

Commentary on the Catholic Epistles

JAMES, 1-2 PETER, 1-3 JOHN, AND JUDE

By Oecumenius (6th Century)

Translated by John Litteral

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INTRODUCTION

Oecumenius has been one of my favorite Bible commentators for decades. I remember twenty years ago when I first read the English translation of his commentary on the book of Revelation that I admired the way that he explained and interpreted the words of Scripture. After all of these years I was disappointed to learn that other commentaries by Oecumenius have never been translated into English nor published, with the exception of excerpts that can be found in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Sacred Scripture series. I plan to change that, starting with the commentaries that I have already translated by Oecumenius, that is, the Catholic Epistles (James, 1-2 Peter, 1-3 John, and Jude).

When it comes to the identity of Oecumenius, there are different conclusions that scholars have come to. Not only about who he was, but when he wrote his commentaries, and which ones are actually his, and which ones are not. There have been manuscript discoveries of his commentary on Revelation that have given evidence that the author of that commentary on Revelation wrote in the seventh century, perhaps very early 600's. Some think that Oecumenius lived in the sixth and seventh centuries. Not all scholars agree that the Oecumenius who wrote that commentary on Revelation is the same Oecumenius who wrote the other commentaries on the New Testament, but some do think it is the one and same Oecumenius.

It has been thought for a long time that Oecumenius was bishop of Tricca in ancient Thessaly. Others think he was a lay person from Isauria in Asia Minor. Herman Charles (H.C.) Hoskier, who published the first critical Greek text of the commentary on Revelation by Oecumenius had this to say...

It is, therefore, not inappropriate to bring to public attention the text and commentary of OECUMENIUS, who flourished in the sixth and seventh centuries, and whose commentary on the Apocalypse has been missing for a long period, although some of his commentaries on other New Testament books have come down to us. Attributed generally to the tenth century, the document which we now publish itself gives us the correct date (preceding Andreas 563–614 A.D. and Arethas 860-939 A.D.), and we can now place Oecumenius, Greek Bishop of Tricca, towards the beginning of the seventh century.¹

While H.C Hoskier and some others believed that the same Oecumenius who wrote the commentary on Revelation is the same one who wrote the other New Testament commentaries, others, such as William C. Weinrich does not think it is the same Oecumenius...

Questions concerning the identity, date and provenance and literary output of Oecumenius continue to elicit various conclusions. In 1532 Donatus Veronensis published under the name of Oecumenius commentaries on the book of Acts, the seven Catholic Epistles and the letters of Paul. Although some scholia from the commentary on the Pauline epistles may be authentic to Oecumenius, the remainder of these commentaries have been demonstrated to be falsely ascribed to him.²

In my opinion, it is probably the same Oecumenius who is responsible for the commentary on the book of Revelation and the commentaries on the everything in the New Testament, except for the four Gospels. His commentaries on the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's Epistles relied heavily upon the homilies by John Chrysostom and other writings from the Early Church Fathers that preceded Oecumenius, so much so that those commentaries, especially of Paul's Epistles, are in the manner of a catena rather than an ordinary Bible commentary. Greek

catenae were popular in the early Greek Church. The word “catena” means “chain”, which is a chain of quotes by different writers that create a running commentary on Scripture. A common Bible commentary is when a writer will comment on each passage of Scripture, while the catena is when a compiler will take, often, direct quotes from multiple writers and place them after each passage of Scripture to serve as commentary that explains the meaning and interpretation of each given passage. By the time of Oecumenius in the sixth century, those who wrote commentaries on the Bible were somewhat compliers themselves, because it was a sign of orthodoxy to draw from earlier Church Fathers when expounding Scripture. Even ordinary Bible commentaries by individual writers were in many ways catenae, because even though many of them may not have copied word for word from earlier Church Fathers, they would often depend on them and preserve what their predecessors wrote. Especially by the time of the ninth and tenth centuries, just after the time of what most consider to be the period of the Early Church Fathers, those writers who made commentaries on the Bible rarely ever wrote anything original in their commentaries but would write in the manner of a catena without necessarily appearing to be a catena outwardly; but with examination, it would be obvious that they drew heavily upon others, not entirely quoting word of word, but slightly rephrasing excerpts. In this day and time some would consider that flirting with plagiarism, while back in those days it was considered sound orthodox exposition on Scripture, and no one took offense to it. While the Greek Church produced commentaries in the form of catenae, the Latin Church evolved in a similar fashion by creating glossed Bibles such as the *Glossa Ordinaria*, which was the standard “Study Bible” for centuries during and after the twelfth century.

As for the commentaries by Oecumenius, it is outwardly obvious that he took the role as a compiler of quotes for his commentaries on Paul's Epistles, while his commentaries on the Catholic Epistles, even though he did draw upon earlier Church Fathers, those commentaries are in the manner of an ordinary commentary. Here is an excerpt from the introduction to the commentaries by Oecumenius from the *Patrologia Graeca* (Greek Church Fathers collection) concerning the topic...

Moreover, it is clear who the author of the commentaries is; it is evident that he is not the primary author of all the material, since in the Acts of the Apostles and in the letters of Paul, many things are summarized here, which Chrysostom had treated more extensively. Furthermore, the opinions of many others are referenced, sometimes with only the names placed in the text, and sometimes with additional notes in the margin: which we have entirely left as they were found in the example. However, regarding the Apocalypse, a certain author is clearly indicated, with the names of those from whom he had extracted some things added at the beginning. Moreover, in all these commentaries, the opinions of various authors are frequently presented, with their names suppressed, I do not know whether due to the negligence of the copyists. Nevertheless, it is evident from this that you often find something contrary to what had preceded. And let us bring forth an example for the sake of a word: when he previously said in the Apocalypse that Babylon is Constantinople, not the world nor any other city, afterwards he states and proves in many places that it is the world, and no particular city. Moreover, although in the earlier books no one has prefixed his name, as is the custom among the Greeks, never publishing under his own name what he has not elaborated by his own effort, but rather collecting certain patches from various sources: yet from evident conjectures we gather that Oecumenius is partly the author of these, partly the collector who,

however, sometimes, when he presents his opinion after others, has also added his own name, lest anyone attribute it to others, which he himself did not consider worthy to be compared with their opinions. However, he has extracted many things from Chrysostom, whose name he only took care to add when he was reciting his words, but not when he was referring to his opinion in more concise terms. As for Oecumenius, who has transmitted all these things to us, except for the Apocalypse, as they are now published, we gather this from the following arguments. First, in the last words of the commentaries on the Epistle to the Colossians, with his own name prefixed in the margin, he writes in this manner: "Since I have not found the scholia of the blessed John on the Epistle to the Colossians in an unbroken form, I have written them as I could. Therefore, if anything light or worthy of reproach has been found in them, let him who reads know that such a lapse is mine." Again, in the fourth chapter to the Ephesians, he has these words, added in the margin under the name of Oecumenius, "Notice what I also thought: for it was not given to consider what belongs to the saint himself." Understanding Chrysostom, for which reason the name of John was added in the margin. Therefore, Oecumenius sufficiently shows that he is a collector of commentaries on all the Epistles, yet he has made no mention of himself elsewhere, because he had obtained an entire copy of Chrysostom. Again, the explanation of this is placed more frequently after the explanations of others, sometimes providing a reason for those things that were previously mentioned, often adding, "It seems to me that this can also be said." What if it is said in this way, according to the understanding that Saint John also holds: or even citing the names of Cyril or Basil or others. Furthermore, this can be seen in many places, some of which we will enumerate here. To the Romans, in the fifth chapter at those words, "Sin is not imputed where there is no law"; in the ninth chapter at those words,

"Unless the Lord of Hosts had left us a seed"; in the first to the Corinthians 6, when it says, "He who engages in sexual immorality sins against his own body"; in chapter 7, "I have no command of the Lord concerning virgins"; in chapter 15, "When he delivers the kingdom to God the Father." And likewise, "As if God were all in all"; to the Ephesians 2, "According to the prince of the power of the air"; in chapter 4, "From whom the whole body is fitted and joined together." In chapter 4, "Let not the sun go down on your anger," where he says: "I have heard some interpret it this way." To the second Thessalonians 3, "Furthermore, may the Lord direct your hearts." To the Hebrews 10, "Having a shadow of the law of good things to come"; in chapter 12, "Who for the joy set before him"; and in many other places as well. Since it is therefore more clearly evident that the Oecumenius collected commentaries on the Epistles of Paul, we believe that he did the same in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Catholic Epistles, although he did not add his name there: since the phrasing is entirely his, except that he had fewer to copy there, the names of whom we scarcely ever find added in the Greek manuscript, neither in the text of the letter nor in the margin.³

As for the commentaries on the Catholic Epistles by Oecumenius, some commentators on the Bible after him from the Greek Church relied heavily upon him, most especially Theophylact (1055-1107 A.D.), who was a Byzantine Archbishop of Ohrid and Bulgaria. As a matter of fact, Theophylact's commentaries on the Catholic Epistles are somewhat slightly condensed versions of Oecumenius. Some sources say that their commentaries are "identical", but that is not entirely true. These commentaries by Oecumenius and Theophylact are not carbon copies of each others, but Theophylact was not shy about copying at length word for word from Oecumenius. Theophylact did slightly condense the content

by Oecumenius when he could, and he would rephrase some things. But by today's standards it would be considered blatant plagiarism. But like I said above, back then, this was considered to be a noble preservation of traditional orthodoxy. It is said that imitation is the best form of flattery.

The English translation of these commentaries by Oecumenius on the Catholic Epistles comes from the *Patrologia Graeca* (*Patrologiae Cursus Completus*. Greek Series) volume 118.

I want to give a special thank you to Darren Weeks, who has helped me with proofreading these commentaries and offering suggestions and encouragement.

1 The complete commentary of Oecumenius on the Apocalypse : now printed for the first time from manuscripts at Messina, Rome, Salonika, and Athos, Ann Arbor : University of Michigan, Hoskier, H. C. (Herman Charles), 1864-1938, editor. Page 4

2 William C. Weinrich, Greek Commentaries on Revelation, InterVarsity Press, 2011, Pages xix-xx

3 Patrologia Graeca (Patrologiae Cursus Completus. Series Graeca) 118. Oecumenius v.1: Commentary on Acts, Commentary on Paul's letters, Commentary on the Catholic letters. Pages 16-17

OECUMENIUS

on the Epistle of James

HYPOTHESIS OF THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JAMES

James writes to those who have been dispersed from the twelve tribes and have believed in our Lord Jesus Christ. He writes a letter suitable for teaching, addressing the variety of temptations, distinguishing which come from God and which arise from the human heart: that faith should be demonstrated not only in word but also in deed, and that it is not the hearers of the law who are justified, but the doers. He also instructs that the rich should not be given precedence over the poor in the assembly of the church, but rather be rebuked, as they are haughty and proud. Finally, he comforts those who are wronged, urging them to be patient until the coming of the Judge, where he also teaches about the benefit of patience, using Job as an example. He instructs that the elders should be called for the sick and that they should strive to convert those who have been led astray or who are in error: for he says there is a reward from the Lord for the remission of sins. And thus he concludes the Epistle.

Why the following Epistles are called Catholic.

These are called Catholic, that is, universal, or circular, because they are not specifically dedicated to one people or city (as the Apostle Paul does to the Romans or Corinthians) but rather to all the faithful universally, whether Jews who were dispersed, as also Peter does, or to all Christians living under the same faith.

SECTIONS OF THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES OF JAMES

1. On patience and faith, nothing is to be judged or discerned, and on the modesty of the mind towards the wealthy: in which he also discusses the desire that is within us and the affections that follow it, which is not a cause from God: for if there is anything good in us, he says it comes from Him.
2. Of humility and innocence and good action which leads to happiness, and of knowledge and moderation of speech.
3. From charity, let each one act without regard to person according to the law.
4. That man is justified not by faith alone, but also by works, and not by one separately, but together by both.
5. That which a hasty and disordered tongue destroys when it has been seized by it: which must be overcome for the praise and glory of God: in which it also deals with good conduct and without strife of one against another, out of the desire for glory, because of human wisdom: and about divine wisdom: and that quarrels, seditions, and enmity against God arise from negligence and the love of

pleasures, and about repentance for salvation, and about not judging one's neighbor.

6. That the steps of man are directed not by man, but by God: in which it is also discussed regarding the avarice of the rich, and their delights in this world, and about the just judgment of God.

7. On patience and tolerance of afflictions, and on truth; in which special exhortations are presented suitable for each according to faith: and that one must serve the salvation of one's neighbor.

CHAPTER 1

With humility and faith, without hesitation or judgment, from the modesty of the mind to the wealthy: in which he also discusses the desire that is within us and the affections that follow it, which is not caused by God: for if there is anything good in us, it is said to be from Him.

James 1:1 *James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion, greetings. Rejoice, my brothers, when you fall into various temptations,*

Indeed, the Son is of the Father, truly the Lord. Therefore, if the servant is equally of the Father and the Son, the Son is equal to the Father in honor, and in essence and in operation. But above all worldly dignity, the Lord's apostles, boasting that they are servants of Christ, want this to be a sign of themselves, both in speaking and writing and teaching.

Rejoice. James saw these godly sorrows and temptations as commendable and worthy of joy. For these are indeed a strong bond, and an increase of charity and remorse. Hence it is also

said: "Son, if you come to serve God, prepare your soul for temptation." (Sirach 2:1) And Christ said: "In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer." (Jn. 16:33) and: "Narrow and sorrowful is the path that leads to life." (Matt. 7:14) For neither without struggle and training can one obtain earthly or divine crowns. But, out of humility about himself, he calls them *brothers*, not sons. Moreover, for the virtuous and diligent, temptations or afflictions are a source of the highest joy, although their testing is evident through them. The trial, however, leads to perfect work. But someone will say: If temptations do this, how does Christ teach us to ask God in prayer not to be led into temptation? (Matt. 6:13) We therefore say that there are twofold temptations or afflictions. Some have their origin from ourselves; others, however, are brought to us by God for the sake of practice and the declaration of victory. There are two things that have their origin from us. Indeed, some, because of their unreasonable courage, which we call reckless boldness, are taught by the Lord to observe this: that the spirit is indeed ready: But that readiness is extinguished in the midst of struggles, nor does it yield to good in those who use it: but some are brought because of sin, as the destruction of the Sodomites. We should flee these temptations as much as we can, by living without sin. Moreover, those things that are from God, such as those that happened to Job or Abraham, should not be avoided, but rather, if it can be done in any way, they should be embraced through patience and thanksgiving. For God, who tempts, knows how to do this for the benefit and declaration of victory. James said that there are *various temptations*, because some come from God, as we have said, while others come from ourselves.

James 1:3-4 *Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience; but let patience have its perfect work,*

that your work may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Testing, James says, that which is searched, that which is received, that which is pure: as it is written: “tried in the fire, purified in the earth.” (Ps. 11:7) But how does *testing produce patience*? Because that faith is proven to be pure, which is perfected through patience and endurance of the conditions inflicted. For it is the work of a truly faithful person to receive such desires with patience and thanksgiving: just as Job behaved, who gave thanks in all things (Job 1:1).

"that your work may be perfect." James did not definitively say *patience*, that it has a perfect work, but imperatively, *let [patience] have*. For he does not preach that virtue which preceded it, but that which comes next, and he has determined how it should be done.

James 1:5-8 *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without blame, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting. For he who wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven by the winds and swept away by force. For let not that man think that he will receive anything from the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.*

James says wisdom is the cause of the perfect work. “*let him ask of God.*” Since he knows that the proof of *faith* and the endurance in afflictions is not the work of any men, but of those who are wise according to God, therefore he urges those who strive to achieve these things towards the pursuit of wisdom.

“*he who wavers.*” For if he trusts, let him ask; but if he wavers, let him not even ask, because he who does not trust that he will receive, will not obtain.

"like a wave of the sea." For he who wavers, doubtful about his requests, after having endured for a little while, immediately withdraws. But this happens to him from pride, that he quickly despairs because he does not follow through on what he asks for: since he thinks great things of himself and deserves to be rejected in the request he makes. Moreover, he behaves in the opposite way to one who is of modest mind.

"For let not man think that," namely, one who asks out of pride and carelessness. Remove from yourself the duplicity of mind, and never waver in your mind when you ask something from God, saying to yourself, "How can I ask and receive anything from the Lord, since I have sinned against Him so often?" Do not think of these things, but turn to the Lord with all your heart, and ask of Him without hesitation, and you will know the multitude of His mercy, which will never forsake you, but will fulfill the request of your soul. For God is not like men, who holds grudges against one another, but He forgets, and He has compassion on His creation.

"A man of double mind." James calls a man of double mind unstable and not firm, who is never firmly established for the future, nor securely for the present: but is led here and there and carried about: always moving to the future, but never enduring the present. But he also compared such a thing to a wave of the sea, which has neither firmness nor stability: and to a flower of grass, which likewise does not persist, but fades away at the same time as the sun rises. Consider, however, that he did not say that such a one is likened to a grass, but to a flower of grass, signifying by the flower a very short time. But since he knows that modesty of mind gives birth and is a nurturer of all things, and without this there is nothing excellent in upright and scholarly men, therefore he adds: *Let the brother who is humble glory*, etc. (James 1:9) But how and why was another called double-minded? That he is not established for the present life nor

for the future: for life is also called soul, when it is said: "all that a man has will he give as a ransom for his life." (Job 2:4)

"*In all his ways.*" James means the ways of the mind's emotions by which hope is raised, whether useful or useless, according to what David says: "And you have known all my ways." (Ps. 138:4)

James 1:9-11 *Let the brother who is humble glory, in his exaltation: But the rich, in that he is made humble: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withers the grass, and the flower thereof falls, and the beauty of its appearance perishes: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.*

Because James likens the wavering, to a wave driven by the wind, who, being inflated, is exalted together with the winds of the sea, but before he is raised, he prostrates himself and gives himself up: but this very thing happens to the wavering one, who, in spite of his pride, does not confirm his petitions in any of the things that are necessary;

therefore, James adds: "*Let the brother who is humble glory.*" As if he were saying: Whoever wishes to ask for something, let him first ask for what is right, and He will not refuse those who ask. For of these is the kingdom of God and righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) Then let him be tolerant in the petition of such, and let him not depart immediately when he has prayed a little, for that is arrogant; but let him wait until he receives, by enduring with humility.

"*Who is humble, in his exaltation.*" From humility according to God, all good is bestowed upon us. James calls the rich arrogant

and proud, whom he also calls humble, because by the very act of being elevated, he is brought low.

"But the rich, in that he is made humble." It would have been more fitting for James to say, "But let the rich man be ashamed in his humility," but avoiding saying it in an offensive manner, he added this instead: *"and the beauty of its appearance."* Appearance, that is, face or countenance, He spoke in a critical manner: for this is said of man alone and not of other animals; however, among the quadrupeds, the snout is not called a face, but on birds it is a beak.

"in his ways." James speaks of ways or paths of the rich, in prosperous success, or business, among which he unexpectedly receives a change to unhappiness and misfortune.

James 1:12-16 *Blessed is the man who endures temptation: for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love him. Let no one who is tempted say he is tempted by God: for God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempts no man. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own conscience. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin: but sin, when it is conceived, brings forth death. Be not deceived, my beloved brethren.*

It seems that this blessed one has made use of the discourse about temptations more securely, in which he says, "Rejoice, my brethren, when you fall into divers temptations." (James 1:2) Then, remembering the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:12), which commands what is best, namely that we pray that we may not fall into temptation, he repeats the discourse: according to what is proposed here, showing what temptation is sent by God, namely,

which is also a source for joy, and which is from our will. Yet it can rightly be said that the Lord and God Jesus Christ, looking to the weakness of human nature, admonishes the disciples to flee temptations, since they were still more badly affected: which he also did to others in many places, meanwhile abstaining from those who perfected them. But after our weak nature was strengthened by the thought of His resurrection and ascension into heaven: His [Jesus] brother [James] according to the flesh teaches us, so that we may not fear temptations, since we can, after being strengthened by the Lord's afflictions, overcome every ensuing affliction and temptation. Since there are twofold temptations, as we have said, patience is useful in both: in those that come from God, because afterwards we attain praise from victory, like Abraham; in those that are from ourselves, because by enduring with gratitude, we refer this as a kind of compensation for the sins we have committed. He who was conscious of his own sins, lays the beginning of his salvation and conforms himself to the form of a righteous man, as the first accuser of himself.

