Bede’s Commentary on the Catholic Epistles

The Venerable Bede (AD 673–735)

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Prologue on the Seven Canonical Epistles

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

For it is known that blessed James completed his martyrdom in the thirtieth year after the Lord’s passion. Peter suffered in the thirty-eighth year, that is, the last year of Nero, and he himself wrote in his second Epistle: ”I am certain that the putting off of my tent is imminent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ indicated to me by revelation. Whence it is evident that he wrote this Epistle while his passion was impending, as James had departed for Christ long before. Nor indeed did it seem proper to separate his Epistles from one another, which he wrote to the same

churches. Furthermore, John wrote his Epistles and the Gospel much later, who, after the Lord's assassination, returned from exile and found the Church troubled by heretics in his absence, whom he often names Antichrists in his Epistles.

On the Epistle of James — Chapter 1

[James 1:1] -- James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes in the Dispersion: Greetings. The apostle Paul spoke of this James: James, and Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave the right hand of fellowship to me and to Barnabas, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised (Galatians II). Therefore, since he was appointed as an Apostle to the circumcised, he took care of those who were from the circumcision by instructing them both by speaking in person and by comforting, teaching, reproving, and correcting those absent through his letter. To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion, greetings, he says. We read that after the blessed Stephen was killed by the Jews, there was a great persecution on that day against the church in Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. To those who were dispersed and suffered persecution for righteousness, he sends the letter. Not only to them, but also to those who, despite having received the faith of Christ, had not yet been perfect in works, as the subsequent parts of the Letter testify, as well as to those who remained faithless and continued to persecute and disturb the believers as far as they were able. All of these, driven from their homeland by various circumstances and suffering countless slaughters, deaths, and hardships wherever they were oppressed by enemies, as ecclesiastical history sufficiently explains.

Even in the Acts of the Apostles, we read that they were widely dispersed by the time of the Lord's passion, as Luke says: Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven (Acts II). Many of these nations are expressly named as it continues: Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, etc. (Ibid.). Therefore, he exhorts the righteous not to fall away from faith in temptations, rebukes the sinners and admonishes them to refrain from sins and to advance in virtues, lest they become unfruitful or even damned after having received the sacraments of faith. He admonishes the unbelievers to repent for the killing of the Savior and their other crimes in which they were involved before divine retribution overtakes them, whether invisibly or even visibly.

[James 1:2] -- Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials. The word begins with the more perfect, so that it may reach those in order whom he saw being corrected and raised to the height of perfection. And it is to be noted that he does not simply say, "Rejoice" or "Consider it joy," but "Consider it all joy," when you encounter various trials; deem yourselves worthy of all joy if it happens that you endure trials for the sake of faith in Christ. This is grace, if someone

endures suffering unjustly for the sake of God's conscience, as Peter says (1 Pet. II). And his co-apostle Paul: The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us. And all the apostles departed rejoicing from the presence of the council, because they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus. Therefore, we should not be saddened if we are tempted, but if we have been overcome by temptations.

[James 1:3] -- Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. And let patience have its perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Therefore (he says) you are tempted by adverse things, so that you may learn the virtue of patience, and through it, you may be able to show and prove that you carry in your heart a firm faith in future reward. Nor should this place be considered contrary, but rather understood to be in harmony with, what the apostle Paul says: Knowing that tribulation produces patience, and patience, experience (Rom. V). For patience produces experience, because he whose patience cannot be overcome is proved to be perfect. Which is also subsequently taught here when it is said: And let patience have its perfect work. And again: The testing of your faith produces patience. Because that reason makes the faithful exercised through patience, so that through this their faith may be proved how perfect it is.

[James 1:5] -- If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all abundantly and without reproach, and it will be given to him. All truly salvific wisdom must be asked of the Lord, because, as the wise man says: All wisdom is from the Lord God, and it was always with him (Ecclesiasticus I). Nor can anyone through free will, without the help of divine grace, although the Pelagians strongly contend otherwise, understand and be wise. But here it seems especially to be said of that wisdom which we need to use in temptations. If anyone (he says) among you cannot understand the usefulness of temptations that happen to believers for the sake of testing, let him ask God to grant him the sense by which he may discern with how much compassion the Father chastises the children whom He cares to make worthy of eternal inheritance. And he deliberately says: Who gives to all abundantly, lest anyone, conscious of his own frailty, should doubt that he can receive by asking, but rather let each one remember that the Lord has heard the desire of the poor. And as the same one says elsewhere: The Lord has blessed all who fear Him, the small with the great (Psalms CXIII). However, because many ask for many things from the Lord, who nevertheless do not deserve to receive, he adds how they ought to ask if they desire to obtain.

[James 1:6] -- But let him ask in faith, without doubting. That is, let him show himself to be such by living well, that he may be worthy to be heard when he asks. For he who remembers that he has not obeyed the Lord's commandments justly despairs that the Lord will attend to his prayers. For it is written: He who shuts his ear to the law, even his prayer shall be abominable (Proverbs XXVIII). [James

1:6] -- For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. He who, with a conscience biting him for sin, doubts about receiving heavenly rewards, easily abandons the state of faith at the impulse of temptations, in which he seemed to serve God in peace, and at the whim of the invisible enemy, as if by a gust of wind, is carried away through various errors of vices.

[James 1:8] -- A man of double mind is unstable in all his ways. In all his ways, in adversity and prosperity, he says. A man, however, is double-minded, who both kneels to pray to the Lord and utters prayerful words, yet inwardly doubts, due to his accusing conscience, that he can obtain. A man is double-minded who wants to rejoice here with the world and reign there with God. Likewise, a man is double-minded who seeks not inward reward in the good things he does but outward favor. Hence, it is well said by a certain wise one: Woe to the sinner who enters the land on two paths (Eccli. II). For the sinner enters the land on two paths, when what he shows in action belongs to God, and what he seeks in thought belongs to the world. However, all these are unstable in all their ways, because they are easily deterred by worldly adversities and entangled by prosperities, so that they stray from the path of truth.

[James 1:9] -- Let the humble brother boast in his exaltation. Therefore, he says, you must consider it all joy when you fall into various trials, because everyone who humbly endures adversities for the Lord receives lofty rewards of the kingdom from Him. [James 1:10] -- But the rich man in his humility. It is understood from the previous verse to boast. It is clear that this is said with sarcasm, which in Greek is called irony. Thus, he says, the rich man must remember that his glory, in which he boasts of his wealth and despises or even oppresses the poor, is to end, so that humbled, he may perish forever, like that rich man in purple who despised the poor Lazarus. [James 1:10] -- For like the flower of the grass, he will pass away. The flower of the grass delights both the sense of smell and sight, but swiftly loses the grace of its charm and sweetness. Therefore, the present happiness of the wicked is most rightly compared to this, which can in no way be lasting.

[James 1:11] -- For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the grass; its flower falls. The scorching heat of the sun is taken to mean the stern sentence of the judge, by which the temporal glory of the reproved comes to an end. However, the elect also flourish, but not like the grass. For the righteous will flourish like a palm tree (Ps. XCI). The unrighteous flourish temporarily, who will quickly wither like grass, and like the herbs of the field will soon fall. The righteous flourish like trees, because their flower, that is, their most certain hope, awaits everlasting fruit. And their root, that is, charity, remains firm and immovable. Hence, the wise man says: I have flourished like a vine with the sweetness of fragrance (Eccl. XXIV). Finally, Naboth, a just man, preferred to die rather than transfer the vineyard of his fathers into a garden of herbs. For to transfer the vineyard of the fathers into a

garden of herbs is to change the strong works of virtues, which we have received from the teaching of the fathers, into the fragile pleasure of vices. But the righteous prefer to lay down their soul rather than choose earthly goods over heavenly ones. Hence, it is almost sung about them that they will be like a tree planted by the streams of water, which bears its fruit in its season (Ps. I), and so forth. But what of the unrighteous? And his face's beauty perishes. So too, the rich man withers away in his ways.

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

[James 1:12] -- Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he is tested, he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love Him. This is similar to that in Revelation: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life," which God has promised, He says, to those who love Him (Revelation 2). He openly admonishes that one ought to rejoice all the more in temptations, the more it is evident that God imposes a greater burden of temptations on those He loves, so that through the exercise of temptations they may be proven perfect in faith; when they have been proven to be truly faithful, that is perfect and entire, lacking nothing, they rightly receive the promised crown of eternal life. [James 1:13] -- No one, when tempted, should say that they are tempted by God. Hitherto he has spoken about the temptations which we endure externally by the permission of the Lord for the sake of being tested; now he begins to address those which we endure internally, instigated by the devil, or even persuaded by the fragility of our nature. Here he first destroys the error of those who believe that just as good thoughts are inspired by God in us, so also bad ones are thought to be generated in our mind by His instigation. Therefore, no one, when tempted, should say that they are tempted by God, namely with that temptation by which a wealthy person withers while traveling his paths. That is, no one who has committed robbery, theft, false testimony, murder, adultery, or other such things, should say that they had to

commit these acts under the compulsion of God, and thus could by no means avoid the perpetration of these deeds.

[James 1:13] -- For God is not a tempter of evils. It is understood as temptations. Indeed, He tempts no one. That is, with the temptation that deceives the merciful so that they sin. For there are two kinds of temptation. One which deceives, another which tests. According to that which deceives, God tempts no one. According to that which tests, God tempted Abraham. Of whom even the prophet asks: "Test me, O Lord, and try me" (Psalm 26). [James 1:14] -- But each one is tempted by his own desire, being drawn away and enticed, etc. Drawn away from the right path and enticed into evil. On this verse, Jerome, against Jovinian, says: "Just as in good works God is the perfecter, for it is not of the one willing, nor of the one running, but of God who shows mercy and helps, so that we may be able to reach the goal, so in evils and sins, our seeds are the incentives, but the perfection is of the devil. When he sees us building on the foundation of Christ with hay, wood, and stubble, he sets fire beneath it. Let us build with gold, silver, precious stones, and he will not dare to test it, although even in this there is no certain and secure possession: for a lion lies in wait in hiding places to kill the innocent. And the furnace tests the potter's vessels, but testing of tribulation tests just men."

[James 1:15] -- Then desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death. Temptation occurs in three ways: by suggestion, by delight, by consent. By the suggestion of the enemy, and by delight or also by the consent of our frailty. But if, while the enemy suggests, we do not want to delight or consent to sin, this very temptation leads us to victory, by which we may deserve to receive the crown of life. Yet if, by the suggestion of the enemy, we are gradually drawn away from right intention, and begin to be enticed by vice, we indeed offend by delighting, but have not yet incurred the fall of death. However, if from the delight of the offense conceived in the heart, the birth of a wrong action follows, then we, already guilty of death, are left by the victorious enemy. To prove this by examples, Joseph was tempted by the words of his mistress, but because he did not have lustful desire, he could only be tempted by suggestion, not by delight or consent; thus, he emerged victorious. David was tempted by the sight of another man's wife, and because he had not yet overcome the desire of the flesh, he was drawn and enticed by his own desire. And when he completed the conceived crime, he fell into the guilt of death, which he nonetheless escaped by repenting.

Judas was tempted by avarice, and being greedy, he was drawn and enticed by his own desire, and fell into destruction by consenting. Job was tempted in many ways, but because he did not place his possessions or bodily health above divine love, he could be tempted by hostile suggestion, but never could he consent to or even delight in sin. Therefore, what is said, "Sin, when it is fully grown, brings forth death," looks back conversely to this, which was said above about the one

who endures temptation, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life. For just as the one who overcomes temptation merits the rewards of life, so indeed the one who is enticed by his desires and overcome by temptation, rightfully incurs the ruin of death.

[James 1:16] -- Do not therefore err, my most beloved brethren, by assuming that the temptations of vices originate from God. Although we know that some, due to the demands of the merits of preceding crimes, have again fallen into other wickednesses by the permission of the just and rigorous judge. Hence is the saying of the Apostle: "And as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness" (Rom. I). [James 1:17] -- Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights. After he has taught that the vices by which we are tempted do not come from God to us, but arise from ourselves, he shows on the contrary that whatever good we do, we receive this by the gift of God. Hence he calls Him the Father of lights, whom he knows to be the author of spiritual gifts. To which also agrees the saying of the Apostle Paul: "For what do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. IV).

[James 1:17] -- With whom there is no variability or shadow of turning. Because in God's nature there is no changeability, nor does His light, as the light of this world, suffer any shadow of turning, it is clear that He sends us gifts of light alone, and does not also send us the darkness of errors. [James 1:18] -- Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth. And the Lord in the Gospel: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John XV). And in the prophet Hosea: "I will love them freely" (Hosea XIV). Therefore, what he had said, that every good and every perfect gift comes from God, he confirms by adding consequently, that not by our merits, but by the benefit of His will, through the water of regeneration, He has transformed us from children of darkness into children of light.

[James 1:18] -- That we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. Lest we imagine that by saying, "He begot us," we become what He is, this demonstrates that a certain preeminence is granted to us in creation by this adoption. Indeed, some have translated the verses as follows: "Of His own will He begot us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." That is, that we should be better than the other creatures we see. For the law commanded to consecrate the firstfruits of crops or animals to the Lord, and the firstfruits of gold and silver were to be offered for the work of the tabernacle, which means the best of the metals. And of the ancient people of God, the prophet Jeremiah said: "Israel is holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of His harvest" (Jer. II).

[James 1:16] -- You know, my most beloved brothers. "It is well known," he says, "to you that you yourselves had the inclination to fall to the depths, but it happened that you were enlightened by the Lord, not by your own provision, but by heavenly

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

[James 1:19] -- And slow to anger. Because the maturity of wisdom is only perceived with a tranquil mind. For it is written, anger rests in the bosom of fools (Eccles. VII). However, it does not so much alter the speed of anger, as to approve its slowness, but rather admonishes this, that even in the hour of perturbation and quarrels, let us beware lest anger creeps upon us; or if it has crept upon us, let us restrain its impulse within the confines of the mouth, and after the hour of crisis has passed, let us more freely purify it from our heart over time. Or certainly, he commanded us to be slow to anger, so that we do not turn the serenity of our countenance into austerity for any reasons, but only for certain reasons. For example, if we see that those near us, especially those entrusted to us, cannot be corrected otherwise, let us then exhibit the severity of the word or even of stricter judgment, while maintaining as much as human nature allows, the serene state of our mind. For (as I believe) Phinehas, Samuel, Elijah, and Peter were slow to anger, and yet they punished the sinners, whether by sword or by word. But Moses, though he was a very meek man, went out from Pharaoh whom he saw as incorrigible, very angry, and threatened him with punishment, which he also carried out in deed.

[James 1:20] -- For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. The meaning is clear, because whoever rashly subjects himself to the sin of anger, even if he appears just to men, is not yet perfectly just in the divine judgment. But it can be understood more profoundly, because it is said of the Lord: "But you, Lord of hosts, judge with tranquility" (Wisdom XII). Any human judge who judges a delinquent with a disturbed mind, even if he judges justly, cannot imitate the justice of divine judgment, into which disturbance does not enter. [James 1:21] --

For this reason, putting away all filthiness and abundance of malice, in meekness you have received the implanted word. First, he orders both the body and the mind to be cleansed from vices, so that they may be worthy to receive the word of salvation. For he who does not first turn away from evil cannot do good. Indeed, he designates all impurity of both flesh and soul. But malice properly refers to the depravity of the inner man. "Receive," he says, "the implanted word," that is, the word which we impose on your hearts by preaching, you must receive by learning. Or certainly, it should be understood this way: the word which was implanted in you on the day of redemption, when God voluntarily begot you, now receive it more perfectly, even fulfilling it with works, which you already hold in ministry.

[James 1:21] -- Which can save your souls. Even if you suffer temptations in body, or are consumed by death from the unfaithful. [James 1:22] -- Be however doers of the word, and not hearers only, etc. Thus also Paul about the observers of the law. "Not the hearers," he says, "of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. II). And in the Apocalypse John, having said: "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy of this book," immediately added: "And keep those things which are written therein" (Apoc. I). [James 1:25] -- But he who has looked into the perfect law of liberty and has continued in it. By the perfect law of liberty, he means the grace of the Gospel. For the law brought nothing to perfection (Hebr. VII). And elsewhere: "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption of sons" (Rom. VIII). And again: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (II Cor. III). And the Lord Himself: "If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (John VIII).

[James 1:25] -- Not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. Not by the futile hearing of the word, but by the execution of the work is happiness prepared. Thus also the Lord speaking to the disciples: "If you know these things," He says, "blessed are you if you do them" (John XIII). [James 1:26] -- But if anyone thinks that he is religious, not restraining his tongue, but deceiving his heart, this person's religion is worthless. He had previously advised not only to hear the word of God but also to do it. Now he adds that even if someone seems to exercise the Lord's commands, which he has learned, in deeds, if he does not also restrain his tongue from slanders, lies, blasphemies, foolish talk, even from much speaking itself, and other things by which he usually sins, he boasts in vain about the righteousness of his works. Just as Paul, approving the sentence of a Gentile poet, says: 'Bad company ruins good morals' (I Cor. XV).

[James 1:27] -- Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this. Beautifully did he add "before God and the Father," because there are those who seem religious to men, while they are considered profane by God. Therefore, Solomon also says: 'There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the

way to death' (Prov. XIV). [James 1:27] -- To visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. Because he said that the doer of the work will be blessed in his act, now he says which deeds are most pleasing to God, namely mercy and innocence. For in that he commanded to visit orphans and widows in their distress, he suggests all that we must do mercifully towards our neighbors. How much this matters will be revealed at the time of judgment, where the Judge will say: 'As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me' (Matt. XXV). Furthermore, in that he commanded us to keep ourselves unspotted from this world, he shows all those things in which it is fitting to keep ourselves chaste. Among these are also those things which he had previously advised to observe, that we should be slow to speak and slow to anger.

Chapter 2

[James 2:1] -- My brothers, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with partiality. He showed that those to whom he wrote were indeed imbued with evangelical faith, but were empty in works. And since the Lord taught that his commandments should be fulfilled through alms for the poor, he saw that they, contrary to what should be done for the poor for the sake of eternal rewards, were rather doing it for the rich for the sake of earthly advantages, and therefore he reproved them as they deserved. And fittingly, at the beginning of this passage, he surnames our Lord Jesus Christ as "of glory," so that we may remember that it is to his commands we ought to obey, who, being the splendor of glory (Hebrews 1), rewards eternally whatever is given to the poor out of love for him, rather than any human dignity which is generally said to be all flesh is grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass, etc. (Isaiah 40).

[James 2:2-3] -- For if there comes into your assembly a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there also comes in a poor man in shabby clothing, and you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, "You sit here in a good place," while you say to the poor man, "You stand over there," or "Sit down at my feet." In this exposition of the sentence let us use the words of blessed Augustine. "If," he says, "we refer this difference of sitting and standing to ecclesiastical honors, it must not be thought a small sin to have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory with partiality. For who can tolerate that a rich man should be chosen to the seat of honor in the Church, disregarding a poorer but more learned and holier man? But if he speaks of everyday seating arrangements, who sins here (if indeed he sins) except when he judges internally within himself that the other seems better to him to the degree that he is richer?"

[James 2:4] -- Do you not judge among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? It follows: [James 2:5] -- Listen, my beloved brothers. He says, pay closer attention, because those who are richer in the world are not necessarily better in the divine judgment. [James 2:5] -- Has not God chosen the poor of this

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

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

[James 2:8] -- If, however, you fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures: You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. See how he calls them transgressors, because it is said to the rich: Sit here, and to the poor: Stand there. Thus, lest they think it a contemptible sin to transgress the law in this one matter, he added:

[James 2:10] -- Whoever shall keep the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not kill." Now if you do not commit adultery but you kill, you have become a transgressor of the law. Because of what was said: Convicted by the law as transgressors. Therefore, it seems accordingly (unless it can be otherwise understood) that he who says to the rich man: Sit here, and to the poor man: Stand there, giving more honor to this one than to that one, should be judged guilty of all crimes. For he who offends in one is made guilty of all. Hence, it must be questioned, how is he guilty of all if he has offended in one who has kept the whole law? Or perhaps because the fullness of the law is love, by which God and neighbor are loved, upon which commandments of love the whole law and the prophets depend, he rightly becomes guilty of all who acts against that in which all things hang? No one sins except by acting against it. Because "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not kill," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom. XIII). Hence,

he becomes guilty of all by doing against that in which all things hang. Why then are not all sins said to be equal? Or perhaps because he acts more against charity who sins more gravely, and less who sins lightly? Yet even if he offends in one, he is guilty of all, because he acts against that in which all things hang.

[James 2:12] -- Thus speak, and thus act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. The law of liberty is the law of charity, of which it is said: If, however, you fulfill the royal law according to the Scriptures: You shall love your neighbor as yourself, you do well. Therefore, he says, speak thus, and act thus, that by loving your neighbors, you may deserve to be loved by God, and by showing mercy to your neighbors, you may expect mercy in the divine judgment. Otherwise, as the law of servitude is what was given through Moses, so the law of liberty is the grace of the Gospel which was given through Jesus Christ, as the Apostle attests, who says: For you have not received the spirit of slavery again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, in which we cry, Abba, Father (Hebr. VII). And again, where there is the Spirit of the Lord, there is liberty (II Cor. III). Therefore, if you speak, he says, and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. This is indeed to begin being judged. For it is more severe to be judged by the law of Moses than by the natural law. Likewise, it is more severe for those who despise the known grace of the Gospel than those who despise the edicts of the Mosaic law. For to whom much is given, much will be required from him.

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

[James 2:13] -- For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Without mercy shall be judged the one who, though able to show mercy, did not do so before being judged. While this is rightly thought of all the unmerciful, it is certainly understood that the greater the mercy someone has received from the Lord, the more unjustly they have denied mercy to a needy neighbor and thereby will more justly suffer the penalties for their wickedness. Hence the Lord wisely warns: Do not judge, so that you may not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be

given to you (Luke 6). Therefore, judgment without mercy will be for the one who has shown no mercy. [James 2:13] -- But mercy exalts over judgment. For as the one condemned in God's judgment will grieve who did not show mercy, so the one who did will rejoice and exult when rewarded. Alternatively: Mercy exalts over judgment. It is not said: Mercy overcomes judgment. For it is not opposed to judgment but exalts over it, because many are gathered through mercy, but those who have shown mercy. For blessed are the merciful, since God will have mercy on them (Matthew 5). Again, Mercy exalts over judgment, that is, mercy is placed above judgment. In which, if a work of mercy is found, even if there is reason for punishment in judgment, like a wave of mercy, the fire of sin is extinguished.

[James 2:14] -- What will it profit, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? And so on. Here he discusses the works of mercy more extensively, so that he might console those he had strongly frightened with knowledge preceding, by reminding them how even daily sins, which cannot be lived without here, are expiated by daily remedies. Lest a person, who, by offending in one thing, becomes guilty of all, and by offending many, since we all offend in many ways (James 3), brings a great heap of accumulated guilt before the tribunal of so great a Judge and does not find the mercy they did not show. Instead, by forgiving and giving, they may merit to have their debts forgiven and the promises returned to them.

[James 2:15-16] -- But if a brother or sister is naked and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them: Go in peace, be warmed and filled, but you do not give them the things that are necessary for the body, what does it profit? So too faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself, etc. It is clear that just as mere words of piety do not refresh the naked or hungry, unless food and clothing are also offered, so faith kept only in words does not save. For it is dead in itself without works of charity, by which it might be revived and animated. Nor is this contrary to what the Lord said: He who believes and is baptized will be saved (Mark XVI). For it must be understood that he truly believes who exercises what he believes by doing. And since faith and charity cannot be separated, as Paul attests, who says: There is faith which works through love (Gal. V), John the Apostle aptly gives such a judgment on charity as James gives on faith, saying: Whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him (I John III)?

[James 2:19] -- You believe that there is one God, you do well, and the demons also believe and tremble. Do not think that you are doing something great by believing that there is one God. For the demons also do this, and not only do they believe in God the Father, but also in the Son. Hence Luke says: "And demons also were coming out of many, shouting and saying, 'You are the Son of God.'" And rebuking them, He did not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ

(Luke 4). Not only do they believe, but they also tremble. Hence the legion that was possessing the man cries out to Him with a suppliant voice: "What have I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me" (Mark 5). Therefore, those who do not believe that God exists, or do not fear Him when believed, are certainly to be considered more sluggish and defiant than demons. But it is not great to believe in God and to tremble, if one does not also believe in Him, that is, if the love of Him is not held in the heart. For it is one thing to believe Him, another to believe in Him, another to believe into Him. To believe Him is to believe that what He says is true. To believe in Him is to believe that He is God. To believe into Him is to love Him.

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

[James 2:20] -- Do you want to know, O empty man, that faith without works is idle? Because the Apostle Paul, preaching that a man is justified by faith without works, was not well understood by those who took it to mean that once they believed in Christ, even if they acted badly and lived wickedly and wickedly, they would be saved by faith: this passage of this epistle explains how the same sense of the Apostle Paul should be understood. Therefore, he uses the example of Abraham more, showing that faith is empty if it does not work well, because Paul also used the example of Abraham to prove that a man can be justified without works. For when he recalls the good works of Abraham, which accompanied his faith, he sufficiently shows that the Apostle Paul did not teach that a man is justified by faith without works in such a way that if anyone has believed, it does not matter for him to do good works, but rather to ensure that no one thinks he has achieved the gift of justification, which is by faith, through the merits of previous good works. In this, the Jews wanted to prefer themselves over the Gentiles believing in Christ, because they said they had achieved evangelical grace through the merits of good works which are in the law. And therefore, many who believed from them were scandalized because the grace of Christ was given to the uncircumcised Gentiles.

Whence the Apostle Paul says that a man can be justified by faith without works, that is, preceding works. For being justified by faith, how can he not act justly? Therefore when James says:

[James 2:21] -- Our father Abraham was justified by works, offering Isaac his son upon the altar. Elegantly, the example of good works from the patriarch himself was pointed out to be learned, urging those who believed from among the Jews to follow the deeds of their first and greatest ancestor as good offspring. And since he admonished them not to fail in temptations and to prove their faith through works, he elegantly used the example of the patriarch, by which he could instruct them in both virtues. For what greater temptation, except those pertaining to the wounds of one's own body, can occur than for an old man to be compelled to kill his only beloved son? How then would he delay in giving his tunics or food to the poor for the love of God, who did not delay in giving his son, whom he had received in his old age as an heir, to death at the prompt command of the Lord? Therefore, this statement of blessed James is in harmony with what Paul says: "By faith Abraham offered Isaac his son when he was tested, and he offered his only begotten son whom he had received by promise, to whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' considering that God is able to raise even the dead" (Heb. 11). Indeed, in the same act, James praised the magnificence of Abraham's works, while Paul lauded the constancy of his faith. Yet Paul did not present a different or contrary opinion to James.

For both knew that Abraham was perfect in both faith and works, and therefore each of them praised that virtue in him which they saw as needed more by their own audiences. Because James wrote to those who held faith without works idle, he presented that relevant example where Abraham's notable faith, which was previously praised by Scripture, appeared, showing that it did not lie dormant idly in his heart but was proven fervent in obedience to divine commands. But Paul demonstrated to those who boasted in their works without the grace of faith that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11), and by collecting examples from all the patriarchs, clearly taught that all were proven by the testimony of faith. Hence he specifically mentioned Abraham: because by faith he offered Isaac, considering (he says) that God is able to raise the dead (Heb. 11). So he joined the work of faith, who therefore was willing to offer his son at once, because he believed God would immediately raise him. He believed this because he held as true what he had heard: "In Isaac your seed shall be called. This combination of both virtues blessed James also expounds by saying:

"You see that faith was working together with his works, and by works, faith was made perfect, and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.'" Paul's firm discussion addressed to the Romans clearly teaches this testi-

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

[James 2:24] -- Do you see that a man is justified by works and not by faith only? What he says by works means by works of faith. Because no one can have perfect works without faith, but many can have faith without works if they do not have the time to act. Of such it is said: He was taken away lest wickedness should change his understanding or deceit beguile his soul (Wis. IV).

[James 2:25] -- In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? Lest they excuse themselves as unable to imitate the works of so great a father Abraham, especially since no one now compels them to offer their sons to God to be killed, but rather God Himself forbids this to be done through the Scriptures, he adds also of a sinful woman, a foreign woman, who nevertheless by acts of mercy, by the duty of hospitality, even at the risk of her life, received the servants of God and was deemed worthy to be justified from sins, to be numbered among the citizens of the people of Israel, to be counted in the catalog of their royal lineage, to be inserted in the genealogies of our Lord and Saviour descending from the fountain of the patriarchs, to be rescued from the destruction of her perishing country, whose treachery she abandoned. By the examples of this woman turned to better things, he therefore advises his listeners to avoid entering the perishing homeland, and to remember to separate themselves by fruitful works from the sins they had left by believing, so that they may be united with the assemblies of the saints and may deserve to reach the fellowship of their Redeemer. And so he exhorts them to receive the messengers of Jesus, that is, to gladly hear the preachers of the word of the Gospel.

