Retractions on Acts

The Venerable Bede (AD 673–735)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

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Introduction

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Preface

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

For even Jerome teaches many testimonies of the Old Testament as the Hebrew truth holds it; yet he did not wish these to be interpreted or us to correct them in our codices. For example: "I shall no longer look upon man, and the inhabitant, my generation has rested" (Isaiah XXXVIII). And: "His grave shall be glorious" (Isaiah XI); and: "We have heard praises from the ends of the earth" (Isaiah XXIV); and: "Everyone who kills Cain shall be punished sevenfold" (Genesis IV): he says in Hebrew, "He shall be avenged seven times; and: "From the wings of the earth; and: "His rest shall be glorious; and: "The inhabitant of quietness, my generation

has been taken away; he wanted the reader to be aware of these Hebrew versions for learning purposes only, not for the sake of correction.

Chapter 1

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

[Acts 1:5] -- For John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Baptisma in Greek is called tinctio in Latin. Wherefore, in some manuscripts we find it interpreted thus: For John indeed dipped with water, but you will be dipped in the Holy Spirit. Here the marvelous harmony of the words of the Lord and his precursor is evident. For he said to those whom he baptized, about the Lord: I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:8). And the Lord himself: John indeed baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit. It should be noted as well that the baptism of the Lord in the Holy Spirit, which John had foretold, does not refer only to that time when the Apostles and other faithful of that time were baptized with water for the remission of sins, through the grace of the Holy Spirit given to them by the Lord; but also to this, when, with the Lord sending them, they received more fully the gifts of the same Spirit from heaven. But also now, whoever receives baptism for the remission of sins, is certainly baptized in the Holy Spirit, through whose

gift they are both cleansed from all sins, and are aided so that they can progress in good deeds.

[Acts 1:6] -- Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Not to this Israel, but to this Israel; and as it is manifest in Greek, where τῷ Israel, and not οὗ Israel, is written. Which would be understood more easily if, by adding one word, it were said: Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to the people of Israel. [Acts 1:10] -- While they were looking on as he went into heaven. In Greek, it is thus: And while they were gazing into heaven as he went; that is, they were gazing into heaven, where he was going. Hence, the angels say to them: Why do you stand looking into heaven? Because it is also shown that they were gazing at him who was going into heaven, by the angels' following words, when it is said: He will come in the same way you saw him going into heaven.

[Acts 1:13] -- And when they had entered the upper room, they went up where they were staying. For in Greek the order of words is also placed thus: And when they had gone into the upper room, they went up where they were staying—Peter and John, and Andrew and James. In Greek the order of names is thus: Peter and Andrew, and James and John, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. Histories recount concerning these, in which the passions of the apostles are contained, and many deem them apocryphal, that they preached in Persia, and there were killed by the priests of the temples in the city of Suanir, and they underwent glorious martyrdom. The Book of Martyrology, which is titled with the name and preface of blessed Jerome, although Jerome himself was not the author but the translator, and Eusebius is narrated to have been the author, affirms this as well. Further, Isidore believes that this Simon is the one who ruled the Church of Jerusalem after James the brother of the Lord, and was crowned with martyrdom of the cross under Trajan, being a hundred and twenty years old, whom we also followed formerly in the first book of the Acts of the Apostles, not examining what he wrote scrupulously, but simply listening to his words, believing that he learned these things from certain ancient histories.

We dare not deny this even now, especially since he who wrote the aforementioned passions of the apostles has most certainly revealed that he wrote uncertain and false things. For he says that the eunuch of Candace, whom Philip baptized in Judea, was in Ethiopia at the time when Matthew was teaching there and helped him in his teaching, while it is manifest that Candace is the name not of a man, but of a woman, that is, not of the eunuch, but of his mistress, namely the queen of the Ethiopians, who, as we have learned from ancient records, were all commonly called thus in olden times. I wrote in the same work, following Jerome's commentary, and concerning Judas the brother of James, who was also called Thaddaeus, that he was sent to Abgar, king of Osroene, as ecclesiastical history has handed down; but afterward, examining the ecclesiastical history itself more diligently, I

found it not written there that Thaddaeus the apostle, one of the twelve, but Thaddaeus one of the seventy disciples, was sent to heal the aforementioned king. I do not think an error should be imputed to me, where, following the authority of great doctors, I believed without doubt what I found in their small works should be accepted.

[Acts 1:14] -- With the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. It says brothers of Jesus, not of Mary. For in Greek there is a clear distinction where it is written not αὐτῆς but αὐτοῦ, which without any doubt is a masculine pronoun among them. Blessed Luke took care to inform readers that the brothers of the Lord were participants in his faith at that time, about whom it was previously said before his passion: ”Neither did his brothers believe in him.” [Acts 1:19] -- And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Akeldama. It says in their language who were inhabitants of Jerusalem, because certainly, even though both spoke Hebrew, the propriety of the language of Jerusalem differed from that of the Galileans, from whom were the apostles, which we learn in the story of the Lord’s passion, where Peter, even against his will, was revealed by his speech to be a Galilean.

[Acts 1:23] -- And they appointed two, Joseph who was called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus. In Greek it is more detailed: And having said these things, they appointed two: Joseph who was called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. Where we in this sentence read Justus, in the Greek also Justus is written. If we believe it to be a Latin name, it seems that this man was of such virtue that even the Romans, who could have known him, gave him the name of justice. But if it is a Hebrew name, it can be interpreted as “sparing” or “he himself uplifted,” as Jerome teaches in the Book of Hebrew Names. What is called Justus in Latin, in Hebrew is Sadoch, and in Greek is called δίκαιος. Furthermore, Clement of Alexandria, a most learned man in all respects, reports that both those appointed to the lot of apostleship were from the number of the seventy disciples.

Chapter 2

[Acts 2:1] -- And when the days of Pentecost were completed, they were all together in the same place. Some Codices incorrectly have, Pentecosten. For Pentecoste in the nominative case means fiftieth; Pentecostes in the genitive, fiftieth's; Pentecosten in the accusative, fiftieth. However, no rule of speech allows us to say Pentecosten, when it should be said: When the fiftieth day was completed; or certainly as it is read in Greek in the singular number: And when the fiftieth day was completed. But truly in the prayers of the same day, it should be said: And celebrating the most sacred day of Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth. From the usage of this word, it is thought by some who do not know the Greek language that the solemnity of this day should also be called Pentecosten in the nominative case.

[Acts 2:2] -- And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, etc. And in the very giving of the law and grace, the most evident difference between the old and new testament is apparent. There, the people stood far off, there was fear, but no love. For they were so afraid that they said to Moses: Speak to us yourself, and do not let the Lord speak to us, lest we die (Exodus 20). Therefore, God descended, as it is written, on Sinai in fire, but terrifying the people standing far off, He wrote the law with His finger on stone, not with His spirit in the heart. But here, when the Holy Spirit came, the faithful were gathered together in one place; He did not terrify them on a mountain, but entered the house. Indeed, a sound came suddenly from heaven, and it sounded as if a violent wind was coming; but no one was afraid. You heard the sound, see the fire, because on the mountain there was both, and fire and sound, but there also smoke, here fire, divided tongues as of fire. Was He terrifying from afar? By no means. For He sat on each one of them, and they began to speak in tongues, as the Holy Spirit gave them to utter. Hear the tongue speaking, and understand the Spirit writing not on stone, but in the heart.

[Acts 2:3] -- And there appeared to them divided tongues as of fire, and one sat upon each of them, etc. This fire, not this fire. For in Greek it is πυρὸς, not πῦρ. This distinction would be easier to see if, adding a word, it were said: Divided tongues appeared as if of burning fire, or as if of shining fire, so that it may be

understood that the tongues were divided in the appearance of fire. [Acts 2:4] -- And they began to speak in various tongues, as the Holy Spirit gave them to speak. But there were in Jerusalem Jews dwelling, religious men from every nation, etc. In Greek it does not say at this place ”in various tongues,” but ”in other tongues.” For Isaiah had said: With other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people, and even so they will not hear me, says the Lord. Indeed, Blessed Luke, noting that this prophecy was fulfilled by this gift of the Spirit, took care also to place the same word which he saw in the prophecy in this sacred history.

[Acts 2:6] -- Since each one heard them speaking in his own language, they were all amazed and astonished, saying, ”Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? I know I have been criticized by some for saying that this sentence can be understood in two ways, or rather for asking how it should be understood. To them, I briefly respond that everything I wrote about the same sentence in my previous volume was not expressed from my own thought but taken from the words of the holy and utterly irreproachable teacher, that is, Gregory of Nazianzus. It is indeed clear that the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke in all tongues, nor is it allowed for any of the faithful to doubt this. But how they spoke is rightly questioned, namely whether the speech of the apostles had such power that everyone who knew different languages could equally understand it when heard, or if whoever spoke, as it was necessary for someone to speak among such a multitude, while the rest were silent, at first made his speech in Hebrew for the Hebrews, with the rest not knowing what he said. Then for the Greeks, he spoke in Greek while the others waited.

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

[Acts 2:9] -- And those who inhabit Mesopotamia, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia. These provinces which are named after Judea, indeed all speak Greek, but if they sounded nothing different from the custom of their homeland, they would not by any means be mentioned with such a subtle distinction of languages. Hence, the wondrous grace of the Spirit is to be seen in the apostles,

which not only taught them the diversity of all languages, but also made the distinctiveness of properties in each language recognizable in their speech, according to the number of provinces that used it. [Acts 2:10] -- And Roman sojourners. It would be more correctly rendered in Greek as And Roman wanderers, that is, Jews who were living in Rome as foreigners, just as others elsewhere, as mentioned above. For it is shown in the following verse that among those present were foreigners who are called proselytes in Greek, that is, those who from the nations had converted to Judaism, abandoning the rites of their own cultures, as it is said: Jews and proselytes as well.

[Acts 2:19] -- Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. About fire and smoke it has been said in the previous book: he speaks of blood not only of the Lord's wounds, but also of the Lord's sweat, when, praying before the betrayal, His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground. This is numbered among the divinely wrought signs, because it is proved not to be found in the custom of human nature. It is therefore a sign, because it signified that the whole world would be cleansed by the blood of the Lord, so that just as the tabernacle or temple was at some point consecrated to the Lord with the blood of victims, so now through the whole world the faithful people would be dedicated to Him as a holy house by His own blood, and not only in Jerusalem would be a place for prayer, but in every place of His dominion, the elect would lift their hands through pure prayers to the Lord.

