Commentary on Genesis

The Venerable Bede (AD 673–735)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Introduction

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Preface
To the most beloved and reverend bishop Acca, the humblest of Christ's servants, Bede, greetings.

Many have spoken much about the beginning of the book of Genesis, in which the creation of this world is described, leaving many monuments of their intellect to posterity; but chiefly, as much as our smallness could learn, Basil of Caesarea, whom Eustathius translated from Greek into Latin; Ambrose of Milan, Augustine, bishop of Hippo; the first of whom in nine books, the second following his footsteps in six books, the third in twelve books, and again in two others specifically written against the Manichaeans, have poured forth broad streams of saving doctrine to their readers, fulfilling in them the promise of Truth, which said, "He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). Among these, Augustine also, in his books of Confessions, and in the books he excellently composed against the adversary of the law and the prophets; but also in other scattered works, has made a significant remembrance of the same primordial creation with appropriate exposition. But because these are so extensive, so deep, that they can hardly be acquired even by the wealthier, and so profound that they can scarcely be scrutinized except by the more learned, it pleased your holiness to charge us with the task of gathering from all these, as from the most delightful fields of a widely blooming paradise, what might seem sufficient to meet the needs of the weak. Nor have I shown sloth in executing what you have deigned to command;

but rather, having immediately perused the volumes of the Fathers, I have collected from them and distinguished in two small books what might instruct a still unlearned reader, with which the learned might learn to ascend to a higher and stronger reading of the elders. In this work, I aimed to convey throughout the sense of the aforementioned others and equally Catholic Fathers, sometimes with their own words, sometimes, for the sake of brevity, with mine, sometimes with their names mentioned, sometimes not, as the suitability of the places dictated, and I carried on the work until Adam, expelled from the paradise of pleasure, entered the exile of temporal life; I will also write some things from the subsequent sacred history, if God wills, with the help of your intercession accompanying, while

I first examine the book of the holy prophet and priest Ezra, in which, as prophet and historian, he described the sacraments of Christ and the Church under the figure of the long captivity being ended, the temple restored, the holy city rebuilt, the vessels which had been taken away returned, the law of God which had been burnt rewritten, the people chastised from alien wives, and turned with one heart and soul to the service of God. I will render some of these sacraments clearer to the studious, God willing. Farewell always, most loving bishop, remember us in the Lord.

Chapter 1

[Genesis 1:1] -- In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. By introducing the creation of the world, the divine Scripture aptly and immediately demonstrates the eternity and omnipotence of God the Creator. Indeed, by stating that He created the world at the beginning of time, it designates that He existed eternally before time. And by narrating that He created heaven and earth at the very beginning of creation, it declares that He is omnipotent in such a swift act of operation, to whom wanting is doing. For human frailty, when it operates; for example, when we build a house, we first prepare the material at the beginning of the work, and after this beginning, we dig deep, then lay stones in the foundation, then build walls by adding rows of stones, and thus gradually progressing, we reach the perfection of the intended work. But God, whose hand is omnipotent to execute His work, did not need the delay of time, because it is written: ”He has made all that He desired” (Psalm 113:3). Hence, it was well-pleasing, because in the beginning, God created heaven and earth, to be clearly understood that both were made by God simultaneously, although both cannot be said by man at the same time. Finally, the prophet says: ”In the beginning, you have laid the foundation of the earth, Lord” (Psalm 102:26). However, here it is narrated that the Lord created heaven and earth in the beginning;

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

[Genesis 1:2] -- But the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was over the face of the deep. For why were these things about the earth mentioned, leaving heaven aside, unless because he did not want anything like that to be understood about heaven? For the higher heaven is that which remains always quiet, secluded from all the variable state of

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

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

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

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

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

[Genesis 1:2] -- And the Spirit of God was moving over the waters. It should not be childishly thought that the creative Spirit, of whom it is written, 'the Spirit of the Lord has filled the world' (Wis. I, 7), was hovering over the things to be created in terms of physical location; rather, it must be understood that the divine power was excelling over the creatures, having in its own power when he would enlighten the abyss of waters, when he would separate them into one place so that the dry land would appear, when and how he would arrange the other creatures according to his will, in the likeness of a craftsman, whose will is accustomed to being superior to the things to be made. This also pertains to the distinction of the higher heaven, in which presently everything arranged by the presence of the Holy Spirit was perfectly illuminating: But these things, as in the lower, that is, the creatures of this world, he intended to lead well the beginnings of condition from time to perfection. For Moses also briefly mentioned the higher world for this reason, because he intended to speak about this world in which man was made, for the instruction of the human race, believing it sufficient if he comprehended the entire state and ornament of the spiritual and invisible creature under the single name of heaven, which he said was made in the beginning; he described the bodily, visible, and corruptible creature more extensively in order;

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

[Genesis 1:3] -- And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. It is fitting for the works of God that the adornment of the world should begin with light: for since He Himself is the true light and dwells in inaccessible light, whose most blessed vision the angels in the heavens of heavens began to enjoy immediately after they were created, He also suitably granted to this world the first grace of material light to be its adornment, so that the other things He created might appear from the source of that light. However, that God is said to have spoken, whether for light to come into being or for other things, we must not believe to be by a bodily voice as we do, but rather that it is understood higher that God spoke for creation to be made, because through His Word He made all, that is, through His only-begotten Son: about whom the Evangelist John speaks more plainly: "In the beginning," he says, "was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. It was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him" (John 1:1). Therefore, what John says, all things were made through the Word of God, is what Moses says, that God said: "Let there be light"; said: "Let there be a firmament"; said: "Let there be," and other creatures. This the psalm also says with the addition of the Holy Spirit's person:

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

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

[Genesis 1:5] -- And He called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. This was said for our understanding; for in what language did God call the light Day and the darkness Night; whether in Hebrew, or Greek, or some other language! And so for everything else that He named, it can be asked in what language He named them; but with God, there is pure understanding without noise and diversity of tongues. However, it is said He "called" because He made them to be called, as He distinguished and ordered everything so that Days could be seen and names given. For we say: That householder built this house, meaning he had it built, and many such examples are found throughout the books of divine Scriptures.

[Genesis 1:5] -- And there was evening and there was morning, one day. And there was evening as the light gradually waned following the completion of the period of daytime length, and as the lower parts of the world emerged, which now habitually happens by the circuit of the sun throughout the night; and there was morning as the same light gradually returned over the earth and initiated another day; and thus one day was completed, namely of twenty-four hours, for the commendation of which the Scripture vigilantly admonishes us so that we might learn that the light which was made illuminated the lower parts of the earth by its setting. For if this did not happen, but rather as evening came, the whole light perished gradually, and gradually returned with the morning and rose again, it would not call it a perfect day in the morning of the next day but in the evening of the first day. Hence, it also preferred to say evening and morning, rather than night and day, to imply that the action of the original light was by circuit, which now indeed happens by the circuit of the sun night and day; beyond this only, that after the stars were created, night too is suffused with its own light, although lesser than that of the day. However, during those first three days, the night remained entirely gloomy and obscure. It was completely fitting that the day beginning from the light should be extended into the morning of the following day, so that it might be intimated that the works of Him who is the true light, and in whom there are no shadows, begin from the light and are completed in the light.

[Genesis 1:6] -- God also said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from those which were above the firmament. And it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven, and the evening and the morning were the second

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

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

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

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

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

[Genesis 1:9] -- God said: Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so. The waters that filled everything between the sky and the earth were drawn off, and they gathered into one place, so that the light which shone clearly on the waters for the previous two days might shine more brightly in the pure air; and the earth which had been hidden appeared, and that which had remained muddy and weak under the waters, by their withdrawal, became dry, and was made suitable for receiving seeds. If anyone should ask where the waters that had covered all parts of the earth up to the sky were gathered, let him know that it could have happened that the earth itself, by the command of the Creator, subsided far and wide, providing some parts concave, into which the waters, flowing together, might be received, so that the dry land might appear from those parts where the moisture had receded. It can also not unreasonably be believed that the primary waters, as we mentioned above, were rarer, which covered the land like a mist; but by gathering were made denser, which could be contained in their assigned places, with the dry land appearing in the remaining parts. Although it is clear that there are many seas, he says that the waters were gathered into one place, because evidently all these are connected by a continuous wave and are joined to the great ocean and sea; but even if some lakes appear to be enclosed by themselves, they are said to discharge their streams into the sea through some hidden perforated caverns. For the diggers of wells also prove this,

since the entire earth is filled with flowing waters through invisible veins, which draw their origin from the sea.

[Genesis 1:10] -- And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of the waters He called Seas. Previously, indeed, He called this entire more solid part of the world Earth for distinction, when He said: In the beginning, God created the heaven and the Earth; and the Earth was without form and void. But now, after the world began to be formed, and when the waters retreated to their place, the surface of the Earth appeared. For distinction of the part still covered by waters, the other portion, which was dry, received the name Earth; hence it was called in Latin, because it is trodden by the feet of living creatures. The gatherings of the waters are called Seas, namely for the most part. For also among the Hebrews, all gatherings of waters, whether salty or fresh, are said to be called Seas. Aptly, He who first, because of the continuation of all waters on Earth, stated they were gathered into one place, now also names their gatherings of waters in the plural, and says these are called Seas in the plural, because of their manifold inlets, which themselves acquire names according to the regions.

[Genesis 1:10] -- And God saw that it was good. The Earth was not yet producing herbs, nor had it yet, whether by itself or the waters, brought forth living creatures, and yet God is said to have seen that it was good, with the waters receding and the dry land appearing. Because the Creator of waters and the Estimator of the universe, foreseeing what was to be, praises as perfect that which was still in the beginning of the first work. And it is no wonder for Him, for whom the perfection of things lies not in the completion of the work but in His predestined will.

[Genesis 1:11] -- And He said: Let the earth bring forth green plants producing seed, and fruit trees making fruit according to their kinds, whose seed is in itself upon the earth. And it was so. And the earth brought forth green plants, and bearing seed according to their kinds, and trees making fruit, each having seed according to its kind. And God saw that it was good, and the evening and the morning were the third day. It is clear from these words of God that the world's adornment was perfected in springtime. For it is in this season that green plants usually appear on the earth and trees are laden with fruit; and it is also noteworthy that the first sprouts of plants and trees did not come from seed, but emerged from the earth; for at one command of the Creator, the earth, which appeared dry, was suddenly adorned with plants and dressed with flowering groves, and these immediately produced from themselves fruit and seeds of their respective kinds. For it was necessary that each form of things should first proceed perfectly at the command of the Lord, just as man himself, for whom all things on earth were made, is believed to have been created perfectly, that is, in the age of youth.

[Genesis 1:14] -- And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven." The world proceeds in fitting order from formless matter to suitable form. For after God created heaven and earth and water before any day of this age, that is, the higher and spiritual world with its inhabitants, and the formless matter of this whole world, according to what

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

[Genesis 1:14] -- Therefore God said, ”Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night.” That is, by the division which is explained more clearly in what follows, that the sun indeed should illuminate the day, but the moon and the stars the night. For this addition of lights to the sky, which occurred after the primary light was made, was so that the night would also advance luminously, either by the splendor of the moon, or by the stars, or irradiated by both, which until then had known nothing but ancient darkness. For even if the night often appears dark and blind to us, obviously obscured by nebulous whirlwinds in the air that is closest to the earth, those higher spaces, which are designated by the name aether, which extend from this turbulent air up to the starry heaven, always shine brightly due to the circling stars. But also, by the divine gift, the stars arising in the sky offered their light with added brilliance to the world, so that the distinction of passing times could also be recognized by them; whence it follows.

[Genesis 1:14] -- And let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years. Because, of course, before the stars were made, there were none by which the order of times could be marked by indications; there was nothing from where the meridian hour could be recognized, before the fiery orb climbed the middle of the sky; nothing from where the other hours of day and night could be marked, until the stars divided the sky by equal allotment in day and night. Therefore, the luminaries are for signs and seasons and days and years, not because from their creation times began, which evidently started from the beginning when God made heaven and earth; nor days and years, which are known to have originated from when God said: Let there be light, and there was light; but because through their risings or crossings the order of times and days and years is marked. For that entire earlier period of three days passed with an indistinct course of its progress, having entirely no dimension of hours, since the primary light was still generally filling everything, having no head, which is now received from the sun, no rays shone brighter anywhere, no shadow cooled under any rock or tree. But besides the marking of times, the luminaries are for signs necessary for the uses of this life, which either sailors in steering or those traveling in the sandy deserts of Ethiopia observe, where even a very slight wind quickly flattens all tracks found of travelers. And therefore those going in those regions need no less, than those navigating the sea, signs of the stars by night and day. There are also signs by which we sometimes foresee the quality of the weather to come through their contemplation.

[Genesis 1:15] -- So that they may shine in the firmament of the heaven, and give light upon the earth; and it was so. Indeed, the luminaries always shine in the firmament of the heaven, as we have said, and they flood the nearby regions with bright light, but at appropriate times they give light to the earth. For sometimes the cloudy atmosphere obstructs, so that neither the light of the moon, when it is small, nor the light of the stars appears to the earth; and the rising of the sun, with its greater light, prevents the moon and the stars from illuminating the earth; hence it is named in Latin, because it alone, with the stars and the moon obscured, shines on the earth during the day. [Genesis 1:16] -- God also made two great luminaries. We can understand the great luminaries not so much by comparison with others but by their role, as the heaven is great and the sea is great. For there is also the great sun which fills the world with its heat, or the moon with its light, which, wherever they are in the sky, illuminate all the earth and are equally observed by everyone. An evident example of their greatness is that they appear the same to all people. For if they appeared smaller to those far away and larger to those nearer, it would indicate a limitation of their size.

[Genesis 1:16] -- The greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars; and He set them in the firmament of the heaven. The greater light is the sun, not only in its form whatever it may be, but also in the magnitude of its light, by which it is believed to illuminate both the lesser light and the stars. It is also greater in the power of its heat, which warms the world when it rises, whereas the previous days before its creation had no heat at all: but the fact that the moon is seen as of equal size to the sun is said to be because the sun is much farther from the earth and higher than the moon; therefore, its true size cannot be discerned by us who dwell on the earth. For all things set farther away generally appear smaller.

[Genesis 1:16] -- And he said, ”And the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars; and he set them in the firmament of the heaven”; because although it happens sometimes that the moon and the major stars are seen in the day every month, it is certain that they bring some aid of light not to the day but only to the night.

[Genesis 1:18] -- To shine upon the earth, and to rule over the day and the night, and to divide the light and the darkness. These things can be understood both about the great lights and about the stars with this distinction only, that what is said ”to rule over the day” refers especially to the sun; what is added ”and the night” pertains to the moon and the stars; but what is further stated ”and to separate the light from the darkness” applies equally to all the stars, which carry light wherever they move and leave all things dark where they are absent. But if anyone inquires what kind of light could have existed by day before the creation of the stars, it might reasonably be said that it was such as we see every morning, namely, when the rising of the sun is approaching, but it does not yet appear on the lands, when the day indeed shines with the dim rays of the stars but does not yet glow fully until the sun rises. Hence, there could be no distinction of times then except only of day and night, and rightly it was said when the stars were made: ”And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years.

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

They are also for days, because some accompany the sun in vernal days, others in autumnal. They are also for years, because those that for example now rise in the morning during the vernal equinox, come into the sky at the same equinox in the face of the sky every year; those that now rise in the evening or morning at the solstice, always rise at those times in the same hours. But there are also some stars which the astrologers call planets, that is, wandering stars, which make longer years by their orbit, returning to the same place in the sky. For the star called Saturn is said to return to the same places of the stars in which it was thirty years before, Jupiter in twelve years, Mars in two solar years completing its circuit in the sky, the moon, too, makes a year with twelve of its cycles, that is, of three hundred fifty-four days, and to make its cycle concord with the solar year, every second or third year it adds a thirteenth month, which calculators call the embolismiatic year, and it becomes a year of three hundred eighty-four days.

[Genesis 1:18] -- And God saw that it was good. Necessarily, the holy Scripture often finds that God saw that the things He made were good, so that the piety of the faithful might be informed by this; however, it is not for human understanding, which often is offended even by good things whose causes and order it does not know, to judge visible and invisible creation, but rather to believe and yield to the praising God. For the more religiously one has believed in God before knowing, the more easily they will understand something in progressing. Therefore, God saw that the things He made were good, because what pleased Him to be made so that they would be made, pleased Him when made to last, to the extent that the measure of existing or persisting was established for each thing by such a great Creator.

[Genesis 1:19] -- It was evening, and it was morning, the fourth day. This is that memorable evening in which the people of God in Egypt offered a lamb in celebration of Passover; this

morning, which first saw the yoke of long servitude being cast off and the journey of freedom beginning. It is written, the Lord said to Moses: This month shall be for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. On the tenth day of this month, each man shall take a lamb for the families and households, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight (Exodus 12:2), etc. On that same evening, to complete the legal sacraments of Passover, our Lord initiated the celebration of the mysteries of His body and blood after eating the lamb typologically; at that dawning morning, as an unblemished lamb, redeeming us by His blood, He freed us from the servitude of demonic domination. The day of that full moon, which proceeded on the fourth day in the creation of the world, in the time of the Lord's passion, by the grace of a higher sacrament, fell on the fifth day of Sabbath, so that the Lord was crucified on the sixth day of Sabbath, rested in the tomb on the Sabbath itself, and by His resurrection consecrated the first day of Sabbath, granting us also in it the faith and hope of rising from the dead and entering into eternal light.

[Genesis 1:20] -- God also said: Let the waters bring forth swarming living creatures, and flying creatures above the earth under the firmament of heaven. After adorning the face of the sky with lights on the fourth day, He then adorned on the fifth day the parts of the lower world, namely the waters and the air, with those which are moved by the breath of life, because these elements are also connected to each other and to heaven by a certain kind of kinship. To each other, indeed, because the nature of the waters is close to the quality of the air; hence it is proven that their exhalations thicken, so that they contract clouds, and can support the flight of birds, as Scripture attests: For suddenly the air will gather into clouds, and the wind passing by will dispel them (Job 37:21). Moreover, even on serene nights it dews, the drops of which are found on the grass in the morning; they are also connected to the sky in this way, because the air is so close to it that it sometimes takes its name, as Scripture names the birds of the sky, which are known to fly in the air; and the Lord Himself speaks to the crowds, who had not known the time of His coming from the manifestation of the powers, saying: When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say: A shower is coming, and so it happens; and when the south wind blows, you say there will be heat, and it happens. Hypocrites, you know how to judge the face of the earth and sky, but how do you not judge this time (Luke 12:54)? Where it is certain that he calls the face of the sky nothing other than this changing state of the air.

[Genesis 1:20] -- Therefore God said, let the waters bring forth swarming living creatures, and flying creatures above the earth under the firmament of heaven. And lest by chance, because there are water creatures, which move not by crawling, but by swimming or walking with feet, and there are among the flying creatures those which have wings, yet lack the full use of flying, anyone might think that some kind of flying or aquatic animals were left out in this word of the Lord, it is carefully added:

[Genesis 1:21] -- And God created great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, which the waters brought forth in their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind.

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

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

[Genesis 1:22] -- And God saw that it was good, and He blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. When He said, be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, it pertains to both kinds of creatures made from the waters, that is, both to fish and to birds, because just as all fish can live only in the waters, so too there are many birds which, although they sometimes rest on the lands and propagate their offspring, not only feed from the land but also from the sea, and prefer to inhabit marine dwellings rather than terrestrial ones. But when He adds, and let birds multiply on the earth, it pertains to both kinds of birds, that is, both those that come from the waters and those that feed from the earth, because indeed even those birds which do not know how to live without waters often hide much of the time under the depths of the waters like fish, occasionally tend to come out onto the lands, especially when they are breeding and nurturing their young.

[Genesis 1:24] -- God also said: Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creeping things, and wild animals according to their species. And it was so. After the heavens were adorned with stars, after the air, which due to its proximity deserved the name of heaven, was filled with flying creatures, and after the waters, which are closely connected by nature to the air, were enriched with their animals, from which also rains, snows, hail, and the like derive, it was fitting that the earth too should be filled with its own animals, that is, those born from itself. For it also has a chief connection with the waters, for without their moisture and irrigation, it can neither bear fruit nor even sustain itself, as Peter attests, who says: For the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by God's word (II Peter 3:5). Therefore, God commands the earth to produce livestock, and creeping things, and wild animals; because under the true name of wild animals, everything that rages with mouth or claws, except for serpents, is understood to be comprehended, but the name of creeping things on the earth also includes serpents, and by the name of livestock are designated the animals that are in the use of humans.

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

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

[Genesis 1:26] -- And He said: Let us make man in our image and likeness. Now it appears more clearly why it is said of the created herbs and trees, fishes and birds, also terrestrial animals, that each was made according to its kind and species. For it was foreseen that his creation was coming, who would not only correspond by similarity and species to his own kind but would also be made in the image and likeness of his Creator. The nobility of this creation is also testified by the fact that, unlike the other creatures, God did not say: Let man be made, and man was made; or: Let the earth bring forth man, and the earth brought forth man; but, before he was made, it is said: Let us make man, so that, because a rational creature was being created, it might seem as if he were made with counsel. As if he were formed with effort out of the earth and raised by the inspiration of the Creator with the power of the vital spirit, so that he might exist not by the command of voice but by the dignity of operation, because he was being made in the image of the Creator. When it is said, Let us make man in our image and likeness, the unity of the Holy Trinity is openly commended. Indeed, the same indivisible Trinity was mystically hinted at in the preceding formation of things, when it was said: And God said: Let it be done, and God made it;

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

Renew yourselves, he says, in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who is created according to God in justice, holiness, and truth (Ephesians IV, 23). Therefore, Adam was created a new man from the earth according to God, so that he would be just, holy, and true, subject and humbly adhering to the grace of his Creator, who exists eternally and perfectly just, holy, and true: who because he corrupted through sin this very beautiful novelty of the divine image in himself, and procreated a corrupted offspring of the human race from himself, from where came the second Adam, that is, the Lord Himself and our Creator, born of the Virgin, created incorruptibly and unchangeably in God's image, immune from all fault, and full of all grace and truth, so that He might restore in us His image and likeness by His examples and gifts. For He is truly the new man created according to God, because He took from Adam the true substance of flesh so that He would draw nothing of the filthy vice from

him: whose examples we follow according to our capacity, whose gifts we adhere to, whose commandments we obey; this is to recover the image of God which we lost in the old man, in the new. Therefore, man is created in the image of God not according to the body, but according to the intellect of the mind.

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

[Genesis 1:26] -- It is therefore fitting that his body matches his rational soul, not according to the outlines and shapes of the limbs, but rather according to that which is raised up to heaven to observe the things in the upper parts of the world, just as the rational soul ought to be raised in those things which excel most in spiritual nature, so that it may set its mind on things above, not on things on the earth. But it is well added. [Genesis 1:26] -- And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the beasts, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; because doubtless in this primarily man was made in the image of God, in that he surpasses the irrational beings: being made capable of reason, through which he can rightly govern all created things in the world, and enjoy the knowledge of Him who created all things. If set in this honor he does not understand to do good, he will be compared to the very same senseless animals over which he has been placed in authority, as the Psalmist testifies (Psalm 49:13).

[Genesis 1:27] -- And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him. What was said before, in His image, He doubled for the sake of confirmation, by adding, in the image of God He created him, so that He might more diligently impress upon us what kind of beings we were made by God, and more closely fix in our minds the hope of receiving the image of God, lest, walking in the image of God, we be vainly troubled, hoarding uncertain riches, but instead look for the Lord with longing, when we shall come and appear before His face, certain that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. But now it is said, in the image of God He created him, when it was said earlier, let us make in our image, it signifies not that this plurality of persons makes us believe in multiple gods, but that we accept one God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, on account of which it was said, in our image, and on account of which it is said, in the image of God.

[Genesis 1:27] -- Male and female He created them. It will be explained more fully in the following, from where and how God made the first humans. But now, for the sake of brevity, it is only mentioned that they were created, so that the work of the sixth day and the dedication of the seventh day along with the rest may be explained, and thus freely from time both

this and other omitted matters that were worthy of mention may be said. However, God first created one male and one female alone, not like the other animals, which He created not single but multiple in each kind, so that by this He might bind the human race more closely together with the bond of charity, because it would remember that it was all born of one parent; for the sake of which union the sacred Scripture, when it said: ”And God created man, in the image of God He created him,” immediately added: ”Male and female He created them,” it did not wish to add: ”in the image of God He created them,” for the female too was created in the image of God, according to that which she also possessed a rational mind; but Scripture did not think it necessary to add this about her, considering that in the unity of conjunction it left it to be understood in her as well, and indeed it signified that it should be understood in the entire human race that originates from them.

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

[Genesis 1:28] -- And He blessed them and said: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it. For indeed, this multiplication of humans and filling of the earth could only be accomplished through the union of man and woman. Yet, if the human race grows and multiplies by the blessing of God, how much more worthy of a curse are those who forbid marriage and condemn the arrangement of the heavenly decree as if it were devised by the devil? Therefore, marriages should not be condemned, which were established by the grace of the heavenly blessing for the propagation of the human race and the filling of the earth; but rather, virginity is more to be honored and is worthy of greater blessing, which, after the earth has been filled with people, desires in chastity of mind and body to follow the Lamb wherever He goes—that is, the Lord Jesus in heaven—and to sing a new song, which no one else can sing. For God and our Lord, who in the beginning of the nascent world formed the woman from the side of the man to teach that the earth was to be filled by their mutual union, Himself in the end of the age took a man from the flesh of a Virgin, free from all contamination, filled with the fullness of all divinity, to prove that He valued the glory of virginity more than marriage.

[Genesis 1:28] -- And rule over the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that move upon the earth. It is rightly asked for what use man received dominion over the fish, birds, and all the animals of the earth, or to what uses and comforts these were created for man, if he had never sinned: to whom, as the following scripture declares, these were not given for food but only the herbs and fruits of trees were granted in the first condition, unless it is to be said that God foresaw that man would sin and become mortal by sinning, whom He created immortal, and therefore originally provided those comforts for

him by which mortal fragility could be sustained, namely either food from them, or clothing, or aids for work or travel. And it is not worth asking why man also does not now rule over all animals; for after man did not want to be subject to his Creator, he lost dominion over those which his Creator had subjected to his authority. Finally, we read as a testimony of the first creation that the birds provided service to the holy and humbly serving men of God, the jaws of beasts withdrew and the venom of serpents was not able to harm.

[Genesis 1:29-30] -- And God said: Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed upon the earth, and all the trees which have in themselves the seed of their own kind, to be your food, and to all the beasts of the earth and every bird, and to all that move upon the earth, and in which there is a living soul, that you may have them to eat: It is now clear that before man's guilt the earth produced nothing harmful, no poisonous herb, no sterile tree, since it was clearly said that every herb and all trees were given to men and the birds, and to all the beasts of the earth for food, it is evident that even the birds did not live by snatching weak wings, nor did the wolf plot ambushes around the folds, nor was dust the snake's bread, but all ate in concord the green herbs and the fruits of the trees. Certainly among these must arise the question of how man was made immortal above other creatures, and nevertheless received common earthly nourishment with them. In which we must see that there is one kind of immortality of the flesh which we received in Adam's first state, and another which we hope to receive in the resurrection through Christ. Thus, he was made immortal in such a way that he could not die if he did not sin; but if he did sin, he would die.

Thus the children of the resurrection will be immortal, when they will be equal to the angels of God, so that they will neither die anymore, nor be able to sin. Therefore our flesh after the resurrection will need no nourishment of food, as it will not be subject to deficiency from hunger, or weariness, or any other kind of weakness. But Adam's flesh before sin was created immortal in such a way that, helped by the supports of temporal nourishment, it existed free from death and pain, until, having been brought to that age which pleased the Creator through bodily growths; then having created much progeny of this kind, by the command of God, it would also partake of the tree of life, from which becoming perfectly immortal, it would no longer need the sustenance of bodily food. Thus, therefore, the flesh of the first humans is created immortal and incorruptible, so that they might retain the same immortality and incorruptibility through obedience to God's commandments; among which commandments was also this, that they should eat of the allowed trees of paradise, but refrain from the consumption of the forbidden one, preserving the gifts of immortality granted to them by the consumption of these, and in the touch of that find the ruin of death. Thus indeed our flesh will be incorruptible and immortal at the end; so that, like angelic splendour, it may remain always in the same state, unable to need bodily foods, since in the spiritual life there will be no need of them.

For the fact that angels are read to have eaten with the patriarchs was done not out of need but out of kindness, so that by doing these things they might more sweetly adapt to the men to whom they appeared. The Lord also after the resurrection ate with the disciples, not

because he needed nourishment but to show that he had indeed received true flesh after death.

[Genesis 1:30] -- And it came to be so, that is, that man might rule over all that were created on land or in the waters, and that he might receive the faculty and power to eat from the fruits of the earth along with the birds of the sky and the creatures of the land. [Genesis 1:31] -- And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good. Because it was said of each of God's works individually that he saw that they were good, rightly in conclusion, with all things completed, it was stated with an added emphasis that he saw all that he had made, and it was very good. But the question rightly arises, why of man, when he was made, was it not additionally stated individually: And God saw that it was good, but rather that his creation was more generally praised among the others? Or did God, foreseeing that man would sin and not remain in the perfection of his image, wish to state that he was good not individually but along with the others, as if indicating what was to come? Therefore, man before sin and undoubtedly in his own kind was good, but Scripture omitted saying this, rather to state more what would announce something to come. For God is the best creator of natures, but indeed the most just regulator of sinners, so that even if certain things become deformed through individual sins, yet the entirety always remains beautiful with them.

[Genesis 1:31] -- And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. The number six is considered to be perfect because it is completed by its parts: namely the sixth which is one, the third which is two, and the half which is three. Indeed, one and two and three make up six, which in the units of numbers you will nowhere else find except here, nor in the tens except for the number twenty-eight. Therefore, in six days God completed all the array of the heaven and the earth, so that He who established all things in measure and number and weight, might also teach that His works are perfect in this very number in which He worked. And God completed on the seventh day His work which He had made. In another translation, it is said that God completed His works which He had made on the sixth day. This brings up no question at all because it is declared plainly in the description of what was done in it. But it is rightly questioned how our version, which descends from the Hebrew truth, says that God completed His work which He had made on the seventh day, in which nothing new is mentioned as having been created, unless perhaps we say that He made the seventh day itself then, and in its making completed His work, by which creation of it He finished the measure and number of the days by whose cycle all ages henceforth would proceed to their end. For in the revolution of times, the eighth day is counted the same as the first day.

Chapter 2

[Genesis 2:2] -- So God completed His work on the seventh day, which He had made. Because He ended the sum of the days He had made in it, adding the seventh itself, which He wanted to be called and to be the Sabbath, because he endows it with mystical blessing and sanctification above the others, as the following teaches. Hence also the day of judgment and consummation of the world, because it is to come after the seventh Sabbath, is called the eighth in the Scriptures, namely because only seven precede it. For it is said in the title of the psalms: To the end, in hymns, for the eighth, a psalm of David, which the entire text of the following psalm teaches is written about the day of judgment, in which the prophet, fearing the wrath of the coming judge, exclaims: Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger, nor chasten me in Your wrath (Psalm VI, 1), etc. But also the day of the Lord's Resurrection, although it was to come after so many thousands of days, is also called the eighth in the title of another psalm, because naturally it follows the seventh, so that it exists as the first of the following week, that is, the same one in which God said in the beginning: Let there be light and there was light. The psalm written about the Lord's Resurrection indeed proves it by the one speaking in it, saying:

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

[Genesis 2:2] -- And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. Not as if God rested like a weary man from excessive labor through human frailty after completing the world's creation; but He is said to have rested from all His work, because He ceased to

create any new creature thereafter. For Scripture often uses the term ”rest” to indicate the cessation of work or speech, as in the Apocalypse about the holy animals: And they have no rest day and night saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty (Apoc. IV, 8). Instead of saying they did not cease to always chant this. For the greatest and only rest for the saints in heaven is to declare the praise of the highest Trinity, which is God, with an unfailing voice. It can indeed be understood more profoundly that the Lord rested from all His works, not having any need for those works in which He might rest, since His rest in Himself is always true without beginning and end, but He made His works solely for the sake of His goodness, so that they might rest in Him: which, conversely, is easier to understand when we remember that human necessity particularly insists on daily labors for the purpose of finding rest in its works, as the Lord tells him: By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread (Gen. III, 19). But God, who before the creation of the world had perfect rest in Himself eternally, even after creating the world, did not rest in the works He made, but from all the works He made, as He had no necessity to rest in His creatures, but rather, offering rest to rational creatures, while perfectly always resting in Himself, and being blessed in that good which He alone is to Himself.

[Genesis 2:3] -- And He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. That is to say, with the blessing and sanctification which He more fully intimates to His people in the law, saying: Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord your God, in it you shall not do any work (Exod. XX, 8). And a little further on: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day (Exod. XX, 11). Therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. Indeed, the blessing and sanctification of the seventh day were made as a type of greater blessing and sanctification. For just as by the frequent, or rather daily, sacrifices in the law the blood of the Lord’s passion, which was to be poured out once for the salvation of the world, was signified; so also by the rest of the seventh day, which was always celebrated after the works of six days, that great day of the Sabbath, in which the Lord was once to rest in the tomb, was prefigured, having completed and perfected on the sixth day all His works, by which He was restoring the world, which He had perfect in the sixth day, now lost. On which also, as if recalling His original work, with an open word He declared that He had now completed the salvation of the world.

For when He had taken the vinegar, He said: It is finished, and He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit (John XIX, 30). But this sanctification and blessing of the seventh day, and God’s rest in it after His very good works, signified that we individually tend to the rest of heavenly life after the good works He works in us both to will and to do, in which we may enjoy His eternal sanctification and blessing. Hence, it is well written that the seventh day did not have an evening, because evidently it signifies our perpetual rest in it.

[Genesis 2:3] -- And He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He had rested from all His work which God had created and made. That is, having completed the adornment of the world, He had ceased from instituting new kinds of things. Nor should

this be considered contrary to the saying in the Gospel: My Father works until now, and I work (John 5:17). Clearly responding to those who complained that the Sabbath was not observed by Him, invoking the authority of this ancient Scriptural rest of God. For He had ceased on the seventh day from creating kinds of creatures, because He no longer created any new kinds; thereafter, however, He works the administration of these same kinds which He had instituted even to this very day, so that not even on that seventh day would His power cease to govern heaven and earth, and all things which He had made, otherwise they would immediately fall apart.

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

On the second day, the firmament was made in the midst of the waters; and in the second age of the world, the ark, in which the remnants of the human race and the seed, so to speak, of the following ages were preserved, was placed in the midst of the waters, which on one side all the fountains of the deep were broken up, on the other, the windows of heaven were opened and poured out. But even here the day inclined toward evening, when the nations, having forgotten either the recent wrath or mercy of God, gathered to build the tower of pride; full evening was reached when, with the confusion of languages, the society of the human race was scattered.

On the third day, when the waters had flowed into their places, the dry land appeared, and it was immediately clothed with green herbs and trees; and at the beginning of the third age, when the idolatrous nations had been separated into their places, whose unstable error and vain doctrines of idols were as movable as all winds, rightly signified by the name of the sea, the seed of the patriarchs was separated from their society and was made fruitful with spiritual produce, as the Lord said to Abraham: ”Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, into a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee” (Genesis XII, 1), etc., until he says: ”And in thee

shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In which nation, indeed, orders of the faithful, distinct as green herbs and fruit-bearing trees, were springing from the one and the same land, receiving the heavenly rain of divine words. But here too, the day began to decline towards evening, when the Israelite nation, rejecting both the faith of the patriarchs and the ceremonies of the law given to them, was oppressed by the nations of others, polluted with crimes and burdened by slavery. The evening had already come, when that nation, along with the king whom they had chosen for themselves, neglecting God, was for the most part destroyed by the sword of foreigners.

On the fourth day, the sky received lights, and in the fourth age, the aforementioned people of God became conspicuous with new brightness through the rule of David and Solomon and other kings reigning by God's authority, through that most noble temple which Solomon built for God, through the signs of prophets, which did not cease to flourish in the times of those same kings, and especially through that which the Lord swore to the first and most preeminent of the kings pleasing to him, saying: "Of the fruit of your womb I will set upon my throne" (Ps. 131, 11). Truly, even here the day began to incline toward the evening when afterward both the kings and the people, scorning the temple and the laws of God, were devastated and torn apart by enemies. The gravest of evenings, indeed the night, followed when the entire kingdom was overthrown, the temple burned, and all the people were led captive into Babylon.