"Let no one who is tempted say." If there are two kinds of temptations, why does James now reject the cause of all temptation from God? But consider that he does not say: He who was tempted, but he who is tempted. For he who, through his own fault and depravity, gives rise to temptations, so that he is a perpetual slave, says that he is not tempted by God, but by his own desire. He who has overcome the temptation that has come upon him, having established himself more securely, still becomes difficult to tempt, especially by those arising from himself. For having turned towards a wiser life, he has blocked the source of temptations, and now he lives free from temptations. But God cannot be tempted by evil: according to him who said (although he is external to us and unfamiliar to faith); Divine and blessed nature neither endures trouble nor

inflicts it on others. For around mortal and earthly nature, in which variety and change are evident, all these things that preoccupy our nature occur. Indeed, lust and sin, and the death of the soul that follows from this, have been established as certain stages leading to human perdition. For lust, seizing a place to stay, having found a dwelling place, has wrought sin, which gives birth to death, unless, by removing it from the mind, we renew for ourselves the beginning of another life. Therefore, it sufficiently demonstrates divine nature, neither able to be tempted nor providing temptations to others; however, it says here that thoughts disturb and confuse the splendor of the soul. For those things that are from God greatly soothe the soul, illuminating it and revealing his ineffable beauty in many ways: therefore, he now adds.

James 1:17-18 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change or shadow due to change. In His destined will, He has begotten us by the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.*

"*is from above, from the Father of lights.*" Since those things that come from us do not have perfection, but rather much imperfection, nor do they illuminate the soul, think what perfection they will have who acquire it after a joyful journey through life, and with much effort hardly cleanse the ugliness contracted from birth, and then reach divine splendor.

"*With whom there is no change.*" For He Himself cries out through the prophet: "I am and I do not change." (Mal. 3:6) But what James says: "*shadow due to change,*" that is, not even doubt or any shadow of doubt.

"*In His destined will.*" He said destined will, silencing those who foolishly assert that the world was produced by chance. For since James said above: with whom there is no change, and from this he shows that God is unchanging, he adds:

"*In His destined will, He has begotten us.*" For if we are born, it is clear that we are also changed. For how could that which proceeds from non-being to being through change be unchangeable? Then, because James said: *He has begotten us*, lest anyone suspect that He has begotten the Son in the same way as us, and that He was born as a Son together with us, he adds:

"*By the Word of Truth.*" For all things, according to blessed John, were made through the Son. (John 1:3) Therefore, if progress has happened to us through the Word of Truth, who have our being from the Word, we are not begotten together with him from whom we were made.

"*we should be a kind of first fruits.*" That is, the first and most honored. But κτίσματα means the visible creature itself.

James 1:19-20 *Therefore, my beloved brothers, let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

What James says is not referred to mere hearing, but to vigorous action in work and to the one who, after hearing, proceeds to perform what he has heard. For he knows that he who listens with interest to what is said will also show himself prepared for their performance: just as, on the other hand, he who is affected by slowness in procrastinating in something, will be completely separated from all effort at work by being distracted. Therefore, in the doctrine of divine things, he prescribes speed, but in those

things which have a dangerous administration, slowness. But those are speaking and being angry. For both thoughtless speech and uncontrolled anger never know how to end in good. Because of which a certain divine man once said [Xenocrates]: He often regretted having spoken, but never having remained silent. Again, that blessed David says: "Be angry and do not sin," (Ps. 4:5) that is, lest by being easily angry, you also incite the fury which anger suggests. These things are also similar to what is said here. Indeed, slowness in speaking and slow in becoming angry, preserved by hesitation in these matters, lead to what is decent and right: and either completely dissolve the impulse around these things through deliberate consideration, or teach a suitable way to respond to the occurrences that arise in their course, especially regarding anger; which, if it is induced irrationally, deprives divine justice. And therefore, James adds this reason:

For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. For if righteousness is a habit in the soul which divides each according to his dignity, but anger, as he says, destroys even the wise, how could this very thing which so darkens the mind with passionate affection as to destroy even the wise, constitute that which divides each according to his dignity?

"*Slow to anger.*" He wants slowness to be exercised in us in two ways, for example in speaking and in becoming angry. For he knows that hesitation produces abstinence from committing an action.

Of meekness and innocence, and of good actions which lead to happiness, and of knowledge and moderation of speech.

James 1:21 *Therefore, putting away all filthiness and excess of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

James also adds to impurity the excess of nastiness, wishing to demonstrate this: Although someone frequently falls into some impurity, he should quickly depart from it, and not by remaining and lingering in it, through habit do they make the evil stronger and more difficult to cleanse: since those things are born which continually and abundantly find their way into us, to reduce to nature that which is done, or to acquire the habit of nature itself.

"*with meekness.*" For discipline is conveyed through meekness and not through uproar and disturbance.

"*implanted word.*" It is called implanted word that which better distinguishes the good from the bad: by which we are also said to be natural.

James 1:22-25 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer: he shall be compared to a man beholding his natural face in a mirror. For he saw himself, and went his way, and immediately forgot what manner of a man he was. But he that has looked in the law of perfect liberty, and has remained in it, not made a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work: this man shall be blessed in his deed.*

Since James knows that some who listen to the word with diligence often extinguish their fervor even at the very time they are listening, therefore, he now adds this, commanding it in effect: Do not show diligence only in hearing, but much more in doing.

"*deceiving yourselves.*" That is, seducing. Furthermore, James says that the natural face is to know oneself through the law. Therefore, with "*face*," he added "*natural*." For by saying through the law what kind of things we have become, we consider that such things are made by the spiritual law to perfect us through the washing of regeneration. May we not, by remaining in such consideration through action, forget the grace and gift of God. For he who exposes himself to wicked actions does not even remember that he has been favored by God. For if he had remembered that he had been adopted as a son of God and justified and sanctified, which are spiritual gifts, he would never have given himself over to works that repel grace.

"*in a mirror.*" From this common mirror James speaks figuratively for an intellectual mirror, without going into detail: for example, he might say in this way: If anyone hears the discourse and does not express it in actions, he is like a man looking at the face of his action in a mirror. For just as he considered himself and went away, immediately forgetting what he was like: so also this one who, through the law of Moses, considered for what purpose he had been made, namely that he had been made for the glory of God and in the image of the Creator God, after he had considered, expressed none of those things that had been considered in actions, but was inclined to go back to the same way he as before. It is not therefore a matter of how it should be used. But James, the disciple of the Lord, does not do this vainly or rashly, but speaks everything briefly, as if he were a disciple of the abbreviated word, and at the same time gathering and restraining the listener, lest he should listen to these things idly.

"*But he that has looked in.*" Consider what it says: *Who has looked in*, and not, *Who entered*. The spiritual law indeed has something magnificent and desirable everywhere, from which it also knows how to attract and render perfect, even from those in

wrongful pursuit of it: and since it has perfection and lacks defect in all things, it leaves no one who has attained it in doubt regarding anything that is connected to it; and it persuades those who have even merely looked upon it to remain in it.

"in the law of perfect." Because the Jews were exalted because of the observances of the law, and thought that by these they showed themselves the highest devotion towards God; and applying themselves to these alone, they claimed perfection for themselves, but towards other men, being moved by a proud and reproachful spirit, they erred. As is evident from the Pharisee, of whom it is written in the Gospel (Luke 18:10), and from those who were scornful against the Publican: repressing this fear, blessed James speaks of the things that are proposed. For indeed, by mentioning his works, which express speech through actions, where he proclaimed him blessed, he immediately corrects the evil that arises from many actions, and says: Do not think that you derive blessedness from the works of the law, as if mere action could render one acceptable before God: not at all; but he is blessed who both acts and is not affected by a scornful or inhumane spirit towards others of his kind.

"of liberty." Where he had said the perfect Law, he added: of liberty, making liberty his official sign. For the law of Christ, freeing from the servitude of all fleshly things, such as the Sabbaths, circumcision, and ceremonies regarding other purifications, established a liberty and rest for those approaching it: and because of the freedom and sweetness that proceeds from this freedom, it also makes one attentive and liberates from oblivion, which corrupts all good things. For indeed, nothing persuades one to adhere to something as much as that which seems to offer rest from business and freedom. Moreover, he has also demonstrated this to be blessed.

"a forgetful hearer." James linked forgetfulness to hearing, because hearing requires action, but no action follows forgetfulness: as if hearing were unessential, which has the ability of action.

James 1:26-27 *And if any man think himself to be religious not controlling his tongue, but seducing his heart: this man's religion is useless. Religion pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit orphans and widows in their affliction: and to keep himself pure from the world.*

Religion (Θρησκεία) seems to have something more than faith (πίστεως). For the name itself promises knowledge of certain hidden things and the firmness of those things that are perceived by faith. Therefore, the blessed James also used this expression, saying: Religion, as if he had said: You think you know and precisely observe the secrets that are in the law. How can this happen when you do not know how to restrain your tongue, slandering your neighbor: and living proudly, you do not show mercy to any needy person: when the law neither receives the slanderer (Ps. 100:5) nor commands you to have mercy on your enemies, and even commands that you should be a help to the enemy occupied in lifting up what has fallen under the burden? (Ex. 23:5) If, therefore, you wish to be religious, do not show yourself to be religious from knowledge of the law, but from action, and that by showing mercy to your neighbor: for mercy towards your neighbor is a certain likeness to God. For he says: "Be merciful, just as your heavenly Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36) But mercy should not be with respect to persons: for neither does God distribute His benefits (Matt. 5:45) to this one or that one, but involves all with benefit, rich and poor, evil and good, without distinction. However, this is restraint, and not out

of arrogance as if it were expressing a law through actions, deceiving one's own conscience: for this signifies the heart, as it is written: "A broken and humbled heart God will not despise." (Ps. 50:19)

"Religion pure." Perhaps someone will say: If James is the teacher of the covenant which Christ established, how is it that he does not now repeal the things of the law, but rather exalts them, welcoming those who are engaged in its observance, and not rebuking or resisting them from the observance of the law? To that which we say, that in the manner of introducing, James rather now discusses with them, and lowers himself to their weakness, lest by immediately overturning the law from the beginning, he causes them to retreat, becoming weary of the novelty of the doctrines and leaning towards disbelief. However, addressing the matter more conveniently and yielding to the law, regarding those things in which he did not bring harm to the new covenant with the legalistic fallacies (for what harms the faith that is in Christ, such as the observance of sabbaths or fasting or abstaining from certain foods), and making them more attentive to his discourse, he gradually encourages them to indeed depart from the observances of the law, as if they were laborious and yet useless, and as if they were calling to servitude, not to the freedom that is in Christ. Therefore, having wisely used brief exchanges and alternations, when he found that they were no longer seriously bearing what was being said, he then presents those things that were suitable for Christians.

"to keep himself pure from the world." By "world" here we must understand the popular and common crowd, which is corrupted by the desires of its own error.

CHAPTER 2

On charity towards each one without respect of person according to the law.

James 2:1-4 *My brothers, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with bias to individuals. For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?*

"with bias to individuals." For he who does something with respect to individuals fills himself with many blemishes and much reproach, afflicting his neighbor with disgrace, and also himself before him: for the treatment of a companion transmits what is done even to oneself.

"have you not shown partiality." The conjunction, "And", abounds, that is, you have corrupted the power of judging which was in you, making no inquiry as to whether he is to be honored, the poor man who is upright and industrious, or the rich man who is lazy: but without judgment and with respect to persons, you honored the one indeed because of his riches, but you held the other in contempt because of his poverty.

"among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?" That is, unjust judges, affected by jealousy out of respect for persons. In this place, the conjunction *καὶ* abounds, that is, "and", as has been said, from the use of the former phrase. For since this discourse is a response to what has gone before, the conjunction is unnecessary. For the sentence should be arranged thus: For if a man wearing a gold ring, dressed in splendid clothing, enters your assembly, while a poor man in filthy clothing also enters, etc., you have not judged among yourselves and have become

judges of evil thoughts: that is, corrupting the power of judging, you have chosen evil thoughts, honoring the one indeed, but holding the other in contempt: although yet the nature was the same in both.

James 2:5-9 *Listen, my beloved brothers: has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He has promised to those who love Him? But you have despised the poor. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts? Do they not blaspheme that good name by which you are called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you do well. But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.*

Since poverty is a serious matter for many, when James said, "*the poor of this world*," he immediately added, "*rich*." But in what way are they rich? In faith and concerning faith. For so it is. Indeed, when the poor are not distracted by worldly things, once they come to faith, they become more diligent and more devoted to labor than the rich. Therefore, the Lord also chose such disciples, whom he declared to be heirs of the kingdom.

"*They blaspheme the good name*." A good name is a new name according to the prophet saying: "To those who serve me, a new name will be called, which will be blessed over all the face of the earth." (Isa. 62:2) "According to Scripture." Deuteronomy says.

James 2:10-13 *And whosoever shall keep the whole Law, but offends in one: is made guilty of all. For he that said, You shall not commit adultery, said also, You shall not kill. And if you do not commit adultery, but shall kill:*

you are made a transgressor of the Law. So speak, and so do, as beginning to be judged by the law of liberty. For judgment without mercy to him that has not done mercy. And mercy exalts itself above judgment.

"*but offends in one.*" James said this concerning love, for the sake of which he also discussed all the preceding discourse at greater length for the sake of proof. But he said, "*You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill,*" for example. Consider, however, that the examples are from the law, insofar as it contributed to love. For he who loves his neighbor perfectly will neither commit adultery nor kill. For these are his who is affected with a hostile spirit towards his neighbor. Since it would not be said in this way, no one among men would be saved, since no one keeps the integrity of the commandments in all things. For he who has preserved chastity for the sake of the word has sometimes been overcome by anger; and he who is adorned with almsgiving has perhaps been obscured by envy. Therefore, it is not said of anyone who has no defect in virtues, but of love, that it should not be attained with defect due to respect for persons, but wholly. However, we also speak of these virtues. For one who has not perfectly adhered to modest or just matters, for example, but has used them with a deficiency, here, staggering in dealing with virtues, has been corrupted in the whole body of virtue. The law must therefore be understood as dealing with love, which is its chief aim. But the law of freedom says that it is without regard to persons: this is the law of Christ. For he who respects persons is not free, but a slave: "For by whom anyone is overcome, to him he is also enslaved." (2 Peter 2:19)

"*For judgment without mercy to him that has not done mercy.*" If we have forgiven our neighbors the sins they have committed against us, and have made the needy among us sharers in our alms, then God's mercy will deliver us from judgment. God will

also welcome the merciful. Indeed, it is a remarkable deed, just as on the other hand, a serious condemnation will be for those who have not been well and piously disposed towards the people of their own class. For those who remain unmoved by any feeling of sympathy towards their neighbors who have wronged them, the condemnation of the evil servant will embrace them, together with the retribution that the Lord's Prayer designates. For there we ask God to forgive us as we forgive those who have sinned against us. And those who are hard-hearted, moved by no feeling of mercy towards those who lack bodily comfort, will also receive judgment without mercy according to the present discourse.

“mercy exalts itself above judgment.” For the merciful shall obtain mercy, according to the judgment of the Lord. (Matt. 5:7) Furthermore, if in an idolater's mercy towards the poor he can erase sins, as we learned in Daniel (Dan. 4:24), what would he not do in faithful men? But this mercy seems to me to accomplish something like this oil from the manna trees, anointed on athletes. For this enables them to escape, lest they be held by their adversaries: and so also in the universal judgment our mercy towards the needy will enable them to escape the attacks and dangers which will threaten us from the demons who accuse us. In another way.

“judgment without mercy.” The cause of restitution is against those who have shown pride and arrogance with great cruelty towards the lower classes with respect to persons. Therefore, it softens their cruelty and hardness, with this terrifying sentence, as if it were saying: The law commands you to love your neighbor as yourself: just as no one regards a person with respect to themselves (for that would be insane), so neither should you regard a person. But if, out of arrogance and hardness, you deviate towards respect for persons, fear that in some way you

too might receive similar treatment from a just judge, and exclude from yourself that mercy: for judgment without mercy, etc.

“And mercy exalts itself above judgment.” That is, it conquers, subdues, dulls, or blunts.

That man is justified not by faith alone, but also by works, and not by one separately, but by both together.

James 2:14-19 *What shall it profit my brethren, if a man say he has faith: but has not works? Shall faith be able to save him? And if a brother or sister be naked, and lack daily food: and one of you say to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled: but you give them not the things that are necessary for the body: what shall it profit? So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself. But some man says, You have faith, and I have works: show me your faith without works: and I will show you by works my faith. You believe that there is one God. You do well: the demons also believe and tremble.*

Notice the spiritual understanding. For James did not only say: If you have faith, but also: What is the benefit? As if he were saying: Show me the work from which I can judge that this title suits you: for that is the benefit of faith.

“So faith also, if it have not works, is dead in itself.” These things are not opposed to blessed Paul, since the name faith is applied to two meanings. (Rom. 4:1) For we often say that faith is a simple approval, according to that which we also know the demons believed, that the Son of God was Christ. (Matt. 4:3; Luke 4:1) And again, when we call the consequence proceeding from affection with firm acceptance the name of faith; indeed, James says that simple acceptance is a dead faith and devoid of

living works; however, Paul says that it is that which is from affection and is in no way lacking in deeds: for it could not arise without honorable deeds. Indeed, Abraham did not attain this unless a contest was first held, by which he would be expelled from his paternal kinship, for which contest faith was declared as the reward: but Paul placed this before works, namely the observance of the Sabbaths according to the law, circumcision, and other purifications. Indeed, two meanings are also seen in works. For certain works are said to confirm faith, without which faith is dead. And again, works are said to be those of the law, without which both Abraham and all who follow Christ are justified. For who would deny that it is true that faith would in no way approach the impure? But I speak of true faith. For neither would an ointment be stored in a vessel that was full of mud, nor would faith be imparted by God to an impure man. Therefore, the holy apostles are not contradictory, but each, operating in a different meaning, directs and leads to the use of its own meaning that is proposed to it.

James 2:20-26 But will you know O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Abraham our father was he not justified by works, offering Isaac his son upon the altar? see that faith did work with his works: and by the works the faith was complete? And the Scripture was fulfilled, saying, Abraham believed God, and it was reputed him to righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. Do you see that by works a man is justified: and not by faith only? And in like manner also Rahab the harlot, was not she justified by works, receiving the messengers, and putting them forth another way? For even as the body without the spirit is dead: so also faith without works is dead.

James called a man vain who boasts of a bare faith, when he has obtained nothing of substance for completion through works.

“Abraham our father.” Both Paul (Rom. 4:12) and James take Abraham as an example in their discourse on faith: Paul, indeed to show that faith is superior to works, while James, on the other hand, asserts that works are more excellent than faith through the same Abraham. And indeed, it has been said above that concerning the dual meaning of faith, each one brings forth what is beneficial to the explanation of their own purpose. Some of the Fathers, however, understood this matter in this way. For they say that the same Abraham bore the image of both faiths at various distinct times, and that the faith which is before baptism does not require works, but only faith and the confession of salvation and the word by which we are justified, believing in Christ; and that which follows baptism is connected with works. Thus, it does not appear that the spirit who spoke in the apostles is different; but that this faith indeed justifies the one who approaches by confession alone, if he immediately departs from a sinful life (for to him there are no works, but purification through baptism is a sufficient remedy), while that which is required from one who has already been baptized also demands the display of good works. With this sense, Paul also agrees in another place, saying and teaching that faith after baptism requires perfection through works, when he says: "Neither circumcision benefits anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which works by love." (Gal. 5:6) And love needs lengthy practice to be perfected.

In another way. Abraham was indeed an image of the justification which is by faith alone, when it was imputed to him for righteousness that he believed (Gen. 15:6); but of that which is by works, when he offered his son upon the altar. (Gen. 22:10) If anything, he not only completed the work but also remained in

faith that through Isaac his seed would be multiplied like the stars, considering that God could even raise the dead. (Heb. 11:17-19) Yet Paul also brings David as a witness (Rom. 6:6), wisely confirming his own. For he knew through the Spirit that faith which was to come in future times through Christ: therefore he said: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Ps. 31:2)

"faith without works is dead." James says faith which is after baptism. For faith without works profits nothing, except that it makes us liable to a still greater punishment, who indeed have received the talent, yet have not returned the gain. From which the Lord also teaches us that after baptism good works are necessary for us, since after being baptized by John he went to the desert and undertook struggles against the Devil. (Matt. 4:1) Paul also exhorts those who had already received the mysteries, saying: "Let us strive to enter into that rest." (Heb. 4:4) As if faith were not enough, but purity of life should also be added, and great diligence should be applied to this.

CHAPTER 3

James 3:1-2 *Do not become many teachers, my brothers, knowing that we shall receive a greater judgment: for in many things we all stumble.*

When James had said and taught the faithful in the above matters that they should possess faith that is not empty of good works, he turned to another commandment similar to this. For indeed, some attempt to teach things which they themselves do not practice: and it is said that their judgment will be harsher, since they have brought no profit. For whoever teaches what is not beneficial, as

if possessing it, is condemned just as if he has slipped with his own tongue. Moreover, confirming this abundantly, he says, Although in another way the tongue is prone to slip due to negligence, in the case of those whose judgment will not escape, who has acquired this, as Solomon has it, saying: “Because of the sin of the lips, the sinner falls into a snare”; (Prov. 12:13) much more, however, will he who knowingly and deliberately sins, teaching with his tongue what he has not learned through experience, be unable to escape the inevitable punishment.