[Acts 2:20] -- The sun will be turned into darkness. The name of darkness in Greek is read in the singular number, that is, σκότος, which the Latin translator necessarily rendered in the plural as tenebras because he could not express it in the singular. I thought it necessary to mention this so that anyone who reads this among the people of the Angles might know that it is not necessary, because of the authority of the Latin language, to render "darkness" in their own speech in the plural; rather, it should be in the singular, as this can just as easily be done owing to the authority of the Greek, from which it was translated into Latin scripture. [Acts 2:23] -- By the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, this man was handed over to you, and with the help of wicked men, you put him to death by nailing him to the cross. The Greek has one more word which pertains significantly to the cause: "Foreknowledge of God handing him over." For he was handed over by the governor into their power with the condition that they could choose either him or the robber; and they, having received this option, granted life to the robber and, by their own shouts and prayers, put Jesus to death through the hands of the soldiers.

[Acts 2:24] -- Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains, just as it was impossible for Him to be held by it. The sense of this sentence seems to be that the pains of punishment were loosened when the Lord descended to the lower regions, that is, they were not able to touch Him at all. But if we look at the Greek authority, where

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

[Acts 2:25] -- For David says in reference to Him, that is, in His person: I foresaw the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, that I may not be moved. By explaining what the Mediator of God and men did, He gives us who are pure men advice on how to avoid sins. For whoever continuously looks upon the presence of his Creator with the eye of his mind in no way turns to sins. He also states the reason why he was not moved. Since indeed with the Lord helping at the right hand, the left side does not prevail; but the soul that He guards perseveres more firmly in Him. Appropriately, he was saying that the Lord is at his right hand, because if He does not hold this part, the insidious devil will immediately occupy it, as it is written about Judas: And the devil stood at his right hand (Ps. CVIII).

[Acts 2:26] -- For this reason my heart was delighted, and my tongue exulted. For this reason, because He, indeed, stood at the right hand, and He attests that in His thoughts, joy and exultation arose in His tongue. And indeed, as the passion was threatening, He said: "My soul is sorrowful unto death," and He began to fear and be weary (Mark 14). But He was sorrowful to show that He was truly man in soul and body, and truly passible; but His soul and tongue exulted because He knew that by His passion the human race was to be saved. [Acts 2:26] -- Moreover, even my flesh will rest in hope. Indeed, He was rejoicing that He could not be moved or overcome by enemies; but beyond this joy, He declares that His joy increased even more in that He was to provide an example of resurrection in His flesh, by which He saved us through His death.

[Acts 2:27] -- Because you will not abandon my soul in hell, nor will you let your holy one see decay. It is certain that the soul of the Lord was not abandoned in hell, which, having taken away those for whom He descended there, soon returned to the heights above; it is certain that nor was His flesh corrupted, which was glo-

rified by a swift resurrection. But it must be asked how He says in another psalm, reproaching the impenitent and the stubborn, the suffering of His passion: ”What profit is there in my blood, while I go down into corruption?” (Psalm 29). This is solved because there He says He descends into corruption when His body is penetrated by the piercing of nails and the lance, for the transfixion of the solid body itself may not unreasonably be considered a kind of corruption spoken of. Here, however, He rightly denies that corruption, that is, putrefaction, not happening, which generally devastates human flesh, but it had no power to come upon His most sacred body.

[Acts 2:28] -- You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy with your face. These words are rightly understood not only of the Lord, who did not need any other guide to overcome the kingdom of death, but, once receiving the fullness of divine power and wisdom, he was able to destroy death by himself, rise to life, and ascend to the right hand of the Father; they also truly apply to his chosen ones, who, with His gift, find the path of truth through which they return to the life that they lost in the first man, and who themselves will be filled with joy with the face of God the Father; because this is our perfect happiness, that we have merited to see Him face to face, as Philip understood well when he said: Lord, show us the Father and it is enough (John XIV). For it is enough joy to see the face of the Lord, nor is anything further required, because neither will there be anything more required, when He who is above all is seen. And these are the things that follow in the psalm: Pleasures at your right hand forever (Psalm XV).

[Acts 2:30-31] -- Therefore, being a prophet and knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath that of the fruit of his loins one would sit on his throne, he spoke foresightfully about the resurrection of Christ, etc. In the Greek it is more: To raise the Christ from the fruit of his loins and to sit on his throne. But in what follows: Foresightedly he spoke of the resurrection of his Christ, because neither was he left in hell; it is more consistently in the Greek: Because neither was his soul left in hell. And Saint Fulgentius, writing to Thrasamund, puts it this way: “For he also immediately added about the raising of his body from the dead, saying: Nor did his flesh see corruption.” As also the prophet encompassed both, saying: For you will not abandon my soul to hell, nor let your holy one see corruption (Psalm XV).

[Acts 2:33] -- And having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, He has poured out this which you see and hear. In Greek it is translated thus: He has poured out this gift which you now see and hear. Indeed, concerning Jesus, whom the Jews crucified and whom God raised, He taught that He is the Christ; but now gradually leading the listeners to higher belief, He signifies that this is the true God, by confirming that He has poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit, which any wise person recognizes to be of divine power alone. And fittingly, He used the same word ’pouring,’ which the prophetic statement previously mentioned has the

Lord say, to teach them from this that it is the same Lord Jesus Christ who both before taking flesh was accustomed to speaking in the prophets; who disposed the future ages according to His will; who gave signs and wonders in the heaven and on earth; who would save all invoking His name, and fulfill the other things described in prophetic discourse as the Son of God and true God.

[Acts 2:34-35] -- For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says: The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand. Certain codices have 'The Lord says,' but Greek exemplars in both this book and the Psalter have 'The Lord said.' Most clearly, blessed Peter explains through this psalm how to understand what he previously assumed from another psalm, that the Lord swore to David to raise Christ from the fruit of his loins and to set him on his throne, namely, because this throne of the kingdom is not to be understood in earthly Jerusalem where David reigned, but at the right hand of His majesty in the heavens. Here he evidently asserts both natures of our one Redeemer from the prophetic scriptures: the human, from the fruit of David's loins through the virgin, and the divine because ascending into heaven, the man was received at the right hand of the Father. In this truly, He is the son of David, in that He is the Lord of David, for which reason he congruously added:

[Acts 2:36] -- Therefore, let all the house of Israel know most certainly, that God has made him both Lord and Christ. For he proved him to be Lord from the word of David, which says: The Lord said to my Lord; and from what the prophet Joel said: And it shall come to pass, in the last days, says the Lord: I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh (Joel II), when He declared that this truly happened on that very day. He also taught that he is Christ by the word of the same David, which sings as said to him by the Lord: Sit at my right hand, and also from the fact that speaking through the prophet he declared that his Holy Spirit is Spirit, and that he could give it to men by his own power. For indeed, who but an infidel would doubt that this could pertain to no other man at all, except the Mediator of God and men, man Jesus Christ? For how could it be thought that he was not truly Christ, that is, believed rightly to be anointed with all the fullness of the Holy Spirit, who was proven by the same Spirit to give to whomever he willed? Therefore, he says that God has made him both Lord and Christ. Is not the Lord Christ both God and man, one person existing in two natures? In divinity, he was eternally born from the Father; in humanity, he was made from time by the Father, when He willed him to be incarnate in the womb of the Virgin by the working of the Holy Spirit.

[Acts 2:36] -- And the Lord, he says, He made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. Because Jesus is the proper name of that man whom the Jews crucified, just as Aaron or David are proper names of men: however, Lord is a term of power and majesty, to which every creature should rightly be subject, about which He Himself said to the disciples after appearing post-resurrection: All

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

[Acts 2:37] -- What shall we do, brothers? In Greek, it is rendered more: Show us. This word we frequently find appended to sentences in the works of those who expounded the holy Scriptures. [Acts 2:38-39] -- And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, as the Lord says through the prophet: I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy (Joel II). And what he added: And to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call, refers to that final testimony placed from the prophet, that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Ibid.). This particularly pertains to the calling of the Gentiles, who were far removed from the fellowship of the sons of Israel in both kinship and merit, and yet were to be saved by invoking the name of the Lord according to the prophet’s promise.

[Acts 2:41] -- Those, therefore, who received his word were baptized. Another translation, according to the accuracy of the Greek truth, has it thus: Those indeed willingly accepting his word were baptized. By this interpretation it seems more clearly expressed that not some of those who had heard Peter’s word, but all who had assembled to hear, willingly hearing this, were baptized. [Acts 2:47] -- But the Lord added daily those who were being saved. In Greek it is read thus: But the Lord added to the Church those who were being saved, and then another narration begins.

Chapter 3

[Acts 3:1] -- Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. Which can be adapted to the previous sentence thus: Since the Lord daily was gathering the believers to his Church through the preaching of the apostles, the foremost of the apostles were going up to the temple to pray to God for the same thing, that is, so that he might always provide increases to his Church. [Acts 3:7] -- And immediately his feet and ankle bones were strengthened. The term 'bases' is Greek in origin, and it is placed thus in Greek, which in Latin means 'supports': by which term it indicates that his steps were strengthened, just as some have also translated it into Latin. But it must be known that steps are properly called διαβήματα or πορίαι among the Greeks. [Acts 3:10] -- And they were filled with wonder and amazement. Another Edition for amazement, which is a state of being beyond one's mind, does not properly place 'admiration'; because greater amazement sometimes leads the mind to a state beyond, and transfers it to higher modes of thought beyond the usual manner of thinking.

[Acts 3:13] -- The God of our fathers glorified His Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered, etc. In Greek it is more appropriately stated: The God of our fathers glorified His servant Jesus. For it was fitting for a wise teacher, when addressing those who had killed Him, first to recall His humanity, which could be delivered up and slain; then gradually revealing the glory of His resurrection, to declare that He is also God and God's Son. Finally, shortly after, he calls Him the Author of life. And at the conclusion of the speech, more openly: To you first, he says, God, raising up His Son, sent Him blessing you, that your sins may be blotted out, that when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord, then your sins may be blotted out. The times of refreshment, however, signify the distinction of the universal judgment and the redemption of the just, of which they themselves, having indeed suffered tribulations but made safe in hope, say to the Lord in the psalm: We went through fire and water, and you brought us into refreshment (Psalm 65). For then indeed our sins will be fully blotted out when, by the power of the resurrection, the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed (I Corinthians 15). In a certain translation, we find this verse positioned this way for the explanation of the sense: That when the times of refreshment come, they

may come to you from the face of the Lord. And indeed it is thus written in Greek, with the addition of that pronoun: That when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord to you.