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

On the sixth day, the earth produced cattle, wild beasts, and creeping things, on which day God also created the first man, Adam, in His image, and from his side while he slept created the woman Eve. In the sixth age of the world among many wicked ones, who could rightly be compared to serpents and beasts due to their savagery and because they are born to cling wholeheartedly to earthly cares and pleasures, there are also many saints in the people of God who, like clean animals, know how to chew over the word of God, to keep the cloven hoof of discernment on the path, to bear the yoke of good work with divine law, and to warm themselves with the wool of their labor, among whom, as is aptly mentioned in the

Gospel, is the second Adam, the mediator of God and men, in whom the whole fullness of the image of God appeared in the world. From His side, while sleeping on the cross, came forth blood and water, from which sacraments the Church is born and nourished, which is the mother of all living in the true life throughout the world, as the name of Eve signifies. Hence the Lord Himself says of these sacraments: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life" (John 6:54). We now see the evening of this day approaching, when, with iniquity abounding everywhere, the love of many grows cold. But a much darker one than the others will come, when, with the appearance of the man of sin, the son of iniquity, who exalts and magnifies himself above all that is called God or is worshiped, there will be such tribulation that, if possible, even the elect will be led into error. Then will immediately follow the hour of universal judgment of which it is written: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, do you think He will find faith on earth?" (Luke 18:8).

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

[Genesis 2:4] -- These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. With this conclusion, Scripture addresses those who assert that the world always existed without a beginning, or those who believe that the world was indeed made by God, but from material not made by God, but which was coeternal with the Creator and without beginning. For it says the generations of the heavens and the earth are the very order of divine institution, by which their adornment through the works of six days reached that level of perfection which has been described above, according to what the Creator himself said in the Decalogue of His law: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them (Exodus 20:11); what follows, however: On the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth and every herb of the field before it grew, should by no means appear contradictory to the statement of God that has been mentioned, but should be clearly understood because here Scripture put the day for all that time in which the primordial creation was formed. For neither in one of those six days was heaven made, or illuminated by the stars, and the earth

separated from the waters and clothed with trees and grasses; but Scripture, according to its custom, put the day for time, in the same way the Apostle, when he says:

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

On the day, he says, that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew. But if on the day he speaks of, we understand that time is designated, when before any day of this age all things were made simultaneously, the sense appears straightforward that both the grass and all the trees were made in the very substance of the earth causally before they visibly arose or sprouted from the earth. Otherwise, if we take the appellation of the day, as we more consistently judge, for the signification of the time in which this world was made and adorned through six days, we can understand because now Scripture wanted to explain more openly how it previously said that the earth brought forth green grass and bearing seed according to its kind, and the tree yielding fruit. For these things were not produced by the earth at the beginning of things as they are now, where with the presence of irrigation the earth spontaneously brings forth fruit arranged by God;

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

[Genesis 2:5-6] -- For the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground, but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. For who does not see that these things could not have been said about the first creation of the earth when it was still void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the abyss? Was it necessary to narrate about the rain not descending upon the earth at

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

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

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

For if, he says, the vastness of the abyss itself, excluding the part called the sea, surrounds the land with evident height and bitter waves in that only part which the land contains in concealed recesses, from where all fountains and waters distribute themselves in various tracts and veins, and burst forth in their respective places, Scripture wished to call it a

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

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

but there his creation was briefly mentioned, which is more fully expounded here, namely that he was made in the substance of body and soul, of which the body was formed from the dust of the ground, while the soul was created from nothing by God's inspiration; and also the woman was formed from his side while he was sleeping. In which statement, the poverty of the carnal sense is to be avoided, lest we perhaps think that God formed the body of man from the dust with corporeal hands, or breathed into the face of the formed with a mouth and lips so that he might live and have the breath of life. For even the Prophet when he says: Your hands have made me and fashioned me (Psalm 119:73), spoke this in a figurative rather than a literal sense, that is, according to the custom by which men are accustomed to work. For God is Spirit, nor is it believed by the uninstructed that His simple substance is composed of the lineaments of corporal members. Therefore, God formed man from the dust. Whom he commanded to be made from the dust by His word. He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living being, creating in him the substance of soul and spirit in which he might live. For it is rightly understood that God breathed into the face of man the breath by which he would live, just as it is understood above:

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

[Genesis 2:7] -- In the image of God He created him. Male and female He created them. For what is said to be in the image of God is understood correctly only in the soul; what is added as male and female is understood correctly only in the body. Therefore, those who think that the soul is a part of God should not be listened to, as if the soul of man were a part of God, and could neither be taken away by itself nor by anyone, nor be compelled by any necessity to do or suffer anything evil, nor be changed at all for better or worse. But that breath of God, which animated man, was made by Him, not from Him, just as neither is man's breath a part of man, nor does man make it from himself, but it is taken and emitted from the aerial vapor. But God was able to make from nothing, and He could make it living and rational, which man cannot do; although some think that the first man was not animated when God breathed into his face, and he became a living soul, but that he received the Holy Spirit at that time. However credible any of these hypotheses may be shown to be, we should not doubt that the soul is not a part of God, nor that it was created or issued from His substance, but that it was made from nothing.

[Genesis 2:8] -- Now the Lord God had planted a garden of pleasure from the beginning, in which He placed the man whom He had formed. Surely, it is to be believed that God planted the garden from that very beginning, from which He commanded all the earth, after removing the waters that covered it, to produce herbs and fruit-bearing trees, in which He placed man on the sixth day, on which He had also formed him. Nor should there be any doubt that the garden in which the first man was placed, although it holds the type either of the present Church or of the future homeland, nevertheless must be understood according to the literal meaning, to be sure, a most pleasant place, shaded by fruitful groves, and also large, and fruitful with a great spring. However, because our edition, which is translated from the Hebrew truth, has "from the beginning," while in the ancient translation it is put "towards the East," some wish that the location of the garden is in the eastern part of the world, although separated by a great distance, either by the Ocean or by lands, from all the regions now inhabited by the human race. Therefore, not even the waters of the flood, which most deeply covered the entire surface of our world, could reach it. But whether it is there or elsewhere, God knows, we are only permitted to doubt that this place was and is earthly. Finally, with the following words, Scripture more fully explains how God planted it, saying:

[Genesis 2:9] -- And the Lord God brought forth from the soil every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This is understood to have been done on the same day on

which, at God's command, the earth also brought forth the other fruit-bearing trees. But it is necessarily repeated here so that we could understand the nature of the place of paradise, especially because there needed to be a special reference to the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; in one of which was a sign to man of the obedience he owed, in the other the sacrament of eternal life, which he would merit through this very obedience. And indeed the tree of life was so called because it had this power, as we said, divinely received, that whoever ate from it would have their body strengthened with stable health, never changing for the worse through any infirmity or age, nor even falling into decline; but this was done physically in such a way that it was also a figure of a spiritual sacrament, that is, of our God and Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it is said in the praise of wisdom: "She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her" (Proverbs 3:18). And in the Apocalypse of Saint John:

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

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

[Genesis 2:10] -- And a river went out of the place of delight to water the paradise. That is, those beautiful and fruitful trees that shaded the whole land of that region, where it is believed to have been made as in this land we inhabit, the Nile waters the plains of Egypt, wherefore, as we also mentioned above, it was said of the land of Sodom, which was wholly

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

[Genesis 2:11] -- Which then is divided into four heads: the name of the first is Pishon. It is established, according to the most certain authorities, that the sources of all these rivers, which are said to go out from paradise, are known in our land. The source of the Pishon, which is now called the Ganges, is indeed in the places of the Caucasus mountains; but the Nile, which the Scripture, as we have said, names Gihon, now far from Mount Atlas, which is the furthest end of Africa to the west. Furthermore, the Tigris and Euphrates from Armenia, from where it is believed that the place of paradise itself is most distant from human knowledge, and from there the four parts of the waters are divided; but those rivers, whose sources are said to be known, are somewhere beneath the earth and after passing through extended regions erupt in other places, where they are reputed to be known in their sources. For who is unaware that some waters are accustomed to do this? But it is known there where they do not run under the earth for long. Finally, historians report that the same rivers Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile are taken up in many places of the earth, and after some interval reemerging, continue their usual course; which is also believed to be done by the Lord as a sign of that course by which they come to us from paradise through the more hidden channels and longer veins of the earth. Now Phison is interpreted as change of mouth, and rightly, because indeed it shows another appearance for our benefit, that is, much more humble than it has in paradise.

[Genesis 2:11] -- This is the one which encircles the whole land of Havilah. This is the region of India, deriving its name from being settled after the flood by Havilah, son of Joktan, who was the son of Eber the patriarch of the Hebrews, whom Josephus also reports with his brothers possessed the land from the river Cephen and the region of India to the place called Hieria. [Genesis 2:12] -- There is found gold, and the gold of that land is good. Pliny the Elder reports that the regions of India abound in gold veins more than other lands, whence even their islands took the names Chryse and Argyre from the abundance of gold or silver.

[Genesis 2:12] -- In that place are found bdellium and onyx stone. Bdellium is, as Pliny the Elder writes, an aromatic tree, black in color, of the size of an olive, with oak-like leaves, fruit like the fig, and its nature is such that it exudes gum. Its tear is bright, somewhat white, light, sticky, uniformly waxy, and easily softened, with a bitter taste, a pleasant smell, and

more fragrant when soaked in wine. The book of Numbers also mentions it, saying, ”Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color was like bdellium” (Num. XI, 7), that is, bright and somewhat white. Onyx, on the other hand, is a precious stone, so called because it has a whiteness mixed within it like a human fingernail. The Greeks call a fingernail ”onyx.” Arabia produces it, but Indian onyx has sparks with white bands surrounding them; Arabian onyx, however, is black with white bands. The ancient translation has for these a carbuncle and a prasinus stone. The carbuncle, as its name suggests, is a stone of fiery color, which is said to illuminate the darkness of night. The prasinus stone has a greenish appearance and derives its name from the Greek word for leek, which they call ”prason.”

[Genesis 2:13] -- And the name of the second river is Geon. It is the one which goes around all the land of Ethiopia. The name of the third river is Tigris. It goes towards the Assyrians. The fourth river is Euphrates. Therefore, concerning the Euphrates, where it goes or what lands it circles, it does not say, because, flowing nearby the land of promise, it was very easily known to the people of Israel, who were placed there and were to read this. But since a return to heavenly places is open to us through the waters of regeneration, it is sufficiently fitting to the dispensation of divine piety that this very element, through which we are led back to the upper homeland, is common to us with paradise, where the first man was placed, and just as grace invisibly recreates us in preparation for the entrance to the heavenly kingdom: so also invisibly from paradise through the veins of the earth the very water through which we are recreated flows forth to the Lord’s world. Just as the Spirit breathes where He wills, and you hear His voice, but do not know where it comes from or where it goes (John 3:8); thus it was fitting that the water which the Holy Spirit sanctifies those whom He wills, should come to us by unknown ways from paradise, and return to unknown places to us, because it is known to have its origin from the paradise of pleasure.

[Genesis 2:15] -- The Lord God took the man whom He had formed and placed him in the paradise of pleasure, to work and keep it. What He said, to work and keep it, seems to refer to the place where it was said, And there was no man to till the ground. Truly we also, in exposing this word, let us place the words of the holy Father Augustine. ”What was he to work or keep? he said. ”Did the Lord perhaps want the first man to do agriculture? Or is it not believable that He condemned him to labor before sinning? Indeed, we would think so, unless we saw some people work the land with so much delight of mind, that it would be a great punishment for them to be called away from it. Whatever delights agriculture had, then of course it was far greater, when nothing adverse happened to the land or the sky. For it was not the affliction of labor, but the exhilaration of the will, when those things which God created would thrive more joyfully and fruitfully with the help of human work, from which the Creator Himself would be more abundantly praised, who had given the reasoning and skill of working to the soul set in an animal body, as much as would suffice for a willing soul, not as much as the necessity of the body would force the unwilling.

To work and keep it, he said, to keep the same paradise for himself, lest he permit anything for which he would deserve to be expelled from there. Finally, he also receives the command,

so that he keeps the paradise for himself, that is, by observing it, he would not be thrown out from there. For rightly is anyone said not to have kept his property, who acted in such a way that he lost it, even if it is safe for another who either found it or deserved to receive it. There is another sense in these words, which I think should not undeservedly be put first, that God was working and keeping the man himself; just as a man works the ground, not to make it the ground, but to make it cultivated and fruitful, so God works the man whom He created as a man, so that he may be just, if the man does not depart from Him through pride. Therefore God placed the man in the paradise of pleasure, to work and keep it. He was to work, that is, to be good and blessed: and to keep it, that is, to be whole, by humbly submitting himself to His domination and protection.

[Genesis 2:16-17] -- And He commanded him, saying: Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. It is not to be believed that there was anything naturally evil in that tree, as we have also taught above, but man was forbidden from that which was not evil, so that the very observance of the command itself would be good for him and its transgression evil. Indeed, the sinner desired nothing but to not be under the dominion of God when that was committed concerning which only the command of the ruler should have been regarded, which, if it alone were regarded, what else but the will of God would have been loved? What else but the will of God would have been preferred to the human will? Nor can it happen that one's own will does not fall upon man with the weight of a great ruin, if he exalts it by preferring it to the superior will. This man experienced, who scorned the precept of God; and by this experience he learned what difference there is between good and evil, namely, the good of obedience, but the evil of disobedience, that is, of pride, defiance, perverse imitation of God, and harmful freedom. However, the name was given to this in which it could happen from the very matter, as said above.

[Genesis 2:17] -- On whichever day you eat from it, you shall surely die. He did not say, if you eat, you shall be mortal, but on whichever day, he said, you eat from it, you shall surely die. For man died in the soul when he sinned, because God, who is the life of the soul, departed from him, through whose desert the death of the body followed, with the soul departing from it, which is its life, and which death first happened to the same man when he reached the end of the present life not long after he ate the forbidden. It can also be understood that that day in which they sinned brought death upon them, as the Apostle laments saying: For I delight in the law of God according to the inner man; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death (Romans 7:22)? For it is not enough for him to say: Who will deliver me from this mortal body, but from this body of death, he says. As indeed also this: The body is dead because of sin (Romans 8:10); nor did he say there, mortal, but dead, although indeed it is mortal because it is to die, it is not to be believed that those bodies were such, but though they were animal, not yet spiritual, yet not dead, that is, which it must needs be that they should die, which happened on that day when they touched the forbidden tree.

[Genesis 2:18] -- The Lord God also said: It is not good for man to be alone, let us make a helper suitable for him. And this speech of God is to be believed to have been made not by a corporeal voice emitted externally into the air, but on earth by the intention of the divine will, through which all things were created, ineffably, according to what we also taught above, where it is written: Let us make man in our image and likeness. But if someone asks for what purpose this helper needed to be made, let him hear the response of Saint Augustine, whose words we have very often included above, with his name silent. He said that nothing else likely occurs except for the sake of begetting children, just as help is for the seed in the earth, so that offspring may arise from both. For it was also said in the first condition of things: He made them male and female, and blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it. This rationale for the condition and union of male and female and the blessing did not fail even after man's sin and punishment. For it is the same according to which the earth is now filled with men who dominate it. Although it is mentioned that they came together and begot after being expelled from paradise;

nonetheless, I do not see what could have prevented them from having honorable marriages and an undefiled bed even in paradise, with God providing this to those living faithfully and justly and serving Him obediently and zealously, so that offspring would be begotten from their seed without any disturbing ardor of lust, without any labor and pain of giving birth, not that sons succeeded to dying parents, but so that, with those who begot remaining in some form of condition, and taking bodily vigor from the tree of life which was planted there, those who were begotten would be brought to the same condition, until the definite number was completed, if all lived justly and obediently, then that transformation would take place, so that without any death, the animal bodies converted to another quality, because they would serve the spirit ruling them at every nod, and living only by the spirit giving life without any sustenance of bodily food, they would be called spiritual.

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

[Genesis 2:19] -- Therefore the Lord God formed out of the ground all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the sky and brought them to Adam. If anyone is concerned because it does not say "formed out of the ground all the animals of the earth and out of the waters all the birds of the sky," but as if He formed both kinds from the ground, then it is said, "The Lord God formed out of the ground all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the sky"; it should be understood in two ways: either that it is now silent about where He formed the birds of the sky from, because it could also be implied that it is possible He did

not form both from the ground; but let us understand that He only formed the animals of the earth and the birds of the sky, even if Scripture is silent about where He formed them from; or that He calls the ground universally, along with the waters, just as it is called in that Psalm where, after the praises of the heavens were finished, the speech turns to the earth and says, ”Praise the Lord from the earth, sea monsters, and all deeps” (Ps. 148:7), etc. It is not said afterward: ”Praise the Lord from the waters.” For where all depths which praise the Lord from the earth are, there also are reptiles and winged birds which likewise praise God from the earth according to this universal appellation of the earth, according to which it is said of the whole world: ”God who made heaven and earth,” whether from dry land or from the waters, whatever is created is truly understood to be created from the earth.

[Genesis 2:19] -- And he brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. It should not be thought carnally that God brought the animals of the earth or the birds to Adam in the same way a shepherd drives his flock from place to place; but it should rather be understood that just as by divine power He created these from the waters when He willed, in the same mysterious will of His power He brought them to man to be seen whenever He willed, just as all kinds of birds or quadrupeds are read to have come to Noah’s ark, not gathered by the hand of man, but driven by divine command, and entered it, not knowing themselves for what purpose they were coming, but known by the man who, as they came into the ark, received them, God bringing and commanding.

[Genesis 2:19] -- For whatever Adam called every living soul, that was its name; and Adam gave names to all the animals of the earth, to all the birds of the sky, and to all the beasts of the earth. It is evident that Adam in that language, in which all of mankind spoke until the construction of the tower when languages were divided, named the animals of the earth and the birds of the sky. However, at the destruction of the tower, when God assigned to each nation its own distinct language, it is then to be believed that He also distinguished the names of the animals and other things according to each one’s language: although it is also known that later men gave various names to many newfound things per their individual nations as they pleased, and still continue to do so. Finally, about the fish brought to Adam to name, Scripture says nothing, but it is credible that as they were gradually known, they were given different names by men according to the diversity of nations. However, it seems that the first language for the human race was Hebrew, since all the names we read about in Genesis up to the division of languages belong to that language. The reason for bringing all the animals of the earth and the birds of the sky to Adam, for him to see and name them, was to thus show God how much better man was than all irrational animals. For it appears that man, by his very reasoning, is better than beasts, as only reason can distinguish and name them individually, and reason itself is superior.

[Genesis 2:20] -- But for Adam there was not found a helper like him. Therefore, the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam; and while he was sleeping, he took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he had taken from Adam into

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

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

[Genesis 2:22] -- And He brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. Because when the living creatures of the earth and all the birds were brought to Adam, he found none like himself among them. Thus it was fitting that now, when he saw a helper like himself made and brought to him, he acknowledged and exclaimed, saying: This now is bone of my bones. Now indeed, because having seen other living creatures before, he did not see one like himself: Bone indeed of my bones and flesh of my flesh, because other creatures, which having bones and flesh he had seen and distinguished by name, he knew were made not from his substance, but from earth or waters. Just as he had given names to those brought to him, so it remained for him to name her whom he recognized as being like himself and created from his body.

[Genesis 2:23] -- "This, he said, will be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. And as the Latin etymology agrees in these names, since Woman is named from Man, so it also agrees in Hebrew, in which language man is called 'ish', and from this name the derived term for woman is 'ishah'. Hence, that man is called 'ish' in Hebrew is also testified by the name Israel, which is interpreted as 'man seeing God'. But also in the sacraments of Christ and the Church it most fittingly agrees that Adam wanted the woman created from his flesh to share in his own name, because our Lord Jesus Christ equally gave to the Church, which He redeemed with the price of His body and blood and adopted as His bride, the participation of His name, so that from Christ she would be called Christian, and from Jesus, that is, Saviour, she would seek eternal salvation. Nor should it be overlooked that the sleep, or ecstasy, that is, the mental departure, as the ancient Translation has it,

which God imposed on Adam, is rightly understood, as St. Augustine says, 'to be induced so that the mind would first participate in an ecstasy like that of the angelic court, and entering into the sanctuary of God would understand the end. Finally, waking up as if full of prophecy, when he saw the woman brought to him, he immediately uttered what the Apostle commended as a great sacrament: This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She will be called Woman because she was taken out of Man; and what follows.'"

[Genesis 2:24] -- Wherefore a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. Though the Scripture itself testifies that these words were first said by man, yet the Lord in the Gospel declared that God said them. For He said: Have you not read that He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh (Matt. XIX, 4), that we might understand from this that, on account of the ecstasy which preceded in Adam, he could have said this divinely as a prophet. Therefore, if Christ adhered to the Church so they would be two in one flesh, how did He leave the Father, how the mother? He left the Father because, being in the form of God, He did not consider it robbery to be equal with God but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant (Phil. II, 6). This means He left the Father, not because He deserted and departed from the Father, but because He did not appear to men in that form in which He is equal to the Father; just as He left the mother by leaving the Synagogue of the Jews, from whom He was born according to the flesh, and adhering to the Church, which He gathered from all nations, so that in the peace of the New Testament they might be two in one flesh: because, being God with the Father through whom we were made, He became a partaker with us through the flesh, so that we could be the body of that head.

[Genesis 2:25] -- And they were both naked. Adam and his wife, and were not ashamed. "And rightly so, for why would they feel shame when they perceived no law in their members opposing the law of their mind? This consequence followed the sin after the transgression, with disobedience usurping what was forbidden and justice punishing what was committed: for before this happened, they were naked as said, and were not ashamed. There was no movement in the body to which shame was owing; they thought nothing needed covering, for they felt nothing needed restraint."

Chapter 3

[Genesis 3:1] -- But the serpent was more cunning than all the animals of the earth that the Lord God had made. This serpent can be said to be more cunning than all the animals, not by its own irrational soul, but by an external spirit, that is, a diabolic one. For although the transgressing angels were cast down from the heavenly seats due to their perversions and pride, they are still in nature superior to all the animals of the earth due to their excellence of reason. Therefore, it is not surprising that the devil, filling the serpent by his own impulse and mixing his spirit with it, as the soothsayers of demons are often filled, made it the most cunning of all the animals of the earth. Or, as another version has it, the wisest of the beasts according to the irrational living soul. ”Therefore, if it is asked why God allowed man to be tempted, knowing that he would consent to the tempter; the true reason occurs, that man would not have been of great praise, if he could live well because no one would persuade him to live badly, since in nature he had the power to do, and in his power to will not to consent to the one persuading, with the help, however, of Him who resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.

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

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

[Genesis 3:1-3] -- He then said to the woman: "Did God really command you not to eat from any tree in the Garden?" To which the woman replied: "We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden, but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God commanded us not to eat, nor to touch it, lest perhaps we die." "Therefore, first the serpent asked and the woman answered this so that the transgression would be inexcusable, and it could not in any way be said that the woman had forgotten what God had commanded."

[Genesis 3:4] -- But the serpent said to the woman: "By no means shall you die. For God knows that on whichever day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil. What is understood here except that she was persuaded to not want to be under God, but rather in her own power without God, so as not to follow His law as if He envied them, so that they themselves might govern, not needing His eternal light, but relying on their own providence as if with their own eyes to discern good and evil which He had prohibited. In these words, it is notable with what great craftiness the devil's wickedness tempted man from the beginning, who not only taught him disobedience and contempt for his Creator as if envious, but also proposed a belief in the multiplicity of gods, saying: "And you will be like gods," so that if he could not perhaps drag him into disobedience, he would nonetheless corrupt the purity of the faith with which they worshipped the one God; but if he succeeded, he would be victorious in both respects. "But when would the woman believe with these words that she had been divinely forbidden from a good and useful thing, unless the love of her own power and a certain proud presumption about herself was already in her mind, which was to be convinced and humbled through that temptation?

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

[Genesis 3:6-7] -- WHO EATS. AND THE EYES OF BOTH WERE OPENED. "To what? If not to lusting after each other, to the penalty of sin conceived in the flesh's own death, so that now the body would not only be an animal one, which, if they kept obedience, could be changed into a better spiritual state without death, but now the body of death, in which the law in the members would oppose the law of the mind." For they were not created with closed eyes, and they were not groping and wandering blind in the paradise of delights. This is like the passage in the Gospel when it spoke of those two, one of whom was Cleopas, that

when the Lord broke bread for them, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him whom they had not recognized by the way: certainly not walking with closed eyes, but unable to recognize him. To this end, therefore, the eyes of the first humans were opened, to what they were not previously open, although they were open to other things.

[Genesis 3:7] -- When they realized that they were naked, they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves. "The rational soul felt shame about the bestial movement in the members of its body, and it instilled this shame, not only because it felt this sensation where it had never felt anything like it before; but also because that shameful movement came from the transgression of the commandment. For there it sensed the grace with which it was previously clothed, when in its nakedness it did not suffer anything improper. Finally, in that disturbance, they rushed to the fig leaves, which they perhaps found first in their confusion: they sewed loincloths, that is, girdles; and since they lost what was to be glorified, they covered what was shameful. Nor do I think they considered anything in those leaves suitable to cover their now prurient members, but by a hidden instinct they were compelled in that disturbance so that even the signification of such a punishment might be made clear to those unaware, which would convict the doer and teach the reader from what was written." The mystery of this tree under which the Lord saw Nathanael still placed, S. Ambrose briefly but clearly explained by saying: "Blessed are those who tie their horses under the vine and the olive, dedicating the course of their labors to the face of joy. As for me, the fig still, that is, the prurient lust of world delights, shades the lowly, fragile to work, soft to use, barren of fruit." And elsewhere he says: "What is more serious," he says, "is that Adam girded himself with this interpretation where he should have girded himself more with the fruit of chastity, for in the loins where we are girded it is said there are some seeds of generation, and therefore Adam was wrongly girded there with useless leaves, where he marked not the fruit of future generations, but certain sins."

[Genesis 3:8] -- And when he heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, Adam and his wife hid themselves. After noon, those who had failed from the light of truth were accustomed to be visited. Hence, the Lord fittingly ascended the cross at noon, and having promised the thief the abode of paradise, after noon, that is, at the ninth hour, he gave up his spirit; so that indeed at the same hour at which the first man had touched the tree of transgression, the second man ascended the tree of redemption, and at the hour of the day at which he had expelled the transgressors from paradise, he might at that hour bring a confessor into paradise. [Genesis 3:8] -- Adam and his wife hid themselves, he says, from the face of the Lord God in the midst of the trees of the garden. "When God inwardly turns away his face, let us not wonder that these things happen which are similar to madness, through excessive shame and fear, with that secret impulse also not being at rest, so that they did things unknowingly which signify something, for the sake of those who would know in the future for whom these things were written. For they who sin hide themselves from the face of God, because they render themselves unworthy of being seen by divine mercy. They hide themselves from the face of God, not so that the inward judge

does not see their conscience, but so that they may never see the glory of his face except by repenting."

[Genesis 3:9] -- And the Lord God called Adam and said to him: Where are you? Certainly, he did not ask out of ignorance but admonished by rebuking, so that he might consider where he was wherein God was not. For now that he had eaten from the forbidden tree, he was dead in the death of the soul, when it is said that his life had deserted her. "And this indeed pertains to a certain meaning, that just as the command was given to the man through whom it would reach the woman; so the man is first questioned. For the command from the Lord comes through the man to the woman: but the sin from the devil comes through the woman to the man. These things are full of mystical meanings, not by those in whom they were done, but by the most powerful wisdom of God doing this through them; however, let us not now express the meanings, but defend the deeds."

[Genesis 3:10] -- He said: I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself. It is quite probable that God used to appear to those first humans in a human form suitable for such an action through his creation, which he never allowed them to notice their nakedness, lifting their intention to heavenly things, except after the sin when they felt the shameful movement in their members under the penal law of their limbs. Thus, they were affected as humans are accustomed to be under the eyes of others: and such an affection was from the penalty of sin, wanting to hide from him who nothing can hide from. For indeed, what now made them ashamed towards themselves, from which they made coverings for themselves, they feared much more vehemently to be seen by him even so covered, who brought, as it were, human eyes by a familiar temperament through the visible creation to see them.

[Genesis 3:11] -- Therefore, the Lord willing now to punish sinners asked according to the manner of justice more than that penalty, from which they were already compelled to be ashamed, For he says, Who told you that you were naked, unless you have eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat? For from here indeed death was conceived because of God's sentence, who had thus threatened, made the members be noticed with concupiscence: where their eyes are said to be opened, and followed what would cause shame.
[Genesis 3:12] -- And Adam said: The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. "Was it pride that he did not say, I have sinned? It has the deformity of confusion, and it does not have the humility of confession. These things were written for this reason, because these very questions were certainly made for this reason, so that they might be usefully written, that we might notice how men labor with pride today, trying not to refer anything evil they have done except to the Creator, while they wish any good they have done to be attributed to themselves. The woman, he said, whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate, as if she were given to this end, so that she rather should not obey the man, and both should obey God."

[Genesis 3:13] -- And the Lord God said to the woman: Why have you done this? She answered: The serpent deceived me, and I ate. She also does not confess her sin, but refers

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

[Genesis 3:14] -- You shall go upon your breast, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. For indeed, the serpent goes on its breast because all the steps of the devil are wickedness and deceit: for in its breast is indicated the craftiness and deceptions of its thoughts, with which it creeps to those it wishes to deceive, for which the old translation has: You shall creep on your breast and belly. He creeps with his breast when he suggests earthly thoughts to men, whom he desires to make his members. He also creeps with his belly when he excites them, overcome by gluttony, into the heat of lust. For all that creep drag their body over the earth. The body of the devil, moreover, are all the reprobates; and he creeps with his breast and belly when he lowers them by wicked thoughts or the allurements of gluttony and luxury. He devours the earth when he is nourished and delighted by the error of sinners, and by deceiving them, he snatches them into destruction. For just as the saints are often signified by the name of heaven, so by the name of the earth those who savor earthly things are indicated, as it is said to Adam in the following: You are earth, and to earth you shall go, which our translation has: For you are dust, and to dust you shall return. As a sign of this spiritual devouring, the irrational serpent itself, with which the devil used as his instrument to deceive man, is now commanded to eat material earth, to which it previously, along with other animals of the earth, was granted to eat the herbs and fruits of the trees.

[Genesis 3:15] -- I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. The seed of the woman is the entire human race, the seed of the devil are the betrayers, who are depraved with his example of pride and rebellion. His seed is a perverse suggestion; the seed of the woman is the fruit of good work, by which the perverse suggestion is resisted. The enmity mentioned between this serpent and his seed, and how much the human race endures this enmity, and how much enmity all the elect exercise against him by living rightly, is clearer than the sun to all the faithful. A sign of this enmity appears even in the nature of the irrational serpent, which, because of the innate pestilence of its venom, exists always as an enemy to all living creatures and beasts of the earth: it is to be believed that from the time of this curse, and not before, this was implanted in it.

[Genesis 3:15] -- She will crush your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel. The woman crushes the head of the serpent, when the holy Church detects and scatters the devil's wiles and toxic suggestions from the very start, and as if trampling on him, reduces him to nothing.

She crushes the serpent's head when she resists the pride through which Eve was deceived, often humbling under God's mighty hand: for the beginning of all sin is pride. The serpent lies in wait for her heel, because the devil, circling around the Church like a roaring lion, seeks whom he may devour, how he may overthrow the steps of our good actions. He lies in wait for the heel, when he tries to snatch us at the end of this present life. For the heel, which is the end of the body, not unjustly designates the end of our life, which both are also figuratively announced by the condition of the serpent, who is accustomed to be crushed by all who have the power, and he himself does not cease lying in wait to strike the heels of men.

[Genesis 3:16] -- He also said to the woman: "I will greatly multiply your sorrows and your conceptions. In pain you will bring forth your children. These words, spoken figuratively and prophetically, are much more properly understood as referring to the woman of God. Nevertheless, since the woman had not yet given birth, and the pain and groaning of childbirth is only from the body of death, which was conceived by the transgression of the commandment, this punishment is also referred to in the proper sense of the literal word: for it is in what follows: "And you will be under the power of the man, and he will rule over you. It is right to believe that the woman was made otherwise even before sin, except that the man should rule her, and she should live under his power; this servitude, therefore, can be interpreted correctly as one of condition rather than affection, so that even this kind of servitude, by which humans began to be servants to other humans, is found to have arisen from the punishment of sin. Indeed, the Apostle said: "By love serve one another" (Gal. 5:13); but he by no means said: "Dominate one another. Therefore, spouses can serve one another through love, but the Apostle does not allow the woman to dominate the man. This sentence rather pertains to the man, and the husband has merited dominion over the woman, not by nature, but by fault: but if this is not observed, the fault would be further corrupted and increased.

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

[Genesis 3:17] -- But to Adam he said: Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree concerning which I commanded you not to eat, cursed is the ground because of you. In toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life, thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field, etc. Who is ignorant that these are the labors upon the earth of the human race, and that they would not be if the happiness that was in paradise had been maintained? For by the sin of man the earth was cursed, so that it would bring forth thorns, not that it itself would feel punishment because it is without sensation, but in order that the crime of human sin might always be placed before men's eyes, so that they might be reminded to turn away from sins at some point, and turn towards God's commandments. Indeed, poisonous herbs were created for the punishment or the discipline of mortals. And this must be noted because of sin, for we became mortal after sin. We are also mocked through unfruitful trees, so that we may understand how shameful it is to be without the fruit of good works in the field of God, that is, in the Church, and so that we may fear lest God abandon us, because they themselves abandon unfruitful trees in their fields, nor do they apply any cultivation to them.

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

[Genesis 3:19] -- By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return. Here, understand that bread to be the one who says: I am the bread of life, who came down from heaven (John 6:51); which we eat by the sweat of our face, because we ascend to the sight of divine exaltation only through the labor of necessary affliction. [Genesis 3:20] -- And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. And it is established that Adam gave his wife this name by divine instinct, which very fittingly corresponds to the Holy Church, in whose unity alone, which is called Catholic, the door to life is open to all.

[Genesis 3:21] -- And the Lord God made for Adam and his wife tunics of skins, and clothed them. And this was done for the sake of significance, yet it was indeed done. For by this kind of garment, the Lord indicates that they had already been made mortal; for skins, which are not stripped from animals unless they are dead, contain the figure of death. Thus, when man sought to be God against the commandment, not by legitimate imitation, but by illicit pride, he was cast down to the mortality of beasts. And indeed, they had made for themselves girdles of fig leaves, to cover their shame: but God made for them tunics of skins, to cover their whole body: because they, having lost the glory of innocence through transgression, provided for themselves the covering of excuse, by which they transferred their guilt to the Creator: and the Creator himself, by the sentence of a just judgment, punished them with the penalty of mortality in both soul and flesh, having taken away

the state of immutable life. Moreover, the Gospel parable narrates that the merciful father, among other gifts, ordered the first robe to be brought and put on his prodigal son returning to him through repentance, mystically signifying that the elect are to receive the habit of immortality, which they lost in Adam at the beginning of the world, at the end of the world in Christ, and indeed with greater grace.

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

[Genesis 3:22] -- And He said: Behold, Adam has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. On this St. Augustine comments: "Since, he says, it is said in any manner and in any way, God nevertheless declared, it should not be understood otherwise, that He said 'one of us,' except that the plural number is taken on account of the Trinity, just as it was said 'Let us make man,' just as also the Lord about Himself and the Father said: 'We will come to him and make our abode with him' (John 14). Therefore it was repeated upon the head of the proud one by which outcome he desired what was suggested by the serpent 'You will be like gods.' Behold, he says, Adam has become like one of us. For these words are of God, not so much insulting him, as deterring others from being proud in that way; for the sake of those for whom these words were written: He has become, he says, like one of us, knowing good and evil. What else should be understood except that an example of instilling fear was proposed? because not only did he not become as he wanted to become, but he did not even maintain what he had become. On this point elsewhere: 'Nor are they the words of God confessing,' he says, 'but rather reproaching.' Behold, Adam has become like one of us, just as the Apostle says: 'Grant me this wrong' (II Cor. 12:13), surely he wants it to be understood from the contrary."