And when they know that these have been rejected by their kinsmen or even sought after to death, as the Acts often show to have happened, they themselves, taking

from them counsel for their salvation, should send them back to the Lord Jesus in peace. So the Book of Acts of the Apostles indicates that Gamaliel, the master of the blessed apostle Paul, by the revelation of the relics of the proto-martyr Stephen, effected something once honorable to all the people of the Jews and now more honorable to the whole Church of Christ, when the Jewish council, planning to slay the apostles, himself with wiser counsel thwarted their machinations and sent the apostles, rescued from their snares, back unharmed to evangelize Jesus.

Chapter 3

[James 3:1] -- Do not become many teachers, my brethren. The Acts of the Apostles show that there was much zeal among believers during the time of the apostles to spread the word more widely, so much so that Apollos, a man very learned in the Scriptures, knowing only the baptism of John, confidently preached Christ. Yet because he was wise, as soon as a teacher was present, he most easily fulfilled what he had lacked, and returned now perfected to the office of preaching. Others, departing from Judea to Antioch with greater ignorance, were teaching the Gentile believers that unless they were circumcised according to the law of Moses, they could not be saved, and they brought no small labor of debate to the chaste preachers. Therefore, blessed James removes these and such teachers from the office of the word, lest they become an impediment to those who could properly fulfill it.

[James 3:1] -- Do you not know that you shall receive greater judgment? For as he who ministers well acquires a good degree for himself, so also he who, being unlearned, tries to usurp the office of teaching, who does not sincerely announce Christ, would deserve a greater judgment of condemnation than if he had perished alone in his own sin. [James 3:2] -- For in many things we all offend. He did not say "you offend," when he reproved those whom he saw as less perfect in both knowledge and action, and would remove such from the chair of teaching, fearing lest they might harm the little ones by preaching erroneously, and turn their ears away from the hearing of teachers by forestalling them; or certainly might defile what they rightly preached with the filth of incorrect action, and thus obscure the path of evangelical perfection with sinister opinion; but he said, "we offend," when we are of Christ; thus speaks the Apostle. And he prefaced it with "in many things," he added "all," so that the imperfect might consider themselves all the more cautiously in acting or speaking, as they would know more certainly that not even the perfectly good, who walk under the guidance of the grace of the Holy Spirit, can by any means pass through the path of this life without offending by some sin, according to what is written elsewhere: "The heavens are not clean in His sight" (Job XV). And as Solomon says: "There is no just man upon earth, that does good, and sins not" (Eccl. VII).

[James 3:2] -- If anyone does not offend in word, this one is a perfect man. How can he say that the man who does not offend in word is perfect, when he has previously

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

[James 3:2] -- He can also bridle his whole body. This verse depends on the previous one. If anyone, he says, does not offend in word, this one is a perfect man, and he can also bridle his whole body. Which is to say openly: If anyone avoids the slip of the tongue, which is nearly inevitable, he will learn also to observe the other members of the body, which can be more easily disciplined, so that they do not stray from the right path. [James 3:3] -- But if we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole body as well. How much more fitting it is to put the bit of restraint into our own mouths to comply with our Creator, so that by guarding our tongue we may also seek to obtain the rectitude of deeds? If, as some copies have it, we read: Just as we put bits into the mouths of horses, there will be no question, because it is connected to what is said subsequently: So also the tongue is indeed a small member, etc.

[James 3:4] -- Behold, even ships, though they are so great, and are driven by strong winds, are steered by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. The great ships on the sea are the minds of men in this life, whether good or bad. The strong winds by which they are driven are the inclinations of the minds, compelled by nature to act, by which they reach either a good or bad end. The rudder by which such ships are steered wherever the will of the pilot directs is the intention of the heart itself, by which the elect, having crossed the waves of this world, reach the happy harbor of the heavenly homeland, while the reprobate, killed by the stormy errors of this life, which they did not know how to leave, perish like those destroyed by Scylla or Charybdis. And because the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart, it is rightly added:

[James 3:5] -- Thus also the tongue is indeed a small member, and it exalts great things. Certainly, it exalts great rewards if the force of the guiding mind rightly governs it. According to that of Solomon: He who understands possesses the steerage. But if it governs badly, it exalts great evils of destruction both for itself and its people. Wherefore Solomon says: Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. XVIII). Therefore it exalts life if it teaches the Church well. Against this, it exalts death if it acts gravely. For this is said against those who, lacking both life and knowledge, presumed to teach and, therefore, harmed the Church even more; but if it is read as in some manuscripts: It also rejoices greatly, that exultation must indeed here be understood, of which it is said in the following, when he enumerated through many vices of the tongue, he added: But now you exult in your arrogances. All such exultation is evil. From which also the mother of blessed Samuel restrains us with devout exhortation, saying: Do not multiply speaking proudly (I Kings II). Therefore, the tongue exalts greatly, which, despising the senses and words of others, boasts singularly of being wise and eloquent itself.

[James 3:5] -- Behold how great a fire a small forest kindles. How much he says how small. Indeed, the manuscripts also have it so: Behold a small fire. Just as from a small spark the growing fire often kindles a great forest, so the incontinence of the tongue, nourished by its lightness, destroys much of the material of good works, many fruits of spiritual life, where it touches, but also very often consumes countless leaves of speech which seemed the best. [James 3:6] -- And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is a fire because it consumes the forest of virtues by speaking badly. Hence the wise man says of the foolish: "The opening of his mouth," he says, "is a flame." To which indeed the fire of perdition is opposed, that saving fire which, being a tongue, consumes the hay, stubble, and vices, and illuminates the secrets of the heart. By this fire, the holy teachers are kindled, so that they both burn with love and, as if with fiery tongues, ignite others by preaching. Of such it is well written: "There appeared to them tongues as of fire, and they rested on each one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2). Rightly, it is said of the undisciplined tongue that it is a world of iniquity, because almost all crimes are either concocted by it, such as robberies, rapes; or perpetrated, such as perjuries, false testimonies; or defended when any impure person, by excusing the crime he has committed, pretends to display a good deed that he has not done.

[James 3:6] -- And it sets on fire the wheel of our birth, being set on fire by hell. By hell, it means by the devil and his angels, for whom hell was made, and who, whether they fly in the air, wander on earth or under the earth, or are detained, always bring with them the torments of flames, like a feverish person who, even if placed on ivory beds or in sunny places, cannot avoid the heat or cold of his inherent disease. Thus, demons, even if they are worshipped in golden temples or roam through the air, always burn with the hellish fire, and, reminded by their own

punishment, suggest to deceived men the fuel of vices that cause their downfall. In contrast, the holy city of God, the new Jerusalem, is said to descend from heaven by God, because clearly, whatever heavenly things we do on earth, we have certainly received the celestial gift to do so. Moreover, the wheel of our birth refers to the continuous course of temporal life, in which from the day of birth until death we are driven like a constantly running wheel. Hence, Solomon rightly said: "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of affliction come" (Ecclesiastes XII), and shortly after added: "And the wheel is broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth from which it came. Therefore, the tongue sets on fire the wheel of our birth, contaminating our entire state of being with corrupt speech.

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

[James 3:7] -- For every kind of beast, and bird, and serpent, and that of others, is tamed and has been tamed by human nature. We read in Pliny that the most enormous asp of serpents in Egypt was tamed by the head of a household, and daily emerged from its hole, accustomed to take provisions at his table. We also read, as Marcellinus Comes writes, that a tamed tiger was sent from India to Emperor Anastasius. Therefore, it is meant to be understood that the tongue of the wicked surpasses beasts in ferocity, birds in lightness or exultation, serpents in venomousness. There are indeed those who have sharpened their tongues like a sword (Psalm LXIII), there are those who are flighty and have set their mouth against the heavens (Psalm LXXII), and whose mouth speaks vanity (Psalm CXLIII), there are those serpentine, of whom it is said: The venom of asps is under their lips (Psalm XIII).

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

known to be tamable. He subsequently adds many things about the atrocity of its venom.

[James 3:10] -- Blessing and cursing proceed from the same mouth. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth sweet and bitter water from the same opening? Just as sweet and bitter water cannot simultaneously bubble up from a single vein of the fountain, but if they are mixed in a vessel or a cistern, the sweet water immediately becomes bitter from the bitter water, but the bitter water cannot be changed into sweetness by the mixture of sweet water, so blessing and cursing cannot be in any way combined in one mouth; but whoever is accustomed to bless God by praying or preaching His word, but still does not cease to curse men, it is evident that the sweetness of his blessing is consumed by the bitterness of the cursing. For a little leaven corrupts the whole mass (I Cor. V). And there is no fair praise in the mouth of a sinner (Eccli. XV). Finally, if you make a pipe with double openings for the water to enter, and a single one for it to exit, and you pour bitter water in one side and sweet water in the other side, without any doubt where there is one exit opening, they will be mixed, and the water will appear bitter. For it is certainly much easier for sweet to turn into bitter when they are mixed together, than for bitter to turn into sweet. From this example, it is gathered that bad conversations, as testified by the Apostle, corrupt good morals as well as good speech.

[James 3:12] -- Can a fig tree, my brothers, produce olives, or a vine figs? etc. It is clear, because just as a tree cannot, having lost its natural fruit, produce the fruit of another tree from itself, so a slanderer, even if he seems to speak some good temporarily, is in no way able to have the fruit of blessing. But if someone wishes to discuss this more deeply, in the fig tree whose leaves our first parents, after the recognition of their transgression, used to cover their nakedness, can be understood the veil of excuse, by which they then tried to repel the reproach of the Creator and to cast it back on the Creator Himself, and now many of the foolish turn their hearts to an evil word, to excuse excuses in sins (Psalm 140). In olives can be taken the fruit of mercy, in the vine the fervor of love. But I, he says, like a fruitful olive tree in the house of the Lord, have hoped in the mercy of my God (Psalm 51), that is, just as one who produces the fruit of mercy, I have hoped for mercy myself from the Lord. Likewise: And your cup inebriates me, how excellent it is (Psalm 23)! Which is understood to speak of the love of God, which is poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5). Therefore, a fig tree cannot produce olives, because whoever tries to excuse himself for sins rather than accuse himself, in no way performs works of piety for sins perfectly towards others, but gives more with a proud heart. Nor can a vine produce figs, because he who is perfectly inebriated with divine love, accuses none of his errors, except himself.

[James 3:13] -- Who among you is wise and disciplined, let him show by good conduct his works in the humility of wisdom. Because he had imposed silence on wicked teachers and had forbidden them to hold the rank of teacher, since he saw that they had neither the perfection of life nor the restraint of the tongue, he consequently admonishes that if anyone among them is wise and disciplined, or appears to be so to himself, let him show his wisdom and discipline more by living wisely and disciplined than by teaching others. For he who with meek heart and calm speech does the good which he can, surely gives evident proof of a wise man. For the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord (Psalm 110). But he who is more inclined to preach the word than to act often incurs the guilt of foolishness through the love of boasting, through the zeal of contention, through the facility of eloquence, through the envy of other teachers, through ignorance of the catholic truth. Well does that saying of Solomon apply to him: For in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin (Proverbs 14). Hence it is rightly added here:

[James 3:14] -- But if you have bitter zeal, and there are contentions in your hearts, do not glory, etc. He says 'bitter zeal' because there is also sweet zeal, from which also the apostle Simon rightly received the name of perfect heart. Which also Elijah had, when he said: I have been very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant (1 Kings 19). And the apostle Paul: For I am jealous for you with a Godly jealousy (2 Corinthians 11). There is also good contention, which the Lord commanded us to have, saying: Strive to enter through the narrow gate (Luke 13). Do not, he says, glory, and lie against the truth. For the Truth itself proves that those who utter words of wisdom from their mouth, and carry bitter zeal and the zeal of unfruitful contention in their heart, are not worthy of glory.

[James 3:15] -- This is not the wisdom descending from above, but earthly, unspiritual, demonic. And Paul says that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God. It should be noted that the natural man, or natural wisdom, is derived not from the animal, but from the soul, as the Apostle testifies, because the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving spirit (I Cor. XV). But it is not first that which is spiritual, but that which is natural. The authority in Greek, in which language ψυχὴ means soul, and ψυχικὸν means natural, confirms that it is derived from the soul. Moreover, though animals in Latin seem to derive their name from the soul, in Greek they have a very different and dissimilar etymology. For they get their name from the fact that they live. Among the Greeks, ζωὴ means life, ζῶα means animals. Therefore, when the Apostle in his Epistles often mentions the carnal man, the natural man, and the spiritual man, he calls spiritual either the Lord Himself, who, appearing in flesh and soul, was full of the Holy Spirit, or every elect person, who, naturally consisting of flesh and soul, also received the grace of the Holy Spirit according to the measure of Christ's gift, by which he is enlightened. But he calls carnal or natural the man who, having

no grace of the Spirit, knows only to think or do those things which are naturally implanted in the senses of the flesh or the soul. Therefore, contentious and proud wisdom is rightly remembered as earthly, unspiritual and demonic, because while the soul seeks earthly glory, while, devoid of spiritual grace, remaining alone, it thinks of those things which are naturally implanted in it after the fall of the first transgression, rightly deluded by the evil spirit, it turns to doing those things which are mad and harmful.

[James 3:16] -- Where there is jealousy and contention, there is inconstancy and every wrongful work. With all, he says, guard your heart, for from it comes life. For just as the root of the heart is, so in the sight of internal judgment is the whole fruit of action. And he who conceals wickedness in a heart filled with envy or contention, every work of his is wrongful, however righteous it may seem to men, evidently because of the inconstancy of a mind fluctuating here and there, because he has neglected to anchor himself firmly to the heavenly gaze. [James 3:17] -- But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits. This is the gentleness of wisdom that he previously instructed to be possessed, certainly as opposed to the bitterness of jealousy and contention, which is foolish, by which the virtue and doctrine of the holy preachers are mutually associated with each other in the peace of charity and concord. First, he says, pure, then peaceable. Pure, evidently, because it understands chastely; peaceable, because it does not separate itself from the society of others through pride. Gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, because it is certainly the wise man's task to give assent to the persuasion of the good, just as Peter promptly agreed with the one rebuking him, and to repudiate the doctrine of the wicked with all intention, either by teaching or by living.

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

[James 3:18] -- The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Everything we do in this life is a seed of future retribution, and that retribution itself is the fruit of present works, as the Apostle bears witness, saying: For whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. And he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life (Galatians VI). And therefore it is rightly said that the fruit

of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. For the fruit of righteousness is eternal life, which is rewarded for just works, because those who seek peace follow it; with that same peace which they study, they sprinkle the soil of their heart as with the best seed, so that through the daily growth of good works they may be able to arrive at the fruit of heavenly life. Concerning this, it is written elsewhere: Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy (Psalm 126), and so on to the end of the psalm. But the wicked also sow and reap, because they will receive according to their deserts in judgment. However, they are known to reap not fruit, but corruption, because they do not enjoy eternal goods (for fruit is named from enjoying), but they will pay eternal penalties for the corruption in which they lived.

Chapter 4

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

[James 4:3] -- You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, etc. He had foretold that they do not ask, and now he says that they ask wrongly, because he who asks wrongly seems to ask nothing at all in the sight of the inner witness. He asks wrongly who, despising the Lord's commands, desires supreme benefits from the Lord. He also asks wrongly who, having lost the love of higher things, seeks merely to gain lower goods, and this not for the sustenance of human frailty, but for the excess of unrestrained pleasure. This is indeed what he means when he says: So that you may spend it on your passions.

[James 4:4] -- Adulterers, do you not know that friendship with this world is enmity with God? He rightly calls adulterers those whom, having turned from the love of heavenly wisdom to the embrace of worldly friendship, he reproaches, seeing that they serve mammon more than the Creator whom they despise. He had indeed spoken above about the manifest enemies of God: Do not the rich oppress you

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

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

[James 4:6] -- But He gives greater grace. The Lord gives greater grace than the friendship of the world, because while it provides these earthly goods temporarily and with the pain of losing them, He bestows eternal joy. He subsequently explains to whom He grants this grace.

[James 4:6] -- For this reason it says: God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Thieves, indeed, perjurers, the lustful, and other sinners are punished by God as despisers of His precepts, but He is said to resist the proud especially,

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

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

[James 4:8] -- Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you: Draw near to the Lord by following His footsteps in humility, and He will draw near to you through mercy, freeing you from distress. For no one is far from God in terms of regions, but in terms of affections. Indeed, dwelling in one place on earth, both he who is diligent in virtues and he who wallows in the filth of vices, one is far from God, the other has God near. Hence the Psalmist says: "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145). Again: "Salvation is far from sinners" (Psalm 119). That same salvation of which we sing: "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?" (Psalm 27). And the Lord Himself, when He encouraged us to draw near to Him by saying: "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11), immediately demonstrated that this should be fulfilled not by feet but by actions when He added: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (ibid.).

[James 4:8] -- Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. This is truly to draw near to the Lord, namely to have purity of works and simplicity of heart. "Innocent," he says, "with clean hands and a pure heart, this one shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy" (Psalm 25). And this is truly the Lord drawing near to us, to give to us simply those gifts of His mercy which we seek. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and will withdraw from thoughts that are without understanding (Wisdom 1). [James 4:9] -- Be mis-

erable, mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. Do not, He says, love to become wealthy and rejoice in this world, but being mindful of the sins you have committed, rather aim that through the brief miseries, poverty and transient lamentation of this life you may reach the eternal joys of the heavenly kingdom, so that you do not, for the temporary joy of wealth which you have acquired through unjust labor, perpetually beg, mourn, and pay the penalties in torment.

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

[James 4:12] -- But who are you to judge your neighbor? He condemns the recklessness of the one who delights in judging his neighbor without taking care to consider the state of his own frailty and the uncertainties of his temporal life. And because sometimes, through the change of the right hand of the Most High, those who judged their neighbor are subjected to the power of the one they judged, sometimes they are suddenly taken from the world while still living, he subsequently also condemns the recklessness of those who, having no certainty of their own life, stretch their minds into the future, thinking of the profits of many years to come. For it follows: [James 4:13-14] -- Behold now, you who say: "Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and spend a year there, and trade, and make a profit," yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. He notes the folly in this kind of planning in many ways, since clearly they both consult about the increase of profit and assume they will live for a long time, and that it is within their power to spend a year there, and in all of these things they disdain to recall the judgment of the Supreme Judge to mind.

[James 4:14] -- For what is your life? It is a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. He does not say what is our life, but what, he says, is your life? Because the righteous truly begin to live when they reach the end of this life. But the enemies of the Lord, when they have been honored and exalted, will

perish like smoke (Psalm 36). However, it should not be thought that this is the same sentiment which the ungodly are reported to have expressed in the book of Wisdom: For we are born from nothing, and after this we will be as though we had never been (Wisdom 2). Because smoke has been blown into our nostrils, and a word as a spark to stir up our heart. When this is extinguished, the body will be ashes, and the spirit will be dispersed like soft air. For these things reasoned with those who believed in no life except this one, saying with Epicurus: "After death there is nothing, and death itself is nothing." But the blessed James added that the life of the wicked is short in the present, yet in the future, eternal death follows, according to the saying of the blessed Job: They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave (Job 21).

[James 4:17] -- To him therefore who knows to do good and does not do it, it is sin. Throughout the text of this Epistle, the blessed James shows that those to whom he wrote had the knowledge of doing good, and had also learned the right faith, so that they had presumed they could become teachers to others, yet had not attained the perfection of works, or humility of mind, or even moderation of speech. Hence, he now among other words of reproof and exhortation greatly frightens them with this statement, that he who knows how to do good, and does not do what he knows, is said to have a greater sin than he who sins out of ignorance. Although he who sins in ignorance cannot be entirely free from guilt, for ignorance of good itself is not a small evil. Hence the Lord said: The servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few (Luke 12).

Chapter 5

[James 5:1] -- Come now, you rich, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming upon you. Now, while it is the acceptable time, while it is the day of salvation (II Cor. VI), avoid, he says, the future miseries of punishment by weeping and giving alms. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be a testimony against you, and will eat your flesh like fire. Not only does the visible fire of Gehenna torment and torture the wicked and merciless rich, but also the very memory of their decayed and useless riches, with which they could very easily redeem their sins, will burn their souls no less before judgment, and their flesh after the resurrection, when they begin to be intensely angry with themselves because they did not wish to wash away their sins with alms. Finally, the rust of wealth was a testimony to the wickedness of that rich man clothed in purple and turned into an increase of punishment, when through Abraham's reproach he heard: "Son, remember that you received your good things in your lifetime, and Lazarus likewise evil things" (Luke XVI). Even the carnal delights themselves can be understood by the name of the flesh, which the rust of wealth eats like fire, while the flame raging outside torments the luxurious soul, and not less piercing inwardly the pain of its tenacity

accuses. This often happens even in this life, that some, losing wealth they used badly, begin too late to feel the sorrow that they had them without profit, and then groan that they did not give their goods to the needy when they are themselves compelled to beg due to impending need.

[James 5:3] -- You have stored up wrath for yourselves in the last days. Because, having neglected the nakedness or hunger of the poor, you rejoiced in storing up treasures of money for yourselves, now, not having foreseen it, you have accumulated the wrath of the eternal Judge against yourselves. Although it has not yet appeared, in the last days it is already most certain, that is, when the end of temporal days has come.

[James 5:4] -- Behold, the wages of the workers who have reaped your fields, which were withheld by you, cry out. How great is the iniquity of the proud, who, although they have sufficient wealth, not only disdain to welcome and refresh the poor coming everywhere, but also refuse to give the due wages of their work to the laborers or their servants. This fault of impiety the blessed Job indicates that he took great care to avoid, as he says: If my land cries out against me, and its furrows weep together, if I have eaten its fruits without money, and afflicted the soul of its tillers, let thorns grow instead of wheat, and thistles instead of barley (Job 31). And their cry has entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts. He calls the Lord of Hosts to instill fear in those who think that the poor have no protector. But to this place suits that of the Psalmist: "For the poor are left to you, you will be a helper to the orphan" (Psa. Heb. 10). And what is written in the book of the blessed Job: "For God will not hear in vain, and the Almighty will consider the causes of each one" (Job 35). You have feasted on the earth. Having neglected the heavenly joys to which you could have come through afflictions and fasts, you only love carnal feasts, which will be followed by such great hunger and thirst in the future, that not even a single drop of water can then be obtained from elsewhere to cool your burning tongue.

[James 5:5] -- And in luxury you have nourished your hearts. They nourish their hearts in luxury, who, according to that saying of Ecclesiastes, do not forbid their heart to enjoy every pleasure and to amuse itself with those things they have prepared. And this they take as their part, if they use their own works, having no care for the sustenance or amusement of the poor (Eccl. II). On the day of slaughter you have led and killed the just man, and he did not resist you. He calls the Lord Savior just, about whom the blessed first martyr Stephen also speaks to the same Jews: Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute, and killed those who announced the coming of the Just One? of whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers (Acts VII). Therefore it appears that the blessed James addresses those rich men from that place, where he says: Come now, you rich, weep and howl, who conspired for the death of the Lord, and yet have not accepted the faith

of his name by which they might be saved. Of whom he also speaks above to the believers: Do not the rich oppress you through repentance, and they themselves drag you into courts? Do they not blaspheme that good name that has been invoked upon you (James II)?

And because he writes to the twelve tribes that are in dispersion, he thus urges the faithful to do works of faith, so that he may also persuade those who had not yet believed to convert to the faith of the Lord along with the works of faith, reminding them that they had killed the Son of God, and moreover, as if they had done nothing evil, they gave themselves over to luxury and avarice, nor did they care to amend such a crime with repentance and alms. To whom it properly applies what he says: That avarice will consume their flesh like fire, and because they have treasured up wrath for themselves in the last days. For this became evident in them after the killing of James himself, when the city of Jerusalem, indeed the whole province of Judea, was besieged and cleared by the Romans, and for the rest of their crimes they had committed. Therefore be patient, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. After he had rebuked the proud and incredulous, he again turns to those who had been oppressed by the wickedness of such men, exhorting them to patience, and insinuating that the end of such pressures is near, whether by them being taken up to the Lord and receiving the fruit of their patience, or by their persecutors being deprived of the power to persecute. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, patiently enduring until he receives the early and the latter rain, etc.

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

[James 5:9] -- Behold, the Judge stands at the door. He will return to you the rewards of patience, and to your adversaries the punishment they deserve. He stands at the door, because either He is close to knowing everything you do, or He will come quickly to repay, to you and to your persecutors, what each one has deserved. Take as an example, brothers, the outcome of evil, and of longsuffering, and of labor, and of patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. See, he says, that the prophets who were so holy, so free from sins, so that the Spirit of

God spoke through them His mysteries to men, had an evil end by suffering death from the faithless, such as Zechariah, Uriah, and the Maccabee martyrs. And in the New Testament, John, Stephen, James the son of Zebedee, and many others. Nevertheless, they did not lament over such an end, but rather wished to bear it with long-suffering. Others endured long labors, but they bore these patiently and without grumbling, like Noah in the building of the ark for a hundred years, Moses in the redemption and leadership of the people for forty years, David in suffering exile without fault, Joseph in service taken deceitfully by his brothers. To both cases, however, he added a firm and immutable example saying: You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord.

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

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

[James 5:13] -- Is anyone among you in trouble? etc. He who previously forbade brothers to groan to each other under trials now demonstrates what should be done in contrast. If, he says, any of you is oppressed by sadness, whether an injury received from other men may accidentally occur, or by an incidental fault, or by a domestic loss overwhelming, or by any other reason you are caused grief, in no

way at that hour should you murmur amongst yourselves and convene to complain about God's judgments, but rather run to the church, pray to the Lord on bended knees, so that He may send the grace of His consolation, lest the sadness of the world, which works death, swallow you (II Cor. VII). Also, drive away the harmful plague of sadness from your heart by the sweetness of frequent Psalm-singing. [James 5:14] -- Is anyone among you sick? etc. Just as he gave counsel to the sorrowful, so he gives counsel to the sick, on how to guard themselves from the foolishness of murmuring, and he sets the manner of healing according to the manner of the wound, instructing the sorrowful that they should pray and sing Psalms for themselves, but commanding the sick either in body or in faith to remember to cure themselves with the aid of several, and especially elders, and not to refer the cause of their weakness to the younger and less learned, lest they might receive some harmful word or advice from them.

[James 5:14] -- And let them pray over him, anointing him, etc. We read that the apostles did this in the Gospel, and now the custom of the Church holds that the sick are anointed with consecrated oil by the presbyters, and are healed with accompanying prayer. Not only the presbyters, but as Pope Innocent writes, also all Christians are permitted to use the same oil to anoint in their own or their relatives' necessity, though this oil may only be consecrated by bishops. For what he says, With oil in the name of the Lord, signifies oil consecrated in the name of the Lord. Or certainly because when they anoint the sick, they should also invoke the name of the Lord over him. [James 5:15] -- And if he is in sins, they will be forgiven him. Many people, due to sins committed in the soul, are punished with sickness or even death of the body. Hence the apostle told the Corinthians, who were accustomed to receive the body of the Lord unworthily: Therefore many among you are weak and ill, and many sleep (1 Corinthians 11). If therefore the sick are in sins, and they have confessed these to the elders of the Church, and have endeavored with a perfect heart to abandon and correct them, they will be forgiven. For sins cannot be forgiven without the confession of amendment. Hence it is rightly added:

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

the long plague of famine, with only one prayer prayed, and restored to the lands the fruits and waters he had denied. For thus it follows:

[James 5:18] -- And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, etc. Therefore, he prayed once and before and after, and this one Elijah obtained such great and mighty things; how much more, then, is the frequent prayer of many righteous people worth? But lest our frailty should tremble, thinking that it cannot do similar things to such a great prophet, who deserved to be taken up to heaven in a fiery chariot, the blessed James, intending to speak about his prayer, thus began: Elijah was a man like us, subject to suffering. For he was a man, although second to none in virtue, like us in the origin of the flesh, subject to suffering as we are, both in the frailty of the mind and the flesh. For he showed that he was frail in the flesh by seeking sustenance from the widow at Zarephath. And because he was also subject to the suffering of the mind, he showed it when, after waters were returned to the earth and the prophets and priests of idols were slain, he fled through the deserts, terrified by the threats of a single woman. But how great it is to pray for the sick before the Lord, and to call them back to health as confessing their sins, he shows by adding:

[James 5:19] -- My brothers, if anyone among you strays from the truth, etc. For, as in the earlier sections of this Epistle, our tongue is restrained from wicked or idle speech, it is now shown what we should especially speak at the end. Therefore, we are commanded to pray and sing psalms to the Lord whenever we are struck by adversities. Likewise, we must confess our sins to one another and pray for each other, so that we may be saved, showing as much care as we can for the health of our neighbors, not only their temporal but rather their eternal health. For just as it is of great reward to save a body destined to die, how much more meritorious is it to save a soul destined to live forever in the heavenly homeland? It should be noted that some codices have: "He will save his own soul from death. And from the ambiguous Greek, it can also be rightly interpreted this way. Indeed, whoever corrects a stray person thereby secures for themselves greater joys of celestial life. He says, "He will save his own soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. He who converts a sinner from error hides his sins from the view of the inner Judge by the superposition of a better life; and he also covers his own failings, in whatever ways he has erred, from the sight of Him who sees all things by caring for his neighbor, according to the Psalmist:

"Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Psalm 31). And Blessed James, urging this, does not forget what he said earlier: "Do not become many teachers, my brothers" (James 3). For there, he removes the imperfect from the office of teaching, which they sought out of pride. Here, however, he instructs those who are well-prepared on what they ought to do for the salvation of their neighbors out of fraternal love. For what a teacher is said to

do here, elsewhere charity is remembered to do, according to Blessed Peter the apostle: "Because charity covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4). Nor should it be overlooked that this conversion of the erring is often accomplished not only by speaking but also frequently by acting well. For if anyone shows good examples of action to their neighbors, even without speaking, and converts them to works of alms, hospitality, or other virtues they had neglected, they indeed perform the office of a teacher and will receive a certain reward from the merciful Judge for the salvation of the brother they corrected.