The unrefined and chaotic tongue destroys the one who has acquired it: it is necessary to overcome it for the praise and glory of God; in which he also discusses good conduct and without strife of one against another, out of a desire for glory, because of human wisdom; and about divine wisdom: and that quarrels, seditions, and enmities against God arise from laziness and the love of pleasure; and about repentance for salvation, and about not judging one's neighbor.

James 3:2-4 If anyone does not stumble in speech, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the mouths of horses so that they may obey us, and we turn the whole body about. Behold, ships also, though they are so large and driven by fierce winds, are turned about by a very small rudder wherever the impulse of the helmsman wishes.

That no man can lead a life without sin is confirmed by the slipperiness of the tongue. From the same, it also demonstrates that no one can attain perfection. For who is there who has not erred through his tongue? But if someone has overcome the slipperiness of his tongue, is he not suitable to govern the whole body? For he who has conquered that which is easiest to slip, could by no means be overcome by that which is much more difficult.

"Behold, we put bits in the mouths of horses." This is the order of letters: We put the reins in the mouths of horses; for unless it is arranged this way, speech is unintelligible (namely, if we take the Greek words in the order they are placed). This confirms what has been said about the tongue, and also addresses something greater: namely, that he who brings into his power that which is easy to arrange, will also overcome that which is difficult to handle. However, this resolves the objection. For it was plausible that someone might add: What labor is there in governing such a small member? Or what harm can come from the smallest member? And this shows that from the bridle and the helm and from the small things which are indeed small, but make great things. — In another way. Furthermore, these also show that the tongue should not move recklessly, but should be directed towards better things: just as the strength of horses is restrained by the bridle, and the onslaught of a ship is controlled by the rudder. Thus, we must also direct the tongue to what is beneficial with proper speech. For this signifies what is said: So also the tongue, that it should be directed in this way with proper speech, and not do what it does: for when it is small, it does great things, and kindles a great fire for us, since it is itself a fire. And what does it do? It adorns iniquity through the cunning eloquence of orators, contaminates the body, persuading women to allow its approach: it operates through deceit: it slanders others with falsehoods: and above all, it ignites the wheel of hell: that is, it sets on fire and stirs up hell in us, as if making a fire rage against us. But it also, he says, is set on fire by hell, as is evident from the rich man who was tormented by the tongue. (Luke 16:24) For the tongue is punished not for any other reason than because it has been inclined towards pleasures and trifles. Therefore, if the Wheel of hell is read, as some copies have it, the meaning must be explained accordingly. However, if it has the Wheel of Birth, it achieves this solution: the Wheel of Birth signifies our life. Therefore, inflaming the wheel of birth contaminates life:

and how? While it is moved carelessly and lustfully, from which our life is enraged, or the time of our life. For this, the Psalmist also called it a crown, saying: "You will bless the crown of the year." (Ps. 65:11) Indeed, the wheel and the crown agree in that both are circular and spheric; the Wheel is said to be life, as if rolled back upon itself. But how does it contaminate our life? As it is moved, as we said before: because of which our life is both soiled and full of sighs. Thus, the tongue is turned about in proper speech. Indeed, the world is full of iniquity, as if it were cast down to a vile and popular crowd, looking back. For the world is understood here as a multitude. Or the world is, that is, an ornament, or adorning human nature: through this, we communicate our thoughts to one another, for in this meaning, some also wish to accept the World. Therefore, while it is directed towards the vile crowd, it does harm and injures and contaminates the whole body, and the wheel of birth is inflamed and is inflamed by hell. Yet, it is not difficult to direct it so that it moves rightly and in the way that the one who governs wishes. But if all of nature of wild beasts, birds, serpents, and marine creatures is tamed and has been tamed by human nature, is it true that the tongue, which is an uncontrollable evil, full of deadly poison, cannot be tamed by any human? I would say by no means is this the case. For if it cannot be tamed, it never inclines toward what is better; how is it that by it we bless God and the Father, and by it we curse men? Behold, it is governed by the will of the one who uses it. But it should not be so, my brothers. For if by it we bless God, is it not shameful to curse men who are made in the likeness of God? Is it just that from the same mouth there should come blessing and cursing? It should not be so.

James 3:5-9 *So the tongue also is certainly a little member, and boasts great things. Behold how much fire what a great wood it kindles? And the tongue is fire, a*

whole world of iniquity. The tongue is set among our members, which defiles the whole body, and inflames the wheel of our birth, inflamed of hell. For all nature of beasts and fowls and serpents and of the rest is tamed and has been tamed by the nature of man. 8 But the tongue no man can tame, an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison. By it we bless God and the Father: and by it we curse men which are made after the similitude of God.

"So the tongue also." As if it were said: In the same way, the tongue must be rightly moved, which, although it is a small member, nevertheless accomplishes great things, both good and bad: however, the discourse is not so explicit, since the one who writes this is a disciple of a condensed writing style.

"world of iniquity." In this place, some wish to signify the multitude, just as where it is said: "The world did not know him," (Jn. 1:10) that is, the popular multitude. Therefore, the world is also the tongue, that is, the multitude of iniquity. And how great if a multitude was said there when it was sent before, how great the matter.

"For all nature." One must understand the objections in accordance with what has been said previously. For when James had previously said and demonstrated that those things which are indeed small become great when moved correctly, and had added that in the same way the tongue should be directed by appropriate language: he now shows with the examples given that it is not impossible for it to be instructed: as if he were to say: But someone will say that although the tongue is a small member, it nonetheless accomplishes great things, both good and evil: it is neither obedient nor manageable by us in what we desire. This does not affect the response. For if wild animals are tamed by man not by their nature, indeed fierce in appearance, but far more fierce in handling, would it not be much more

appropriate to handle a member that is appropriate so that it might easily obey? Therefore, also what he says:

"the tongue no man can tame," should not be read affirmatively, but rather with doubt or as a question, so that it might be said in this way. If a man can tame wild beasts and make them manageable, can he not tame his own tongue? Thus, this must be read and understood. For if it were said assertively, it would not seem right to use it as an exhortation when it says: *"My brothers, this should not be done."* (James 3:10) For if it were impossible to adjust in such a way, he who admonishes impossibilities does not make a stable and fitting warning. Someone might say: "Nevertheless, what he says." An uncontrollable evil must be expressed assertively, for these show through amplification that the tongue is untamable. However, on the contrary, the statement, *"From out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing,"* (James 3:10) must be read with hesitation: for it is the speech of one exhorting the listeners. For if we are commanded to bless all, since the cursed will not inherit the kingdom of God, is it not shameful to use the same member for the ministry of iniquity and good works? No wise person would use the same instrument to move mud and oil. Do you pray? Do not curse your enemy. There is a great difference between prayer and cursing. If you do not forgive him who has troubled you, neither will you be forgiven: but by cursing you will ensnare yourself, when you pray that your debts may be forgiven, just as you forgive your debtors. (Matt. 6:9) But let us provide, for the sake of easier consequences, the whole section in the middle to present the order of the required phrase, adding some things that are lacking. It will be in this way: Behold, we put the reins on the horses so that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body around: behold also that ships, however large they are and tossed by fierce winds, are turned about by a small rudder wherever the impulse of the helmsman wishes. Thus also let the tongue be

turned about in right speech. Nor is this difficult. For all nature, both of wild beasts and birds and serpents and sea creatures, is tamed and has been tamed by human nature. If this is so, can no one tame the tongue? This cannot be said at all.

James 3:10-18 *From out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, this should not be done. Does the fountain give forth out of one hole sweet and sour water? Can, my brethren, the fig tree yield grapes: or the vine, figs? So neither can the salt water yield sweet. Who is wise and has knowledge among you? Let him show by good conversation his working in mildness of wisdom. But if you have bitter zeal, and there be disputes in your hearts: glory not and be not liars against the truth. For this is not wisdom descending from above: but earthly, sensual, devilish. For where zeal and contention is: there is inconstancy, and every perverse work. But the wisdom that is from above, first certainly is faithful: then peaceable, modest, vulnerable, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, not judging, without distinction. 18 And the fruit of justice, in peace is sowed to them that make peace.*

"From out of the same mouth." This kind of sacred discipline has received nothing bitter to be emitted, nothing ungrateful.

"Who is wise and has knowledge among you?" When men were ambitious and boasted of the wisdom of this world, they preached from disagreement and rivalry of the rulers, openly inciting the people to agitation, and besides, they were wasting away with envy and allowing human things to mingle with divine, so that the examiners were drawn in by the novelty of what was being said; hence also heresies arose. Therefore, after completing the discourse on the slander and intemperance of the

tongue, he then transitions to envy, which arises in men from similar recklessness: and he says that these doctrines are not established and firm, as they are not from divine wisdom, but rather demonic. However, he said this to encourage the good teacher, saying that he should show his wisdom through good works with his gentleness. Moreover, since the name of zeal, that is passion, is neutral and indifferent in itself to good and evil. (For zeal, or passion, is a movement of the heart stirred up towards something with some similarity to that which is the object of study or affection) therefore he added *bitter zeal*, showing what passion leads to. Indeed, contentiousness is a blameworthy contention and obstinacy.

"first certainly is faithful." That is, pure and without stain, adhering to no fleshly thing.

"without distinction." Not discerning the observance of foods and various washings. Paul discusses these matters in detail in the Epistle to the Colossians. (Col. 2:1)

CHAPTER 4

James 4:1-4 *Where do wars and conflicts come from among you? Is it not from here, namely from your pleasures that wage war in your members? You desire and do not have; you kill and covet, and cannot obtain; you fight and wage war, and you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is hatred against God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

It shows that although they may imitate the speech of the teacher, they are all entirely fleshly and commit the most disgraceful acts,

calling pleasures to themselves: some indeed seek a more delicate table (which Paul also argues against them saying, "For such are not serving our Lord but their own belly;") (Col. 2:1) others desire the possession of precious fields or houses: others again wish to take on a household or join one house to another: while another seeks something else, in which that evil one imposes upon them, attempting to steal their souls.

"You desire and do not have," etc. According to position and elevation, it proceeds from the position, being removed due to the absurdity. The absurdity, due to the pleasures, is expected to be the underlying cause of what is contemplated in the position. For both desire ends in the perfection of pleasures, and murder, rivalry, and similarly strife and war are not good: therefore, neither do those things follow whose cause they affect. It should be noted at this point that he speaks of murder and war not in a bodily sense: for it would be serious even to think about robbers; much less, therefore, about those who were somewhat faithful and approached the Lord. But as it seems to me, those are said to kill who, through these reckless attempts, destroy their own soul, which is why war is also against piety for them. And just as in the course of the text he calls *adulterers and adulteresses*, not because they are entirely such, but because they corrupt divine and rightly established precepts by turning to other illegitimate things: for no one would tolerate a whoremonger as a teacher, even if he were more entangled in filth than a pig: so he speaks of murder and wars not in a bodily sense, but concerning the soul,

"You ask and do not receive." Just as the Pharisee, of whom it is written in the Gospel according to Luke (18:11); for the more he recounted his good works, the more he blocked the divine ears, and the empty splendor of words flowed around his lips and dissolved into foam like a surging wave. But someone will say: if the promise of the Lord Jesus, who cannot be deceived, is true,

in which He says: "Everyone who asks receives," (Matt. 7:8) how does the present apostle say this now? But we say that he who proceeds in the proper way and order to ask also has the complete promise, not being frustrated in anything he asks for. If, however, he seems to ask outside the scope of the given petition, not asking as he ought, he does not even ask, and therefore he will not receive. For example, if a grammar teacher promises to teach everyone who comes to him grammar, but the one who wishes to learn approaches improperly and does not direct himself towards the reception of what has been promised, then if he falls into absurdity similar to his own, will anyone justly accuse the teacher of lying? Certainly, such a person would not act wisely. Nor did the one who was to receive the discipline approach as the teacher exhorts. However, someone might say: And how or what should one ask? Listen to Him who made the promise. "Seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness." (Matt. 6:33) Therefore, it is clear that he who asks in this way, especially concerning such things, will not be disappointed in other matters, since receiving them will not fall outside of what is for his salvation. But he who asks for harmful and damaging things will not have them from Him who gives every good gift. Moreover, if one seeks divine knowledge or some spiritual gift out of pleasure, he will not receive it: for he asks wrongly, and it is for his own destruction; furthermore, God does not grant evil things at all.

"You adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world." For James had previously reproached a few false wise men who would corrupt the divine Scripture and pervert it to their own will, so that they might have a backing for their luxurious life: this arises from nothing other than arrogance and pride, and for this reason, he now proceeds more severely and uses words that are particularly strange to his own humor, calling such people adulterers and adulteresses, and by

reproaching them, he brings them to shame, and using almost such accusations: Tell me, vain one: do you wish to present yourself as wise? and from where do you have that, while you continually avoid conflict and war, you are always fixated on the present and pursue the joy of this life with certainty of mind? This is not the way of the wise but of ordinary men, and those who have inclination towards the friendship of the world, and it shows you to be adulterers who prefer the vulgar, profane, and shameful over the hidden, divine, and honorable beauty, and bear hatred towards God out of affection for the present. Do you not know that the friendship of the world alienates from the friendship of God, or makes one an enemy of God? In this context, the world refers to all material and vile life, as if it were the mother of corruption, of which he who attempts to partake becomes an enemy of God. For due to a passion for the useless, he neglectfully and disdainfully regards the divine, which pertains only to those whom we hate and who are our enemies. Therefore, since there are two things that men strive for, namely God and the world, and around both of these revolve two things, friendship and hatred: if we are found to be studious of either, we seem to entirely neglect the other. However, diligence produces friendship, while negligence produces hatred. Therefore, whoever clings to the divine is a friend of God, and it is said: But whoever neglects God and is firmly attached to the things of the world should be considered among those who are the greatest enemies of God. Moreover, since this and all such evil has been shown to have originated from the arrogance of the false wisdom of the teachers, he used another argument, wishing to bring them back from such drunkenness and to free them from gluttony, and he says:

James 4:5-6 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, or out of envy? That the spirit desires which dwells in you? But he gives a greater grace?

This signifies something through these means, through the lack of using language, and again through the use of abbreviated wording. Therefore, James says: Indeed, I have criticized you in my own words regarding the correct and blameless use of your wisdom, lest you, abusing it out of arrogance, pollute and deceitfully handle the discourse of doctrine. But if you seek this from Scripture, listen. For it says: "The Lord resists the proud." (1 Peter 5:5) Therefore, I was not speaking absurdly when I said that contempt for divine doctrines arises from pride and a great zeal for the world constitutes hate against God. For if He resists the proud, and we are accustomed to resist enemies, surely the proud must also be numbered among the enemies. For Scripture does not publish difficult precepts to us in vain or out of envy, but to desire or seek the grace that dwells in us through its exhortation: which, when it finds working in us through spiritual modesty, gives a greater grace. Therefore, if you obey the Scriptures, humble yourselves and become lowly before the Lord, and you will find grace through His exaltation. Pride (Υπερηφανία), however, is a vice that inflates deeply, which we call elevation: and it differs from arrogance, which is called conceit (οἷσις), because the former is exalted by what it has, while the latter is exalted by what does not belong to it in any way. On the contrary, humility or modesty of the mind is a great good. And since both are voluntary for us; whoever exalts himself through arrogance, apart from being condemned by the Lord, is also humbled by Him: exalted through the occasion of the one who had humbled himself out of modesty of spirit: so that, guided by this, he who exercises himself in these things achieves spiritual greatness in the contests.

"Do you think that Scripture speaks in vain, or out of envy?" None of these, but it desires or seeks grace in you through its counsel dwelling within. It is similar through the restraint of the response, as in Job: Do you think I have answered you for any other purpose than to appear just? Indeed, in this place the response: No, is not expressed.

"*The spirit desires.*" It refers to the good intention, as David also says: "With a willing spirit:" (Ps. 50:14) that is, by the Lord's will through which He sends afflictions. And it refers to the right spirit as the right will.

James 4:7-13 *Be subject therefore to God, but resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Approach God, and he will approach you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners: and purify your hearts, you double minded. Be miserable, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned into mourning: and joy, into sorrow. Be humbled in the sight of our Lord, and he will exalt you. Do not speak ill of one another my brethren. He that speaks ill of his brother, or he that judges his brother, speaks ill of the Law, and judges the Law. But if you judge the Law, you are not a doer of the Law, but a judge. For there is one law-maker, and judge that can destroy and deliver. But you, who are you that judges another?*

"*purify your hearts, you double minded.*" 'Double of mind' refers to those who do not wish to live in a certain way but are driven and carried away by the wickedness of men. For they do not dwell in the house under the Lord in one way. Moreover, that the soul is also called life will be sufficiently taught to us in Job. "Skin for skin, all that a man has will he give as a ransom for his life." (Job 2:4)

"Do not speak ill of one another." New pride and arrogance arise from contempt and speaks ill against the meek, which drives those who use it to complete contempt for these things. Therefore, withdrawing them from this, James wishes to make them modest through what is submitted here, saying:

"He speaks ill of the Law and judges the Law." This is to condemn, to despise. For he who condemns does so out of contempt. But which law? First indeed that which commands: "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged." (Matt. 7:1) Therefore, what is in the Psalms: "I was secretly pursuing this one who was detracting from his neighbor." (Ps. 101:5) And because this is done out of contempt, he adds: If you judge the law, whether you condemn it, you are not a keeper of the law. For who indeed despises anyone, how will he bear to live from now under his authority? Therefore, he says, do not despise, and have as if a contrary legislator. For it is not permitted to you, since there is only one lawmaker, God, who can save and destroy the transgressors of His law. For it is the role of the law and the lawmaker to make their transgressors subject to punishment; it is not yours, who can do nothing else but joke about these matters. Moreover, you fall upon yourself and are contrary to yourself, bringing a judgment against yourself. For when you do the same things as the one you speak ill of, in the very act of condemning him, you condemn yourself long before.

"Who are you that judges another?" By despising: that is, when you are such, how do you dare to judge or condemn him who is similarly affected?

That the steps of a man are directed not by man, but by God: in which it is also discussed about the greed of the rich and their delights in this world and about the just judgment of God.

James 4:13-17 But you, what are you that judges another? Whoever says, Today or tomorrow we will go to that city, and we will spend a year there, and we will trade and make a profit. Who are ignorant what shall be tomorrow. For what is your life? It is a vapor appearing for a little while, and afterward it shall vanish away; for that you should say, If the Lord wills, and if we live, we will do this or that. But now you glory in your arrogance. All such rejoicing is wicked. To one therefore knowing to do good, and not doing it: to him it is sin.

"Whoever says, Today." It does not take away power or free will but shows that not everything is in his hands: for even the heavenly needs grace. For although one may strive, run, engage in business, and do all things necessary for life, one should not attribute these to one's own efforts, but to divine kindness. For Jeremiah says: "Lord, life is not in man himself." (Jer. 10:33) And the author of Proverbs (Παροιμιαστής) says: "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring." (Prov. 27:1)

"For what is your life?" This says, pointing out the vanity and wretchedness of our life: and shaming us for the fact that throughout all the time of our life we consume ourselves in temporary evils, and in those things that arise and vanish simultaneously, all our labor is fulfilled. This is also echoed by David, saying: "Yet man passes away like a shadow; yet he is in vain troubled," (Ps. 38:7) that is, about that which is not, but exists only in a mere illusion: for such are the things and the image; or about that which does not exist, but insofar as it has a resemblance and image with life that truly proceeds.

"It is a vapor." Vapor is a condensation of air expiring from the moisture due to the heat of fire, having minimal existence. For due to its extreme low density, it easily yields to the surrounding

body and vanishes and dissolves, like a moderate moisture when water is added. Thus, it has similarity to our life: and that very cleverly. Furthermore, having intercepted such speech by this example, it again returns from the perspective to what was following. For the whole particle is to be ordered in this way: Now you who say,

"Today or tomorrow we will go to that city, and we will spend a year there, and we will trade and make a profit," for what you ought to say. *If the Lord wills, and if we live, we will do this or that. "But now you glory in your arrogance."* Since this was truly a consequence of the discourse, it does not do this, but after it interrupts the continuity of the discourse with an example, it subsequently adds what it intended, by portraying the thing and proving the vanity that lies beneath what distracts us regarding this world. It is to be understood in this way:

"Glory in your arrogance." Who are you that do not know what will happen the next day? What is your life? etc. By saying, *"What is your life?"* it despises life, and by this, it paves the way with an example set against brittleness, thus it also adds an example, rendering this most solid.