[Acts 3:21] -- Whom heaven must indeed receive until the times of the restitution of all things, which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began. This is what the Psalmist testifies as said to the same Lord Jesus Christ by God the Father: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet (Psalm 109). For He was taken up into heaven and sits at the right hand of God. In that seat of paternal majesty, He always remains divinely, nor has He ever departed from it, but in the assumed humanity, He is to come from heaven to judge the living and the dead when all His enemies will be put under His feet, and all things which God spoke through all the prophets from the beginning of the world will be restored; because, when all the saints enter eternal life with the Lord, the reprobates with the devil will endure eternal punishments, there will be absolutely nothing left which the prophets can promise us further to hope for, since both parts, namely the good and the bad, will have received an irrevocable sentence in the final judgment from the just judge. And Origen is greatly mistaken and deceives, who thinks that after this judgment, though after a long interval of time, the other sinners, who were sent to hell with the devil on the left side of the judge, will be freed and brought to the heavenly kingdom, as if the prophet who said:

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

[Acts 3:22] -- Moses indeed said: Because the Lord your God has raised up for you a prophet from among your brethren, like me, you shall listen to him according to all that he will speak to you, etc. The beginning of this passage in Greek has more: Moses indeed said to your fathers: Because the Lord your God has raised up for you a prophet. The meaning of the sentence is clear, because our Lord took on the truth of flesh from the people of Israel, appearing in the likeness of Moses, so that just as he [Moses] introduced carnal Israel, instructed and purified by ceremonies and sacred rites, into the promised land, so also the Lord, through the grace of

the Gospel, gathering spiritual Israel from the whole world, would lead them to the heavenly kingdoms. And just as those who disdained the law of Moses were expelled from the promised land by enemy nations, so also those who have scorned the teaching of evangelical grace will be cast out from the assembly of the saints by avenging spirits. For this is what follows:

[Acts 3:23] -- But it shall be, every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be cut off from the people. Truly, it should be noted that blessed Peter here did not care to hold onto the words of the Mosaic sentence, but the sense. For it is written in Deuteronomy, with Moses speaking to the sons of Israel: The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your nation and from your brethren like me, you shall listen to him, as you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb (Deut. XVIII). And a little later: And the Lord God said to me, Well have they spoken all that they have said: I will raise up for them a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command. And whoever will not listen to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will be the avenger (Ibid.). For which Peter placed: He shall be cut off from the people, more manifestly insinuating that this is the mode of divine vengeance, that those who scorn heavenly mandates are rendered exiles from the ranks of the elect. And also here, and in many other places, where the apostles and evangelists have taken examples from the Old Testament, it is clear that they sought the sense of the Scriptures, not the words, nor did they particularly care for the order of the speeches, so that the matter might be clear to the understanding.

[Acts 3:25] -- Saying to Abraham: And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. From both this testimony, namely that which was given to Moses, and that which was proclaimed to Abraham by the Lord, both his severity and goodness are shown: goodness indeed in those who, having received faith in Christ, deserve to be blessed by him; severity, however, in those who, due to their own contempt and disobedience, are exterminated from the people of the blessed, that is, cast out beyond the boundaries of eternal happiness. But it was said: In your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed, just as it was said in the Gospel: He was the true light which enlightens every man coming into the world (John I). For not all the families of the earth are blessed in Christ, nor is every man coming into the world enlightened by Christ, since many are those who, living in the darkness and curse in which they were born due to the first transgression, or even adding worse deeds, are damned to eternity. But it must be understood that in the seed of Abraham, that is, in Christ, all the families of the earth who are to be blessed are blessed; and by his grace, every man who belongs to the lot of the saints, which is in light, is enlightened: nor is there another name under heaven given to men in which we must be saved (Acts IV).

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

Chapter 4

[Acts 4:1] -- The priests and magistrates of the temple arrived. ”Magistratus” should be read in the singular, as is clear from the Greek, where ”στρατηγὸς” is written in the singular: for which, in Latin, some Codices have ”praepositum templi,” while others more correctly have ”praetorem templi.” For in Greek ”praetor” is ”στρατηγὸς,” while ”magistrate” or ”chief” is called ”ἄρχων.” [Acts 4:8] -- He said to them: ”Rulers of the people and elders.” In Greek, it includes more: ”And elders of Israel, listen.” Similarly, in the following, where it is said: ”In this, he stands before you healthy,” in Greek it is: ”Before you healthy today, and in no other.” [Acts 4:13] -- But seeing the boldness of Peter and John, and realizing that they were unlettered and ordinary men, they marveled. ”Unlettered” is said, not because they were ignorant of letters, but because they were not skilled in the art of grammar. For in Greek, it is more clearly, for this word, ”ἀγράμματοι,” that is, unlettered, and ”idiotae” are called unskilled. Finally, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where it is written: ”And if unskilled in speech, yet not in knowledge” (2 Cor. XI), for ”unskilled” in Greek it is ”ἰδιώτης.”

[Acts 4:21] -- Because all were praising for what had been done. It is better in Greek: ”For all were glorifying God for what had been done.” And what in our Codices is added, ”for what had happened,” is not in the Greek. Indeed, ”glorifying” and ”praising” are often interchangeably translated from the same Greek, which is ”ἐδόξαζον,” but there is a difference between a deed being praised and God being praised or glorified in the deed. For a deed or word to be praised is to be spread to the knowledge of many by fame, which can also happen with human deeds remarkably done; but for God to be praised or glorified in the deeds of men is specific to Christian piety and humility, with Him commanding and saying: ”Let your good deeds shine before others, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven” (Matt. V).

[Acts 4:25] -- Why did the nations rage and the peoples devise vain things? The prophet does not ask as if he does not know but reproves the madness of the impious in astonishment, those who rose up against the Lord the Savior, although harmed not at all by him, rather assisted by many good deeds. He mentioned na-

tions because of the Roman soldiers, peoples because of the Jews. Hence it is aptly said that the nations raged but the peoples devised vain things against God. For indeed, the leaders of the Jews with diligent meditation plotted how they might deliver the Lord to death; but the soldiers are found to have inflicted nothing upon him, to have laid no traps against him, but merely to have obeyed the governor's orders in his insult and death. Hence they are also said to rage, driven by an unskilled and disorderly motion; and since rage is properly of wild beasts, they are rightly said to rage who, setting aside reason, were inflamed by bestial fury. However, that the peoples are said to have devised vain things looks back to what is said about the blessed man in the preceding Psalm: "But his will is in the law of the Lord, and in his law, he will meditate day and night" (Psalm 1). For just as he is blessed who spends all his time in meditation on the divine law, so rightly must that people be assigned to perpetual miseries who not only pridefully turn away from meditating on God's law but also, in insanity, frequently engage in meditation against God himself, the lawgiver and their Lord.

[Acts 4:26] -- The kings of the earth have taken their stand, and the rulers have gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. It speaks of the leaders of the Jews and Pilate himself; but it mentions kings in the plural because of Herod the tetrarch, as the subsequent words of the apostles testify. Although it can be rightly interpreted by the plural appellation of kings to refer to Herod the tetrarch who consented with Pilate in the Lord's death, as well as that one of the same name and malice who, after the Lord's birth, killed the children in Bethlehem. Even though they did not live at the same time, with the same hatred and wickedness of mind, they took their stand and gathered together with the leaders of the Jews against the Lord. It is also noteworthy that the clauses of these verses are such that the first takes the closing phrase from the second, which says "against the Lord and against His Christ," and the second takes the introductory adverb "why" from the first, so that the position of each is complete: Why did the nations rage, and the people devise futile things against the Lord and against His Christ? Why did the kings of the earth take their stand, and the rulers gather together as one, against the Lord and against His Christ? He says "kings of the earth" to distinguish them from those for whom, while they are pilgrims on earth, the kingdom is preserved in heaven.

[Acts 4:30] -- In that you stretch out your hand, healings and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy Child Jesus. In Greek, it is rendered as "through the name of your holy Boy Jesus," which seems to align more with the apostles' wishes, who strove in every way to make it known that the man whom the Jews crucified, through the signs of miracles becoming evident by his name, having been taken up into heaven, should be recognized as the Son of God.

[Acts 4:31] -- And they spoke the word of God with confidence. In the Greek it is added: To everyone willing to believe. Also, in the following reading, when it was said: And the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul, here too in the Greek manuscripts, which our Codices do not have, it is added: And there was no division among them. And then, which is also contained in our Codices in a subdued manner: Nor did anyone say that what they possessed was their own. Blessed Cyprian also placed this sentiment in the third book of Testimonies, saying: "But the crowd of those who believed were of one heart and soul; nor was there any distinction among them, nor did anyone consider any of their possessions to be their own." This passage fits well and coheres aptly with what was said above, since those who received the Holy Spirit on the holy day of Pentecost, though all were Galileans, spoke in the tongues of all who were present from different parts of the world, both Jews and proselytes. For there indeed, through the uniting of different languages, it was beautifully foreshadowed that the holy Church, by the gift of the same Spirit, would have one heart and soul among the different nations and languages across the world. For it is not for all believers to speak in all tongues, but the unity of different tongues in the faith of Christ was a sign, because there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all (Eph. IV).

[Acts 4:32] -- But they had all things in common. In Latin, "common" is said as "communia," which in Greek is called κοινὰ, from which it is understood that the perfect servants of God are called κοινοβίται in Greek, that is, those living in common, and their communal dwellings are called κοινόβια; for in their language, βίον is understood to mean life, not that life which is contrary to death, but the way of life someone leads in their conversation, whether in the military, or in agriculture, or in any honorable or dishonorable art, whether one is a monk, layperson, or cleric. However, the life by which we are distinguished from the dead is called ζωὴ by the Greeks. Therefore, those who live in such a way that all things are common to them in the Lord are rightly called κοινοβῖται, a name composed from two words. This life is certainly so much happier than other ways of living in this world, as it imitates the state of the future world even in the present, where all good things are common to the blessed, who see His glory from whom all good things come; and because there the highest grace of peace and security reigns, the city in which this way of life was first typified was rightly called Jerusalem, that is, the Vision of Peace.