On the First Epistle of Peter — Chapter 1

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

[1 Peter 1:1] -- The dispersion of Pontus, Galatia, etc. All these provinces are of the Greeks in Asia. But there is also another Bithynia in Europe, from which it is said those in Asia are descended. However, the Bithynia in Asia is also called the greater Phrygia, which is separated from Galatia by the river Hiera. [1 Peter 1:2] -- According to the foreknowledge of God the Father, etc. These verses are connected to what was previously stated, "To the elect exiles." For they were chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Hence the apostle also says: "Those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the im-

age of His Son." And elsewhere: "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." They were elected to this end, that by the gift of the Holy Spirit they might be sanctified, cleansed from all sins, to begin to obey the Lord Jesus Christ, who had perished due to the proto-parent's disobedience, that being sprinkled with His blood they might avoid the power of Satan, just as Israel avoided the dominion of the Egyptians through the lamb's blood. He speaks of sprinkling in the manner of the old Scripture, where those things which were to be sanctified were usually sprinkled with the blood of sacrifices. Otherwise, the Lord Himself speaks clearly about this: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6).

[1 Peter 1:2] -- May grace and peace be multiplied. So that what you have well begun, you may complete perfectly. He first names grace, then peace, because without the grace of Christ we cannot attain to the peace of reconciliation, indeed we cannot have anything peaceful except through His grace. [1 Peter 1:3] -- Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus he returns praises to God the Father, to show that our Savior Lord is both God and man. For when he says, "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he indeed calls Him the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, because he remembers that the Lord Christ was made man; but he calls Him the Father of our Lord, because he does not doubt that the same Lord of ours has always existed as the Son of God. [1 Peter 1:3] -- Who according to His great mercy has reborn us, etc. Rightly is God blessed by us, who, when we had been begotten by our merits unto death, through His mercy reborn us unto life. And this through the resurrection of His Son, when He so loved our life that He arranged for Him to die on its behalf; and by that same death destroyed through the resurrection, showed us the hope and example of rising again. For He died, so that we would not fear death. He rose from the dead, so that we might hope through Him to be resurrected.

[1 Peter 1:4] -- To an inheritance incorruptible, etc. Incorruptible, he says, because of the heavenly life, which is touched neither by age, nor disease, nor death, nor any sadness. Undefiled, because no impure person can enter into it. Unfading, because that heavenly life and conversation never come to seem worthless to the minds of the blessed, as the luxuries and delights of the present age often turn into disgust from prolonged custom and use. [1 Peter 1:4] -- Kept in heaven for you. Kept in you he says, instead of saying, kept for you, that is, kept now for this purpose, that it might be bestowed on you in heaven at the appointed time. Or certainly kept in heaven in you, because He who gave believers the power to become children of God (John 1), gave them the power to receive that inheritance in heaven, by persevering until the end to be saved. And therefore he says the inheritance is kept within those whom, with the Lord's help, he knows must arrive at it by their merits, because those who do not keep the discipline of the Father do not deserve to receive the inheritance from Him.

[1 Peter 1:5] -- You who are kept by the power of God through faith, etc. And the Lord said in the Gospel: In my Father's house are many mansions (John XIV). And again: It is not mine to give to you, but for whom it is prepared by my Father (Mark X). Therefore, seats are prepared in the kingdom of God, mansions prepared in the house of the Father, salvation prepared in heaven, only let him render himself worthy who desires to receive it. But since no one can make himself worthy solely by his own effort, nor can come to eternal salvation by his own strength, it is rightly prefaced: You who are kept by the power of God through faith. For no one can sustain themselves in good by their own free will's power, but help must be sought from Him through all things, that we may be perfected, from whom we have received the beginning of good action.

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

[1 Peter 1:7] -- That the proof of your faith may be much more precious than gold, etc. And the book of Wisdom compares the sufferings of the saints to gold that is tested by fire, saying of the Lord: As gold in the furnace he has tried them, and received them as a burnt offering (Wis. III). Indeed, those whom He has found faithful in the furnace of tribulation, these He will take up in the joy of reward as a pleasing sacrifice to Himself. And well is the patience of the saints likened to gold, for just as among metals there is nothing more precious than gold, so this is most worthy of praise before God. Hence it is written: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Psalm CXV). For as gold enclosed in the furnace is tested by fire, but when brought out it will show what brilliance it has, so the constancy of the faithful appears contemptible and foolish among the oppressions of the unfaithful; but when the time of retribution comes, after the contest of tribulations is ended, then it is shown how much glory and progress in the flames of passion their virtue has acquired. Hence it is aptly added:

[1 Peter 1:7] -- Found unto praise and glory, etc. The proof of faith is found unto praise when the Judge, praising it, will say: I was hungry and you gave me food, etc. (Matt. XXV). It is found unto glory when, glorifying it, He introduces it: Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Ibid.). It is found unto honor when, with the wicked cast into eternal punishment, the just will go into eternal life (Ibid.). Of this, He Himself says: If

anyone serves me, my Father will honor him (John XII). [1 Peter 1:8] -- Whom having not seen, you love, etc. And Paul says: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him (I Cor. II). [1 Peter 1:10] -- About which salvation the prophets inquired and searched, etc. They inquired and searched in secret from the Lord, or from angels, about the future grace of the Gospel, when or in what order eternal salvation would come to the world, which is found in their books. Therefore, one of them also deserved to be called "man of desires" by the angel for his great love of saving knowledge. But they prophesied by speaking openly to people and explaining what they knew in secret through internal contemplation.

[1 Peter 1:11] -- Inquiring into what or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating, etc. The evangelist indicated these glories when he said: "For the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified" (John VII). There are, however, two glorifications of the Lord, according to the form of the assumed man: one, by which He rose from the dead; and the other, by which He ascended into heaven before the eyes of His disciples. A third remains, also in the sight of men, when He will come in His majesty and that of the Father and the holy angels to render to each according to their works. [1 Peter 1:12] -- To whom it was revealed that not to themselves, etc. Among the many secrets revealed to the prophets, when they diligently searched and inquired about the future salvation, it was also revealed to them that the same salvation would not be in their days, but rather in yours, who are born in the last days of the world. He says this to warn them to take care of the proffered salvation, which the prophets and earlier just ones loved so much, desiring to live in the world at the time when, immediately after departing from the world, it would be permitted to ascend to the heavenly kingdoms.

[1 Peter 1:12] -- Through those who evangelized to you, etc. Previously he had said that the prophets foretold his sufferings and subsequent glories by the Spirit of Christ, and now he says the apostles declare the same to them by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Hence, it is clear that the same Spirit of Christ was in the prophets before, who later [was] in the apostles; therefore the same faith in the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories were preached by both to the people, [with] the former still expecting it to come, [and] the latter [declaring] it had already come; and by this, [it is evident] that there is one Church, of which one part preceded the Lord's advent in the flesh, [and] another part followed.

[1 Peter 1:12] -- Into whom angels long to look. It is indeed clear that so great the later glory of Jesus Christ, the man who suffered for us, followed, that even the angelic powers in heaven, though they are perfected in eternal happiness, not only rejoice to always look upon the eternal magnificence of the Deity, but also the glory of His assumed humanity. But it should be more diligently considered how

it is said that angels desire to look into Him, since longing is not usually spoken of concerning that which we have, but that which we wish to have, for no one longs for what he has. How then do they desire to look into Christ, whose face they never cease to behold, unless the contemplation of the divine presence so beatifies the citizens of the heavenly homeland, that in an ineffable order for us, they are both always satisfied with the vision of His glory, and always hunger insatiably for His sweetness as if it were new? For, as blessed Pope Gregory, wonderfully distinguishing the delights of the heart and of the body, says, bodily delights, when not possessed, kindle a grave desire in themselves, but when possessed and consumed, immediately turn the eater into disgust through satiety. On the contrary, spiritual delights, when not possessed, are in disgust; when possessed, are in desire; and they are hungered for more by the one who eats them more, as they are consumed more by the one who is hungry.

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

[1 Peter 1:13] -- Wherefore girding the loins of your mind, etc. Because it is promised to you, he says, that you shall see the revelation of Jesus Christ after this life, which angels now see, the greater the grace promised to you, the more diligently you ought to strive to be worthy to receive it. He girds the loins of his mind, who also restrains it from wandering thoughts. And rightly he says: Hope for the grace which is given to you in the revelation of Jesus Christ, because he who with girded loins of mind, that is, chaste in mind and body, awaits the Lord's coming, rightfully, when He is revealed, hopes. For he who does not know how to please the Lord, rightfully, in the hope of good things, fears lest they come sooner in the flesh. [1 Peter 1:14] -- As children of obedience, etc. Rightly he wishes them to be children of obedience, whom he had called elect in the preface to the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

[1 Peter 1:15] -- But as he who has called you is holy, etc. This is similar to that in the Gospel: Be ye therefore perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect (Matt. 5). [1 Peter 1:17] -- And if you call on the Father. Saying in prayer: Our Father, who art in heaven (Matt. 6). [1 Peter 1:17] -- Who without respect of persons judges,

etc. Not like an earthly father who is accustomed to pardon his erring children more indulgently than his servants. But the Father God is of such justice and piety, that He transforms even humble and obedient servants, indeed even enemies who give themselves to Him, into the adoption of children, and again, those who seem more honorable under the name of children, for the fault of disobedience, utterly excludes from perpetual inheritance. [1 Peter 1:17] -- Conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your sojourning. Lest through idleness and negligence you become unworthy of such a Father, and while you are secure in the present sojourn, you may not attain the promised happiness of the homeland.

[1 Peter 1:18] -- Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, with gold or silver, etc. The greater the price by which you were redeemed from the corruption of carnal life, the more you ought to fear, lest perhaps by returning to the corruption of vices you offend the spirit of your Redeemer. [1 Peter 1:23] -- Born not of corruptible seed, etc. Such is in the Gospel of John: To those who believed in his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1). Therefore, just as the price of the Lord's passion by which we have been redeemed is incorruptible, so also is the sacrament of the holy font by which we are reborn. These are so interconnected with each other that neither can confer salvation upon us without the other. For indeed, the Lord in the time of His Incarnation redeemed us all together with His holy blood, so that also in our time, individually through the regeneration of baptism, we ought to reach the fellowship of the same regeneration. Of this regeneration, it is well said that it is not of corruptible seed, but through the word of the living and eternal God, so that it is understood hence that just as from corruptible seed is born flesh which is corrupted, so through water consecrated by the word of God, a life that does not know faith is granted to us. This indeed is aptly supported by prophetic testimony, adding:

[1 Peter 1:24] -- Because all flesh is like grass, etc. Therefore, just as perishable flesh generates perishable flesh, so the word of the Lord, which remains forever, gives eternal life in both flesh and soul to those whom it regenerates from water. Saint Cyprian, in his book on the Dress of Virgins, thus recalls this testimony: "Isaiah's God, he says, proclaims: All flesh is grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever." It is not fitting for any Christian, and especially not for a virgin, to consider any fleshly glory and honor, but to seek only the word of God and embrace what is good and will endure forever. Or if there is to be any glorying in the flesh, it is clearly when one suffers in the confession of the name, when a woman is found stronger than torturing men: when she endures fires, or crosses, or iron, or beasts, so that she may be crowned. Those are the precious adornments of the flesh, those are the better ornaments of the body. However, let it not trouble the reader that in this sentence of the prophet, he used "claritas" while our translation says "gloria,"

for both are commonly translated from the one Greek word, which is δόξα (doxa), into Latin.

Chapter 2

[1 Peter 2:1] -- Therefore, laying aside all malice and all deceit, etc. Because you have been recently reborn, he says, and made children of God through baptism, now be such by striving for a good way of life, just as newborn infants of an innocent age by nature, ignorant, namely, of malice and deceit, not knowing to pretend, envy, slander, or be committed to other such vices in any way. Just as they naturally desire their mother's milk, that they may grow to salvation and be able to come to eat bread, so also you should seek the simple rudiments of faith first from the breasts of the mother Church, that is, from the teachers of both Testaments, who either wrote divine words or even preach them to you in a living voice, so that by learning well you may come to the nourishment of the living Bread that came down from heaven, that is, through the sacraments of the Lord's incarnation, by which you have been reborn and by which you are nourished, you may come to the contemplation of the divine majesty.

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

[1 Peter 2:4] -- To whom coming, a living stone, etc. And he takes this testimony about the stone from the psalm, where it is written: The stone which the builders rejected, this became the head of the corner (Psalm 117). Lest anyone should think in the Jewish sense that it was sung by the prophet about a material stone, which in the construction of any earthly house would be set against human disposition by divine judgment, he thoughtfully added living: To whom coming, he says, a living

stone, to signify that it was said about Christ. He was rightly called a stone, who coming in the flesh, deigned to insert himself for the edification of the holy Church, by which this might be confirmed. However, living, who could say: I am the way, the truth, and the life (John 14). Who was rejected by men, when they said: We have no king but Caesar (John 19). But chosen by God, when he himself said: But I am appointed king by him (Psalm 2), and so forth. And honored, when after the death on the cross, God exalted him and gave him a name which is above every name (Philippians 2), and so forth.

[1 Peter 2:5] -- And you, as living stones, etc. He says they are being built upon because without our Lord Jesus Christ, specifically the living stone, no spiritual edifice can stand. For no one can lay another foundation except for Him (1 Cor. 3), by whose participation the faithful are made living stones, who through disbelief had been dead stones, meaning hard and insensible, to whom it is rightly said: I will take the stone heart from you and give you a heart of flesh (Ezek. 36). But as living stones, they are fit for the spiritual edifice, who, through the discretion of a learned teacher with superfluous actions and thoughts cut away, are squared like with the blow of an axe. And as the layers of stones in a wall are carried by one another, so too are the faithful each borne by the preceding just ones in the Church, and they themselves bear the following just ones through doctrine and tolerance until the last just one. He who, being borne by the previous ones, will not have one whom he should bear himself among the following. But He who carries the whole edifice and is not carried by anyone, is the Lord Christ, whence He is also called a precious stone founded on the foundation by the prophet. Likewise, He calls the chosen living stones, to insinuate the effort of their good intention or action, by which, with the grace of God preventing and accompanying, they must always be exercised.

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

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

[1 Peter 2:5] -- Holy priesthood. By this most clearly, he exhorts us to be built up as a holy priesthood, being ourselves upon the foundation of Christ. Therefore, he calls the entire Church a holy priesthood, which only the house of Aaron had the name and office of under the law. For indeed, since we are all members of the high priest, we are all anointed with the oil of gladness, and what he added applies to all: [1 Peter 2:5] -- To offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. He calls our works, alms, and prayers spiritual sacrifices, distinguishing them from the carnal sacrifices of the law. However, what he says in conclusion, through Jesus Christ, pertains to all that he stated previously, because through his grace we are built up in him by wise architects, that is, ministers of the New Testament, and we are made spiritual houses by his Spirit, protected against the rains, winds, and lightning of temptations. And to participate in the holy priesthood and to do something good and acceptable to God, we can only do so through him. For as the branches cannot bear fruit by themselves, unless they remain in the vine; so neither can you (he says) unless you remain in me.

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

not be ashamed (Ibid.). Similar to what John says: And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming (1 John 2).

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

[1 Peter 2:8] -- And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. Hence Paul also says: But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness (1 Cor. 1). [1 Peter 2:8] -- To those who stumble at the word, etc., They stumble at the word itself because it happens that they hear the word of God. They stumble in thought when they refuse to believe what they hear. Highlighting their foolishness, he added: And they do not believe in what they were destined for. Because they were destined for this, that is, by nature men are made to believe in God and to obey his will. Solomon testifies to this when he says: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man (Eccles. 12). That is, every man is by nature made for this, to fear God and obey his commandments. Some manuscripts have: In which they were placed, which is understood according to what Paul says about God: For in him we live and move and have our being (Acts 17).

[1 Peter 2:9] -- But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, etc. This testimony of praise was once given to the ancient people of God through Moses, which the apostle Peter now rightly gives to the Gentiles because they have believed in Christ, who as the cornerstone has united the Gentiles in that salvation which Israel had in him. He calls them a chosen race because of their faith, to distinguish them from those who, by rejecting the living stone, have themselves become reprobates. And a royal priesthood, because they are united to His body, who is the supreme king and true priest, granting His kingdom to His followers as a king, and as a pontiff cleansing their sins by the sacrifice of His own blood. He names them a royal priesthood, so that they may remember both to hope for an eternal kingdom and to always offer sacrifices of spotless conduct to God. They are also called a holy nation and a people for his possession, in accordance with what the apostle

Paul, expounding the sentiment of the prophet, says: But my just one shall live by faith; and if he draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him; but we are not of those who draw back unto perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul (Hebrews 10). And in the Acts of the Apostles: The Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood (Acts 20). Therefore, we have been made a people for his possession by the blood of our Redeemer, which was formerly the people of Israel redeemed by the blood of the lamb from Egypt. Hence also, in the following verse, reminding mystically of the old history, he teaches the new people of God to fulfill it spiritually, saying:

[1 Peter 2:9] -- That you may declare His virtues, etc. For just as those who were freed from Egyptian bondage through Moses sang a triumphal song to the Lord after the crossing of the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh's army, so it is also proper for us, after receiving in baptism the remission of sins, to repay worthy thanks for heavenly benefits. For the Egyptians, who afflicted the people of God, and who are also interpreted as darkness or tribulations, aptly signify our sins, which are erased in baptism. The liberation of the children of Israel and their leading to the promised homeland aligns with the mystery of our redemption, through which we strive towards the light of the heavenly dwelling place, illuminated and guided by the grace of Christ. The light of this grace was also shown by the pillar of cloud and fire, which protected them from the darkness of the nights throughout their entire journey and led them on an indescribable path to the promised homeland's seats.

[1 Peter 2:10] -- Who were once not a people of God, but now are a people of God, etc. He explicitly indicates through these verses that he wrote this Epistle to those who had come to faith from among the Gentiles, who were once alienated from the conversation of the people of God, but now by the grace of faith are united to His people, and have obtained the mercy which they did not know to hope for (Ephes. II). He takes them from the prophet Hosea, who, foretelling the vocation of the Gentiles, says: "I will call those who were not My people, My people, and her who had not received mercy, one who has received mercy. And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they will be called children of the living God" (Hosea I, II).

[1 Peter 2:11] -- Dearest ones, I beseech you as sojourners and travelers, etc. Thus far, blessed Peter has generally instructed the Church, explaining both the benefits by which divine mercy has called us to salvation and the gifts by which, at times the Jews, but now also us, have been deemed worthy of honor. Hence, he earnestly exhorts the diverse persons of the faithful, lest by living carnally, they render themselves unworthy of such great grace of the Holy Spirit. Lest those who are distinguished by the royal and priestly title, subjugated by the malice of vices, degenerate from the glory of the nobility once promised to them. Therefore,

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

[1 Peter 2:12] -- So that in what they detract from you, etc. It frequently happened that the pagans who disparaged the faith of the Christians, because they had abandoned their gods, later, considering their chaste conduct and unbeaten heart in Christ, would stop maligning them, and rather begin to glorify and praise God, who was proven to be good and just by the goodness and justice of His worshippers. He says, "Let them glorify God on the day of visitation," that is, in the time of retribution, let the unbelievers now already recognize how great a glory through God is to be given to you, when they see that you constantly follow Him amid opposing dangers. [1 Peter 2:13] -- Be subject therefore to every human creature for God's sake. He says, to every human creature, to all human dignity, to every person, to every authority, to which divine disposition wished us to be subjected. For this is what he says: For God's sake, because there is no power but from God. And he who resists authority, resists the ordinance of God (Rom. XIII). Which creature he subsequently explains, adding:

[1 Peter 2:13] -- Whether to the king as excelling, etc. Therefore, he speaks only of the king and leaders, but not of masters, because in this place he particularly instructs, as we have said before, those who are masters of slaves. Subsequently, he also admonishes servants how they should serve their masters. He thus teaches the faithful servants of the eternal King also to be subjected to worldly powers, lest even in this the faith and religion of Christ be disparaged, that through it the rights of the human condition should be disturbed. For it can also rightly be understood what is said, to every human creature, to signify both faithful and unbelieving masters of things. [1 Peter 2:14] -- For the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of those who do good. Not that all kings or leaders indeed know how either to punish evildoers or to praise those who do good, but he narrates simply what the action

of a good judge ought to be, that is, to restrain evildoers and reward those who act well. And even if a judge acts unjustly by condemning the good, nonetheless it pertains to the praise of those who endure his wickedness patiently, and resist his foolishness patiently. "Do you want," he says, "not to fear the power? Do good, and you will have praise from it" (Ibid.). He does not say "from that," but "from it," because even if human power does not praise, indeed if it even persecutes, if it kills with the sword like Paul, if it crucifies like Peter, you will have praise from it, since from the fact that it wrongs you, just and innocent, the patience of your virtue earns a crown of praise. For the following words teach that blessed Peter aimed at this sentiment, where it is said:

[1 Peter 2:15] -- "Because this is the will of God, that by doing good, etc." This is therefore the praise of the good, to which he says leaders sent by the king, while using the ignorance of unwise leaders, the good act well to their own perpetual praise.

[1 Peter 2:16] -- As free people, and not as those who have freedom as a veil for malice. Truly free people do good, who, the greater the freedom they enjoy among men, the more strictly, or rather more freely, they are subjected to divine servitude. But those also act as truly free who, in the example of the patriarch Joseph, although they are oppressed by human servitude, are compelled by no art to be slaves of vices. But indeed, they turn their freedom into a veil for malice, who, the less they are restrained by the yoke of human servitude, are the more widely enslaved by the dominion of sins; and when they serve their vices with impunity, they call it freedom, covering their guilt with this name. However, it can be understood generally according to that statement of the Apostle Paul: "You were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh" (Gal. V). For we are rightly called free, who through baptism are freed from the bonds of sins; who, redeemed from demonic servitude, because made sons of God, have not received a greater faculty or license of sinning by such a gift of freedom; rather, if we sin, we immediately, having lost freedom, become slaves of sin. And whoever thinks that he is freed by the Lord for this reason, that he may sin more licentiously, such a person changes his freedom into a veil for malice. But blessed Peter wishes us to be free from the servitude of faults, so that we may be able to remain good and faithful servants of our Creator; whence he subsequently adds:

[1 Peter 2:16] -- But as servants of God. Honor everyone, etc. Therefore, he urges to give due honor to all, and, according to the command of the Lord, to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's (Luke XX). And it is commendable that he commands the free also to love the brethren, so that they likewise remember that those who are subject to them by temporal condition have been made their brothers in Christ, invoking the Father together with them who judges without partiality. [1 Peter 2:18] -- Servants, be subject to your masters

with all fear, not only to the good and gentle but also to the crooked, etc. He calls the crooked undisciplined, using a term derived from Greek speech. For in Greek, schola is called the place where young men usually devote themselves to literary studies and to listening to teachers; thus, schola is interpreted as leisure. Finally, in the psalm where we sing, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46), for that which we say "be still," the Greek has σχολάζετε. The learned in Greek are called scholars, and the unlearned and rustic are called uncultured. But he wishes the subjects to obey both, explaining more clearly how he commanded us to be subject to every human creature. Another translation has "difficult" for "crooked." And the holy bishop Fulgentius in his treatises puts it this way: "Serving with fear not only the good and gentle but also the harsher."

[1 Peter 2:20] -- But if you suffer for doing good, etc. Note carefully how greatly he glorifies the condition of servants, whom he declares to be imitators of the Lord's passion by doing good and, without fault, receiving punishment from cruel and wicked masters. Indeed, you hear that he suffered for us, and rejoice that he died for you; consider what follows: [1 Peter 2:21] -- Leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps. An example of tribulations, not of delights, of insults, scourges, pains, reproaches, thorns, the cross, wounds, death. In the psalm it is written: "Because of the words of your lips I have kept hard ways" (Psalm 17). Because of which words of God's lips, if not those by which he promises eternal life? [1 Peter 2:24] -- He himself bore our sins, etc. Whereas previously he spoke specifically to servants, now he admonishes in general that even masters be reminded of what God and the Lord endured for them. Indeed, he instructs the whole Church on what the Maker endured for its liberation. For he did not say "your sins," but also added himself: "He bore our sins in his body on the tree."

[1 Peter 2:25] -- For you were like sheep gone astray. How is it that he calls both sheep and gone astray, when those who lead a life in error are rather called by the name of goats than sheep, unless because the Lord knows who are his, who also endures many living wrongly for a long time, who he nevertheless foresees to be saved in the number of his sheep?

[1 Peter 2:25] -- But now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. He touches on the evangelical parable, where the pious Shepherd, having left ninety-nine sheep in the desert, came to visit the one that had gone astray. For what was said there, that having found it, he placed it on his shoulders rejoicing, this here the blessed Peter has stated beforehand, saying: Because he himself bore our sins in his body on the wood. Because indeed he wished to redeem us in such a way that the wood on which he would take away our sins, he had to hang upon, bearing it on his shoulders. Therefore, he says, to the shepherd and overseer of your souls. Shepherd, namely, because he grants us the pastures of eternal life, he provides pastures of temporal grace in the present. Truly, overseer of your souls,

because the Orient from on high has visited us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death (Luke 1). He visits daily the very light in us that he has granted, so that it does not fail by preserving, but rather grows by aiding. Certain Manuscripts have the very Greek: To the shepherd and bishop of your souls. However, bishop in Latin is said to mean "superintendent." Because indeed the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are towards their prayers, so that out of all their tribulations he may deliver them. (Psalm 34).

Chapter 3

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

[1 Peter 3:4] -- But let it be the hidden person of the heart, in the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit, etc. He preaches chastity and the adornment of the inner man in the incorruption of a quiet and meek spirit, saying almost: Since your outer person is corrupted, and you have ceased to have the blessedness of integrity, which is especially proper to virgins, imitate the incorruption of the spirit through strict abstinence, and what you cannot do with your body, perform with your mind. For Christ seeks these riches, and this adornment of your union. It is also remarkable and found this judgment dictated by the law of natural science, according to Pythagoras, that the true adornments of matrons are chastity, not garments. [1 Peter 3:7] -- Husbands, likewise dwelling with them according to knowledge, etc. Likewise, he says, provoking men to imitation because he had already commanded wives above, saying: Let husbands consider your chaste conduct in the fear of God. But according to knowledge, that they may know what God desires, and give honor to the feminine vessel. If we abstain from intercourse, we give honor. If we do not abstain, it is clear that intercourse is contrary to honor."

[1 Peter 3:7] -- That your prayers may not be hindered. And Paul says: Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer (1 Corinthians 7). Therefore, he reminds us that prayers are hindered by the marital duty, for whenever I render the due to my wife,

I cannot pray. But if, according to another saying of the apostle, it is necessary to pray without ceasing, then I should never be devoted to marriage, lest I be hindered at any hour from the prayer I am always commanded to continue. [1 Peter 3:8] -- But all of you in faith be of one mind, sympathetic. As above he taught with appropriate discretion the various persons, conditions, and sexes, now he admonishes all in common in the cause of the Lord's faith, to have one heart and one soul.

[1 Peter 3:9] -- Because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing. Namely, with the Judge saying: Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom (Matthew 25). The blessing of inheritance can also be understood as that by which the Church is perpetually blessed in future life. Hence, now rejoicing in the hope of future things, it says: I will exalt you, my God the King, and I will bless your name forever and ever (Psalm 144). Therefore, what anyone wishes to find in the future, he should strive to meditate on and perform in the present, and bless both his Creator and neighbor with sincere voice, making himself worthy of both divine and fraternal blessing. [1 Peter 3:12] -- Because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, etc. Since blessed Peter forbade us to return evil for evil, rather ordered us to bless those who curse, he strengthens with prophetic testimony that both good and bad are always seen by the heavenly inspection, so that we may remember that both our patience by which we tolerate the wicked and our benevolence by which we wish good for our persecutors will be rewarded with an eternal reward, and that our persecutors, if they do not repent, shall rightly be punished, but if they do repent, we too will receive a crown of righteous rejoicing for their salvation which we implored from the Lord.