"Glory in your arrogance." The arrogant and arrogance are affections for non-sustaining things. Therefore, it is also called ἀλαζών, which means "living with the sea," that is, living with something unstable and lacking permanence.

"All such rejoicing is wicked." James repeats the empty boasting that desires to arise from pride, and as if concluding his speech, he supposes that it is evil: if it is evil, it is certainly also from the Evil One. However, those who have been consecrated to the Lord through baptism should not receive any corruptions from the Evil One. He also infers this: Therefore, he who knows how to do right and does not do it is held by sin; he also rebukes false

teachers. Do you dare to rebuke these things when you have not first acted rightly in them? "For blessed," he says, "is not he who has taught, but he who has both done and taught." (Matt. 5:17) For it is necessary that works precede the word, since the righteous proclaim the faith they have exhibited. "For whoever breaks one of these least commandments," says the Lord, "and teaches men so, that is, in vain, namely in those things in which he has not labored, shall be called least; but he who has both done and taught shall be called great." (Matt. 23:19) Since both God and man taught this doctrine which He had begun to practice first. It also seems to be the case that Paul says: "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord;" (2 Cor. 10:17) that is, according to the Lord, using His example long before, and thus doing and teaching. For when David says: "My soul shall make its boast in the Lord," (Ps. 33:3) he says nothing other than that by walking according to the Lord's commandments, he is praised.

CHAPTER 5

James 5:1-6 Act now you rich men, weep, howling in your miseries which shall come to you. Your riches are corrupt: and your garments are eaten by moths. Your gold and silver is rusted: and their rust shall be for a testimony to you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. You have stored to yourselves wrath in the last days. Behold the hire of the workmen that have reaped your fields, which is defrauded of you, cries: and their cry has entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. You have made merry upon the earth: and in riotousness you have nourished your hearts in the day of slaughter. You have presented, and slain the Just One: and he did not resist you.

"*Act now.*" The greed and frugality of the rich are made evident by their lamentation, commanding them to weep, that is, to mourn, as those who hide their wealth for destruction and ruin, nor do they spend it on the needy: for indeed, the expenditure of wealth on these does not perish, but the one who spends it remains intact. Therefore, the author of Proverbs (Παροιμιαστής) also says: Cast your bread upon the waters, (Eccles. 11:1) that is, upon the apparent dissolution and corruption (for bread cast upon the waters is destined to be lost): yet it is by no means lost, but through its corruption it provides us with refreshment, when it would come to pass that we were pressed by thirst like a tongue tortured in flame.

"*Your riches.*" Or your wealth. It must be understood, that is, what wealth, as the saying goes: Your riches, which you have hidden like fire as a treasure, will exceed your flesh.

"*Your garments are eaten by moths.*" The rotting, James says, of riches and the corrosion or consumption of garments by moths, and the rust of gold and silver will bear witness against you, arguing your greed. Because of this, *in the last days* (the Lord says of His coming), you will find your riches hidden for you like fire for destruction: which also happened to the rich man, of whom it is told in the Gospel. (Luke 15:24)

"*You have made merry upon the earth.*" The Jewish leaders were devouring the poor, and they were growing fat on honors that were conferred by all, but they were being prepared for slaughter under the hands of the Romans. And especially because they condemned the Lord, who alone was just, and killed Him without resisting or shouting. Therefore, James now says:

"*You have slain the Just One.*" Without a doubt, this refers to Christ. However, by what He adds:

“*He did not resist you,*” James makes a common statement also to others who have suffered similar things from the Jews. Perhaps, however, He also prophetically designates His own passion.

On patience and tolerance of afflictions, and on truth: in which special exhortations suitable for each are presented along with faith: and what is to be done for the salvation of one's neighbor.

James 5:7-11 Be patient therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient for it until he receives the early and latter rain. Be patient therefore, you also, and establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door. Take as an example, my brothers, of suffering and patience, the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who endured. You have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end intended by the Lord, that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

After James has accused the indulgences of the Jewish leaders, and their cruelty and inhumanity towards the poor, he also turns to the faithful and says: "Do not be offended by seeing these things, brothers, nor be disheartened, as if either vengeance is not being taken against them, or if it is indeed being taken, it is too delayed. For there is certain retribution, and it will come immediately." He speaks of the insult of the Romans and the captivity of the Jews under them, which he even calls the coming of the Lord: just as John, who reclined on the Lord's breast, when he speaks of his own destruction, introduces the Lord himself, saying: "If I want him to remain until I come." (Jn. 21:22)

Indeed, this time of this life has been extended until the captivity of Jerusalem, and a little beyond that time.

And that *the coming of the Lord* and the destruction of Jerusalem in this place and in John is evident from the prophet, who says: "Behold, the Lord will come, and who will endure the day of his coming?" (Mal. 3:1) as the coming of the Lord brings judgment against the wicked. But also John Chrysostom¹, in a certain commentary of his, explains the same thing, saying: This statement intends to signify the complete destruction of Jerusalem: and he confirms it from the prayer of the three youths, who said: "So let our sacrifice be in your presence today, and may it be perfected after you." (Dan. 3:40 LXX) He says: What does "after you" mean? It means, after your fury has passed. And when did it come? When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem. And indeed, this is about the coming. However, some of the Fathers say that "*patience*" [μακροθυμία] here refers to long-suffering, which pertains to those who are among us; while "*endurance*" [ὑπομονή] refers to patience towards strangers. For one bears with those whom he could avenge; but he endures those whom he cannot avenge. Therefore, in God, "*endurance*" [ὑπομονή] is never said but "*patience*" [μακροθυμία]; in men, however, it is "*endurance*" [ὑπομονή].

Until he receives the early and latter rain. The *early rain* is repentance completed in youth with tears, while the *later rain* is that which occurs in old age. Indeed, all things depend on God's kindness, therefore it says: *Until he receives.*

James 5:12 But above all, my brothers, do not swear, neither by heaven, nor by earth, nor by any other oath. But let your yes be yes, and your no be no, so that you do not fall into hypocrisy.

But someone will say: If someone is compelled to swear, what should be done? We say that the fear of God will be stronger than the necessity imposing force. However, someone might doubt, since the old law holds that those who swear by the name of the Lord are worthy of praise, how does grace forbid this? Therefore, we say that the old law, leading the Jews not to swear by idols, commanded them to swear by God: just as it also commanded them to sacrifice to God, withdrawing them from sacrificing to idols: where it sufficiently taught the worship of God, then it also rejected sacrifices as useless: not seeking the sacrifice of animals, but a repentant soul as a sacrifice. But what is that? It is one that is entirely set ablaze with the fire of love through the modesty of the spirit, such as was also the soul of Paul, who, because some of the faithful were offended, was wondrously kindled.

"But let your yes be yes." This means your deposit should be firm and reaffirmed, and denial in those things that do not correspond to the act.

"That they may not fall into hypocrisy." The term *hypocrisy* refers to condemnation, that is, the condemnation that follows those who incessantly and without selection swear: and by the habit of swearing, they are led to perjury. Or even the term *hypocrisy* in this context has a specific meaning (for example, simulation) which is different from what it appears. How then does one who swears fall into hypocrisy? For in swearing, one is believed to be truthful, but by subsequent transgression, he is found to be lying instead of truthful. Or also because *ναί*, that is *yes*, is not presented for confirmation, nor is *οὐ*, that is *no*, in response to what does not correspond to the act. However, swearing by God is prohibited because of perjury; but swearing by heaven and the rest, so that these may not be referred to divine honor. For whoever swears, swears by the greater.

James 5:13-18 *Is anyone among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man is very effective. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*

Prayer go together with *affliction*, so that for the one who is afflicted, the withdraw from afflictions or temptations may be lighter. Then, when through prayer it has pleased God to remove the things that trouble us, and the soul has reached its state of peace and tranquility, *let him sing psalms*, so that what is beneficial may be multiplied, and it may delight in spiritual joy. Indeed, joy and gladness are the right state of the mind, according to our great Basil, for hymns or divine praises confer the grace of consolation. Therefore, whoever has not progressed in this way, nor reached such a state, which David also calls holiness: "Sing to the Lord, you His saints," (Ps. 30:4) does great nonsense, singing vainly and empty, as the proverb says.

"anointing him with oil." This is what the apostles did while the Lord was still among men, anointing the sick with oil and healing them. (Mark 6:13)

"The effective prayer." The prayer of a righteous person is effective when he who prays helps the one for whom he prays

with spiritual affliction. For if, while others pray for us, we indulge in pleasures and dissolutions, and our lives are full of transgressions, we dissolve through this the fervor of the prayer that strives for us: and that which Saint Peter says is fulfilled in us: "One builds and one destroys, what does it profit them but labor?" (Sirach 34:28)

James 5:19-20 *Brothers, if anyone among you has strayed from the truth and someone turns him back, let him know that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*

"someone turns him back, let him know." For it is necessary to serve the salvation of one's neighbor.

"whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way." This is also said by Jeremiah: "And if you separate the precious from the vile, you will be as my mouth." (Jer. 15:12) For whoever announces His words becomes the mouth of God. "For it is not you who speak," He says, "but the Spirit of my Father who speaks in you." (Matt. 10:19) Therefore, He also forbids the sinner, through David (Ps. 49:16), not to declare his justifications, and to take the covenant upon his lips.

The end, with the help of divine grace, of the Catholic Epistle of James.

Translation Footnotes for James

1 John Chrysostom, Eight Orations Against Judaizing Christians, Homily two

OECUMENIUS

on the Epistles of Peter

HYPOTHESIS OF THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF PETER

This letter is written by Peter to the Jews who had become Christians and were dispersed in various places, teaching them. For he confirms those who believed from among the Jews. First, he narrates and shows that faith in Christ was announced by the prophets, and that the redemption which would come through His blood was signified by them: and that all things to which angels desire to look have been announced to them and the Gentiles. Then, having urged them to conduct themselves worthily toward Him who called them, Peter exhorts them to honor even kings and commands harmony among women and men, and after briefly encouraging them regarding morals, he signifies that a preaching of salvation and resurrection was also made by the Lord in Hades: so that those who had previously died might indeed rise and be judged in the body, but through the

grace of resurrection may persevere. And that the end of all things is imminent, and all should be prepared, as if to give an account to the Judge: and thus Peter concludes the letter.

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF PETER.

SECTIONS

1. Of regeneration in Christ, and of patience in temptations and afflictions, and of the saving faith which was foretold by the prophets.
2. From hope and sanctification and firm conversion, which is necessary in addition to adoption.
3. That it may be lived worthily according to the adoption through Christ, for the benefit also of those who are strangers, to the glory of God.
4. On subjection to superiors, and fraternal love and divine worship: in which he discusses the subjection of servants and the patient endurance for the sake of Christ. On the obedience of women and harmony towards men, and the salvation that is in spirit, in the likeness of Sarah: on the behavior of men towards women. On meekness and mercy towards all, of which the type was God's kindness in Noah, and in us, however, the compassion of Christ through baptism.
5. On the rejection of wrongful actions and the recovery of fruits in the spirit according to the diversity of gifts.
6. That from the fellowship with Christ it is necessary to overcome natural adversities, and from hope to bear losses inflicted by others.

7. Admonition of the priests concerning the care and visitation of the flock: in which it also addresses the common modesty of all towards individuals, for victory against the Devil.
 8. Prayer for the perfection of the believers.
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PETER THE APOSTLE
THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE

CHAPTER 1

Of regeneration in Christ, and of patience in temptations and afflictions,
and of the saving faith which was foretold by the prophets.

1 Peter 1:1-2 Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen sojourners of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace to you and peace be multiplied.

The series and order are now collected: *Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.* The rest, however, will be placed by interjection: for they signify to whom the letter is written. However, that particle is used *according to the foreknowledge of God*, to signify that there is no prophet who is inferior in

anything, except in time. That they were sent, says Isaiah: "He has sent me to announce good news to the poor." (Isa. 61:1) But although later times have brought this to pass, it is not, however, the foreknowledge of God; rather, in this, he shows himself equal to Jeremiah, who was known and sanctified before he was formed in the womb and designated as a prophet to the nations. And since the prophets, among other things, had foretold the coming of Christ (for this reason they were sent), he adds the necessity of his apostleship, saying:

"I was sent *in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*," signifying through what is proposed: "This is the manner of my apostleship, to be set apart." The name signifies through *sanctification*: as it is said, "And you shall be to me a peculiar people sanctified," (Deut. 14:2) that is, separated from other nations. Therefore, the manner of his apostleship was to separate through spiritual gifts obedient nations, sprinkled with the passion and blood of Christ, not with the ashes of a heifer, when it must be purified, taken from the pollution of the Gentiles: but with the blood received from the passion of Christ. At the same time, it also touches upon a certain prolog to martyrdom of blood for Christ suffered by those who believe in him: for he who follows the footsteps of the teacher through obedience, when it is absolutely necessary, will not refuse to shed his own blood for him who poured out his for the whole world.

"*Peter, Apostle of Jesus Christ*." Here Peter writes to those who were of the circumcision, as does blessed James, but he indeed addresses all Jews who inhabited the world, wherever they were; however, this one specifically addresses the regions of Pontus in Galatia. He also added Pontus to Galatia. For there is another Galatia near the Celts which is also truly Galatia, from which those he is now discussing had migrated. Therefore, he directs his speech to these and other nations which are mentioned in the

preface, using this letter universally or generally. The series of letters is therefore this, with the addition of those things that have been said through deficiency for the sake of manifestation, for this reason also he employs rearrangement and the alteration of figures to the word.

Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ... receiving the end of your faith¹, and what is that? Salvation of the soul: concerning which salvation even the prophets searched and inquired,

"To the chosen sojourners." Sojourners, either because of dispersion he said, or also because all who live according to God are sojourners on earth, as David also says: "I am a sojourner with you and a pilgrim as all my fathers were." (Ps. 38:13) The name "sojourner" [παρεπίδημος] signifies something different from a "newcomer" προσήλυτος. The former indicates someone who has come from elsewhere or from abroad, while the latter παρεπίδημος denotes something more shameful. For just as a πάρεργον, that is, something incidental, is less valuable than an ἔργον, that is, a work, and a πάροδος, that is, a passage, is less than a ὁδός, that is, a way: Indeed, work and way are proper and are pursued with intention, while passage and what is done incidentally are like those things that intrude upon these. Thus, the term παρεπίδημος, as it intrudes upon existence, seems indeed to signify more abjectly than ἐπίδημος.

"grace to you and peace be multiplied." Grace, because you are saved freely, having contributed nothing to it, *"And peace"*, for this is necessary for those who have offended their Lord and have become His enemies.

1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has

begotten us again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Peter blesses God, referring this act of thanksgiving for the good things He grants. But what are those things that are given? Hope, not like the promised dwelling in the land of Canaan through Moses, which hope, being corruptible, promises corruptible things: but *a living hope*. And from where has it received life? From *Jesus Christ who rose from the dead*. For by the fact that He rose, He grants the same resurrection to those who come to Him through faith. Therefore, the *living hope* that is given is an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, not laid up on earth, as it was for the fathers, but in heaven, from where it has also obtained endlessness, which is even greater than the inheritance that is on earth. And for this reason, the preservation and guardianship of the believers: for even this the Lord prayed, saying: "Holy Father, keep them." (Jn. 17:11) But also power. And what is patience? That which endures until the revelation or manifestation of the Lord. For if the protection were not powerful, it would not last for such a long time. Therefore, since there are such great and such things that are given, it is not absurd that joy follows those who receive. However, since the master's promise brings not joy but sorrow by saying: "In the world, you will have tribulation," (Jn. 16:33) he adds a little to the exultation. And because it is sad, he adds "Now," speaking in accordance with his leader, who says: "In the world, you will have tribulation," but your sorrow will turn into joy. Either what he said "Now" or "But," is added for the sake of exultation, as if the exultation that will follow will not last for a little while, but for a long and infinite time. Or "A little," refers to what is sorrowful, so that the sense here is: If it is necessary, we are now sorrowful for a little while through various tribulations. But since afflictions bring about turmoil, he added the reason for afflictions, that through these your faith is made more manifest

and more precious than gold, since that which is tested by fire is more valuable to men. Peter also adds: If it is necessary, for not every faithful person is tested through affliction, nor is every sinner. Yet neither does each of these always rejoice: the just are indeed afflicted for the increase of their crowns, while sinners suffer to pay the penalties of their sins. However, not all the just are afflicted, lest you attribute vice to praise and detest virtue. Nor are all sinners afflicted, lest there be a loss of hope in the resurrection, as if all those who are their own receive here.

1 Peter 1:4-9 *In an incorruptible and undefiled inheritance, and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. In which you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found in praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy, inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

If there is an inheritance in heaven, the restoration of things is magnificent in a thousand years.

"In which you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary." This is the order: affected by sorrow now, if necessary, that is, if this also should be (for not all saints are afflicted) at the end of time you will rejoice, for the present is accepted for the future. Or even through the present, as is declared in the following.

"*In praise, honor.*" It signifies the reason why the righteous are afflicted through these things, while also comforting them, because through afflictions they become more manifest: and making them more diligent by adding:

at the revelation of Jesus Christ, at that time, through the demonstration of sufferings, a great nobility will be added to those who have competed. Moreover, he adds another thing that attracts to the endurance of afflictions. What is that?

"*whom having not seen, you love.*" For if, when you do not see him with bodily eyes, you love him solely by hearing, he says, consider how great a love you will show when you see him, and that when he is manifested in glory: for if his passion has so attracted you, how much will his manifestation affect you with incredible splendor, when he will even grant you the salvation of souls as a reward? Therefore, in order that you may be known in such a way, also receiving such glory, show the briefest endurance in time, and you will have the highest goal of your purpose.

1 Peter 1:10-12 *Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to come to you searched and investigated carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance about the sufferings that would come upon Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the Gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; into which angels long to see.*

Since Peter had made mention of the salvation of the soul: however, this was not clear, but he brings forth the prophets who inquired and studied about it. For they inquired about future events: as Daniel did, who was called a man of desires by the angel, who gave him divine responses. (Dan. 9:23)

"inquiring what person or time the Spirit." To that, namely the consummation of the age: such as when the Jews, through various captivities, deviating from the perfect worship of God, were constituted towards the mystery of Christ. Note, however, that the spirit of Christ openly contemplates and discusses Christ. Moreover, this Spirit signified the afflictions of Christ, as Isaiah indeed says: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter." (Isa. 53:7) And through Jeremiah: "Come, let us put wood in his bread." (Jer. 11:19) Moreover, the resurrection through Hosea: "On the third day we will be raised up before Him, and we will pursue Him to know the Lord; as the dawn is ready, we will find Him." (Hos. 6:2-3) However, it has been revealed not for Himself, but for you. Moreover, these two things he does with these words: Peter shows the providence of the prophets, and that those who are now called to the faith of Christ were foreknown by God before the foundation of the world. Indeed, through the foresight of the prophets, he leads them, so that they are not unbelieving regarding those whom the prophets greatly cared for, for their own benefit: for neither do wise sons despise their father's labors. Indeed, if they sought and found these things, when they would not benefit themselves, and committed the findings to books, as if transmitting an inheritance to us, we would act unjustly, he says, if we were negligent in these matters: therefore, do not show our gospel as empty, leading you who announce these things to you, as rejected and insignificant. Therefore, these things are from the providence of the prophets. Through this, however, that they were foreknown by God, they are terrified lest they present themselves as unworthy by divine

foreknowledge or by His calling, but they urge and inspire each other, so that they may be deemed worthy of the gift of Christ.

"through those who preached the Gospel to you." If both the prophets and these have effectively worked through the Holy Spirit: indeed, those in prophecy, and these in the Gospel: nothing is different from the prophets for them: therefore, you must bring the same diligence that those who were obedient to the prophets, lest you be subjected to the same punishment as those who were unbelieving towards the prophets.

It must be noted, however, that through this mystery of the Trinity, Peter reveals: the Son and the Spirit when he says *"the Spirit of Christ,"* but the Father in what follows, *"from heaven."* Moreover, when he says *"from heaven,"* do not take it according to place, but understand it as excellence, because it especially applies to God.

"by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven." Peter speaks of what had happened on the day of Pentecost.

However, that *"into which angels longed to see"* means that which angels also desire; for this reason, even while such things were happening, they sang out of abundant joy: *"Glory to God in the highest."* (Luke 1:14)

From hope and sanctification and firm conversion, which is necessary in addition to adoption.