Hence, the distance of things and places is noteworthy, seeing that in the work of the prideful tower, the language and mind of the human race, when they were one, were deservedly scattered due to iniquity, so that although people spoke all languages there, no one could understand the will or words of their neighbor. However, in Jerusalem, the same languages were united by the merit of humility, and there was one language, one will, and one soul among all. This indeed continues to this day throughout the whole world, while the elect serve the Lord with one

and undivided heart and intention amidst the manifold division of languages; but indeed the reprobates all serve the devil in such a way that the same service is carried out with mutual conflict and contention, because of which their city is rightly called Babylon, that is, confusion.

[Acts 4:36] -- Joseph, who was surnamed Barnabas by the apostles, which is interpreted as the son of consolation, a Levite of Cyprian origin, having land, sold it, etc. It is remarkable how this Barnabas, who was later ordained an apostle of the Gentiles with Paul, and after a long companionship with him, returned to Cyprus, where he was born, to preach again, Eusebius, in the Ecclesiastical History, considers him to be among the seventy disciples of the Lord Savior, while it is clearly written by blessed Luke that he came to the discipleship of the apostles after the Lord's ascension; unless perhaps it is to be thought that he first followed the discipleship of Christ in such a way that he had not yet renounced all that he possessed. Whether this was in keeping with evangelical doctrine, anyone can easily see. [Acts 5:17] -- But the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him, etc. This reading in Greek begins thus, looking back at the previous events: And seeing these things, the high priest rose up.

[Acts 5:24] -- But when the temple magistrates and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about what was to happen concerning them. And here "magistrate" should be read in singular form, as also in the following passages where it says: Then the magistrate went into the temple with the ministers. For the Greek exemplar has "στρατηγὸς," that is, "praetor," in the singular in both places. It should be noted that this passage has more in Greek, for it is written thus: But when the priests heard these words, as well as the temple magistrate and the chief priests, they were amazed and perplexed about them, wondering what this might mean. [Acts 5:27-28] -- And the high priest questioned them, saying: Did we not strictly command you, etc. In the Greek it is more consistent: Did we not strictly command you? For it is more fitting for one questioning to speak thus.

[Acts 5:29] -- We must obey God rather than men. It is read interrogatively in Greek: Should we obey God rather than men? and the Apostles fittingly refuted the foolish and rash questioning of the high priest with a firm and prudent response. [Acts 5:30] -- The God of our fathers raised up Jesus. In Greek, it has His Child Jesus, according to the psalmist: Give power to your child; save the son of your handmaid (Psalm 85). [Acts 5:32] -- And we are witnesses of these words, and the Holy Spirit whom God gave to all who obey Him. We are witnesses because we have seen the glory of His resurrection, because we have followed with our eyes as He ascended into the heavens. The Holy Spirit is also a witness, because as we proclaim to you the great works of God with unyielding proclamation, He has strengthened us with His presence, He has formed these words in us as He speaks within us. And this is what the Lord promised them, saying: But when the Comforter comes, whom I will

send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of me, and you will bear witness (John 15), that is, He by inspiring you to speak, and you by providing outward testimony, will bear witness of me.

[Acts 5:34] -- Then stood up one in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, etc. Of this Gamaliel, we read in the book of Saint Clement, that he was secretly a disciple of the apostles, but by their counsel, he was commanded to remain among the Jews to mitigate their fury where necessity required; but this has been most certainly made known today as a true account through the revelation of the relics of the most blessed protomartyr Stephen, which was made widely known to the Church of Christ through the divine dispensation by the same man. For he appeared in a vision to the holy servant of God and priest Lucian, as the same priest Lucian later wrote to all the Churches; and he taught most sweetly where Saint Stephen was buried, along with Nicodemus, who buried the Lord with Joseph, as well as Gamaliel himself with his son Abibam.

[Acts 5:37] -- After this arose Judas the Galilean in the days of the registration. In Greek, it is written, In the days of ἀπογραφῆς, that is, in the days of the census registration, as we also have interpreted in ecclesiastical history in Latin. [Acts 5:38] -- And now therefore I say to you: Depart from these men, and leave them alone. In the Greek, it is added: Not defiling your hands. [Acts 5:39] -- But if it is from God, you will not be able to destroy them. And in the Greek, more is added here: Neither you, nor your rulers. [Acts 5:39] -- Lest you be found to be fighting against God. For what we have as fighting against God, or, as some have interpreted, opposing God, in Greek one word is used, θεομάχοι. I thought this worth mentioning, so that when we find θεομάχος or θεομαχίαν in histories, we can more surely know the meaning of the term.

Chapter 6

[Acts 6:6] -- They set them before the sight of the apostles, and praying, they laid hands on them. Not those who set them, but the apostles, laid hands on them. For indeed the common dispensation demanded that men be chosen as ministers for widows; but when those were found who seemed worthy for this ministry, gradually, as often happens, the providence of the saving counsel pleased that they themselves should be ordained as ministers of the altar of the sacred and dominical blood, as well as the refection and common table of the multitude of believers: which is proved by the word which said: And praying, they laid hands on them. For this is indeed for those who are promoted from the common number of the faithful to the office of the most holy altar.

[Acts 6:8] -- Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. In Greek it is added: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I wrote in the previous book that Stephen is interpreted as ”crowned,” and it is not far from the truth what I wrote. But learning more diligently, I found that Stephen in Greek signifies not ”crowned,” but ”crown.” For this name is of the masculine gender among them, and thus appropriate for a man; however, the term for ”crowned” is στεφανηφόρον, as if, ”bearing a crown.” Indeed, in the psalm where we sing: You will bless the crown of the year with your goodness (Psalm 64), that verse begins among the Greeks as εὐλογήσεις τὸν στέφανον. Expounding beautifully on the mystery of this name, Eusebius says: ”Immediately, after his ordination, he was stoned by those who also killed the Lord, whereby a crown is given to Stephen by Christ in accordance with his name.” The term for ”crown” in Greek is also in the neuter gender στέμμα. I thought this worth noting, because we often find this name included even in Latin books.

[Acts 6:9] -- However, there arose some from the synagogue called the Libertines and Cyrenians, etc. And in the Greek text, the name Libertines is written. Now, libertini are called the sons of freedmen, that is, those who, after servitude, were freed and granted liberty. It is therefore evident that those who first rebelled against the faith of Christ were born of a servile stock; who, although they were emancipated from human masters, nonetheless did not cease to be slaves of sin. In

their person, the most wicked persecutors of faith and all holiness, namely heretics, are fittingly portrayed, about whom Peter says: ”For speaking proud words of vanity, they lure in the lusts of the flesh those who have barely escaped, those who walk in error, promising them liberty, while they themselves are slaves of corruption” (2 Peter 2). This servitude is, of course, opposed to the liberty of the Spirit, which the Bereans had, about whom it is said in praise while Paul and Silas preached: ”These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, daily examining the Scriptures.”

[Acts 6:10] -- And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Holy Spirit who spoke. In the Greek text, there is more: ”And they were not able to resist the wisdom that was in him, and the Holy Spirit who spoke: for which reason they were reproved by him with all confidence.” Therefore, when they could not contradict the truth, then they suborned men who said, etc.

Chapter 7

[Acts 7:1] -- Then the high priest said. In the Greek text, it is added to Stephen; and then it is appended: ”Are these things so?” [Acts 7:2] -- Brothers and fathers, hear: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham. Because the blessed Stephen was accused of speaking blasphemy against Moses and God, at the very beginning of his speech he very vigilantly addressed their slander by saying that the same God who spoke to the fathers and prophets was the God of majesty and glory. Even when he reached the times of Moses in his speech, he praised him with fitting words, but proved that those people had always been rebellious and disobedient to his words. It is also noteworthy how skillfully he spoke; thus, he began to speak to his persecutors as if he were afraid of them: Brothers and fathers, hear. What could be gentler, what could be more gracious in winning over his audience, than to commend the Savior? He began gently so that he would be listened to for a long time. And since he had been accused here of speaking against God and the law, just as he showed that he was preaching the true God at the beginning of his speech, he also explained their law to them in such a way that he was seen as a proclaimer of that law of which he was accused of being a destroyer. Indeed, as his speech progressed, when he refuted both their new and old errors, he clearly showed how great was the authority of his spirit, and how free his soul was from the fear of the enemy.

[Acts 7:16] -- And they were placed in the sepulcher that Abraham had purchased for a sum of silver. In the Greek it is written: Our father Abraham, which the blessed Stephen added while speaking gently to his listeners so he would be heard longer and more willingly. [Acts 7:17] -- But when the time of the promise which God had confessed to Abraham approached, it is better written in Greek: Which God had promised to Abraham. [Acts 7:31-32] -- And as he came near to observe, the voice of the Lord came: I am the God of your fathers. In the Greek it is written thus: A voice came from heaven saying to him: I am the God of your brothers, remove the sandals from your feet. For the place where you stand is holy ground. This place, according to moral sense, admonishes us that while standing in the Church, which is rightly called holy ground, we should renounce dead works.

[Acts 7:42] -- And he handed them over to serve the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets. He says this in the singular because among the Hebrews there is one book of the twelve prophets, and not twelve books, according to the number of those same prophets. The host of heaven, however, is sometimes referred to as the army of angels: but in this place, it seems more consistent that he called the host of heaven the stars, since he immediately adds the testimony of the prophet, in which the star of their god is taken in place of God; they are convicted of having accepted the tabernacle of Moloch instead of the tabernacle of the true God. [Acts 7:51] -- Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. He shows them that the circumcision of the foreskin, in which they gloried against the grace of the Gospel, is of no avail for salvation, who were proven to have unclean thoughts and hearing. And at the same time, by speaking these things as if interpreting, he explains to them what the Angel signified when he appeared to Moses in the flame of fire from the bush, so that the bush burned but was not consumed. For the fire indeed signifies the Holy Spirit; the bush, which is a kind of thorn, figuratively denounced the sins of that people. Therefore, the Lord appeared to Moses in the bush having fire, but not consumed, to indicate that He Himself indeed came with the enlightenment and fervor of the Holy Spirit to instruct the people, but He would not consume the sins of that same people, although He would always oppose them with His pious benefits amidst the thickest thorns of their wickedness.