[Genesis 3:22] -- "Now, therefore, lest he stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever, the Lord sent him out of the paradise of pleasure, to till the ground from which he was taken. The above words are God's; but this action followed because of those words. For alienated from the life he would have received with the angels if he had kept the commandment, but also from the life he was leading in the paradise, in a certain happy state of the body, he necessarily had to be separated from the tree of life, whether because that happy state of the body would continue through it with visible matter by invisible virtue, or because in it there was also the visible sacrament of invisible wisdom. He had indeed to be alienated from there, either as already dying or even as excommunicated, just as also in this paradise, that is, in the Church, men are accustomed to be removed from the visible sacraments of the altar by ecclesiastical discipline."

[Genesis 3:24] -- And he drove Adam out and placed before the paradise of delight the cherubim and the flaming sword, which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. The

ancient translation has it thus: ”And he drove Adam out and placed him opposite the paradise of delight, and appointed the cherubim and the flaming sword, etc. If we follow this, we must believe that this was done for the sake of signification, but still done, so that the sinner, indeed, would dwell in misery against the paradise, where blessed life was also spiritually signified. But what is said that God placed cherubim and the flaming sword before the paradise of delight, this must surely be believed to have been done by heavenly powers in the visible paradise, so that there would be a fiery guard there through angelic ministry, not done in vain, unless it also signifies something of the spiritual paradise, which is surely not to be doubted: and that this guard is well testified to be versatile for the reason that a time would come when it could also be removed. Indeed, it was removed for Enoch, who was translated not to die; it was removed for Elijah, who was taken up in a fiery chariot; it was removed for all the elect, when, after the Lord was baptized, the heavens were opened to him; it is likewise removed for each of the elect when they are washed in the font of baptism;

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

”What use was the tree in paradise that bore the fruit of life? To which Saint Augustine, answering, says: ”For whom,” he says, ”except for those first humans who were placed in paradise? Then, after they were cast out of paradise for the merit of their iniquity, it remained to signify the memory of the spiritual tree of life, which is the wisdom of the blessed and the immortal food of the souls. However, whether anyone now partakes of that food, except perhaps Enoch and Elijah, I do not think it is to be rashly asserted. If, however, the souls of the blessed were not nourished by that tree of life, which is in the spiritual paradise, we would not read that the paradise was granted to the soul of the thief, believing in Christ, on the same day for the merit of piety and the most faithful confession. Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise (Luke 23:43). But to be there with Christ, this is to be with the tree of life, for he himself is indeed the Wisdom, of which it is written: ”She is a tree of life to those who embrace her” (Proverbs 3:18) Amen.

Chapter 4

[Genesis 4:1] -- Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying: I have acquired a man through God. Henceforth, after the delights of paradise and the guilt of the first transgression, the events of this world and mortal life are narrated, when the first-created, who had been made immortal, after receiving the condition of dying, began to generate mortal offspring from themselves, all conceived in iniquity and brought forth from the womb in sins. Cain is interpreted as possession, the reason for which name the mother herself explained when she said: I have acquired a man through God. And with this statement, our mother now teaches us with catholic discernment that although she bore a son subject to the sin of her transgression, nonetheless this which was born a man, that is, which possessed a soul and body, was a gift of divine creation and the first blessing.

[Genesis 4:2] -- Again, she bore his brother Abel. Abel is interpreted as grief or miserable, by which name from the earliest age was foreshadowed the condition of his lamentable untimely death. For, although precious is the death of his saints in the sight of the Lord, having tasted the cup of saving suffering, yet, as far as human view is concerned, it is sufficiently mournful, since we have so far departed from the innocence of the first condition that not even those who were first born on earth as brothers could have peace and concord between themselves, but one envied the other and killed him, while they still existed alone with their parents as masters of the whole world; already clearly foreshadowing that saints in this life would be oppressed by the reprobate and suffer deaths: in this also to be noted that Cain was born first in this life, but Abel was taken away first from this life, because indeed this life is properly the life of the wicked, from which they are precipitated into eternal death; but truly the life of the elect is properly the future life, to which that they may come more happily, they are daily put to death in this life and are considered as sheep for the slaughter.

[Genesis 4:3] -- It came to pass after many days that Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the ground: Abel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. It is clearly shown that both brothers had faith in God, both either naturally admonished or taught by their parents, knew that gifts should be offered to God, and that the guilt of their father's transgression should be washed away by sacrifices offered to Him: but because they did not offer with an equal mind, their offerings were not equally accepted. For I do not

think that Cain sinned in that he either worked the work of a farmer or offered gifts to God from the fruits of the ground, but that he worked with less perfect piety in the care of the flesh, and approached the offering of gifts to God with less perfect devotion. Finally, Noah, a farmer, also worked the land and planted a vineyard: and Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, offered bread and wine from the fruits of the land. Therefore, Cain was not rejected because of the kind of offering. He indeed offered to God from what he himself was accustomed to live by; but he was rejected along with his gifts by Him who looks into the hearts, because of the impious mind of the offerer, as the following words show when it is said:

[Genesis 4:4] -- And the Lord looked with favor upon Abel and his offering, but upon Cain and his offering He did not look with favor. For it does not say: And the Lord looked with favor upon the offerings of Abel and then upon him; but upon the offerings of Cain and then upon him He did not look with favor. It first testifies that the person of the offerer was accepted or not accepted by God, then the gifts were regarded or not regarded. For men are often appeased by the gifts of those with whom they were offended; but God, who is the discerner of thoughts and intentions of the heart, is pleased by no gift more than the pious devotion of the offerer: when He has approved the purity of our mind, then He will also accept the vows of our prayers or works.

[Genesis 4:5] -- And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. How did Cain know that the Lord had looked favorably upon Abel and his offerings, but had turned away his face from himself and his offerings, unless, as some have interpreted, the Lord had set fire to Abel and his sacrifice, but had not set fire to Cain and his sacrifice, that is, by sending fire from the heavens, He accepted Abel's offering, as we often read that this happened to holy men who offered. Cain, on the other hand, had to consume his own sacrifice by fire. For this is what the Apostle seems to mean when he says: By faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain to God, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, with God bearing witness to his gifts (Hebrews 11:4). Therefore, God testified to Abel's offerings by fire, by accepting them from the heavens, through which we are also taught by the Apostle's testimony that Abel's offering was made acceptable to God by his faith's devotion, and on the contrary, we must understand that Cain was rejected because he did not serve his Creator with complete faith.

[Genesis 4:6] -- And the Lord said to him: Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door? Why, he says, are you angry, and why are you tortured with envy of your brother, and you cast your eyes down to the ground? If you do well, if you offer your sacrifice with a pure heart, will you not be accepted, with the Lord looking favorably upon you and your sacrifice? But if you do not do well, sin lies at the door, and by having such a doorkeeper, you will always enter and exit with him accompanying you, instead of the Lord guarding your going in and coming out, just as it is said of wisdom: Whoever rises early to seek her will not toil, for he will find her sitting at his doors (Wisdom 6:15). And again: Because she goes about seeking

those worthy of her and graciously shows herself to them on their ways, and meets them with all providence (Wisdom 6:17).

[Genesis 4:7] -- But his desire shall be for you, and you shall rule over him. In accordance with the idiom of the Hebrew language, he substituted the indicative mood for the imperative, such as you have innumerable times: You shall love the Lord your God, you shall love your neighbor, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness (Deut. VI, 5), instead of saying: Love, and do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness. Therefore, he says, his desire shall be for you, and you shall rule over him; you, because you are of free will, I advise you to combat and restrain the desire of sin, and not let it grow over you anymore, but you shall rather rule over it more righteously by living correctly. This passage in the ancient translation reads thus: If you do well, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do well, sin lies at your door; and its desire shall be for you, but you should rule over it. It is rightly offered to God, who alone must be sacrificed to. But it is not rightly divided when neither places nor times of the offerings nor the things themselves which are offered, nor who offers, nor those to whom the offering is distributed for eating are rightly discerned, so that here division means discernment. In what of these was Cain displeasing to the Lord, it cannot easily be found.

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

[Genesis 4:8] -- And Cain said to Abel his brother: Let us go out into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and killed him. And here the treachery of Cain and the innocence of Abel are both demonstrated: the innocence of Abel indeed, in that he simply followed his elder brother as a brother, being commanded, though his brother was inflamed with hostile hatred towards him; the treachery of Cain, in that he leads his brother outside to kill him, as if he could avoid divine presence in a more secret place: not considering, nor understanding that He who knew the secret things of his heart which reproved him, could also see wherever he withdrew and whatever he did in secret.

[Genesis 4:9] -- And the Lord said to Cain: Where is Abel your brother? Not as if ignorant, to learn from him, but as a judge questioning a defendant whom he will punish.

[Genesis 4:9] -- He answered: I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? A foolish and equally arrogant answer; foolish, since he thought he could deceive Him who knew his sinful conscience and accused him of the crime of fratricide even before it was committed, as the knower of secrets; arrogant, since he denied being his brother's keeper in the manner of an obstinate servant, who by manifestation, if any danger threatened, should have taken care of his younger brother, and as the elder should have protected him from impending adversities.

[Genesis 4:10] -- And He said to him: What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. The blood has a great voice, not only of Abel, but of all those slain for the Lord: for the voice of their blood is the very steadfastness of their faith, the very fervor of their charity, through which they merited to suffer for the Lord. It cries out to the Lord from the earth: for even if they have been slain by the impious in the hidden recesses of the earth as Abel was, nevertheless the very cause of their death is precious and clear in the sight of the internal Judge, justly demanding that those who were unjustly slain in their simplicity be crowned; and those who unjustly persecuted and slaughtered them be condemned. Therefore, the blood of the slain cries out to the Lord, and it is proven that their life before death cried out to Him as well, for they used to say: "I cried out with all my heart, hear me, O Lord; I will seek your justifications" (Psalm 118:145). For he indeed cries out to the Lord in his heart, who asks for great things, who prays for heavenly things, who hopes for the eternal, who seeks from Him not the glory of this world, but the keeping of His justifications. The Apostle teaches where this cry is born in the hearts of the just, saying:

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

[Genesis 4:11] -- Now therefore you are cursed from the earth which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand: when you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. According to the measure of sinners, the just judge also sets the measure of retribution: for Adam, who

ate the forbidden fruit, is by no means himself cursed, but rather the earth is subjected to a curse in his work; not so much that it denies the fruits to the worker, but that it yields its fruits to the cultivator with labor and sweat; and so that the same labor could eventually be finished, and eternal rest entered. He is also subjected to the death of the flesh: which is done by a favor of benevolence, so that he would not always labor and suffer, as only those who cannot grasp how burdensome the life of this present age is would doubt. But Cain, though knowing the transgression of his parents and their condemnation, added to the same transgression a heavier guilt of perfidy, malice, murder, and lying, which he had inherited; hence he is also justly punished with a harsher penalty: first, that he himself should be cursed beyond the earth, which he had polluted with his brother's blood, previously clean; then, that he should sweat uselessly in working the earth, with no abundance of fruits responding to his labors: thirdly, that he should always be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth, not daring to have settled abodes anywhere, or, as another translation has it, live trembling and lamenting on the earth. But he, having heard the penalty of his great curse, did not wish to ask for forgiveness, but doubling sins upon sins, thought his crime so great that it could not be forgiven by God. Finally, he responded to the Lord:

[Genesis 4:13-14] -- My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon. Behold, you cast me out today from your presence, and I shall be hidden from your face and from the face of the earth, and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth. I am cast out, he says, from your sight, and the consciousness of my crime not enduring the very light itself, I shall be hidden to lie in concealment. Or certainly you cast me out from the face of the earth, namely that in any region of the lands, among any inhabitants of this world, I may not be allowed to remain safe and free, and also hidden from your face, that I may no longer deserve to see it, which until today, by often beholding and hearing your voice, I lived more happily. [Genesis 4:14] -- Therefore, everyone who finds me will kill me. Since from the trembling of the body and the fury of the trembling one, or from the instability of the wanderer and fugitive, he understands him to be one who deserves to be killed. But God, not wanting to end his torments quickly with death, nor delivering him to the punishment to which he had condemned himself:

[Genesis 4:15] -- By no means, he said, shall it be so, but whoever kills Cain shall be avenged sevenfold. You shall not die as you think, and you shall not receive death as a remedy, but you shall live for a long time as an example to others, so that they may not dare to sin in the same way; and it is so far from my wish that you be killed by anyone, that if anyone kills you, he shall be punished sevenfold, that is, with the gravest vengeance, for he will not have refrained from shedding blood despite being warned by the severity of your condemnation. For man should not have killed the man to whom God had given life despite his sin, either for the accumulation of his punishment or for the exemplar of caution and correction of others. For often Scripture signifies fullness by the number seven, as in Leviticus: If you walk contrary to me, and will not listen to me, I will add seven times more plagues upon you (Lev. 26:21). And a little later: And I will strike you seven times for your sins (Lev. 26:24), meaning manifoldly. And in a favorable sense the Psalmist says: Seven times a day

I praise you (Ps. 118:164), which is to say in other words: His praise shall constantly be in my mouth (Ps. 34:1). As the ancient interpreters have said: Whoever kills Cain shall pay sevenfold vengeance, this holds the meaning:

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

[Genesis 4:15] -- And God set a sign upon Cain, lest anyone who found him would kill him. The very sign by which it was evident that he would always live as a trembling, groaning, wandering, and fugitive; reminded by his own misery, because he could not be killed by just anyone; but whoever would kill him would either deliver Cain himself from great miseries or, by doing this, would subject himself to a sevenfold vengeance. [Genesis 4:16] -- And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, that is, from the inner parts of those dwellings in which he had been living with his parents until then, and was often accustomed to see Him in angelic form.

[Genesis 4:16] -- He dwelled in the land as a fugitive to the east of Eden. Eden is interpreted as pleasure or delight, by which name paradise is designated, about which it is said above: ”And the Lord God planted a garden of pleasure from the beginning,” which ancient interpreters have thus translated: ”And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden to the east,” from which it is understood that paradise is established to the eastern region of the world. Therefore, Cain dwelled not to the eastern region of paradise, otherwise he would dwell beyond this world, but in the eastern parts of the world, where paradise is nearby, although inaccessible and unknown to mortals. All things that are said literally about the justice or martyrdom of Abel, and about the depravity and condemnation of Cain, mystically testify to the passion of the Lord, the incarnation and persecution, and the destruction of the Jews. For the Lord says to those same Jews: ”If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me as well; for he wrote about me” (John 5:46). Thus Cain was the firstborn, Abel the second. The people of the Jews were God’s first possession, as He Himself said to Moses, ”Israel is my son, my firstborn” (Exodus 4:22); the second is the people of the gentiles, for whom especially the Son of God deemed it worthy to be born in the flesh and to die. Abel was a shepherd of sheep, and the Lord said: ”I am the good shepherd” (John 10:14). But Cain was a farmer, because the people of the Jews were involved in earthly and temporal

affairs, either pursuing these alone or serving the Lord with these in mind, as they carnally understood those things which the prophets spoke mystically about the heavenly promise, saying: "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land" (Isaiah 1:19).

[Genesis 4:3] -- For Cain offered gifts to the Lord from the fruits of the earth. For that people believed they pleased the Lord through good works, which they pursued for the sake of earthly reward. Or certainly, they offered gifts from the fruits of the earth when that people believed themselves to be justified through earthly circumcision, earthly Sabbath, earthly unleavened bread, and earthly Passover, despising the righteousness of faith which is in Christ.

[Genesis 4:4] -- Abel also offered from the firstborn of his flock and their fat. For the Lord, interceding with the Father on behalf of the saints, offers their vows to Him according to the form of the assumed humanity, that is, good works and the fat of inner love. For these are indeed the firstborn of his flock and their fat. The Lord looks upon Abel, saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased (Matt. XVII, 5). He looks also upon his gifts, because the life of the elect which he offers to Him gratefully, God the Father accepts, and as if by fire from heaven He ignites his sacrifice, because He inflames with the power of His spirit those who have taken care to mortify themselves for the Lord, so that they may more abundantly burn in the heavenly regions, indeed so that they may become wholly heavenly. But to Cain and his gifts, He does not look, because rebuking the carnal works of the Jews, He says through the prophet: To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? says the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of goats (Isa. I, 11). And a little later: Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, be clean, that is, through faith in the grace of Christ.

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

[Genesis 4:8] -- Cain led his brother out into the field and killed him. The Jewish people led the Lord out of their city Jerusalem and crucified Him at Calvary; from both instances of this ordeal we are reminded typically to go out to the Lord outside the camp, bearing His reproach, that is, leaving behind the fellowship of the world and the company of the wicked, we should willingly endure all worldly contempt for the love of our heavenly homeland. When the Lord asked Cain where his brother Abel was, he replied that he did not know, and that it was not his duty to be his brother's keeper. Even to this day, when the faithful, the members of Christ, inquire of the Jews about Christ, they say they do not know. They would themselves have been keepers of Christ if they had been willing to receive and

uphold the Christian faith. For whoever keeps Christ in their heart does not say, like Cain, that they do not know their brother, or that they are not their brother's keeper.

[Genesis 4:10] -- God said to Cain: What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries to me from the ground. In the same way, the divine voice in the holy Scriptures reproaches the Jews. For Christ's blood speaks with a great voice on the earth, when all the nations respond Amen upon receiving it. This is the clear voice of the blood which the blood itself expresses from the mouths of the faithful redeemed by the same blood of which the Apostle rightly says to the faithful: You have come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks better than the blood of Abel (Heb. 12:24). For the blood of Christ certainly speaks better than that of Abel, since the latter cried to the Lord in condemnation of the fratricide, but the former raises its voice to heaven for the salvation of Christ's faithful brethren.

[Genesis 4:11] -- Now therefore you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. He refers to the earth as the Church, for no other earth but she opens her mouth to taste in the mystery the blood of Christ that was shed by the hands of the Jewish people. Over this Church, the same people are accursed: for as much as she more closely adheres to the love of her Creator, so much more gravely does she understand the nation opposed to Him to be cursed, even if they, still in their pride, boast themselves as specially blessed.

[Genesis 4:12] -- When you have worked it, it will not give you its fruits. The same people worked that land which the head of the Church Christ bore, that is, in his flesh our salvation, by crucifying him who died for our sins, and that land did not give him its fruits, because he was not justified by faith in his resurrection who rose for our justification: hence, neither did the resurrected one appear to those by whom he was crucified, like Cain working the land, to sow that grain, not showing the same land the fruit of its virtue. But the Jews worked the land which is the Church, acting through their persecutions so that it might more greatly progress in God: often also raging against many unto death, but they themselves did not merit to see the fruit of the faith and precious death of those. But what Cain answered to the Lord was, "My iniquity is greater than to deserve forgiveness. Behold you cast me today from the face of the earth, and I shall be hidden from your face, and I shall be a wanderer and a fugitive on the earth: it is evident more clearly than light about the Jewish people, because the iniquity by which they killed the Son of God is greater than to deserve forgiveness; and hence whoever of them receive forgiveness repenting, these truly beyond their merit are saved by the divine grace of piety.

It is evident that he was cast out from the face of the earth, that is, from the lot of the holy Church, and hidden from the face of divine contemplation; what he himself extended, when he veiled the face of Christ in the passion, which also the heavenly signs extended to them, when, he being crucified, the sun hid its rays of light, and with the kingdom lost, a fugitive and wanderer he was dispersed through the world, fearing lest he be deprived of even temporal life, and as if saying with Cain: "Everyone who finds me will kill me. But

what did God answer to him? “It shall not be so,” but “whoever kills Cain will pay sevenfold vengeance,” that is, the impious race of carnal Jews will not perish by bodily death. For whoever will thus destroy them will pay sevenfold vengeance, that is, will remove from them the sevenfold vengeance with which they were bound for the guilt of the slain Christ, so that in this whole time, which is turned by the sevenfold number of days, the more because the Jewish nation did not perish, it may appear clearly enough to faithful Christians what subjection they deserved, who with proud rule killed the Lord. We placed the exposition of this sentence here according to the old translation because we have excerpted from the works of St. Augustine who followed this, as also many other things.

[Genesis 4:15] -- And God set a mark upon Cain, so that no one who found him would kill him. The Jewish people, whether under pagan or Christian rulers, have the mark of their law, by which they are distinguished from other nations and peoples, and every emperor or king who finds them in his kingdom finds them with that mark, nor does he kill them, that is, he does not make them cease to be Jews, being distinguished by a certain definite mark of their own observance from the communion of other nations, unless any of them have turned to Christ.

[Genesis 4:16] -- And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod to the east of Eden. By the presence of the Lord is usually understood the recognition by which He manifests and is known. Therefore, deservedly, the people who have withdrawn from the grace of divine recognition are said to dwell on earth. For they cannot say with the elect, ”Our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 3:20). The Septuagint interpreters translated this passage thus: ”Now Cain went out from the presence of the Lord God and dwelt in the land of Naid opposite Eden.” Naid, however, is translated as ”fugitive,” or as we find in the book of Hebrew names, ”unstable motion and fluctuation,” which some, including Josephus, agree to be the place where Cain dwelt. Furthermore, our interpreter understood not the name of a place, but the significance of the thing itself; because Cain would be always unstable and fluctuating and of uncertain abodes. How much this matches the present state of the Jews, the whole world is a witness. They are also rightly said to dwell opposite Eden. For Eden signifies pleasure or delight: because indeed that faithless people, as much as they turn away from the knowledge of truth and entangle themselves in earthly affairs, so much they live a life contrary to heavenly delights; and because they only thirst for temporal joys, they are adversaries with the dry throats of their hearts to the torrent of divine pleasure by which the righteous are refreshed.

[Genesis 4:17] -- Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. He built a city, and he called its name after his son’s name, Enoch. Just as from the beginning of the world, starting with the murder of Abel, the passions of the saints were present; so too in the malice and persecution of Cain, the betrayals of the reprobate are suggested, which will continue in the world until the end of the age; thus in the city that Cain built, it was symbolically intimated that the entire hope of the wicked is to be fixed on the kingdom and happiness

of this world, as they have no faith or desire for future goods. The Lord speaks of this city through the prophet Hosea: ”I am God, not human, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not enter into the city” (Hosea 11:9). For neither Abel nor Seth, who was born in his place, are read to have built a city or houses: for they clearly designated, or rather they were the first fruits of those who rejoice to sing to their Creator: ”For I am a sojourner with you, a wanderer, as were all my fathers” (Psalm 39:12). This fits well with the promise of the Lord we mentioned earlier: ”I am God and not human, the Holy One in your midst”: because to the extent that they render themselves foreigners from the association of the worldly city, they are therefore more worthy of the dwelling of their Creator.

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

[Genesis 4:18] -- Moreover, Enoch begot Irad, and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech, who took two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the other was Zillah, and Adah bore Jabal. The progeny of Cain is counted up to the seventh generation, and in this generation, he himself was killed by Lamech, being freed from the sevenfold punishments which he had long borne. In this entire offspring that was born from him, having been also polluted by the adultery of Lamech adding to the curse, perished with the coming flood. Defiled indeed by adultery in the sixth generation, but destroyed by the flood in the seventh generation, in which it is spiritually conveyed that the city of the impious, that is, the entire society of the reprobate, will corrupt itself with crimes in the six ages of this world, but in the seventh, which is in the future, it will perish eternally. For just as Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was taken up into paradise and man did not see him, because he lives in peace with God, so the seventh from Cain, Jabal, is interpreted as “Change,” and he was destroyed by the flood with his brothers and all his progeny, and man did not see him, because he was punished with eternal death, and from the glory of the world which he loved, he was changed into the punishment which he did not foresee. In these, it is clearly indicated, as we have said, that the holy tend towards rest in another life after the six ages of this world, and the reprobate towards punishment, as also

the history narrated by the Lord about the poor Lazarus and the proud rich man clearly proves.

[Genesis 4:20] -- He begot, he says, Ada Jabal, who was the father of those who dwell in tents and shepherds, and the name of his brother was Jubal. He was the father of those who play the harp and organ. Sella also begot Tubal-Cain, who was a forger in every kind of bronze and iron work. All these things which are said to have been found or made by the sons of Lamech relate to the cultivation, adornment, or enticements of this life: but none such are read of Abel, nor of Seth who was born in his place, nor of his grandchildren, but they are proved to have led a simple life on earth like strangers. For even if Abel was a shepherd of sheep, he did not so devote himself to this service as to build himself tents in which he could engage more comfortably in it. As for the harp and organ, it is far from likely that so great a man would have given any time to them. Indeed, anyone who diligently observes all the works made of bronze and iron will clearly recognize that if the human race had kept the natural law rightly, even after being expelled from the joys of paradise by the fault of transgression, it would by no means need all these things:

whence it is evident that all these were invented by the sons of the curse, although later, as the human race degenerated from the purity of its first way of life, even good servants of God sometimes engaged in such things for the sake of social living. But with a great distinction, of course, because the wicked delighted in such things as their highest good: whereas the chosen either utterly renounce them or use them for some convenience of this life, until they reach the eternal, as a traveler uses a lodging or provisions while passing through. In short, the patriarchs lived in tents, but like strangers on earth, to distinguish them from those who lived in cities and houses as citizens of the earth. The psalmists used the harp and organ, but to praise the Lord with them: and on the contrary, the prophet reproves those who resounded with the harp, tambourine, and lyre in banquets. There were learned men among the people of God in all works of bronze and iron, as well as silver and gold: but God himself commanded them to transfer this art to the distinction of his tabernacle. The prophet also, proclaiming the joys of the Lord's incarnation, predicted that harmful works of iron would be removed and changed for the better, saying, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isa. II, 4).

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

[Genesis 4:22] -- The sister of Tubalcain is Noema. Noema is interpreted as Pleasure. Well, the lineage of Cain fittingly ends with the birth of a woman; and the same woman is named Pleasure: because the entire intention of the wicked in the world serves allurements, and they desire to end their life in the fulfillment of carnal pleasures. Indeed, after this woman was born, not long after, the entire cursed progeny was finished by the flood: because when they submit the neck of their mind to the delights of the world, when they say peace and security, then sudden destruction will come upon them. It should be noted, however, that delight or pleasure can be understood in two ways, that is, in both good and evil: in good, namely, when it is said, "But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace" (Psalm 37:11). And again: "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Psalm 36:8). From which pleasure paradise is also named, because surely man was placed in it to enjoy perpetually the most blessed and holy delights of the flesh and soul in the presence of his Maker. But pleasure is understood in an evil sense when certain lovers of pleasures more than of God are noted by the Apostle. The name Noema is fittingly applied to them, in whose generation at first the world's age, except for a few, was destroyed.

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

[Genesis 4:23-24] -- And Lamech said to his wives Ada and Zillah: "Hear my voice, you wives of Lamech; give ear to my speech, for I have slain a man for wounding me, and a young man for bruising me." The man or young man that he mentions signifies Cain, whom the same Lamech unintentionally killed, as Jerome testifies to be written in a certain Hebrew volume. He killed him both in his wound and in his bruise, because he brought death and damnation upon himself for killing him whom God had granted life.

[Genesis 4:24] -- Sevenfold vengeance shall be taken for Cain, but for Lamech seventy-sevenfold. Sevenfold vengeance was taken for Cain, as he bore the penalties of fratricide and envy as a wandering fugitive up to the seventh generation. But for Lamech seventy-

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

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

[Genesis 4:26] -- But to Seth also was born a son, whom he called Enos. He began to invoke the name of the Lord. Enos is interpreted as Man or Vir: whence it is proper that he who has such a name begins to invoke the name of the Lord, imploring the help of the Creator all the more earnestly in his daily prayers, the more he remembers that he is made of frail nature. Mystically, however, just as Abel slain by Cain denotes the suffering Lord; so Seth born for him designates him risen from the dead: hence, aptly among the Septuagint Translators, it is reported that his father or mother said at his birth: For God has raised up for me another seed for Abel, whom Cain killed. For this reason it is rightly called another seed according to the mystical senses, since the same Lord who was slain has risen again, because indeed he was slain mortal, he rose immortal: he died so that we might not fear death: he rose to give us hope and faith in rising again from death: whose separation of seeds, speaking of our resurrection, the Apostle has plainly distinguished, saying, It is sown in corruption, it rises in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it rises in glory: it is sown in weakness, it rises in power: it is sown a natural body, it rises a spiritual body (I Cor. XV, 42).

And concerning the Lord himself, Although he died, he says, of weakness, yet he lives by the power of God (II Cor. XIII, 4). Enos truly, the son of Seth, figuratively expresses the Chris-

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

Chapter 5

[Genesis 5:1] -- This is the book of the generation of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God: He created them male and female, and He blessed them. This is the book of the first creation of man, which God made in His likeness, that he might be perpetually good, immortal, and happy by participation in His goodness. God created them male and female and blessed them with the grace of His blessing. Such was the generation of Adam with his wife on the day he was created. But alas! how grievous! He defiled the likeness of God by believing the enemy rather than the Creator; his firstborn contracted the heavier punishment of a curse by envying and killing his brother; the seventh from him, Lamech, corrupted the established law of male and female, of which it was said, "They shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. II, 24), by taking two wives and uniting three in one flesh. As evils increased everywhere, humanity so departed from the likeness of its Creator and the first blessing that by the tenth generation, except for a few whom the ark held, it deserved to be entirely destroyed. However, the Creator Himself granted that we might return to that likeness and blessing, being born and dying in the likeness of our nature, so that redeemed through Him, we might merit to say of Him: "We know that when He appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John III, 2), and to hear from Him: "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. XXV, 34).

[Genesis 5:2] -- And he called their names Adam on the day when they were created. Adam, like Enos, is interpreted as Man, but Enos is said to sound like Man in a way that only suits males: whereas Adam is able to be applied to both sexes; hence it is rightly said that he called their names Adam, that is, Man. Just as man in Latin derives the etymology of the name from soil because he derives the origin of his flesh from soil, so among the Hebrews Adam is named from the earth because man was formed from the clay of the earth; hence also Adam can be interpreted as Earthly, or red earth. Furthermore, among the Greeks, man has a different etymology: for he is called antropos, from the fact that he ought to look above and lift the eyes of the mind to view the heavens. Moreover, in the name Adam, apart from the interpretation which designates man, there is another mystery which ought not to be passed over in silence. For it has four letters: A, and D, and A, and M, from which letters the four quarters of the globe, when named in Greek, take their beginning. For among them the east is called anatole, the west is called dysis, the north is called arctos, and the south is

called mesembria; and it was very fitting that the name of the first man should mystically contain all the regions of the world, through whose progeny the whole world was to be filled. But when it says, And he called their names Adam, and added, On the day when they were created, it clearly insinuates that on one and the same day, that is, the sixth day of the nascent world, Adam and his wife were made, and not that the wife was separately created from his side after the sixth or seventh day.

[Genesis 5:3-32] -- Adam lived for one hundred and thirty years, and he begot a son in his own likeness and image, and he named him Seth. Adam indeed was created in the likeness and image of God, because he was made immortal in both soul and body. However, after he corrupted the image and likeness of God in himself by sinning, he begot a son in his own likeness and image, that is, mortal, corruptible, capable of reason, bound by the guilt of his transgression, and to be freed only by the grace of his Creator. It should be noted that where our Codices, translated from the Hebrew source, say Adam lived for one hundred and thirty years and begot Seth, the ancient translation has, instead of one hundred and thirty, two hundred and thirty; where our Codices continue, "And the days of Adam after he begot Seth were eight hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters," that one has seven hundred instead of eight hundred. And where it concludes, "And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died," it places the same total, and such a distinction of numbers is preserved in all generations up to the flood between the two editions, so that before the birth of a son each one in the Septuagint is said to have had one hundred years more, and after the birth one hundred years less than in the Hebrew truth. But in the conclusion, both editions place an equal number;

except only in the sixth generation; where in both Codices, Jared is found to have begotten Enoch at one hundred and sixty-two years, and after his birth to have lived eight hundred years: and in the ninth, where, according to the Hebrew truth, Lamech begot Noah when he was one hundred and eighty years old, and after he was born, he is found to have survived for five hundred and ninety-five years. However, in the Septuagint, the years before Noah was born are found to be one hundred and eighty-eight, and after he was born, five hundred sixty-five; thus it happens that Lamech is found to have lived twenty-four years longer in Hebrew than in the Septuagint Codices: by which difference of interpretations, it is made that the lifetime of Methuselah seems to extend fourteen years beyond the flood, and so the years before the flood according to the Hebrews are one thousand five hundred and fifty-six; according to the Septuagint, which the chronographers follow, two thousand two hundred and forty-two: although the most learned Augustine professes that even in the Septuagint translation, Methuselah is found in fewer but more accurate Codices to have died six years before the flood: who, when he most diligently investigated the cause of the aforementioned discord in interpretations, and did not wish to derogate from the faith of the Septuagint translators, whom the apostles and evangelists are proven to have followed in many places; and he himself believed they used more a prophetic gift than the office of interpretation in translating the Scriptures;

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

[Genesis 5:21-22] -- Furthermore, Enoch lived sixty-five years and begot Methuselah, and walked with God. After he begot Methuselah, he lived for three hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters. It is said that he walked with God. He followed God’s will and precepts in all things, with God dwelling in him, possessing, and ruling over his heart, he performed good works outwardly, according to that of the prophet: ”I will show you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: certainly to do justice and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). And as Zachariah says: ”I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk in His name, says the Lord” (Zachariah 10:12). However, it is not said that Enoch walked with God for three hundred years after Methuselah was born, as if he had not obeyed divine commands even before his birth; but rather by this sentence, it simply indicates that he did not serve God with good work for more than three hundred years after Methuselah’s birth in this life. But after these years were completed, he followed God to the further joys of life. For it continues:

[Genesis 5:23-24] -- And all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years, and he walked with God, and he was not, because God took him. It is said most beautifully, that he who had walked with God in this life by obeying His commandments, walked afterwards with Him by passing from this life into another, where he would live in the greatest peace and happiness of flesh and spirit: whom however the faith of the universal Church holds to return before the day of judgment, that is, at the imminent advent of the Antichrist, with Elijah for the conversion of this age, so that by the authority and doctrine of such great men, the hearts of men might be instructed and strengthened to endure and overcome the persecution of that son of perdition; and then, having completed their martyrdom, to consent to the joys of immortal life, according to what the Lord says in the Apocalypse to John: And I will give to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth (Rev. 11:3), that is, for three and a half years living in great continence and struggle. And shortly after: And when they have finished their testimony, the beast that rises from the abyss will make war against them, and will conquer them, and kill them (Ibid., 7).

We have said previously, by anticipation, that just as Lamech in the seventh generation from Adam, who was cursed, signifies the destruction of the reprobate, which they find in the future age where they ought to have hoped for rest, so Enoch, who was translated in the seventh generation from the world, demonstrates the true rest of the elect, which they receive without end after the labors of this life, which pass through six ages. Hence it is rightly read that Lamech took two wives against the decree of Him who said: "The two shall be one flesh," and from them begot offspring dedicated to worldly deeds and allurements, and thus, by committing murder, was cursed by the sentence of his own mouth. Furthermore, it is stated that Enoch walked with God. What greater praise could there be for a man? None, since he is an inseparable companion, following in all deeds the footsteps of the divine command: if Adam had done this, he would not have turned his foot away from the company of the Creator to hear the serpent's speech, and would still be in paradise with his entire race. The fact that all the days of Enoch are said to be three hundred and sixty-five years, the number of days in a solar year, mystically signifies that throughout the whole of this world's time, those who serve the Lord faithfully and strive towards eternal rest will never fall short.

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

[Genesis 5:25] -- Methuselah also lived one hundred eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. Lamech lived one hundred eighty-two years, and begot Noah, saying: "He will comfort us from our works and labors of our hands on the earth which the Lord has cursed. Lamech foresaw in prophetic spirit what kind of person his son would be, of what great virtue he would be, and that in his days the nation of the impious would be exterminated, and that through him, after the flood, the generation of the faithful would be restored. But the works and labors of the hands, which he said, I believe he wanted not to be understood as anything other than those by which the progeny of the elect were oppressed at that time by the wickedness of the evil; he declared that his and their consolation, when the world, which was then lost by the flood, all things of the world and its inhabitants being removed from the midst, would foresee a new race of the just to be born. For even at this time, the consolation of

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

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

[Genesis 5:32] -- Noah indeed, when he was five hundred years old, begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Therefore, Noah was born in the tenth generation, because he both represented and led the lives of those who are perfect in the observance of the Decalogue. He begot three sons, so that his service to the Lord in the faith of the Holy Trinity and the produce of spiritual virtues would also be signified by the fruit of his physical offspring; although, according to history, it was appropriate for him to have begotten three sons, in whom the seed of the world perishing was to be left to a future generation, so that through the offspring of the three sons, indeed, the three parts of the world would be filled. For the sons of Shem especially possessed Asia, the offspring of Ham Africa, and the descendants of Japheth Europe.