1 Peter 1:13-16 *Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope perfectly for the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, in your ignorance: but as He who called*

you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written: "Be holy, for I am holy." [Lev. 19:2]

For this reason, an exhortation is brought forth from those things which were previously held in honor. For when it was said, The prophets provided you with what concerns your salvation, and these were so admirable that even angels were made agreeable: and that they themselves also demonstrated that these things were agreeable in that they sweetly sang from abundant joy at the birth of Christ, "Glory to God in the highest." (Luke 1:14) Therefore, having said this, he adds for their sake, saying: "Since these things have been administered to you all, both agreeable and most desirable, not only to men but also to angels, therefore do not be negligent in being affected by these things, but directing yourselves and arranging yourselves with courage. For this signifies the girding of the loins: which Job was also commanded by God. (Job 38,40) He explains what he means by loins, saying that they refer to those who are of the *mind*. Therefore, he says, prepared, perfectly *sober*; *hope perfectly in the grace that is brought to you*. Moreover, this is what he said a little earlier, concerning the second coming of the Lord; consider that he did not simply say, "Sober," but added "*perfectly*," as if the law had provided a slender and introductory soberness.

Conforming [Συσχηματίζειν], however, means to shape and adapt oneself to the present circumstances. This is also what some foolish people now say: Conform yourself to affairs and business. Therefore, it commands to renounce such vanities: whether those who were previously knowledgeable and wise, or those who ignorantly clung to these. But now, he says, you, and those like you, *be holy* yourselves.

1 Peter 1:17-19 And if you call upon the Father, him which without respect of persons, judges according to

every one's work: in fear of turning, you spend your time in your dwelling. 18 Knowing that not with corruptible things, gold or silver, you are redeemed from your vain conversation of your fathers' tradition. 19 But with the precious blood as it were of an immaculate and unspotted Lamb, Christ.

Gathering and with much exaggeration: first from the angels who are affected by a longing spirit for these things: then from the description of what is just again: from that which is necessary. For since they *call upon God as Father*, it is necessary that those who desire adoption, which are worthy of the Father, should act: and fourthly, since they have received countless goods, through the established price for them: that is the blood of Christ which was given as a price for those who had sold themselves to evil through sin. After these things, he commands to have a continuous *fear* throughout life: not the initial one, for this has a ensuing punishment, but perfect *fear*. For perfect *fear* always accompanies the *holy* ones, lest anything be lacking to them of what is fitting for the perfect. Consider how, when it has been said by Christ, "The Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son," (Jn. 5:22) Peter now says that the *Father* judges. To which we say that the Son can do nothing except what he sees the Father doing: for this is what Christ also said. Furthermore, this shows that it is inherent to the Holy Trinity: and that the divine operations are not divided among the persons we see in it: but there is both complete identity and a peaceful concord free from strife. Therefore, he said without distinction that the Father judges: as if it were truly and universally considered common to all, whatever another might say is divinely accomplished by one of the three. Moreover, since the Lord frequently calls the apostles sons, and said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven," (Mark 2:5) and to the woman who suffered from a flow of blood, "Daughter, your faith has made

you well," (Mark 5:34) there is nothing obscure or absurd if he also calls this one the father of the offspring whom he generated through the sharing of holiness.

"*In fear of turning.*" According to this limit of perfection, it was also said by the blessed David: "Fear the Lord, all you His saints, for there is nothing lacking to those who fear Him." (Ps. 38:10)

1 Peter 1:20-25 *He was indeed predetermined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God: since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit. Love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever: because all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls away: but the word of the Lord endures forever. Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.*

Peter connected the death of Christ with the resurrection. For he fears the easy change of beginners in faith to skepticism, due to the disgrace of Christ's afflictions, but he says there is no recent mystery about Christ: since this also disturbs the foolish; but in former times and *before the foundation of the world*, it had been hidden by divine providence until the opportune time, indeed it was revealed to the prophets who inquired about these things, as he had said a little earlier, now, however, he says, it is more manifest, because what had been *foreknown before the foundation of the world*, namely by God, is now *revealed*, whether completed or perfected. And he adds because of whom

it may be perfect, namely because of you. For because of you, he says, he *raised him from the dead*. But why because of you? So that when you have *purified yourselves by obeying the truth through the Spirit, you may have faith and hope in God*. And how have you purified yourselves? Because by believing in Him who has proclaimed to you the resurrection from the dead to an incorruptible life, you are debtors to Him who, being incorruptible, called you to walk in newness of life.

But if both Peter and Paul say that the Father raised the Lord from the dead, do not be disturbed: for now they are using introductory teachings to say these things. For listen to Christ saying that he raised himself, when he says: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (Jn. 2:19) But also Luke: "To whom he also showed himself alive, after he had suffered." (Acts 1:3) And again Christ himself: "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." (Jn. 10:18) Therefore, in a certain dispensation, the Son's resurrection is sometimes referred to the Father, to show the unity of the operation of the Father and the Son.

The sequence of the letters is as follows: *He was indeed predetermined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory: so that you may purify your souls (in fact, ὥστε is taken for 'so that') in obeying the truth, having faith and hope in God*. For it is accepted that εἶναι means "to have", because of the preceding. For if ὥστε is left in its meaning as stated, the sentence will be incoherent and unintelligible.

"*Love one another fervently*." In this way, it must be said: *That you may have faith and hope in God, when you have purified your souls through obedience to the truth, that is, when you have prepared yourselves for obedience to the truth through the Spirit*.

For the obedience in evils and lies is not through the Spirit, that is, it is not spiritual. Since purification for obedience or preparation, exercise, care, also wishes to attract many other helpers, provided it is spiritual and free from envy: but this is the work of *fervent love*, making a neighbor a participant in the goods that someone has obtained: therefore, it adds: to *love fervently*, devoid of hypocrisy. However, this is subjected by deficiency: for it is familiar to the blessed apostles, as it is also found in blessed James, "Who is wise among you and endowed with knowledge?" (James 3:13) And again: "Now you who say, 'Today and tomorrow,'" (James 5:1) and many other similar things. That spiritual ones should, in turn, make others partakers of all good things with utmost diligence, can be learned from what he says elsewhere: "I indeed consider them to be mutual for the provocation of love," (Heb. 10:24) that is, to sharpen and stir it up.

Because all flesh is grass. When Peter said, "*not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever*," he also adds, by casting down and despising the easy corruption of human glory, and so to speak, its non-subsistence, enticing the listeners to cling to those things which are proposed by themselves, as those which have subsistence and endlessness. However, the subsistence of those things that come to corruption is here called *grass* and the *flower of grass*. Moreover, the weakness of the subsistence of grass is brought to a greater faith of the word: with which David compares our life. (Ps. 41:1) Wherever, therefore, it shows our glory to be so worthless, it again repeats and teaches more openly what it is that has regenerated them *through the word of God which lives and abides forever*, and it says:

"But this is the word that has been announced to you." That which remains forever is confirmed in the same way with the Lord. For He Himself said: "*Heaven and earth will pass away*,

but my words will not pass away." (Matt. 24:35) Moreover, it must be known that this should be expressed: "*Love one another fervently* should be expressed in a manner free from all deceit." For such outcomes tend to follow those which are treated and carried out for their sake. Therefore, since mutual love from the world leads to fervent love that is unaware of deceit, it is rightly done that "*From the world*" precedes, and "*To love fervently*" follows. It should be noted that the preposition εἰς, that is, "unto", is translated into διὰ, that is, "for the sake of", so that the sense is: for the sake of "*Love one another fervently*."

CHAPTER 2

That it may be lived worthily according to the adoption through Christ, for the benefit also of those who are strangers, to the glory of God.

1 Peter 2:1-6 Therefore, laying aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisies and envies, and all slanders, like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good: to whom coming as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and honorable, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also contained in the Scripture: Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes in Him will by no means be put to shame. [Isa. 28:16]

Where the excellence of spiritual rebirth shows above birth according to the flesh, and demonstrates the despair of mortal glory: for birth is indeed corruptible and filthy, while glory is not

different from those things that germinate in springtime: it shows that the same does not occur in the Lord's word. For all human opinion soon ceases, but not so the word of God; rather, it has a perpetual duration and true promises. For that is what the addition means, "The word which by the gospel was preached to you." (1 Peter 1:25) When he had woven this in the preceding parts, taking from each what is useful and tends toward necessary use, he adapts the teaching to moral discourse, and says:

Therefore, laying aside all malice, designating so many and such things with these few words. For those who are reborn to incorruptible life, it is unworthy to be caught in the snares of malice, and to prefer what is not to what truly is. For malice is not substance, but revolves around the vice of created substance. However, there is a great distinction between the life that subsists and that which has only loyalty to what subsists. These, however, are worthy, he says, to be shown to be free from *deceit and hypocrisies and from envies, and all slanders*. Indeed, *deceit and hypocrisies* are far from "the word which by the gospel was preached to you," (1 Peter 1:25) as *deceit* leads to the destruction of those who are seduced, while *hypocrisies* proceed in variation and change of that which is: against which the valuable discourse that has instructed you seems to proceed. But what place will envy and slander have in you, who, bound by the solid bond of brotherly love, can receive harm from any discord stirring up? Moreover, he who does not know that envy and slander are the causes of discord and brotherly hatred is unaware of both Cain and the tragedy that surrounded him, who, because of envy, was torn from brotherly union, and conceived deceit, hypocrisy, and murder. (Gen. 4:1) But he is pure from slander who is envious, provided that Joseph's brothers are deemed suitable to confirm the speech, who reported this to the father about countless matters. (Gen. 37:1)

Therefore, Peter said, purifying yourselves from all these things, *as newborn infants*, approach (for such is the kingdom of God, as the Lord has demonstrated [Luke 17:16]) and grow up in the word of malice, until you reach the measure of the fullness of Christ's age. (Eph. 6:14)

For *when you have tasted*, that is, when you have progressed through the practice of the sacred commandments according to the Gospel, you have recognized the sweetness of the doctrine by sense: for sense is more effective than any word for knowledge, since that which reaches experience is more pleasing than any word. Therefore, as you have *tasted the Lord is good*, show the goodness of sweetness to others, and apply yourselves to Him *as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and honorable*, who has also been proclaimed through the prophets: being bound to one another in love, and being fitted together for the completion of a *spiritual house*, having no care for contempt among men: for neither did Christ, *the cornerstone*, have that care, who was *rejected* by them: and being built up and perfected into a *spiritual house* by yourselves, demonstrating a *holy priesthood*, offer *spiritual sacrifices*, which are far more *acceptable to God* than sacrifices lacking reason. For you cannot, without a firm bond of mutual love, offer pure sacrifices to God. For it is said: "Lifting up holy hands without anger and disputes." (1 Tim. 2:8) For how can one who strives to unite himself with God through prayer achieve this, while separating himself from his brother through anger and wicked disputes?

1 Peter 2:7-12 *To you therefore who believe, honor is given. But to those who do not believe, the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner, and a stone to stumble over, and a rock to offend: namely, to those who stumble at the word, being*

disobedient to that which they were also appointed. But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who have obtained mercy, that you may proclaim the virtues of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light: who once were not a people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beg you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul: have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that in that which they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

"To you therefore who believe, honor is given." To God, namely, who said, I lay, *honor is given*: but against the unbelievers, this is what God now says: I lay for you in Sion *a stone* on which you will *stumble over*: which is both a rock to which they will stumble, and a rock on which they will stumble if they fall: who, namely, the unbelievers, remaining in *the word*, stumble over it: for which, namely, *they were also appointed*. Therefore, the whole part must be ordered in this way: Behold, I lay in Sion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes in Him will by no means be put to shame [Isa. 28:16]: precious to you who believe, but to the unbelievers, a stone over which they will stumble: which stone the builders rejected, but has become the head of the corner, uniting the believers into one: but to the fallen, it is for those who stumble, namely, not believing in the word of the Gospel.

"to that which they were also appointed." not as if they are separated from God, this has been said. For no cause of destruction is administered by Him who desires all men to be saved, but those who have made themselves vessels of wrath, and unbelief has followed, and in that order they have been given to what they had prepared themselves for. For if man has been made free in will, and cannot be obligated in free will, no one could respectfully accuse him who has decreed such a fate for himself, which he has brought upon himself through his own actions.

Furthermore, Christ is called *the head of the corner*, as he completes the two walls of the Father's house, joining those who were from the nations and the Jews through his own contract, and adapting them into one fitting unity: indeed removing useless sacrifices from the midst, while transferring demonic superstition to the true worship of God.

"*But you are a chosen generation.*" After criticizing the wickedness of the morals of the unbelievers, and that they had become the cause of their own unbelief, Peter now turns to praise those who had excelled, saying: *You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood*: as if to say: They, indeed, through their hardness and disobedience have stumbled upon the cornerstone, but they were not co-built; but you, on the contrary, have been built up into *a royal priesthood* through obedience: as a *chosen generation, as a holy nation*. But let them not dissolve themselves with excessive praise: and furthermore, let them not seem to have a certain inherited right as if they were a holy people and the other things that follow: and that they were considered worthy of such honor because they were of the lineage of Abraham, nor had they ever stumbled, he adds, suppressing their pride, and says: Do not be exalted because of your lineage; for you were not chosen for the royal priesthood because of Abraham: for those who descended from him had a priestly tribe distinct from the royal one: therefore, you were not chosen as a people and a lineage, separated for the royal priesthood because of Abraham: for none of these things were said about Abraham, but because of Christ, who is also called a priest according to the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 109:4), a gentle king, just and saving; (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5) who also rode on the colt of an ass.

Therefore, to those who have both, by the merit of the sacred baptismal rebirth, you are called a *chosen generation* and a *royal priesthood*. This you have from *Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*. Therefore, through your works made in the light, announce His virtues to other men. Thus, you have this from His kindness, since you are a people who once were not a people: and who have obtained mercy, *you who once were not a people have now obtained mercy*. Moreover, to ensure that the word is more devoid of hatred, it confirms the word of reproach from Hosea, "Therefore, announce His virtues through good works." (Hos. 2:1) But how do they announce? The Lord

Himself teaches when He says: "Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16)

"a people who have obtained mercy," that is, to possession or inheritance. Indeed, all are God's creation, but the possession belongs only to those who are deemed worthy of this benefit by their own deeds, "that you may announce His virtues." Therefore, He says, you are chosen, so that by obedience you may be called heralds of the virtue of Him who called you.

"Beloved, I beg you." This part must be taken in this way: *Beloved, I beg you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.* It is customary for teachers to introduce moral conduct after the discourse of doctrine: this blessed one also does so now, calling them ἀγαπητοί, that is, beloved or rather lovable and friends, and not ἀγαπώμενοι, that is, somewhat beloved: for all are desirable for everything; for those who are desirable for one thing are called ἀγαπώμενοι, not ἀγάπητοί.

Indeed, he says that *fleshly lusts wage war against the soul*, since according to the blessed Paul, the flesh lusts against the spirit. (Gal. 5:17) For the desires of the flesh, concerning the enjoyment of the senses, confuse reason and make the soul servile.

I beg you, he says, *to have your conversation honest among the Gentiles.* However, the term ἔχειν, that is, "to have", is taken for ἔχοντες, that is, "having". Peter introduces the Gentiles as slanderers against us. But if anyone wishes to learn this, from what has been written by Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, about the martyrs Sanctus and Blandina², it will be possible to know precisely. And as they are proposed briefly in the middle, these are: When the Greeks had apprehended the servants of these Christians, educated in divine mysteries, they then inflicted violence, so that they might learn something secret about the Christians from them: since these servants had no way to speak to those inflicting violence for pleasure and grace, except what they had heard from their masters, that divine communion is the blood and body of Christ, believing themselves that it was truly

blood and flesh, they responded to those inquiring. They, taking this as if it were actually being done by Christians, also revealed it to others among the Greeks: and the martyrs Sanctus and Blandina were compelled to confess this under torture. To whom Blandina spoke freely and wisely, saying: How could they bear this who, for the sake of divine study and meditation, do not even partake of permitted meats? Furthermore, she calls the day of visitation an inquiry of worldly matters. For when the inquiry about our life comes from them, where things are found to be contrary to what their suspicion was, they not only become ashamed, but they themselves are corrected, and God is glorified.

On subjection to superiors, and fraternal love and divine worship: in which he discusses the subjection of servants and the patient endurance for the sake of Christ. On the obedience of women and harmony towards men, and the salvation that is in spirit, in the likeness of Sarah: on the behavior of men towards women. On meekness and mercy towards all, of which the type was God's kindness in Noah, and in us, however, the compassion of Christ through baptism.

1 Peter 2:13-17 *Therefore, be subject to every human creature for the Lord's sake: whether to the king as the supreme authority, or to governors as those sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do well. For it is the will of God that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's servants. Honor everyone, love the brotherhood. Fear God, honor the king.*

The *human creature* is said to be the leaders who have been appointed by *kings*, or even the *kings* themselves, because they too have been established and placed by men. For Scripture knows how to call *creation* a constitution, as when it says: "That he might create two in himself into one new man," (Eph. 2:15) that is, to place or establish. Therefore, it says: "Be subject to human authorities; be subject *for the Lord's sake*." *For the Lord's sake*, that is, as the Lord has commanded. But what has the Lord commanded? "Render to Caesar the things that

are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Matt. 22:21) Therefore, in what they command outside of God, that is, what is contrary to or beyond God's constitution, they must not be obeyed. This the Lord and his disciple absolutely command, so that the Greeks might not be able to say that Christianity brings about the subversion of life and politics, and is the cause of disorder and confusion. Moreover, for the Lord, also on account of the faithful. For it was likely that some of them would say: Since we are deemed worthy of the kingdom of heaven, add great dignity to us from it, why then do you again cast us down, subjecting us to worldly princes? If anyone should say this, let him know, he says, that this kind of command is not mine, but the Lord's. However, Peter also shows to whom and to what kind of princes it is necessary to be subject, namely to those who uphold what is just. He also adds the reason, because both *the will of God* and the example of our righteousness is in submission to princes, and what is more, it brings shame upon the unbelievers. For when they speak ill of us as being arrogant and stubborn and disobedient, seeing us humble and obedient in what is necessary, their mouths are more shut and they are put to shame.

"as free people." The order is this: Be subject as free people, and not using *your freedom as a cover-up for evil*, but also as servants of God. Not only honor the princes, but also *everyone*: indeed, those who *love brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king*. However, as if they were free, John Chrysostom³ explained it this way, saying: "Let them not say, 'We are free from the world, we have become citizens of heaven, and you again subject us to princes and command us to obey?'" Therefore Peter says: "So obey as if you were free," that is, as if complying with him who has freed you, and this he has commanded. For you should not have in mind evil, that is, the excuse for disobedience and stubbornness, for the very freedom for which you refuse to obey. However, according to another consideration, something can also be said about this matter. A person is *free* according to the Lord, who does not obey anything absurd. Therefore, since living in hypocrisy is not free, but that of one who is subject to passions, whether of flattery or any other dishonorable pleasure: for which someone also pretends to be in pretense, lest it appear what he is, and to whom he has endured to

serve (this, however, is foreign and alien to the servants of God), he now commands that subjection be shown to princes, with true and not fictitious morals, lest we exhibit a forced subjection towards them as if hostile; and when such evil lies hidden in us, which is certainly sincere and simple, let us make a ploy and veil of manners, exhibiting an apparent subjection, and not one that proceeds from affection.

"*Fear God.*" Consider carefully how the fear of God is said to be distributed, and *honor to the king*, so that if fear is to be given to God, who can destroy both soul and body (Matt. 10:28), we should by no means obey kings when they urge us to do something absurd. For fear knows how to conquer even the honor that is given to kings; moreover, it will deprive of honor those who are compelled by them to do evil, according to the holy one who said: "The wicked are brought low before him." (Ps. 14:4)

1 Peter 2:18-25 *Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the unjust. For this is grace, if anyone endures grief for the sake of conscience toward God when suffering unjustly. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your sins, you take it patiently? But if, when you do good and suffer for it, you take it patiently, this is praiseworthy before God. For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.*

"*Servants, be subject.*" It must be understood that it means, that is, you are, just as when he said, Wives (1 Peter 3:1). "*with all fear.*" Fear is

expressed in many ways: it is called fear and also that which is with knowledge, which is now understood through *Conscience*, which is also called reverence with fear; it is also called painful fear, which is experienced by some through the punishment, which even wild animals fear; it is again called initial fear which follows those approaching the Lord, because they are aware of many things that provoke punishment: therefore the harlot mentioned in the Gospel, fearing, approached Christ (Luke 7:37); but perfect fear is again said to be that which is always present with all the saints, fearing lest anything be lacking in them for what is fitting for those who have been taken up to perfect love: therefore, since fear is expressed in many ways, whether it is just for servants to be presented to their masters through all these means, he who now encourages servants to be subject to their masters with all fear would not deny: since both initial and perfect fear would be present, it would rightly affect them: there, indeed, that they might fear, lest anything happen to them because of their offenses for which there would be no remedy; here, however, that they might not even think of anything, which, if accomplished, would be ungrateful to their master. Now, therefore, he speaks of fear that is due to conscience, that is, which occurs with a right conscience of reason: when, indeed, evil masters afflict their servants who have committed nothing. Therefore, judging this fear as worthy of praise, he commands that it be received with patience. Since those who have fear because of sins, whether those they have committed or even those they have not observed to do, are indeed good servants if they endure anything because of that, and are inclined towards correction: but they are not yet endowed with such great wisdom of mind as they would be if they endured affliction with a grateful heart, even when they were not conscious of any evil. This is great, this is also fulfilled by few; it is commended before God, as responding to the afflictions of Christ; since he himself, he says, did not suffer for his own sins: *for he committed no sin*, but suffered for us and for our transgressions. (Is. 53:8)

From the iniquities of my people, or because of the iniquities of the people, he was led to death, the prophet says (Is. 53:5), he places fear to be praised. However, he also wishes to retain servants with other fears: which is evident from what he says: *with all fear*. Moreover, he rightly and skillfully placed above other fears the fear that is due to *conscience*

towards God, and demonstrated with the truest discourse that this alone is worthy of praise, for indeed they have a cause for the wrath of their masters against them, but here there is never anything of the sort.