[1 Peter 3:13] -- And who is there to harm you, etc. He speaks of those things that happen to us from adversaries through insulting words, through the loss of temporal goods, through bodily tortures. For all these and similar things, when inflicted upon the faithful, can in no way harm those who are zealous for good, especially according to knowledge, but rather bring the reward of patience to those who endure equanimously. On the contrary, they greatly harm those who inflict punishment by accumulating eternal punishment for themselves. But if anyone succumbs to such adversities and falls, it is not the one who inflicted the evil that harmed him, but he himself, who refused to bear it patiently. For the house which the wise man built did not fall because it did not endure the violence of tempests, but because it was founded upon a rock. And again, the house which the foolish man built foolishly did not fall because it was struck by tempests, but because it was placed upon sand. For both were equally tested by adversity striking them, but the firmness of the foundation gave the crown of perseverance to one, while the foolishness of the fragile structure overthrew the other. For no mishap, whether brought by the devil, by a wicked human, or by the general turmoil of passing things, can harm the perfect emulator of good. However, it is clear that many

zealous for good have been harmed by others when they are ill-instructed in the knowledge of the truth which they love. For how many desiring to believe rightly in God and to live correctly in the Church have been unknowingly led astray by the madness of Arius, by the malice of Sabellius, or other heretics? Read the book of John Chrysostom, which he wrote about this: No one can be harmed by another unless by himself.

[1 Peter 3:14] -- But even if you suffer anything for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. He says, not only does the one who inflicts evil upon those doing good not harm you at all, but also when the enemy persecutes you for the good deeds which he abhors, he provides you with a greater cause of blessedness as he exercises the strength of your patience, according to that saying of the gospel: Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake. [1 Peter 3:15] -- Sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts. What does it mean to sanctify the Lord in our hearts, if not to contemplate His holiness, which is of incomprehensible glory, with the innermost affection of the heart? How much strength He is able to give to those hoping in Him to overcome, whose inestimable holiness shines forth. [1 Peter 3:15] -- Always be prepared to provide an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. We must be prepared to give an account of our hope and faith to those who ask in two ways, so that we may reveal the just reasons for our hope and faith to everyone, whether they inquire faithfully or unfaithfully, and so that we always hold firm the very profession of our faith and hope, even amidst the pressures of adversaries, showing by patience how reasonably we have learned to maintain it, for the love of which we neither fear to suffer adversities nor to undergo death.

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

[1 Peter 3:17] -- For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. This statement elegantly refutes the foolishness of those who, when they are accused by their brothers for faults or even restrained by punishments, endure it completely patiently; but when they suffer insults, losses of property, or any adversities from others without fault, they immediately burst into anger, and those who previously seemed innocent, through impatience and murmuring,

render themselves guilty. So that the difference in the scourging appears vastly different in unequal merits, let us see that Tobias, Saul, and Elymas were struck by the same affliction of blindness. But Tobias was struck in order that the virtue of his patience might shine more widely as an example to all; Saul so that he might be transformed from Saul the persecutor into Paul the apostle; and Elymas so that, suffering the fitting punishment for his treachery, he would cease to lead astray those who were about to believe. And if I were given a choice, I would rather, with such a Father, be subjected to just scourging, divine or human, than be dragged to the pursuit of justice by the force of unjust blows. Again, I would rather be pulled back from faults by a scourge than be subjected to eternal punishment for the insurmountable weight of sins.

[1 Peter 3:18] -- Because Christ also once died for our sins, etc. Therefore, the righteous one who suffers imitates Christ; the one corrected by scourging imitates the thief who recognized Christ on the cross and entered paradise with Christ from the cross; the one who does not desist from faults even amid scourging imitates the left-hand thief, who ascended the cross for his sins and after the cross fell into Tartarus. But he recalls that Christ died once, so that it might also remind us that an eternal reward is given for our temporary sufferings.

[1 Peter 3:18] -- That He might present us to God, indeed mortified in the flesh, etc. Concerning this mortification of the flesh and vivification of the spirit, which those who labor for the Lord through patience possess, the apostle Paul also speaks: Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day (II Cor. IV). Therefore Christ offers us to God the Father when we joyfully sacrifice ourselves for Him through the mortification of the flesh, that is, He presents our praiseworthy life in the sight of the Father. Or certainly, He offers us to God when He introduces us, freed from the flesh, into the eternal kingdom. Indeed, as it is said: Made alive by the Spirit: Saint Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, does not refer this to the human spirit, which is better vivified when the flesh is mortified, as the prophet says about the Lord: To revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite (Isaiah LVII), but rather refers it to the grace of the Holy Spirit, who gives eternal life to those mortifying their flesh. For he also uses this testimony against the Arians, who contradict the equality of the Holy Trinity, affirming that by the indivisible unity of divine operation, the Father gives life, the Son gives life, and the Holy Spirit gives life. The Father and the Son, as it is written: For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom He will. The Holy Spirit, indeed, as it is declared by this testimony, which is said of the Son, that He might present us to God, indeed mortified in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit; and therefore, where the operation is one, the substance or essence cannot be different.

[1 Peter 3:19] -- In which he also preached to those who were confined in the flesh, etc. He who, coming in the flesh in our times, proclaimed the way of life to the world, also came in spirit before the flood to those who were then unbelieving and living carnally, and preached to them. For he was in Noah and the other saints of that time through the Holy Spirit, and through their good conduct preached to the wicked people of that age, so that they might turn to better ways. For he calls those confined in the flesh, those heavily burdened by carnal desires. Hence, Scripture says of them: "For all flesh had corrupted its way" (Gen. VI). And what he says, "in which," refers to what he had stated previously, that he might present us to God. For even then if anyone had wished to believe in the preaching of the Lord, which he manifested through the life of the faithful, he rejoiced to present even them to God the Father. However, those who disparaged the good as if they were evildoers were confounded by the coming flood. His saying, "in which," can be understood in both ways: in those confined in the flesh, he coming in spirit preached, so that through the same preaching, it might result in a crown of praise for the believers and confusion for those who persisted in unbelief. Some manuscripts read: "In which also he who was in prison, preached coming in spirit.

This refers to the same intent of wicked and unbelieving people, who, since they had their minds darkened by darkness, are rightfully said to be confined in prison even in this life. In this prison, indeed, they are burdened by inner darkness, that is, blindness of mind and unjust works, until, being released from the flesh, they are cast into the outer darkness and the prison of eternal damnation. Of which the Lord says in the Gospel: "And the judge will hand you over to the officer, and you will be thrown into prison" (Matt. V). Although even the saints, in this life, when they long for the joy of the heavenly homeland, rightly proclaim themselves to be in prison, as the Psalmist says: "Bring my soul out of prison, to give thanks to your name" (Psalm CXLII). There is a great difference between the two prisons, for the reprobates are in the prison of sins and ignorance, but the righteous, although placed in the prison of tribulations, with hearts always expanded in the light of righteousness towards God, rejoice. This was exemplified by the apostles Paul and Silas, who, at midnight, in the terror of the deepest prison, bound and beaten, sang a hymn of praise to God with a most joyful voice. Some have interpreted this passage to mean that the consolation of which the Lord speaks to the apostles: "Many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it" (Matt.

XIII); and of which the Psalmist says: "My eyes fail, longing for your word, saying, 'When will you comfort me?'" (Psalm CXIX), that the saints resting in the underworld desired this, and that when the Lord descended to the underworld, this consolation or exhortation was preached even to those who had been in prison and unbelieving in the days of Noah. And that is what he said, but the Catholic faith holds that the Lord, descending to the underworld, only led out his faithful ones,

bringing them to the heavenly kingdoms with him, not liberating those souls imprisoned due to their crimes, but daily demonstrating the life of life either through himself or through the examples or words of his faithful in this life. About whom it is well said:

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

[1 Peter 3:21] -- Not the removal of the filth of the flesh, etc. For where is a good conscience, except where there is also unfeigned faith? For the apostle Paul teaches that the goal of the commandment is love from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and unfeigned faith (1 Tim. 1). Therefore, the water of the flood did not save those placed outside the ark, but killed them; without a doubt, it prefigured that every heretic, even if having the sacrament of baptism, is not uplifted by the waters but plunged into hell by them, whereas the ark is elevated to heaven. The number eight of the souls who were saved through water also signifies that the holy Church received the washing of baptism as a sacrament of the Lord's resurrection, so that just as He rose from the dead by the glory of the Father, so too we, cleansed from sins through the water of regeneration, might walk in newness of life (Rom. 6). For on the eighth day, that is, after the seventh of the Sabbath, the Lord, rising from the dead, showed us an example of future resurrection and the mystery of a new way of life, by which, placed on earth, we would lead a heavenly life. Peter also added this by explaining, saying:

[1 Peter 3:21] -- Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, etc. For just as He, rising from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, so

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

[1 Peter 3:22] -- Having gone up to heaven, etc. There is no doubt that all angels and all powers and authorities of the heavenly homeland have always been subject to the Son of God, whom they praise, tremble before, and adore as one God with the Father and the Holy Spirit without beginning. But blessed Peter necessarily considered it appropriate to note that the assumed humanity is so gloriously exalted by the resurrection that it is preferred by an incomparable summit to the dignity of all angelic power. According to which the Psalmist also said about Him to the Father: You have made Him a little lower than the angels (Psalm 8); immediately adding: You have crowned Him with glory and honor, and have set Him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under His feet (Ibid.).

Chapter 4

[1 Peter 4:1] -- Therefore, Christ having suffered in the flesh, etc. After he had based the example of the Lord's resurrection and our cleansing which occurs in baptism on the sacrament of the ark and the flood, he returns to what he had begun to say, that, by imitating the work of our Redeemer, we should, in the midst of the good deeds we do, patiently endure the malice of wicked men. It should be noted, however, that he speaks distinctly when he says: Therefore, Christ having suffered in the flesh. For as blessed Ambrose says: "His flesh suffered, but Divinity, free from death, allowed the body to suffer by law of human nature." Or can Divinity indeed die, when the soul cannot? He says, do not fear those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul (Matt. X). If therefore the soul cannot be killed, how can Divinity be killed?

[1 Peter 4:1] -- Because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sins, etc. Whoever among the saints has subjected his body to martyrdom under the violence of persecutors, there is no doubt that, as much as possible given human nature, he has abstained from sins until the end of his life. For what could he think about perpetrating sin, what about carnal desires, what but the will of God could he entertain in his mind, who, whether affixed to a cross, surrounded by blows of stones,

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

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

[1 Peter 4:7] -- The end of all things is near. Let no one soothe themselves with the delay of the future judgment, in which he said that the living and the dead were to be judged; he prudently warns, for although the coming of the final judgment is uncertain, it is certain to all that in this mortal life they cannot long endure. [1 Peter 4:7] -- Be therefore prudent, etc. And the Lord in the Gospel has commanded us to always pray and watch, in view of the uncertain end. For he says, speaking of the day of judgment: Watch therefore, praying continually, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand

before the Son of Man (Luke XXI). But we are rightly ordered to watch in prayers, so that when we stand for prayer, all carnal and secular thought may depart, nor should the mind then think of anything except what it is praying for. For often the enemy sneaks in and subtly deceiving, distracts our prayers so that we both have one thing in our heart and utter another with our voice, whereas with sincere intention, it is not the sound of the voice but the sense of the soul that ought to pray to God.

[1 Peter 4:8] -- Above all, have fervent charity among yourselves. He rightly added "fervent," because we can always love, but we cannot always be vigilant in prayers due to the frailty of the flesh; we might not always be able to engage in the virtues he subsequently mentions, that is, hospitality, teaching, the administration of graces, whether common or special to our neighbors, and other such things. For indeed, these must necessarily be done both through bodily effort and at appropriate times. However, the charity itself, under whose influence these external actions are performed, can always be present within the inner person, even though it cannot always be publicly displayed. [1 Peter 4:8] -- Because charity covers a multitude of sins. Especially when it is truthfully said to God: "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matth. VI). And indeed, it is certain that all the good works we do atone for and cover the faults we have committed, but this is particularly said of charity, through which we forgive our neighbors what they owe us, because it is most just with God that according to the measure of mercy we have used, it will be measured to us. As, on the contrary, the wise man severely rebukes the merciless, saying: "A man preserves anger against man, and seeks healing from God?" (Eccli. XXVIII). And there is no doubt that in the case of one who, through charity, does everything he can for the correction of his neighbor, admonishing, rebuking, chastising, charity itself covers a multitude of sins, as James attests, saying: "He who converts a sinner from the error of his way shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (James V).

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

[1 Peter 4:11] -- That in all things God may be honored through Jesus Christ, etc. According to the command of Jesus Christ Himself, who said: "Let your good works be seen, and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew V). Thus, God is honored in our actions when whatever good things we do according to His will, we attribute not to our own merits but to His grace; yet, on the contrary, we attribute the evil things we do only to our own wickedness or ignorance. [1 Peter 4:12] -- Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal, etc. Some manuscripts read: Do not be strangers to the fiery ordeal. The meaning of both expressions is apparent, because a faithful person should neither be surprised at why he suffers tribulations in this life, as it is for the reason that he is now tried with tribulations so that, when proven, he may be deemed worthy to receive the crown of future life; nor should anyone consider himself to be a stranger and alien from the members of Christ because he is struck by the adversities of the present age, since the death exit of the Lord (Psalm LXVII), and never in His Church, from the first martyr Abel to the last elect who will be born at the end of the age, has the persecution by unbelievers ceased. Therefore, well did he say, Do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal, he added:

[1 Peter 4:12] -- As though something new were happening to you. For it is very ancient and common for the chosen of God to endure adversities in this present life for eternal salvation. [1 Peter 4:15] -- But let none of you suffer as a murderer, etc. For he suffers as a blasphemer who, at the time of his suffering, is carried away into the injury of his persecutor. [1 Peter 4:17] -- For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God. There are two judgments of God indicated by Scripture: one hidden, the other manifest. The hidden judgment is the punishment by which each human being is now either exercised for purification or admonished for conversion, or, if he has scorned the call and discipline of God, blinded for condemnation. The manifest judgment is when the Lord is to come to judge the living and the dead. Now it is said to be the time in which judgment begins from the house of the Lord, that is, from the Church, which is being prepared for future joys through the exercise of present afflictions. For the reprobate now lead a transient life so much more securely and without any scourge of retribution, as there remains nothing else for them in the future but retribution, according to that saying of the blessed Job: They spend their days in prosperity, and in a moment they go down to the grave.

[1 Peter 4:17] -- If it begins with us first, what will be the end of those, etc.? From this it is inferred how sternly the Judge will strike those whom he rejects, if he thus torments here those whom he loves. For if the children are scourged, what can the wicked servants expect? [1 Peter 4:18] -- And if the righteous man is scarcely saved, etc. The Pelagians do not want to believe that in one man the entire mass of the human race is corrupted and utterly damned. From this vice and condemnation of one man alone, the grace of Christ heals and liberates. For why should the

righteous man be scarcely saved? Is it a labor for God to free the righteous man? By no means. But in order to show that it was deservedly condemned by nature, the Almighty Himself does not wish to easily liberate from such a great evil. Because of this, both sins are easily fallen into and justice is laborious, except for those who love. But the charity that makes those who love comes from God. It is to be noted, however, that Blessed Peter took this sentence from the Proverbs of Solomon according to the ancient Editio, for which in our version that descends from the Hebrew truth, it is written: If the righteous man receives on earth, how much more the impious and the sinner (Proverbs XI)? Which is to say openly: If the fragility of mortal life is so great that not even the righteous who are to be crowned in Heaven pass through it without tribulation because of the innumerable errors of corrupted nature, how much more those who are deprived of heavenly grace expect the certain outcome of their perpetual damnation?

Chapter 5

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

[1 Peter 5:2] -- Providing not forcefully but willingly, etc. One who feeds the flock of God and provides out of necessity for material things, having nothing to live on, therefore preaches the Gospel so that he may live from the Gospel. But willingly and according to God is one who, looking not for any earthly reward, but only for the heavenly reward, preaches the word of God. The Apostle Paul distinguishes between the two: "For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship." Stewardship is said to be entrusted to someone who is commanded to take care of an external matter for a time. For instance, one who is commanded to distribute his master's wheat to his fellow servants in due time is similar to one who does not willingly, but reluctantly, evangelizes. [1 Peter 5:2] -- Neither for shameful profit, but willingly. He provides for the flock of God for shameful profit, who preaches for gain and earthly benefits, while all works of religion ought to be done willingly. According to the example of the construction of the tabernacle, which prefigured the present construction of the Church, where all the multitude of the children of Israel offered the first-fruits

to the Lord with prompt and devoted minds for the construction of the tabernacle, giving all things freely, and the craftsmen offered themselves willingly to do the work.

[1 Peter 5:3] -- Nor as being lords over those assigned to your care, etc. So that the humility, which you desire your subjects to have towards you and among themselves, you may first show by your own actions and keep in your own mind intact, according to the word of the Lord: "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant; and whoever wants to be first among you must be the servant of all" (Matthew XXIII). Paul carefully observing this precept says: "For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake." [1 Peter 5:5] -- Likewise, young men, be subject to the elders. After teaching the elders how to lead, it was necessary to also instruct the younger ones to obey their paternal provision. However, it was not necessary to speak much to them, but only to give the precept of subjection. For surely he had commanded the elders to be examples to those under them, and it sufficed for the younger ones to look to the good examples of their elders and devoutly imitate them. But lest the superiors hearing these things should think that only the subjects are to observe the laws of humility and not also themselves, he immediately added by admonishing generally:

[1 Peter 5:5] -- All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another. For he says all, meaning both the elders and the young men, who are commanded to manifest the virtue of humility towards one another, both by ruling and by humbly obeying. This is something we read that Peter himself did, when, upon entering Caesarea, Cornelius humbly fell at his feet, and he humbly raised him up, saying: Stand up, I too am just a man like you (Acts X). And indeed Cornelius had not yet been reborn in Christ, nor had he yet been incorporated into the members of the Church. Therefore, all are either taught to have humility towards one another by example, or this is also insinuated by word because he knew that the vice of pride, which cast the angels down from heaven, ought to be guarded against by all. He prudently warns and refreshes all with the accompanying judgment of Solomon, saying:

[1 Peter 5:5] -- For God resists the proud, etc. And he immediately explains what that same grace is which God bestows upon the humble, when he subsequently adds by admonishing: [1 Peter 5:6] -- Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, etc. Thus, He grants this grace to the humble, so that the more they are humbled for His sake at the time of the struggle, the more gloriously they may be exalted by Him at the time of recompense. But humility can be understood in many ways in this context, that is, both the humility where some-

one, beginning the path of virtues, is healthily worn down to wash away the sins they have committed, and the humility that is shown voluntarily, out of devotion of mind, to God or to neighbors in peace regarding surrounding matters, and also the humility where, under the attacks of persecution storms, the undefeated soul is armed with the virtue of patience. To every kind of humility devout to God, that reward succeeds, so that those who humble themselves during their pilgrimage will be exalted during His visitation.

[1 Peter 5:8] -- Be sober and vigilant, etc. In the exposition of this sentence, let us place not our own words, but those of the blessed Cyprian. "He (says he) circles around us individually, and like an enemy besieging enclosed walls, he inspects and tests to see if there is any part of the members that is less stable and less dependable, through which entry to the interior may be gained. He offers alluring forms and easy pleasures to the eyes so that through sight he may destroy chastity. He tries to tempt the ears through melodious music so that the hearing of a sweeter sound may dissolve and weaken Christian vigor. He provokes the tongue with revilement, incites the hand with injuries inducing it to the petulance of killing; to make one a fraudster, he opposes unjust gains; to capture the soul with money, he introduces pernicious advantages. He promises earthly honors to take away heavenly ones. He presents false things to steal the true. And when he cannot deceive secretly, he openly threatens, always restlessly and always hostile, intending the threat of a turbulent persecution to overpower the servants of God. In peace, he is deceitful; in persecution, violent. Therefore, against all the deceitful ambushes and open threats of the devil, the mind must stand trained and armed, as prepared always to resist as the enemy is to attack always."

[1 Peter 5:9] -- Resist strong in faith, etc. Be (he says) so much stronger in faith, have so much more patience to overcome the deceits of the devil, as it is certain that you are not tempted alone, but the same passion that wearies you is common to the Church of Christ which is throughout the whole world, that is to say, to your brotherhood. And because the righteous have always suffered since the foundation of the world, let it shame you to be unable to endure alone above all others. [1 Peter 5:12] -- Through Sylvanus, your faithful brother, etc. What he says, beseeching, can refer to what precedes, because he writes briefly after all, not commanding, but beseeching them to stand firm in faith. It can also be rightly connected to what follows, so that it is understood that he not only testifies that this is their true grace which he declares by writing, since indeed there is no other in whom we must be saved (Acts IV), but also urges them to make this their true grace which they have been imbued with in Christ. For the grace of Christ becomes their grace, who accept it with a pure heart. For he who despises the grace of God does not diminish grace itself, but makes it not his own, that is, makes it to not benefit himself.

[1 Peter 5:13] -- The Church which is gathered in Babylon greets you, etc. He calls Rome Babylon figuratively, evidently because of the confusion of manifold idolatry. In the midst of which, the holy Church, now immature and very small, was shining forth, in the example of the Israelite people who once, small in number and captured, sitting by the rivers of Babylon, wept for the absence of the holy land, nor could they sing the Lord's song in a foreign land (Psalm 136). And blessed Peter appropriately, while exhorting his listeners to endure present adversities, mentions the Church which is established with him in Babylon, that is, in the confusion of tribulations. And yet, he confirms it to be gathered, to show that the holy city of God in this life cannot be free from the intermingling and oppression of the city of the devil, which Babylon signifies. He calls Mark his son, who is said to become his son through baptism. Hence it is clear that before he sent Mark from Rome to Alexandria to preach the gospel, he wrote this Epistle. In the time of Emperor Claudius, both Peter and Mark came to Rome, and Mark himself, after composing his Gospel in Rome, was sent to Alexandria. Whence it is inferred that when Peter sought a place and time to write this Epistle, the place was Rome, the time was during the reign of Claudius Caesar.

[1 Peter 5:14] -- Greet one another with a holy kiss. With a holy kiss, a true kiss, a peaceful kiss, a dove-like kiss, not deceitful, not polluted, like the one Joab used to kill Amasa, like the one Judas used to betray the Savior, like those who speak peace with their neighbor, but evil is in their hearts (Psalm 27). Therefore, they greet one another with a holy kiss, who do not love in word or tongue, but in deed and truth. [1 Peter 5:10] -- Grace to all of you who are in Christ Jesus. He began the Epistle with grace, ended with grace, and sprinkled grace throughout, in order to condemn the Pelagian error in every part of his speech and to teach that the Church of Christ can only be saved by his grace. And thoughtfully, when he said: Grace to you, he added: To all who are in Christ Jesus, signifying that what he wrote to a few Churches, that is, to Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, he wrote to all the Churches of Christ throughout the world. Just as John, in the Apocalypse, when he admonished the seven Churches of Asia individually as befitting each, added at the end of each, thus concluding: He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches (Apoc. II), plainly indicating that everything he wrote to any one Church, was written to all Churches of the faithful who have a discerning ear.

On the Second Epistle of Peter — Chapter 1

[2 Peter 1:1] -- Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, etc. It is written later in this Epistle: Behold, beloved, I write to you this second Epistle. Hence it is clear that he wrote this to the same elect proselytes dispersed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, to whom he had sent the first Epistle. He considers them equals to himself, not because they had received circumcision according to the Law, which, being a Jew by nature, he himself held, but because they had re-

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

[2 Peter 1:2] -- Grace and peace be multiplied to you, etc. In the first Epistle he wrote: Grace and peace be multiplied to you (1 Peter 1). But in this one: Grace and peace be fulfilled to you, because, of course, he wrote the former letter to those beginning, and this one to those more perfect. For peace and grace are multiplied to those advancing well in this life through faith, but will be fulfilled for those arriving in the other life through vision. Hence, well, when saying: Grace and peace be fulfilled to you, he added: In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because this is eternal life (he says), that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17). And again: If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free (John 8).

[2 Peter 1:3] -- Just as His divine power has given us all things, etc. This statement depends on the previous sentences. The meaning is: Grace and peace be multiplied to you as you come to know our Lord Jesus Christ perfectly. And know this too through Him, that all things of His divine power have been given to us through His grace, which are sufficient for attaining life and preserving piety. Hence, He says: Because everything I have heard from My Father I have made known to you (John XV). And elsewhere: And the glory which You have given Me, I have given them (John XVII). But if it is read as some manuscripts have: Which has been given for life and piety, then the meaning will be: So that you may understand how our Lord has given all things of His divine power to us according to the measure of our capacity, which power has been given for us to attain life and piety. For this form of expression is very common in the Scriptures; and it is called by grammarians ellipsis, that is, the omission of a necessary word, such as in the Psalm: For neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert mountains. It implies, for the way of escape is evident, for God is judge everywhere (Psalm LXXIV).

[2 Peter 1:3] -- Through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and virtue. And this too depends on the previous passage, because through the

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

[2 Peter 1:4] -- That through these things you may become partakers of the divine nature. He suddenly changes the person, and who had previously spoken about himself and his own things: He has given us precious promises, immediately turned to those to whom he was speaking: That through these, he says, you may become partakers of the divine nature. This he does not by chance, but providentially. Therefore (he says) the Lord has revealed to us, who by nature are Jews, who are born under the law, who are even physically instructed by his teaching, all the secrets of his divine power, therefore to us, that is, to his disciples, he has given the greatest and most precious promises of his Spirit, that through these even you who are from the Gentiles, who were not able to see him physically, might be made partakers of his divine nature by us who teach you what we have heard from him, by us consecrating you through his mysteries. Hence, very rightly he said above: May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, how all things of his divine power which have been given to us for life and piety, can also be taken as said: May grace and peace be multiplied to you in this, that you may know our Lord Jesus Christ, even you, just as to us through him all the promises or gifts of his divine power, which lead to life and piety, have been given. So that just as we have received the promised gifts from him, or we confidently trust without any doubt that we will receive them, so also may you not doubt about his gifts.

[2 Peter 1:4] -- Fleeing from the corruption of lust that is in the world. He rightly says that the lust of the world has corruption, and therefore must be fled from, according to him who says: "Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent" (Ecclesiasticus 21), because there is also incorruptible lust, about which it is sung: "My soul has desired and fainted after the courts of the Lord" (Psalm 83). About which also in the book of Wisdom through a figure of speech called in Greek κλῖμαξ, in Latin gradation, it is very beautifully reported: "The beginning," he says, "of wisdom is the most true desire for discipline" (Wisdom 6). Therefore, care for discipline is love, and love is the keeping of its laws. But keeping of the laws is the completion of incorruption. And incorruption makes one to be near to God. Therefore, the desire for wisdom leads to the eternal kingdom.

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

[2 Peter 1:6] -- And in patience, godliness. So that he may be kind towards those whom he patiently endures, according to that of the apostle Paul: "Charity is patient, is kind" (1 Corinthians 13). [2 Peter 1:7] -- In piety, however, the love of brotherhood. So that no one renders the works of piety to their enemies with any other view than that of brotherly love. This, of course, obtaining in all temptation, aims at converting those whom one cannot teach or rebuke, to the affection of piety by praying or doing good. [2 Peter 1:7] -- In the love of brotherhood, charity. Here he specifically calls charity that by which we love the Creator, which, as the degrees of virtues advance, is rightly joined to the love of brotherhood, because neither God can be perfectly loved without a neighbor, nor a neighbor without God. Indeed, the love of God is superior to the love of neighbors, because we are commanded to love them as ourselves, but God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength (Mark XII), however, through the practice of brotherly love we ought to ascend to the love of the Creator. For he who does not love his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he does not see (1 John IV)?

[2 Peter 1:8] -- For if all these things are present with you and abound, not empty, etc. He said if they abound, if with superior virtue they prevail against the wars of vices. [2 Peter 1:9] -- For he to whom these things are not present is blind, etc. The eye signifies knowledge, the hand signifies work. He is blind and groping with his hand who, not having the knowledge of righteous work, performs whatever seems right to him, and, ignorant of the light of truth, extends his hand to a work he does not see, lifts his steps to a path he does not foresee, and thus suddenly falls into the ruin of perdition, which he could not foresee. Such is everyone to whom these things that Peter speaks of are not present, because through the increments of spiritual virtues it is proper for us to reach the fellowship of divinity. On the contrary, Solomon, admonishing a wise listener: And let your eyelids precede your steps (Prov. IV). Which is clearly suggesting that in all our acts, we should dili-

gently strive to foresee what we are to attain, carefully scrutinizing what is done according to God's will and what otherwise.