Chapter 6

[Genesis 6:1-2] -- And when men began to multiply on the earth and had daughters, the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. ”Men” means the offspring of Cain, who, turned away from the view of divine will, subjected their mind solely to human affairs: ”sons of God”, however, refers to those who were born from the lineage of Seth, who, following the example of their father’s devotion, preserved with an inviolate mind the service they owed to God. By this distinction, the Lord in the Gospel also separated His disciples from the rest, saying, ”Whom do men say that the Son of Man is? (Matthew 16:13). And having received their answer, He said, ”But who do you say that I am? evidently wanting them to be understood as superior to men and to be counted among those of whom He Himself said: ”I have said, You are gods; and all of you are children of the Most High” (Psalm 82:6). Some manuscripts have ”angels of God” instead of ”sons of God,” which is obviously taken in the same sense. For the angels of God are rightly called righteous men, who according to the measure of their capacity strive to live an angelic life on earth: to such the Apostle says, ”But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit” (Romans 8:9). And again: ”For our conversation is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20).

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

[Genesis 6:3] -- And God said, ”My Spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh; and his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” Saint Jerome, explaining these verses, says, ”It is written in Hebrew: My Spirit shall not judge these men forever, because they are flesh; that is, because human nature is fragile, I will not condemn them to eternal torment; but here I will render to them what they deserve. Therefore, it denotes not the severity, as it is read in our texts, but the clemency of God, while a sinner is punished here for his crime: hence also an angry God speaks to some: I will not punish your daughters when they play the harlot, nor your brides when they commit adultery (Hos. IV). And in another place: I will punish their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with stripes; nevertheless,

I will not take my mercy away from them (Ps. LXXXIX).” Moreover, lest He seem to be cruel in not giving sinners a place for repentance, He added: ”And his days shall be one hundred and twenty years” (Gen. VI), that is, they will have one hundred and twenty years to repent; but because they despised repentance, God did not want to wait for the appointed time, but cutting short the span of twenty years, He brought the flood in the hundredth year appointed for repentance.

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

[Genesis 6:5] -- But God, seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that every thought of their hearts was only evil continually, regretted that He had made man on the earth. He is said to have regretted, not because God, like man, truly regrets any of His actions, whose judgment on all things is as fixed as His foreknowledge is certain; but Scripture uses such words in order to insinuate itself to us more familiarly, we who are accustomed to change anything we undertake and transfer it into something else only by repenting: even though divine providence, for those perceiving with a serene mind, appears to administer all things with the most certain order. Nevertheless, Scripture fits and adapts itself to the humble understanding of the slower minds, of whom the far greater number is, so that it says as if by the repentance of God, those things taken away which begin to exist, and do not continue as long as they were hoped to last: similar to which is what follows.

[Genesis 6:7] -- And touched by inner sorrow of the heart, He said, ”I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the earth, from man to animals, from creeping things to the birds of the sky; for I regret that I have made them.” For God is said to grieve in a human manner when He considers that the men whom He created cling to a malicious enemy through sin rather than to Him by living piously, according to Solomon’s statement: ”A foolish son is a grief to his father” (Prov. 19:13). And again: ”A foolish son is the anger

of his father, and the grief of the mother who bore him" (Prov. 17:25). But that He also announces the destruction of all earthly and flying creatures expresses the magnitude of the coming disaster: for He threatens destruction to the irrational creatures as if they, too, had sinned.

[Genesis 6:9] -- These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a just and perfect man in his generations; he walked with God. Noah is praised with the same commendation as Enoch, namely that he followed the footsteps of the divine command with upright steps of good works, and thus, while the world perished, he was saved in the ark. Noah was just and perfect, not as the saints are to be perfected in that immortality in which they will be equal to the angels of God, but as perfect as one can be in this pilgrimage; and therefore it is added, in his generations, to signify that he was just according to the righteousness of his generations, namely, those generations in which Seth, Enos, Enoch, and the other holy and perfect men of that time lived. To these generations, the following text of Holy Scripture indicates, also belonged his sons Shem and Japheth.

[Genesis 6:12] -- And when God saw that the earth was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted its way. All flesh means all humans, according to the prophet's statement: "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 3:6). For neither birds nor quadrupeds had corrupted their way by sinning, just as they will not see the Salvation of our God, that is Christ, but all humans will see.

[Genesis 6:13] -- He said to Noah: The end of all flesh has come before me; the earth is filled with iniquity because of them, and I will destroy them with the earth. Make yourself an ark of smoothed wood, etc. The diverse form in the construction of the ark and the imminent flood contains a mystery. First, as the Lord himself showed by the sudden inundation of the flood, the unexpected hour of the last judgment is signified: "And as it was, he says, in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all" (Matthew 24:38). For the construction of the ark, which took a hundred years, signifies the entire period of this age, during which the holy church is also built and brought to its perfect end. There is no doubt that the hundred-year number signifies perfection, either because it is filled by ten decades, or because it moves from the left to the right, expressing an action which takes place in this life as though on the left, but will be consummated in the future life as on the right. But as the ark was made, and with everything that was to be saved brought into it, the flood came and took away all that was outside it;

so, when all those who are predestined to eternal life have entered the church, the end of the world will come and all those found outside the church will perish; and according to this understanding, the ark clearly signifies the church, Noah signifies the Lord who builds the church with his saints, and the flood signifies the end of the age or the final judgment. However, aside from the construction of the ark, even in Noah, because his name means rest, and he was to give rest or comfort to men, it was prefigured that men would rest from the

works and labors of their hands on the earth, which the Lord cursed, holding the image of the Lord Savior. For he consoles us through the illumination of his Spirit, who is therefore called the Paraclete, that is, the comforter. He has rescued us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for us. He calls the weary to rest: "Come to me, he says, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28). He truly was the just and perfect man through all generations, that is, in every congregation of saints, as he committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth.

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

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

[Genesis 6:14] -- Make for yourself, he says, an ark of smoothed wood. Not only the humans who were saved in the ark, but also the animals that entered it together; even the wood of which it was made mystically announces the faithful of the holy Church. Therefore, the wood of which it was made is commanded to be smoothed, because whoever is placed in the structure of the Church by coming to faith must first, being cut off from the root of his former lifestyle through the instruction or chastisement of those who have preceded in Christ, remove everything of harmful crookedness and deformity which he finds in himself,

and direct his whole mind and action to the rule of the Catholic faith and truth, so that, in the order of the heavenly building, he may be fitly and opportunely placed for the creation of a new man in his proper place and time.

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

[Genesis 6:14] -- And you shall cover it inside and outside with bitumen, and you shall make it thus. Bitumen is the hottest and most violent adhesive, whose power is such that the woods which have been coated with it can neither be eaten by worms, nor can they be dissolved by the heat of the sun, or the blows of the winds, or the flooding of the waters; whence what else is mystically understood by bitumen than the constancy of faith? Moreover, the ark is covered inside and outside with bitumen, and thus it is completely perfected, while both the thoughts of the elect and their works, so that they may not be overcome or deceived by the incursions of vices, are fortified by the power of faith in all things.

[Genesis 6:15] -- The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. The length of the ark signifies the long-suffering patience by which adversities are bravely endured; the width signifies the breadth of charity, which embraces even those who inflict adversities; the height signifies the sublimity of hope, by which the eternal reward in heaven is insinuated. Hence the length of the ark is commanded to be three hundred cubits, as this number, as we have previously noted, is represented by the letter T in Greek. This letter is written in the shape of a cross, because the holy Church, while remaining invincible and steadfast amid adversities, follows the footsteps of the Lord's passion, remembering His word where He said: And he who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me (Matthew 10:38). The width extends to fifty cubits, in which number the Holy Spirit is sent, and under the law universal rest and remission are bestowed upon God's people because the love of God is poured into our hearts, not by the merit of our actions but by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. And this is rest and remission

of our debts, when we love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, and our neighbor in God as ourselves, and our adversary for the sake of God. The height is thirty cubits, because this is the only and unique hope of the elect, that through the observation of the Decalogue, which is perfected in the love of God and neighbor, they ascend to the contemplation of the Holy Trinity. For three times ten makes thirty.

[Genesis 6:15] -- There is, however, another memorable mystery in the shape of the ark, which is found to be formed according to the measure of the human body. For the length of the human body from the top of the head to the feet is six times the height from one side to the other, and ten times the height measured from the back to the abdomen, as if you measure a lying man supine or prone; the length from head to feet is six times as long as the width from right to left or left to right, and ten times as high from the ground. Therefore, the ark was made three hundred cubits in length, fifty in width, and thirty in height; and because the Apostle says of the Church that it is one body and one spirit in Christ, rightly the ark, which bore the figure of this, was formed in the likeness of the human body, because Christ Himself, God, and our Lord willed to be incarnated for us and to wash us from sins and consecrate us through the sacraments of His humanity.

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

[Genesis 6:16] -- You shall make a window in the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above. A window is commanded to be made in the ark so that, after the rains ceased and the ark rested, Noah might release a bird through it to ascertain whether the waters had ceased, or whether the earth had dried or sprouted, so that he also, having opened it, might see the light of the sky; hence in Hebrew it is aptly translated as having the noon, because windows are usually illuminated more clearly by the midday sun; which also aptly accords with spiritual sacraments. For the window, which illuminated the inhabitants of the ark with the splendor of the midday sun only after the flood had passed, suggests that knowledge of heavenly mysteries which is more fully revealed to the baptized faithful. Moreover, the fact that the top of the ark is said to be finished in a cubit indicates that it had three hundred cubits of length and fifty cubits of width at the bottom; gradually narrowed at the corners,

it was collected into the space of one cubit at the top, thus becoming shorter and narrower as it rose higher.

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

[Genesis 6:16] -- You shall place the door of the ark on the lower side. This door, through which men and all the animals to be saved in the ark entered, signifies the unity of faith, without which no one can enter the Church; for there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God, which is aptly commanded to be placed on the side of the ark, because it clearly designates that door, which was opened in the side of the Crucified Lord Savior by the soldier's lance, from which immediately flowed blood and water: through these sacraments, each of the faithful is received into the communion of the holy Church as into the insides of the ark. Moreover, the door of the ark is commanded to be made not only on the side but also below, so that the humility of either the Lord himself by which he died for us or ours, without which we cannot be saved, is signified. Also, the door of the ark was made below and near the ground, so that men or animals to be saved could enter it, and having entered, immediately ascended to the higher places to their respective seats, because the Lord, appearing in the depths of this mortality, was wounded for our iniquities, so that through the sacraments of his wounds, we being redeemed might be led to the heavenly mansions of virtues in the present and to the heavenly rewards with an invisible ascension.

This is also well expressed in Solomon's temple, the door by which it was ascended to the upper parts, concerning which it is thus written: "The entrance of the middle side was on the right side of the house; which some interpret as stating that the temple had an entrance from the southern part, which is far from the truth. For if it wanted to be understood this way, Scripture could briefly say: "And it had an entrance to the South or to the South. But the temple itself actually had an entrance from the rising of the sun. What is said: "The entrance of the middle side was on the right part of the house," the right part of the house is called the southern part, in whose middle side was the door by which it was ascended to the upper parts, with the entrance beginning from the eastern part of the same side, that is, from the very corner, and gradually proceeding to the upper rooms through the interior

of the middle wall; hence it is subsequently added: ”And they ascended by winding stairs to the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third.

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

[Genesis 6:16] -- You shall make upper rooms and lower rooms in it. Lower rooms denote a triple roof. For ”stege” in Greek means ”roof”; hence ancient interpreters for this word used ”tricamerata. Finally, in the Acts of the Apostles, where a young man, whom Paul the Apostle revived from death, is said to have fallen from the third roof or upper room, in Greek it is written that he fell from the ”tristego. But upper rooms and lower rooms, as early translators said, were made two-chambered and three-chambered in the ark, such that in distinct seats they would house animals of various kinds. Beasts, indeed, as it is believable, in the lowest parts; clean animals in the higher parts; humans and birds in the highest. For it is certain that where man sat, there too were the raven and dove, and consequently other birds too, located near the window, which is believed to have been made in the highest parts of the ark. For through this window he sent out the aforementioned birds, to see how the land’s face fared; in these roofs as well, various little chambers were made, as stated above, for the distinction of the same animals or birds, so that some might not harm others, the more violent not harming the gentler.

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

[Genesis 6:17] -- Behold, I will bring the waters of a flood upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which there is the breath of life under heaven. Everything that is on the earth shall perish, and I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall enter the ark, you and your sons, and the rest. The waters of the flood brought upon the earth killed all flesh that was

found outside the ark, but Noah and all that were in the ark were saved. Washing the world with the water of baptism saves whomever it finds faithfully abiding in the unity of the holy Church; but those who receive baptism outside the Church from heretics or schismatics die unless they repent by returning to catholic unity. Likewise, when the time of the final judgment comes, whoever is found persevering in faith and action in the holy Church shall be saved eternally; those separated from the Church by faith, action, or both, perish.

[Genesis 6:21] -- Therefore, you shall take with you of all food that can be eaten, and gather it to yourself, and it shall be food both for you and for them. And the Lord has abundantly filled His Church with the nourishment of spiritual life in many ways, so that He might invite the multitudes of the faithful to the reception of heavenly rewards by the general precepts of His commandments, and call whomever is more perfect to the higher gifts of the same everlasting kingdom through the disciplines of stricter observance. But it is usually asked whether the ark, with the capacity described, could have carried all the animals said to have entered it along with their food? Origen tries to solve this question with the geometric cubit, asserting that it was not for nothing that Scripture mentioned that Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, who loved geometry. He states that the geometric cubit is equivalent to the value of six of our cubits. If, therefore, we understand such large cubits, there is no question that the ark had such a capacity as to contain all these things. But it should be noted that although Moses had learned geometric cubits, the people for whom he wrote the book were ignorant of such arts, nor did he wish to deceive them by writing things that they would not understand in truth but that he alone, with the most skilled Egyptians, could comprehend.

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

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

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

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

Chapter 7

[Genesis 7:1] -- Noah did therefore all that God commanded him, and the Lord said to him: Enter you and all your household into the ark, etc. Noah did all that God commanded, that is, he built the ark, and, with chambers arranged, he brought provisions into it for all living creatures.

[Genesis 7:2] -- Of all clean animals, take seven and seven, male and female; but of animals that are not clean, two and two, male and female; of the birds of the heaven also, seven and seven, male and female, so that seed might be saved upon the face of all the earth. When he said seven and seven, he does not mean twice seven in each species, but he wants seven only to be taken, of which one, which exceeded the pairs, could be offered to God after the flood. He says seven and seven, because of the many kinds of animals which were to be included in this number. Similarly, when he said two and two, he does not mean two pairs in any species of unclean animals, but only two, indicating the male and female. He says two and two, because in many kinds of animals the same pairs were to be taken; it is easily clear to everyone that if the matter were only for saving the kind and not for some higher mystery, a smaller number of animals would suffice to preserve the progeny; now, however, because not all who undergo the baptismal cleansing in the Church also maintain the purity of good works, unclean animals enter the ark along with the clean ones. And rightly are the clean animals contained by the number seven, because the grace of the Spirit is sevenfold, by which the hearts of the faithful are cleansed and sanctified. The unclean are contained by the number two, because false Catholics receive the sacraments of the faith with a double heart, wishing to rejoice here with the world, and to reign in the future with Christ; of whom James says: That man should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord, a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways (James 1:7).

[Genesis 7:6] -- Noah did everything the Lord had commanded him, and he was six hundred years old when the waters of the flood overflowed the earth. And Noah entered the ark, and his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him, and so on. The age of Noah signifies the perfection of those who enter the Church and, through faith and actions worthy of faith, reach eternal joys. For six times a hundred makes six hundred; and the number six, in which the world was made or formed, not undeservingly signifies the perfection of good action. The number one hundred, moreover, as we mentioned above, is transferred in

digital computation from the left to the right, and is especially appropriate for those who in the final judgment will stand on the Judge's right hand and will hear: Come, blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom (Matthew 25:34). Therefore, the number one hundred multiplied by six signifies that perfection of spiritual virtues which is not shown externally for the favor of men, but fulfilled for the glory of the Creator in the hope of heavenly reward; and justly, the leader of the ark, in which the state of the Church is expressed, in the time of his age also signifies the devotion of those who enter thus, that through the merits of good action they may also deserve to pass to eternal salvation. Although it can also be properly understood that since the waters of the flood designate the wave of baptism, the age of Noah then insinuates the perfection to which those who are baptized ought to strive. When it prefigures the time of the final judgment, the same number of his years figuratively announces what kind of people will enter everlasting rest with the Lord, which the name Noah means, that is, those worthy of heavenly entry by the effect of good work and purity of heart intention.

[Genesis 7:10] -- And when seven days had passed, the waters of the flood inundated the earth. The seventh day signifies the Sabbath, that is, the rest of future life. Therefore, since the flood signifies the water of baptism, aptly after seven days from when the ark was made it came, because we are baptized in the hope of perpetual rest. However, since the waves of temptations are represented by the waters of the flood, it is also fitting that they come after seven days, because for the sake of faith in the hope of future goods, the just suffer persecution from those who prefer earthly goods to heavenly ones, and the temporal to the everlasting. But indeed, since the flood is compared to the coming of the final judgment, it also fittingly inundates the earth after seven days, because then all the elect who have borne the gentle yoke of Christ and the light burden find rest for their souls.

[Genesis 7:11] -- In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights. The months among the Hebrews are computed only according to the course of the moon from the first to the first, and their first month, in which the Passover is commanded to be kept, and in which the world was made, is called Nisan, which we call April. The second is Jair, which we call May, on whose seventeenth day, that is, when the moon of the same month was the seventeenth, the flood came, when on that same day Noah entered the ark with all the men, animals, and birds that were to be saved through it, for this is what follows.

[Genesis 7:13] -- On that day, Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, his sons, and his wife, and the three wives of his sons with them entered the ark. They and every animal according to its kind, and so on until it says: and all the birds entered the ark with Noah. Therefore, all the living creatures entered the ark on one and the same day, because Noah did not labor greatly and for a long time to collect and bring them in or drive them into the ark; but by divine guidance, they all came willingly in their respective numbers, following him with his children and wives in order, and each took their own quarters, as if by their

own will, under the guidance of the Lord. This is supported by what is said of the birds: they entered the ark with Noah, and above generally, and of all that moved on the earth, two by two they entered the ark with Noah. On that same day, that is, the seventeenth day of the second month, the following happened.

[Genesis 7:16] -- And the Lord shut him in from outside, and the flood was upon the earth forty days. Now this is the eighth day since the whole structure of the ark was completed. From which it is evident that the ark in the great mystery was completed on the tenth day of the same second month. For the first month, indeed, that ancient one which was collected from the Hebrews, can aptly represent the people of God. The second month, however, signifies the people of the New Testament. Hence it is commanded in the law, that whoever either were defiled by a dead body, or on a long journey, or preoccupied by any other necessity, could not celebrate Passover in the first month, should do so in this second month, in the blood of a lamb and with unleavened bread, on the fourteenth day in the evening. By the addition of this month we are marked, who could not previously celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's passion with the former people of God, as we were far distant from the communion of the saints, and defiled, indeed dead in sins; but who, after the sacrament of the Lord's incarnation being accomplished, came to faith, as it were, in the light of the second month we celebrate the Lord's Passover.

On the tenth day of this month the ark was completed, for the Lord appearing in the flesh promised us the tenfold reward of the heavenly kingdom, granting us the ability to fulfill the Decalogue of the law, through the grace of the Holy Spirit given to us. This grace can indeed be symbolized by the number of seven days during which, after the ark was made, its entry and the advent of the flood were awaited, because surely, having received the promise of the kingdom, which is expressed by the tenfold reward, grace is given to the faithful by the Spirit, through which they can be united to the members of the holy Church. We can also correctly understand that the ark was flooded on the seventeenth day of the month and not before, because each of the faithful first ought to be marked in the faith with the sealing of true rest and the heavenly tenfold reward, that is, the image of the eternal king, and thus be admitted into the society of the Church through the washing of regeneration. Now because of the flood all the fountains of the great abyss were broken up and the floodgates, that is, the windows of heaven were opened, by the name of the great abyss the Scripture of the Old Testament is designated, which, long closed by the veil of the letter, could not open the veins of spiritual understanding to the world, but now revealed by the Lord, it provides the Church with abundant fountains of saving knowledge.

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

[Genesis 7:16] -- But the Lord sealed the ark from the outside, because He always protects His Church, which rejoices in the washing of sacred baptism, with heavenly defense, so that none of those whom He has predestined to life may perish in any way, and He protects it, struggling amid the waves of the world, so that it may not be overwhelmed or submerged by the pressures or delights of the world. For the Lord sends an angel encamping around those who fear Him, and He will rescue them. But on the day of judgment, the Lord encloses Noah with the inhabitants of the ark from the outside, when, with His elect gathered with Him in the house of His Father, He shuts the door of the kingdom against the entry of the lost, although late repentant, perpetually, according to that parable in the Gospel of the ten virgins, where it is said that those who were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut, and so forth. Moreover, it is well said that it rained upon the earth for forty days and forty nights; for ten taken four times makes forty, because all guilt of sins, which is committed against the ten precepts of the law, throughout the whole world, which is contained in four parts, is washed away by the sacrament of heavenly baptism, whether that guilt pertains to days from the prosperity of things, or to nights from the adversity of things contracted.

[Genesis 7:17] -- And the waters increased and lifted the ark high above the earth, the waters increased greatly and filled everything on the surface of the earth. And the waters of baptism and faith, multiplied throughout the whole world, raise the Church from the desire for earthly things to the hope and desire for heavenly life; but also from where the tribulations frequently striking the Church, the more intensely they filled everything, the higher they compelled her to seek the joys of another life: which is well indicated in sacred history, when it is said that the Amorite confined the children of Dan, in the mountain, and did not give them the place to descend to the plains. For the Amorite indeed is interpreted as Bitter, Dan as Judging or Judgment; and who are signified by the sons of Dan, if not those who diligently examine all they do, so that it may be right, in the balance of truth, who, walking by the light of the word of God, swear and decide to keep His judgments of justice; and who are expressed through the Amorite, if not those who attempt to disturb or even overthrow the sweetness of the life of the saints with the bitterness of tribulations? And the Amorite confines the sons of Dan in the mountain, and does not allow them to descend to the plains, as often such a violent storm of persecutions afflicts the elect, that they are not permitted to indulge in any time for weak thoughts; but living in the highest continence, they must devote themselves continually to prayers and fastings and the meditations of the divine Scriptures, so that by greater exercise of virtues they may be able to overcome greater struggles of temptations.

[Genesis 7:19] -- Moreover, the ark was carried above the waters, and the waters prevailed exceedingly, and all the high mountains under the entire heaven were covered. They signify every proud mountain and those lifting themselves up in the glory of this world: the waters cover these mountains, but the ark is carried above them, because the torrent of temptations treads down and sinks the proud and the wicked, but it is overcome by the righteous, who, with a free course of good work and a keen mind, do not cease to strive toward the harbor

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

[Genesis 7:20] -- The water was fifteen cubits higher than the mountains which it covered. Indeed, seven and eight make fifteen; seven pertains to the rest of souls which is to be after death, since the Lord certainly rested in the tomb on the seventh Sabbath; but since He rose from the dead after the Sabbath, that is, on the eighth day, the number eight very rightly indicates the time of our resurrection. Therefore, the water surpassed the high mountains by fifteen cubits, that is, seven and eight, because the faith of the Church, sanctified by the fountain of the saving washing, surpasses in the hope of future rest and immortality all the arrogance of carnal philosophy, which indeed knows how to subtly dispute about the creation of the world, but knows nothing to say about the Creator of the world and the life of the saints that is above the world.

[Genesis 7:24] -- And the waters held sway over the earth for one hundred and fifty days. And this number pertains to the same mystery as the number fifteen because seventy is derived from seven, and eighty from eight; combining both numbers, the waters held sway over the earth for one hundred and fifty days, thus commending and confirming the sacrament of baptism in consecrating the new man towards upholding the faith in rest and resurrection.

Chapter 8

[Genesis 8:1] -- But the Lord remembered Noah, and all the living creatures, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark, and caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters were diminished. This can be understood in the name of the Vivifying Spirit of God, of which it is said at the beginning: ”And the Spirit of God was moving over the waters” (Genesis 1:2), regarding which there is no doubt that just as then, when the waters were gathered to one place, making the land dry, so also now, with the waters of the flood taken away, He once again revealed the face of the earth. This wind can also be called the Spirit, according to the following from the Psalmist: ”He spoke and the stormy wind stood” (Psalm 107:25), by whose frequent blowing the waters are often caused to diminish or to be moved from their place; hence the passage from Exodus: ”And when Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, the Lord caused it to go back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided” (Exodus 14:21).

[Genesis 8:2] -- And the fountains of the deep were closed, and the windows of heaven, and the rains from heaven were restrained, and the waters returned from the earth, going and coming, and they began to decrease after one hundred and fifty days. What is said, that the waters returned from the earth going and coming, clearly indicates according to the letter that all the courses of rivers and streams return through the hidden veins of the earth to the matrix of the abyss, according to Solomon: All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea does not overflow; to the place where the rivers go forth, they return so that they may flow again (Ecclesiastes I, 7). Mystically, however, after one hundred and fifty days, the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven are closed, the rains ceasing, the waters return, because the words of the sacred oracle, after having trained us in the faith and hope of eternal rest and immortality, will cease to teach us further, because they will have nothing greater to promise, after having perfected us in the immortal glory of flesh and spirit and led us to the blessed vision of our Creator. Hence it is well that the book of Psalms, which is contained in the number of one hundred and fifty, is completed in divine praise. Indeed, the beginning of blessedness takes its rise from continence and meditation on the divine law, saying:

Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked (Psalm I, 1), and the rest. Near the end, however, it commends the new joys of the future age, saying, and at the very end consummates all in praise of God: Sing to the Lord a new song, praise in the

assembly of the saints (Psalm CXLIX, 1); thus concluding; Let everything that has breath praise the Lord (Psalm CL, 6). This hundred and fiftieth psalm is rightfully sung entirely in praise of God, and completed, because evidently the sum of all our blessedness is in this, that dwelling in His house we may endlessly praise Him.

[Genesis 8:4] -- And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, upon the mountains of Armenia. That the ark rested in the seventh month refers symbolically to that seventh rest about which it has often been spoken, as those who are perfect and who have the stability of a mind fixed upon God, as if squared, tend toward rest. Well did the ark come to rest on the twenty-seventh day of the same month, which number according to arithmetic reasoning is a solid squared trinity. For the number three accords with our devotion of mind due to the memory by which we recall God, the understanding by which we know Him, and the will by which we love Him. But for this very trinity to reach a squaring from a simple and straight line, multiply three by three, and make nine; and for that squaring to also take height and become solid, again multiply nine by three, and there will be twenty-seven, that is, you will complete the solid squared trinity number, in which the ark rested, because the Church in the stability of its mind and action, as if squared, both expects rest in this life and receives eternal rest in the future. Now it rested upon the mountains of Armenia, because, renouncing the summit of the world's pomp, even in this pilgrimage, leading a life, it approaches heavenly joys with the mind.

[Genesis 8:5] -- But the waters went back and decreased until the tenth month. The time of the tenth month can signify that period during which the saints enter the joys of eternal light with the Lord. For He also in the Gospel by the name of the denarius, which was to be given to the laborers of the vineyard, intimates the perception of the same heavenly kingdom. For a denarius contains ten obols. So the waters go back, which had flooded the ark, and decrease until the tenth month, because the washing of baptism, where it has fulfilled its office in each of the faithful, ceases. For no one, if he has sinned, can be cleansed anew by the same font of sacred baptism; but it sends those already once washed and sanctified to the hope of heavenly life, when they come and appear before the face of God.

[Genesis 8:5] -- For on the first day of the tenth month, the mountain peaks appeared. The first day of the tenth month can be understood as the beginning of that eternal life, in which the saints, even while placed in this life, taste and see that the Lord is good. On this day, the mountain peaks appear because the more perfectly this is held in their pure hearts, the more clearly the empty heights of the world, which are inflated in vain, become apparent.

[Genesis 8:6] -- And when forty days had passed, Noah opened the window of the ark, which he had made, and sent out a raven, etc. We have spoken above about the window of the ark, which, after the flood has subsided, is opened, indicating the secret mysteries of the heavens, to which those baptized are especially initiated; but with these same sacraments some are led to the allurements of the world, others to works of piety; and these indeed are represented by the raven, those by the dove. The fact that forty days are completed by four tens indicates not unreasonably the fulfillment of the divine law, which is perfected by the

grace of the gospel. For the law is contained in ten commandments: the doctrine of the gospel is described in four books, and rightly after the beginning of the tenth month, after the appearance of the peaks of the mountains, forty days pass, and so Noah, opening his window, revealed the entry of new light into the ark, because surely Christ revealed to the faithful the future life they are to receive, laid bare the pride of those who, placed outside the Church, boast of worldly glory, and also revealed to His faithful that the precepts of the law should be fulfilled, not by the power of human liberty, but by the gift of evangelical grace, which they deserve to know, as if the window, newly opened in the ark, reveals higher gifts of the heavenly homeland, but the same knowledge of heavenly gifts, as we have said, some use to their ruin, others to salvation; hence it is well said of the raven sent out from the ark.

[Genesis 8:7] -- He went out and returned, until the waters were dried up from the earth. It does not say he went out and returned to the ark; but he went out and returned, it says, until the waters were dried up from the earth, because obviously he was turning here and there with uncertain flight, now beginning to go away, now returning as if about to enter the ark, but not really seeking the window he had left, but rather wandering outside until, the waters being removed, he would find rest and a place for himself outside the ark; his going out and journey are rightly compared to those who, although initiated and imbued with heavenly sacraments, do not lay aside the blackness of earthly delight, but rather love the broad paths of the world more than the confines of ecclesiastical conversation.

[Genesis 8:9] -- He also sent out a dove after him, to see if the waters had ceased upon the face of the earth; but when she did not find where her foot might rest, she returned to him in the ark. For the waters were over the whole earth; and he extended his hand, and having caught her, brought her into the ark. The dove, as we have said, signifies the spiritual and simple mind of the elect, who, with the window of heavenly contemplation opened to them, reject all things that revolve in the lower regions the more cautiously, the higher they see the joys that remain forever. For such persons, like this dove, so despise all worldly allurements as if flying above them, that they do not care even to touch them with the last vestiges of their mind, as it is impossible for them to find true rest in this world, both its adversities and its prosperities being carried away like flowing waters, wandering and uncertain. Moreover, they strive not only to remain themselves within the boundaries of the Church, but also, as much as they can, to bring others into it by their example or exhortation; hence it is rightly added.

[Genesis 8:11] -- But after waiting another seven days, he again sent the dove out of the ark; and it came back to him in the evening, carrying a fresh olive branch in its mouth. For the olive branch found outside and brought into the ark by the dove signifies those who receive baptism outside the Church but are fruitful in the richness of charity and, with a pious intention, are upright like the greenness of leaves: many of whom, later on, as if at evening, are called back to the Church by the reconciliation of spiritual men, just as the dove did well after the seven days when it did not find rest outside itself. For the number seven of days

is mystically adapted to the light of spiritual grace because, after spiritual men withdraw their minds from carnal desires, they strive to withdraw others as well, guided by the same spirit of grace. It may also be understood that in the dove, which brought the olive branch into the ark after the window was opened after the flood, this is prefigured: that, when the Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the heavens were opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove upon Him; that, upon each individual receiving baptism as a child of the Church, the hand of the bishop is laid upon them through the anointing of the sacred chrism to open to them the gate of the heavenly kingdom, so that they receive the Holy Spirit.

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

[Genesis 8:12] -- Noah then understood that the waters had subsided from the earth, and he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove, which did not return to him again. The dove, which left the ark once the waters subsided and did not return, signifies the souls of the saints departing from this life into the free light of the heavenly homeland, and no longer returning to earthly way of life: in which very homeland prophecy will cease, knowledge will be destroyed, tongues will stop, and thus the water of baptism will dry up; but charity will never fail, through which truth and immutable life will be perpetually present and praised. And because the gift of heavenly favor is necessary not only to do good works, but also to attain eternal life after good works, it is fitting that the dove left not only after seven days to bring back the olive branch to the ark, but also after another seven days left again to enjoy the free sight of the sun and the new world as it were. For the grace of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, and from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace, namely the grace of reward for the grace of good actions.

[Genesis 8:13] -- Therefore, in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried from the earth; and Noah, opening the covering of the ark, looked out and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. The covering of the ark refers to its uppermost plank, about which it was previously said: "And you shall finish the ark to within a cubit from the top." In this roof, namely a cubit in length and width, we have said that the Mediator between God and men is symbolically represented, who willed thus to be humanly joined to the members of His Church, so as to distinctly transcend it by the dignity of His dominion and protect it from above in its entirety. However, Noah opened this roof after the flood had receded, because after the celebration of the sacrament of baptism, it is necessary for the mysteries from the time of the Lord's Incarnation to be diligently disclosed by the mouths of teachers to each of the faithful, so that knowing what He did or taught in the flesh, they might follow His footsteps by imitating them to the extent

of their ability. And it is most fitting that this is said to have occurred on the first day of the first month after six hundred years, to show the beginning of the new spiritual life that was to be initiated by the faithful. Indeed, the same month in the law in which the Passover is commanded to be observed is called the month of new things, due to the great sacrament of renewing our old life in the passion of Christ.

[Genesis 8:14] -- In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. It was stated above that the surface of the ground was dried up in the beginning of the first month; and now, in the second month, nearly completed, it is described as dry because then the ground was dried on the surface with growing grass, so that it could revive and produce anew the grass that the water had consumed. But now it is dried even inwardly to such an extent that it could bear the footsteps of those walking on it, and covered with so many flowering grasses that it was also suitable for the pasturing of animals and beasts of burden.