"but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously," namely God, who gives to each according to their works (Rom. 2:6): this is just. But perhaps someone will say: How does Peter now say that the Lord, when he was being reviled, did not return reviling, and when he was suffering evil, did not threaten? Yet we see him calling some Jews dogs (Matt. 7:16; 15:26), and blind Pharisees (Matt. 15:14; 22:16), and threatening the Jews when he said: "It would be better for that man if he had not been born;" (Matt. 26:34) and: "It will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city;" (Matt. 10:15) and: "Where their worm does not die," (Mark 9:48) and countless other things. We will say, therefore, that he does not say the Lord did not speak reviling, or did not threaten: but, when he was being reviled, he says he did not return reviling, and when he was suffering evil, he did not threaten. But although he might have uttered some reviling, he was not opposing those who reviled him, but reproaching and rebuking those who did not convert. However, when he was affected by reproaches and heard: "You have a demon," (Jn. 7:20; 8:48) and: "By the prince of demons he casts out demons," (Matt. 7:24; 9:34) and: "Behold, a glutton and a wine-drinker," (Matt. 9:19) did he direct reviling against them, saying something reproachful against them? Not at all, but he indeed said to them: "If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out?" (Matt. 7:27) Indeed, this man, a ravenous eater and drinker of wine, opposed the parable of the indignant children in the marketplace against those with whom they conspired, that when they played the flutes, they did not dance; when they sang lamentations, they did not weep. However, crucified and afflicted by punishments, he prayed rather than threatened the Jew before he would betray, and being affected by some evil, he threatened, restraining him from evil intent. Similarly, he showed those who would not receive the disciples that they would suffer something worse than the Sodomites: partly indeed urging them towards hospitality, partly opening a place for the preaching of the Gospel through fear. Therefore, he did not threaten these things while he was being afflicted by evils; and the word of Peter concerning the Lord's

mercy is very true, saying that he did not bring any accusation against anyone while they attempted to accuse him.

"*As dead to sins.*" For having become estranged by sins, (ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι), it is taken for ἀποθάνοντες, that is, dead.

"*by whose stripes you were healed.*" For having been scourged by Pilate, he also bore scourges in the body.

CHAPTER 3

1 Peter 3:1-7 *Similarly, wives should be subject to their husbands, so that even those who do not obey the word may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. Let your adornment not be external, consisting of braiding hair and the wearing of gold, or of fine clothing; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious. For in this way, holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, being subject to their husbands, just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him master. And you are her daughters if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

Concluding this discourse on morals; namely through kings, through presidents, through masters, through servants; since it has also been established that subjects should be subjected to kings and presidents in what is necessary and in what is appropriate, and through this it is shown that those princes who have laws as a certain incentive of justice, will not be condemned for those things they have done according to them: but in those cases where they have acted unjustly and without judgment and tyrannically against them, they will also

perish through these. Indeed, the law was given to them for the benefit of the nations, as Paul also proclaims (Gal. 3:19). But also the authorities, just like the laws, were given for the benefit, and not as some wrongly wish, namely that the power of those who are on earth comes from the Devil: who supports this Devil by saying to the Lord: "All these things have been given to me, and I give them to whomever I wish." (Luke 4:6) For it is not by his command that kings are established, who have been given for the correction of evildoers, since the Devil does not bring about anything like this to be administered among men. For powers and princes have been given by God, partly for the preservation of justice and the correction and benefit of the subjects, partly indeed out of fear for the punishment and correction of wrongdoers; partly also to punish with fitting punishment those who are unruly. Therefore, this having been shown, and that it is good to be subjected, or to be disobedient is evil, where it would also have been established in the same way that servants should obey their earthly masters, and that those who are afflicted and endure without cause by evil masters should receive the greatest praise: where in some way this would have recalled to the order of masters also through the slander of evil masters: it then also passes to the assembly of women, and says;

Let these two things concern women or wives, *to be subject to their husbands*, and to show themselves alienated from all *adornment* and culture, imitating *holy women*, for they too, he says, knew only this form of worship, namely obedience to their husbands. And what profit will come from this? The good imitation of those who are outside of the faith, which is also generated from our subjection to the rulers, and the praise of God on our behalf coming from them: this also greatly contributes to the praise of Christians, namely that for our sake He is not spoken ill of, but rather the name of God is blessed. But where he said "*holy women*" indefinitely, he also specifically adds *Sarah*: and proceeding in an encouraging manner, he calls them *daughters* of this Sarah, whether according to faith or even according to lineage. For it is necessary for daughters to imitate their mothers. With honest truth and decent Christian conduct, it also admonishes them to be merciful, without fearing the accounting of their husbands. For this indicates that they are not afraid of any terror. For it was likely that husbands would

sometimes revisit the account of expenses. In this way, having raised the discourse, where Peter encouraged the female sex to be more generous towards their household, he also moderates the harshness of men towards their wives, and says:

"Husbands, living together in an understanding way, that is, learning through experience the triviality and folly of women in all things and their carnality in fear, be patient with them, not strictly reevaluating the accounts of what has been entrusted to them for safekeeping." However, as we said, the more freely they persist in giving to the poor, he admonishes men not to be demanding investigators. Yet, it seems to me that something deeper is suggested through this, and more charming and casual than what Paul hints at regarding the marital act. For Paul openly cries out: "Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by mutual consent," etc. (1 Corinthians 7:5) Here, however, more modestly, as we said, speaking of *understanding* and thereby designating the matter itself, Peter advises, since the female sex is more prone to this slippery behavior, not to drive them away with harsh criticisms, but rather to treat them gently as the weaker ones, and then to persuade them to adopt some moderation in abstaining from such things: for this is what he wants to signify (moderation, I say, or abstinence) by saying,

"showing honor"; for honor does not follow unless someone looks towards something. Therefore, as to the weaker ones or even as co-heirs of the *grace of life*, it is necessary to use life in the custom of such people. And that we have not misused this understanding is made clear by what follows, when he says:

"that your prayers may not be hindered." For what kind of interruption of prayers can a man's severity towards his wife bring? Indeed, this negligence brings great attention and eagerness during the time of prayer. Therefore, it seems to me that this should be said. Furthermore, if someone has indicated this better, I certainly do not envy.

"without a word." Whether by ceasing all speech and all response, or because a demonstration through deeds is more effective than the anxious diligence found in words: for a silent deed is more excellent than a work deprived of speech.

"but let it be the hidden man of the heart." For all the glory of the king's daughter comes from within. "All her glory is that of the daughter of the king." (Ps. 44:14) For he knows here by blessed David (Ps. 19:14), and Paul (Eph. 3:16) is another inward man from the outer.

"They adorn themselves." Do you see that this refers to adornment or decoration as subjection?

1 Peter 3:8-16 *In summary, all of you, be united, compassionate, endowed with fraternal love, merciful, approachable, humility not repaying evil for evil or insult for insult, but instead blessing: knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. For whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil. And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. And always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear: having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.*

Free from the ordinances that concerned both men and women, Peter then presents a common exhortation to all men, women, youths, adolescents, kings, leaders, subjects, and those who are governed, foreigners, citizens, the rich, and the poor. Therefore, he adds: "*In summary.*" That is, what is the need to discuss in detail? I say simply to *all of you*. For this signifies *summary*/τέλος): and this refers to the goal of salvation proposed to all, and this is the law of love; established for all, from which all virtue proceeds, namely, the modesty of the soul, compassion, mercy, and other similar virtues which he enumerated,

the *united* indeed being harmony without discrimination about something with a willing spirit:

compassionate, however, is pity towards those who are afflicted as if towards oneself:

fraternal, on the other hand, is the due affection towards relatives as towards brothers.

Again, *merciful* is the movement from the soul to do good towards those who are in the same condition.

Indeed, *approachable* or benevolence is kindness and courtesy towards all, which also extends towards those of similar character and towards friends.

Humility, however, or modesty of the soul, is bearing another's insults, acknowledging one's own sins, and enduring accusations, which could also be a form of kindness of the soul.

Indeed, *insult* arises from a corrupt habit, which is rooted in the reproach of others. With these, Peter says, adorned with the aforementioned virtues, moreover, you should not be easily captured by warfare: furthermore, competitors are also directed by the divine way of living. For he who is blessed by all must certainly also be a competitor. And he brings in David (Ps. 34:12-15) as a witness saying:

For whoever desires to love life? Life, I say, not in which even irrational beings exist, but in which man lives according to God, and days that are not bad, but good. For the days of this age, according to the patriarch Jacob, are few and evil. (Gen. 47:9) But where the prophetic oracle concludes, because it was placed therein:

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil: Peter adds to these: If you live in this way, you will have God as gracious and obedient. Therefore, who, with Him standing by you, will boldly attack you? For all things are in His hand; death and life are in the hand of the Lord. Nevertheless, since the afflictions imposed for the sake of faith seemed to some to be evil, the blessed Peter correcting this said: *not repaying evil for evil or insult for*

insult, but instead blessing. For the fear awaiting from men should not be regarded, but it lasts only for a very short time, as it comes from those who themselves pass away very quickly.

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil, threatening destruction to the wicked. Indeed, if these evils were present, surely the distributor of good things would not allow His beloved ones to be afflicted by evils: for He sends evils upon the wicked. Therefore, these are not evils, but afflictions inflicted for the sake of devotion. Furthermore, God commands "to sanctify Him in the hearts," as Isaiah says (Is. 8:13): this means, do not glory in those things that appear, but in the hidden treasury of your hearts, working the sanctification of the Lord, which consists in the separation of the nations from their abominations or wicked customs;

thus *sanctify* Him. However, being sanctified, while others glorify Him through your good conduct, just as God and man Himself commands when He says: "Let your light shine before men," etc. (Matt. 5:16) What is said about being ready is connected to the previous part, for example,

"all of you, be united." The word "*be*" is also attributed to the common understanding, so the meaning is: "May you always be ready." He wants to command that a faithful person should always be prepared regarding the discourse of faith, so that at any time when a reason concerning it is sought from us, we may easily respond;

moreover, in responding, let us do so with *meekness*, as if God Himself were present: no diligent servant would be arrogant in the presence of his master. It also adds the profit that follows from this, namely, the inquiry of the unbelievers and the kindness of the mind towards us. However, it should be noted that these are not contrary to what has been said by the Lord, for He indeed commands not to be anxious about what we should answer when we are brought before rulers and authorities. (Matt. 10:19) Indeed, the Lord's words about martyrdom were spoken, as He also says that virtue and a more powerful discourse should be given than any human wisdom, and that one who despises the surrounding fears: however, Peter's opinion speaks of doctrine. For

without understanding and inquiry, it is worthy of reproach to think one knows something. For the knowledge of the foolish is an unprofitable discourse. (Eccles. 21:21) Moreover, since we were accused of various wicked things, and they also showed that our hope was vain, he says that we should bring forth considered responses about these things, having at the same time a proven life, which he certainly calls *conscience*.

"knowing that you were called to this." The order is with the aforementioned structure. In summary, or I may say absolutely, may you all be unanimous and so forth, knowing that you have been called to this, to bless, that is, to bless all. For Paul says: "Bless those who persecute you." (Rom. 12:14) By doing this, you will inherit the name, so that you may be heard by all as those who bless. For it is not just to bring reproach upon anyone who clings to eternal life. Therefore, David also advises to have a pure tongue from reproach for one who is affected with a loving heart towards true life, etc. (Ps. 15:3) Thus, being prepared, you will have the omnipotent and all-seeing inspector kindly observing you, not with a stern or angry mind, as he looks upon those who do evil. If this is the case, *who will harm you?* And if you are afflicted while you are doers and initiators of good, do not be of little spirit, but rejoice: first of all, because these things are not evil; and also, because *you are blessed* and not miserable because of these things.

Therefore, *sanctify God in your hearts*, and do not be afraid of human fear nor be troubled. But *always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you*. And do this with the demonstration of good actions. For by doing so gently and with kindness, you will confirm that you are well aware of yourselves, and you will shame those who have evil suspicions about you.

"Having a good conscience." That is, while you are well aware of yourselves and not evil, as those who slander you are.

"that when they defame you." That is, those who create trouble with words, harshly investigating.

1 Peter 3:17-18 *For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil: for Christ also died once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.*

This is the explanation of the cause not relating to what has been said immediately, but to what was mentioned a little earlier, for example: "if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed" (1 Peter 3:14); [now Peter says] *for it is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil*. Or if someone wants to refer to the immediately preceding explanation of the cause: what is said about doing good should not be understood as pertaining to someone else *doing good*, but absolutely, that is, as doing good works. Similarly, it applies to those *doing evil*.

Peter also adds: "*if that should be God's will*," indicating that nothing happens to us without God's will, but either for the easing of sins, or for our praise and glory, or even for the salvation of others. This happens in two ways. Either a righteous person is afflicted for the correction of others' sins, as it has been said: If the righteous is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly appear? (1 Peter 4:18; See Proverbs 11:31 LXX) And this also presents twofold usefulness: for the just one who is afflicted, an increase in righteousness due to patience; for the sinner who observes, conversion, as we have said.

Therefore, the just man suffers for these reasons: either for the salvation of others, as Christ did. And for this reason, Peter now adds the example of Christ: *for Christ died* not for His own sins, but for ours.

Therefore, Peter also adds: *righteous for the unrighteous*. For He, as previously shown through the prophet, had not committed sin. However, showing the effectiveness and power of Him who suffered, he adds: *once*. So great, he says, was the strength of

Him who suffered for men, that although He offended many of their sins, the single passion of the Lord was sufficient to overcome all the power of our sins. Therefore, since Christ suffered to bring us to God and His Father, it is shown that not all who suffer do so because of sins. And because Christ is considered in a twofold manner, namely God and man, He also bestowed upon us a double grace. For He died as a man, freeing us from death and corruption, renewing for us the resurrection, and giving by His example, that those dying from this time should not face death without the hope of resurrection.

But made alive, that is, rising from the dead by the power of divinity (for He rose from the dead not as a man, but as God), He simultaneously restored to life all who were in Hades, raising them up together with Himself. Indeed, many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, according to the holy evangelist, and were seen by many. (Matt. 27:52) But when Peter has proceeded thus far in his discourse and has shown these things, he then proposes how the dead benefited those who had previously slept. At the same time, with much questioning, if the incarnation of the Lord occurred for the salvation of all men, what kind of salvation did those who had died before receive? He resolves both in one way and says that the death of the Lord accomplished both, namely the hope of action through the fact that he himself has risen, and again the salvation of those who had previously slept. For those who had adorned their lives with good works during the time they lived, just as if Christ had come at that time they would not have been deprived of the preaching that gives life to them, so also at that time through the Lord's descent to Hades they obtained salvation, as it also seems to the divine Gregory⁴. For he himself says: "Does Christ who appeared, namely in Hades, save all simply? Or does he also save those who believed there? For by saying: Those who believed, he signifies that they had prepared themselves in such a

way that if he had come even then, they would have believed.” Nor do I think this should be rejected. Salvation is not held by inheritance, since although it comes to all the living, it does not save all, but only those who believe. Indeed, it was also the work of the free will of individuals, that since they were rational, they would not behave insensibly towards the magnificence of him who had granted such a gift, but would present themselves as worthy of the goodness of the giver. However, he stated, They had been disobedient, thereby resolving a certain objection. For it was likely that someone would say: And what else before Christ was preached, afterwards were they judged or deemed worthy of condemnation who preceded Christ? And since he could demonstrate this, just as Paul did, from the rational powers dispersed among us, which, when given to them, allowed them to discern between good and evil, and yet they did not act according to good afterwards, such were worthy of death; this does not, however, make it so, for that is of a higher consideration and a deeper philosophy than the mind of the Jews could bear: but it confirms disobedience from Scripture; nor is this from the times of the prophets, but almost from the very beginning of the world: from which he demonstrates that salvation was preached to men from the beginning, but was despised due to their inclination towards vain and sensual pleasures.

For even in their time, although there were countless wicked men, only eight, who believed what was proclaimed through the preparation of the ark, were saved (1 Peter 3:20). And because salvation was through water, he immediately applies this to the sacred baptism, and says that that water prefigured our baptism, since it also drowns and submerges unbelieving demons and saves the faithful who come to the ark of the Church. At the same time, he says: Just as water washes away filth, so does baptism. But it does not effect the removal of bodily dirt, rather,

through a symbol, it demonstrates the washing away of the stains of the soul. It is, moreover, as it were, a pledge and guarantee of a good conscience toward God. For those who are well aware of themselves, that is, who embrace a blameless life and earnestly seek and, as it were, inquire after it (for those who seek something are accustomed to inquire), these also hasten to the sacred baptism. And who, he says, provides that divine baptism should be sought and requested? The resurrection of Christ. For before His resurrection and passion it is shown: “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit,” (Jn. 3:5) but after the resurrection: “Baptizing all nations who come, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt. 28:19-20) After he concluded the discourse on the dispensation, I speak now of the descent of the Lord into Hades, and for what reason he also went there—namely, that it was for the salvation of those who were in Hades as well. He again takes another occasion from the death of the Lord to exhort to virtue, and says:

If Christ died in the flesh for us (for he could not die in his immortal and divine nature), then surely you also, repaying him in turn, by dying to sin for his sake, will no longer be captivated by human desires, but will live for the rest of your time in the flesh only for the will of God.

“put to death indeed in the flesh” —that is, by the nature of the flesh, that is, the human nature, but rising by the power of divinity. For God is spirit (Jn. 4:24), just as He Himself, the source and wisdom of theology, has taught us.

1 Peter 3:19-22 *In which also he went and preached to the spirits who were in prison, who had formerly been disobedient, when the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.*

Equivalent to this figure, baptism now saves us, not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the appeal of a good conscience to God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers made subject to Him.

"In which also." Here, ἐν ᾧ is taken causally for "therefore." For when Peter had said that he died for us, the unjust, and from this had shown that he endured death for the salvation of all men, he now says that for this reason also he preached to those who were held in Hades. "Ὁ ἄντίτυπον, etc." (The context of the Greek words here is obscure, and therefore rendered in Latin with more words; yet by rendering the Greek expressions literally, it would be arranged thus:) *that baptism*, corresponding to the figures, *now also saves you*, which is *now not the removal of the filth of the flesh*, but the ἐπερώτημα *of a good conscience*, which is toward *God*, or according to God. Furthermore, ἐπερώτημα, that is, to the *angels*, evidently to the united man.

CHAPTER 4

On the rejection of wrongful actions and the recovery of fruits in the spirit according to the diversity of gifts.

1 Peter 4:1-5 Since Christ suffered in the flesh for you, arm yourselves with the same thought: for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in filthiness, lusts, drunkenness, festivities, drinking parties, and

abominable idolatries. Therefore, it seems strange to them that you do not run with them in the same flood of degeneracy. They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

The order is as follows: Therefore, *since Christ* has died *in the flesh*, you also should arrange yourselves according to *the same thought*: for you have died, namely, to the world: moreover, he who has died *has ceased from sin*, etc.

"*For we have spent.*" Whether we have abundantly operated the will of the Gentiles in our past life: that is, we have lived in a Gentile manner, walking according to the customs of the Gentiles. Therefore, the Gentiles now marvel at this.

"*the same thought.*" That is, according to the same intention and the same purpose. For due to the lack of intention, it is said κατὰ, that is, "according to".