[Acts 7:56] -- Behold, I see the heavens opened. What we say in Latin as ”I see,” in Greek is called θεωρῶ, from which is derived the name of the theoretical, that is, contemplative life. Through this, some of the elect, still retained in this life, with the eye of the heart more diligently cleansed, have deserved to behold divinely elevated the joys of the future life, as at present saint Stephen, as Paul, when he was caught up to the third heaven, and many others at other times. Hence also God is called Θεὸς in Greek, because He sees all things, and all things are naked and open to His eyes. [Acts 7:60] -- Lord, do not hold this sin against them. And having said this, he fell asleep. Beautifully he says ”fell asleep,” and did not say ”died.” For he offered the sacrifice of love and fell asleep in the hope of resurrection.

Chapter 8

[Acts 8:1] -- Now on that day, a great persecution arose in the Church that was in Jerusalem, and all were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. If the Church was scattered, the apostles remained in Jerusalem, as Luke tells us, it is evident that he lied who, writing under the name of Melito, bishop of Asia, explains that in the second year after the Lord's ascension, all the apostles were divided to preach in their respective provinces: who all, as the death of the blessed Mother of God approached, were lifted in the clouds and snatched to Jerusalem from the places where they were preaching the word of God, and placed before the door of her house, among whom was also Paul, who, having recently converted from being a persecutor to the faith of Christ, was taken up with Barnabas into the ministry of the Gentiles. This scripture also specifically refers to the Apostle John, that at that time he preached in Ephesus: all of which openly contradicts the words of blessed Luke, who narrates that the apostles, with the other faithful driven out from Jerusalem, remained there and preached everywhere until the Church had peace through all Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. That this could not be accomplished in one year is evident to all. He also clearly indicates that Paul was not ordained with Barnabas into the ministry of the Gentiles in the second year after the Lord's ascension, but a long time later.

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

[Acts 8:2] -- Godly men cared for Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. This lamentation and the martyrdom of blessed Stephen is well remembered in the book of the revelation of his relics, which we have made mention of before, in which it is recounted that Gamaliel said among other things, in a vision to the presbyter Lucian: ”I am Gamaliel, who raised Paul, the apostle of Christ, and taught the law in Jerusalem. Here with me in the eastern part of the tomb lies my lord Stephen, who was stoned by the Jews and the chief priests in Jerusalem for the faith of Christ outside the gate which is to the north, which leads to Cedar; where he lay cast out day and night, so that burial would not be given to him, according to the command of the impious chiefs, that his body should be consumed by wild beasts. But by God’s will, not one of them touched him, neither a beast, nor a bird, nor a dog. I, Gamaliel, sympathizing with the ministry of Christ, and hastening to have a reward and part with the holy man of faith, sent by night as many as I knew who were religious and believed in Christ Jesus, living in Jerusalem among the Jews: and I encouraged them, and provided necessary supplies, and persuaded them to secretly go and carry his body with my conveyance to my village, that is, to Caphar Gamala (which means, the village of Gamaliel), twenty miles from the city; and there I made lamentation for him for forty-five days, and placed him in my new tomb in the eastern chamber, and I commanded them to give whatever was necessary for his lamentation from my resources.”

[Acts 8:4] -- Therefore, those who were scattered went about evangelizing the word of God. For scattered, in Greek it is written as disseminated, that is, dispersed. For they were those of whom Isaiah spoke: All who see them will recognize them because they are the seed which the Lord has blessed, and about whom the Lord said in the parable of the Gospel: The good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom (Matthew XIII). This seed was disseminated through regions so that the harvest of faith, which began in Jerusalem, first filled Judea and Samaria, then the whole world. Finally, we read about these same scattered ones, or rather disseminated ones, in the following: that they spoke the word not only to Jews but also to Greeks, and the foundations of the nascent church in Antioch were laid nobly through them. [Acts 8:5] -- But Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And he was from among the disseminated ones, who first preached Christ in Samaria, and he began through the deacon, as Christ said to the apostles: And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria (Acts I).

[Acts 8:9] -- A certain man who had previously been in the city, a magician seducing the people of Samaria. For seducing, in Greek it is written ἐξιστῶν, which signifies putting into ecstasy or mental displacement, that is, amazement and awe, through the displays of his tricks. [Acts 8:10] -- All listened to him from the least to the greatest, saying: This man is the power of God. This, not as an adverb of place, but as a pronoun. As if to say: This one is the power of God. [Acts 8:20] -- May your money perish with you. More accurately, it is written into perdition, according

to the Greek authority, rather than in perdition. For in that perdition, in which a wicked man was condemned, his money was not to be with him, but he was commanded to retain the money he offered to the apostles for the sacrilegious bargain since they did not want to accept it, and this into his own perdition, so that, undoubtedly, due to this money which he had amassed for an unjust purchase, he would suffer eternal punishment.

Chapter 9

[Acts 9:11-12] -- Behold, he prays and sees a man named Ananias entering and laying hands on him. In Greek, it is held thus: And he saw in a vision a man, that is, ἐν ὁράματι, which name Juvencus the priest also used in the evangelical poem, saying: Make all ignorant of this vision. Therefore, it appears that during those three days, in which he, being blinded, awaited the grace of future light, he was by no means idle or torpid, but rather elevated by divine illumination, he explored heavenly secrets; and, unless I am mistaken, it is credible that at that time he was taught the mystery of the evangelical dispensation, of which he himself boasts to the Galatians, saying: For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. I). And shortly afterwards: But when it pleased Him who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem, etc. (Ibid.). Also, the text of this little book, which is appended: He was with the disciples who were at Damascus for some days, and immediately in the synagogues he preached Jesus, that He is the Son of God (Acts IX), in no way asserts that he learned anything from men, but rather confirms that he immediately took up the ministry of an eminent teacher after baptism. Certainly, he is to be compared to him of whom it is written: Because the word of the Lord set him on fire (Psalm CIV).

[Acts 9:23-24] -- The Jews made a council to kill him. But the plot against Paul was known to him; and they watched the gates of the city day and night to kill him. It was not the Jews who kept watch, but the citizens themselves with their king Aretas, as the Apostle himself, who was besieged and escaped, writes to the Galatians. For both Gentiles and Jews, although they disagree among themselves, always agree in the persecution of Christians. [Acts 9:26] -- When he had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples. In this verse, in Greek, the name Paul is applied: "When Paul had come to Jerusalem," not because at that time he was yet called so, before he converted Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Cyprus, to the faith of Christ, but he is now called by anticipation in this way, the blessed Luke speaking opportunely: to indicate beforehand that he was to be called Paul, when

he first came to Jerusalem after his conversion, and was said to be joined to the apostles, so that where a little earlier he had exited as a proud persecutor of the Church, he now entered as a humble protector of the Church. For since in Latin ”paulum” means ”little,” rightly did he prefer to be called Paul, who did not cease to remain humble amid the greatest works of virtue. Nor is it to be thought that Paul or Peter are Hebrew words, but rather Latin or Greek words, since it is certain Hebrews do not have the letter p in any way.

[Acts 9:27] -- But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles, and narrated to them how he had seen the Lord on the way, etc. When these things were done, and to which apostles Barnabas brought Paul, Paul himself shows, writing to the Galatians: But when it pleased Him who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, and so forth, until he says: Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord’s brother (Galatians 1). Therefore what Luke subsequently says: And he was with them entering and departing out of Jerusalem, it is credible that this was acted during the fifteen days which he asserts himself to have stayed with Peter and James. And as for what follows, he himself in the Epistle says: Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia (Galatians 1), and how this happened Luke thus subsequently insinuates saying:

[Acts 9:29-30] -- And he spoke and disputed against the Greeks, but they sought to kill him. When the brethren knew of it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. For Tarsus is a city of Cilicia, and Caesarea Philippi is also a city of Syria. And when he adds: But he was unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ; they had only heard, that he who once persecuted us now preaches the faith which once he ravaged (Galatians 1). This is what Luke had previously stated, that he attempted to join the disciples, and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple, until they learned from Barnabas narrating it. Therefore, since it is established that Paul came to Jerusalem after three years of his conversion, and was associated with the number of the apostles, still being, as he himself writes, unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ, they are greatly mistaken who following apocryphal books think that in the second year after the Lord’s passion, he was already ordained as an apostle to the Gentiles with Barnabas.

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

that the Holy Spirit is called the Paraclete because, enlightening the hearts of the faithful, He multiplies the Church throughout the whole world and fills it with His grace.

Chapter 10

[Acts 10:5-6] -- And summon Simon, who is called Peter; he lodges with a certain Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. All things in the Holy Scriptures are filled with spiritual figures, even the names and the location of places. Peter lodges in the house of Simon, that is, the obedient one; and he himself is a tanner, because he is a teacher of the Church; there he has a pleasing dwelling and beloved lodging, where he finds obedient listeners, where those who chastise their body and bring it into subjection (I Cor. IX); who, strengthened by God, stand on the height of virtues, so that having crossed all the waves of the fleeting world, they despise them with the tranquil liberty of mind. For this is to have Simon the tanner's house, in which Peter is received in a part of the city which is by the sea, that is, to have perfect listeners of the word in the holy Church, who with unfaltering constancy of true faith, either despise the fleeting glory of the world or the temporary and changing terrors of it.

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

[Acts 10:15] -- What God has cleansed, do not call common. The meaning of this divine voice is indeed clear, that the Gentiles, whom Peter still considered unclean, the internal providence of their Creator already counted among the clean. But note the custom of Holy Scripture, which usually calls unclean things common, because whoever wants to serve various allurements cannot be clean, as Scripture says: No one can serve two masters (Matt. VI). And again: You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve (Luke IV). Therefore, whoever desires to be clean should not divide his mind with diverse and multifarious thoughts, but should constrain himself to follow solely the will of his Creator. [Acts 10:30] -- And Cornelius said: Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour. In Greek, it is written more fully and clearly: Four days ago to this hour, I was fasting and praying from the sixth hour until the ninth. Where it is clearly shown that four days before he spoke with Peter, he remained fasting until the ninth hour; and to make the fast acceptable to God, he prayed devoutly from the sixth hour until the ninth; hence he deserved to obtain what he sought with great persistence in fasting and prayer.