[Genesis 8:16] -- God said to Noah, "Go forth from the ark, you and your wife, your sons and your sons' wives with you; bring out with you all the living creatures that are with you of all flesh, both birds and animals, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, be fruitful and multiply on the earth. So Noah went out, with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. In many ways and through many symbols, the mysteries of Christ's Church are often repeated. Thus, Noah's departure from the ark to a land purified by the flood, along with those humans and animals he had brought with him, symbolically corresponds to the time when the faithful, washed in the fountain of baptism, also go forth to perform good works in public, with Christ as their leader, just as spiritual Noah, and immediately grow and multiply through the increase of spiritual virtues. "Go, therefore, into the world," he says, "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19); which is figuratively to say: bring into the ark all kinds of living creatures to be washed by the waters; and straightaway, he added: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Ibid., 20), as if to say, in a figurative manner:

And let the creatures that go out of the ark after the flood enter into a renewed face of the earth, flourishing with new flowers, and there let them multiply and increase. Now, the fact that they leave the ark on the twenty-seventh day of the month, which is a perfect cubical number, as we have previously stated, signifies the perfection of faith consecrated in baptism, which can in no way waver, but remains always invincible and steadfast against all the snares of the devil. Notably, according to the literal sense, they were in the ark for a full solar year, entering it on the seventeenth day of the second month, and emerging after a year on the twenty-seventh day of the same month. For if today, for example, the moon were the seventeenth over the Calends of April, the next year on the day before the same Calends, the moon would be the twenty-seventh, having completed three hundred and sixty-five days, which completes a solar year. Therefore, they were in the ark for a whole year—that is, until the sun, having traversed the ecliptic circle, illuminated all regions of

the world through its twelve months, just as the water covering the entire world washed it clean, so by cooperating over the same period of time, the sun, passing around the whole world, irradiates it with the light of its brightness. Now, just as the Fountain of Life is figuratively called the Lord, so also the Sun of Righteousness. He is called the Fountain because he regenerates;

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

[Genesis 8:20] -- Noah built an altar to the Lord, and taking from all the clean animals and birds, he offered burnt offerings on the altar. Because he was a just man and truly perfect in his generations, after surviving such a great calamity, he immediately, upon building the altar, gave thanks to the Creator, simultaneously petitioning that the world no longer deserve to be struck by such a plague. And because he prays devoutly and piously, he is soon deemed worthy of being heard. For it follows:

[Genesis 8:21] -- "And the Lord smelled a sweet savor, and He said to him: I will never again curse the ground because of humans. It was appropriate that, as a holy man and providing for future things, just as Abel consecrated the first age of the world by offering sacrifices to God, Noah would also consecrate the beginning of the second world age. This same act is remembered to have been done by Abraham and Melchizedek at the beginning of the third age, and by King David, a patriarch of the fourth age, on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Jesus, the high priest, and Zerubbabel, at the beginning of the fifth age, are also said to have done this upon restoring the altar which the Chaldeans had destroyed. All these prefigured the highest King and our true High Priest, who dedicated the entirety of the sixth age, indeed the beginning of the sixth age, to God with the sacrifice of His own body and blood on the altar of the holy cross. What is said, that the Lord smelled a sweet odor from Noah's offering, does not signify the fragrance that could delight human nostrils coming from burning sacrifices. It refers instead to the odor of virtues, which coming from the purest heart of the offerer, ascends to the sight of Divine Majesty. This is the kind of scent that Isaac, the patriarch, smelled in his son Jacob when he said:

"See, the scent of my son is like the scent of a field that the Lord has blessed" (Genesis 27:27), and of which the Apostle says: "We are the pleasing aroma of Christ to God" (2 Corinthians 2:15). In mystical interpretations, it is appropriate that Noah offers a sacrifice after the flood, because this is the order of our consecration in Christ: first, we are washed in the fountain of life, and then we are refreshed at the sacred altar with the offering of the Lord. Hence the Apostle says: "But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified" (1 Corinthians 6:11). Washed in baptism, sanctified by the saving sacrifice, justified by good works. In the burnt offerings which were offered to the Lord from clean animals after the flood, holy martyrs can also be particularly prefigured. These, after the baptismal washing,

maintained the purity of life and even shed their blood for the Lord. Burnt offerings, known as holocausts, were consumed entirely by fire and were the sacrifices of which nothing was consumed by the offerers. This name fittingly applies to martyrs, who merit to glorify God not only in their lives but also in their deaths. The altar on which these holocausts are offered is the heart of the elect, built by our Noah, Christ, and infused with the fire of His Spirit, which He sent to earth and wished vehemently to be kindled. There are many holocausts but one altar, because the heart and soul of the multitude of believers were one, without any separation;

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

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

[Genesis 8:21] -- And he said to him: ”I will no longer curse the ground because of man; for the intent and thought of the human heart are prone to evil from their youth. Therefore, I will never again strike down every living being as I have done.” The Lord promises not to curse the earth again, nor strike every living being, because humans are so prone to sin that even if they were punished again by a flood, nonetheless, after it has passed, they would again involve themselves in vices and crimes. It should be noted that although the intent

of the human heart is said to be prone to evil from youth, from which time the incentives of carnal desires are naturally generated in us, it does not follow that we first begin to be subject to sins from the time of puberty, though from then the wantonness of age prompts us to commit greater deeds. For there is also that divine sentence which says: "A heavy yoke is upon the children of Adam from the day they come forth from their mother's womb" (Sirach 40:1), referring to the yoke of the first transgression, because of which we are all conceived in iniquities and born in sins, although from the onset of youth we willingly add many more to those burdens with which we involuntarily came into this light due to the guilt inherited from our father; from all of which we are only freed by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, He says, "I will never again strike down every living being as I have done; but the extent of this promise of mercy He manifests by adding:

[Genesis 8:22] -- All the days of the earth, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, night and day, shall not cease. For when he had said all the days, he immediately added of the earth, so that you may understand that during all the days in which the earth will have its present state, men should be free from the threat of a universal flood; yet the time will not fail when, ceasing this succession of fleeting events which is carried out annually, the whole world with its living things will perish by fire, as Peter attests, who says: For the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and by means of water by the word of God, by means of which the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment (2 Peter 3:5). It should be noted here that the heavens which he says were destroyed by water or will perish by fire are none other than this turbulent air which is nearest to the earth, from which the birds of the air are named because they fly in it. For the ethereal or starry heavens are not to be consumed by fire, just as they were not consumed by water.

Chapter 9

[Genesis 9:1] -- And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon all animals of the earth, and upon all the birds of the air, with everything that moves upon the ground. All the fish of the sea are handed over to you, and everything that moves and lives shall be food for you; just as I gave you green plants, I give you everything. It is clear from the text that the second age of the world, like the first and the beginnings of others, is blessed by the Lord. Noah is blessed with his sons, that is, with all those who are born of his flesh and endowed with faith and obedience, demonstrating truly that they are his sons; for his progeny is commanded to fill the earth, as is evident that it has come to pass; for men are said to be a terror to all the animals of the earth and the birds of the air; for these, together with the fishes, are permitted to be eaten, as they were given herbs to eat up to the time of the flood. Where it is noted that since their terror and dread is commanded to be over the animals, certainly it is prohibited from being over men. For to desire to be feared by an equal is manifestly to be proud contrary to nature;

and yet it is necessary that governors be feared by their subjects when they find that God is least feared by them. For in that they demand fear from those living perversely, they dominate not as men, but as animals, because evidently insofar as the subjects are beastly, insofar they ought also to lie under fear. According to the spiritual understanding, however, Noah is blessed with his sons, namely our Lord and Savior with the apostles, whom he also deigned to call sons, saying: Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them (Matt. 9:15). God the Father commanded them to grow and multiply over the whole world, when the Lord said to his disciples: Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:14), that is, to all nations. For all the commands of the Lord and Savior are indeed those of the Father. He himself said: What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me (John 12:50). He subjected all animals that move on the earth, all the birds of the air, and all the fish of the sea to their dominion when he said: Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. 18:18).

For animals, birds, and fish represent persons of different dispositions and characters, all of which after the flood are given as food to Noah's sons, because after the Lord brought

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

[Genesis 9:4] -- Except that you shall not eat flesh with its blood. For blood rightly denotes carnal desires and carnal sense. Blood is poured out when one renounces carnal temptations and thoughts, in which one lived poorly, so that such people can say with the Apostle: Yet I live, now not I; but Christ lives in me (Gal. II, 29). And again: I conferred not immediately with flesh and blood (Gal. I, 16): otherwise, whoever begins to incorporate those persevering in former crimes into the unity of the holy Church by baptizing them, as if eating beasts given by the Lord with blood, because he receives into society those whose conscience is still held by their old way of life as if suffocated. They say that this was the greatest transgression of the giants because they ate flesh with blood; and therefore the Lord, having destroyed them by the flood, indeed allowed people to eat flesh, but prohibited them from doing so with blood.

[Genesis 9:5] -- For I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it and from man, from his fellow man I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed. For in a typological sense, lifeblood refers to that vital essence by which humans are animated, sustained, and live in the flesh through the soul, just as the hand of beasts typologically refers to the act of devouring by which they kill a man. For who in sound mind would truly believe that the blood of man pertains to the substance of the soul? Although the same legislator seems to say more clearly elsewhere: For the life of every creature is its blood (Leviticus 17:14). Thus it is said in the same way as it is said And the rock was Christ, not that it was, but that it signified. The law was not without purpose in wanting to signify the soul through the blood, that is, an invisible thing through a visible thing, except that blood, diffused through all veins from the heart itself, predominates in our body more than other fluids, so that wherever a wound may be inflicted, no other fluid but itself emerges. Thus the soul, which invisibly prevails over all that we consist of, is better signified by that which visibly prevails over all that we consist of. It is clear to understand how God seeks the soul of man from the hand of man, demanding retribution from him who has sinned;

but it can indeed be reasonably asked how it is also required from beasts, which lack reason, unless perhaps we can understand here the mystery of the future resurrection intimated to us, when all the bodies of the human race, which have either been consumed by wild beasts or destroyed in any other way, or corrupted, are restored incorrupt, and all souls of humans, separated from their bodies by any manner of death, are restored to their bodies, so that

they may obtain either eternal life for their good deeds, or eternal death for their bad deeds, in judgment with those same bodies. It is aptly added:

[Genesis 9:6] -- Whoever sheds human blood, their blood shall be shed. Many have shed human blood, and their blood has not been shed. And others have killed a man with poison or by hanging, and yet when the man is dead, blood is not shed; how then will the Lord shed their blood in such a man when he who has killed has not shed blood, unless because the blood of man, as we have said, should be understood to be his vital substance by which he subsists? Whoever sheds it, that is, whoever kills a man by some kind of death, his blood will be shed because by sinning he loses eternal life. For the soul that sins will die (Ezekiel 18:20). Which is similar to what is said to Peter: For all those who take up the sword will perish by the sword; as if it were openly said: All who unjustly kill a man, and they themselves perish by killing in the soul. It is fittingly added:

[Genesis 9:6] -- For man was made in the image of God. Therefore, it is a greater crime to kill an innocent man; because whoever does this not only destroys the work which God made but also corrupts His image. Therefore God requires the souls of men from beasts or men by whom they were driven from the body, because He made man in His image in that He intended him to remain for eternity, and not to perish with the death of the body like the animals; and for the sake of this sacrament, it is not permitted to eat flesh with blood, so that we may always be reminded by this command that we were created according to the substance of our soul in the image of our Creator, and that we should fear corrupting that same image in ourselves by sinning.

[Genesis 9:8-11] -- God also said to Noah and to his sons with him: Behold, I will establish my covenant with you, and with your offspring after you, and continuing until he says: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; nor shall there ever again be a flood to destroy the earth. The meaning of the letter is clear, because the world need no longer fear the judgment of water, but of fire, and the frequent repetition rebukes and condemns the heresy of Origen, who presumed to dogmatize the cycles of infinite ages always running in the same order. Mystically, however, the water of the flood not returning to the earth signifies that the water of baptism, once received, cannot be repeated; for he who has been washed does not need to wash again, as the Lord himself testifies (John 13:10), and those who have been washed once in the waters of tribulations and reached eternal salvation are no longer to be cleansed in the same waters, but will joyfully sing to their Redeemer forever: We went through fire and water, and you brought us to a place of abundance (Psalm 66:12). Nor indeed should the meaning of the saving bath seem contrary to what is said about the waters of the flood above: Never again will I curse the ground because of man; or what is said here: Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth, since the water of baptism is not accustomed to bring a curse or destruction to our mind or body, but rather blessing and health; but it is to be understood that the Lord in baptism in a certain way curses our old conduct, and destroys it when he commands us to renounce the devil and all his works

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

[Genesis 9:13-15] -- I will place my bow in the clouds, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth; and when I cover the sky with clouds, my bow will appear, and I will remember my covenant with you and with every living soul that is alive in the flesh, and the waters will no longer become a flood to destroy all flesh. The bow in the sky, whenever it is seen even today, reminds us of the divine covenant that the earth will no longer be lost in a flood; but if it is well considered, it also shows us a sign of future judgment that will come upon the world by fire. For indeed, it shines with both blue and red color not without reason, except because the blue color testifies about the waters that have passed, and the red color testifies about the flames that are to come. Fittingly, the celestial bow, which they call Iris, is placed as a sign of divine propitiation; for that bow tends to shine in the clouds, and responds in a somewhat grateful confession to the rays of the sun that illuminate the dewy darkness. Therefore, Christ is the Sun of righteousness, the clouds illuminated by Him are the saints, whose names are written in heaven, and the Psalmist speaks of them: Lord, your mercy is in heaven, and your truth reaches to the clouds (Psalm 35:6).

And when the bow appears in the clouds, the Lord remembers His promise not to destroy the earth with a flood, because through the intercessions of the saints, who know how to shine not by themselves, but through Him, He is propitiated towards the faithful when they lift up the eyes of their minds to desire heavenly things, and they recognize His glory in the deeds and words or even the rest of the preceding just ones, as if in His clouds, there will be a bow in the clouds, and I will see it and remember the eternal covenant that was made between God and every living soul of all flesh that is upon the earth. It is said in a human manner that God remembers His covenant when He sees the bow in the clouds, which by the merits of the saints, glorified and heavenly through His illumination, He spares and has mercy on our frailty; but He does not newly remember anything since He can never forget anything. He has been mindful of His covenant forever, but He seems to remember the covenant He made with us when He extends the help of His protection to those in tribulation; hence, it is well said in the psalm from the persona of some afflicted individuals, to whom divine aid seemed delayed: Why do you turn your face away, do you forget our poverty and our tribulation (Psalm 43:24)?

[Genesis 9:20] -- Noah, a man of the earth, began to cultivate the ground and planted a vineyard, etc. It is often pleasing to repeat the word of the Lord, which he said to the Jews: ”If you believed Moses, you would perhaps believe me as well, for he wrote about me” (John 5:46). For even in this reading where Moses, weaving history, writes of Noah and his sons, he figuratively announces the passion of the Lord and the devotion of the peoples believing in him, as well as the infidelity of those contradicting the faith. Indeed, Noah cultivating the ground planted a vineyard, because the Lord, caring for the human race, established the Synagogue among the Jewish people; of which vineyard the Psalmist also remembers saying: ”You transplanted a vine from Egypt” (Psalm 80:8); and the Lord, speaking in the

Gospel to the Jews, says: "A man planted a vineyard and surrounded it with a fence" (Luke 20:9), and the rest to the end of the parable, where he says: "What therefore will the lord of the vineyard do to those tenants? They said: He will put those wretches to a miserable death and lease the vineyard to other tenants."

[Genesis 9:21] -- And drinking the wine, he became drunk, and he was naked in his tent. The Lord drank wine when he received the cup of his passion. He was made drunk by drinking when by suffering for us he reached the utmost extremity of death. He was naked in his tent, when among the Jewish people, whom he had made his own, and in which he had long been accustomed to dwell as in his tent, enduring reproaches and mockeries, he ultimately underwent the sentence of the cross, making manifest to all most openly the truth of the mortal substance which he had deigned to assume.

[Genesis 9:22] -- When Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father's nakedness was uncovered, he told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a cloak, laid it upon their shoulders, and walking backward, covered their father's nakedness; their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's private parts. Ham, who saw his father's nakedness and laughed, signifies the Jewish people, who, contradicting and incredulous, rather despised the passion of our Lord and Savior than honored it, rejoicing in their relief at seeing it as contemptible rather than salvific. He also told his brothers outside what had happened to their father because through him the secret of the Lord's passion prophesied was made manifest and somewhat public, reaching the gift of the second generation; hence the Apostle says: "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:23). Furthermore, the two brothers, the eldest and the youngest, signify those to whom it was subsequently added: both Jews and Gentiles are called to Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

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

[Genesis 9:24-25] -- But Noah, awakening from his wine, when he had learned what his younger son had done to him, said: Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be

to his brothers. Awakening from wine, Noah curses his offspring by whom he was mocked; however, he rewards with due blessing those who honored him as their father; and the Lord, according to the voice of the psalm (Psalm 3:6), having slept in death and risen immortal, smote all who opposed him without cause, and shattered the teeth of sinners; but upon his own people he poured the blessing of eternal salvation. Not only is Canaan subjected to a curse, but also to the servitude of his brothers. For what else is that nation today, but a certain scribe of Christians, bearing the law and the prophets as testimony to the affirmation of the Church, so that we might honor through the sacrament what it announces through the letter.

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

[Genesis 9:27] -- May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem. Indeed, Japheth dwells in the tents of Shem because in the faith of the patriarchs and prophets, in the prophetic Scriptures, in the spiritually understood legal sacraments, the Church sojourns on earth. For we are accustomed to use tents in war or on a journey, and in the tents of the Israelite people we, who have come to Christ from the Gentiles, dwell, because certainly as long as we sigh for the heavenly homeland while placed on this path of life, as long as we fight against the snares of the ancient enemy with Christ as our leader and helper, it is necessary always to hold on to the sayings and deeds and works of the ancient fathers as examples of life and profession; so that, protected by their authority, we may more certainly and securely strive towards the palm of reward with a perfected struggle. However, it also aligns with the growth of the holy Church, which has filled the whole world, that the name Japheth, which means 'Enlargement' is used; whence Noah, alluding to this name itself, says: May God enlarge Japheth, that is, may He grant enlargement. It is fitting, however, that what was said of Shem is repeated of Japheth:

And let Canaan be his servant, because certainly the unbelieving Jews serve both peoples of believers, although with an impious mind, they provide service for salvation, not only in that they aid with the authority of the sacred volumes and strengthen in faith, but also in that they pursue them as far as they are able, because indeed by pursuing on account of righteousness, they make them higher participants of eternal blessedness, and even in that their offense of hard-hearted blindness prompts them to give greater thanks to their Redeemer and illuminator. To this people indeed the name Canaan, which means 'Commotion,' most aptly applies. For he cannot say: He set my feet upon a rock, and directed my steps (Psalm 40:3); but uncertain and wavering, he is always in motion. It should also be

noted according to the literal sense that not in vain is Canaan cursed when Ham sinned, not he himself but his son, especially when he was neither the firstborn of Ham but his youngest son. For it is written: The sons of Ham: Cush, Saba, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. Indeed, he foresaw equally in spirit that the progeny of Canaan would sin much more than the rest of the offspring of Ham, and therefore be worthy either to perish by curse or to groan under subjugation;

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

[Genesis 9:27] -- God also expanded Japheth, so that he dwelt in the tents of Shem, and that Canaan was his servant, when the Greeks or Romans, certainly descended from the line of Japheth, possessed the kingdoms of Asia, in which the descendants of Shem lived, and among other things made the Canaanites tributary to themselves.

[Genesis 9:28] -- But Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood, and all the days of his life were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died. As we have taught above, the six hundred years of Noah's life, after which he entered the ark, signify the perfection of the faith and profession of those who undergo the sacraments of the Church of heavenly grace and everlasting reward. Thus also the three hundred and fifty years which he lived after the flood represent the great perfection of those who, having received the sacraments of life, faithfully serve the Lord until death. We said that the number three hundred, because it is marked by the letter tau in Greek (and tau is written in the figure of a cross), most aptly bears the type of those who know to glory only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; whence Gideon, with the Lord commanding and helping, defeated the innumerable army of the Midianites with three hundred men, teaching figuratively that by the faith of the Lord's cross we would be victorious over the wars against us by this world and our vices. Moreover, the number fifty, because Scripture teaches that it designates the rest of the law by figure, which always in the fiftieth year decreed the greatest remission of all sufferings and the liberation from all services for God's entire people.

Therefore, Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood with a certain grace of mystery, to signify that we, having received the baptismal washing, should endure labors for the Lord in hope of the supreme rest and happiness. For he lived three hundred years to be patient in tribulation; he lived fifty years to be joyful in hope. But since seven times fifty make three hundred and fifty, and the number seven signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit, and fifty signifies true rest, which is given to the elect through the same Spirit, the type aptly corresponds. We can also interpret in this way the mystery of this number, that he who lives three hundred and fifty years after the flood, symbolizes the one who, throughout

the whole time of received baptism, aided by the spiritual gift, does not cease to labor for eternal rest in heaven; and he will happily see the death of the flesh, or rather, he will pass from death to life, which alone is to be called true life, who completes the course of present life in such a great perfection. Amen.

Chapter 10

[Genesis 10:1] -- These are the generations of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and sons were born to them after the flood. The sons of Japheth: Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. The series of Noah's offspring begins with his youngest son and is completed in the eldest, which is a familiar expression in the holy scriptures, mystically signifying that the lesser people of the nations would be preferred in faith over the greater people of the Jews when Christ came in the flesh. The sons of the sons of Noah who are mentioned are believed to have been progenitors of various nations who divided the world among them in such a way that Shem, the firstborn, inherited Asia, and Ham, the second, Africa, and Japheth, the last, Europe; yet because Asia is much larger in extent of land than Europe or Libya, the offspring of Ham and Japheth would also hold some portion in Asia. Thus, seven sons were born to Japheth who took possession of the land in Asia from the mountains of Amanus and Taurus in Syria, Cilicia's mountains, up to the river Tanais. In Europe, up to Gadira, they left names for places and nations, many of which later changed names, while others remained as they were. Therefore, Gomer are the Galatians, Magog the Scythians, Madai the Medes, Javan the Ionians, who are also Greeks, from whom the Ionian Sea is named, Tubal the Iberians, who are also the Spanish named from the river Ebro, from whom the Celtiberians come, although some suspect them to be Italians; Meshech are the Cappadocians, where a city among them is still called Mazaca today, also called Caesarea by Augustus Caesar. Meanwhile, the seventy interpreters believe Capturim to be the Cappadocians, Tiras the Thracians, whose name has not changed much.

[Genesis 10:3] -- Furthermore, the sons of Gomer: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. Ashkenaz are the Sarmatians whom the Greeks call the Medes. Riphath the Paphlagonians, Togarmah the Phrygians. [Genesis 10:4] -- "The sons of Javan were Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. From the Ionians, that is, the Greeks, are born the Elishah, who are called Elishites, hence also the fifth language of Greece is called Aeolic, which they call 'penten dialecton.' Josephus assumes Tharsis to be Cilicia, saying that the letter 'h' has been corruptly omitted in 'Thar' by later generations; hence also their metropolis city is called Tarsus, glorious in the apostle Paul's time. (Some think that Tharsis, from where gold was brought to Solomon, refers to the region of India.) Kittim is from Kittim, from whom to this day the city of Cyprus is named. Dodanim is identified as the Rhodians, for it is better read

as Rodanim, or Rodim, as the Septuagint translators rendered it, and even our translator placed it in the book of Hebrew names. For the similarity of the letters Daleth and Resh often causes this error among the Hebrews, so that one is read for the other. But Rhodes is the largest of the Cyclades, and once the most powerful city in the Ionian Sea, glorious in naval combat, and a refuge for all merchants because of its very safe harbor.

[Genesis 10:5] -- From these have divided the islands of the nations into their regions, each according to his language and family in their nations. 'Let us read the histories of the ancients, and we shall see almost all islands, and the shores of the whole world, and lands near the sea, occupied by Greek settlers, who, as we said above, possessed all maritime places from the Amanus and Taurus mountains to the British Ocean.' And while it is said 'each according to his language and family in their nations,' it clearly shows that according to the common opinion, each of the sons of Noah mentioned here, or the grandsons of the sons of Noah, formed separate nations or families of different languages. For the same statement, after recounting the descendants of Cham or Shem, also infers concerning the variety of generations and languages." [Genesis 10:6] -- The sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut and Canaan. Cush is today called Ethiopia by the Hebrews, Mizraim is Egypt, Phut is Libya, from whom even to this day a river in Mauretania is called Phut, and the whole region around it is called Phutensis. Moreover, Canaan possessed the land which the Jews subsequently took over by expelling the Canaanites.

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

[Genesis 10:8] -- Moreover, Cush begat Nimrod. He began to be mighty on the earth, and he was a mighty hunter before the Lord. While the progeny of Shem and Japheth remained in the innocence of a simple life, a cursed offspring was born of the lineage of Ham, who would pervert the state of human interaction with a new way of living, being lifted up with unique power, living first by hunting; then, having gathered an army, he endeavored to exercise unusual tyranny over peoples; and finally, he is read to have had a kingdom and to have

built great cities: which Scripture confirms because he was the first to do so, as it says: He began to be mighty. He began indeed because he was the first to do it. Moreover, he was mighty on the earth because, neglecting heavenly matters, in which the just are mighty, he learned to seek lowly things and place his hope in them.

[Genesis 10:9] -- From him came the proverb: Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. It turned into a proverb because his deeds were unprecedented in his time; and the phrase before the Lord was added to magnify the crime, since it was evidently quite reckless and arrogant for a man on earth to dare live in such a way before the Lord, who looks down from heaven upon the children of men; whence it is clear that many at that time avoided doing such things due to fear of divine oversight, although another version has it that Nimrod was a giant hunter against the Lord. From the ambiguous Greek term, enantion, both can be interpreted. In fact, in the psalm where we sing let us weep before the Lord who made us (Psalm 95:6), the word is enantion Kyrion. This also appears in the book of Job, where it is written, You burst forth into rage against the Lord. The understanding about the giant is thus evident, that he was a mighty hunter of brute animals, as a powerful man; but because he was an impious man, he led a proud life against the will of the Creator.

[Genesis 10:10] -- Now the beginning of his kingdom was Babylon and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. In the following passages, it is more fully explained how Babylon was made; but here it is first stated that it is left unmentioned that Nimrod was the builder of that city and its most proud tower. The beginning of his kingdom was Babylon, either because it was the first of his cities, founded, or because it was considered the metropolis of his kingdom due to its size and splendor. ”Erech is what is now Edessa, Accad is what is now Nisibis, a city of Mesopotamia. Calneh is what is now Seleucia, named after King Seleucus, or certainly what is now also called Ctesiphon. But what is added in the land of Shinar seems to pertain to all the same four cities. Shinar, indeed, is said to be a plain of such width that it could easily contain Babylon itself and many other cities. Because Babylon, with the cities of which it is the capital, designates the proud glory of this world, which is subject to confusion; for Babel means confusion, aptly the builder of it figuratively indicates the devil, who is the head of all evils; to whom also the name Nimrod, which sounds like tyrant, or fugitive, or transgressor, suits well. For he is a tyrant because, rebelling against the Creator, he strives to obtain the height of divinity and the kingdom of the world.

He is a fugitive, because, having fallen from heaven and cast out from the society of the angels who remained in their state, he wretchedly exults too much. He is a transgressor, because he disdained to obey the will of the Creator, to whom the role of a hunter is not undeservedly attributed; for he sets traps of his ambushes in the forest of this world, and hunts men who are clean in nature and wit, like deer and goats, deceiving them for death: surely opposed to those hunters who seek to catch the souls of men by their teaching so that they may lead them to eternal life; to whom the Lord speaks, saying, ”Come after me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19); whose homeland for that reason was

called Bethsaida, that is, the House of Hunters, because they were to hunt men for life. Now Nimrod is the son of Cush, which is interpreted as Ethiopian, because indeed the ancient enemy always arises anew from the dark people of the unfaithful through the execution of nefarious teaching or operation.

[Genesis 10:9] -- From whom even today remains the proverb, so that it is said: Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord. With those imitating the devil who are on his side, it can very truly be said, because such people, when they hunt the souls of men either by their word or example to destruction, follow the deeds of the ancient transgressor and deceiver. [Genesis 10:11] -- From that land came forth Asshur, and he built Nineveh and the streets of the city. From that land, from the land of Shinar it is said, from which the empire of the Assyrians sprang up, who from the name of Ninus the son of Belus founded the great city, which the Hebrews call Nineveh. Certainly, because the Scripture seems to be silent about where Asshur was born, from whom the Assyrian race was born, but only from what land he came out to build Nineveh, or other cities that it mentions, some of the Fathers understood this Asshur to be the son of Shem, of whom it is read in the following. But whether it was the same or another Asshur, it is agreed that first in the land was the kingdom of the Babylonians, second of the Assyrians, whose metropolis was Nineveh, which came forth from the same land.

[Genesis 10:13] -- But indeed Mizraim begot Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, and Pathrusim, and Casluhim, from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim. These seem to be the names of peoples rather than of individual men, since it was stated clearly even Casluhim from whom came the Philistines. For all of them end in -im, which is the proper ending of the plural number in Hebrew in the masculine gender, but also interpreted they signify a plural number rather than a singular. Now indeed Lehabim are Libyans, Philistines are Palestinians, Caphtorim are Cappadocians, as we find set according to the opinion of the Seventy interpreters in the book of the names of the Hebrews. The names of the other peoples which are now known to us, however, are unknown. But they possessed the land from Gaza up to the boundaries and limits of Egypt.

[Genesis 10:15-18] -- Canaan became the father of Sidon, his firstborn, Heth, and the Jebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, the Hivite, the Arkite, the Sinite, the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. ”From Sidon, the firstborn of Canaan, comes the city in Phoenicia called Sidon, formerly the northern boundary of the Canaanites. The Arkite founded Arca, a town situated against Tripoli at the foot of Mount Lebanon, near which was another city named Sim, which was later destroyed by various wars but retained its original name for the site. The Arvadites possessed Aradus Island, separated by a narrow strait from the Phoenician coast. This island, situated near Tyre, is today seen as a safe city and across from it lies the town of Antaradus. Samara is the noble city of Emesa in Syria. Emath, up to our time, is called by both the Assyrians and Hebrews as it was of old. The Macedonians, who ruled the East after Alexander, named it Epiphania, and some think it was called Antioch. Indeed, there were two cities named Emath: one was Great Emath, now

called Antioch, and it was called great to distinguish it from Lesser Emath, which is called Epiphania, where the eyes of Zedekiah were blinded by Nebuchadnezzar.

[Genesis 10:19] -- And the borders of Canaan extended from Sidon as one enters Gerar, reaching to Gaza, until one enters Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. The ancient translation has Lyce for Lasha. It is now called Callirhoe, where hot springs flow into the Dead Sea. Therefore, Sidon was the boundary of the Canaanites to the north, Gerar to the south, Gaza near Egypt."

[Genesis 10:21] -- From Shem were also born the fathers of all the sons of Heber, the brother of Japheth the elder. He calls him the brother of Japheth, but does not mention him being the brother of Ham, because he understands those who are united in the faith of piety to be rightly called brothers; but he shows that the faithless one, though born of the same parents, is estranged from the brotherly society of the righteous. However, it seems that by this sentence it is indicated that although many sons born of Shem begot many peoples, that progeny specifically followed his faith and piety, which through Heber descended to Abraham and the Hebrew people; hence they are properly called the fathers of all the sons of Heber. Finally, alone in the construction of the tower, as Scripture says, the language of the whole earth remained in the house of Heber, who was at that age, as will be read in subsequent texts, the original speech of the human race, which the names of the men of the following age clearly prove to be Hebrew, as is to be believed by merit, because following the faith of his ancestor Shem with his house, he kept himself immune from the conspiracy of the arrogant work. Nor was it in vain that Abraham chose to be called a Hebrew; but because he knew how to imitate the life of this Seth, he wished to have and leave his name as a nickname to himself and to his descendants for the future.

[Genesis 10:22] -- The sons of Shem: Elam, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. "These occupied part of Asia from the Euphrates river to the Indian Ocean. Now, Elam is from whom the Elamites, the chiefs of Persia, come. Of Assur, it has already been said before, that he founded the city of Nineveh. Arphaxad, from whom the Chaldeans come. Lud, from whom Lydia. Aram, from whom the Syrians, whose metropolis is Damascus. For in Hebrew, Syria is called Aram. [Genesis 10:23] -- The sons of Aram: Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. Uz, the founder of Trachonitis and Damascus, held the chiefdom between Palestine and Coele-Syria. Hul, from whom the Armenians come. Gether, from whom the Arcanians, or Carians come. Moreover, Mash, for whom the Septuagint interpreters said Mosoch, who are called the Maonians." [Genesis 10:24] -- But indeed Arphaxad begat Salah, from whom Heber was born. From this Heber both Abraham and the people born from him, as we have mentioned before, are surnamed Hebrew.

[Genesis 10:25] -- And there were born to Heber two sons: the name of one was Peleg, because in his days the earth was divided, and the name of his brother was Joktan. He calls this the division of the earth, which occurred in the confusion of languages. He named his son Peleg, that is, Division, to leave a perpetual memory of his devotion to his descendants, because, indeed, when the languages of the faithless were divided due to their pride, he, by

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

[Genesis 10:26] -- All these are the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. We previously said that Shem, the firstborn of Noah, signifies those believing from the ancient people of God, Japheth signifies those believing from the gentiles; Ham, mocking the nakedness of his father and for this cursed, insinuates that part of the same people which, as remaining in the middle, neither firstly with their fellow tribesmen, nor afterwards wanted to be associated with the gentiles in faith. Therefore, the figures and places of habitation of these are most fittingly congruent; surely the sons of Eber, who is shown to be predominant among the descendants of Shem, are said to have extended their habitation from Mesha to the eastern mountain called Sephar. Now Mesha is a region of India which, when interpreted, is called Elevation, which signifies not a reprehensible pride, but rather that elevating of the mind to which the Apostle exhorts us saying: If you have risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God; set your mind on things that are above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:1). But what is the eastern mountain, if not that of which Isaiah says: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob (Isaiah 2:3)?

which is rightly called a mountain because it raises all those climbing up it from the desire for lowly things to the longing for heavenly things. It is rightly called the Eastern Mountain, because it reveals the rising of the true light to all those flocking to it. It is also rightly named Sephar, that is, Book. For it is the book of life, in which all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden, in which the names of all the elect are written. Therefore, the dwelling of the sons of Joktan, who is interpreted as Little One, was from Mesha, that is, Elevation, going towards the eastern mountain which is called Book, because all the saints following the humility of the earlier just ones, of whom it is said: The Lord preserves the simple (Psalm 114:6), at the beginning of a religious conversation uplift their minds from earthly contagions, so that they may be deemed worthy to ascend to see the brightness of the eternal Sun, and to be instructed from the very book of life, which is the Lord Christ, with the pages of eternal wisdom revealed. Similarly, concerning the sons of Japheth, when it is

said, from these the coastlands of the nations were divided in their lands, does it not most manifestly indicate by this very name the churches of the gentiles throughout the world, which, like islands, are continually beaten by the waves of the sea, that is, the swollen and bitter storms of the world, yet are not overcome;

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

[Genesis 10:32] -- These are the families of Noah according to their peoples and nations. From these were the nations divided on the earth after the flood. Let the diligent reader review in order the names of the men or peoples who are said to have been born from the three sons, and they will be found to number seventy-one: namely, thirteen from Japheth, thirty-one from Ham, twenty-six from Shem, from whom they are believed to have filled the world with as many languages and nations, or rather seventy-two, as clearer tradition holds, since there was one among them from whom afterward two nations and peoples were born; unless perhaps it is to be understood that there are two Asshurs, who created two peoples: one who, having gone out from the land of Shinar, built Nineveh, and the other a son of Shem; and thus the number of seventy-two nations is completed. Neither does it seem irrelevant that the Lord therefore sent seventy-two disciples to preach, because there were as many nations and languages to whom the word of preaching was to be committed, just as he first chose twelve apostles for the same number of tribes of Israel to be called to faith; so afterward he designated seventy-two teachers to indicate the salvation of all nations, which were encompassed by the same number.

Chapter 11

[Genesis 11:1] -- Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. Because having anticipated saying that the sons of Noah had divided the earth according to clans, languages, territories, and nations, it returns to show how humans were separated from each other: where it is most clear that as long as the human race served its Creator with due humility, it also harmonized with itself in peaceful charity. But once it raised its neck against its Author in pride, it was soon justly punished and could not have peace even with itself. How great the human happiness could have been even after being cast out of paradise, if only they then wanted to serve their Creator humbly, is testified by the grace of our Lord, the Creator and Redeemer, who gave the knowledge of all languages to His disciples faithfully adhering to Him by sending the Spirit from above; thus by the wondrous transformation of the right hand of the Most High, just as here, through the division of languages due to pride, the nations were dispersed throughout the world, so there, due to the merit of humility, the diversity of languages brought together, people collected from every nation under heaven resonated with one unvarying confession and faith in the praises and greatness of God; and deservedly so, this city, in which languages were divided and nations dispersed, is called Babylon, that is, Confusion; the other is called Jerusalem, that is, Vision of Peace, in which, through the united languages of all nations in the praise of God, concord was made. But these things later. Meanwhile, let us see the text of the letter.

[Genesis 11:2] -- And as they journeyed from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. It appears from these words that even the first humans held the region of the East; thus it should be considered the head of the world, not only because the light of the stars rises from there, but also because the human race first inhabited it. [Genesis 11:3] -- And one said to his neighbor: Come, let us make bricks and bake them with fire, and they had bricks for stones and bitumen for mortar. Perhaps, therefore, they used bricks for stones and bitumen for mortar because in those regions the supply of stones, from which such a great work could be completed, was lacking; or because they knew that a wall of bricks could more strongly resist the danger of fires. Bitumen, however, is made from trees, and it is also made from the earth or waters; whence it is written later about the land of Sodom. The woodland valley had many bitumen pits; and the Dead Sea is called the Asphalt Lake in Greek, that is, the Bitumen Lake; because bitumen floating on it is usually collected, which more clearly suggests that the walls of Babylon were constructed from it.