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

[2 Peter 1:11] -- For so an entrance will be abundantly supplied to you into the everlasting kingdom, etc. This passage is suited to that of the prophet Ezekiel, where speaking of a building set upon a mountain, he says: "And its ascent had eight steps" (Ezek. 40). And here indeed the blessed Peter enumerates eight steps of virtues, by which we must ascend, fleeing the corruption of worldly lust, to the habitation of the heavenly kingdom: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. Of these steps the Psalmist surely speaks: "In his heart he has set his ascent" (Ps. 84), and elsewhere says: "They will go from strength to strength; the God of gods will be seen in Zion." (Ps. 84). [2 Peter 1:12] -- Wherefore I will always begin to admonish you about these things, etc. Why does he want to always admonish them about good works, those whom he says have knowledge and are confirmed in the present truth? Unless perhaps it is so that the knowledge they have learned they may exercise in good works, and the truth of which they are confirmed in presence they may guard with a fixed mind, lest ever through teachers of error they fall from the simplicity and purity of faith, concerning which teachers he speaks more in the course of the Epistle. And this sentiment agrees with that of blessed John, who says: "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it" (1 John 2). Therefore, the apostles write to those who know the truth, and admonish them so that they might observe what they know. Whence also John, speaking, adds shortly after: "Let that which you have heard from the beginning remain in you" (Ibid.).

[2 Peter 1:13] -- I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, etc. We usually make use of a tabernacle in journey or in war, and rightly therefore the faithful, as long as they are in the body and are away from the Lord, testify that they are in tabernacles, in which they may conduct the journey of this life and fight against

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

[2 Peter 1:16] -- For we did not follow cleverly devised myths, etc. Here he touches upon both pagans and heretics, the former of whom did not fear to call whatever pleased them gods; the latter, after receiving the mysteries of the true God, no longer paid attention to the divine Scriptures but instead tried to transfer them by badly interpreting them according to their own erroneous understanding. [2 Peter 1:18] -- And we heard this voice brought from heaven, etc. Some deny that this Epistle was written by the blessed Apostle Peter; had they carefully attended to this verse and what follows: When we were with him on the holy mountain, they would by no means doubt the author of this Epistle. For it is established, according to the faith of the Gospels, that Peter, along with his fellow apostles James and John, heard that aforementioned voice when the Lord was glorified on the mountain.

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

[2 Peter 1:19] -- And the morning star rises in your hearts. Who is this morning star? If you say the Lord, it is not enough. The morning star itself is our clear understanding. For it rises in our hearts, it will be illuminated, it will be manifested. Love will be as we now desire it to be, and since it is lacking, we sigh, and what it will be like, each will see in each other, just as we now see our faces in each other. [2 Peter 1:20] -- Understanding this first, that every prophecy of Scripture, etc. This verse depends on what was said above: You do well to pay attention; for those who pay attention to the words of the prophets do well indeed, that they may have the light of knowledge through these. They must first understand that none of the holy prophets proclaimed to the people their own doctrines of life by their own interpretation, but recommended to their listeners to act upon what they had learned from the Lord. They simply delivered to God's people, whether by speaking or writing, the heavenly secrets they had perceived in private, unlike the soothsayers of the Gentiles, who proclaimed to the crowds of the deceived the inventions of their own hearts as the resolutions of a divine oracle. Therefore, just as the prophets wrote not their own words but the words of God, so also their reader cannot use his own interpretation but must very carefully consider how the writer himself wanted his words to be understood.

[2 Peter 1:21] -- For prophecy never came by the will of man, etc. They could always foretell the future; but the Spirit itself filled their hearts whenever it wished; thus, it was not in their power to teach whatever they wanted, but they spoke only what they had learned, enlightened by the Spirit. We say this so that no one may dare to interpret the Scriptures according to their own will. Someone has ridiculously interpreted these words of the blessed Peter, saying that just as a flute receives the breath of a human to sound, yet does not understand the sound it produces because it is of an insensible nature; so the prophets, inspired by the Spirit of God, uttered what the Spirit willed, yet did not retain in their minds what they said, according to that line of Virgil: "It gives a sound without a mind." This is clearly a most shameless error. For how could they give such sound advice for living to their listeners, if, being like the insane, they did not know what they were saying? Why, then, are they called seers? How is it written: "The word that Isaiah saw" (Isaiah 2), or any other prophet, if not because in the hidden, most lucid vision of heavenly matters they understood the mysteries that they then clearly expressed to their listeners in words?

Chapter 2

[2 Peter 2:1] -- But there were also false prophets among the people, etc. This sect is called heresy in Latin, in Greek it is called hairesis, when someone, with foolish obstinacy, never ceases to follow the errors they have once adopted. Who does not know that this is characteristic of heretics? [2 Peter 2:1] -- And they deny the Lord who bought them, etc. Concerning this buyer, Paul also says: "For you were bought at a great price; glorify and carry God in your body" (1 Cor. 6). Rightly indeed

do they bring upon themselves swift destruction, who, denying their Redeemer, refuse to rightly confess Him and glorify, and by doing good, to bear Him in their own body: which all heretics do; for Arius, who says that our Redeemer is lesser than the Father in divinity, and Photinus, who says: "Christ is a man, not God," and Manichaeus, who says: "Christ is only God, not truly man," and Ebion, who says: "Christ did not exist before Mary, He took His origin from her," and Apollinaris, who says: "Christ is only God and flesh, never having taken a rational soul," and Pelagius, who says: "Christ is not the Redeemer of infants in baptism, because they, conceived without iniquities and born from their mother without sins, have no sin that must be forgiven to them, and therefore Christ is not the Savior of all the elect"; and other heretics with them indeed deny the Lord who bought them with the price of His own blood, because they proclaim Him not as truth reveals but as they themselves imagine. And therefore, made alien from the Redeemer, nothing is more certain than that they expect the pit of destruction.

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

[2 Peter 2:4] -- But He handed over those dragged down by the howls of hell into Tartarus, etc. Another translation has this verse as: But pushing back into the prisons of the darkness of hell, He handed them over to be reserved for punishment in judgment. Therefore, it shows that the punishment of the final judgment is still owed to the apostate angels, about which the Lord says: Go into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew XXV), even though they

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

[2 Peter 2:5] -- And He did not spare the original world. It is the same world in which the human race now dwells, which was inhabited by those who lived before the flood. Yet, nonetheless, that original world is rightly called another, as it is written in the following part of this Epistle that the world at that time, having been flooded by water, perished, and the heavens that existed before, meaning all the turbulent spaces of the air being consumed by the height of the increasing waters, and the earth, altered by the waters exceeding into another form. For although some mountains and valleys are believed to have been made from the beginning, they are not as significant as those now seen in the entire world. This could perhaps be denied, if we did not also now see the face of the earth changed by the subversion of the waters every year. This is believed to have happened even more so then, as the greater and more prolonged flood of waters besieging the earth flowed over it.

[2 Peter 2:5] -- But He preserved Noah, the preacher of righteousness, etc. It is known to all that Noah was born in the tenth generation from Adam, but he is called the eighth because eight people survived the flood, of whom he was one. He mentions the number eight to subtly imply that the time of the flood signifies the test of the final examination, when, with all the reprobates condemned, all the righteous will receive the glory of eternal life. For there are six ages of the present world, the seventh is also now conducted, in that life where the souls of the saints enjoy eternal rest in a blessed Sabbath, and the eighth is to come at the time of the resurrection of all and the universal judgment. And he surnames Noah the preacher of righteousness, because by doing works of righteousness in the sight of all, he showed how it should be lived before the Lord. For he is not found to teach anyone by word, indeed not a single word is found spoken to God or man by him, but with the greatest virtue, in the whole construction of the ark, in the coming of

the flood, in the beginnings of the following age, with a silent mouth but with the most prompt devotion of the heart, he obeyed the heavenly commands.

[2 Peter 2:6] -- And the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc. Because he asserts that the cities of the impious were reduced to ashes, it should be understood in two ways. Because first, through fire, he reduced them along with the adjacent lands to ashes, and when he afterwards covered the places of the fire with the waters of the Dead Sea, he still wanted to preserve the surrounding region as a specimen of ancient punishment. For very beautiful fruits indeed grow, which also generate a desire to eat for those who see them. If you pluck them, they crumble and dissolve into ashes, and raise smoke, as if they still burned. Hence, in the Book of Wisdom it is said: "This [fire] rescued the righteous man fleeing from the wicked who were perishing as the fire descended upon Pentapolis." As a testimony to whose wickedness, it is evident that a scorched earth remains deserted, and at certain times the trees have fruit (Wis. X). It can be understood: And they also remain deserted and scorched. And this is what is also added here:

[2 Peter 2:10] -- Giving an example of those who are going to act impiously. For even the fire which once punished the Sodomites plainly shows that the impious are to suffer without end. And that their land remains scorched with smoke, that its most beautiful fruits have ashes within and stench, clearly signifies to all ages that carnal delight, although it may seem pleasing to the minds of fools for the present, reserves nothing for itself in the unseen but burning, so that the smoke of its torments ascends forever and ever.

[2 Peter 2:7] -- And just Lot, oppressed, etc. Indeed, the holy man was tormented by both the unjust deeds and words of his neighbors; seeing these things daily, he was not able to correct them at all; but nevertheless, he conducted himself so prudently that neither by witnessing their disgraceful acts nor by hearing them did he taint the gaze of his chaste mind, but with unflagging intent, he pursued the actions of his own righteousness. Or certainly, he was righteous by sight and hearing, because those present saw and heard nothing in him except the works of righteousness and words; and no fame about him spread among the absent, except what pertained to righteousness, like the example of the blessed Job, who said: The ear that heard me blessed me, and the eye that saw me testified to me (Job XIX). And it is to be noted that the blessed Peter follows the example of the Lord's teaching in this place. For the Lord Himself, speaking in the Gospel about the day of judgment, recalls the sudden advent either of the flood or of the Sodomite fire, where the righteous were delivered, but the reprobate were caught in the snare of sudden destruction. And also in another place, when He intended to restrain the minds of His disciples from the pride of arrogance, He presented the example of the angelic fall, saying, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven (Luke X).

[2 Peter 2:9] -- The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, etc. He says the unjust are reserved for punishment on the day of judgment, not because they do not suffer torment for their merits even before the day of judgment, freed from the body, but because greater torments await them in judgment when, having received their body back, they will be punished, who are now tormented in spirit alone. Whence the Lord, reproaching those cities that refused to receive the word of the Gospel, concluded in this way: It will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you. [2 Peter 2:10] -- But especially those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness. He speaks of fornicators, who will suffer greater torments in judgment for the guilt of their corruption than general iniquities. [2 Peter 2:10] -- And despise government, daring, self-willed. He speaks of the proud and arrogant, who will also endure severer punishments than the general ones.

[2 Peter 2:10] -- They do not fear to introduce sects, blaspheming. He calls heretics those who, blaspheming the faith or life of the orthodox, introduce sects in their own name, that is, heresies, who themselves, with the former, will hear, for a stronger punishment awaits the stronger. [2 Peter 2:11] -- Where angels, though greater in strength and power, do not bring a blasphemous judgment against themselves. When he says: Where, it signifies in that they despise dominion, that they are daring, that they are self-pleasing, that they create heresies, that is, sects, that they blaspheme. By doing these things, the angels deserved to become demons and pay the penalties for their pride. For their spiritual nature did not suffer the obscenity of carnal desire to pollute them. Unless perhaps when they lure men into this, he indicates that they are to be judged for this also, just as for the other evils that they persuade men to commit.

[2 Peter 2:12] -- But these, like irrational animals naturally, etc. Just as it is natural for irrational animals to often ignorantly fall into traps and destruction out of the need for food, so heretics, compared to foolish beasts, out of a desire to fulfill their own corruption, blaspheming the incorrupt and sound doctrine of the Catholic Church and life, bind themselves with the snares of eternal perdition by impious recklessness. The ecclesiastical history reports that such heretics existed in the times of the apostles: the Simonians, Menandrians, Basilideans, Nicolaites, Ebionites, Marcionites, and Cerdonians, and many others. Rightly, having said of them: Blaspheming in their own corruption they shall perish, he added: [2 Peter 2:13] -- Receiving the reward of injustice. The reward of injustice is the punishment he speaks of, which the works of injustice deserve, especially in those who, while they themselves are slaves to the corruption of the flesh, nonetheless blaspheme the conduct of those who live chastely, though they themselves are held by insane errors, they do not cease to disparage those who hold sound understanding.

[2 Peter 2:13] -- Thinking of the delights of the day as impurities and stains. Pleasure is taken both in a good and an evil sense. In the good sense, it is called the paradise of delight, and as it is sung in the psalm: And they shall drink from the torrent of Your pleasure (Psalm 35). In an evil sense, as Solomon says: For youth and pleasure are vain (Ecclesiastes 11). But it is also used indifferently, according to what Sarah said: After I am old, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure? (Genesis 18). Therefore, good pleasure is rightly called the delight of the day, by which the saints delight in the Lord. However, evil pleasure belongs to the night, when the wicked perversely delight in performing deeds of darkness. It is rightly said of the unjust that they think of the pleasure of the day, the delights of impurity and stain, because many are so lazy, perverse, and shameless that, whilst engaging in the most impure and detestable pleasures, they nonetheless judge these to be the best and almost luminous. Some join the first word of this verse to the preceding verse, reading thus: Receiving the reward of unrighteousness as pleasure, and expound it according to what the apostle Paul said: God gave them over to the desires of their hearts in impurity, to dishonor their bodies among themselves (Romans 1). And a little later: Committing shameless acts, receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error. And as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind, to do what ought not to be done (Ibid.). But we thought it right to follow the distinction we found in the works of the blessed Pope Gregory.

[2 Peter 2:14] -- Leading astray unstable souls. Whores are usually called "enticeresses," derived from pollution, or from the beauty of their skin by which they lure the unsuspecting. Therefore, they lead astray unstable souls who, by teaching them wrongly, bring them under the various heretical doctrines as if corrupting them with sensual pleasures.

[2 Peter 2:15] -- They followed the way of Balaam from Bosor, etc. Often, heretics propose such foolish doctrines and abominable sacraments that even the most dull-witted, the pagans, and those who completely lack understanding of divine knowledge, detest their madness. They refute their twisted paths and those contrary to God with healthier judgment. And what is worse, because it is more frequent, sometimes many Catholics love the reward of unrighteousness so much that they are deservedly attacked by the unlearned, by laypersons instead of clerics. These are rightly compared to the prophet who is reproached by the words of a donkey speaking against its nature, yet is not deterred from his evil path. The name of the city from which Balaam is said to have come, Bosor, meaning either of flesh or in tribulation, aptly fits such people. Excessive indulgence in luxury provides no greater reason to adulterate the word of truth for the love of money or the desire for temporal things, than when they have enslaved themselves to the lusts of the flesh, clearly unworthy of apostolic praise, which glorifies true believers saying: But you, brethren, are not in the flesh but in the spirit (I Thes. V). And thus they are placed in tribulation, not in the sense that they suffer for the Lord, but rather

in that which oppresses the spirits of the weak with the perverse examples of their actions, preventing them from rising to salvation or repentance. Also, the name Balaam itself, meaning a vain or precipitating people, suits such individuals. For those who willingly desert the known path of truth are nothing but a vain people, casting their listeners into perdition by preaching not what corrects them but what delights them erroneously. About whom it is well added:

[2 Peter 2:17] -- These are wells without water, etc. Saint Jerome, placing these verses in the book against Jovinian, explains them thus: "Does it not seem to you that the apostle has described a different kind of ignorance?" For they reveal knowledge as if from wells, because they promise the rain of doctrines which they do not have, like clouds of prophecy toward which the truth of God reaches, and they are agitated by the whirlwinds of demons and vices. They speak great things, and all their speech is pride. But every one who exalts his heart is unclean, so that they who have slightly turned away from sins return to their error and are eager for the luxuries of foods and the delights of the flesh. For who does not gladly hear: Let us eat and drink, and we will reign forever (Wis. II; Isai. XXII; I Cor. XV)? The wise and prudent call them perverse who are sweet in speech.

[2 Peter 2:22] -- For the truth of the proverb happened to them: The dog returns to its vomit, etc. He says this is a true proverb because he takes testimony from the Proverbs of Solomon, which is placed there with explanation: As a dog, he says, which returns to its vomit, so is a fool who repeats his foolishness (Prov. XXVI). And he added from his own: And the sow that was washed returns to wallowing in the mire. Therefore, when a dog vomits, it certainly expels the food that weighed down its chest. But when it returns to the vomit, it is again burdened by what it had been relieved of. And those who lament their sins certainly confess and cast away the evil which had satiated them wrongly and weighed down their innermost thoughts; when they repeat it after confession, they take it up again. But the sow, when washed in the mire, is rendered filthier. And he who laments his sins but does not forsake them subjects himself to greater punishment because he scorns the very pardon which he could have obtained by weeping, and he wallows in muddy water as it were, because by his tears he withdraws the cleanliness of life, and before the eyes of God even those very tears become filthy.

Chapter 3

[2 Peter 3:1] -- Behold, dearly beloved, I now write to you this second Epistle, in which, etc. In which, he says, in the Epistles, or to those to whom he writes the epistles. [2 Peter 3:3] -- In the last days, in deception, mockers will come, mocking, namely, the faith and hope of Christians, as they promise to themselves in vain that the time of the resurrection will come. [2 Peter 3:3] -- Walking according to their own desires, etc. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says, "I beseech you, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto

him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of the Lord is at hand" (II Thess. II). Therefore, blessed Peter reproves and calls mockers those who assert that the coming of the Lord and His promises are delayed; Paul restrains those who believe that the day of the Lord is imminent. Hence, it is clear to all who love His coming that they should temper their mind in this opinion, so as not to suspect either that the same day of the Lord is near and will come sooner, nor again that it will come later, but we should only diligently ensure that, whether He comes sooner or later, He may find us prepared when He comes.

[2 Peter 3:5] -- For this is hidden from them willingly, that the heavens existed long ago and the earth, out of water, etc. The earth consists out of water, for at the beginning of creation God said: "Let the waters be gathered together in one place, and let the dry land appear;" and it was so (Gen. I). It consists also by water by the word of God, because by divine arrangement the veins of water fill the whole depth within, just as we see the bodies of living creatures overflowing with veins of blood, lest they fail in dryness if the irrigation of water ceases. Finally, we see that with the heat of summer, the lands with their absorbed moisture wither away, and soon are turned into dust which the wind casts. Another Edition has: "The heavens existed long ago out of water and through water." But it signifies this humid and cloudy air. For Scripture is accustomed to call this air, and sometimes the heavens. Whence it is written: "The hawk in heaven knows its appointed time" (Jerem. VIII).

[2 Peter 3:6] -- At that time the world perished, being flooded by water. At that time, referring to the heavens and the earth which he had previously mentioned. For through these things the world that had existed was destroyed. For the higher parts of the world were in no way touched by the flood. Therefore the earth perished, because being submerged and covered by waters, it not only lost the state of fruitfulness inherent to it for such a long time, but also, as we have taught above, in many places it received a different face from that which it had initially. The heavens likewise perished to the extent of this airspace. "For the water increased," as Saint Augustine says, "and occupied this entire space where birds fly." And thus certainly the heavens close to the earth perished, as it is said "the birds of the heavens." But there are also (he says) the heavens of the heavens higher in the firmament, but whether they too are to perish by fire, or if only these which perished by the flood will do so, is a rather more precise debate among the learned.

[2 Peter 3:7] -- But the heavens and the earth which are now, etc. Therefore it is clear from the view of blessed Peter that the earth and those heavens which perished in the flood, and were restored after the flood, are affirmed to be destroyed by final fire.

[2 Peter 3:8] -- But this one thing, beloved, do not let it escape your notice, that one day with the Lord, etc. Some think this statement should be understood as

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

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

[2 Peter 3:9] -- The Lord does not delay His promise, etc. Therefore, He who knows all times, the latest and the ancient, does not delay His promise, but indeed shows this at the time which He predestined before all times to come. And therefore He still defers, so that the full number of the elect, which He decreed with the Father before the ages, may be fulfilled. Hence, in the Apocalypse, the souls of the martyrs who longed for the coming of His judgment and resurrection heard that they should rest yet a little time, until the number of their fellow servants and brethren should be completed. But those who understand the aforementioned judgment of blessed Peter as if he were saying that the day of judgment would last as long as a thousand years, refer this to the cause that it is necessary for those who depart from the body with some sins, yet are predestined to the lot of the elect, to be purged by fire for such a time, and then finally, with all sins forgiven, to come to life. But these do not see how impudent it is to believe that such a great

company of the perfect and just, having received blessed and immortal bodies in the blink of an eye, would have to wait in the air or on earth for the end of the judgment for a space of a thousand years, and then finally, with their companions fully prepared, to hear the long-desired judgment: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom" (Matt. XXV).

[2 Peter 3:10] -- But the day of the Lord will come as a thief, etc. Without a doubt, he speaks of those heavens which passed away in the flood, that is, this air close to the earth, which is destined to be destroyed by fire, occupying (as rightly believed) as much space as the water of the flood occupied. Otherwise, if anyone asserts that the higher heavens, where the sun, moon, and stars are set, will pass away, how does he wish to understand the Lord's saying: "Then the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven" (Matt. XXIV)? For if the place of the stars passes away, that is, heaven, by what reason can it be said on the same day of the Lord that the stars will either be darkened or fall, and that the place of the stars where they are fixed will pass away with fire consuming it?

[2 Peter 3:10] -- But the elements will be dissolved by heat. There are four elements by which this world consists: fire, air, water, and earth, all of which that great fire will consume. However, it will not consume everything to the extent that they will not exist fundamentally, but it will consume two to that extent, and it will restore two to a better appearance. Hence, it says in the following: [2 Peter 3:13] -- Yet there will be new heavens and a new earth. He did not say different heavens and a different earth, but the old and ancient ones to be changed for the better, according to what David says: In the beginning, you founded the earth, Lord, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain, and all things will grow old like a garment, and like a cloak you will change them, and they will be changed (Psalm 102). Therefore, those which will perish, grow old, and will be changed will certainly be consumed by fire, soon, with the fire departing, they will resume a more pleasing form. For the figure of this world has passed away, not the substance, just as the substance of our flesh does not perish, but its form will be changed, when what is sown is a natural body, it will rise a spiritual body (I Cor. 15). Concerning fire and water, we read nothing of the sort, but rather we have in the Apocalypse: And the sea is no more (Apoc. 21). We have in the prophets: And the light of a lamp will shine in you no more (Apoc. 18).

[2 Peter 3:13] -- And we await His promises, in which righteousness dwells. Righteousness dwells in the future age, because then to each of the faithful a crown of righteousness will be rendered according to the measure of their struggle, which in this life cannot in any way be done, according to that of Solomon: I saw under the sun in the place of judgment wickedness, and in the place of righteousness iniquity. And I said in my heart: God will judge the righteous and the wicked, and

there is a time for every matter (Ecclesiastes III). And again: I saw, he says, the oppressions that are done under the sun, and the tears of the innocent, and they had no comforter, nor power to resist their violence, being destitute of all help, and I praised the dead more than the living (Ecclesiastes IV). Therefore, he praised the innocent dead more than the living because the former are still in the struggle, but the latter are rewarded with the gift of eternal happiness. Hence, he lamented seeing the oppressions under the sun because he knew there is a just Judge above the sun, who dwells on high and regards the lowly (Psalm CXII), and above the sun are the mansions in which the righteous receive the rewards due to their righteousness. This can also be understood in light of the Psalmist's words: This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous will enter through it (Psalm CXVII). And in Revelation, concerning the heavenly city, John says: Nothing unclean and no one who practices abomination and falsehood shall enter into it, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life (Revelation XXI).

[2 Peter 3:14] -- Wherefore, my beloved, as you wait for these things, strive to be found spotless, etc. These are the holy vigils of which the Lord said: Blessed are those servants whom the lord when he comes shall find watching (Luke XII). Indeed, he is watchful who keeps himself free from the defilement of vices, who, as far as it depends on him, has peace with all men, who, using the most blessed peace within himself, submits all the allurements of the flesh to the rule of the spirit. And rightly, when he said: Strive to be found spotless and blameless, he added before him, that is, before the Lord, because only he who is clean in the judgment of God is perfectly clean. Hence in praise of good spouses, it is said: They were both righteous before God (Luke I). Well, before God, because human judgments often fail.

[2 Peter 3:15] -- And consider that the patience of our Lord is for salvation. Do not think that the Lord delays his promise, but understand that he is patiently waiting for this reason, that more might be saved.

[2 Peter 3:15] -- Just as our most beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given to him. He recalls that Paul wrote to them, because even if Paul wrote to certain churches specifically, it is proven that he wrote generally to all the churches that are throughout the world, and which make up the one catholic church. And it should be noted that here Peter praises the wisdom of Paul, while Paul himself says about himself: "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. 15). Behold, Paul humbles himself, remembering his former unbelief, and prefers the innocence of the other apostles. Behold, the foremost of the apostles, as if forgetting his primacy and the keys of the kingdom given to him, marvels at the wisdom given to Paul. Because it is indeed the custom of the elect to admire the virtues of others more than their own, through which they incite themselves to

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

[2 Peter 3:16] -- In which there are some things hard to understand, etc. All the Scriptures are corrupted by heretics. For there is no book of either the New or the Old Testament in which they have not understood many things perversely. But they have often perverted the Scriptures themselves from their status, by either removing, adding, or changing whatever their treachery dictated. As it is evident that the Arians erased from the Gospel what the Savior said: "Because God is spirit" (II Cor. III), because they did not want to believe that the Holy Spirit was Almighty God. He rightly calls them unlearned and unstable, because they have neither the light of knowledge nor the stability of mind, so that they might remain among the learned until they are educated. For the only remedy for the unlearned is to humbly provide their ears to the words of the learned with stability. Since heretics do not have the grace of stability, like light chaff in the wind, they are even taken away from the Church by the wind of pride. About whom it is well added:

[2 Peter 2:1] -- To their own destruction. For those who attempt to corrupt the holy Scriptures and to disturb and pervert the Catholic faith bring condemnation upon themselves in this. However, the Church of Christ, having dispelled the darkness of errors, enjoys its true light. Hence, it is well said at the end of the Apocalypse, which is the closing and, as it were, the seal of all divine Scripture: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the book of life and from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Apocalypse XXII). The difficult things to understand in the Epistles of Paul, which he says are distorted by the unlearned and unstable, are especially those in which he speaks about the grace of God that justifies the ungodly (Romans IV), that is, makes the ungodly righteous. For he himself says: Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans V). Those who did not understand this thought he was saying: Let us do evil that good may come (Romans III). But far be it from Paul to teach his listeners to do evil to achieve good, for his entire intention is to restrain from evil and to call as many as possible to do good.

But when he says, Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Romans V), he thereby commends the gift of grace more strongly, which is accustomed to forgive both great sins and lesser ones when people convert. And the greater the

sins committed before conversion, the greater the forgiveness received through the gift of grace. Therefore the Apostle speaks thus about the sins we have already committed, so that no one should perish from despair of forgiveness because of the enormity of his crimes; but, as the enemies interpreted, he was not urging to commit more sins to receive greater good through them. Hence the blessed Peter rightly adds by way of admonition:

[2 Peter 3:17] -- You therefore, brothers, being forewarned, be on guard, etc. Being forewarned, because foolish ones will introduce various errors, some denying the future judgment, some falsifying divine words, some interpreting wrongly, some loosening the restraints of luxury, others deceiving the hearts of the wretched with other fraudulent deceptions, be on guard, lest by any cunning of deceivers you might fall from the firmness of your faith. [2 Peter 3:18] -- But grow in grace, etc. According to that of the Psalmist: They will go from strength to strength, the God of gods will be seen in Zion (Psalm 83). [2 Peter 3:18] -- To Him be glory both now and unto the day of eternity. Glory always to the Savior God and our Lord, both now when amidst the daily pressures of adversities we still, placed in the flesh, wander far from Him, and especially then when He, long desired by all nations, coming, will have deigned to illuminate us with the presence of His vision. Meanwhile, because we sigh, we rightly and diligently sing: For one day in your courts is better than a thousand (Psalm 83).

On the First Epistle of John — Chapter 1

[1 John 1:1] -- What was from the beginning, etc. The blessed Apostle John wrote this Epistle about the perfection of faith and charity, praising the devotion of those who persevered in the unity of the Church; furthermore, he reproached the impiety of those who disturbed the peace of the Church with insane doctrines, especially Cerinthus and Marcion, who argued that Christ did not exist before Mary. He also wrote his Gospel on account of them, affirming in it both by his own words and the words of the Lord that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, while here he conveys in his own words what he learned from the Lord, refuting the foolishness of the heretics with apostolic authority. Hence, right at the beginning of the Epistle, he designates both the divinity and true humanity of the same God and our Lord Jesus Christ, saying: What was from the beginning, what we have heard. For the Son of God was indeed from the beginning, but the disciples heard and saw the same Son of God appearing in man with their eyes, which he elaborated more extensively in the Gospel. For what he says here: What was from the beginning, is what he states in the Gospel: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God (John I). And what he adds here: What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, is what he elaborates on there: And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father (John I). And lest it seem too little to say in what he says: What we have seen with our eyes, he added:

[1 John 1:1] -- That which we have seen and our hands have touched concerning the Word of life. For not only did they see the Lord with their physical eyes like the others, but they also perceived His divine power with their spiritual eyes. Especially those who saw Him transfigured on the mount, among whom was John himself. And when he says, "and our hands have touched concerning the Word of life," he refutes the madness of the Manichaeans, who deny that the Lord assumed true flesh; the apostles could not doubt the truth of this flesh, as they attested not only by seeing but also by touching; especially John himself who, accustomed to recline on His bosom at supper, touched His limbs more freely the closer he was. And even after His resurrection from the dead, their hands touched concerning the Word of life, as they understood without any doubt that He had taken on true flesh, though now incorruptible, hearing Him say: "Touch and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have" (Luke 24). It is well said, "and our hands have touched concerning the Word of life," because as they proved the truth of His resurrected flesh by touching with their hands, they more surely knew Him to be the Word of life, that is, the true God. Hence Thomas, who was specially ordered to touch Him, immediately upon touching the flesh, confessed Him to be God, saying, "My Lord and my God" (John 20).