[Acts 10:32] -- He is staying in the house of Simon the tanner by the sea. Immediately therefore I sent to you, and you have done well by coming. It follows in Greek: When he arrives, he will speak to you. [Acts 10:33] -- Now therefore we are all present before you to hear all that has been commanded to you by the Lord. In Greek it is: We are present before God. Which was rightly said by him who had a mind ready to obey the divine will as soon as he learned it, and he believed that its majesty was present everywhere.

[Acts 10:41] -- For us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. In Greek, it is added, ”For forty days,” and Saint Augustine declared that it is so in his Codex, and in explaining it, he added: ”Not that they ate and drank with him every day for forty days. For it would be contrary to John, who interposed those eight days during which he was not seen by them, to manifest himself for the third time at the Sea of Tiberias. Explaining the sacrament of his eating and his fasting for as many days elsewhere, he says: ”He fasted when he was tempted before his death, still needing food; but he ate and drank when he was glorified, no longer needing food. For there he showed our labor in himself, but here he showed his comfort in us, defining both by forty days. For he fasted for forty days when he was tempted in the desert, as it is written in the Gospel, before the death of his flesh; and again, he was with the disciples for forty days coming and going, eating and drinking after the resurrection of his flesh. By this number forty, the duration of this world seems signified, in those who are called by grace to him, who did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it.

For there are ten commandments of the law already spread through the world by Christ’s grace, and the world is divided into four parts, and ten multiplied by four

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

[Acts 10:45] -- And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues, etc. This is similar to that statement by the same apostle Peter, when he was giving an account to the Jews why he had committed the sacraments of baptism to the circumcised. So then, he said, if God gave them the same gift as He gave to us, etc. There are many other testimonies of the Scriptures that consistently attest that the Holy Spirit is the gift of God, insofar as it is given to those who love God through Him. Therefore, it is the gift of God insofar as it is given to those to whom it is given; but it is God Himself, even if it is given to no one, because God was coeternal with the Father and the Son before it was given to anyone; nor because they give, is it given, hence it is not lesser than them. For thus it is given, as a gift of God, so that He gives Himself as God. For the Spirit blows where He wills (John III).

Chapter 11

[Acts 11:29-30] -- Now the disciples, each according to what they had, decided to send aid to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Paul. Here the disciples seem, to those who understand poorly, not to have kept the command of the Lord, where He says: Do not be anxious about tomorrow (Matthew VI), or what Paul often testifies about himself, that he worked with his own hands, so as not to burden anyone, does not seem to have followed the Lord's command to imitate the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. But from these and similar passages of Scripture, it is clear enough that our Lord does not disapprove of someone providing for these things in a human manner; but if someone serves God for the sake of these things, so that in their works they seek not the kingdom of God but the acquisition of these things. Therefore, this entire precept is reduced to this rule: that even in the provision of these things we should think of the kingdom of God, but in the service of the kingdom of God, we should not think of these things.

Chapter 12

[Acts 12:8] -- Gird yourself, and put on your boots. Instead of boots or sandals, as some manuscripts have, in Greek it says sandals. We read in the Gospel that a type of footwear was permitted to the apostles, not without a symbolic mystical sense. For the apostles' feet were covered neither entirely nor bare to the ground, so they would be reminded that the Gospel is neither to be concealed nor devoted to earthly comforts, so it may be as it is written: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news! [Acts 12:21] -- And he sat on the tribunal and preached to them. On the tribunal, he says in the tribunal. It is a custom of the Latin language to use 'pro' to mean 'in' with this word.

Chapter 13

[Acts 13:2] -- The Holy Spirit said: Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them. This seems to have happened after the death of Herod, who died in the third year of the reign of Claudius, which, according to the chronicles, is the thirteenth year after the passion of the Lord. Since it is clear that Paul, along with Barnabas, was set apart for the apostleship after so much time had passed since the Lord's passion, it becomes evident that those who wrote or accepted the book we mentioned above about the death of Saint Mary are greatly mistaken. For it is written in that same fabrication, as we have often said, that in the second year after the Lord's ascension, when that most blessed Mother of God was about to die, the apostles, who had already been dispersed throughout the world to preach, suddenly came together in a cloud to visit her; among them was Paul, recently converted to the faith, and immediately made an apostle to the Gentiles with Barnabas. But it happened very differently: that is, he was not ordained an apostle in the second year after the Lord's passion, but in the thirteenth. Anyone who believes blessed Luke understands this; and thus the aforementioned book about the death of blessed Mary, being obviously mistaken in its timing, also proves to be of dubious faith in other respects.

[Acts 13:6] -- They found a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet, whose name was Barjesus. In Greek it adds more: Which is interpreted as Elimas. [Acts 13:8] -- However, Elymas the magician (for so his name is interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith. And this too is more in the Greek: Because he was gladly listening to them. [Acts 13:9] -- But Saul, who is also Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, and so on. Just as Barnabas' name was changed immediately after his renunciation, so that instead of Joseph he was called Barnabas, which is, instead of "increased," "son of consolation." For after he was increased and added to the number of the elect, he immediately deserved to be both called and to be "son of παράκλησις," that is, "of consolation" through the received grace of the Spirit; so Saul, after receiving the rank of apostleship, was named Paul. Because he had become humble from being proud, he was rightly called Paul instead of Saul: for Saul was named after the impious and persecutor king Saul, but Paul is named from humble and small spirit. For Paul means "small." Hence, interpreting

his own name in a certain way, he himself would say: For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God (I Cor. XV).

[Acts 13:11] -- And immediately a mist and darkness fell upon him. The name of darkness in Greek is placed in the singular number σκότος, which the Latin interpreter did not follow, because this name does not have a singular number in Latin as we have similarly taught above. [Acts 13:19-20] -- And destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, He allotted their land to them by lot, as after four hundred and fifty years, and after this He gave them judges. How this number can be understood, we said in the preceding book of our exposition. But it should be known that in the Greek it is written differently: And destroying the nations in the land of Canaan, seven, He allotted their land to them by lot. And after this, about four hundred and fifty years, He gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. How this agrees with the statement which is contained in the book of Kings, that from the exodus of Israel from Egypt until the building of the temple, there were four hundred and ninety years, is not within our capacity to explain, unless perhaps he followed the popular saying in speaking, which is proven that blessed Stephen did in the discourse held with the Jews about the burial of the twelve patriarchs.

[Acts 13:21] -- And God gave them Saul, the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And in this place concerning the kingdom of Saul, the apostle seems to have followed popular opinion, as we have already said in the previous book; but what I said there, because Eusebius, following Josephus, assigned forty years to the rule of Samuel and Saul, divided equally between them, subsequently, upon more diligent inspection of the histories of Josephus, I saw that he did not write those forty years of that age but assigned twelve only to Samuel and twenty years to Saul. But also, having more carefully reread the books of Chronicles, I noticed why Eusebius did not want to follow the authority of Josephus in this place, just as he did not in the years of Joshua, to whom Josephus attributes twenty-six years, while he thought it better to annotate twenty-seven. This, therefore, was the reason: because if he followed him, he could by no means have the prescribed number of four hundred and eighty years from the exodus of Israel from Egypt until the temple began to be built, but would find in his codices ten years less of the same age. This he endured because, following the Septuagint interpreters, he neglected to place Ahialon the judge, who ruled the people for ten years after Abessa, in his Chronicles.

But realizing that ten years of the prescribed calculation were missing in the sacred history according to the Edition he followed, he took care to add these from his own where it seemed convenient and less contrary to the sacred history. Thus, he adds one year to the times of Joshua, eight to the times of Samuel and Saul, and to complete the tenth number, he includes the fourth year of Solomon’s reign,

in which the temple began to be built: which whoever follows the Hebrew truth finds should not be done. And what I wrote in the preceding book, that the judges ruled the people from Moses to Samuel for three hundred and ninety-six years, I followed the authority of the Chronicles, not yet noticing that it does not agree with the Hebrew truth.

[Acts 13:25] -- He said: ”Whom you think me to be, I am not.” In Greek it is more fully said: ”I am not the Christ.” [Acts 13:26] -- ”Men, brothers, sons of the lineage of Abraham, and those among you who fear God.” In Greek it adds: ”Listen.” [Acts 13:32-33] -- ”And we declare to you the promise made to our fathers, that God has fulfilled this to our children.” In Greek it reads more consistently: ”That God has fulfilled this to their children.” It follows:

[Acts 13:33] -- ”Raising up Jesus, as it is also written in the second psalm.” The holy Father Hilary thus remembers this place: ”But what is now in the psalm: ’You are my Son; today I have begotten you’ (Psalm II), does not pertain to the birth from the Virgin, nor to the regeneration of the bath, but to the Firstborn from the dead, according to apostolic authority. For in the book of the Acts of the Apostles it is said thus: ’We announce to you the good news of the promise made to our fathers; God has fulfilled this to our children, raising our Lord Jesus Christ, as it is written in the psalm: You are my Son; today I have begotten you, when he raised him from the dead, no longer to return to decay’ (Acts XII). Therefore, this voice of God the Father according to the Apostle is heard on the day of resurrection.” And shortly after, recalling the opinion of the Apostle, where he says about him: ”Who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Philippians II), and so on: ”And in the glory of God the Father, today he is born begotten, that is, in the enduring form of God previously, the assumption of the form of a servant is honored by the reward of death, and a new but not unusual nativity happens under time, since to resume the glory of God the Father, who was found in the form of a servant from the form of God, the firstborn from the dead was born.”

[Acts 13:41] -- ”Look, despisers, and be amazed, and perish.” In Greek it is written thus: ”Listen, despisers, and be amazed; look, and perish.” [Acts 13:43-44] -- They were speaking, urging them to remain in the grace of God. Hence in the Greek follows a verse, which our Codices do not have: But the word was spread throughout the whole city, and then what we have is added: On the next Sabbath, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of God.

Chapter 14

[Acts 14:13] -- The priest of Jupiter, who was in front of the city, bringing bulls and garlands before the gates, etc. It was the custom of the gentiles, according to Pliny, that when sacrificing to the honor of their gods, they would place garlands on both the victims and themselves. [Acts 14:19] -- But some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium. In Greek, the narrative begins thus: While they were staying and teaching, some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium.