[Genesis 11:4] -- And they said: Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower, whose top may reach heaven, and let us make a name for ourselves before we are scattered over the face of the whole earth. When it says whose top, it refers not to the city but to the tower, that is, the citadel, which they planned to make higher than the other walls in a more elevated place. Truly, it is amazing with what intention they planned to raise the top of their tower up to heaven, and yet at the same time claimed they would be divided over the entire earth; unless they foolishly and most arrogantly thought to divide themselves throughout the world in such a way that if they should be discontented with earthly habitation, or if a flood of water again threatened the earth, they might seek the upper regions of the air or the sky through this tower.

[Genesis 11:5] -- The Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of Adam were building. The old translation has for the sons of Adam the sons of men, that is, not the sons of God, but those who, living according to man, deserved to hear from the Lord: "I said, you are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High; but you will die like men" (Psalm 81:6). However, God does not move from a place, who is always wholly everywhere; but He is said to descend when He does something on earth which, done wonderfully beyond the usual course of nature, shows His presence in some way; nor does He learn by seeing in time, who can never be ignorant of anything; but He is said to see and know in time, that which He makes to be seen and known. Therefore, the city was not thus seen as God made it to be seen, when He showed how much it displeased Him; although it can be understood that God descended to that city, because His angels had descended, in whom He dwells, so that what follows: "And He said: Behold, the people is one, and they all have one language," and the rest, and then added: "Come, let us go down, and there confound their language," might be a recapitulation, showing how what was said, "the Lord came down," was done; for if He had already descended, what does "come, let us descend" mean, which is understood to have been said to the angels, unless because He had descended through the angels, who were descending in the angels?

[Genesis 11:6] -- Behold, he said, the people are one and they all have one language; and they have begun to do this, and they will not desist from their thoughts until they complete them in action. There is a great difference in sinning between those who so despise God's commandments that they still have among themselves just admirers and worshippers, and those who all with unanimous consent contradict heavenly commands. There is also a great difference between those who sin, for example, in their youth, intending to do penance for their committed sins later in old age, and those who carry no intention of correction for the evils they do. Therefore, to show here the unanimity of the sinners, the invisible Judge says: Behold, the people are one and they all have one language; and he adds their unrepentant intention: They have begun to do this, and they will not desist from their thoughts until they complete them in action; to whom aptly fits the beginning of the thirteenth psalm, in which it is said: The fool has said in his heart, There is no God (Psalm 13:1), that is, Nimrod the contriver of the infamous work; and hence about the workmen of the doomed city: They are corrupt and have become abominable (ibid.). These words which we discuss, the internal

Judge speaks to the ministers of virtues in an incomprehensible order to us: His speaking to them is to show His own invisible secrets to their hearts, so that in the contemplation of truth they read whatever they ought to do; for what is said as if to those who hear is inspired to those who see; therefore, when God infused into their hearts the verdict of retribution against human pride, He says:

[Genesis 11:7] -- Come, let us go down and there confuse their language. It is said to those who were present: Come, because indeed this itself never decreases from divine contemplation, and it is always to increase in divine contemplation; and never to withdraw from the heart is always to come by a certain stable motion. To whom he also says: Let us go down and confuse their language there. Angels ascend in that they see the Creator, angels descend in that they press the creature lifting itself illicitly with an examination of strictness. Therefore, to say: Let us go down and confuse their languages, is to show them in Himself that which is rightly read, and to inspire by the force of the inner vision the judgments to be displayed to their minds by hidden motions. And well He did not say: Come, and going down confuse; but let us confuse their language there, showing thus that He operates through His ministers, so that they are also co-workers of God, as the Apostle says: For we are God's fellow workers.

[Genesis 11:7] -- He says, let us confuse their language there, so that everyone may not hear the voice of his neighbor. Justly is the evil intent punished, even to which the effect does not succeed; because indeed the dominion of command is in the language, pride is condemned there, so that he who did not wish to understand to obey the command of God was not understood by a man giving commands.

[Genesis 11:9] -- And so the Lord scattered them from that place over all the earth, and they ceased to build the city; and therefore it was called Babel, because there the language of the whole earth was confused. Rightly was the language confused for dispersion, because it had wickedly conspired in nefarious speech: the power of language was taken from the proud leaders, so that they could not teach the evils they had begun to their subjects in contempt of God, and thus the judgment of divine severity was turned into an aid for human utility, so that by keeping silent they would stop the work which they had perversely gathered to insist upon: and so with the Lord descending and seeing the city of pride, Babylon, that is, confusion, it happened to be named: which contrarily, the city of truth has both the name and the state; for it is called Jerusalem, that is, Vision of Peace, in which the Lord, seeing the assembly of the faithful and humble in spirit, sent the grace of the Holy Spirit, who would grant them the knowledge of all languages, with which, imbued, they would unanimously call all people who were in different languages to the construction of that same holy city, that is, the Church of Christ; and those who had humbly listened to the truth would sublimely open their mouths to proclaim the knowledge of the truth to the whole world.

However, it should be noted that although the Scripture says that having been scattered through the world, the builders ceased from building the city; it does not say that it was ceased from being inhabited: from which it should be gathered that, with others descending

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

The citadel, that is, its capitol is the tower which was built after the flood, said to occupy four thousand paces. Orosius in his histories (Book I, chap. 6) similarly mentions it: This [city], visible from all sides in the plain expanse, most fertile by the nature of the place, arranged quadrangularly with equal walls in the appearance of a camp, the strength and magnitude of its walls is scarcely credible in report, that is, fifty cubits in width, four times as high: moreover, its circumference is four hundred eighty stades, the wall built with baked bricks and mixed with bitumen, surrounded outside by a wide ditch that flows like a river. In front of the walls, a hundred bronze gates: the width at the top of the walls on either side includes the dwellings of the defenders, and spaced in the middle it accommodates chariots. The houses inside are four stories high, wonderful in threatening height. But since in the spiritual sense Babylon is the city of the devil, that is, the entire multitude of reprobate humans, who are the builders of Babylon except the masters of errors, who either introduce a cult contrary to the truth of divinity, or attack the known faith of the truth with evil deeds or words?

[Genesis 11:1] -- Now the whole earth had one language and the same words, as long as men remained in the East: but when they moved from the East, soon because of the words or deeds of pride, they were separated from each other and were expelled further from their Creator. The region of the East from which the world is accustomed to receive the light of the stars rightly signifies Him who said: I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12): in whom as long as men remain, they are of one language and the same speech: for there is certainly one confession of faith, the same purity of action, common charity, and hope of eternal things: for all who persevere in Christ are enlightened. But those who withdraw from the contemplation of true light can have neither peace with the Lord nor among themselves: for just as there is one norm of faith, so there is not one and the same norm of infidelity; but one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, in whom is the salvation of the elect: but there are many lords of the reprobate, various winding paths of perfidy, various filths of pollution, various gods

of the nations, to whom all the wretched are led to one destruction of damnation: which the figure of those two cities well signified, when, with tongues divided in Babylon, no one could recognize the voice of his neighbor. Moreover, in Jerusalem, with tongues united by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the faithful, even of all foreigners who had come, were able to understand the voice and all together in one bond of charity and faith praise the same God and Lord.

[Genesis 11:2] -- Departing from the East, they found a plain in which to dwell, because withdrawing from the light of righteousness, the reprobate found for themselves the broad ways of the world in which they might remain with a fickle mind; and this in the stench of carnal vices. For Shinar, as we have said, is interpreted as their stench: And what is meant by the land of Shinar, except the rotten lust of carnal slothfulness, in which whoever does not avoid dwelling, that is, persisting with a secure and fixed intention, soon by the increasing wickedness, also provoke their neighbors to the injury of the Creator and nefarious acts. For it follows that one said to his neighbor: Come, let us make bricks, and bake them with fire. They then inflame one another to make bricks, with which they would build the city of Nimrod on the plain of Shinar; because indeed, the entire multitude of the impious serves the devil with filthy, sordid, and earthly works, and they build for him not any other city than themselves by living wickedly: but on the other hand, the city of Jerusalem, in which David and Solomon, that is, the strong in hand and peaceful reigns, is not built of bricks, but of stone: not on a plain, but on a mountain, as its king says to it: Behold, I will lay your stones in order, and lay your foundations with sapphires (Isa. LIV, 11). And of which the Prophet says:

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

[Genesis 11:3] -- But as they mold clay into bricks, which are usually made with equal square sides, hence also taking their name, it shows the composition and ornamentation of secular eloquence, through which the proud city of the devil, either in deceptive philosophy or heretical craftiness, seems to be raised much for a time; but in the examination of the strict judge, it will be evident how condemnable and worthy of confusion it is.

[Genesis 11:3] -- They baked the bricks they had made with fire. Indeed, that fire of which it is said: ”all adulterers, their hearts are like an oven” (Hosea 7:4), and about which Isaiah says: ”Behold, all you who kindle a fire, encircled with flames, walk in the light of your

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

But the bitumen with which the builders of Babylon used in place of mortar, which was taken from the ground or pits, certainly shows the intention of earthly and base pleasure, with which the people of this age fortify all their works, as those who, having no hope or knowledge of heavenly goods, direct themselves to seeking the joys that are in the heavens, and thus everything they do is carried out for the sake of temporary gratification or favor: against which it is rightly read that the masons made the temple of the Lord: indeed, mortar is made from stones burned and turned into ashes, which are acted upon by fire, so that what were once singly firm and strong become softened with the addition of whiteness, and, infused with water, are better connected to each other, and the stones placed in the wall can connect others, themselves too quickly regaining better firmness, which they seemed to have lost for a short time. Who then are to be understood by the mortar but those who, being diligently baked in the furnace of temporal tribulations, have first in themselves changed all the darkness of vices into the whiteness of virtues, saying to their Creator: "You will wash me and I will be whiter than snow" (Psalm 51:7); then also strive to whiten their neighbors with their exhortations or examples and bind each other with the bond of love? Of whom it is rightly said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9);

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

[Genesis 11:4] -- Come, he said, let us build ourselves a city and a tower whose top may reach to heaven. The wicked teachers make a city for themselves when, having left the heavenly city, whose architect and builder is God—that is, the holy Church—they gather their own assemblies. All the reprobates make a city for themselves when, neglecting the protection of God's commandments, they follow the thoughts and desires of their own hearts in their actions or words. They build the city of Babylon when they perform works worthy of confusion. They also make a tower whose top may reach to heaven when, to the injury of their Creator, they exercise impious tongues; when, according to the voice of the Psalmist, they speak iniquity against the Most High, when they set their mouth against heaven, which the heathens do by worshipping many gods, the heretics by polluting the faith of the one God with errors, the Jews by denying Christ the Son of God, false Catholics by profaning the true faith with evil deeds or schisms. To all these, the Psalmist's cry to the Lord fits: Their pride rises always against you (Psalm 73:23), that is, it rises to you in the remembrance of your just judgment.

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

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

[Genesis 11:10] -- These are the generations of Shem. Shem was one hundred years old when he begot Arphaxad, two years after the flood. After the destruction of the Tower of Babel, Scripture hastens, by enumerating the generations of the second age of the world (for the first had run until Noah and the flood), to arrive at Abraham, the patriarch of the third age, indeed of all nations; through whose faith and obedience the new foundations of the holy city would once again be laid, and in whose seed the dispersion of nations would return to one confession and faith in divine worship. But the number one hundred, which is

transferred from the left hand to the right, usually insinuates great perfection whether of good action or of hope or heavenly life; fittingly Sem, the son of blessing, in the hundredth year of his life begot a son, whose lineage would come from Heber and reach to Abraham; and Abraham himself, by the same grace of the sacrament, begot Isaac the son of promise in the hundredth year of his own age, in whose example we, the children of the promise, as if placed temporarily on the right side of our judge through hope, expect the blessing of heavenly life through good works: for the two sons whom Sem begot before the hundredth year, Elam and Asshur, as read above, placed outside the holy seed and as if retained still in the left hand, created citizens of the earthly city rather, that is, of this world.

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

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

[Genesis 11:11] -- And Sem lived after he begot Arfaxat five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Nowhere in all this series of generations is it added, as in the age before the flood, ”and he died”; because there was no one in the whole assemblage of those born, of whom it could be said that he walked with God, as was said of Enoch: ”and he was not found, for God took him” (Gen. 5:24). [Genesis 11:12] -- Moreover, Arfaxat lived thirty-five years and begot Sale. In this place, the Septuagint interpreters added one generation more than the Hebrew truth, stating that Arfaxat was one hundred and thirty-five years old when he begot Cainan, who, when he was one hundred and thirty years old, begot Sale. The evangelist Luke seems to have followed this translation at this point. However, the

Greek chronographers, having noticed this discrepancy, corrected the series of generations to the Hebrew authority by removing Cainan; nevertheless, they did not care to amend the number of years in the generations that they had in common with the Hebrew codices according to their authority; but following their own authority, they assigned to this age, which extends from the deluge to Abraham, a total number of years less by one hundred and thirty than the edition of the seventy, but greater by six hundred and fifty years than the Hebrew truth.

[Genesis 11:14] -- Sale also lived thirty years and begot Heber. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty. [Genesis 11:18] -- But Heber lived thirty-four years and begot Phaleg. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty-four. [Genesis 11:18] -- Indeed, Phaleg lived thirty years and begot Reu. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty. [Genesis 11:20] -- Now Reu lived thirty-two years and begot Sarug. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty-two. [Genesis 11:22] -- Indeed, Sarug lived thirty years and begot Nachor. The seventy interpreters have it one hundred and thirty. [Genesis 11:24] -- Now Nachor lived twenty-nine years and begot Thare. The seventy interpreters have it seventy-nine. [Genesis 11:26] -- And Terah lived seventy years, and he begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. The seventy interpreters in this generation alone do not differ at all from the Hebrew truth. And up to this point the second age of the world extends, having according to the Hebrew truth 192 years, according to the seventy interpreters 1072 years, and according to the chronographers' reckoning 942 years. Thus it is said that Terah, having lived seventy years, begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran, just as Noah is narrated to have begotten three sons, when he was five hundred years old before the flood; since one man from one wife in one year could not have begotten three sons. For it is understood that when he was seventy years old, he begot Abram, who is now Abraham, and then his brothers in subsequent time; but Scripture was less concerned to express the time of their births, since merely noting the time when Abraham was born would signify the age and could suffice.

[Genesis 11:27] -- These are the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. The house of Terah was one, from which Abraham was born, in which the worship of the one true God was kept; and, as is credible, in which the Hebrew language alone also remained, when, as told by Joshua, he himself, like the manifest people of God in Egypt, served foreign gods in Mesopotamia. The others from the progeny of Heber gradually flowed into other languages and into other nations, in the same manner as after the flood of waters, one house of Noah remained to restore the human race. Thus, in the flood of many superstitions throughout the world, one house of Terah remained, in which the planting of the city of God was preserved. Finally, just as there, after enumerating the generations up to Noah along with the number of years, and after expounding the cause of the flood, before God began to speak to Noah about the construction of the ark, it is said "These are the generations of Noah"; so also here, after enumerating the generations from Shem, the son of Noah, up to Abraham, then a notable phrase is similarly put, so that it is said "These are

the generations of Terah. Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran." Indeed, there, the patriarch of the second age of the world was born, here, in the third age.

[Genesis 11:28] -- Moreover, Aran begot Lot, and Aran died before his father Thare in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans. What is said before Thare may designate both presence and time; time, evidently, because he died before his father; presence, indeed, because he passed away before him, that is, in his presence. Finally, some Codices have that he died before the face of his father Thare. That what is said in Ur of the Chaldeans seems to be the name of the place where he was buried; whose tomb, as Josephus reports, is shown today, from which it seems that the same Aran had been of some great excellence or dignity. Moreover, because among the Hebrews Ur means Fire, they narrate that he was consumed by the fire of the Chaldeans; because clearly, recognizing the true God with Abraham, his elder brother, he refused to worship the fire which they worshipped; and thus, both being cast into the fire by the Chaldeans, he was consumed by the flames; but Abraham, by the merit of his higher faith, was delivered by the Lord: hence it speaks to him subsequently: I am the Lord, who brought you out of the fire of the Chaldeans; and on account of this dissension of Abraham, although he escaped the fire, he could not dwell among the Chaldeans; but with his kindred, he was transferred by his parent to another land:

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

[Genesis 11:29] -- Abram and Nachor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nachor's wife was Melcha, the daughter of Aran, the father of Melcha and the father of Jescha. Our elders say that Jescha is the same as Sarai, the wife of Abraham, since evidently the brothers Abraham and Nachor had two sisters, the daughters of Aran, as wives. But if this is so, Aran, their father, cannot be the one who was the younger brother of Abraham and Nachor, but instead must be another person with the same name. For it is known that Abraham was only ten years older than his wife Sarai, as he himself said before the Lord: "Will a son be born to a hundred-year-old man, and will Sarah at ninety years old bear a child?" (Genesis XVII, 17). And how could his younger brother have a daughter who would be ten years younger than he, while he himself would be only seven or at most eight years older than her?

[Genesis 11:30] -- But Sarai was barren and had no children. By the counsel of Divine Providence, it happened that she was barren in her youth, so that in her old age, by bearing the son of promise, she might symbolize the holy Church, to whom it is said, "Rejoice, O

barren woman who does not bear" (Galatians IV, 27), and so on. For it was fitting that she, who in the figure of unique faith and our hope was to bear one son of promise, should give birth to him not in Chaldea, nor in Mesopotamia, but in the land of promise.

[Genesis 11:31] -- So Thare took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, the wife of Abram his son, and brought them out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to go into the land of Canaan. The old translation has, "he brought them out of the region of the Chaldeans," which poses no question at all. But as it is said according to the Hebrew truth, "he brought them out of Ur," that is, out of the fire or burning of the Chaldeans, it can be rightly understood that he brought them out of that region where fire was worshipped, instead of saying, "he brought them out of the idolatry of the Chaldeans. As for the statement "to go into the land of Canaan," and immediately thereafter is added "they came as far as Haran, and dwelt there, and the days of Thare were two hundred and five years, and Thare died in Haran," it shows Thare's intention, because he indeed thought, when he fled from the Chaldeans, to go into the land of Canaan: but when he reached Haran, and found in it a convenient and safe place for himself and his people from the pursuit of the Chaldeans, he refrained from further traveling to the land of Canaan, but remained in the city to which he had come until his death:

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

Chapter 12

[Genesis 12:1-3] -- And the Lord said to Abram, ”Go out from your land, and from your kindred, and from your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, and I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. For, speaking distinctly, the Lord mentions land, kindred, and father’s house. The land of Abram must be understood as the region of the Chaldeans from which he had already departed: his kindred, the family of his brother Nahor, whom he had already left behind: the father’s house, in which he was then dwelling in Haran. How then is it that he is now commanded to go out from his father’s house as well as from the land and kindred from which he already seemed to have come forth? Unless perhaps it should be understood that he had left his land and his kindred with his parent with the intention, as we have previously mentioned, to return to it after reconciling with the Chaldeans in the following age: he is now commanded by the Lord to turn his mind away from the purpose of returning to Chaldea, and to take away his mind and body from the habitation of Mesopotamia as well.

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

Therefore, what he says, ”And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” is as if he were saying, ”And in your seed all the families of the earth will be blessed. For, to

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

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

[Genesis 12:4] -- So Abram departed as the Lord had directed him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. It is clear from this number of Abraham's years that he left Haran while his father was still alive, as was explained above. There is no doubt that the number seventy-five is mystical, since in it he received the promise of divine blessing and left Isaac, the heir of the same blessing, when he was dying. To speak briefly, seventy, because it is seven times ten, represents the perfection of good actions, when we fulfill the commandments of the Decalogue through the grace of the Holy Spirit, which the prophet describes as sevenfold. To these are added five, so that in all the senses of our body, we may fulfill the same divine commandments with the help of the Spirit's grace. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran at the command or promise of the Lord and entered the Promised Land; to show that he himself, through the help of the Spirit, having anathematized the errors of Babylonian conduct, would keep God's commandments; and this in all that he did with his body, whether living, hearing, tasting, or touching, so that there might be nothing in his body that was not enlightened and aided by the gift of the Spirit to obey the heavenly commands. And he marked that all his heirs of the promise should live in a similar manner.

It is also to be imitated by all the sons of the promise, among whom we are, that he was ordered to leave his land, his kindred, and his father's house. For we depart from our land when we renounce the pleasures of the flesh; from our kindred, when we strive to strip ourselves of all the vices with which we were born, as far as is possible for humans; from our father's house, when we contend to leave the world itself with its prince the devil out of love for heavenly life. For we are all born into the world as sons of the devil because of the guilt of original transgression; but through the grace of regeneration, we belong to the

seed of Abraham and become the sons of God, as our Father in heaven says to us, that is, to His Church: ”Listen, daughter, and see, and incline your ear, forget your people and your father’s house” (Psalms 45:10). Thus it is well that Haran, from which Abraham departed, is interpreted as Wrath. Canaan, to whose land he was invited, is called the Changed or Merchant. Therefore, not only did Abraham and his brother Lot leave Haran to go to the land of Canaan, but all the elect who are born through the laver of regeneration certainly depart from Haran and come to the land of Canaan;

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

[Genesis 12:5] -- Therefore, Sarai took his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all the substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had made in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan. The phrase ”the souls that they had made” is used to mean the children they had begotten. For in the Scriptures, a man is sometimes indicated by the name of the soul alone, sometimes by the name of the flesh alone. By ”soul,” as it is said: ”The soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20); by ”flesh,” as in the Psalm: ”Unto thee shall all flesh come” (Psalm 65:3), since neither flesh without the soul can come to God, nor can the soul sin without the flesh, but the whole man is signified by one part. Nor do those who believe that as the flesh is generated from flesh, so the soul is generated from the soul have any support from this sentiment: for by the term ”soul,” as we have said, the whole man is understood. However, that they made souls, that is, procreated souls in Haran, should be understood not of Abraham and Lot, but of their household and servants: for the sacred history following this testifies that the patriarchs themselves still remained without children.

[Genesis 12:6] -- And when they had come to it, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land. So he built an altar there to the Lord, who had appeared to him. It is read above that while Abram was still living in Haran, the Lord spoke to him, promising manifold blessings, commanding him to leave there and come into the land that He would show him. When he did this and willingly obeyed the divine commands, he was immediately deemed worthy of greater grace from God, so that not only would he enjoy His speech, as before, but also merit His vision. When, through the same divine vision and speech, he knew that this was the land promised to him for possession, he quickly, as a man devoted to God, built an altar there to dedicate and consecrate it for offering sacrifices to Him. But because sacred history is full

of mystical types, it should be noted that the Lord's appearance and the erection of the altar are recorded as having taken place at Shechem and at the oak of Moreh. What illustrious valley, if not humility, is figuratively understood? When called by the Lord from the labors and burdens of this world, we must have humility as the first among virtues, as He Himself says:

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

[Genesis 12:8] -- And thence, crossing to the mountain that was east of Bethel, he pitched his tent there, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. He also built an altar there to the Lord and called on His name. Indeed, after the valley, he ascended to the mountains, for through the humility of self-despair we must ascend to the loftiness of devout action dedicated to God. And there too, as in the valley, he built an altar to the Lord and called on His name, because both to be humbled in the sight of the Lord and to perform sublime works of virtue are gifts of divine favor; for both we must offer praises of thanks to Him. And because there should always be progress in virtues towards higher things, it is aptly added: [Genesis 12:9] -- And Abram journeyed, going and still progressing towards the south. The southern region, from where the sun is accustomed to shine more ardently upon the world, mystically demonstrates the fervor of love by which the hearts of the elect, lest they become sluggish in the appetite and desires for lowly things, are always inflamed by the Sun of righteousness shining from above, namely Christ. Thus Abraham, desiring to see and know the land he was to receive as a possession, indeed proceeded in human curiosity, going and still progressing towards the south: but in mystical significance, he showed that he, ascending from strength to strength, and like all the elect, always made progress in divine love until he is granted to see the God of gods in Zion.

[Genesis 12:10] -- Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there. After receiving the promises of blessing, after entering the land of promise, after building an altar to the Lord there, after invoking His name, Abraham is tested by famine, and such a great famine that he left the land which he had received in promise as soon as he saw and visited it. But Isaac and Jacob, and his sons, also left the same land of promise, driven by similar necessity. As the Psalmist sings, they passed from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another people (Psalm 105:13). This was believed to have happened not by chance, but by divine providence, so that both they and all the heirs of the same promise would understand that they received the gifts of divine blessing in such a way that in this life they would endure labor and temporal affliction, but in the future,

they would expect everlasting rest and happiness. This was also to illustrate that the land of Canaan was promised to Abraham and his seed in such a way that it signified more the inheritance of the heavenly fatherland, of which it is written: "The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell upon it forever" (Psalm 37:29). This is clearly not said about the land of this world, which is common to both the righteous and the wicked, since it is narrated that it will be possessed forever by the righteous alone.

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

[Genesis 12:11-18] -- And when he was about to enter Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife: "I know that you are a beautiful woman, and that when the Egyptians see you, they will say that you are his wife, and they will kill me and keep you alive: therefore, please say that you are my sister, so that it may go well with me because of you," and so on until it was said, "The Lord, however, struck Pharaoh with great plagues and his house because of Sarai, Abram's wife; and Pharaoh called Abram and said to him: What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say she was your sister, so that I took her as my wife? Abraham did not lie because he said his wife was his sister, for she was also that, being a close relative; likewise Lot was called his brother, though he was his brother's son. Thus, he concealed that she was his wife but did not deny that she was his sister, entrusting the defense of his wife's chastity to God and avoiding human deceit as a man, since if he did not avoid danger as much as he could, he would tempt God rather than hope in Him. Indeed, what Abraham trusted in the Lord came to pass, for Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, who had taken her as his wife, being gravely afflicted, returned her to her husband.

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

year, and Pharaoh had given many gifts to Abraham, and Pharaoh was afterwards struck by the Lord, she still remained untouched by his embrace.

Chapter 13

[Genesis 13:1] -- Abram went up therefore from Egypt, he and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, to the southern region. He does not mean the southern region of Egypt, but of the promised land: for indeed he did not travel southward from Egypt, which whoever does, goes farther from the promised land: but leaving all of Egypt, part of which he had visited, he first ascended to the southern region of the promised land, which was nearest. It should also be noted according to the letter that Abraham is remembered as having previously descended into Egypt, and now ascending from Egypt, because certainly the land of Egypt is considered inferior not only to the land of Canaan but also to other regions of the world, just as conversely the region of the Scythians is said to be elevated higher than other parts of the earth: which can be easily inferred from the courses of the rivers flowing into it from elsewhere and flowing out from it. It fits however most aptly with the typical senses that the land of Canaan should be higher than Egypt, because this indeed represents the promise of the heavenly homeland, while that signifies the oppressions and labors of present life. For this the Lord both promised and gave as an inheritance to his people Israel:

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

whence it is aptly added.

[Genesis 13:3] -- And he returned by the way he had come from Bethel in the south. For by the south, we indeed tend towards Bethel through the light of heavenly knowledge, and through the inspiration of intimate love, we hasten by frequent steps of good works to the entrance of the house of God, which Bethel signifies; namely, that house which, as the Apostle says, is not made with hands, but is eternal in the heavens (II Cor. V, 1), which the Prophet desired to see, when he said: Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house, and the place of the tabernacle of your glory (Psalm XXVI, 8).

[Genesis 13:3] -- To the place where he had previously pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai: at the place of the altar which he had made formerly, and he called upon the name of the Lord. It is noteworthy that blessed Abraham, progressing in his chosen journey, is said to have returned from Bethel either from the south or through the south, yet it is not added that he entered the same city; but he is said to have reached the area between this place and Ai, and there he invoked the Lord. This place of prayer is mentioned to be situated on a mountain, because obviously, the elect, still restrained by the bond of flesh and set in the progress of virtues, strive with the whole intention of their mind to reach the house of heavenly habitation, hasten to it with continuous steps of good works; but they cannot yet enter it, nor can they see its King and citizens in their beauty: however, between the acceptance of faith by which they are consecrated to the Lord, and the entrance to the kingdom in which they desire to see Him, they climb the height of good action as a peak of a lofty mountain. For Ai indeed, or Aggai, as the ancient translators rendered the name of that city, is interpreted as Question or Festival: which name, evidently, most fittingly suits the time when each of the faithful is consecrated to the Lord with the saving sacraments: about which the Apostle admonishes saying:

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

Where it is also noteworthy that Abraham is not described to have made an altar or invoked the Lord in Egypt, nor in Chaldea, nor in Haran, but solely in the land of Canaan, which he

received in promise: because evidently, only within the unity of the Catholic faith, only in the hope of the heavenly promise, can we accomplish perfect works and offer vows worthy of God. Bethel itself, which was formerly called Luz, was named Bethel by Jacob, when, sleeping there, he saw heavenly miracles and hosts; the city, like Ai, is located approximately twelve miles from Jerusalem for those traveling to Neapolis.

[Genesis 13:5-9] -- But Lot also, who was with Abram, had flocks of sheep, and herds, and tents; nor could the land bear them so that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, and they could not dwell together: hence there was a quarrel between the herdsmen of Abram's flocks and Lot's, and it is detailed how Lot departed from Abraham with their love preserved, preferring to separate physically from his dearest and most holy brother rather than to remain with him amidst scandals and disputes, which were troubling the weak ones; yet he in no way let his bodily separation from him separate him from the deepest love of his mind, as the following sacred history most clearly proves: where having been captured by enemies, he saved him with all his might with his men, and rightly so because Lot himself did not at all alter the course of virtue and faith, which he had been accustomed to practice with his elder brother, even living apart.

[Genesis 13:10] -- Therefore, Lot, having lifted up his eyes, saw all the region around Jordan, which was all watered before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the paradise of the Lord and like Egypt as you go towards Zoar. And Lot chose for himself the region around Jordan and moved eastward; and the rest up to the point where it says: but the men of Sodom were wicked and great sinners before the Lord. He praises the fertility of the land and at the same time notes the impiety of the inhabitants, so that they may be understood to be deserving of greater damnation, for they turned the greatest gifts of God not to the fruit of piety but to the increase of luxury: where also it is silently added to the praises of blessed Lot, because in that land, living among those natives, neither the wealth of the rich soil nor the example of the inhabitants could in any way corrupt the integrity of his purity. However, concerning which sins the Sodomites were subject to, except for that abominable one which Scripture mentions later, the prophet Ezekiel sufficiently explains, speaking to Jerusalem: Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and abundance, and idleness were in her and in her daughters; and they did not strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, and they were haughty and committed abomination before me (Ezekiel 16:49).

From all these, blessed Lot was free, as testified by the sacred history, which declares that he received the angels as guests and that through them he was rescued from the perishing impious ones; and the judgment of blessed Peter the apostle proves, where it is said: And righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked, was delivered (2 Peter 2:7). For he was righteous by sight and hearing, dwelling among them who day by day tortured his righteous soul with their lawless deeds. For what good merit could be lacking in him, whom the apostolic voice declares righteous? In him, those present could hear nothing but the fame of righteousness, for the deeds and sight of the wicked known to his

pure eyes and ears were nothing but torture and affliction. That which is said about him moving from the east to Haran also signifies Mesopotamia, from where he had already long ago physically departed, led by Abraham; but because a reader might doubt whether his mind was still held by love for his kindred and homeland or whether, like Abraham, he had perfectly departed from his country and kindred and from his father's house, Scripture took care to specifically intimate even concerning him that he departed not only in body but in mind from those places and inhabitants, and because of his faith and hope in divine blessing, he consented to remain a perpetual guest and sojourner wherever Abraham chose.

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

[Genesis 13:14-15] -- And the Lord said to Abram after Lot had separated from him: Lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are northward and southward and eastward and westward: all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. Some manuscripts have "unto the age," which both translate from the one Greek term Aeonion, α ν. Therefore, if it is read as "unto eternity," it rightly raises the question of how Abraham's offspring can possess that land eternally, whereas human life in this world cannot be everlasting. But if it is read as "unto the age," and thus understood, as we faithfully hold, that the beginning of the future age will commence from the end of the present, no question will arise: because even if the Israelites were expelled from Jerusalem, they still remain in other cities of the land of Canaan, and will remain until the end, and that entire land is inhabited with Christians, and they themselves are the seed of Abraham. It can also be mystically understood to have been said to blessed Abraham, "all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever"; because the region of the heavenly homeland, which that land of promise prefigured, is thus possessed in full by all the elect, namely the seed of Abraham, so that they remain in it without end, according to what is said of the fire of the burnt offering in Exodus:

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

[Genesis 13:18] -- Moving therefore Abram his tent, he came and dwelt by the valley of Mamre, which is in Hebron. Hebron is a city situated about twenty-two miles south of Jerusalem, which in the times of Moses was called Arbe or Kiriath-Arba, that is, the city

of the Four, because there three patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—are buried, and Adam the first man, as it is written in the book of Joshua. Later, Hebron received its name from one of the sons of Caleb, as the Words of the days recount. If anyone is moved by how it is now called by this name even before the times of the sons, let him understand that it could have been added in this place by Ezra the priest when he was renewing the sacred Scripture, which had been burned by the Chaldeans, as many such things added by him are found by those skilled in the sacred writings.

[Genesis 13:18] -- And he built an altar to the Lord. And this is the third altar that Abraham built: for the first he built near the place of Shechem, the second between Bethel and Ai. In all of these, it should be noted that nowhere is a sacrifice offered by him, but only the invocation of the name of the Lord is recorded in Scripture; nor in the following Scriptures is it found that he offered any victim or sacrifice to God, except for one ram, which he offered as a burnt offering to the Lord in place of his son, in which the passion of the Mediator between God and men is most clearly figured. Nor is it read that Isaac, his son, offered any victim to God, but only built an altar to the Lord. Similarly, Jacob, though he made an altar at the Lord's command, is not found to have slain any victims, except when, leaving the land of promise, he was about to enter Egypt because of Joseph. Then indeed, arriving in Beersheba, having slain victims there, he is reported to have received a divine oracle; but there both the species and the number of the victims are omitted: nor is any sacrifice offered to God by the fathers found from then until the time of the Passover which was sacrificed in Egypt with the blood of the lamb.

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

Chapter 14

[Genesis 14:1] -- Now it came to pass in those days that Amraphel, king of Shinar, Ariok, king of Pontus, Chodorlahomor, king of the Elamites, and Thadat, king of the nations, made war against Bera, king of Sodom, and against Birsha, king of Gomorrah, and the rest. It is recounted how Chodorlachomor, king of the Elamites, that is, the Persians, waging war against the Pentapolis with allied kings, won a victory, and how many nations were slain by him on his march to that contest. It is not to be supposed that the sacred author of Scripture recorded these only for the sake of historical study but rather to commend to us the grace of heaven. For it teaches us through the victory of Abraham, who overcame so many kings with a few men, what the power of faith is, with which he himself was armed, and how great the grace of divine blessing was, with which he was endowed. Because in the same way, the saints, later to be born, would, through this faith, overcome kingdoms, perform righteousness, and obtain promises. But there is also another very important and by no means negligible reason why the battle of the kings, the initial flight of the Sodomites, and their subsequent capture is written, for it is established that they, too, were subsequently utterly overthrown by heavenly wrath. Seeing their wickedness, God first chastised them with hostile slaughter and captivity.

But then, through his faithful servant, he delivered them from that captivity with all the things that were taken, and this was for the sake of the blessed Lot, who served God faithfully among them, so that aided by such a gift of divine protection and delivered from their miseries, they might learn, leaving their errors, to serve God and follow his example in good works, by whom and through whom they were saved by God's grace. But because they neither wished to be corrected by divine chastisements nor by gifts to abandon their iniquity, but rather daily added new crimes to their old wickedness, it remained that they be damned by heavenly wrath permanently. This kind of correction and punishment continues to this day, indeed until the end of the age, against the impious and sinners, for those who care neither for heavenly benefits nor chastisements are subsequently condemned by heavenly vengeance. In this way, the world itself will finally meet its end, when men throughout the whole earth, ungrateful for heavenly gifts and insensitive to chastisements, will suddenly be swept to eternal destruction by the whirlwind of the last judgment. And indeed, it is mentioned that all these came together in the wooded valley which is now the Salt Sea, an-

ticipating where the battle took place. For it is explained later what the cause of the duel was and by what route the hostile army, after causing massive destruction, came there:

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

[Genesis 14:5] -- And they struck the Rephaim in Ashtaroth-karnaim, and the Zuzim with them, and the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, Rephaim in Hebrew, in Greek are called Giants: in the singular number, however, a Rephaim is called a Giant. Now their land, which was called Ashtaroth-karnaim, was at the edge of Sodom. Moreover, until today a village across the streams of the Jordan called Carnea is shown. Ashtaroth-karnaim is interpreted as "Flocks of Horns," because indeed they were the dwellings of strong men. But Shaveh is a city of the Emim situated above the region of Sodom, which is still called by that name today. What is added as Cariathaim is interpreted as "Their City"; and the meaning is, they also struck the Emim in Shaveh their city, just as the Seventy Translators have translated. Emim undoubtedly, as well as Zuzim, were proven to be a very strong people even by their name itself. For Zuzim are called "The Terrible Ones," Emim are called "The Horrifying Ones."