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

[1 John 1:3] -- What we have seen and heard, we proclaim to you, etc. Blessed John clearly shows that anyone who desires to have fellowship with God must first be united with the fellowship of the Church, learn that faith, and be imbued with its sacraments, which the disciples received from the Truth dwelling in the flesh itself. Nor in any way are those less associated with God who believe through the doctrine of the apostles, than those who believed through the Lord preaching in the world himself, except insofar as the quality of faith or works distinguishes them. Hence also concerning this fellowship of the saints, which they have in the Father and the Son, the Son himself, praying to the Father, says: Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given to me, that they may be one as we are one (John XVII). And a little later: I do not ask for these only, but also for those who

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

[1 John 1:4] -- And we write these things to you so that your joy may be complete. The joy of teachers is made complete when, through preaching, they lead many to the fellowship of the holy Church, and to the fellowship of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, through whom the Church is strengthened and grows. Hence also Paul says to those whom he instructed in the faith: Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind (Philippians II). [1 John 1:5] -- And this is the message which we have heard from him, etc. By this statement, blessed John both shows the excellence of divine purity, which we are also commanded to imitate, saying: Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy (Leviticus XIX); and he refutes the insane doctrine of the Manicheans, who said that the nature of God was conquered and corrupted by the prince of darkness in war.

[1 John 1:6] -- If we say that we have fellowship with Him, etc. He names darkness, sins, heresies, and hatreds. Therefore, the mere confession of faith alone is not sufficient for salvation, to which the testimony of good works is lacking. But neither does the rectitude of works without the simplicity of faith and love profit. For whoever is besieged by darkness in any part cannot have fellowship with Him in whom no iniquities occur. For what fellowship has light with darkness? (II Cor. VI). [1 John 1:7] -- But if we walk in the light, etc. The distinction of words is to be noted, because he says that God is in the light, but that we ought to walk in the light. For the righteous walk in the light, as they advance to better things by serving with works of virtue. But divine holiness, to which it is said: "But you are the same" (Ps. CI), is rightly remembered to be in the light, because being full goodness always existing, it does not find where it may advance. To the faithful it is said: "Walk as children of light" (Eph. V). For the fruit of light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. But God always exists as good, just, and true without any progress. If, therefore, we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. Because it evidently gives an indication that we are advancing by walking in the path of light, if we rejoice in the bond of fraternal fellowship, with which we likewise may reach the true light. But even if we are found to do the works of light, if we seem to hold inviolable the rights of mutual love, we should not think that by our progress or industry we are able to be completely cleansed from sins. For it follows:

[1 John 1:7] -- And the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin. For indeed, the sacrament of the Lord's passion both alleviated all past sins for us in baptism and forgives whatever we commit after baptism due to daily frailty, by the grace of the same our Redeemer. Especially when among the works of light that we perform, we humbly confess our errors to Him daily, when we receive the

sacraments of His blood, when we pray for our debts to be forgiven as we forgive our debtors, when, mindful of His passion, we willingly endure each adverse thing. Remarkably, when speaking of the Lord, it is said: "And the blood of Jesus His Son"; indeed, the Son of God in the nature of divinity could not have blood; but since the same Son of God also became the Son of man, appropriately He calls the blood of the Son of God due to the unity of His person, to show that He truly assumed a body, truly shed His blood for us; and to refute the heretics who either deny that the true flesh was assumed by the Son of God or that the Lord Jesus truly suffered in the flesh which He assumed. Similar to this is what Paul says: "The Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20).

[1 John 1:8] -- If we say that we have no sin, etc. This sentence avails against the heresy of Pelagius, which claimed that all infants are born without sin and that the elect in this life can progress to such an extent as to be without sin. For even when the prophet says: "Behold, I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin my mother bore me" (Psalm 50), we cannot be without guilt in the world, having come into the world with guilt. But the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses us from all sin so that our debts do not hold us under the power of our enemy, because the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, freely repaid on our behalf what He did not owe. For He who undeservedly paid the debt of death in the flesh for us, freed us from the debt of the death of the soul.

[1 John 1:9] -- If we confess our sins, He is faithful, etc. Because we cannot be without sin in this life, the first hope of salvation is confession, and no one should consider themselves just or lift up their neck before the eyes of God. Then comes love, because charity covers a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4), which is consequently highly recommended to us with much praise in the following parts of this Epistle. Beautifully, both are suggested together, that we should both pray for our sins and obtain God's indulgence when we pray. Therefore, He is also called faithful to forgive sins, retaining the faithfulness of His promise, because He who taught us to pray for our sins and debts promised fatherly mercy and ensuing forgiveness. He also affirms Him to be just, because He justly forgives true confession. "That He may forgive us our sins," he says, "and cleanse us from all iniquity." He forgives daily and slight sins to the elect in this life, without which they cannot live on earth; He cleanses them after the dissolution of the flesh from all iniquity, bringing them into that life in which they neither wish to sin nor can. He now forgives greater temptations to those who pray, so they may not be overcome; He forgives the smallest, so they may not be injured; He then cleanses from all, so that no iniquity at all may exist among the blessed in the eternal kingdom.

[1 John 1:10] -- If we say that we have not sinned, etc. For he himself said through a man filled with his Spirit: There is no just man on earth who does good and does not

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

Chapter 2

[1 John 2:1] -- My little children, I write this to you so that you do not sin. He is not contradictory to himself, who previously asserted that we cannot live without sin, but now says that he writes this to us so that we do not sin. But there he necessarily, providently, and beneficially reminded us of our fragility, so that no one should take pleasure in himself as if he were innocent, and by exalting himself through merits, perish more; here, he consequently exhorts us that if we cannot be free from all fault, we should nonetheless make every effort, as much as we are able, not to live negligently by indulging the frailty of our condition, but rather vigorously and vigilantly fight against all vices, especially the greater and more obvious ones, which, with the Lord's help, we can more easily overcome or avoid, so that, according to what Paul says: Let no temptation take hold of you except that which is human (1 Corinthians 10), that is, the kind that human frailty cannot completely avoid.

[1 John 2:1] -- But if anyone sins, we have an advocate, etc. See how John himself maintains the humility he teaches; surely he was a righteous and great man, who drank the secrets of mysteries from the Lord's breast. Yet he did not say, "You have me as an advocate with the Father," but said, "We have an advocate. He said "we have," not "you have. He preferred to place himself among the sinners to have Christ as an advocate, rather than place himself as an advocate for Christ and be found among the condemned proud ones. However, it should not be said that bishops or leaders do not intercede for the people. For the Apostle prays for the people, and the people pray for the Apostle, who says, "Praying together for us and for you, that God may open to us a door of the word" (Colossians 4). And the Church prayed for Peter when he was in chains, and it was heard, just as Peter also prayed for the Church, because all members pray for each other. The Head intercedes for all, of whom it is written: "He is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Romans 8). For the only-begotten Son interceding for man means showing himself as man to the co-eternal Father. And for him to have prayed on behalf of human nature means he took up that same nature in the height of his divinity.

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

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

[1 John 2:3] -- And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. Which commandments he means, he explains subsequently, that is, love. [1 John 2:4] -- Whoever says he knows Him but does not keep His commandments, etc. Christ is called the truth: "I am" (He says) "the way, the truth, and the life" (John XIV). Therefore, it is futile for us to boast about knowing Him when we do not keep His commandments. Nor should we consider it a great thing to know one God, since even demons believe, and tremble. But what it truly means to know God, he shows later, saying: [1 John 2:5] -- But whoever keeps His word, etc. Therefore, truly the one who keeps God's commandments and proves by his love has true knowledge of God. For to know God is to love Him. For whoever does not love Him clearly shows that he does not know how lovable He is. And he has not learned to taste and see how sweet and pleasant the Lord is, who does not strive continuously to please Him through intent devotion.

[1 John 2:5] -- By this we know that we are in Him, etc. That is, through excessive love, even to pray for enemies, just as He did, saying, "Father, forgive them" (Luke XXIII). Also, to despise all the favorable aspects of the world with a strong mind, to willingly endure insults and reproaches, just as He said: "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Luke IX). [1 John 2:7] -- Dearest, I am not writing a new commandment to you, etc. The same love is also an old commandment, for it has been recommended from the beginning, and it is a new commandment because, with the darkness cast out, it

infuses the desire for new light. Hence it is rightly added: [1 John 2:8] -- Which is true in him and in you, etc. Behold here is the new, for darkness pertains to the old man and the light truly to the new man. Finally, the Apostle Paul says: Put off the old man and put on the new one (Eph. IV); and again: You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord (Eph. V).

[1 John 2:9] -- He who says he is in the light and hates his brother, etc. The Lord has commanded to love enemies; therefore, he who says he is a Christian and hates his brother is still in sins. And he rightly added "still," because all men undoubtedly are born in the darkness of vices, all remain in darkness until they are illuminated by the grace of baptism through Christ. But even the one who approaches the fountain of life with brotherly hatred to be reborn and to the drink of the precious blood to be redeemed, if he considers himself to be enlightened by the Lord, is still in darkness, nor in any way could he shed the shadows of sins who did not care to put on the entrails of charity. Hence it is that Simon, recently drenched by the waters of baptism, heard from him who had the keys of heaven: You have no part or lot in this matter; for I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity (Acts VIII). Because evidently neglecting the fellowship of brotherhood, he desired to buy the gift of the Spirit, by which the unity of the Church is preserved, with money and to have it privately.

[1 John 2:10] -- He who loves... and there is no stumbling in him. That is, no offense; for he who loves his brother endures all things for the unity of unity. For much peace is for those who love your name (Psalm CXVIII), that is, charity, and there is no stumbling for them (Ibid.). And Paul says: Bearing with one another in love, striving to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. IV). [1 John 2:11] -- He who hates his brother is in darkness, etc. For he, ignorant, falls into hell, blind and unaware, withdrawing from the light of Christ who warns and says: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John VIII). [1 John 2:12] -- I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account of His name. He glorifies all his hearers, whom he had preceded in Christ, with the name of children, because, having been reborn of water and the Spirit, they had received the remission of sins. And lest you doubt that all faithful can rightly be called the children of preceding fathers, hear the prophet singing of the Church, "All the glory of the king's daughter is within" (Ps. XLIV); likewise to the same, "Instead of your fathers shall be your sons" (Ibid.).

[1 John 2:13] -- I write to you, fathers, because you know Him who is from the beginning. He calls fathers not by age, but by greater wisdom and maturity. For venerable old age is not counted by long duration nor by the number of years. Gray hairs, however, are the understanding of a man, and the mature age is an unspotted life (Wis. IV). For it is the role of fathers to remember ancient things,

to know them, and to reveal these to the younger. Hence, it is written: "Ask your fathers, and they will tell you" (Deut. XXXII). And thus he rightly calls fathers those who have learned to know Him who is from the beginning, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and to faithfully preach to their hearers. [1 John 2:13] -- I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. Youth is a slippery time because of the incentives of the flesh, but fitted for battle due to the vigor of age. Hence, John writes to those youths who have, by the love of God's word, overcome the temptations of carnal delights. He writes also to those who, with greater perfection, despite persecutions inflicted because of the word of God, have bravely scorned all the plots of the wicked enemy.

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

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

[1 John 2:16] -- Since all that is in the world, etc. All that is in the world, he says, refers to all who dwell in the world with their minds, who inhabit the world with love; just as they inhabit heaven who have their conversation in heaven, whose hearts are above, although they walk in the flesh on earth. Therefore, all that is in the world, that is, all lovers of the world, have nothing but the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. By these names of vices, he comprehends all kinds of vices. For the lust of the flesh is all that pertains to bodily pleasure

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

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

[1 John 2:16] -- Which is not from the Father, but from the world. The conflict of vices has not been naturally instilled in us by God the Father and Creator, but it is proven to have happened to us from the love of this world, which we have preferred to the Creator. For God made men upright, and they have sought out many inventions, as Solomon testifies. Hence James also says: "Let no man, when he is tempted, say he is tempted by God. For God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one" (James 1). But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own desire. [1 John 2:17] -- And the world passes away, and its desire, etc. The world will pass away, when on the day of judgment it will be transformed by fire into a better form, so that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. And its desire will pass away, because the time for a life of luxury, or for any sin, will be no more. For on that day all their thoughts will perish (Psalm 145), those indeed which were directed toward the desires of this world; but he who does the will of the Lord, his thoughts will not perish with the passing world, but because he desired heavenly and eternal things, they remain unchangeable forever, because he will obtain the heavenly rewards he desired. Hence the Lord said of the devoted woman, or rather of any soul that has perfectly followed his will: "Mary has chosen the best part, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10). Therefore, whoever desires to remain undisturbed and at peace forever, let him embrace the things that do not pass away, let him follow the will of God who is eternal.

[1 John 2:18] -- My little children, it is the last hour. The last hour, the last time of the age, which is now being carried out, he says, according to that parable of the Lord, where he narrates that workers in the vineyard are hired from the first hour,

the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the eleventh. For at the first hour those who cultivated the vineyard of the Lord were serving the will of their Creator either by teaching or by living rightly from the beginning of the age. From the third hour, those from the times of Noah. From the sixth hour, those from the times of Abraham. From the ninth hour, those from the times the law was given. From the eleventh hour, those from the times of the Lord's Incarnation until the end of the age, are serving the heavenly commands: in which hour, both the coming of the Savior in the flesh and the future plague of the Antichrist, who would fight against the heralds of salvation, was marked by the prediction of the prophets. Whence it follows:

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

[1 John 2:19] -- "They went out from us, but they were not of us. It seemed to be mourned as a loss when we heard: 'They went out from us'; but soon consolation is added, when it is said: 'But they were not of us.' For it is evident that only Antichrists can go out from us, but those who are not opposed to Christ cannot in any way go out; for he who is not opposed to Christ, remains in His body. But there are those who are within the body of the Lord, while the body is still being healed, and perfect health will not be until the resurrection of the dead. They are in the body of Christ as evil humors; when they are vomited out, the body is relieved. So too the wicked, when they go out, the Church is relieved. 'They went out from us,' it says, but, 'do not be sad, they were not of us.' How do you prove it?

[1 John 2:19] -- For if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. Therefore, it must be seen that many who are not of us receive the sacraments of Christ with us. But temptation proves that they are not of us, for when temptation comes to them, like the wind they fly away, because they were not the grain. However, they will all fly away when the Lord's threshing floor begins to be winnowed on the day of judgment. If some indeed go out by sinning but return through repentance, they are not Antichrists, but are proven to be in Christ, if the end of this present life finds them remaining in the Church. [1 John 2:19] -- But so that it may be evident, because not all who are within us are of us. Therefore, by the permission of the

Lord, some go out from the Church even before the final winnowing, showing that they were not members of the Church, nor did they belong to the body of Christ, so that it may be clearly manifest that not all who are placed inside with us and receive the sacraments of Christ are of us, but only those who do works worthy of those same sacraments in the unity of the Church of Christ."

[1 John 2:20] -- But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. The spiritual anointing is the Holy Spirit, whose sacrament is in the visible anointing. He says that all who have this anointing of Christ have the ability to discern the good and the evil, and that there is no need for them to be taught those things which the anointing itself teaches. And fittingly, when speaking about the heretics, suddenly turning towards his own listeners, he says that they have the anointing from the Holy One, to show them, by contrast, that the heretics and all Antichrists are deprived of the gift of spiritual grace, and do not pertain to the Lord, who has been accustomed to be called Holy by the prophets, but rather they hold a place among the ministers of Satan, who have nothing of holiness and hold a position of perdition.

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

[1 John 2:22] -- Who is the liar, if not he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He had foretold that every lie is not from the truth, but since there are many kinds of lies that are not at all similar, now he sets forth the lie of denial of Christ as singular because this is such a heinous and abominable lie that in comparison to it, other lies either seem small or nonexistent. According to what was said to the sinning Jerusalem: Sodom was justified because of you (Ezekiel 16). This denial is proper to the Jews, that they say Jesus is not the Christ. But even heretics who wrongly believe about Christ deny Jesus is the Christ, because they do not think rightly about Christ; nor do they confess him as such as divine truth teaches, but as their vanity invents. Wicked Catholics also who despise obeying the commands of Christ deny Jesus is the Christ, to whom they do not render the due service of fear or love as to the Son of God but dare to contradict at their will as to a man of no power. Therefore, all these are proved to be liars and Antichrists, that is,

contrary to Christ, as the Apostle attests who says: They profess to know God, but they deny him by their deeds (Titus 1).

[1 John 2:22] -- This is the Antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. With this sentence, he strikes both heretics and especially the Jews, who denying that Jesus is the Son of God, nonetheless claimed to have God as the Father, showing them to confess the Father in vain if they deny the Son. Hence, the Lord himself, cursing them, said: If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here (John 8). [1 John 2:23] -- Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either, etc. Here he seeks the confession of the heart, the voice, and the work, as Paul sought when he said: And no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit; which is openly to say: No one can, unless by the grace of the Holy Spirit granted, serve the Lord Christ with perfect profession and action.

[1 John 2:24] -- That which you have heard from the beginning, let it remain in you, etc. He says, follow with all your heart that faith, those doctrines which you have received from the voice of the apostles from the earliest times of the nascent Church. For these alone are what make you partakers of divine grace. And if anyone says to you, "Behold, here is Christ, behold, there he is," do not believe it. For false prophets will arise, as the Lord foretold (Mark XIII). And you, he says, will remain in the Son and in the Father. He places the Son first, because as the Son himself says: "No one comes to the Father except through the Son" (John XIV); no one will see the glory of divine exaltation except he who is reborn through the sacraments of the humanity which the Son assumed. Or surely he named the Son first and then the Father for the reason that the Arians may not say that the Son should be believed to be lesser than the Father because he has never found to be named before the Father.

[1 John 2:25] -- And this is the promise which He Himself promised us, eternal life. As if you were asking for a reward, and you were saying: "Behold me, I keep what I have heard from the beginning, I obey; I endure dangers, labors, temptations, for maintaining this. What will be the fruit, what the reward? What will be given to me afterward?" And this, he says, is the promise which He Himself promised us, eternal life. Let the remembrance of the promised reward make you perseverant in your work. [1 John 2:26] -- These things I have written to you about those who deceive you. By deceivers whom he names, not only are heretics to be understood, who seek to turn away from the faith by wicked doctrine, but also those who, by allurements or by adversities of the world, detract the minds of the weak from the promise of eternal life, either by enticing them evilly or by frightening them.

[1 John 2:27] -- And the anointing which you received from Him, etc. This, he says, with the Lord's help, strive to ensure that the grace of the Holy Spirit, which you received in baptism, remains whole in your heart and body, according to what the Apostle Paul says: Do not extinguish the Spirit (1 Thess. 5). So it happens that

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

[1 John 2:27] -- And it is true, and it is not a lie. By frequent repetition, he keenly emphasizes that what he preaches is true and free from all stain of falsehood, in order to restrain those who presume to preach otherwise, and diligently remind us that eternal life cannot be found otherwise than by following that purity of faith and work given by the apostles to the early Church, and by remaining steadfast in following and keeping it until the end of this life. This is similar to what the Apostle Paul says: Let no one deceive you with empty words, because of these the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience (Ephesians 5). What is said in another translation: And it is true, and it is not a lie, refers to the previous verse, where it is said: But as His anointing teaches us about all things, signifying that the same anointing is true, that is, the Spirit Himself who teaches humans cannot lie.

[1 John 2:27] -- And as he taught you, abide in him. Do not be carried away by various and strange doctrines. In the faith and the tradition which he himself taught, abide in him. For whoever perseveres to the end, he shall be saved (Matt. XXIV). [1 John 2:28] -- And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears, etc. Whoever remains in the Lord amidst the persecutions of the unbelievers, amidst the mockeries of carnal neighbors, has confidence in his coming, knowing that the patience of the poor will not perish at the end. But whoever is ashamed to either offer the other cheek to the one who strikes him or to patiently endure the reproach inflicted by a neighbor, or indeed other such things which the Lord commanded to observe, or certainly fears to publicly profess himself as a Christian in time of persecution, this one, undoubtedly, cannot have confidence at the coming of the Lord, for he has neglected to maintain the confidence of his profession in this life. Rather, he will be ashamed by Him at His coming. Hence it says: Whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, him the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his glory and that of His Father and of the holy angels (Luke IX).

[1 John 2:29] -- If you know that he is righteous, know that our righteousness is now by faith. Perfect righteousness is found only in angels, and scarcely in angels if compared to God. However, if any perfect righteousness exists in the souls and spirits that God created among the angels and saints, the righteous and the good, who fell by no lapse, were not brought down by pride, but always remained in the contemplation of God's word and found nothing else sweet except the one from whom they were created, in them is perfect righteousness. But in us, it began to be according to the Spirit through faith. Whence the Psalmist says: Begin to the Lord in confession (Psalm 146). He says, begin. The beginning of our righteousness is the confession of sins. You have begun not to defend your sin; you have already started righteousness. It will be perfected in you when you will be pleased to do nothing else. When death is swallowed up in victory, when no desire will titillate, when there will be no struggle with flesh and blood, when there will be the crown of victory, and triumph over the enemy, then there will be perfect righteousness. Therefore, if you know that he is righteous, he says, know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of him; that is, of Christ. And because he has said, he is born of him, he encourages us now that we are born of him, so that we may be perfect. Listen of course to what follows.

Chapter 3

[1 John 3:1] -- Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, etc. Great is the grace of our Creator, which has granted us to love Him, to know, and to be able: and thus to love, as children the father, when even this would be great, if we could love Him as faithful servants love masters, as devoted hirelings love masters. How, however, we ought to become children of God, the same John testifies in the Gospel: He came unto His own (he says), and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, to those who believe in His name (John I). Therefore, combining both testimonies, it is certain that through faith and love we become children of God. But also the doctrine of Pelagius and Arius is condemned by these matters. The heresy of Pelagius (who dared to say that men can be saved without the grace of God) is condemned in that it is said that love or the power is given to us by God, by which we receive the adoption of sons. Moreover, Arius, who said the Son is lesser than the Father and unlike Him, is refuted in that the same John says here, the Father gives us the love by which we are named and are children of God, and in the Gospel, he says through the Lord the Savior, power is given to believers to become the children of God. For it is certain that they are of one substance and the same power, who equally and indifferently bestow heavenly gifts upon men.

[1 John 3:1] -- For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. In this place, he calls the lovers of the world. And this is what the same will say in judgment, seeing the glory of the saints whose faith they despised, they will say within themselves, groaning and repenting: These are they whom we once had

in derision, and in a likeness of a reproach. We fools considered their life to be madness, and their end without honor. How are they counted among the children of God, and their lot among the saints (Wisdom V)? [1 John 3:2] -- Dearest, now we are children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. And Paul says: For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Colossians III). A faithful one is dead through the extinguishing of the old life which was in sins, and has a new life in Christ through faith, the height of which is not yet visibly apparent to us.

[1 John 3:2] -- We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him. And Paul explains this too in other words: When Christ (he says) your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory (Colossians III). He says we shall be like Him, for when we enjoy the immutable and eternal contemplation of divinity, we ourselves shall also be immortal. And indeed we shall be like Him, because we will be blessed; and yet, similar to the Creator because we are creatures; for who among the children of God will be like God? Even though this might also be thought to be said about the immortality of the body. And in this too we shall be like God, but only to the Son, who alone in the Trinity took on a body, in which He died, rose again, and raised it to the heights.

[1 John 3:2] -- Because we will see Him as He is. To be God is to remain eternally and immutably. Whence to Moses He says: "I am who am" (Exod. III); and: "You shall say to the children of Israel: He Who Is has sent me to you" (Ibid.). Therefore, we will see Him as He is, when we will contemplate Him in the very substance of His divinity, which in this life is granted to no one among the elect. Even the legislator, who was accustomed to contemplating the Lord in an angelic guise, beseeched, saying: "Lord, show me Yourself that I may see You" (Exod. XXXIII), and heard from the same Lord: "No one shall see my face and live" (Ibid.). However, to him, for the merit of great sanctity, He said: "I will show you all good" (Ibid.). Hence Paul also said: "Now we see through a glass in a riddle, but then face to face" (I Cor. XIII). Therefore, what was answered to Moses is true, that no one can see the face of God and live (Exod. XXXIII), which is to say, no one living in this life can see Him as He is. Many have seen, but what the will of God chose, not what nature formed. And that which John said can rightly be understood as: "Beloved, we are children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we will see Him as He is.

Not as men saw Him when He willed, in the guise in which He willed, not in the nature which remained hidden in himself even when He was seen; but as He is, which was requested of Him by Moses when he said: "Show me Yourself" (Exod. XXXIII), by Him who spoke with him face to face. Not that anyone has comprehended the fullness of God, not only with the eyes of the body but even with the mind itself. For it is one thing to see, another to comprehend fully by seeing. Therefore, what

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

[1 John 3:3] -- And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, etc. Many say they have the hope of heavenly life in Christ, but they make this confession void by living negligently. However, he shows a clear sign of his hope of the hereafter in himself, who strives to give diligence to good deeds, being certain that no one will reach the likeness of God in the future otherwise, unless by sanctifying himself in the present, that is, by renouncing impiety and worldly desires, and by living soberly, justly, and piously, he imitates the holiness of God. We are commanded to imitate the purity of divine holiness according to the measure of our capacity, just as we are enjoined to hope for the glory of divine likeness according to our measure, that is, the measure of the creature. It is not to be believed that the Pelagian dogma is to be supported—what is said about man "He purifies himself"—as if anyone could sanctify himself by free will without divine aid. But he who has hope in the Lord purifies himself to the extent he can by striving, and by imploring His grace in all things, who says: "Without me, you can do nothing" (John XV); and saying to Him: "Be my helper, do not forsake me" (Psalm XXVI).

[1 John 3:4] -- Everyone who commits sin also practices lawlessness. Let no one say: sin is one thing, lawlessness another. Let no one say: I am a sinner but not lawless. For everyone who commits sin also practices lawlessness, because sin is lawlessness. The meaning of this statement is more easily understood in the Greek language in which the Epistle was written, for among them lawlessness is called ἀνομία, which means something done against or without the law, as the Greek term for law is νόμος. Therefore, when John says that everyone who commits sin also practices lawlessness, that is ἀνομία, and sin is lawlessness, he clearly indicates that whatever sin we commit is against the law of God, as the Psalmist says: "I have considered all the sinners of the earth to be apostates" (Psalm 118). For all who sin are guilty of transgression, that is, not only those who scorn the knowledge of the written law given to them but also those who corrupt the innocence of the natural law we all received in our first parent, whether through weakness, negligence, or even ignorance. Moreover, the Latin term corresponds to the same reasoning since iniquity is called as if it is contrary to equity, and whoever commits sin also practices iniquity, and sin is iniquity. Because whoever sins clearly exists in opposition to the equity of divine law by sinning. However, lest we who cannot be entirely free from sins and iniquities lose all hope of salvation, let us see what follows about the Lord:

[1 John 3:5] -- And you know that He appeared to take away sins, etc. John the Baptist also bore witness to this about the Lord, saying: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. The Lord was able to take away sins because there was no sin in Him. Many and so great men came into the world perfect, but none of them could take away the sins of the world, because none could be without sin in the world. Therefore, let not Pelagius boast, nor let Julian, his follower, exalt himself, hearing that everyone who has hope in the Lord sanctifies himself. For no one takes away sins, which even the law, although holy and just and good, could not remove, except Him in whom there is no sin. He takes them away by both forgiving what has been done and helping that it may not be done, and by leading to a life where it is utterly impossible for them to be committed.

[1 John 3:6] -- Everyone who remains in Him does not sin. To the extent he remains in Him, to that extent he does not sin. [1 John 3:6] -- And everyone who sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. He speaks of the vision and knowledge of faith, with which the righteous even in this life delight in seeing God, until they reach the very form of His open vision in the future, of which it is said above: For we will see Him as He is. Therefore, everyone who sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. For if he had tasted and seen how sweet the Lord is (Psalm 34), he would by no means separate himself from the vision of His glory by sinning. And to the extent that the righteous recall the abundance of His sweetness and exult in His justice (Psalm 145), to that extent they strive to keep themselves from sins, seeking to harmonize with His immutable and incomparable justice.