Chapter 15

[Acts 15:10] -- Now, therefore, why do you test God by placing a yoke on the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear. It is clear that it should be understood in many ways what is said: You shall not test the Lord your God (Matt. IV). Therefore, he tests God who attempts to serve and please him in a way other than he has commanded, who confides that he can keep his commandments without the help of his grace. But the blessed Peter wishes to remove the heavy yoke of law observance from the necks of the disciples, so that he may place upon them the light yoke of evangelical freedom. Of which Paul also says to the companions of the same grace: For you did not receive a spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, Abba, Father (Rom. VIII).

[Acts 15:20] -- To abstain from the pollutions of idols, and fornication, and that which is strangled, and blood. He speaks of that which is strangled as carrion, about which Ezekiel writes: ”The priests shall not eat anything that is dead of itself or torn by beasts, whether it be from birds or from cattle” (Ezek. XLIV). Jerome explains this: ”And according to the literal sense, says he, this pertains to the whole chosen royal and priestly race, which properly refers to Christians, who are anointed with spiritual oil, about which it is written: ’God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.’ These precepts apply, that they do not eat dead flesh, whether from birds or from cattle, whose blood has by no means been shed, which in the Acts of the Apostles is called strangled; and the epistle of the Apostles from Jerusalem warns that these things should necessarily be observed; and what is taken by a beast, because this too is similarly strangled; and it condemns priests who, with gluttonous greed, keep these things from thrushes, fig-peckers, dormice, and the like.”

[Acts 15:24] -- They have troubled you, subverting your souls, to whom we gave no commandment. In the Greek, more is added: Subverting your souls, saying, you must be circumcised, and keep the law, whom we gave no commandment. [Acts 15:26] -- Who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Greek is added: In every temptation. [Acts 15:28] -- For it seemed good to the

Holy Spirit, and to us. In the Greek it is written: For it has pleased the Holy Spirit, and us. [Acts 15:33] -- They were dismissed in peace by the brethren to those who had sent them. Where it is written To those who had sent them, in the Greek it is written To the Apostles.

Chapter 16

[Acts 16:3] -- And taking him, he circumcised him because of the Jews. It is rightly asked why the Apostle, who circumcised Timothy, refused to circumcise Titus, as he himself writes to the Galatians. But it must be understood that he circumcised Timothy to avoid scandal among the Jews, to show through him that he does not condemn the sacraments of the Mosaic law, but does not impose them on the Gentiles as necessary for salvation. But after he circumcised Timothy, certain Jews, who wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised because they said that without those sacraments they could not be saved, began to boast and say: ”Because Paul also holds this view, which we say, that without these sacraments there is no salvation. For if he does not believe this, why did he circumcise Timothy?” When Paul heard this, who did it out of freedom, not necessity, to avoid scandal among the Jews, not for Timothy’s salvation, he saw that they had taken the occasion to preach something else and to cause a bad suspicion towards Paul, and he did not want to circumcise Titus. It is therefore apparent why he wanted to circumcise one and not the other: he wanted to circumcise the first to avoid scandal among the Jews, and did not want to circumcise the latter because of the opportunity for misbelief.

[Acts 16:14] -- And a certain woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple, of the city of Thyatira, a worshipper of God, heard, etc. He says “a dealer in purple” meaning a seller of purple, as we also find in another translation, which in Greek is called πορφυρόπωλις. Properly, however, the woman who first believed with the Apostle preaching in Illyricum is said to be a dealer in purple. It signifies the Church, which is accustomed to sell, as it were, purple, because it does not hesitate to shed its blood for Christ, so that through this it can obtain eternal life. Indeed, purple rightly designates the shedding and color of blood, and by the property of its nature, which is made from the blood of shellfish. Lydia, however, forced the Apostle and his companions to enter her house and to stay there, because the Church received the preaching of the gospel with internal devotion of the heart, despite being rejected by the Jews.

[Acts 16:16] -- As we were going to prayer, a girl having a spirit of Python met us. He who mercifully gathered the believing purple seller to the members of

the holy Church, soon afterward strictly judged and removed the wicked art from the pythoness proclaiming the great deeds of God with an unclean mouth. For this is the power which the holy apostles received from the Lord, when He said: ”Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18). However, what I wrote in the previous book, that python could mean ”mouth of the abyss” in Hebrew, I wrote because I found it in the book of Hebrew names. But let the reader know that this name is Greek and forcibly interpreted according to the Hebrew language, which even the interpreter of Hebrew names, Jerome, did not remain silent about, as if it were said ”Fythona”: for the Hebrews do not have the letter p, but use f instead of it in foreign words. Indeed, it should be noted that in this reading, where it is written that the girl met us, for the Latin ”obviare” it is written in Greek ὑπαντῆσαι, which I thought should be mentioned, so that the reader may notice that the Lord’s feast, which is called the Presentation of the Lord, took its name from this in Greek, because, when the Lord was brought to the temple, Simeon, Anna, and the other faithful and chosen ones who were there came to meet Him with devout heart and homage.

[Acts 16:35] -- And when it was day, the magistrates sent officers. Officers were called those who were in charge of punishing the guilty. Hence in Greek they are called ῥαβδοῦχοι, from the rod, because the Greeks call a rod ῥάβδον, of which Hilary mentions in the exposition of the Apostle’s sentence, saying: ”What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in a spirit of gentleness?” (1 Corinthians 4)? Was Paul inquiring whether he had praetorian power to threaten with the rod, and to be present at the Church of Christ with the office of an officer?

Chapter 17

[Acts 17:6] -- And when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brothers to the rulers of the city. It is written in Greek: And some other brothers; whence it is understood that Jason was also a brother, that is, faithful to Christ. [Acts 17:12] -- Many indeed believed from among them and from the honorable Greek women, and not a few men. Some manuscripts have better and more consistently according to the Greek example: And not a few men. [Acts 17:18] -- And some were saying: What does this word-seedling want to say? Concerning this name, Saint Augustine said: ”We read,” he said, ”that the apostle Paul was called a seed-sower of words. It was indeed said by those mocking, but it should not be rejected by those who believe. For he was truly a seed-sower of words, but a reaper of conduct. And although we are so small, and by no means comparable to his excellence, in the field of God, which is your heart, we sow the word of God and expect an abundant harvest of your conduct.”

[Acts 17:26] -- And he made from one every kind of human being. What he says from one is clear, because he means from one human being. But it is fuller in Greek: He made from one blood, which no one doubts means the same. For by the name of blood, he indicates the propagation of the flesh; and by the flesh, according to the usual manner of Scripture, he wants a human being to be understood according to that of the Psalmist: All flesh will come to you (Psalm 64).

Chapter 18

[Acts 18:7] -- And departing from there, he entered the house of a certain man named Titus Justus. The name Justus is also written in Greek, because either this name was proper to the man, or he was surnamed this way by the Romans who knew him due to his merit of justice. However, it should not be thought that this is Titus, the disciple of the Apostle Paul, to whom he himself wrote an Epistle and appointed him bishop of the Cretans. For that Titus was with him much earlier, when he came from Antioch to Jerusalem concerning the question of circumcision, with Barnabas still accompanying him. For the same Paul says to the Galatians: Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me, and I communicated with them concerning the Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles. For he communicated with them about the Gospel he was preaching, diligently inquiring in the council of the apostles whether he was correct in preaching that the Gentiles could attain salvation through the baptism of faith without circumcision; not that he himself had any doubt about this matter, but that the minds of those who were doubting might be confirmed by the authority of the apostolic council.

[Acts 18:8] -- But Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house, etc. This Crispus is believed to be the one whom Paul mentions as baptized by him when writing to the Corinthians: I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius. [Acts 18:17] -- And all of them seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the tribunal. In Greek it is better written: And all the Greeks seized Sosthenes. For after the Jews were disgracefully expelled from the tribunal, the Gentiles also afflicted their leader with greater humiliation by beating him. [Acts 18:18] -- Bidding farewell to the brothers, he traveled to Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila, who had his head shaved in Cenchrea, etc. It seems unclear whether Paul or Aquila had their head shaved in Cenchrea; but Jerome the presbyter clearly, as we explained more fully in the previous book, understands this as said of Paul. For after he gave this statement in his letter to Augustine, he immediately added and said: ”Even if there he was compelled to circumcise Timothy out of fear of the Jews, why did he grow his hair out as a vow, and later cut it in Cenchrea according to the law?” If we wish to

follow his meaning in this place, we never read anywhere that Aquila was shaved. If we say that Aquila was shaved in this place, there remains at the end of this booklet a place where we also read that Paul was shaved, or shaved off. However, those who say that Aquila and his wife Priscilla were shaved are mistaken due to a textual error. For in the Greek, it is clearly written κειράμενος, that is, shaved, in the singular number, and he had a vow, not they had, whether this is understood of Paul or Aquila.

[Acts 18:28] -- For he strongly refuted the Jews, publicly showing through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ. In Greek, it is written: Publicly and from house to house showing; which is of an excellent teacher, thus to teach many generally, so as not to cease to exhort individuals vigorously.

Chapter 19

[Acts 19:9-10] -- He separated the disciples, daily disputing in the school of a certain Tyrannus. This happened for three years, etc. At this time, while Paul was staying in Ephesus, it is said that he wrote the first letter to the Corinthians, in which he also mentions Priscilla and Aquila, saying: ”Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house” (1 Cor. XVI). By this word it is also shown that not only did they serve Christ faithfully, but also had a congregation of faithful in their house. Furthermore, the second epistle is said to have been written when he was in Troas: Moreover, the Epistle to the Romans was written later as the record shows. For he himself testifies that he wrote it on his journey to Jerusalem. [Acts 19:12] -- So that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried to the sick. Many of us do not know what aprons signify; however, Gregory, who is now the bishop of the Apostolic See, while he was still an archdeacon, answered a friend from Britain who inquired about this among other things, that it is a kind of handkerchief which the Hebrews use on their heads.

Chapter 20

[Acts 20:4] -- And with him was Sosipater, son of Pyrrhus, from Beroea. This one from Beroea, not that Beroean. Moreover, it is more in the Greek: And he went with him as far as Asia. [Acts 20:9] -- Awoken from sleep, he fell from the third loft. For the third loft, in Greek it is written ”τριστέγου,” which I wanted to mention so that the reader may know what is in Genesis, where Noah is ordered to build the ark: ”Make in it lower, second, and third decks” (Gen. VI); for in Greek, ”στέγη” means roof, and ”τρίστεγα” means threefold roofs. [Acts 20:14] -- With him we came to Mytilene. We have written in the first book, following Pliny the Younger, that Mytilene is an island off Asia; but Pliny elsewhere writes that Mytilene is a city on the island of Cyprus. Both are believed to be true; however, it is said that now Paul and his companions did not come to the city of Cyprus, but to the island near Asia. For after a long journey and traveling through many regions, Cyprus appeared, but it is said they did not enter it.