[Genesis 14:6] -- And the Horites in the mountains of Seir. Indeed, these mountains, along with the neighboring regions, were possessed by the sons of Esau, who was also called Seir, because he was hairy, after the Horites were expelled. However, it seems likely that it was not he (i.e., Esau) himself, but another Seir from whom the mountains of Seir took their name: namely, the patriarch of the Horites, from whose lineage Esau took a wife. The Scripture says in the following: "Esau took wives from the daughters of Canaan, Ada the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah the son of Zibeon the Hivite" (Genesis 36:2). What this lineage was or from where it originated is revealed shortly after, when, enumerating the lineage of Esau, it concludes thus: "These are the chiefs of Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, wife of Esau, these are the sons of Esau, and these are their chiefs. He is Edom"; and immediately a new title is attached, which says: "These are the sons of Seir the Horite, inhabitants of the land, Lotan, Shobal, and Zibeon." And soon after: "And these are the sons of Zibeon, Aiah and Anah. This is Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness while he was pasturing the donkeys of Zibeon, his father, and he had a son Dishan and a daughter Oholibamah." Therefore, when Esau had a wife from the lineage of the Horites, Oholibamah the daughter of Anah the son of Zibeon the son of Seir, it is established that the mountains of Seir, where the Horites were struck down, did not take their name from Esau who began to possess those places long after he was born, but from Seir the patriarch of those same Horites.

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

[Genesis 14:8] -- And they drew up in battle array against them in the wooded valley. Instead of the wooded valley, in Hebrew it has in the Valley of Siddim, which signifies pleasant and wooded places. For such indeed was the Pentapolis which, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, deserved not only to be consumed by fires, but also to be hidden in the abyss of waters from the sight of all living beings forever.

[Genesis 14:13] -- And behold, one who had escaped came and reported to Abraham the Hebrew. It is evident from this passage that they err greatly who think that the people called Hebrews are named so from Abraham as if Ebrea, since Abraham himself is called a Hebrew; evidently from Heber, son of Joktan, in whose times the division of languages happened. However, "Hebrew" is interpreted as "passer" or "one who crosses over," which clearly matches the faith and merits of Abraham. For he indeed transcended temporal desires and hastened to pass from the present world to future joys. The holy man, after all, is not a resident of the earth, but a traveler and stranger, saying to his Creator, "for I am a sojourner with you, a stranger like all my ancestors. It is not in vain that, although both brothers, Abraham and Lot, descended from the line of Heber, not both are called Hebrews, but only Abraham; and he also left this name to the people of God born from him; but because he surpassed the world more perfectly, his crossing or passing was, as it were, an inheritable right that he passed on to his descendants, it is indicated by the surname what more he had received in grace than his brother.

And aptly, Abraham is here first called a Hebrew, that is, a passer or crosser, as he was about to rescue his brother from the enemies, so that the Scripture might silently intimate that it is proper for those to save others from the perils of temptations by their teaching or intercession who themselves do not succumb weakly to the temptations of vices but know how to transcend them with a lively spirit. Moreover, Abraham freed his brother Lot, a man devoted to God, from the enemies, and also freed the Sodomites, people much odious to God, so that it might mystically prefigure that through his merits and intercessions often both the elect in the people of Israel and the reprobate are to be liberated from temporal evils: since only the elect can be saved from eternal destruction. It should also be noted that while the province of Sodom remained and was not yet punished, Lot the righteous was afflicted

with temporal losses because of the reprobates, and the reprobates were delivered from temporal hardships by God's mercy because of Lot the righteous. But when the judgment of ultimate strictness fell upon the reprobate citizens, then the just was in no way touched by the punishments of the wicked, nor could anyone of the wicked participate in his miraculous salvation, but then only the good were saved, only the wicked were lost:

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

[Genesis 14:14] -- When Abram heard that his brother Lot had been captured, he numbered his trained servants, three hundred and eighteen, and so on. Indeed, it is a very great miracle of divine power that Abraham, with such a small troop, inflicted such a great slaughter on the enemies, but it contains the deeper sacrament of faith in which we must overcome the spiritual battle. There were three hundred and eighteen, a number that clearly designates the victorious sign of the cross and the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, through whom this has been consecrated for the fortification of our salvation. For among the Greeks, three hundred is marked by the letter T, which is shaped like a cross. For if it had received an apex in the middle, not the figure of the cross but the very sign of the cross would be clearly seen. However, ten and eight are marked among them by I and H, which are the first letters in the name of Jesus: and therefore when three hundred and eighteen are noted in Greek, it is not far from being read as the cross of Jesus. So, fittingly, Abraham overcame the enemies and freed his brother with three hundred and eighteen comrades, to mystically prefigure that the one who would recall the world from death through the passion of the cross would be born from his seed; and he himself would also, by the name of the Savior, that is, Jesus, stand out and be honored throughout the whole world: but also, that all who would pertain to salvation would achieve salvation only through this venerable sign and through his terrible name.

[Genesis 14:15] -- And he pursued them as far as Dan, and having divided his companions, he fell upon them at night and struck them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is to the left of Damascus. The entire series of sacred scripture is full of mystic figures, and not only in what is said and done, but even in the very places and times where these things take place, it agrees with that apostolic saying, "For all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11). Dan is interpreted as Judgment, Hobah as Condemnation, Damascus as the Cup of Blood. Therefore, Abraham, pursuing his enemies, found them in Dan and struck them by night when they were unsuspecting and secure, those who were rejoicing as if with captured prey, boasting that they had raged up to that point; for all sinners and those exalting themselves in the riches of this life and in the oppression of the innocent are permitted to boast up to the brink of divine judgment about their works; but with imprudent blindness, as if set in the midst of

the night, when they say peace and safety, then sudden destruction will come upon them: hence it is well said that he struck them and pursued them to Hobah, that is, Condemnation, which is understood to mean no other condemnation than sudden and eternal destruction.

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

[Genesis 14:18-20] -- But Melchizedek, king of Salem, bringing forth bread and wine (for he was priest of the most high God), blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abram by the most high God, creator of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God, by whose protection your enemies are in your hands, and he gave him tithes of all. Notable first in this reading is that the patriarchs foreshadowed what the apostles proclaimed: And if one member suffers, says Paul, all the members suffer together; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice together (1 Cor. 12:25). For when Lot suffered adversities, Abraham empathized; when they rejoiced over their deliverance and victory, Melchizedek also rejoiced and, blessing the victorious one who had exposed himself to danger for the sake of his brethren's troubles, with heavenly benediction. He magnificently praised not only the human victor but also the Lord who granted the victory, according to that evangelical saying: Let your good works be seen, and glorify your Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Next, it should be noted that after the struggle and victory, Abraham was blessed; and this was done by the king and priest of the most high God: because we all, too, who belong to the promise of the heavenly homeland, await the blessing of the eternal kingdom after the labors of good works, which is prepared for us from the foundation of the world by the great king and priest, namely the Mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ;

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

discussed and explained these topics most sublimely and comprehensively, following his lead we have considered it appropriate to insert a few points from the many he made here.

[Genesis 14:18] -- Therefore, Melchisedech signifies the Lord Savior: first indeed, as the Apostle says, who is interpreted as king of righteousness, and then king of Salem, which is king of peace (Hebrews 7:2): with these words, the blessed apostle demonstrates how the figure of Melchisedech should be understood, teaching us very clearly that in the letters of the Old Testament we should seek not only the significations of things but also of names. Just as Melchisedech by his name and person figuratively announces Christ the King of righteousness, he also by the name of his city denotes figuratively the Church of the saints, that is, the city of the great King; about which it is written: "And His place was made in Salem, that is, in peace" (Psalm 76:3). However, Salem is the same that was later called Jerusalem by King David, becoming the metropolis of the entire province of Judea, because he bought the place of the temple there, and left the expenses of the construction to his son Solomon, all of which and many others that are read about this city pertain to the Church as is clear to all readers. Also with the nature of his sacrifice, of which he made Abraham a participant while blessing him, he prefigured the offering of the New Testament, which our Lord Himself first offered in the sacrament of His body and blood, and which He left to the Church to always be offered for the remission of sins:

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

before he offered any sacrifice to God to give thanks for the granted blessing, Melchisedech king of Salem met him bringing bread and wine which he had offered to God, and blessed him, so that he might clearly understand that the blessing promised to him was to be received through the King of righteousness and the author of supreme peace, through the excellent high priest, through the mystical sacrifice of bread and wine, with all his seed. Therefore, let not the Jews boast of the Levitical priesthood against the Christians, since they offer the sacrifices of flesh, and we offer bread and wine to the Lord. For our sacrifice excels in both time and dignity: in time, indeed, because Melchisedech offered this first, before that Abraham or the priests from the stock of Levi came: and in dignity, because it was said to the Lord Christ by the Father concerning this and not that: "You are a priest for-

ever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Psalm 110:4). Which is also completed by the work itself, and now made manifest throughout the world, only a fool and an impious person denies. Thus it is clear that Melchisedech was greater than Abraham the patriarch. For without any contradiction, as the Apostle says, the lesser is blessed by the better (Hebrews 7:7). The sacrifice of Melchisedech is greater than the sacrifices which Abraham is read to have offered subsequently: because this the Lord Christ, that Aaron: this the priests of the New Testament, that of the Old were to offer.

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

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

[Genesis 14:21-23] -- But the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But he replied to him, "I raise my hand to the Lord, God most high, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'" It should be noted carefully

and drawn as an example of moral life, that Abraham, who, truly compassionate towards his neighbors in need, had exposed himself to danger to free Lot, and as a devout man to God gave tithes to the priest by whom he was blessed; he, as a despiser of money, refused to accept anything from the spoils he had taken, even when offered by the king he had defeated. As a lover of justice, he did not neglect to distribute their share to the soldiers who had fought with him. Rightly, such a conscience, in order to reach the peak of virtues more swiftly, is always elevated by new benefits of divine grace. Hence, after these things had rightfully passed, he immediately became a recipient of the gift of a heavenly oracle and divine blessing, which should be better considered and examined by the reading of the following book.

Chapter 15

[Genesis 15:1] -- After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." The blessing that Abraham had received from the priest Melchizedek, the Lord himself now confirms. For the priest had said, "And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand" (Gen. 14:20). The Lord says, "I am your shield." The priest had said, "Blessed be God Most High." God himself says, "And your reward shall be very great." By reward he means not only the affection he had shown to his brother in distress but also all the devotion with which he had served the Lord with a whole heart since he left his homeland and relatives. [Genesis 15:2] -- And Abram said: Lord God, what will you give me? I go childless, and the son of the steward of my house is this Damascus Eliezer. And Abram added: You have given me no offspring; and behold, my servant will be my heir. He does not ask as though doubtful of God's promises, but simply inquires what reward he, who has no son in whom to rejoice as heir and participant of the divine promise, will receive from the Lord, and whether his servant will be his heir instead. This servant was called by two names, that is, Damascus, Eliezer, by whom, they say, the city of Damascus was both founded and named. But the Lord, favoring Abram's desires, promised him this reward which he sought, when he immediately added:

[Genesis 15:4] -- This one shall not be your heir; but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir. This is proved by reason to have been said about Isaac and his offspring; of whom it was later heard: In Isaac shall your seed be called. For the sons of the concubines, although they were the seed of Abraham, could not be partakers of his inheritance; and since to this inheritance beloved by God, in which the divine protection and great reward would exist, only heavenly souls pertain, it is fittingly added:

[Genesis 15:5] -- He brought him outside and said to him, "Look toward heaven and number the stars, if you can," and he said to him, "So shall your offspring be. For the just and the elect are rightly compared to stars, not only because, like the stars, they cannot be counted by men; but also because they are exalted with heavenly happiness, because they transcend the base and low desires of this life with great sublimity of mind; because they shine among the reprobate as lights in the world, holding the word of life. Of such it may rightly be said in the end: "Star differs from star in glory, so is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor.

15:41). But what he said, "So shall your offspring be," he does not say only of those elect who were to be born corporally from his lineage but also of us, to whom it is said by the Apostle: "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed" (Gal. 3:29). Hence, he first heard while being situated inside: "But one who will come from your body will be your heir. Obviously for those who were to emerge from his seed, who were also to become co-heirs of the promised blessing and inheritance. Afterwards, bringing him outside, he commands him to number the stars, if he can; saying, "So shall your seed be," undoubtedly because of those who were not to be procreated from his body, but were still to be gathered as his seed from the whole world;

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

[Genesis 15:6] -- He believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. The Apostle recalls this sentence (Rom. IV, 3) to commend the grace of God, lest circumcision should boast, and the uncircumcised nations should be unwilling to admit to the faith of Christ: for this was done when faith was reckoned to the believing Abraham for righteousness, and he had not yet been circumcised. Therefore, faith is reckoned as righteousness, not idle and naked, but that which works through love; and also, faith which, although it does not yet have the time to work, still has a perfect will to work. For the faith of the thief was reckoned as righteousness, which, even though it could have no time for works given the imminent article of death, was judged so perfect by the inspector of hearts, that on the same day, it was rewarded with habitation in paradise with him. The faith of Cornelius and his household was reckoned as righteousness, even so much that before the washing of regeneration, they received the gift of the Holy Spirit; because as soon as it was conceived in the heart, it was prepared to work through love. Thus, Abraham's faith was also proven sufficient to be reckoned as righteousness, since he was prepared to offer even his only son as a burnt offering at the command of the Lord. Therefore, the just man lives by faith (Rom. I, 17), that faith surely which is ready to work through love, and if it has time, it works.

[Genesis 15:7] -- And he said to him: I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it. Some think Ur is the name of a place, but because Ur is interpreted as Fire, it is better understood according to the tradition of the Hebrews, as we said above, that he was rescued from the fire of the Chaldeans, who wanted to consume him with flames because he refused to worship and adore the fire which they worshipped as God. But, with God protecting him, they could not accomplish this. [Genesis 15:8] -- But he said: Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it? Abraham is not to be thought to have failed in faith after he believed in God, and it was counted to him as

righteousness, so as to say: Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it? For he is not seeking a sign to believe as if he were still unbelieving; rather, he entreats that some similarity be given to the thing he believed would happen, by which the manner of it being achieved might be recognized. Hence the old translation has more significantly: Sovereign Lord, according to what shall I know that I will be its heir? Just as there was no lack of faith in the Virgin Mary when she said: How will this be, since I do not know a man (Luke 1:34)? She was certain of what was to come, she inquired about the manner of how it would happen. And when she had asked this, she received an answer. Consequently, here too a similitude was given from the animals: a heifer, a goat, a ram, and two birds, a turtledove and a pigeon, so that he might know through these that what was to come would surely come. For it follows:

[Genesis 15:9-10] -- The Lord replied: "Take for me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old goat, and a three-year-old ram, also a turtledove and a pigeon." He took all these and divided them in half, and placed each half opposite the other, but he did not divide the birds. For the heifer may signify the people under the yoke of the law; the goat the same people who would be sinful, the ram the same people who would also reign. Therefore, these animals are called three because in the third age of the world that people matured and entered the land of promise. The first age is from Adam to Noah, the second from Noah to Abraham himself, the third from Abraham to David; in which the people were saved from Egyptian servitude and transferred to the land of promise. Or if these signify something else more fitting, I would by no means doubt that the spiritual are prefigured in the addition of the turtledove and the pigeon; and thus it is said: "But he did not divide the birds," because the carnal are divided among themselves, but the spiritual by no means, whether they remove themselves from the busy dealings of men like the turtledove, or dwell among them like the pigeon; yet both birds are simple and harmless, signifying that in the very Israelite people, to whom that land was to be given, there would be undivided peoples of promise and heirs of the kingdom remaining in eternal happiness.

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

[Genesis 15:13] -- And it was said to him: Know for certain that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not their own, and they will enslave them, and oppress them for four hundred years, etc. This was very clearly prophesied about the people of Israel who were to serve in Egypt. Not that this people were to be afflicted for four hundred years in the same servitude under the Egyptians who oppressed them, but it was foretold that this would happen within the four hundred years. For four hundred years are called so because of the fullness of the number, although they are somewhat more; whether computed from the time these promises were made to Abraham, or from when Isaac was born because of the offspring of Abraham of whom these promises are spoken. They are counted from Abraham's seventy-fifth year when the first promise was made to him, to the exodus of Israel from Egypt, four hundred and thirty years, of which the Apostle thus makes mention: Now this I say, says he, the covenant confirmed by God, which was made four hundred and thirty years later, does not nullify the promise (Galatians 3:17). Therefore, these four hundred and thirty years could already be called four hundred, which are not much more; how much more so when a few of this number had already passed when these things were shown and said to Abraham in a vision, or when Isaac was born to his hundred-year-old father twenty-five years after the first promise; when of those four hundred and thirty, four hundred and five remained, which the Lord wished to call four hundred.

[Genesis 15:16] -- But in the fourth generation, they shall return here. Kohath entered Egypt with his father Levi, whose son was Amram, whose son was Aaron, whose son was Eleazar, who was the fourth from Kohath. And he went out from Egypt with his father Aaron, and when he died in the wilderness, he himself entered the Promised Land. [Genesis 15:17] -- So when the sun had set, a dense darkness came over, and a smoking furnace appeared, and a blazing torch passed between the pieces. This darkness and the fire furnace occurring after the sunset signifies that at the end of the world, the carnal will be judged by fire. For just as the affliction of the City of God, such as never was before and is expected to come under the Antichrist, is signified by the frightening darkness upon Abraham at sunset, that is, as the end of the age approaches; so at sunset, that is, at the end itself, it is signified by this fire that the day of judgment will save the carnal through fire and condemn them in fire.

[Genesis 15:18] -- On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: To your descendants, I will give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates. The river of Egypt, which is the Nile, he does not call great but small, which separates Egypt and Palestine, where the city of Rhinocorura is. Therefore, the Lord made a covenant with Abram on that day, when he offered the sacrifices of animals and birds. Certainly, that covenant was that he and his descendants would always offer prayers and sacrifices to the Lord with a faithful heart; and the Lord in turn would grant him and his descendants the land of Canaan to possess forever.

Chapter 16

[Genesis 16:1] -- Therefore Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne no children, but she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar. She said to her husband, "Behold, the Lord has prevented me from bearing children, so go into my maidservant; perhaps I shall obtain children by her." And when he agreed to her request, she took Hagar the Egyptian maidservant after ten years of dwelling in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband as a wife. He went in to her, and when she saw that she had conceived, she despised her mistress, etc. The Apostle to the Galatians has fully discussed how Hagar and Ishmael symbolize the Synagogue and the Old Testament, while Sara and her son Isaac symbolize the Church and the New Testament. As for the matter in question, it is not to be inferred at all that this concubine's relationship implies a crime on Abraham's part, for he used her to produce offspring, not to fulfill lust; nor did he act insultingly, but rather in obedience to his wife, who believed that the fertile womb of the maidservant would provide comfort for her own barrenness, an act that nature could not accomplish but will made her own; and that right which the Apostle states: "Likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does" (1 Corinthians 7:4), the wife could make use of another for bearing children when she could not do so herself. Lastly, when the pregnant maidservant became haughty towards her barren mistress, and Sarai, in womanly suspicion, blamed her husband, Abram demonstrated that he had been not a lover, but a willing progenitor, preserving modesty with Hagar and fulfilling his wife's will rather than his own. He said, "Behold, your maidservant is in your hand, use her as you see fit."

[Genesis 16:7] -- And when the angel found her by the spring of water in the wilderness on the road to Shur, he said to her, "Hagar, maidservant of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?" Consequently, the Egyptian on the road to Shur, which leads through the desert to Egypt, was hastening. For the desert of Shur stretches up to the Red Sea, which reaches the borders of Egypt. [Genesis 16:11] -- Behold, he said, you have conceived and will bear a son, and you shall call his name Ishmael. Ishmael means God hears, and the reason for the name is explained when it is immediately added: because the Lord has heard your affliction. It is to be noted, however, that he was the first to receive a name from the Lord before he was born, and Isaac the second, clearly for a certain mystery, because both the Old Testament, which is signified in Ishmael, and the New, which is in Isaac, were heirs foreknown in divine election before the ages.

[Genesis 16:12] -- He will be a wild man, his hand against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and he will dwell opposite all his brothers. His offspring will inhabit the desert, that is, the wandering Saracens with uncertain dwellings, who attack all the nations bordering the desert and are attacked by all: but this was in ancient times. Now, however, his hand is against everyone, and everyone's hand is against him to such an extent that they oppress all of Africa in its length, as well as the greater part of Asia and some of Europe, being despised and opposed by all. But when it says: He will pitch his tents; it shows the ancient custom of the people, who always used to dwell in tents, not in houses.

[Genesis 16:13] -- She called on the name of the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me." For she said, "Surely here I have seen the back of the one who sees me," therefore she called that well, "The well of the living one who sees me." It is clear from these words that Hagar could not see the face of the angel speaking with her, but only the back as he was departing; nevertheless, she recognized that she had seen him showing mercy and that he was living, that is, that he was truly God, or had come to her in the presence of the living God. The woman's wisdom is remarkable, or rather not remarkable at all, since she belonged to Abraham's household, in naming the well, by which she was comforted by the divine oracle, after that same God's name; as if clearly understanding that the well signified the deep divine dispensations by which He showed mercy to her affliction, commanded her to return to her mistress, and foretold that her offspring would be great; and just as in that well or fountain, as mentioned above, she saw living and perpetual water, so she understood the depth of the divine substance as always living and enduring without end or beginning, and rightly believed the well should be named after it. In correspondence with this figure, the Psalmist, having said: "As the deer longs for the streams of water, so my soul longs for you, O God" (Psal. 41:2); immediately added: "My soul thirsts for the living God." So that we might understand that just as the fountains have living and unfailing water, so God maintains an enduring life within himself. It is also noteworthy that Hagar's well between the wilderness of Kadesh and Bered is still shown today, and rightly so; as a testimony of her faith and confession.

Chapter 17

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

[Genesis 17:3] -- Abram fell face down. We read that in the earlier places of sacred history, holy men invoked the Lord, offered him sacrifices of praise, and lived innocently in his sight, but none had fallen face down before the Lord before Abram. However, the more superior gifts he received compared to the previous ones, the greater thanks he gave to the Giver of gifts by humbling himself; and because in falling to the ground he humbly recalled his fragility, he immediately deserved to sublimely recognize the eminence of divine power. For it follows:

[Genesis 17:4] -- And God said to him: I am, and my covenant is with you. For what is it for the Lord to say: I am, if not to clearly declare the state of his eternity, in which he is always the same? About which the Psalm also says: But you are the same (Psalm 102:28). This place harmonizes with the Gospel where the Lord said to the Jews: Before Abraham was, I am (John 8:58). For appearing in the flesh, he taught that he himself was the one who had once appeared to Abraham in spirit, when he repeated to the Jews the same testimony of his essence that he had given to Abraham; but the Jews were troubled because they had heard: Before Abraham was, I am; yet Abraham rejoiced when he heard: I am, and did not doubt that God existed before he did; hence, because he faithfully heard the word of divine eternity, he received in the increase of reward that he would be called and be the father of many nations. Moreover, the Jews, because they could not grasp the mysteries of divinity they'd heard, were cast out from the lineage of Abraham, and were counted among

the offspring of vipers: Finally, they took up stones to throw at him; but he hid himself from them, and went out of the temple (John 8:59), so that, evidently hidden from their stony hearts, and going out, he would come to reveal to the Gentiles the knowledge of his majesty. For even then having gone out of the temple, he restored sight to the man born blind. Evidently as a figure of grace, with which he was to enlighten the hearts of the Gentiles. It follows:

[Genesis 17:5] -- And you will be the father of many nations, and your name will no longer be called Abram, but you will be called Abraham, because I have made you the father of many nations. Because blessed Abraham left his kin and his father's house at the command of the Lord, he received deservedly also in this gift of reward to exist as the father of many nations; indeed of so many, that not only those who came from his seed according to the flesh, but also those who deriving their origin of flesh elsewhere, would follow the footsteps of his faith and obedience, as the Apostle writes to the Romans with full exposition. It should be known that Abram means Exalted Father, but Abraham means Father of Many, so it is understood, of many nations. [Genesis 17:7] -- And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and between your seed after you in their generations with an everlasting covenant; that I may be your God and the God of your seed after you. The old translation has: And I will establish my testament. It should be noted, however, that wherever we read "testament" in Greek, in the Hebrew language it is "covenant" or "pact," that is, "berith." It is not surprising, then, that the testament or covenant of God is with Abraham and his seed in an everlasting covenant, that He may be their God: because indeed this covenant will be preserved throughout the entire duration of this life without any interruption in the generations of the chosen following in succession, and will be celebrated without any end in the future age. What follows, however, is:

[Genesis 17:8] -- And I will give to you and to your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession. It requires a more laborious exposition on how it should be understood as fulfilled or still expected to be fulfilled, since any earthly possession cannot be eternal for any nation. But it should be known that "eternal" is interpreted by our people as what the Greeks call "Aeonion," which is derived from "age." For in Greek "Aeon" is called an age. But the Latins did not dare to say "age-long," lest they send the meaning far off into something else. For many things are called "age-long" that are done in this age in such a way as to pass away in a short time. However, what is called "Aeonion" either has no end or extends to the end of this age. And therefore, as we said above, the land of Canaan is given as an everlasting possession to the seed of Abraham, because in it Christians, up to the end of this age, whether from the Jews or from the Gentiles, that is, the seed of Abraham, are believed never to be lacking.

[Genesis 17:9-11] -- God said again to Abraham: And you shall therefore keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations; this is my covenant which you shall keep between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised; and you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign

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

[Genesis 17:12] -- A child of eight days shall be circumcised among you. For on the eighth day, that is, after the Sabbath, the Lord rose from the dead, in whose passion and resurrection we are baptized, absolved from the oldness of faults, as if we are renewed by spiritual circumcision; the Apostle explaining and saying: For as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death, therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death: so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. VI, 3). This number can most fittingly correspond to the time of our resurrection, when we shall be clothed universally with the immortality of the flesh, which we laid down through death, and we shall suffer nothing of sin nor of corruption in the flesh. For our resurrection is also not incongruously figured by the number of the eighth day; because after the six ages of this world and the seventh of rest, that is, the rest of souls, which is now celebrated in another life, the future one will be. Therefore infants were commanded to be circumcised on the eighth day as a sign of the divine covenant to indicate mystically that all the elect by the grace of God would be absolved from all iniquities in this number, cleansed from all corruption of the flesh, and also freed from the very death that they incurred through the guilt of the first transgression.

[Genesis 17:12] -- Every male among your generations, whether born in the house or bought with money, and whoever is not of your seed, shall be circumcised. This signifies that the grace of regeneration and immortality pertains to all the faithful, whether they derive their origin from the stock of Abraham or from another source of the flesh. [Genesis 17:13] -- And My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. By which covenant it is surely signified that I will clothe your flesh and soul together with perpetual renewal and immortality.

[Genesis 17:14] -- A male whose foreskin's flesh has not been circumcised, that soul will be cut off from his people: because he has broken my covenant. By this sentence, the greater

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

[Genesis 17:15] -- And the Lord said to Abraham: "You shall not call your wife Sarai, but Sarah, and I will bless her, and I will give you a son by her, whom I will bless, and he will become nations, and kings of peoples shall come from him. Here the promises about the calling of the gentiles in Isaac are more evident, that is, in the son of promise, which signifies grace, not nature, because a son is promised from an old man and a barren old woman. Although God also works in the natural course of procreation, where however the evident work of God is, with nature being corrupted and ceasing, grace is understood more evidently; and because this will happen not by generation, but by regeneration, therefore circumcision is now commanded. When a son was promised from Sarah, the names of the parents are also changed, everything resonates with newness, and the New Testament is foreshadowed in the Old. Sarai is interpreted as "My Princess," but Sarah as "Princess," and the reason for the change of the name is this: because she was previously called "My Princess," that is, the mother of one household only, but afterwards she is called "Princess" absolutely; for it follows:

[Genesis 17:16] -- And I will give you a son by her, whom I will bless, and he will become nations, and kings of peoples shall come from him. And notably, not as we read in Greek: God said to Abraham, Your wife Sarai will no longer be called Sarai; in Hebrew it is, You will not call her name Sarai; that is, you will not call her My Princess: she is now to be the princess of all nations, wherefore the Apostle Peter, instructing the life of women, says: So once holy women also, who hoped in the Lord, adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, of whom you are daughters, doing good and not fearing any disturbance (1 Peter 3:5). [Genesis 17:17] -- Abraham fell on

his face, and laughed, saying in his heart: ”Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old, and will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” The laughter of Abraham is the exultation of one rejoicing, not the mockery of one disbelieving: those words which he said in his heart are not those of one doubting, but of one admiring; as testified also by the Apostle who, speaking of him, said: ”He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.” (Romans 4:20).

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

[Genesis 17:24] -- He was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, and Ishmael his son had completed thirteen years at the time of his circumcision. Therefore, Abraham was a hundred years old, and Ishmael was thirteen years old when they were circumcised: so that, after a year, when Isaac was born, Abraham was a hundred years old, and Ishmael was fourteen, that is, twice seven, years old? Indeed, in a great mystery: because evidently Isaac held the figure of the New Testament, and Ishmael of the Old Testament. For Isaac, when he was born, his father was a hundred years old, to signify that the grace of the New Testament would bring the children of his promise to the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom. Indeed, the number one hundred, as has often been said, in the arithmetical count, passes from the left to the right, and our heavenly mother Jerusalem is rightly marked by the right hand; for those to whom it is permitted to enter it will stand on the right hand of the Judge in the last examination. In the birth of the same Isaac, Ishmael had completed two weeks of years; evidently because of the sacrament of the Sabbath, which was observed in the Old Testament; so that in the fifteenth year, as if in the sign of the resurrection, that is, of the true circumcision, Isaac would be born;

where it would be typified because the passing legal observance given by Moses would be succeeded by grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Therefore, when Isaac, who prefigured the grace of the New Testament, was born, his elder brother Ishmael, who signified the Old Testament, had completed the number seven in his age; because the observance of the law, in which the Sabbath held the greatest place, was fit to be extended until the

time of grace; but the same number seven is doubled concerning the perfection of the same sacrament; because the law of God desires us to be freed both from servile, that is, from evil works in the body, and from harmful thoughts in the mind. The number seven is doubled because the law commands rest for bodies to its followers in this life and promises rest for souls in the future life; when Isaac was born and the first year of his age began, Ishmael began his fifteenth year because, with the grace of the Gospel appearing, even the law itself, spiritually understood, was found to be full of heavenly sacraments and to have preached the glory of the resurrection; but when Isaac had grown up, at the command of Sarah, Ishmael with his mother was cast out, it should not be thought that the Old Testament is to be abolished by the succession of the New Testament;

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

Chapter 18

[Genesis 18:1] -- The Lord appeared to him in the valley of Mamre as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day, etc. This appearance of the Lord is considered to be more sacred than all the previous ones, in which He was seen so many times by the blessed Abraham. And rightly so, after receiving the sacrament of circumcision, after the name was amplified by which he was to be marked as the father of all nations, he came to know the more secret mysteries of God, of which, notably, not only circumcision but also the uncircumcised were to be participants. Rightly, the appearance in the valley of Mamre is remembered as having taken place. For Mamre, as we read above, was indeed an Amorite by race, but together with his brothers, he was allied with Abraham; hence the valley of Mamre aptly represents our humility, who, having derived fleshly origin from the nations, have Abraham as our father in spirit and faith. To whom the Apostle, drawing from Abraham both the origin of flesh and virtue, says: We announce to you eternal life, which was with the Father and appeared to us; what we have seen and heard, we declare to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us (1 John 1:2). And indeed in this reading, apart from the spiritual understanding, it greatly edifies the readers that Abraham, seeing unknown men, immediately ran to meet them as if to offer the grace of hospitality to strangers;

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

But Abraham and his followers, who conduct the things of the world out of necessity and not out of pleasure, sit as if at the entrance of their tent, because they are ready to leave the world at any moment, always with a joyful mind stretched towards the future rewards and waiting for the entrance into the following life. And it is well added, in the heat of the day; for the heat of the day, in which Abraham was sitting at the entrance of his tent, signifies the virtue of love with which he was burning in his mind with respect towards the Sun of righteousness. And such a state of place and time was fitting for him who was to see the Lord and enjoy His conversation, in which both the sojourner of this world would be figuratively represented, and irradiated by the light of true heavenly grace, and zealously enflamed with the love of divine contemplation.

[Genesis 18:2] -- And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw three men standing near him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the door of the tent, and worshipped upon the ground, and said: Lord, if I have found grace in thy sight, do not pass by thy servant, etc. The fact that three men appeared to him is a mystery of the Holy Trinity; indeed, when he saw three, he worshipped one, and prayed to the Lord, because although there is a Trinity in persons, there is nevertheless one and co-adorable equality in divinity of the Lord, just as in Isaiah when the angelic hosts were singing the glory of the Holy Trinity, saying: Holy, Holy, Holy, they immediately add the unity of dominion and deity, saying: The Lord God Almighty, the whole earth is full of His glory. And it is fittingly said that Abraham lifted up his eyes to see the angels, because indeed it is necessary that one who wishes to see the citizens of heaven, who desires to know the glory and secrets of the Divine Majesty, should raise every gaze of his mind from lowly desires and with diligent intention open up to the light of the true Sun.

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

but surely there was something by which they so excelled, though as men, that in them the Lord was present as He is wont to be in prophets, so that those who offered them hospitality could not doubt; and therefore sometimes they called them in the plural, and at other times

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

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

[Genesis 18:5] -- He refreshed them with the feasts that were prepared because he understood that from his seed would be born the one who, although he is God before the ages, consubstantial with the Father, appearing at the end of the ages as a true man, would truly dwell among men; the food with which he refreshed them is also full of spiritual sacraments, of which it is thus remembered: [Genesis 18:6] -- Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said to her: ”Hurry, mix three measures of fine meal, and make cakes upon the hearth.” And he himself ran to the herd, and took a tender and good calf and gave it to the servant, who hastened and cooked it. Where it is firstly to be noted that everything is done quickly, as if in the service of divine reception; Abraham hastens, he orders Sarah to hurry, the servant quickly completes the assigned task, so that it becomes clearly evident that blessed Abraham truly, according to the voice of the Lord, rejoiced to see his day, and he saw it and was glad (John 8:56). But also all who are touched in soul by the regard of divine grace immediately leap with joyful steps of good works and thoughts into the service of the heavenly will, and with diligent exhortation provoke themselves and those who hear them to the speedy observance of the commandments of heaven.

[Genesis 18:6] -- The flour that Sarah mixed to refresh the angels is the internal sweetness of God’s word, which the prophet promises to the heavenly Jerusalem, that is, the holy Church, saying of the Lord: ”He makes peace your borders, and fills you with the finest of the wheat” (Psalm 147:14). And immediately, explaining more clearly what the finest wheat is, he added: ”He sends out his command to the earth. Now there are three measures of this same flour because in the sacred Scripture there is a threefold sense of understanding, namely the historical, the allegorical, and the anagogical; for example: ”Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house” (Psalm 26:8); according to history, he desired the beauty of the house which Solomon made for the Lord to remain inviolate, being praised by his people in it. According to allegory, he desired the beauty of the holy Church to shine throughout

the whole world, to whom the Apostle says: ”For you are the temple of God” (2 Corinthians 6:16). According to anagogy, that is, the sense leading to higher things, he desired to see the beauty of the heavenly homeland, that is, the house not made with hands but eternal in the heavens. The Lord also mentions this threefold measure in the gospel parable, saying: ”The kingdom of heaven is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.