[1 John 3:7] -- Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, etc. And above: He purifies himself, it says, just as He is pure. Not that our righteousness or holiness can be equal to the divine, since it is written: There is none holy like the Lord (1 Samuel 2), but just as there is much difference between the face of a man and the image in a mirror, because the image is in imitation, the body in reality, and yet, just as here are eyes, so also there; yet the matter differs, but just as it pertains to likeness, so also we indeed have the image of God, but not the one which the Son, equal to the Father, has. For we also, according to our measure, if we were not in some way like Him, would by no means be called similar. Therefore he sanctifies us, just as He is holy. But He is holy in eternity, we are holy by faith. We are righteous, just as He is righteous. But He in the immutable perpetuity itself, we righteous by believing in Him whom we do not see, so that we may someday see.

[1 John 3:8] -- Whoever commits sin is of the devil. Not deriving the origin of the flesh from the devil, as the Manichean impiously believes of all men, but taking the imitation or suggestion of sinning from him, in the same way that we become children of Abraham by imitating the faith of Abraham. And conversely, the Jews, who are children of Abraham, by abandoning the faith of Abraham, have become

children of the devil, as the Lord says to them: You are of your father the devil (John 8). [1 John 3:8] -- For the devil has been sinning from the beginning. When he mentioned "from the beginning," he added the verb in the present tense, "sins." Because from the beginning when the devil started to sin, he has never ceased, neither restrained by the enormity of present punishments nor the fear of future ones. Therefore, it is said to be justified for anyone who neglects to turn away from sin. But the devil sins from the beginning, from that moment when he himself was made, when also the origin of all creatures began. For it is not to be doubted that angels were created among the first creatures, but while the others returned the glory of their condition to the praise of the Creator, he who was first created, as soon as he beheld the height of his own brightness, swelled with pride against the Creator with his followers, and through that same pride, sinning from the beginning, was transformed from an archangel into the devil.

[1 John 3:8] -- The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil. All sinners are born of the devil in as much as they are sinners. Adam was made by God; but when he agreed with the devil, he was born of the devil, and begot all such as he was. That birth cast down to death; the second birth, which is baptism, raised up to life. That birth brings sin with it; the second birth frees from sin. Therefore Christ became man, to free mankind from sin; of which release it is rightly added: [1 John 3:9] -- Everyone who is born of God does not commit sin, etc. However, this is not said of every sin: for if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (1 John 1), but of the violation of charity, which one who has the seed of God, that is, the word of God, by which he is reborn, cannot commit within himself. For following this, he manifests it, saying:

[1 John 3:10] -- By this, the children of God and the children of the devil are made manifest, etc. Therefore, only love distinguishes between the children of God and the children of the devil. Those who have charity are born of God. Those who do not have it are not born of God. Have whatever else you will, if you do not have this alone, it profits you nothing. If you do not have others, have this, and you have fulfilled the law. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. And the fullness of the law is charity. [1 John 3:11] -- For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that you should love one another. The Lord saying: This is my commandment, that you love one another (John XV). [1 John 3:12] -- Not as Cain, who was of the evil one, etc. He explains how Cain was of the evil one because he himself had evil deeds. Therefore, where there is envy, brotherly love cannot exist; but the sin of the evil one, that is, the devil, is in such a heart, for the devil also cast out man through envy. Therefore, the righteous deeds of Abel signify nothing but charity. The evil deeds of Cain signify nothing but fraternal hatred. It is not enough that he hates his brother and envies good deeds (thus). Hence, men are distinguished. Let no one heed words, but deeds. Why, if he does not do good for his brothers, shows what he has within himself? Men are tested by temptations.

[1 John 3:13] -- Do not marvel, brothers, if the world hates you. He calls those who love the world worldly. Nor should it be wondered that those who love the world cannot love a brother separated from the love of the world and intent only on heavenly desires. For religion is an abomination to a sinner, as Scripture testifies. [1 John 3:14] -- We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brothers. Let no one falsely exalt himself over virtues, let no one measure the poverty of his own strength beyond measure: it gives open judgment, whoever is full of fraternal love, that he belongs to the lot of the elect, because he has earned a portion in the land of the living.

[1 John 3:14] -- He who does not love remains in death. He speaks of the death of the soul. For the soul that sins, it shall die. For the life of the flesh is the soul, and the life of the soul is God. The death of the body is to lose the spirit, the death of the soul is to lose God. Hence it is certain that all who are born into this light are spiritually dead, carrying original sin from Adam, but by the grace of Christ, the faithful are regenerated so that they may live in the soul. Indeed the mystery of baptism and faith benefits only those who sincerely love their brothers, drawing them from death to life. And it must be noted that he does not say, "He who does not love will come into death," as if he were speaking of eternal punishment which awaits sinners in the future, but he says, "He who does not love remains in death." Surely in that very death from which he could rise even in this life, if he perfectly loved his brothers. Hence it is said in the Apocalypse: "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection (Apoc. XX); over these the second death has no power."

[1 John 3:15] -- Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer. If anyone despised brotherly hatred, would he also despise murder in his heart? He does not move his hands to kill a man, yet he is already considered a murderer by God. That man lives, but this one is already judged a killer. [1 John 3:15] -- And you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. Even if he seems to live among the saints through faith here, he does not have eternal life abiding in him. For when the time of retribution comes, he will be damned with Cain who was of the evil one, even he who is guilty of this kind of murder, so as to disagree and dissent and have no peace with his brothers. Note that he does not say absolutely, "A murderer does not have life in him," but, "Everyone," he says, "who is a murderer." Certainly not only he who uses a weapon, but also he who follows his brother with hatred.

[1 John 3:16] -- In this, we have known the love of God, etc. What kind of perfect love ought to be in us, we have learned from the example of the Lord's passion. For no one has greater love than this, that one lays down his life for his friends (John XV). Hence Paul also says: But God commends His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly (Romans V). Blessed Peter was admonished to have this love, when the Lord said: Peter, do you love me? Feed

my sheep (John XXI); he responded that he loved Him, and immediately he heard: But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you, and carry you where you do not wish (Ibid.). This He said (says the evangelist) signifying by what death he would glorify God. For, to the one confessing love, He commended His sheep, teaching him to lay down his life for the same sheep as a testimony of perfect love. He, He said, laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. But perhaps someone says: And how can I have this love? Do not quickly despair of yourself, perhaps it is born, but not yet perfect. Nurture it, lest it be choked. And how, you ask, do I know that love is born in me which I should nurture? Listen to the following:

[1 John 3:17] -- Whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need, etc. Behold where love begins. If you are not yet fit to die for your brother, be at least fit to give from your possessions to your brother. For if you do not sympathize with your brother suffering hardship, indeed the love of the Father, from whom both of you were reborn, does not abide in you. [1 John 3:18] -- My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, etc. Namely, in deed, so that when a brother or sister is naked and in need of daily food, we give them what is necessary for the body. Similarly, when we see them lacking in spiritual gifts, let us provide to their need what we can. But in truth, let us give them these blessings with a sincere intention, and not for human praise, not out of pride, not to the injury of others who, though endowed with greater means, have done no such thing. For any mind infected by such vices cannot dwell in the light of truth, even if it seems to show acts of love to its neighbors.

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

[1 John 3:20] -- For if our heart reproves us, etc. If our conscience itself accuses us within, because we are not doing our good works with the right intention, how can we hide our knowledge from Him to whom it is sung: Behold, Lord, you have known all things, and, Because the darkness will not be darkened from you, and the night will be illuminated like the day (Psalm 138)? [1 John 3:21] -- Beloved, if our heart does not reproach us, etc. If it truthfully answers us that we love, and that genuine love is in us, and not feigned, but sincere, seeking the brother's salvation, expecting no gain from the brother except his salvation; likewise, if our heart does not reproach us, notably when we say in prayer: Forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors (Matthew VI), we have confidence towards God, not in the sight of men, but where God Himself sees in the heart.

[1 John 3:22] -- And whatever we ask we shall receive from Him, etc. This is a great and desirable promise given to the faithful. But if anyone is so foolish and absurd as not to delight in heavenly promises, at least let him fear what wisdom terrifyingly thunders in contrast, saying: He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, his prayer will be abominable (Prov. XXVIII). Nor should it seem contrary to this statement of blessed John that Paul asked the Lord three times for the angel of Satan to depart from him, and could not obtain it (II Cor. XII), but was told: My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness (Ibid.). For even if we do not always receive what we ask for in prayer to our will, yet we receive the reward of devotion for our salvation, just as the same Paul praying to the Lord received not what he sought, but what was useful for him. But, on the contrary, the reprobate are often heard according to their will, even if not for their salvation. Whence also their head, the devil, was heard according to his will when he tempted blessed Job, but to his own damnation. For he was allowed to be tested, so that by being tested, he (the devil) should be punished. Therefore, when John said that whatever we ask we shall receive from Him, if we keep His commandments, as if you were asking what the commandments are, he immediately added:

[1 John 3:23] -- And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, etc. He placed the commandment in the singular number and subsequently added mandates to it, namely faith and love, because clearly these cannot be separated from each other. For neither can we rightly love one another without faith in Christ, nor can we truly believe in the name of Jesus Christ without fraternal love. And he says, let us love one another, as he gave commandment to us. That is, with pure love, not like thieves or perpetrators of any other crimes, who indeed love each other but not chastely. But he gave commandment to us when he said: This is my commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you (John XV). For what is, As I have loved you, except: love for the purpose that I loved you, namely, that you may reach the heavenly kingdoms? And by what reward are these commands of faith and love kept? It follows:

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

Chapter 4

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

[1 John 4:3] -- And every spirit that dissolves Jesus is not from God. He dissolves Jesus who denies either His divinity, or His soul, or His flesh, which the Catholic faith teaches that He truly has. He also dissolves Jesus who, by perversely interpreting or by perverse sight, corrupts the commands and words of Jesus. But also he who disturbs the unity of the holy Church, which Jesus came to gather, strives,

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

[1 John 4:3] -- And this is the Antichrist of whom you have heard that he comes, etc. He comes with the imminent day of judgment, born into the world as that man more wicked than all others, the son of iniquity. And now he is already in the world, dwelling in the minds of those who resist Christ either by profession or by deed, without the remedy of repentance. [1 John 4:4] -- You are from God, little children, and you have conquered him. You have conquered the Antichrist by confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, that is, by having the charity that Jesus Christ taught when he came in the flesh, which he also commends in the Gospel, saying: Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends (John XV). For how could the Son of God lay down his life for us, unless he was clothed in flesh, where he could die? Therefore, anyone who violates charity, no matter what he says with his tongue, by his life denies that Christ has come in the flesh, and he himself is the Antichrist. And you have conquered him, he says. But how have they conquered? Was it by the power of free will? Certainly not. Let Pelagius be silent, let John himself speak:

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

bound by the guilt of the first man unless reborn in Christ through the water of baptism is saved.

[1 John 4:5] -- And the world listens to them. For the hearts of the spiritual cannot be recalled to worldly and carnal senses from the simplicity of faith. But even the Catholics who, hearing that saying of the Lord: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you" (Matthew V); and again: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew VI), say they cannot in any way leave their injuries unavenged: these indeed are proved to be of the world, and hence they speak of the world. And because they do not have the bowels of charity, they keep the inviolate mysteries of faith in vain. Nor can they be without the name of Antichrist, who are shown to be opposed to the commands of Christ.

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

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

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

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

[1 John 4:11] -- Beloved, if God so loved us, etc. What then follows:

[1 John 4:12] -- No one has ever seen God. A greater discussion is needed, since the Lord promises that the pure in heart will see God, and He says of the saints that their angels always see the face of the Father in heaven. John also stated this in his Gospel, where he consequentially adds how God can be seen, saying: The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John I). Blessed Father Ambrose explained it thus: "And no one has ever seen God, because the fullness of the divinity dwelling in God has been seen by no one, comprehended by neither mind nor eyes. For 'seeing' must be referred to both. Hence when it is added: The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him, it is a vision of the mind rather than of the eyes being spoken of. The form is seen, the power is narrated. The former is comprehended by eyes, the latter by the mind. Likewise, blessed Augustine in his book on seeing God, discussing the same question: "Therefore (he says), with the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, narrating with ineffable narration, a rational, pure, and holy creature is filled with the ineffable vision of God. We will achieve this when we have become equal to the angels, for we shall see face to face (I Cor. XIII).

As visible things are seen by the senses of the body, no one has ever seen God: because if He was ever seen in any way, it was not as a natural object is seen, but He willed to be seen in the form He chose, with His nature remaining hidden and unchangeable in Himself. But in the way He is seen as He is (I Cor. XIII), perhaps He is now seen by some of His holy angels. But by us, He will be seen in that way when we shall have become equal to them. And after some propositions, expounding the sentence of Saint Ambrose, Augustine says, "No one has ever seen God, either in this life as He is, or even in the life of angels, as these visible things are perceived by bodily vision, because the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. Therefore, it pertains not to the vision of bodily eyes, but to the vision of minds. And after these many words: "To that vision (he says) by which we will see God as He is (I Cor. XIII), He admonished pure hearts.

Because, indeed, bodies are by customary speech called visible, thus God is called invisible so that He may not be believed to be a body.

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

[1 John 4:12] -- If we love one another, God abides in us. But let no one think that this love, in which God abides, is preserved by a certain lax and lazy gentleness, indeed not by gentleness but by leniency and negligence. This is not charity, but languor; charity should burn fervently to amend and correct. But if morals are good, let them delight; if they are bad, let them be amended and corrected. Therefore, if we love one another with sincere and disciplined charity, God abides in us, manifested indeed by the works of that very charity, even though He does not yet appear visibly. [1 John 4:12] -- And His charity is perfected in us. However, it must be inquired how he says that the perfection of divine charity consists in mutual love, since the Lord in the Gospel pronounces that it is not a great thing if we love those who love us, unless that same love extends also to enemies, about whom he here seems completely silent? Unless perhaps we should love even these enemies with the gaze of fraternal love, so that they do not always remain enemies, but repent from the snares of the devil and join us in a genuine covenant. If we love one another, he says, God abides in us, and His charity is perfected in us. Begin to love, you will be perfected. You have begun to love, God has begun to dwell in you, so that by dwelling more perfectly He may make you perfect.

[1 John 4:13] -- In this we know that we abide in Him, etc. This very thing, because He gave His Spirit to you, how do you know? Ask your own inner parts. If they are full of charity, you have the Spirit of God, as Paul attests, who says: Because the charity of God is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us (Rom. V). [1 John 4:14] -- And we have seen and testify, etc. Let no one despair of salvation, because although the diseases of crimes that weigh one down are great,

the omnipotent physician has come to save. Yet let each remember that the same Son of God who came gently to save, will come sternly to judge. [1 John 4:15] -- Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, etc. He speaks of the perfect confession of the heart, which can neither be corrupted by the deceit of heretics who wrongly persuade, nor be shattered by the tortures of pagan persecutors, nor falter by the examples of fleshly brothers, nor waver by the sluggishness of one's own weakness. For there are those who even deny by words that Jesus is the Son of God, of which many are reported to have been at that very time when John wrote this. Likewise, there are those who confess in words, but deny in actions. Hence it is well stated now: Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God, he said a little above: If we love one another, God abides in us, surely insinuating that whoever has love for his brothers, he truly testifies that Jesus is the Son of God.

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

[1 John 4:17] -- In this, love is perfected with us, etc. He says how each one may test how much he has progressed in love. Whoever has confidence on the day of judgment, love is perfected in him. What is it to have confidence on the day of judgment? It is to not fear the coming of the day of judgment. For when someone first converts himself from wicked deeds by repenting, he begins to fear the day of judgment, lest, namely, when the Just Judge appears, he himself, being unjust, be condemned. However, encouraged by a good life in the process, he learns not to fear what he once feared, but rather to wish for the coming of the awaited one for all nations, hoping that he will be crowned with the saints by the merit of good actions. From where we can have confidence on the day of judgment, he explains more fully by adding:

[1 John 4:17] -- Because as He is, so are we in this world. Can a man indeed be as God? But it should be remembered what was said above, that "as" does not always refer to equality, but it refers to a certain similarity. For when you say, "As I have

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

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

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

[1 John 4:19] -- Therefore, let us love God, etc. Let us love because He first loved us. For how could we love unless He had first loved us? Hence He Himself says in the Gospel: "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15). Thus, we will be perfect in charity if, just as He first loved us for the sake of our own salvation, so we also love Him solely for the sake of love. But because there are those who love God only in words, it is wisely added: [1 John 4:20] -- If anyone says, 'I love God,' etc. How do you prove that he is a liar? Listen: [1 John 4:20] -- For he who does not love his brother, etc. He who loves his brother loves God. It is necessary to love God in order to love love itself. For God is love. And lest anyone dare to say: "And what does it hinder to love God, even if I do not love my brother?" it is rightly added:

[1 John 4:21] -- And this commandment we have from God, etc. For how can you love him whose command you hate? Who is it who says: I love the emperor, but I hate his laws? Not so the true lover of God, but: See (he says) that I have loved your commands, O Lord (Psalm CXVIII). And therefore he confidently adds: Quicken me in your mercy (Ibid.).

Chapter 5

[1 John 5:1] -- Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, etc. Who is it who believes that Jesus is the Christ? He who lives as Christ commanded. Let no heretic, no schismatic say: And we also believe that Jesus is the Christ. For even demons believe and tremble, and they confessed, as we read in the Gospel, and knew that he was the Christ. But because they do not have love and works of truth, they are not from God. [1 John 5:1] -- And everyone who loves the one who begot, loves also the one, etc. With marvelous skill in preaching, blessed John took care to incite us to the love of our neighbor, first noting that everyone who perfectly believes is born of God, then suggesting how just it is that the one who loves God should love also the one born of God. For if anyone is so slow as to neglect to love a man because he is a man, because he endures the same pilgrimage on earth with him, he should be admonished to at least love him for this reason, that he is born of God, that he is made a partaker with him of divine grace, that he expects the same rewards of heavenly life with him. Indeed, this exhortation particularly pertains to those who have not only become our brothers by the companionship of human nature but also by the profession of faith. However, because there are some who love their neighbors but because of kinship or for some temporal benefit, the holy evangelist rightly reveals what true neighborly love is by adding:

[1 John 5:2] -- In this we know that we love the children of God, etc. Therefore, he alone is proven to love his neighbor rightly who is known to burn with the love of the Creator. And lest anyone deceive himself about the love of the Creator, professing that he loves by word alone, after having said: In this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, he added, and we keep His commandments.

[1 John 5:3] -- For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. The Lord Himself says this: If anyone loves me, he will keep my word (John XIV). Therefore, the proof of love is the exhibition of work. For we truly love if we constrain ourselves to His commandments from our will. For he who still flows with illicit desires certainly does not love God, because he contradicts Him in his will.

[1 John 5:3] -- And His commandments are not burdensome. The Lord Himself says: My yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. XI). It should not appear contrary to the words of the Lord or blessed John that the Lord Himself says elsewhere that the gate is narrow, and the way is hard that leads to life (Matt. VII); and the prophet says to Him: For the words of your lips, I have kept hard ways (Psalm XVI); and the apostle: For through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (Acts XIV). For what is inherently hard and rough, the hope of heavenly rewards and the love of Christ makes light. Indeed, it is hard to suffer persecutions for righteousness, but what makes it sweet is that for those who suffer thus, the kingdom of heaven belongs. Hence it is well added: [1 John 5:4] -- For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. Therefore, God's commandments are not heavy because all who devote themselves to them in true devotion equally despise the adversities and blandishments of the world with equal mind, even loving death itself as the entrance to the heavenly homeland. And lest anyone trust that he can overcome the world or its luxuries or labors by his virtue, it is deliberately added:

[1 John 5:4] -- And this is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith. Specifically, that faith which works through love; that faith by which we humbly seek the help of Him who said: In the world you will have tribulations, but take courage, I have overcome the world (John 16). [1 John 5:5] -- Who is he that overcomes the world, etc.? He overcomes the world who, believing that Jesus is the Son of God, combines works worthy of that faith. But does the faith and confession of His divinity alone suffice for salvation? See what follows. [1 John 5:6] -- This is He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. He who was the eternal Son of God became man in time, so that He who created us by His divine power might recreate us by the weakness of His humanity. He came by water and blood, namely the water of baptism and the blood of His passion. He not only deigned to be baptized for our cleansing to consecrate and deliver to us the sacrament of baptism, but also gave His blood for us, redeeming us by His passion, that we might be nourished unto salvation by the sacraments.

[1 John 5:6] -- And the Spirit is He who testifies because Christ is the truth. When the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, bearing witness to Him as the truth, that is, the true Son of God, the true mediator between God and men, the true Redeemer and Reconciler of mankind, who is indeed free from all stain of sin, truly able to take away the sins of the world. As also the Baptist, understanding when he saw the coming of the same

Spirit, said: He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, Upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, He it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God (John 1). Therefore, since the Spirit testifies that Jesus Christ is the truth, He calls Himself the truth, the Baptist proclaims Him as the truth, the son of thunder evangelizes the truth, let the blasphemers be silent, who maintain that this is a phantasm; let the memory of those perish from the earth who deny that He is truly either God or man.

[1 John 5:7] -- Since there are three who bear witness on earth, etc. The Spirit has borne witness that Jesus is truth, when it descended upon Him at His baptism. For if he were not truly the Son of God, by no means would the Holy Spirit have come to Him with such a great manifestation. Water and blood also bore witness that Jesus is truth, when from His side on the cross, after He had died, they flowed out: which could not have happened at all, if He did not have a true nature of flesh. And also this that before His passion, when He prayed, His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground (Luke 22), gives testimony to the truth of the flesh He had assumed. Nor should it be ignored that in this also blood and water bore witness to Him, that from His side after death they flowed out vividly, which was against the nature of dead bodies, and therefore was apt for mysteries, and was fitting as a testimony of the truth, namely showing that the very body of the Lord would live more gloriously after being resurrected, and that His very death would grant us life. This too, that His sweat fell to the ground like drops of blood, bore witness to that holy mystery that He would wash the whole Church all over the world with His blood. Therefore, there are three who bear witness to the truth.

[1 John 5:7] -- And (he says) the three are one. For these remain indivisible, and none of them is separated from its connection, because divinity is not to be believed without true humanity, nor humanity without true divinity. But in us also these are one, not by nature of the same substance, but by the operation of the same mystery. For, as the blessed Ambrose says: "The Spirit renews the abiding, water leads to washing, blood pertains to redemption." For the Spirit has made us sons of God through adoption, the wave of the sacred font washes us, the blood of the Lord has redeemed us. Therefore, one invisible, the other visible testimony, follows the spiritual sacrament.

[1 John 5:9] -- If we accept the testimony of man, the testimony of God is greater, etc. Great is the testimony of man that he gives concerning the Son of God, saying: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand" (Psalm 109). And from the person of the Son himself: "The Lord said to me: You are my Son" (Psalm 2). And likewise from the person of the Father speaking about the Son: "He will call upon me, 'You are my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation'" (Psalm 88). "My Father," because I am the Son of God. "My God," because I am man. "The rock of my

salvation," because I will suffer and be saved from death. "And I (he says) will make him my firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth" (Ibid.). This is a great and true testimony, worthy of all acceptance. The testimony of man concerning the Son of God is great, but much greater is the testimony of God, who has testified himself about his Son when, speaking from heaven, he said: "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3). Great is the testimony of the forerunner, who, bearing testimony about the Son of God, said: "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 3). Greater is the testimony of the Father, who sent the Holy Spirit upon him, whom he was always full of, even visibly.

[1 John 5:10] -- He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony of God in himself. He who thus believes in the Son of God, so as to practice in work what he believes, has the testimony of God in himself. Surely this is because he also may rightly be counted among the number of the sons of God, as the only Son of God promises to his faithful: "If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him" (John 12). If you have deserved to have the testimony of God, if you possess God as a witness of your unblemished faith, what does the infamy of men, what does even persecution harm you? For if God is for us, who can be against us?

[1 John 5:10] -- Whoever does not believe in the Son makes him a liar, etc. In vain the Jews and heretics think they believe in and venerate the Father, as long as they despise Christ and refuse to believe in him. For he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Those who do not believe in the Son, who says "I and the Father are one" (John 10), and when Caiaphas asked, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" (Mark 14), he replied: "I am" (ibid.); but they argue that he is either not the Christ, or not the Son of God, or not similar to the Father, they certainly make the Father a liar, because they do not believe the testimony he has testified about his Son: namely, in what I mentioned before: "You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased" (Luke 3); and even in what he testified when the hour of passion was imminent, while he was praying and saying: "Father, save me from this hour, but for this cause I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name" (John 12), he responded, even the crowd hearing from heaven, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again" (ibid.), truly signifying himself as God the Father in the heavens of him who, as a true man, was about to suffer death on earth.

[1 John 5:11] -- And this is the testimony, that God has given us eternal life. He said, He has given us eternal life. And he who speaks, still living a temporal life and subject to death in the flesh. But he has given us eternal life, just as he has given us the power to become children of God to those who believe in his name. For to know that the power to have eternal life has been given by God, listen to the prophet: "Who is the man who desires life, and loves many days, that he may see

good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit," and so on to the end of the psalm (Psalm 33). Therefore he has given us eternal life, but still to those wandering on earth in hope, which he will give in heaven to those who arrive to him in reality.

[1 John 5:11] -- And this life is in His Son. Namely, in the faith and confession of His name, in the reception of His sacraments, in the observance of His commandments. Hence He Himself also said: No one comes to the Father except through Me (John XIV). And Peter about Him: Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts IV). [1 John 5:12] -- He who has the Son, has life, etc. So that it may not seem too little to say that life is in the Son, he added that the Son Himself is life. Which the Son, glorifying the Father, also showed when He said: For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself (John V). But how the same life which is common to both the Son and the Father also enlightens believers, the same Son elsewhere intimates in prayer to the Father: As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent (John XVII).

[1 John 5:13] -- These things I have written to you, that you may know that you have eternal life, etc. That you may know, he says, that you may be certain of your future blessedness, who believe in Christ, so that you are not deceived by the fraud of those who deny that Jesus is the Son of God, and therefore assert that nothing will benefit those who have believed in His name. And the wondrous madness of heretics, who, though the Son of God is referred to throughout this entire Epistle, still assert that Christ is not the Son but a creature of God. Which in no way do they read, except when His humanity is mentioned.

[1 John 5:14] -- And this is the confidence that we have toward him, etc. He provides us with great confidence to hope for heavenly goods from the Lord, because even in this life, whatever we ask of him in a salutary manner, we obtain, according to what he himself promises believers in the Gospel: "I say to you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark XI). But it must be noted that we are heard by the Lord when praying in such a way, provided we ask for what he has commanded. He himself says, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Matthew VI). Hence, John rightly interposed after saying, "Whatever we ask, we receive from him," by adding, "according to his will." Therefore, we are commanded to have full and undoubted confidence of being heard only regarding those things which align not with our own benefits or temporal comforts but with the Lord's will. This is also to be included in the Lord's Prayer: "Your will be done" (Matthew VI), that is, not ours. For if we remember the Apostle's words: "For we do not know what to pray for as we ought" (Romans

VIII), we understand that sometimes we ask for things contrary to our own salvation, and it is most beneficial for us that those things we ask are denied by him who perceives our benefit more rightly than we do. This undoubtedly happened even to the teacher of the Gentiles himself.

[1 John 5:15] -- And we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, etc. He repeatedly emphasizes the same points previously stated, to encourage us to pray more energetically. But the objection remains that we should ask according to the will of our Creator. This can be understood in two ways: both that we ask for those things he desires, and that we come to petition him in the manner he desires us to be. This means to have faith that works through love (Galatians V), and above all, to remember that gospel command: "And whenever you stand praying, forgive if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark XI). [1 John 5:16] -- Who knows his brother to sin a sin not unto death, etc. These and such things are asked according to the will of the Lord, which pertain to the duty of brotherly love. He speaks, however, of daily and light sins, which as they are difficult to avoid, so also are easily cured. But regarding the manner in which this mutual request should be carried out for sins, James more clearly indicates, saying: Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another that you may be saved (James V). If, therefore, by speaking, or thinking, or forgetfulness, or ignorance you have perhaps erred, go to your brother, confess to him, ask for intervention. If he purely confesses to you, making you aware of his own frailty, and you piously intercede for his errors, correct him. But these things are said about lighter sins. Moreover, if you have committed something more serious, bring in the elders of the Church, and at their examination, punish yourself.

[1 John 5:16] -- There is a sin unto death, etc. A great question arises here, because blessed John clearly shows that there are certain brothers for whom we are not instructed to pray, whereas the Lord even commands us to pray for our persecutors. This can only be resolved by admitting that there are some sins among the brothers which are more grievous than the persecution by enemies. Therefore, the sin of a brother unto death occurs when, after the knowledge of God, which is given through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, someone attacks the brotherhood and is inflamed with envy against the very grace by which they were reconciled to God. However, a sin not unto death is if someone has not withdrawn love from their brother but has not shown the duties owed to brotherhood due to some weakness of mind. Therefore, the Lord on the cross says: Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23). For they had not yet become participants in the grace of the Holy Spirit, nor had they entered the communion of holy brotherhood. And blessed Stephen prays for those by whom he was being stoned because they did not yet believe in Christ, nor did they fight against that common grace. And the apostle Paul, for this reason, I believe, does not pray for Alexan-

der because he was already a brother; and he had sinned unto death, that is, by attacking brotherhood with envy.