"*he who has suffered in the flesh:*" that is, He has died, saying similar things with Paul: "If we have died with Christ, we shall also live with Him. And indeed we will be dead to sin, but we will live to God." (Rom. 6:8-10)

"*For we have spent.*" As if Peter were saying: But what? Is it not enough for you that for such a long time you have indulged in *lust*? Have you not lived in a similarly reckless manner as the Gentiles? And what those *filthiness* and obscenities were, he specifically mentions, confusing them.

"*With drunkenness,*" with immoderate desires for wine.

"*Therefore, it seems strange to them.*" They are amazed, that is, they admire. This is what he says: When you have once renounced the pursuits of the Gentiles, which you once lived by, you adhere to the honorable life that you have assumed. For even the Gentiles admire you, that you do not rush into a similar

outpouring or confusion of impiety. And therefore, they not only admire and marvel at your *strange* transformation, not only are they ashamed, but they also slander you, that is, they mock you. For divine worship is an abomination to the sinner. However, they will not bear such slander unpunished, but will give an account to the judge of all, who sits unchallengeable and firmly for this very purpose: for this is what it signifies in this place to be prepared: just as when it is said, "Preparing mountains in your strength," (Ps. 65:6) and, "Your throne is prepared." (Ps. 93:2) Therefore, those who slander you will *give an account to him who judges the living and the dead* unchangeably and firmly. How he is the *judge of the living and the dead* will be made manifest in due course.

1 Peter 4:6 *In this cause, the Gospel has also been preached to the dead: that they may be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

The order is as follows: Those who slander you will give an account to him who judges the living and the dead (1 Peter 4:5): for the dead are also judged; this is evident from the Lord's coming to Hades. For when he went there, namely through his death on the cross, he preached, just as he did to those who were living on earth. However, he preached not by word, but by deed. And just as he came into the world to those who were ready to recognize him, for justification, but to those who wished to remain ignorant, for condemnation: so also to those who were in Hades. For he came to judgment for those who lived *according to the flesh* in a human manner. But for those who *lived according to the spirit*, that is, according to a spiritual and honorable life, he came for glory and salvation. Therefore, he

can rightly be called "the judge of both the living and the dead" (1 Peter 4:5).

So they say. Indeed, the ancient Fathers interpreted this, "*In this cause, the Gospel has also been preached to the dead,*" as a severed part, having no concern for continuity with the preceding, nor for the fact that it ought to be referred to what was said as a cause. For it must have a cause in its statement: but as we said, they interpreted it as an intersection in this way. For the sacred Scripture has said to call the dead in two ways: either those who are dead in sins, who can never see life; or those who have become conformed to the death of Christ, and are indeed dead to the world, that is, to worldly desires, but live only to Christ, as Paul also says: "And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God." (Gal. 2:20) Therefore, they say that those who are thus dead to Christ condemn themselves in the flesh because of their negligent and slothful previous life. This, however, is to live by the spirit or life according to Christ: for the former condemnation makes them more eager regarding the present and what is at hand. And indeed, they are in this way. And although someone might say that these things are rightly so. Nevertheless, what has been said does not entirely hold. However, since it had been said above about those who were in Hades, to whom it was also preached, it is fitting to refer the present discourse to that, which is introduced by reason, and not only to consider, as has now been said. Consequently, we say that because he had said immediately before, "Who is ready to judge the living and the dead" (1 Peter 4:5): an exception could be raised against these: "And where are the living or where are the dead judged?" He adds faith to the discourse, from what he had said before, that it was also preached to those spirits who were in prison (1 Peter 3:19): and this preaching was made to them for judgment or for condemnation: indeed to those who were conscious of good life, immediately holding to the kindness

of him who had appeared there; but to the wicked, filled with shame, and waiting for their own condemnation. Therefore, it confirms that the Lord is the judge of the dead. As for the living, when He came into the world according to mortal life, men had His presence as a condemnation, since the good indeed ran to Him and were instructed, while the wicked rejected Him and willingly abominated the truth: this was indeed their condemnation. Therefore, the Lord also says, "I came into the world for judgment," (Jn. 9:39) that is, for condemnation. Thus, the Lord is the "judge of both the living and the dead": and the rendering of causes will be based on the entire discourse and not on a part.

Therefore, what is said, that they may be *judged in the flesh*, should be understood as when the Lord approached those who were in Hades, those who had lived carnally in the world were condemned: while those who lived spiritually were either brought to life together with the Lord (for many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised Matt. 27:52), or through good hope. Furthermore, it is said that they will be judged and live, taking time for time, namely the future for the past, which is frequent in sacred Scripture. "*The end of all things is at hand*," (1 Peter 4:7) he says, that is, for those who are justified in life and for those who are in Hades. For in the second coming, what is reserved for each will be fulfilled. But if anyone despises the preaching of the Lord in Hades, saying that nothing can benefit the dead, because according to the prophet David, no one confesses in Hades (Ps. 6:6); he understands the preaching in Hades totally and considers confession not as praise of God but as a manifestation: not knowing what is said: "The dead shall not praise you, O Lord" (Ps. 113:17); and it is said: "In Hades, who shall confess to you?" (Ps.4:6) Thus, it should be understood that confession is an act of thanksgiving to God when someone is freed from grave troubles. Therefore, since all things that are

dealt with in this present life, where they are completed, come to an end. For the dead, all things are idle: rightly, since no one works anything for whom they would be freed to give thanks, it is said: "In Hades, who shall confess to you?" (Ps. 4:6)

1 Peter 4:7-11 *The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be sober and watchful in prayer. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of the diverse grace of God. If anyone speaks, let him speak as if it were the words of God; if anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

The end, that is, completion, consummation or the end of all the prophets is said to be imminent: however, the true word is Christ, for He is the perfection of all. And not as the Greeks rave, who indeed say that pleasure is the end, like Epicurus⁵, while others say wisdom or contemplation or virtue⁶. Therefore, since perfection has come in Christ, Peter also says, having been made conformable to this perfection, present yourselves in all things without defect in sobriety, in vigilance for prayers (for the *prayer* of the *sober* or the *watchful*, and not of those who are held by the drunkenness of worldly things), in *love for one another*. Paul, however, says that this is the change of the law (Rom. 13:10): here indeed that it may *cover sins*. For mercy towards one's neighbor makes God merciful to us. This mercy would never proceed to what is righteous, unless it is out of great *love*. But where he mentions *love*, he also adds that those who are

endowed with love, namely *hospitality*, which he commands to be shown *without complaint*; for this is the essence of true love.

But also concerning the *gifts* that are available to each, they should be shared with the brother who has none: for example, let the one who has the discourse of teaching (for this is what it means by *the words of God*) generously provide for the one who is in need. Let the one who has received the supply of food give to the one who has none: not with a small spirit, but as the power of the expenses given as God permits. Furthermore, he says, I exhort you that in all things, whether among the Gentiles or even in your works, that *God may be glorified*. And when he had spoken thus, since he saw that some were offended because of the afflictions brought upon them, as if a promise of life had been placed in the law from all foreign troubles for those who serve the Lord: indeed, previously when he had made a statement about servants, he gave a brief exhortation about these things: but now he has used a more elaborate discourse and says: *Beloved*, (1 Peter 4:12) immediately signifying by this name that these things do not happen to those who are hated, but to those who are greatly loved. However, do not be surprised, that is, do not marvel, do not consider it *strange* (1 Peter 4:12) from the friends of God. Then, where he also said that afflictions are a *fiery trial*, (1 Peter 4:12) he shows that they are tempted upon them as a test: but the trial makes desirable the one who is tested, just as gold and silver. Moreover, by adding that it is more blessed for all these, namely, those who suffer these things to be conformed to the Teacher Christ: and now to be dishonored with him, so that they may be glorified together with him in the future age, when he has subjected the whole world to himself.

"love covers a multitude." This means persevering and enduring and stretched out over a long period.

"As each one has received a gift." For whatever is placed in us, and of which we are masters to do, can be an accusation of injustice in all these matters. For it is not only in the possession of money, but also in the abundance of other natural goods that one is obliged to give to the one who does not have: so that one may give to the needy.

That from the fellowship with Christ it is necessary to overcome natural adversities, and from hope to bear losses inflicted by others.

1 Peter 4:12-19 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial that has come upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you: but rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you: if you are insulted for the name of Christ, it is glorified in you. Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or any kind of criminal, or even as a bigmouth. But if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but glorify God that you bear that name. For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And, If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner? Therefore, let those who are afflicted according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator by doing good.

"the fiery trial that has come upon you." this is how you are proven.

"of the name of Christ." Because you are called Christians.

“if you are insulted.” It must be understood: Who, to be. The meaning: Who seems to be blasphemed by the spirit of God among the wicked, but *is glorified in you*. How? Because while they falsely accuse you, confusion is indeed poured back upon them, but glory upon you.

“even as a bigmouth,” who curiously scrutinizes what belongs to others, in order to have an occasion for slander. This, however, is the disposition of a wicked and deceitful mind, and one that is quick and ready for every evil.

“For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household.” It makes them anxious and terrifies them, driving them away from sloth and a relaxed life; therefore, it also adds: “If the investigation of matters already done begins first with us who are the house of God, what should we think will be the end of those who did not believe? Judgment now does not mean condemnation, but investigation, scrutiny, discussion to choose what is better.” However, let it begin first from the house of God, since, according to our Basil the Great⁷, we are more annoyed towards those who are most familiar to us when they sin against us: but to God, there are no others more familiar than the faithful, who complete the house of God, or the Church. Therefore, the Savior also said: “He will say first to those who will be on his right hand.” (Matt. 25:34) However, this judgment here refers to the examination, namely the afflictions that the wicked bring upon the faithful: of which the Lord also foretold the instigation when He said: “They will hand you over to councils.” etc. (Matt. 5:17)

Then, as if to console them, He adds: *And, If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly.* And this is confirmed by the Scripture which says: “If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (Prov. 11:31) However, this is what Scripture intends to

signify: If the righteous attain salvation through labor and affliction (for the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence (Matt. 9:12), and through many afflictions one attains it Acts 14:21), what will those who lead a depraved and indulgent life attain? It must be understood in the future age regarding what concerns the wicked. Therefore, if this is so, he says,

who are afflicted according to will of God, so that we do not become sluggish, but rather *entrust their souls to a faithful Creator by doing good*. He said, *according to the will of God*, either signifying that our afflictions are not without divine providence but are distributed to us as a test from Him; or that, being afflicted by the will of God, we attribute the outcome to Him. For He is indeed faithful, that is, secure and who does not lie in His promises: nor will He allow us to be afflicted beyond what we can bear. But how should one commit oneself to God? (1 Cor. 10:13)

By *doing good*, Peter says. And what is that? By the modesty of the soul, committing oneself to Him without exalting oneself because of what one suffers: but the greater the suffering seems, the more firmly one should cling to Him, so that one considers oneself useless and says, "for you are righteous in all the things that you have done to us." (Dan. 3:27) Moreover, the wicked and the sinner differ in this respect: for the wicked is completely alien to God, while the sinner clings to God somewhat, but as one who despises Him and transgresses His laws. However, one can be both wicked and a sinner: for whoever works iniquity acts wickedly, in that he sins, thinking that God does not exist.

CHAPTER 5

Admonition of the priests concerning the care and visitation of the flock:
in which it also addresses the common modesty of all towards
individuals, for victory against the Devil.

1 Peter 5:1-6 *I encourage the elders who are among you, I who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: feed the flock of Christ that is among you, exercising oversight not under coercion, but willingly; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; nor exercising dominion against the clergy, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.*

Since Peter proposes to discuss the modesty of the spirit, which he even touches upon while speaking about “doing good”, (1 Peter 4:19) and now calling himself a co-elder, that is, both an elder together with them. Through this, Peter designates either his own age or the honor of bishops. For it is known that bishops are also called elders, as the book of Acts indicates. (Acts 20:17;28) Then, wishing to demonstrate his own eminence, and that he calls himself a co-elder for the sake of modesty, he adds his dignity:

"*witness of the sufferings of Christ.*" wanting to signify through this: If I, who am an interpreter of such visions to you, do not contempt to call myself a co-elder, neither should you, who are righteous, be exalted against those who are inferior to you. Therefore, Christ, teaching this precept of modesty, thus pronounces: "If therefore I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet." (Jn. 13:14)

Furthermore, "*a partaker of the glory that will be revealed,*" to demonstrate the excellence of a modest spirit: just as Paul says,

"When Christ is revealed, then we will also be revealed." (Col. 3:1)

Moreover, he does not *feed the flock coercively*, who, by presenting himself as an example of good conduct to his subordinates, has disciples who mutually encourage each other to imitate their teacher: Nor does he seek *for shameful gain*, who walks not arrogantly nor raises himself against those under him, but converses humbly, maintaining a constant frugality that requires no expense for costly garments or a lavish table, which receives pride with applause and seeks expense from shameful gain.

Peter calls the *clergy* a sacred assembly, just as we do even now. Furthermore, by adding,

"but being examples to the flock," Peter instructs that they should not feed the flock as if coercively.

Furthermore, when it is said, *"And when the chief Shepherd appears,"* it is a conjunction. And it is informally placed for "So that": that is, *"So that when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory."* Just as in Psalm 89, when it is said, *"And look upon your servants and upon your works."* For there "And" is placed in the place of "Because of which." *"Εγκομδῶσασθε"* indeed means, "surround yourselves, embrace."

1 Peter 5:6-9 *Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the Devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.*

It is added, "*In time*." For it refers to the exaltation in the future age, which is the only true exaltation, as unchangeable and everlasting, since the present exaltation is neither secure nor firm, but rather contributes to a perpetual humiliation, so that it may be humbled more quickly than it was exalted. Furthermore, the Lord Himself is suitable to reconcile humiliation with exaltation. For He says: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Matt. 18:4) And: "Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be the last of all." (Matt. 20:27) And speaking at that time, he indicated, as we said, that in the future, the exaltation promised would arise from humiliation. For there will be a time of unchangeable things in the future and in the incorruptible age. For the incorruptible has nothing mortal or perishable. Then, removing the fear that would arise from humiliation (for perhaps he saw some fearing that by humbling themselves in this present life, they would suffer some evil), he said: "Do not be afraid, *casting all your anxiety on the Lord*, when you have entrusted yourself to him who will take careful and diligent *care of you*."

"*because he cares for you*," or concern is placed upon him regarding all these things.

"*Be sober-minded; be watchful*." On those who are spiritually asleep (this, however, is to aspire to vain things) and from this, the watchfulness of souls is weighed down, the evil and most savage beast of despair is accustomed to leap upon them. Therefore, Christ's disciple, strengthening us (Matt. 13:24), exhorts us to always be vigilant and to watch over him who sows tares, lest in any way, while we are asleep, or living carelessly and sluggishly, he secretly sows wicked thoughts and drives us away from true life.

For the Devil does not cease, Peter says, *prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*; to whom you also resist

with firm strength of mind. Concerning such sharp snares and the precise deceit of him against us, the holy Justin Martyr⁸ also brings forth the case, stating that the Devil did not clearly know the power of his punishment before the coming of the Lord, when the divine prophets had announced it mysteriously: just as Isaiah (14:4), under the persona of the Assyrian, tragically narrates the entire representation of the Devil. But when the Lord had come and had openly said that the eternal fire is reserved and prepared for the Devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41), upon hearing this, he does not cease to lie in wait for the faithful, wanting to have many companions in his defection, lest he be ashamed to cling to this alone, applauding himself with this cold and envious consolation.

"*knowing that the same kinds of suffering*," as it is likely, those to whom Peter writes were being pressed by many afflictions for the sake of Christ: therefore, both in the preceding and in the following, he brings consolation to this: indeed, by the fact that the enduring become themselves partakers of the afflictions of Christ and heirs of the glory that is to be revealed; here, however, by the fact that they do not suffer alone, but all the faithful who are in the world: moreover, the company of companions lightens the severity.

1 Peter 5:10-14 *But the God of all grace, who has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. By Silvanus, a faithful brother to you, as I consider, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand. The Church that is in Babylon, elected together with you, greets you, and Mark*

my son. Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

And beginning the letter, Peter said that the Father, for the sake of the Son, have mercy on us, and now concluding, he teaches to call the same Father through the Son: for this is their aim to preach the mystery, although they do this with exhortation.

"*By Silvanus.*" This Silvanus was very faithful and eagerly motivated around the preaching. Indeed, Paul also mentions him and takes him as a helper along with Timothy in his letters, saying: "Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy." (1-2 Thess. 1:1)

Peter calls Rome *Babylon*, because it was so remarkable and distinguished, as it had been for a long time in Babylon.

Peter calls his *son Mark* according to the spirit, and not according to the flesh. To him, he entrusted the task of writing the Gospel. However, some have dared to assert that Mark was the son of the divine Peter according to the flesh, using as an argument what was said by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles. (Acts 12:1) For he says that Peter was miraculously brought out of prison by the angel of God, in which Herod had kept him, and after being released from the angelic conversation, Peter came to the house of the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, as if he had come to his own house and to his lawful wife. However, when Paul writes that they should greet each other with a holy kiss (2 Cor. 14:12), Peter says here,

"*With a kiss of love,*" saying the same as that. For Paul (1 Cor. 13:1-19) knows the love which is according to Christ and is greater than all virtues, even than martyrdom itself suffered for Christ. Therefore, he calls the holy kiss separate and defined in God, while he similarly refers to the kiss of love which is true love, which Paul has praised. Therefore, he also adds:

"Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus:" not speaking of the common peace which is among men, which is dear to men because of the affection for vain glory and the enjoyment of pleasures, to which those who are free from war surrender themselves; but Peter prays that they may attain the peace which Christ himself agreed to grant them as he proceeded to passion, saying: "My peace I leave with you;" and adding a distinction: "Not as the world gives." (Jn. 14:27) For peace is not to be sought because of affection, but that we may be united in love, in order to receive in this way the blows of adversaries. Moreover, the disciples of the Lord, adding as it were a seal, bring a prayer at the end, as a genuine sign of their holiness. (It was written from the city of Rome.)

2 PETER

HYPOTHESIS OF THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF PETER

Again, Peter writes to those already believing. This letter, however, is a reminder of the former one. For when he knew that the ending of his body would soon come, he was eager to admonish everyone concerning the teaching by which they had

been instructed. And first epistle indeed he explains faith, showing that it was announced by the prophets and that the prophecies which speak of the Savior are not human, but have been proclaimed by God. Then he warns them not to pay attention to deceivers, saying that their destruction will be forthcoming, just as it happened to the transgressing angels. He also foretells in the letter that there will be days when mockers will come, wanting to seduce some, saying that the coming of the Lord is to be regarded as a vain thing, since it is always said and it has not yet come. Therefore, he especially commands to be separated from these, teaching that times should not be neglected: since all time is nothing before God, because one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. He confirms and shows that the day of the Lord will be forthcoming, and he commands that all of them to be prepared for it through good works, and to embrace what has been written by the apostle Paul, and not to pay attention to those who slander it, since all also slander the divine Scriptures. Therefore, having suggested and taught all to foresee in matters, he urges them not to fall away from the purpose of faith, and so concludes the letter.

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF PETER.

SECTIONS

1. Of calling confirmed by faith through works that are in virtue and hope of future goods.
2. Exhortation to the reminder of doctrine, recalling it to memory: and how on Mount Tabor he heard the voice of God concerning Christ.

3. Prophecy concerning the fraudulent rebellion of heretics, their wickedness, and the future punishment.

4. Repetition of the wickedness of heretical men: in which it is also discussed how Christ will suddenly come at the end of this age: therefore it is said that one must be adorned with every virtue.

PETER THE APOSTLE

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE

CHAPTER 1

Of calling confirmed by faith through works that are in virtue and hope of future goods.

2 Peter 1:1-2 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

"*Simon.*" It is also written as Simeon. For Simon is short for Simeon: just as from Metrodoros we have Metras, from Menodoros we have Menas, and from Theodosios we have Theudas. Immediately from the beginning, he lifts the minds and souls of believers, inspiring them to equal diligence in preaching with the apostles.

For it is not just *that those who have obtained a faith of equal standing* should be in any way inferior to those who have been declared to be equals. Moreover, Peter receives them everywhere

with *peace*, not that which is of the world, but that which is rooted *in the knowledge of God*. For this alone is called *peace*, as it frees us from offense and hatred toward God. Therefore, Christ also grants this to us as he departs to the Father, and when he rose from the dead, he proclaimed, "Peace be with you." (Jn. 14:27; 20:19,21,26) And in the churches, we pray that the angel of peace may be given to us: and the priest frequently grants this to the people from the altar: we also use this in our mutual addresses, that this is the mother of all good things, and the substance of our joy. Therefore, Christ commanded His disciples to first offer this divinely as they entered homes: (Luke 10:5) "Grace to you and peace."