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

[Genesis 18:6] -- But the fact that Sarah makes bread under the ashes is very relevant. Bread baked under the ashes, while being baked, is indeed cooked with fire and lies hidden in the darkness, but only the ash that accumulates on top is visible to the eyes of onlookers. However, when they are baked, the ash is removed, and the clean bread is presented before the faces of those who will eat, because the words of the Lord have been tested by fire, namely the Holy Spirit, through whom the scripture itself was made. Sometimes, however, the style’s baseness and simplicity contain so much knowledge in themselves that the spiritual fervor and celestial nourishment within them are not easily apparent; but when the veil of the letter is removed through the preacher’s ministry and the sweetness of the spiritual sense is revealed to the hearts of the listeners, just like shaking off the ash, the sweetest bread is offered to refresh the faithful.

[Genesis 18:7] -- The tender and excellent calf that Abraham took from the herd signifies the Mediator between God and humans, whom the most merciful Father killed for his returning younger son, that is, the Gentile people, according to the parable of the Gospel. He is the tender and excellent calf taken singularly to be slain and cooked for the citizens of heaven because he alone from the entire human race was specially chosen, whose blood would redeem the world, and through whom all things on earth and in heaven are restored in him, as the Apostle says. This calf is rightly called tender and excellent. For what is as tender and excellent as He who humbled Himself for our elevation: Becoming obedient to the Father unto death, even death on the cross? [Genesis 18:8] -- He also took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had cooked, and set it before them. By the milk, the beginnings and as it were the elements of the Mosaic law; by the butter, the perfection of evangelical doctrine; by the milk, the simplicity of the letter in the Scriptures, by the butter, the virtue of the mystical sense which is usually generated from the letter, is expressed. Or certainly, the milk indicates the beginning of faith, the butter indicates the perfection of the work which is created from faith. All of which Abraham placed before the men whom he had received, to signify that the sons of promise would always offer spiritual feasts to the Lord,

namely the breads of holy readings, the calf of the Lord's Incarnation, the milk of faith or historical perfection, the butter of good senses or good works, where it is well added:

[Genesis 18:8] -- But he himself stood by them under the tree, because certainly we should so feed the Lord with the feasts of faith and virtues by good living, that is, delight Him, so that we always remember to stand in His presence, according to the saying of Blessed Elijah: "The Lord lives, in whose sight I stand" (3 Kings 17:1). And as the Psalmist says: "In the sight, I will sing to you among the angels" (Psalm 138:1). And this under the tree of the Lord's passion, saying with the Apostle: "But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14).

[Genesis 18:9] -- And when they had eaten, they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife? He answered, "Behold, she is in the tent. Then he said, "I will return to you at this time next year, if life be with us, and Sarah your wife shall have a son. Both indeed the lords of the house, and evidently Abraham and Sarah, prepared with the utmost haste a meal; but as if in a well-ordered house, Abraham, with the meals prepared, more boldly approached the Lord; Sarah, with womanly fear and modesty, restrained herself in the tent, in fact behind the tent door, and no longer dared to approach, but listened from within to what her husband spoke with the Lord. Therefore, since she was both devoted to God and well subjected to her husband, she heard the joy of childbirth which she greatly desired; not indeed any childbirth, but that in which both she in the future and all nations would receive a blessing. And well, after the angels had eaten, they promised a son to their hosts, because when the Lord has accepted the meals of our good work and faith, he rewards us with the grace of his blessing. But the angels ate, or rather seemed to have eaten, as holy Raphael explained to Tobias, to signify the mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, in which he, the Angel of Great Counsel, was to eat as a man, not only visibly appearing, but even sitting at the table of men and eating;

but they, as the same Raphael said, used invisible food, that is, which cannot be seen by men living in the flesh, namely the joy of contemplation; of which also the Lord in the Gospel: "For their angels," he says, "always see the face of my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:10); for they always see, that is, even when they come outside to us to minister something; it is credible, moreover, that the food which they ate, as soon as it touched their spiritual or ethereal body, was consumed like water thrown into a burning flame, and not like water poured into dry land to refresh their bodies, as happens to us when we eat.

[Genesis 18:11] -- They were both old and advanced in years, and it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. To highlight the growth of heavenly power, he says that both were old, and moreover that Sarah, having been barren, was now also deprived of her menstrual blood, because of which she could no longer conceive, even if she had not been barren. Further, if a woman is of such an advanced age that the usual flow of women still occurs to her, she can conceive from a young man, but not from an old man; although the old man can still beget from a young woman, as Abraham, after Sarah's death, was able to beget from Keturah, because he found her age to be vigorous; this therefore is what the

Apostle clearly commends when he says: ”He believed against hope in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to what was said to him: Thus shall your offspring be; and not weakening in faith, he did not consider his own body already dead, being about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; in the promise of God he did not doubt” (Romans 4:18). For this reason he says that Abraham’s body was already dead, because he could still beget from any woman who still had some final period of time left for bearing children at that age: we must understand the body as dead for some purposes, not for all; for if for all, then it is not the old age of the living, but the corpse of the dead.

[Genesis 18:12] -- Who laughed secretly, saying: After I have grown old and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure? The Apostle Peter recalls this sentence when, admonishing women to obey their husbands, he added: ”As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.” It seems, however, similar to this passage what is read about Abraham above, for when he heard about Sarah’s childbirth, he fell on his face and laughed in his heart, saying: Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? And he added, speaking to God: Oh that Ishmael might live before you! But since the Apostle says that Abraham did not waver in unbelief, but Sarah did hesitate, the following word of the Lord clarifies, saying to Abraham: [Genesis 18:12] -- Why did Sarah laugh, saying: ”Shall I indeed bear a child, old as I am?” It remains to be understood that when she heard that Sarah would bear a son, Abraham had previously laughed in wonder with joy, and Sarah herself subsequently doubted in joy; whose doubt, nevertheless, was immediately removed when the reason for divine power was given, as the angel said to him:

[Genesis 18:14] -- ”Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son. With this statement heard, all doubt was so removed, and her faith so confirmed, that the Apostle rightly says of her: ”By faith even Sarah herself received power to conceive. But when he says ”I will return to you,” and added ”with life as a companion,” he speaks in a human manner, as if he were to say: ”If life is a companion. But it should be understood more deeply that the angels always converse with life as a companion either in heaven or descend to earth, certainly with that life that says: ”For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son also to have life in Himself; by whose vision and enlightenment the angels and holy men are perpetually blessed. Indeed, this place seems comparable by contrast with the deeds of the first man; for after his transgression, he did not see the Lord God but is said to have heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden; here, the future blessing’s faith, hope, and love inflamed he saw the Lord standing, because surely with this he was to remain, the contemplation of divine clarity having departed from him. Hearing the voice of the Lord God, trembling he hid himself because he truly blushed at his error.

Here, having seen the Lord, he immediately joyfully ran, believing that by the merit of obedience he had pleased Him. He on the cool of the day, this one at the very heat of the day; because this one burned with the fire of divine love, the other by sinning had driven away the light of divine protection and love from himself. This one receives and entertains

the Lord as a guest, to show with the carnal feast provided that he would foster Him with spiritual feasts in his heart by living devoutly, according to what the Lord Himself promised about His lovers: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20). The other, that is, the first man, who ate what was forbidden, lost those delights which he could have had perpetually in the presence of the Lord and His angels, also being visibly excluded from the tree of life so that it might be openly shown that he had lost the incorruptible fruit of wisdom, which he used to enjoy invisibly. And because the blessed Abraham by the merit of pious devotion had already tasted the fruit of wisdom and life, which is Christ, rightly he is said to have seen and received the Lord standing under a tree.

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

[Genesis 18:16] -- When the men got up from there, they directed their eyes toward Sodom, and Abraham was walking with them to see them on their way. When it is said that the men got up from there, it is shown that while they were sitting, Abraham was standing and ministering to them, although he had initially seen them standing. They directed their eyes toward Sodom so that just as they rewarded the faith of blessed Abraham with joyful promises, they would destroy the faithlessness of the impious city with avenging flames, according to what the Psalmist said, who after proclaiming the Lord's mercy toward the holy: "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are attentive to their cries" (Psalm 34:16), immediately added His severity in the punishment of the wicked: "But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to blot out their name from the earth" (v. 17). But that Abraham walked with the angels to see them on their way, he is believed to have done from the custom of devoted hospitality; but blessed were those steps by which a man was deemed worthy to walk with angels on earth, and to lead them who had come to visit him back to heaven; now blessed are those lives that follow the angelic way of life on earth, by living soberly, righteously, piously, and chastely, and by always, as much as mortal is possible, devoting themselves to divine praises. Truly, blessed Abraham, because he so

joyfully received the Lord coming, that he cared to see them off as if they were household members, deserved to know higher secrets of divine works; who, understanding himself the strictness of the forthcoming divine retribution on the world, as he had previously shown himself devoted to God in receiving guests, so afterward he showed himself solicitous for his neighbors by interceding for them.

[Genesis 18:20] -- The Lord therefore said: "The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah has been multiplied, and their sin has become very grave." He calls the outcry of Sodom the reputation or rather the infamy of their crimes, from which the Apostle, admonishing us, says: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and blasphemy, be put away from you, with all malice" (Ephesians 4:31). To this clamor indeed is opposed the clamor of the elect, who confidently supplicating their Creator, individually say: "Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come to you" (Psalm 102:2). Indeed, great is their clamor, a sublime merit and the intention of faith seeking heavenly things alone, where Christ sits at the right hand of God; since they do not desire earthly riches, nor vain and perishable glory, nor the fleeting joys of the flesh, but only heavenly goods, everything they do is surely lofty and, as it were, resonates with a clamor. But with the multiplied outcry of sins, that is, their enormous crime, let us see what follows.

[Genesis 18:21] -- "I will go down," he says, "and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry which has come to me; and if not, I will know." Therefore, when the Lord said that he would go down to see whether the same outcry was true, he did not show his ignorance, who possesses the knowledge of all things, but instructs our rashness, lest we presume to blame the deeds of others before we learn perfectly; which He also teaches us in the construction of the tower, where it is written that the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of Adam had built; for what would He not see from heaven to earth, of whom it is written that "Hell is naked before Him, and there is no covering for perdition"? [Genesis 18:23] -- And they turned themselves from there and went towards Sodom; but Abraham still stood before the Lord, and approaching he said: Will you indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? If fifty righteous are in the city, will they perish along with the rest, until he said: If ten are found there; and the Lord said: I will not destroy it for the sake of the ten. It is read further that two angels came to Sodom and were received by Lot; hence it seems likely that at this place two angels departed from Abraham, and he spoke with the one who remained with him, interceding for the perishing city. In which intercession, the humility of the blessed Abraham is especially to be considered, who, although he was esteemed so highly by God that he received Him as a familiar guest and interceded with Him as if with a friend of one mind for others, nevertheless in his own estimation he remained vile and despicable; hence in his second prayer he says to Him:

[Genesis 18:27] -- Since I have begun, I will speak to my Lord, though I am but dust and ashes. By this word he clearly rebukes our pride, we who are far distant from the height of his merits, far removed from divine conversation due to our slowness and inertia, nevertheless inflated with the pride of arrogance, do not recall that we are destined to be dust and

ashes; for blessed Abraham, the closer he approached the purity of the divine vision, the more certainly he dispersed and cast away the weaknesses of his own frailty. But we, who are excluded from the gaze of inner clarity by the cloud of our own depravity, the less we lament the darkness of misery inherent in us, the more we are accustomed to see nothing but these.

Chapter 19

[Genesis 19:1] -- And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, while Lot was sitting at the gates of the city. Not without cause, the angels who had come to Abraham at midday are reported to have come to Sodom in the evening, because they came to announce prosperity and joy to the former, but to bring adversity to the latter; he was burning with the fruit of light towards heavenly things, but this one, besieged by the darkness of vices, was approaching eternal perdition. [Genesis 19:1] -- When he saw them, he rose, and went to meet them; he bowed down with his face to the ground and said: I beg you, my lords, turn aside to your servant's house and stay there, and so on. In blessed Lot a great and perfect example of godly hospitality is shown, who, seeing the guests entering the city, was not only prepared to meet and welcome them but also persistently asked them to turn aside to his house and rest with him. At first, they refused to enter his house, but eventually, at his urging, agreed to do so, so that they might more thoroughly test his hospitality's diligence and more worthily reward it, delivering him from the destruction of the sinners along with his house.

[Genesis 19:4] -- But before they lay down, the men of the city, both young and old, all the people to the last man, surrounded the house; and they called to Lot and said to him: Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us, that we may know them, etc. This is what the prophet Isaiah said about the exceedingly sinful people of Israel: They proclaim their sin like Sodom, they do not hide it (Isaiah 3:9). Indeed, they proclaimed their sin like the Sodomites, they did not hide it, for without any sense of shame, all, from youth to extreme old age, used to practice abominations with men; so much so that they did not even hide their crimes from guests and strangers and sought to make them alike in crime by force and to involve them in their wicked deeds. [Genesis 19:8] -- Indeed, when they [the men of Sodom] were raging to commit such a crime, Lot says among other things: "I have two daughters who have not yet known a man. I will bring them out to you, and you may abuse them as it pleases you, provided that you do nothing evil to these men." Because he wanted to offer his daughters as a form of compensation so that his male guests would not suffer such an outrage from the Sodomites, it is rightly questioned whether such a compensation of crimes or any sins should be admitted, that we might do something evil in order to prevent another from doing a greater evil, or whether it should rather be attributed to the disturbance of Lot's mind rather than his intention, since he said this; indeed, this

compensation is most perilously admitted; but if it is attributed to human disturbance and a mind disturbed by such great evil, it should in no way be imitated.

[Genesis 19:11] -- And behold, the men reached out their hands and brought Lot to them and closed the door, and they struck with blindness those who were outside, from the least to the greatest, so that they could not find the door. And the rest is up to the point that Lot said to his sons-in-law: "Get up, leave this place, for the Lord will destroy this city," and he seemed to be speaking jestingly. That the angels closed Lot's door, so that neither he nor anyone from his house could be taken by the Sodomites to destruction, clearly indicates that none of God's elect will be lost to the impiety and persecution of the reprobates, as the Lord says about his sheep: "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand" (John 10:28). That Lot, having the authority given by the angels, could not bring back to salvation any of the wicked citizens, not even his own relatives or friends, even though he tried very much, signifies that no human effort can add even one soul to the number of the predestined, who were chosen by the Lord before the foundation of the world; for the Lord knows who are his own. Indeed, although the weakness of our condition may hide from us the fate of those who belong to the lot of the elect, we must not cease from caring about our own salvation, nor should we be silent in instructing our neighbors. But, following the example of the blessed Lot, we ought to live chastely and devote ourselves to the correction of those who err, for it is certain that even though we cannot save those predestined to destruction, we do not lose the reward of our kindness, which we extend toward their salvation.

[Genesis 19:16] -- And they led him out and placed him outside the city. There he spoke to him: "Save your soul, do not look back, nor stay in any region around, but save yourself on the mountain, lest you also perish together. Generally, indeed, the fire and destruction of Sodom, from which Lot was rescued, designates the punishment of ultimate severity; when, with the completion at the end of the age of the total number of the elect, all the impious will be seized into eternal fire, the Lord explaining, who said: "Similarly as it happened in the days of Lot, they ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built; but the day Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all. So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed" (Luke 17:28). To which the apostle Jude also attests, saying: "Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). However, the same fire of Sodom can also, not incongruously, suggest the flames of the vices with which the reprobate are burned in this life and are thus prepared for eternal fire; who, although they now do not cease to burn with earthly desires and carnal allurements, then will never cease to burn with the fire of vengeance. This sense, too, the Lord affirms, indeed even teaches, who says:

"In that hour, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away; and likewise, let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:31). For we are not taught that in the approaching moment of the

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

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

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

[Genesis 19:22] -- Therefore, the name of that city was called Segor. Segor is interpreted as "Little," which for this reason was so called because Lot had said, "Is it not small?" Previously it was called Bale, as mentioned above: "Against the king of Bale, this is Segor." Bale is interpreted as "devour," which the Hebrews say was called such because it was swallowed up by a third earthquake. But just as Sodom burns with the flames of vices, and the mountain to which Lot is ordered to ascend indicates the summit of virtues, so Segor designates a certain lesser mode of good behavior; although it is far from the heights of the perfect, it is still separated from the contagion of the wicked. For example, one who rightly

keeps a conjugal life escapes the sulfurous flame of fornication but does not yet ascend the mountain of continence; he who turns his hand and mind away from rapine and avarice, and is accustomed to give what he has to the poor, cannot yet leave everything behind. He indeed escapes the fire of the Sodomites, enters the walls of the small city where he avoids the danger of destruction, but has not yet ascended the fortress of virtue where he would already shine as perfect, and other such things.

[Genesis 19:23-25] -- The sun rose upon the earth, and Lot entered Zoar; then the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities and all the surrounding region. The sunrise upon the earth, at which Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, marks the manifestation of the final judgment, when, after all the righteous have been rescued, the wicked will be suddenly overwhelmed by destruction. And surely it was rightly done by the judgment of God that those who had tried to snare the blessed Lot in the darkness of night, laboring much and resisting with their crimes, when day suddenly came upon them, saw him rescued while they themselves perished entirely; and they who had burned with vile pleasures of the flesh in darkness, were consumed with sulfur and fire once morning suddenly appeared, because all who serve vices secretly in the blindness of their minds are openly struck in the knowledge of their crime by the stern judge. Also, it should be noted that on one and the same night while Lot was rejoicing with the Lord as his guest and was being defended from enemies, the Sodomites were laboring to accumulate their crimes, even desecrating Lot with his guests; but at sunrise, Lot was liberated for his righteousness, and they were condemned for their impiety, because indeed in the night of this world holy people also rejoice in welcoming Him who said: 'Behold, I will come and dwell in the midst of you' (Zech.

x, 11), and in Revelation: 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with me' (Rev. iii, 20). And the wicked seek to corrupt either the works of the faithful or the very faith itself with their temptations; but when the morning of the future age appears, they receive the crown of life, and the others incur the punishment of perpetual death. The Sodomites therefore perish with a punishment worthy of their crimes. For since they led an impious life in the filth of luxury and the burning of lust, they are deservedly punished with flames of fire and the stench of sulfur. Nor should it be doubted that by such punishment they were not only condemned to present suffering but are also to be condemned perpetually, as the apostle John says: 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone' (Rev. xxi, 2). The punishment and retribution are therefore made equal to the kinds of sins, according to the saying of the wise man, interpreting the plagues of the Egyptians: 'That they might know, that by the same things wherewith a man sins, by the same also he is tormented' (Wis. xi, 17), just as the blessed Lot deserved to be freed according to the mode of life he led;

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

[Genesis 19:26] -- And his wife, looking back, was turned into a pillar of salt. This indeed must be believed to have happened literally. Finally, Josephus reports that even up to his time the same pillar of salt had endured at the gates of the same city. And indeed, the wife, out of fear due to her feminine frailty at the sudden clamoring of the perishing and the crashing of the flames falling from the sky, looked back; but it nonetheless holds their figure in this infirmity, who, once renouncing the world and beginning the arduous journey of virtues, suddenly return with an unstable and almost feminine heart to the desires of the world they had forsaken; about whom the apostle Peter says: "It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them" (2 Peter 2:21); as, conversely, Lot, who left behind everything he possessed that was destined to perish with the sinners, suggests those who truly renounce the world, and regret not their renunciation; those whom also the blessed Noah, who left behind all his possessions to be destroyed by the floods with the reprobates, just as [Lot] did with the fire, clearly denotes; but the fact that the wife of Lot, when she turned away from the path which the Lord showed, perished and was turned into a pillar of salt;

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

[Genesis 19:30] -- Lot went up from Zoar and stayed on the mountain with his two daughters. He had feared to stay in Zoar. He hurried to ascend the mountain from Zoar because he recognized that this was more pleasing to the angels through whom he was rescued, fearing that the city which at the moment of his intercession had escaped the danger of death might later, due to the citizens' sins, be consumed with a similar destruction as the neighboring cities; he feared greatly, since he knew that it had been frequently devastated by earthquakes in earlier times, hence it was called Bela, that is, 'submerging' or 'devouring.' But also according to spiritual understanding, because Sodom represents the flames of vices, Zoar a small beginning of good works, and the mountain the height of virtues, it is necessary that when someone has moved from the fire of vices to the beginning of virtue, they should not remain sluggish at the outset, but should always strive and hurry with a lively step toward higher progress in good action.

[Genesis 19:32] -- And the elder said to the younger: Our father is old, and there is no man on earth to come in to us after the manner of all the earth; come, let us make him drink wine, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed from our father. And it was related how the daughters of Lot, by making him drunk with wine, lay with him, and conceived and bore Moab and Ammon, the patriarchs of the Moabites and the Ammonites. This story indeed seems to be against the natural custom of human conception, but it cannot be doubted as a fact, because such great authority reports it to have happened. Lot can be seen as excusable, because he suffered such a crime of incest unknowingly rather than committed it; but he is not excused in that, forgetting the recent extermination of the impious, he indulged in wine so much that he could not perceive what was being done to him. The daughters also seem excusable, because they did not commit incest with their father due to lust; but because they believed no men were left on earth, thinking all had been consumed by the same fiery punishment; and they suspected that just as after the flood the human race was restored through the three sons of Noah and as many daughters-in-law, now through themselves and their father, who alone had survived the fires, it must be restored anew;

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

the daughters of blessed Lot represent even the carnal thoughts of exalted men, which by neglect sometimes subdue them; so that from a pious heart an unworthy word or deed, like nefarious offspring, is conceived.

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

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

Chapter 20

[Genesis 20:1] -- Abraham departed from there to the southern land, lived between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. That Abraham came to the southern land suggests a celestial progress of the mind through his earthly journey, by which he always used to ascend to more perfect works of virtues, as did the other saints. The southern land, being nearer to the light and heat of the sun, often indicates that life of the faithful which, shedding the stupor of worldly desire, used to be renewed more and more daily by the inner light of heavenly love. And Abraham, having destroyed Sodom, sought the southern land, since each chosen person, witnessing the destruction of the wicked, more devotedly girds himself in the service of his Creator so that having been inwardly granted to transcend the perdition of the wicked, he might merit to partake eternally in the joys of the good. "When the scourge is inflicted, the little one will become more prudent. The following words, too, which state that Abraham lived between Kadesh and Shur and sojourned in Gerar, aptly suit the spiritual progress of the elect. For Kadesh means Holy, or Changed, Shur means Strong, and Gerar means Sojourning. Therefore, Abraham having journeyed to the southern land, dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, hence, surely, all the chosen, being inwardly enlightened by the recognition of truth and inflamed with love for the divine vision, strive together to exercise works of holiness;

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

[Genesis 20:1] -- And he sojourned in Gerar. For by both the word of sojourning and the name of Gerar, that is, of lodging, the life of the holy ones is aptly depicted, which, as much as it is devoted to divine commands, so much it is alienated from temporal joys; whence also the Apostle, glorifying the life of the same patriarchs, said: By faith, Abraham sojourned

in the land of promise as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for a city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Heb. XI, 9). And a little later: According to faith, all these died, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar and greeted them, and confessing that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth (Ibid., 13). For those who say such things signify that they are seeking a homeland; but Gerar was formerly the border of the Canaanites to the south, and a metropolis city of Palestine, situated between Kadesh and Shur, that is, between two deserts, one of which is joined to Egypt, to which the people arrived after crossing the Red Sea, and the other extends from Kadesh to the desert of the Saracens. It follows:

[Genesis 20:2] -- And he said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister. So Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took her. Why Abraham said this about Sarah, and whence it should be believed that she, although taken into the king's house, was by no means touched by the king's embrace, has already been said above, where in a similar manner she was taken by Pharaoh but returned to her husband at the command of the Lord. It follows. [Genesis 20:3-4] -- But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him: Behold, you are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she has a husband; but Abimelech had not touched her and said: Lord, will you kill an innocent and righteous nation? And the rest of this reading. It seems that Abimelech was diligent in practicing the worship of the true religion and knew it with all his people; for how would a man, ignorant of the knowledge and fear of God, deserve to be rebuked by God for his sin, or receive God's rebuking words with such humility; for he demonstrated his people's innocence when he said: Will you kill an innocent and righteous nation? And he showed his own purity of heart and action when he added: In the simplicity of my heart and the cleanliness of my hands, I did this. Hence also, because he prudently and humbly answered the Lord, he soon merited to be praised and consoled by the second voice of the Lord saying:

[Genesis 20:6] -- And I know that you have done this with a simple heart; therefore I have kept you from sinning against me. But also that he immediately rose in the night, called all his servants, and narrated to them what had happened to him; and that they, having heard the danger of the offense into which the king had fallen, were all greatly afraid, demonstrates how devoted to justice both the king and his servants were: For the king himself, when he said to Abraham: What have you done to us? What did we sin against you, that you have brought upon me and my kingdom a great sin? clearly implies that he did not consider the sin of ignorance to be trivial, which he confessed was harmful not only to himself but also to his kingdom. Hence, he did not believe it sufficient for him that he had obtained pardon from God, or had deserved to be kept from sinning by God's favor, unless he also gave money abundantly along with the returned wife to the man against whom he had unknowingly sinned, so that he might be appeased, as it is read in the following passages. Nor is it to be wondered that uncircumcised men at that time could have been worshippers of truth, since the blessed Job and his royal friends are believed to have faithfully served the

Lord with all that they had after the times of the given circumcision, without the sacrament of circumcision:

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

that is, the daughter of his brother, not his sister; for brothers or sisters are sometimes called kin in the Scriptures, who are of one family, that is, from the fatherland, which the Latins interpret as fatherhoods, when many branches of the family spread from one root; otherwise, how is it that Abraham, a just man, took his father's daughter as his wife, when in the first men for the sake of the ears' health the Scripture does not name it, preferring to be understood rather than openly stated? And that the king said to Sarah:

[Genesis 20:16] -- Behold, I have given a thousand pieces of silver to your brother; this will be a veil of the eyes to all who are with you, wherever you shall go; and remember that you have been discovered. While speaking playfully, because she herself had said that he was her brother, and he says that she was discovered when by pretending she covered the truth, saying that he who was her husband was her brother, and he encourages her to remember this in the future, lest she should incur the same disgrace by similar pretense henceforth. But if in this reading, where Sarah, with Abraham's permission, is taken by kings, but, with God's provision, is returned to her husband undefiled, it pleases to understand something allegorical, it signifies that the Church is often to be assailed by the temptations of worldly powers, certainly with God permitting, who is called her husband by the gift of heavenly protection and grace, so that being tested by adversities, it may become more evident with what firm faith, with what chastity devoted to God, with what great care of her Creator she is always to be protected from all the snares of enemies, and never corrupted from the simplicity of her faith. However, that the king, in returning Sarah to Abraham, likewise gave sheep and oxen, servants and handmaids, and much money, signifies the time when the

kingdom of this world would submit its neck to the Christian faith, and hold in veneration that religion which once it strove to overthrow.

That Sarah, being desired and taken by kings twice and yet was never defiled, first indeed as a young woman by Pharaoh, and now of more advanced age by Abimelech, signified that the Church, though always to be troubled by labors in this life, would yet experience two greater persecutions than the rest; one of the Roman Empire, which she endured, as it were, in her youth, and overcame most valiantly and gloriously with the help of the Lord; the other of the Antichrist, which she is to suffer, as it were, in old age, that is, at the impending end of her temporal life, and with the same merciful Lord's help, she is to defeat. For that Sarah was of such great beauty that even in old age she could be loved for her grace of form, signifies that the Church, in that last time, will be adorned with such glory of virtues, that the fierce enemy with his satellites will greatly envy her, and therefore will strive to attack her with all his snares and forces; fulfilling the prophecy where it is said of her sons: They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing (Psalm 92:14), that is, that they may steadfastly declare the faith in which they glory among the evils they suffer.

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

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

Chapter 21

[Genesis 21:2] -- The Lord visited Sarah as He had promised, and fulfilled what He had spoken to her; she conceived and bore a son in her old age at the time God had predicted to her. God is said to visit Sarah as one who is sick and already despaired of all offspring, so that what nature seemed to deny, the presence of divine grace bestows: which word aptly suits all the children of the promise, who are saved not by their own free will but by the choice of grace, not by the effort of their own labor but by the Lord visiting their hearts and fulfilling the gift of grace which He promised. [Genesis 21:3] -- And Abraham called the name of his son whom Sarah bore to him Isaac. Isaac is interpreted as Laughter or Joy, which very name is fitting for all the faithful, to whom among other goods of the heavenly inheritance, their Redeemer promises by saying: ”Again I will see you, and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you” (John XVI, 1).

[Genesis 21:4] -- And he circumcised him on the eighth day, as God had commanded him when he was a hundred years old. Just as Isaac was indeed born during the time of the Old Testament, yet by his very birth he designates the heirs of the New Testament, so the circumcision by which he was consecrated is indeed a sacrament of the Old Testament, but it was foreshadowed in the figure of the grace of the New Testament, by which the world was to be cleansed in Christ from all filth of sin, death, and mortality. For at that time circumcision freed the faithful from the bond of original transgression; yet it was given as a type of the higher grace, by which the entire kingdom of sin and death was to be destroyed by the passion and resurrection of the Lord; in the image of which we also are absolved from all sins in baptism, and on the last day, renewed from all corruption and mortality of flesh and soul, we will reach eternal life; where, as the Lord said, the sons of the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven; for they can no longer die (Mark 12:25). And because the Lord rose again from the dead on the eighth day, that is, after the Sabbath, we also hope to rise again in the eighth age;

for there are six ages of this world, the seventh is the Sabbath rest of souls in another life, the eighth itself is of our resurrection and the universal judgement; therefore, it was rightly commanded that circumcision be performed on the eighth day. But the fact that Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born and his son of the promise was circumcised, most fittingly corresponds to the perfection of that same promise. For since a hundred is a

perfect number, which is especially evidenced by the fact that it passes from the left hand to the right; therefore, it mystically pertains to heavenly and perpetual goods, Isaac is rightly born into this, who by his birth born miraculously to aged parents, would designate the heirs not of a temporal and lowly kingdom, but of the eternal kingdom in the heavens, in which indeed as a sacrament, Noah's ark was built over a hundred years, and Abraham dwelt a hundred years in the land of promise, and Isaac, sowing in Gerar, found a hundredfold in that very year, and the court of the tabernacle is a hundred cubits long; and in the parable of the gospel seed, the good ground produced a hundredfold fruit, and the Lord promises a hundredfold in this time and, moreover, eternal life to those who leave their own: in all of these, the number one hundred either designates the joys of eternal life or the good works by which one attains these.

[Genesis 21:8] -- The boy grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day of his weaning. Isaac is nourished with milk when each chosen one, that is, the son of the promise, newly begotten in Christ, receives the first rudiments of faith, and although he cannot yet sufficiently search the most profound secrets of divinity, nevertheless, delighted by the sweetness of celestial rewards, he strives to engage in good works through which, with God's help and generosity, he may deserve to receive greater things, according to what the apostle Peter said: "Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good." But Isaac, being weaned and coming to the nourishment of bread, occurs when the chosen ones, with the progress of faith, learn not only to confess Jesus Christ and him crucified but also to add that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[Genesis 21:8] -- And Abraham held a great feast on the day of Isaac's weaning, because it is indeed a great solemnity for the highest teachers of the mind when they see those whom they have nurtured ascend to the summit of wisdom and virtue.

[Genesis 21:9-10] -- And when Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian playing, she said to Abraham: "Expel this slave woman and her son, for the son of the slave woman shall not be heir with my son Isaac. Some manuscripts have: "The son of Hagar the Egyptian playing with her son Isaac," which does not appear in the Hebrew; but whether he was playing with Isaac or in the presence of Isaac, Sarah did not want the son of the slave woman to be a playmate to her son; she did not want him, whom the old woman had received in promise, to be unworthy of the promises and heavenly blessing by the ignoble examples or associations of a bastard; therefore the Apostle did not hesitate to call this play persecution. For one persecutes his brother not only by pursuing him with swords, hatred, or insults, but also by trying to divert him from the rectitude of his purity with playful or silly conversations; hence also the Psalmist says: "The wicked have told me fables, but not as your law, O Lord; all your commandments are truth; the wicked have persecuted me, help me" (Psalm 118:85). And he himself, because he loved the law of the Lord and the commandments of truth, tolerated the storytellers as persecutors; and therefore he implored divine help to

overcome them; the Apostle, moreover, clearly shows what each of Abraham's sons typically demonstrates, writing to the Galatians:

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

Therefore, Isaac was not born to Abraham according to the flesh, but from the promise, not because he was not produced by flesh, but because he was received from utter despair, and unless the promising God had been present, an old man would not have dared to hope for any offspring from the old wife's womb. The Apostle, explaining this law, adds: "Now we, brothers, are children of the promise like Isaac; but as then the one born according to the flesh persecuted the one born according to the Spirit, so also now" (Galatians 4:28); he does not condemn the Old Testament as contrary to the New, lest he confirms by his authority the mad doctrine of the Manichees, God forbid; for the apostles and evangelists would not be preferred in any way over Moses and the prophets who composed the Old Testament, of whose shared grace of spirit and faith he says elsewhere: "But having the same spirit of faith, as it is written: 'I believed, therefore I spoke,' we also believe, therefore we also speak" (2 Corinthians 4:13); but he surely reproves those who understand the spiritual law carnally, who seek temporal benefits and a temporal kingdom from the Lord by observing the law, not eternal goods in heaven; he blames those who trust that the letter of the law without assisting grace is sufficient for salvation, which is characteristic of the Jews, about whom he also says:

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:13); he rejects them and concludes that they are persecutors of the faithful, who, with the Gospel shining, and the grace of the New Testament clearly revealed by the Incarnation of the Lord throughout the world, nonetheless contend that circumcision, sacrifices, and legal ceremonies are necessary for those baptized in Christ; against whom his intention especially watched as he wrote this, as the well-considered text of this entire Epistle openly teaches, finally as he attaches to the words we have set out. But what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the slave woman and her son; for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit with the son of

the free woman. So then, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman, with the freedom by which Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you accept circumcision, Christ will be of no advantage to you (Gal. 4:30). By these words, it is clearly shown that it is not the Scriptures nor the writers of the Old Testament that are to be cast out of the boundaries of the Church as if they were the slave woman and her son;

but it is the carnal observance of that same Testament, after the grace and freedom of the Gospel has shone forth through Christ, that he says will cease, and faithfully fulfilled by the heirs of the New Testament in a spiritual sense. For this is how it is to be understood what the Lord says in the Gospel: "For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one jot, not one tittle, will pass from the law until all things are accomplished" (Matt. 5:18); which means that the things which the law and the prophets clearly speak of concerning the faith of the truth, or works of justice, and purification of heart, in order to see God, should always be accepted literally; but whatever was commanded to be observed carnally by a carnal people, such as circumcision itself, the offering of sacrifices, the daily cleaning from persistent leprosy, not only of men but also of houses and clothing, and countless such things, these should have been observed literally until the times of the Lord's Incarnation. But from the time when the Lord, rising from the dead, opened the minds of the disciples to understand the Scriptures, and to discern clearly the mysteries of prophecy in their full light, though these should be read in the Church on account of the authority of the prophecy, they should be observed spiritually and not carnally because of the clarity of grace;

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

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

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

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

[Genesis 21:10] -- For the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son Isaac. Which the Apostle states as with the son of the freewoman, because in no way should false teachers, who affirm that this grace benefits us only if we are also consecrated by circumcision according to the rite of the law, be received with the preachers of the truth, who proclaim that we should be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus. Rather, they shall remain forever excluded from the inheritance of grace, which is in Christ, those who deny the power of the same grace, or who exalt themselves by works without grace. There are also some today in the Church, indeed initiated into the sacraments of the new testament, but through the intention of a carnal mind pertaining to the old testament and to the figure of Hagar and Ishmael; not that they truly follow the commandments of the old testament, of which the Lord says: If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments (Matthew XIX, 17), but because they seek temporal benefits from the Lord, neglecting eternal ones, which the old Scripture understood according to the letter sometimes seems to sound, embracing more what the Lord says through the Prophet: If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land (Isaiah I, 19) rather than what He says through Himself: Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God (Matthew V); concerning whom the Apostle says:

For all seek their own, not the things which are of Jesus Christ (Philippians II, 21), who either continue in wicked deeds among good Catholics till death, or because of heresies and obvious schisms are expelled from the Church by the judgment of the priest as the sons of the bondwoman through the free Sarah, all the same, in the future judgment, who have not previously corrected themselves, will be rendered and excluded from the inheritance of blessing: For everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin; the slave does not stay in the house forever; the son remains forever. If therefore the son sets you free, you shall be free indeed (John VIII, 34).

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.