But he prays that those who had not severed love but had succumbed to fear be forgiven. For he thus says: Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil; the Lord will repay him according to his works; whom do you also avoid, for he has greatly resisted our words (2 Tim. 4). Then he adds for whom he prays, saying: At my first defense, no one stood with me, but all forsook me; may it not be charged against them (Ibid.). However, a sin unto death can be understood as one for which someone is forbidden to pray, because a sin that is not corrected in this life, its forgiveness is sought in vain after death. But if we carefully inspect the following, the previous sense of this reading seems to align more with its tenor. For it continues:

[1 John 5:17] -- All iniquity is sin, etc. Such is the diversity of sins, he says, that everything which deviates from the rule of equity is counted among the sins, although small sins cannot in any way take away or diminish the merit of righteousness from the just, as long as they are those without which this life cannot be lived, and likewise there are certain sins so discordant with all justice, committed with such iniquity, that without any contradiction, unless they are corrected, they lead their perpetrator to eternal punishment. Concerning which it is written: The soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18). Blessed John's statement clearly repudiates the inept argument of the Stoics, who dared to say against all human sense and to affirm that all sins are equal, saying it makes no difference whether a man steals a human being, an ox, or a chicken, because it is not the animal but the intention that constitutes the crime. Jovinian the heretic followed them, asserting that there is no distinction between marriage and virginity, claiming that those who abstain in no way should be preferred in any privilege of recompense over those who simply partake in feasting. Therefore, everything that is unjustly committed or thought is to be referred to as sin. But there are some sins unto death, about which the Apostle says: For those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5).

[1 John 5:18] -- We know that everyone who is born of God does not sin. Sin, namely unto death. This can be understood about all mortal crimes, and specifically that which violates brotherhood, as we have explained above. But also, the sin unto death can be said to be rightly understood as the sin prolonged up to the time of death, which everyone born of God does not commit. After all, King David committed a mortal crime. For who does not know that adultery and murder deserve eternal death? But yet David, because he was born of God, because he belonged to the society of the children of God, he did not sin unto death, because he immediately obtained forgiveness for his guilt by repenting. [1 John 5:18] -- But the generation of God preserves him, etc. The grace of Christ, by which the faithful are reborn, preserves those who are called holy according to the purpose, so that they

do not commit sin leading to death; and if they err in anything due to the frailty of human condition, it protects them from being touched by the malignant enemy. Furthermore, it must be said, we remain in the generation of God as long as we do not sin; indeed, those who persevere in the generation of God cannot sin, nor be touched by the malignant. For what communion has light with darkness, Christ with Belial (II Cor. VI)? Just as (he says) day and night cannot be mixed, so righteousness and iniquity, sin and good works, Christ and Antichrist, the malignant one and the generation of God.

[1 John 5:18] -- We know that we are born of God, etc. We are of God, regenerated by His grace and baptism through faith, and saved so that we may endure in faith. However, the lovers of the world are subjected to the enemy, either never freed from his dominion by the wave of regeneration, or after the grace of regeneration, returned again to his dominion by sinning. Not only the lovers of the world but also those who are recently born and do not yet have discernment of good and evil, because of the guilt of the first violation, belong to the kingdom of the evil enemy unless by the grace of the kind Creator they are rescued from the power of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1). Hence, he did not simply say that the world is in the evil one but added, And (he says) the whole world is placed in the evil one. For as blessed Ambrose says: "We are all born under sin, whose very birth is in defect." And Pelagius strives in vain to affirm that infants recently born have no need of the grace of baptism to be reborn, because they are said to be born as clean from all stain of sin as Adam was created in paradise, deriving no stain of original guilt from him, and being guilty of nothing until they begin to sin by their own will. But as for us, setting aside the poisons of the Antichrists, which are condemned and expelled from the Church all through this Epistle by the one who drank from the breast of the Lord, the fountain of life, let us hear in the closure the good word of salvation which he pours out for us. Let us observe the works of the supreme King which he tells of. The following ensues:

[1 John 5:20] -- And we know that the Son of God has come, etc. For what could be clearer than these words? What could be sweeter? What could be said more strongly against all heresies? Christ is the true Son of God. The Father of Christ Jesus our Lord is the true God. The eternal Son of God came temporally into the world, who was in the world, and through whom the world was made. Nor did He come for any other reason than for our salvation, that is, to give us the understanding to know the true God. For no one could come to life without divine knowledge, no one could know God except by His teaching: as He Himself says: And no one knows the Son except the Father, nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and whom the Son wills to reveal Him (Luke X). It is implied: both the Father and the Son. For the Son reveals both, who, appearing visibly in the flesh, has deigned to now reveal the secrets of divinity through His Gospel.

[1 John 5:20] -- This is the true God, and eternal life. He had said that the Son is the true God, and repeatedly affirms that this one is the true God. He says that this one is eternal life. Not in the way eternal life is promised to us, which takes us from time and places us so that we never cease living well; but the Son is life, always remaining without the beginning of time, always remaining without end. [1 John 5:21] -- Little children, keep yourselves from idols. You who have known the true God, in whom you have eternal life, keep yourselves from the doctrines of heretics, which lead to eternal death, because, like those who make idols in place of God, they change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of corruptible things with perverse teachings (Rom. I). Keep yourselves from love of money, which is the service of idols. Be careful not to prefer any worldly allurements over the love of the Creator. For this too will be counted among idols, so that having the care and diligence for truth alone, you may deserve to rejoice endlessly in its vision. For the world passes away, and its desire. But whoever does the will of the Lord remains forever (1 John II).

On the Second Epistle of John

[2 John 1:1] -- The Elder to the elect lady and her children, etc. Some think that this and the following epistle are not of John the apostle, but of a certain presbyter John, whose tomb is shown to this day in Ephesus. Papias, too, the hearer of the apostles, and bishop in Hierapolis, often mentions him in his works. But now the general consensus of the Church holds that John the apostle also wrote these epistles, because they truly show much similarity in words and faith with his first epistle, and with similar zeal detest heretics. John calls himself the Elder either because he was advanced in age when he wrote these epistles, or because the name "elder" or "presbyter" was fitting for a bishop due to maturity in wisdom and gravity. Hence Peter also says: "The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (1 Peter 5). The Elder, he says, to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, that is, I love with true love, namely, that which is according to God. Or certainly, I love those whom I consider persevering in the truth.

[2 John 1:1] -- And not I only, but also all, etc. Because he begins to write against heretics, as they have fallen from the truth of the faith, he rightly recalls that there is one love in the Holy Spirit among all who have known the truth, to frighten those who, being few, have separated themselves from the society of the many Catholics with their unanimity and multitude. Indeed, all the Catholics throughout the world follow one rule of truth; but not all heretics and infidels agree in a unanimous error, rather they assault each other no less than they do the path of truth itself. [2 John 1:2] -- For the truth's sake, which dwells in us, etc. He says, we love you and yours for no other reason than for the truth of the faith, which always remains invincible in us, for we find that you also invincibly guard the same.

[2 John 1:3] -- May grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father be with you, etc. Since the heretics of that time, namely Marcian and Cerinthus, denied that our Lord Jesus Christ was truly the Son of God and attributed his beginning to human birth, John rightly recalls him as the Son of God the Father to refute these blasphemers. He also testifies that grace, mercy, and peace are to be given to the faithful by him just as by God the Father, to demonstrate that he is equal and co-eternal with the Father, signifying that his gifts are the same as those of the Father. As the Lord himself, speaking of his and the Father's consubstantiality, said: "For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise" (John V). [2 John 1:5] -- And now I ask you, lady, not as though I were writing a new commandment to you, etc. By this word, he reproaches the heretics, who were attempting to introduce new doctrines, leaving behind what they had heard from the apostles, and thereby disrupting the bonds of brotherly charity. Therefore, he says that he is by no means writing a new commandment but merely urging that the old faith and unblemished charity remain in all things.

[2 John 1:7] -- For many deceivers have gone out into the world, etc. This can also be understood concerning the heretics who indeed confess Jesus Christ incarnate but do not rightly perceive some part of his faith, such as his true flesh, true soul, true divinity, true Father God, true Holy Spirit, omnipotent God, or any other thing that true faith confesses. It can also be taken concerning the Jews, who wholly deny Jesus Christ, swear that Christ has not yet come in the flesh for the salvation of the world, but expect the Antichrist to come for their destruction. [2 John 1:9] -- Everyone who goes ahead and does not remain in the teaching, etc. Note the difference in words, and embrace the truth of the faith. He says that whoever does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God, but whoever remains in his teaching has both the Son and the Father, to show that the Father and the Son are one true God, and to convict those of falsehood who assert that the Son is either not God, or is posterior or inferior to the Father.

[2 John 1:10] -- If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, etc. John speaks thus about schismatics or heretics to be detested, what he taught in words, he also practiced in deeds. For his most holy listener and strongest martyr Polycarp, the bishop of the Smyrnaeans, recounts that at a certain time, while he had entered the baths at Ephesus for the sake of washing, and had seen Cerinthus there, he immediately jumped out and left without washing, saying: "Let us flee from here, lest even the baths collapse in which Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is bathing." The same Polycarp also, when he once met Marcion, who said to him: "Recognize us," he replied: "I recognize, I recognize the firstborn of Satan." Such caution did the apostles and their disciples use in religion at that time, that they would not permit even a word's communion with any of those who had deviated from the truth; as Paul also says: A man that is heretical, after a first and second admonition, avoid, knowing that such a one is perverted and sins, being self-condemned (Tit. III).

[2 John 1:13] -- The children of your sister, the Elect, greet you. Just as he prohibits us to greet the adversaries of the truth, so, conversely, he greets the elect on behalf of the elect, so that the faithless may be detested by all the good, possibly to correct them in this way, and that the peace and love among the faithful may always increase.

On the Third Epistle of John

[3 John 1:1] -- The elder to the beloved Gaius, etc. Who and what kind of person this Gaius was, is revealed in the course of the Epistle. Because clearly he accumulated good deeds in addition to the faith in Christ which he had received, and although he was not sufficient for preaching the word himself, he rejoiced to sustain those who did preach with his resources. We believe this Gaius to be the one whom Paul mentions in the Epistle to the Romans, saying: "Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you" (Rom. XVI). For he was accustomed to be called a host both as one who receives and is received, he was the host of the entire church because he kindly received all who came to him, namely both the preachers and the hearers of the word, as the following parts of this Epistle clearly declare. Hence, John also loves him in the truth, that is, he appears to love him only with the view of eternal goods, not for the sake of temporal benefits. But it seems that Gaius was in Corinth, from the fact that Paul, having stayed in that city, wrote the Epistle to the Romans, whom he greets in his name. And also in the Epistle to the Corinthians, he mentions Gaius as a citizen of Corinth, saying: "I thank my God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that you were baptized in my name" (I Cor. I).

[3 John 1:2] -- Beloved, I pray that in all things, etc. He says, I frequent prayers to the Lord, that you may complete well what you do well. And just as now your soul, that is, the internal intention of your mind prospers, that is, advances in abundant works of alms, and the liberality of a bountiful mind, and the resources of money which you share with the needy, so may you always be able to lead a life full of virtues with the Lord's help. [3 John 1:4] -- I have no greater joy than this, etc. That is, that I recognize those whom I have begotten to God by preaching or baptizing, observing the truth both of right faith and good operation. [3 John 1:5] -- Beloved, you act faithfully in whatever you work for the brethren, etc. You act faithfully, he says, as if he said: Just as you are truly faithful, so you act, showing your faith by your works.

[3 John 1:7] -- For they went out for the sake of the name, accepting nothing from the Gentiles. When it says for the name, it is to be understood as of the Lord Jesus Christ. For the ancients spoke in this manner. And for two reasons, they went out for the name of the Lord, either to preach, evidently coming of their own accord in the name of Him, or because of the faith and confession of the holy name, they were expelled from their homeland by their fellow citizens or relatives.

[3 John 1:8] -- Therefore, we ought to support such men, etc. The blessed John, who had left all things for Christ, aligns himself with the person of believing rich men, so that he might make them more eager to have compassion on the poor and strangers: nor should it be doubted that he could have truly said what we read Paul to have said: "You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. In all things I have shown you that by so laboring you must help the weak, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said: It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20). But he calls them co-workers of the truth, because he who provides temporal support to those who have spiritual gifts, becomes a co-worker in those spiritual gifts themselves. For since there are few who have received spiritual gifts, and many who are rich in temporal things, by this the rich incorporate themselves into the virtues of the poor, while they share their riches with these holy poor. Hence the Lord also says: "Whoever receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and whoever receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward" (Matthew 10).

[3 John 1:9] -- I would have written to the church, but he who loves to have the preeminence among them, etc. Diotrephes, it seems, was an arch-heretic of that time, someone proud and insolent, preferring to usurp the preeminence of knowledge by teaching new doctrines, rather than humbly listening to the commands of the ancient holy Church, which John preached. Hence, aptly, Diotrephes is humorously derided, or interpreted as "mad elegance," to signify with his name even the perfidy of his heart. [3 John 1:10] -- For this reason, if I come, I will bring up his deeds. That is, by openly reproving, I will bring his works to the knowledge of all. Just like the apostle Paul said: "What do you desire? Shall I come to you with a rod?" [3 John 1:10] -- He acts, talking against us with malicious words. It should be noted that we should not arouse the tongues of detractors by our fault, lest they perish, but we should equally bear those that are incited by their own malice, so that merit may increase for us; sometimes, however, we should also curb them, lest while they disseminate evil about us, they corrupt the hearts of the innocent who could have heard good things. Hence John reproved the tongue of his detractor, lest those who could have listened might not hear his preaching and remain in their wrong ways.

[3 John 1:11] -- Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He reveals that he desires him to imitate what is good by adding: [3 John 1:12] -- Demetrius has received a good testimony from everyone. That is, he himself welcomed the weak and supported the needy for the sake of the truth. Therefore, Gaius should also imitate him, so that he too may be worthy of the praise of all. [3 John 1:15] -- Peace to you. The friends greet you, etc. He sends greetings of peace and health to friends, showing by this that Diotrephes and other enemies of the truth are foreign to your peace and salvation.

On the Epistle of Jude

[Jude 1:1] -- Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, etc. Jude the apostle, whom Matthew and Mark call Thaddeus in the Gospel, writes against the same corruptors of the faith whom both Peter and John condemn in their Epistles. [Jude 1:3] -- Beloved, making all diligence to write to you, etc. He speaks of their common salvation, that salvation which was common to both him and them. For the salvation, faith, and love of Christ are one and common to all the elect. [Jude 1:3] -- Exhorting to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Exhorting them not to learn another faith than that which was once delivered to them by the apostles, but always to contend for it even unto death. [Jude 1:4] -- Certain men have crept in, etc. He means into this judgment, into this condemnation, which the impious deserve by their actions. Hence the Lord says: And they shall come forth, those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment (John V), that is, condemnation.

[Jude 1:4] -- Perverting the grace of our Lord into licentiousness. The grace of our Lord has softened the hardness of the law, because when it said, If anyone does this or that, let them be stoned; if anyone does this or that, let them be burned with fire; the Lord, having relaxed the strictness of the law, gave through the grace of the Gospel the license to purge committed crimes through penance and the fruits of almsgiving. But they pervert this grace of His into licentiousness, who now sin all the more freely and easily, as they see themselves less immediately examined by the harshness of the law for their admitted crimes. [Jude 1:4] -- And denying the only Sovereign and Lord, our Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only Sovereign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, just as the Father is the only Sovereign with the Son and the Holy Spirit, and just as the Holy Spirit is the only Sovereign with the Father and the Son. The whole Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is the only Sovereign. For whichever person you name in the same holy and indivisible Trinity, it is the only God. And when you name the whole Trinity together, you name the only true God. Hence it is rightly understood that any heretics who deny that the Father of Christ is the true, good, and just God deny our only Sovereign and Lord. Whoever denies that Jesus Christ is the true Son of God, they also deny our only Sovereign and Lord. Whoever diminishes the power of the Holy Spirit, they also contradict the majesty of our only Sovereign and Lord, for the same Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is undeniably our only Sovereign and Lord.

[Jude 1:5] -- I wish to remind you, although you know these things once and for all. Namely, knowing all the mysteries of the faith and not needing to hear new teachers as if they were holier. [Jude 1:5] -- Because Jesus, saving the people from the land of Egypt, etc., he calls Jesus not the son of Nave, but our Lord, showing first that he did not have his beginning from the birth of the holy Virgin, as the heretics affirm, but according to the mystery of his name, he has existed as the

eternal God for the salvation of believers; then indicating that in the same way he mercifully saves believers, he also justly condemns the unbelievers. For just as he first saved the humble who cried out to him from the affliction of Egypt, he later cast down the proud who murmured against him in the wilderness. He emphasizes this so that we now remember that he saves believers through the waters of baptism, which the Red Sea signified, so that even after baptism he demands a humble life in us, apart from the filth of vices, such as the conversion of the wilderness in its seclusion rightly indicated. Indeed, if anyone defiles this life, whether by deviating from the faith or by acting wrongly, just as if returned in heart to Egypt, he will merit to perish among the wicked rather than reach the promised homeland of the kingdom. Alternatively: Secondly, he destroyed those who did not believe, because as a just judge, he strikes some now and later due to their faults. He frees solely those from punishment whom he transforms in suffering. For those whom present evils do not correct, they lead to future evils.

[Jude 1:6] -- The angels, indeed, who did not keep their own position, etc. And in this sentence, as in the previous one, we must first remember that Jesus our Lord punished the transgressing angels. For He, the man born at the end of the ages from a Virgin, who received the name Jesus by the angel's declaration, being God born from the Father before all ages, arranged every creature with the Father as He willed, and from the beginning condemned the haughty angels under the darkness of this air, reserving them for greater punishment on the day of judgment. And therefore, rightly are they to be condemned who contend that Christ Jesus was not true God, but only a man, and born of both genders. Furthermore, it must be inferred that He who did not spare the sinning angels will not spare haughty men either; but those who did not keep their position, namely, by the grace of adoption made sons of God, but forsook their abode, that is, the unity of the Church, in which they were reborn unto God, or certainly the seats of the heavenly kingdom which they would have received if they kept the faith, He will also condemn severely before the judgment and more severely in the universal judgment.

[Jude 1:7] -- As Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighboring cities, etc. Because He had given an example of condemnation in those who solely deny the Sovereign and our Lord Jesus Christ, by recalling the ruin of the murmuring and unfaithful people in the desert, or those rising against the author of the wicked angels, so He gives an example of the punishment of those who turn the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ into licentiousness, recalling the burning of Sodom. [Jude 1:8] -- Similarly, those who indeed defile the flesh, etc. It must be understood that these, like the Sodomites who defiled the flesh, are also to be damned, like the unbelieving people who blasphemed the majesty of divine power, like the angels who despised the dominion of their Creator.

[Jude 1:9] -- When Michael the archangel was disputing with the devil, etc. From which Scriptures Jude took this testimony is not easily clear. But it should be known that we find something similar to these things in the prophet Zechariah. For he says: Because the Lord showed me Jesus the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan stood at his right hand to oppose him. And the Lord said to Satan: The Lord rebuke you, Satan, and the Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you (Zech. III). But it is very easy to understand in this place that Jesus the high priest desired the people of Israel to be freed from Babylonian captivity and to return to their homeland. But Satan opposed him, not wanting the people of God to be liberated, but rather to be made slaves to enemies and nations; and therefore the angel who was the helper of the people rebuked him and removed him from the injury against that same people. But when Michael contended with the devil about the body of Moses, we have no certainty. However, there are those who say that the same people of God were called the body of Moses, because Moses himself was part of that people; and so Jude, having read what was done about the people, could rightly say it was done about the body of Moses. But wherever and whenever this dispute between the angel and the devil took place, it should be diligently considered, because if Michael the archangel did not wish to say a blasphemy to the devil opposing him, but restrained him with modest speech, how much more should all blasphemy be avoided by men, and especially lest they offend the majesty of the Creator with undisciplined words.

[Jude 1:11] -- Woe to them who have gone in the way of Cain, etc. They go in the way of Cain, who assume for themselves the name of learned men out of envy for their betters to be honored. And they pour themselves out in the error of Balaam, who for the love of earthly goods, attack the truth which they themselves know. They perish in the contradiction of Korah, who descended alive into the inferno, whoever separates themselves from the unity of the Holy Church with the desire of undue primacy, knowing and foreseeing how much evil they carry, yet they descend to the abyss of crimes. And indeed the Lord reproached Cain for thinking of fratricide, but envy did not let him be saved. Balaam, however, desiring to walk against the people of God, the Lord forbade, but the love of money hindered him from obeying. Moses tried to calm Korah, who was boasting, speaking for the Lord; but his pride made him incurable. Thus indeed, thus do heretics act, who, scorned by the rebuke of the holy Church, refuse to be corrected; rather they strive to kill their brothers with the sword of evil doctrine, as Cain did, deceive them with evil counsel as Balaam did, and rise up against catholic teachers as Korah did, to their own destruction.

[Jude 1:12] -- These are spots in their feasts, etc. He who sins is stained: the stain is the very crime that contaminates its perpetrator. And therefore he calls the heretics, whom he accuses, stains; because they not only perish themselves in their feasting and drunkenness, whether carnal or spiritual, but they also destroy and pollute others. [Jude 1:12] -- Clouds without water, etc. The saints are preachers,

who, having their conversation in the heavens, shine with miracles, and rain with words. Of whom it is said to God: And your truth reaches to the clouds. But heretics are clouds without water, who have placed their mouth in the heavens by their proud words; but they do not water the hearts of their listeners with the water of wisdom, who are carried away by the winds, as if by the suggestion of invisible spirits, and are caught up in various errors of vices.

[Jude 1:12] -- Autumnal trees, fruitless, twice dead, uprooted. A tree is dead which does not bear good fruit; but one that has also produced the fruit of evil work is called a twice-dead tree. And if he who refuses to bear the fruit of good work is said to be cut down for his barrenness and cast into the fire; what punishment do you think he deserves, who either by acting wickedly or by perverting others has brought forth the most wicked fruits? Nor is it surprising if fruitless and twice-dead trees are said to be uprooted, which are proven to be. For it is said of the saints: Rooted and grounded in love (Ephes. III). But those who do not fear to uproot themselves from the firmness of love, and justly admit if they seem to have any good fruit. Such men are deservedly compared to autumnal trees, to show their salvation is hopeless. For in the time of autumn not only no fruits are born; but also those that were born and ripened usually fall. To this time are compared those who neglect to bear the fruits of faith themselves and strive to uproot and convert into vain endeavors those good deeds which they see faithful people perform.

[Jude 1:13] -- Wild waves of the sea foaming out their own shame. The wild waves of the sea are perverse teachers, who are always restless in themselves, swollen, dark, and bitter, and never cease to attack the peace of the Church, which is the stability and firmness of the faithful. But such men are rightly said to foam out their own shame, because, like swollen waves, the higher they rise in pride, the more they are confused, dissolving into the lightest foam and perishing.

[Jude 1:13] -- Wandering stars, for whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever. The wandering stars, which are seven, never rise or set in the same place where they did the day before; but sometimes they descend to the lowest part of the winter zone, sometimes they ascend to the highest part of the summer zone, sometimes they return to the middle line of the equinoctial zone. Thus indeed, thus are the heretics, who promising the light of truth, never persist in the same state of teaching; but now in this way, now in that way, shaping their doctrine, they themselves clearly show how contemptible is the display of light which they promise. And indeed among the planets, that is the wandering stars, the most well-known are the moon, the morning star, which is also the evening star. These are sometimes taken in a good sense, when the sun is the Lord, the moon is the Church, the morning star is John the Baptist, who, by being born, preceded the Lord about to be born in the flesh and by providing testimony to the light. But we also read about the sun in a bad sense, as the Lord says about the seeds sown on rocky ground: And

when the sun rose, they were scorched (Matthew 13). Which he himself explains further: When persecution arises because of the word, they quickly fall away (ibid). Therefore, the sun's heat indicates the fervor of persecution. We read about the moon in a bad sense:

A fool is changed like the moon (Ecclesiasticus 27). The morning star in a bad sense: How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star (Isaiah 14)? This can be understood not only about the devil's first fall, but also about his members who fall from the Church through heresy. The evening in a bad sense: You cause darkness to be fall upon the children of earth (Job 38). Because both the Antichrist and his ministers, although they transform themselves as angels of light, do not bear witness to the divine light, like the morning star to the sun; but they rather show the works of darkness to their followers; similar to the star called the evening star, which appearing in the west in the evening, is the precursor of the ensuing night. It says, Wandering stars, for whom the storm of darkness is reserved forever. For rightly they will be sent into the darkness of eternal torment, who were bringing the darkness of errors into the Church of God under the name of light. Deservedly they will be struck by the storm of punishment, who, like sea storms, were disturbing the peace of the faithful.

[Jude 1:14] -- Prophecies were made about them by the seventh from Adam, Enoch, etc. He does not speak against all men, but against all the impious, leaving none of them unpunished. It is added about them: [Jude 1:15] -- And to convict all the impious. He actually states that the seventh from Adam is Enoch, who prophesied these things, to confirm by example what he stated above: Because the impious men who long ago were designated for such judgment had slipped in at his time to subvert the faith of the pious.

[Jude 1:15] -- And to convict (he says) all the impious of all their deeds of impiety, etc. This sentiment is indeed true, because the Lord, coming in judgment, will convict the impious not only of deeds but also of words, and will judge the wicked; however, it should be known that the book of Enoch, from which this is taken, is classified among the apocryphal Scriptures by the Church, not because the sayings of such a great patriarch can be in any way dismissed or should be considered false, but because the book offered under his name does not seem to have been truly written by him, but published by another person under his title. For if it were truly his, it would not be contrary to sound faith. But now, because it contains many incredible things, among which is the account of the giants not having human fathers but angels, it is clear to the learned that the writings that are tainted with falsehood are not those of a truthful man. Hence, this same Epistle of Jude, because it bears testimony from an apocryphal book, was rejected by many in the early times. However, due to its authority, antiquity, and use, it has merited to be counted among the holy Scriptures, especially because Jude took such testimony from an

apocryphal book which is conspicuous for the clear truth of its true light rather than being apocryphal and dubious.

[Jude 1:16] -- These are murmurers, grumblers, etc. The more anyone murmurs and grumbles about the present labors of the Church, the less they have extinguished the desires of the flesh within themselves. But on the contrary, holy Daniel and other men of heavenly desires, as diligently as they only desire the things above, so much more scornfully do they despise all passing things that seem adverse. [Jude 1:19] -- These are they who separate themselves, etc. Therefore, they reprobate themselves by separating from the lot of the righteous, hence they are sensual, that is, following the lusts of their own soul, because they have not merited to possess the Spirit of unity by which the Church is gathered together, by which it is made spiritual. Therefore, they dissolve, because they lack the bond of charity. [Jude 1:20] -- But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, etc. We pray in the Holy Spirit when, pierced by divine inspiration, we seek heavenly aid to receive the goods which we cannot possess by ourselves. Therefore, the blessed Jude instructs us to build ourselves up on the foundation of holy faith, to thus join ourselves as living stones to the house of God, which is the Church; he thus commands us to keep ourselves in the love of God, so that we never presume on our own strength, but hope in the aid of divine protection. Let no one according to the dogma of Pelagius declare that he can be saved by himself, but let us all seek the coming of the Holy Spirit into us, by which inspired we may be able to pray more fervently, lest perhaps we be separated from the society of the Holy Church with those who do not have the Spirit and therefore continue to be sensual.

[Jude 1:22-23] -- And of some have compassion, making a difference: others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh, etc. What he said with fear must be joined to all three things he proposed. Because whoever reproves apostates and shows them as damnable must act in fear, lest perhaps he or his loved ones suffer something similar. And whoever rescues another from the fire of vices by chastising him, must consider himself lest he also be tempted. And whoever shows mercy to a penitent neighbor must also do this carefully, lest perhaps he becomes more severe or more lenient than is just. [Jude 1:23] -- Hating even the garment stained by the flesh. By "garment of the flesh" he means our body. However, we should not hate our body, but we should hate this stained condition in every way, and as much as we can act to make it spotless, so that what is carnal may deserve to become spiritual. Since this is not achieved by our own will, but must be accomplished by the grace of God, it is rightly added:

[Jude 1:24] -- To him who is able to keep you from stumbling, etc. It rightly says here that we will be placed in exultation before the presence of God's glory, whom he previously admonished to serve God in fear. For the more fearful we are about our actions in the present, the more we will rejoice about our deserved reward

in the future. [Jude 1:25] -- To the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord be glory and majesty. This clause attributes equal and co-eternal glory and kingdom to both the Father and the Son, before all and through all ages. It also refutes the error of those who believe the Son to be less or posterior to the Father, when it says that glory, majesty, dominion, and power belong to God the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord. And this not from the beginning of any time, but before all ages, and now and for all ages of ages. Amen.

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.