[Acts 20:16] -- For he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to observe the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. In Greek, it is written as the Day of Pentecost, that is, the fiftieth day. Therefore note that the time of Passover and Pentecost were also celebrated at the time of the apostles. But whether they were celebrated among the Jews who adhered to the law on the day the lamb was sacrificed in Egypt and the day the law was given on Mount Sinai, or on the day of the Lord’s resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit, let those who know say. Nonetheless, it is known that the apostle Peter celebrated Passover in Rome on the Lord’s Day of the resurrection of Christ; it is known that the evangelist Mark, sent by him, taught this in Egypt.

Chapter 21

[Acts 21:8] -- And entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him, etc. For the initial duty of preaching, he deserved to be called an evangelist, although all performed this task. This house and his daughters remained in the same city for a long time afterward. Indeed, Jerome also mentions him in the History of Saint Paula, when he described her coming to Caesarea: ”In which (he says) she saw the house of Cornelius as the church of Christ, and the small houses of Philip and the room of the four virgin prophetesses.”

[Acts 21:25] -- About those who believed from among the Gentiles, we wrote judging that they abstain from idols, sacrifices, etc. In Greek, it is more clearly stated: About those who believed among men, we wrote judging that they observe no such thing, except they keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, etc. Therefore, at that time, Jewish believers in Christ were not prohibited from entering according to the custom of the law, since the temple and their religion still stood, although they would find salvation in the sacraments of the New Testament alone; but those who believed from the Gentiles and were instructed in the sacraments of the Gospel were prohibited from turning to accept the sacraments of the law. However, they were urged to diligently observe those commandments of the law which pertain to the training of morals and the purification of the heart, such as: You shall not covet (Rom. VII). This fourth apostolic synod was held in Jerusalem. The first was concerning the election of the twelfth apostle in place of Judas, the second about the election of the seven deacons, the third about circumcision so that it would not be imposed on Gentile believers, and this fourth one concerning Jewish believers at that time so that they would not be prohibited, where necessity required, from being initiated into the legal ceremonies, to avoid the offense of those who thought they had condemned the decrees of Moses as idolatrous doctrines, which they had also been accustomed to do previously, as proven most notably by the circumcision of Timothy.

[Acts 21:34] -- He ordered him to be taken into the camp. And in this place, and in this whole narration, wherever the name of the camp is positioned, it must be taught that it is placed in the singular in Greek: for this reason the Latin interpreter

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

[Acts 21:39] -- I am indeed a man, a Jew from Tarsus of Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. For 'citizen' some Codices have 'municipate,' which is translated from one Greek word πολίτης, derived from the name of the city, which in Greek is called πόλις. Whence that which the Apostle says: But our conversation is in heaven (Philippians III), some have interpreted: But our citizenship is in heaven. And Jerome, writing to Heliodorus, put it thus: "For he wanted no other citizenship to be understood, than a civil conversation, which in Greek is called πολίτευμα."

Chapter 22

[Acts 22:3] -- Educated according to the truth, being a zealot of the paternal law. In Greek it is added more: Being a zealot of God, according to that in Romans: For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. [Acts 22:7] -- Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? In Greek, in this place as well it is added: It is hard for you to kick against the goads. [Acts 22:9] -- And those who were with me indeed saw the light. And in Greek it is added more: And they were afraid. [Acts 22:17-18] -- But it happened that when I was returning to Jerusalem and praying in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him. For the trance of the mind, some Codices have a mental ecstasy, others a fear, others an alienation. For what is called ecstasis in Greek is variously interpreted in Latin. This word was also used in the vision of Peter above, where he was being called forth to teach Cornelius. For an ecstasy fell upon him, and he saw the heavens opened. But the mind of the praying apostles was alienated, not from the lowly but to the heavenly, not to deviate, but to see.

[Acts 22:28] -- I acquired this city with a great sum of money. In Greek, for city it has πολιτείαν: which signifies rather civil society, that is, social interaction among citizens, or the administration of the republic, than city. For the tribune had not bought the Roman citizenship he possessed, but the partnership of the Roman commonwealth of which he was a participant. But Paul was even more a Roman citizen, because he had this not by purchase, but by birth. [Acts 22:29] -- The tribune also feared, after he discovered that he was a Roman citizen. For citizen, the same word in Greek is placed, which above was for inhabitant, that is, πολίτης.

Chapter 23

[Acts 23:12] -- And they vowed themselves saying they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Vowed signifies cursed. Indeed for this word in Greek it is written ἀνεθεμάτισαν: but in the following, where they said: We have vowed with a vow that we will taste nothing, in Greek it is written, ἀναθέματι ἀνεθεματίσαμεν. The severity of this word knows those who are anathematized by the priestly anathema from the society of Christ and the Church.

Chapter 24

[Acts 24:17] -- However, after many years, I came to my nation to give alms and make offerings and vows. Alms pertain to those things which he had brought for the use of the saints, of which he makes frequent mention in his Epistles; offerings and vows, however, to those things which, at the urging of James and the elders, he offered to God in the temple. Although in Greek, vows are not added. Even though Luke in the order of the history did not say that Paul came to Jerusalem from Greece with the alms for the poor of Christ, from the words, however, which he reports Paul said, he shows that he had done this.

Chapter 25

[Acts 25:4] -- But Festus replied that Paul was being kept in Caesarea, and that he himself was about to depart soon. ”Soon,” he says, naturally means ”quickly,” although sometimes it is said to be ”sooner” when something is done more slowly and with mature counsel. For in Greek it is written ἐν τάχει, that is, ”in haste.” [Acts 25:23] -- When Agrippa and Bernice had come with great pomp, etc. For ”pomp,” in Greek it is written φαντασία, by which term is designated a great display and royal pomp, with which he, being surrounded on all sides, was encircled.

Chapter 26

[Acts 26:5] -- For according to the most accurate sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee. For ”sect,” in Greek it has ”heresy.” Whence it is proved that at that time even a good sect was called by this term among the Greeks, which now among us is accustomed to have only a bad sense.

Chapter 27

[Acts 27:1] -- When it was decided that he should sail to Italy, Paul, along with the rest of the prisoners, was handed over to a centurion. More accurately read in Greek: ”When it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they handed over Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion.” [Acts 27:5] -- And sailing through the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Lystrus, which is of Lycia. For Lystrus, in Greek, it is written Smyrna, for which Jerome in the book of Hebrew names puts Myra: which I think is found thus in some Codices, because in Greek μύῤῥα is called Smyrna. Furthermore, in the psalm where we sing: Myrrh, and aloes, and cassia (Psalm XLIV), in Greek it is written thus: Smyrna, and stacte, and cassia. [Acts 27:8] -- We came to a certain place, which is called Fair Havens. THESE Fair Havens, not THIS Fair Havens.

[Acts 27:11] -- And he trusted the pilot more. The pilot in Greek is called the master of the ship. [Acts 27:12] -- If by any means they might reach Phoenix to spend the winter, a port of Crete looking toward the southwest and northwest. The southwest wind, which in Greek is called λίψ, blows between the south and west, inclining; Corus, however, toward the north and west, but more deflected toward the west. It is clear, therefore, that the region of Phoenix had Crete to the west, and so its port of Crete looked in some places to the southwest; and in some places to the northwest, for that reason, whether the southwest wind or the northwest wind blew, they could sail from Crete to Phoenix. But even if the south wind itself, that is, the meridian wind, blew, they could nonetheless navigate to Phoenix with a wavering direction of rudders and with the trimming of sails, if divine judgments did not hinder them. Wherefore it is subsequently added:

[Acts 27:13-16] -- And the south wind blowing softly, they thought they had obtained their purpose, etc., we could scarcely retain the boat. We wrote in the first book, following Isidore, that the boat was a light vessel, woven from wicker and covered with rawhide; but subsequently, upon perusing the writings of others, we found that boats are also called small vessels hollowed out of a single tree, which the Greeks call monoxylas.

Chapter 28

[Acts 28:2] -- For lighting a fire, they revived us all. In Greek it is written: They received us all. Which we also think was first so translated into Latin, but changed through the negligence of scribes. [Acts 28:8] -- It happened that the father of Publius, having been struck by fever and dysentery, was lying ill. Dysentery is an affliction of the intestines, caused with ulceration, because it expels bloody discharge, or bile, or some other alteration of humour; but it is considered harmful by the ancients if it produces black discharge from the beginning. For Hippocrates in his Aphorisms stated this: “Dysentery beginning from black bile is deadly.” Following this, patients experience continual distress in the lower abdomen, sometimes green, sometimes mucilaginous: they also emit scrapings with drops of blood, with a biting pain in the intestines and navel, they suffer from sleeplessness, nausea, frequently also slight fever, which is narrated that the father of Publius suffers here; sometimes even the exclusion of excrement occurs, especially in infants: it occasionally results from chilling or from the corruption of sharper humours. Gregory also recalls this disease in the fifth book of his Histories, saying thus: “In the times of Emperor Tiberius, the dysenteric disease nearly seized all of Gaul. For in those who were suffering, there was a severe fever with vomiting and excessive pain in the kidneys, heaviness of the head, or neck; moreover, what was expelled from the mouth was either saffron-colored or certainly green. However, many asserted that it was hidden poison; but herbs that cure poisons, taken as a drink, provided relief for many.”

[Acts 28:30-31] -- He remained in his lodging for a full two years and welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God. Jerome makes mention of this place in a letter to Lucinius: “Paul enters Rome in chains, to free those chained by errors of superstition; he remains in his rented lodging for two years, to render to us the eternal gift of both instruments.” By this exposition, he taught that all other things that are written in this volume, either about Paul the apostle himself or about others, do not only present the fruits of ecclesiastical doctrine on the surface of the letter: but truly also if anyone has perfectly understood, they possess the essence of spiritual sense, pregnant with virtue. THE END OF THE BOOK OF RETRACTIONS.

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.