The order is as follows: *May grace and peace be multiplied to you*, as all things that pertain to life and godliness, *in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord*, since by His divine power this grace has been granted to you, the knowledge, glory, and virtue of Him: through which the greatest promises have been given: that you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

"In the knowledge of God." Otherwise: To you who have equally been honored with us in the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, *may grace and peace be multiplied through the righteousness of our God*. Or this is the order: In the knowledge of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, which knowledge has been granted through His divine power, everything that pertains to life and godliness, and that very knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which glory and virtue precious and magnificent promises have been granted, so that you may become partakers of the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, applying all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, and to self-control

perseverance, and to perseverance godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love (2 Peter 1:3).

2 Peter 1:3-9 *As all things are given to you by His divine power, which pertains to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His glory and virtue, by which precious and great promises have been granted to you, so that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, to virtue, knowledge, to knowledge, self-control, to self-control, perseverance, to perseverance, godliness, to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love. For if these things are with you and abound, you will be neither idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.*

Indeed, a long series has been presented, and this is the understanding: Just as countless good things have been received through the appearance of Christ, *by which we may become partakers of the divine nature* and be led back to life and godliness: so we must conduct ourselves, so that we may support *virtue* through *faith*, and by this means progress towards the promotion of *godliness*, until we reach the perfection of *diligence*, which is *love*. Moreover, we have *become partakers of the divine nature* through the coming of the Lord and God, who took the first fruits of our nature upon Himself and sanctified it by assuming it. If the first fruits are holy, the mass is also holy. Furthermore, the mass of the first fruits is nothing other than those from which the first fruits come. However, Peter speaks of

the corruption that comes from worldly lust, as if it were concerning the corruptible and those things that are corruptible.

The step leads to promotion: first indeed *faith*, which is the foundation and basis or principle of good things.

Then in the second step *virtue* or works, for without this faith is dead, as James (2:26) says.

After this indeed is *knowledge*. What is this? The knowledge of the secrets of God's mysteries, which does not happen to everyone, but to one who is exercised in the habit of better works.

After this is *self-control*. For this is also necessary for one who has reached the measure, lest he become wanton due to the greatness of the gift. Since it does not happen that one who uses self-control for a short time can firmly possess the gift (for they always desire afflictions to lead them to what is worse), having entered into tolerance completes the whole matter and appeases *godliness*, producing a more perfect assurance in God: therefore from *godliness*, *brotherly love* is sought, which does not approach unless *kindness* grants access to all things of *godliness*. And above all, the fulfillment of all good things is *love*, as it seems to both Paul (Rom. 13:13) and the Truth. For this has both the Son of God and His Father prevailed: indeed, that He might give Him as a beloved Son, but the Son to pour out His blood for us.

"*For if these things are with you and abound.*" What are these? *Faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love*, which must not only be present but also *abound*. For if presence is beneficial, much more is abundance or wealth. What, then, is the benefit that follows from these? To have security for the second coming of the Lord. For indeed, to those to whom these are not present, in the glory of the coming

Judge, and in the manner of the shining sun, *blindness* follows. Where, even if it is strong in appearance, it cannot be gazed upon without injury by the exaggeration of those who are weak-eyed, since it was born shining in its own light in such a way that it blinds those who rely on it with feeble sight. But the word Μωπάζειν is used to mean, ἀπὸ τῶν μυῶν, that is, from the moles living underground, who remain blind to everything.

"has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins." This is similar to what was said by blessed James: "For if a man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer: he shall be compared to a man beholding his natural face in a mirror. For he saw himself, and went his way." (James 1:23-24) For when he had known that he had been cleansed by holy baptism, because he had been washed from the multitude of sins, he ought to have known that it is necessary to be vigilant in order to maintain his purity and sanctity, without which no one will see God (Heb. 12:14): but he indeed forgot.

Exhortation to the reminder of doctrine, recalling it to memory: and how on Mount Tabor he heard the voice of God concerning Christ.

2 Peter 1:10-15 Therefore, brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble. For in this way, an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Therefore, I will not neglect to remind you always of these things, even though you know and are established in the present truth. Yet I think it right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover, I will be careful

to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my departure.

Therefore, Peter says, *my brothers, make every effort to confirm your calling and election* as permanent and unchangeable, that is, the teaching you heard regarding your election and calling, so that you may be blameless: do not be judged as if you have forgotten the gift of God, but remain steadfast having your calling secure.

"For if you do these things." What are these? Those which have been predicted, namely virtue, knowledge, temperance, and the other things that follow. Notice, however, how orderly it is that those things which were fearsome are now directed through good to the entrance of the eternal kingdom of the Lord.

"even though you know." So that they are not seen to be continually admonished about the same things, as if rebuked for living in idleness, and thus become saddened, for this reason Peter adds: *even though you know and are established in the present truth.* Moreover, giving a reason for the continuous admonition, he added that he knew a release from this body would soon come.

What is suggested, for example: *"I will be careful to ensure that you always,"* some understand through a reversal of a word order in this way: I will take care and after my departure, you will always have or continuously the memory of these things: wanting to show from this that even after the death of the saints, they remembered what they accomplished here for the living. Others, however, simply treating that saying, understand it thus: I will take care and you will always have after my departure the last mention of these things: that is, do not be surprised, nor consider it burdensome that there is a constant mention made to you about these matters. For I do not do this condemning your ignorance, but by a continuous teaching about these things, I

present to you this support, so that, being strengthened by these, you may also have after my death a living and permanent teaching about these matters.

2 Peter 1:16-21 *For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was brought to him by the majestic glory: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." We ourselves heard this very voice brought from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day approaches and the morning star rises in your hearts. Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

When Peter had said that they should diligently attend to themselves, and that those things which had been announced to them were indeed so, and he had explained this at length, frequently: although he knew and they had heard in various ways, he now adds their confirmation and says: I do not apply a vain diligence to these matters, but since I know the truth of them to be certain and undoubted, I dwell on them. And what is this?

We made known to you the power and coming of our Lord, not by human wisdom with adorned speeches, as if deceiving your hearing with tricks, as the Greeks and heretics do: indeed, the

Greeks using elaborate speech and deception; the heretics, however, with fabricated words: just as the Valentinians fleeing into profound depths and silence⁹. For it is likely that they were beginning to arise. Therefore, there is nothing of this kind to be found in us, but we have delivered to you the teaching in a simple and humble manner: which Paul also says to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:1): and those things which we have from the sight of our own eyes, we who ascended with him to *the holy mountain*. Peter says, however, that the Lord showed them *on the holy mountain* the glory of the Only Begotten (Matt. 17:1), and the voice that they heard from the Father brought down from heaven concerning the Lord. Moreover, since we have known through the things themselves and experience what was proclaimed by the prophets, he says, we judge their prophecy to be *more sure* through these things: for the things themselves have followed the sayings and oracles.

Therefore, *the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention*, whether those that were foretold by the prophets: although they were then spoken obscurely by them, and *as to a lamp shining in a dark place*. For such is the filthy place, scorched by the heat of the sun and deprived of the air that informs it with moisture. Hence, it is necessary that the air which serves the solar ray, when it is in danger of losing its property, should render itself an illegitimate servant to the sun, and the ray, as if carried by an illegitimate vehicle, should present a darkened splendor of itself. However, by attending to those things which were thus obscurely spoken by the prophets, you will not be deceived in your hope, for things, Peter says, will come to pass in their own time: which he also aptly called day, remaining very skillfully in the figure of speech.

For Peter said, "*as to a lamp shining in a dark or gloomy place, which is also night.*" However, day succeeds every night. Therefore, *as day approaches* (I speak of the presence of things),

you will have *the Morning Star* rising in your hearts: that is, the knowledge of Christ, or his presence and coming foretold by the prophets, illuminating your hearts like true *light*.

Then, in explaining, Peter adds why his words were not interpreted as private or personal: at the same time, he also distinguishes true prophecy from demonic and false prophecies, which are found to operate in heretics, and says: "*that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.*" That is, indeed, the prophets receive prophecy from God, but not as they wish, but as the divine Spirit works in them moving them: and they certainly knew and understood the prophetic message sent to them, yet they did not make the interpretation themselves. That the prophets, moved by the divine Spirit, knew how the Spirit was sent to them from God is evident from the fact that they spoke voluntarily and said what they wished, while they remained silent on what they did not want to say; just as the prophet Jonah, refusing to preach in Nineveh (Jonah 1:3), and Balaam (Num. 22:13), commanded to speak what was suggested to him. However, the false prophets or the oracles of the Greeks did not have this: for they did not know while they were being agitated, but, having become mad with frenzy, they were unaware of what was happening to them, as if they were drunk.

Therefore, the holy prophets, I say the ancients, although they understood, did not, however, have to interpret what they predicted, but they served these things to others, namely to us. Likewise, so that the Lord's coming might remain hidden, and that traps might not be prepared for Him by the wicked. Indeed, even if the power of God could escape from assaults, it is likely that through extraordinary means of escape, the incarnation would appear as if it were a miraculous event. And that this is true is evident from the prophets who were in the New Testament, who also interpreted themselves while prophesying, although not in all cases, as the blessed Paul says in his earlier

letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 14:21); for there was no such suspicion in the New Testament. Furthermore, it is also clear that the prophets did not prophecy outside of themselves.

When they prophesied with one spirit, both those in the Old Testament and those in the New, Paul says: "If, however, something is revealed to another sitting there, let the first be silent." (1 Cor. 14:30) From this, it is evident that the prophets, remaining in their natural consistency, prophesied spontaneously and intelligently. Therefore, when another rises to whom inspiration has been given, the one who was speaking first is commanded to be silent; which could not be found among mad prophets. For how will he be silent who does not even know what he is doing? Paul himself says that the energy of the Holy Spirit is in the prophets, speaking thus: "To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of prophecy." (1 Cor. 12:8)

Furthermore, here through the things that are now proposed. "*For he received from God the Father.*" This participle λαδὼν is either placed in the position of the indicative verb ἔλαθεν, that is, *he received*: since according to the consequence of the participle, the discourse does not subsequently correspond. Or if this is not pleasing, but someone wishes to take λαδὼν as a proper participle, the discourse will necessarily fall into disorder: if, however, the participle is taken in place of the indicative verb, it will be consistent with what is added, for example: *For he received glory from God the Father*: and from this we have more firmly whatever has been announced about this by the prophets before: not that any prophecy was delivered from the voice of the Father from on high, but that we have been confirmed by the heavenly voice of the Father which testified that he is the Son, so that all the prophecy of the prophets undoubtedly carries testimony from the Father.

"*Here is my beloved Son.*" (Matt. 3:17) Three times the Father testified to the Son: at baptism, at the passion when He said, "And I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again" (Jn. 12:28); and *on the holy mountain*.

"*Knowing this first of all,*" etc. The prophets knew those things which were inspired in them by the prophetic spirit, and about which, however, they did not know exactly how each would be fulfilled. Therefore, understanding, they desired to see the outcome of these things: as the Lord also says.

CHAPTER 2

Prophecy concerning the fraudulent rebellion of heretics, their wickedness, and the future punishment.

2 Peter 2:1-3 But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their obscene ways, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

Since prophecy is a common name that refers to both prophets and false prophets, it confirms that false prophets should not be regarded. And Paul differs slightly from this, as he teaches that no one says Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. (1 Cor. 12:3) Therefore, he begins to oppose the heresy against the Nicolaitans, saying that their wickedness is twofold. For they are indeed most impious in doctrine, as their blasphemy against the Lord Christ demonstrates; however, their life is especially

obscene. And this he now signifies through shameful gain; however, having progressed a little, he will state it more openly. For now he refers to *πλεονεξίαν*, that is, *greed*, signifying shameful gain. For *πλεονεξία* sometimes signifies injustice, but at other times simply gain. Hence, showing that he speaks more particularly, he added:

"*they will exploit you*." Completely alienating them from divine doctrine, he said they would use *false words*. But they will have, he says, the wages of impiety, namely death. Moreover, it is already an indication of the foreknowledge of God. For just as through foreknowledge He prepared good things for the good, so also a fitting place for the wicked.

"*who secretly*," etc. The order: Those who, summoning *swift destruction upon themselves*, will secretly lead destructive sects; and *denying the Lord who bought them*, and through greed negotiating with *false words* about you.

"*is not asleep*." He does not cease, nor will he be idle, sluggish, or ineffective.

2 Peter 2:4-7 *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them into chains of gloomy Tartarus¹⁰, delivering them to be kept for judgment; and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; and condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes, making them an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked—for that righteous man, dwelling among them,*

tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds.

For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, nor the ancient world, but condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction, reducing them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; indeed, He preserved Noah, the preacher of righteousness, when He brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and likewise Lot, who was oppressed by the wicked, when the Sodomites were seeking to abuse the angels who had been received as guests (Gen. 19), and who was daily admonished to emulate their wicked deeds, then tormented his own soul through soberness, and by abstaining from them, He rescued him: will He not much more deliver at this time those who are destined for destruction, just as He did the transgressing angels and those who were in the time of the flood, and furthermore the Sodomites? But you who dwell in the world along with them, will He not preserve you, just as He did Noah and Lot who then lived among the ungodly? No one doubts that He will indeed do so. For He knows how to rescue the godly from temptations and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment. Note, however, that when he previously presented the example of the wicked, he now ordains that which is about the righteous: by this, he also consoles the imitators of the righteous, who are considered superior to the impious. Therefore, Christ also gives the reward first to the just sheep who are on the right, and then to the goats who are on the left, punishments. (Matt. 25:34-41) Since delightful things are preferred over sad ones.

"God did not spare the angels who sinned." He attacks those who were first cut off and says: If the angels who were in honor with God because of the immortality of their substance, when they had shaken off the yoke, sinned, they did not obtain forgiveness:

much less will God spare men who cling to their own creation if they have sinned,

"But chains of gloomy." This signifies the inevitability of condemnation. For with such *chains*, we certainly punish those condemned by us. But someone may say: Whence is such condemnation of the demons evident? From the demons themselves, for they plead in the Gospel (Luke 8:31) not to be cast into the abyss, as if all others might also suffer this. It must be understood, however, that although the argument is presented in a hypothetical manner, it is not truly so; for it has nothing else to respond to later, but is proposed only in appearance, while in truth it is a simple persuasive example: and for this reason, it will be said: for if it were as it seems, it would proceed thus: If angels, having sinned, were not spared, nor the ancient world, nor Sodom and Gomorrah, would He spare these? Certainly not; or even in this way: He will not spare them at all. However, He does not rashly approach those who are more distinguished; but wishing to show that these, while they sin, are more liable to punishment. Therefore, since these also hold a more honorable rank, as they are called to the apostleship, when they have fallen from the divine way, they also have a greater condemnation. From the hypothesis moved by a persuasive example, it did not provide what corresponded to the figure. For he confounded the example of the assumption of the righteous: and when he should have responded in speech to what was proposed from the beginning, namely to those who had sinned, for whom the example was also assumed, and say: If he did not spare these, will he spare the wicked and the wanton present? Or by affirmation: Much more will he not spare these: he does not do this. Why? Because when two examples are proposed, namely of the good and the evil, this response of speech was found only to respond to the evil, not to the good: for the good do not receive evil.

Therefore, since a single response of speech was not sufficient to fulfill the proposed matter, it remained in another way in phrasing, and completed what was necessary through an interjection. But why he mixed examples of good with bad ones will be explained in a suitable place.

"But the eighth person," etc. As we have previously stated, it follows not only from what is evident in the discourse, but also from their understanding of what is proposed. For the response of the discourse is not one that usually follows such arrangements, but is a simple persuasive example, concerning those who are punished for their sins, and those who are honored for their righteousness: as if to say; The Lord knows how to punish sinners without sparing them, just as He did the angels who sinned, as well as those who were in the time of the flood, like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; again, to honor those who practice righteousness, such as Noah and Lot. And this is the arrangement: Having said that false teachers are to be punished for their blasphemies and their lustful lives, he adds examples.

For God did not spare the angels who sinned, nor the ancient world, nor did He spare the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction, but they are reduced to ashes, serving as a punishment for the ungodly. Again, God knows how to honor those who exercise justice, just as He did with Noah and Lot: and for the righteousness of each, it is narrated that both Noah and Lot were preserved from the destruction of the men who lived during their time because of their soberness and chastity. For they were not taken away from the impiety of those who were before the flood.

Lot also did not follow the carnality of those who lived in Sodom, but as if provoked daily by the sight of those who acted impolitely, he was stirred to the same boldness, yet he did not

succumb in any way. For this means, "with seeing and hearing," (2 Peter 2:8) that he had many things that could provoke him to boldness, *sight, hearing*, conversation among the wicked; but he neither delivered the angels, his guests, in the appearance of men, to those who sought them because of their impudence, although he suffered violence from them in countless ways. For this is indicated by saying that he was oppressed. And as figure of speech, Peter adds: "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly," etc. (2 Peter 2:9) However, since he had not forewarned anything about the righteous, but only about the wicked and their punishment, he also scatters examples of the righteous in this place: first, indeed, because the history simultaneously mentions both the destruction of the wicked and the salvation of the righteous; then, moreover, from this comparison, he amplifies the malice of those who sinned, and makes the good works of those who conducted themselves excellently clear. Furthermore, Peter persuades the listeners to indeed hate the shamelessness of those, but to embrace the noble work of these for the sake of salvation. Hence, he also mentions in a figure of speech, both the pious and the impious, and salvation and punishment. Moreover, what he wants from this has already been stated, namely that he desires for them to hate the wickedness of those, but to emulate the salvation of these. "For the just is with sight and hearing." Although he had many things that inflamed, stimulated, and invited to shamelessness—eyes, ears, and conversation among the wicked—he was not, he says, led to the imitation of them.

2 Peter 2:9-13 *The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, but to keep the unjust for the day of judgment, especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of pollution and despise authority: bold, brave, who do not fear to speak evil of dignitaries: whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do*

not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord. But like irrational brute creatures, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming in matters they do not understand, they will perish in their own corruption, receiving the wages of unrighteousness, as they count it pleasure to party in the daytime.

"*especially those who walk according to the flesh.*" Therefore, it cleverly comes from the aforementioned examples to the present argument. Peter speaks, however, of the curses of the Nicolaitans or Gnostics, or Naassenes or Cerdonians, for their wickedness has taken on various names: and as with their wicked deeds, so too is it found to be confused with names. For these, as we have said, having taken on depth and silence, narrate marvelously the first works of the world's existence and certain mothers and ages, just as Marcion who took corrupt seeds from these: then, through this, repulsed from the dominance of institution and oversight or governance of the world, they boldly arrived at all fleshly immorality. But if anyone wishes to learn about these things, taking in hand the book composed by the blessed man Irenaeus of Gaul (Book 1, cap. 1,8-9), which he titled Against Heresies, he will find the impurities of these, especially because of Marcus, the most obscene man, and those who were seduced by him, as well as the corrupted miserable women, "Audacious, reckless." It must be understood who they are. Therefore, rejecting the Overseer or Governor and Creator of the world, it is no wonder that such audacious and reckless individuals are pursuing their own pleasures. But he also speaks of revilers. For those who do not fear *authority* out of contempt, what is surprising if they also stand boldly against all splendor? However, the blessed Apostle Jude speaks more openly about these things, where he also makes mention of the body of Moses. (Jude 9)

Now, Peter only hinted at this matter in passing, touching upon it and calming the discussion. Therefore, taking this occasion to speak about those things that are proposed, we say that "*do not fear to speak evil of dignitaries*," that is: they scornfully attack all exceptional dignitaries with curses. And wishing to restrain their boldness regarding such matters, he says: "*whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord*," saying the same as blessed Jude, as we have said: since he too, restraining the crabbiness and nonsense of certain tongues, made a warning from the same example, and he says more broadly: "Michael the archangel," etc., "did not dare to bring a railing accusation." (Jude 9) Therefore, this is what Peter also wishes to say now, that these evil spirits spare nothing in hurling curses at the dignitaries. However, those indeed who are greater in power and might, namely these unclean ones, do not bring or utter a railing accusation against them, that is, the dignitaries, before the Lord. And of this, Michael the archangel is a witness. For indeed, the Devil also shares in some glory, in that he is the beginning of the creation of the Lord, he did not bring forth a slanderous accusation against him. There is also a more effective argument in this way: For if the Devil, who is more worthy to receive accusations, nevertheless participates in splendor, this was not achieved by Michael before the Lord; it would be utterly unwise for those who rashly attack all splendor or those adorned with splendor with insults, since they are far inferior in honor to the angels; however, he speaks of dignitaries, whether divine virtues or even ecclesiastical principalities, which these most obscene ones do not cease to attack even with curses.

And indeed the angels in this way. "*But like irrational brute creatures*," that is, living only by sense, not likewise by mind and intellectual life: for which reason they are easily captured by corruptible things, that is, by the movement in a corrupt life: the

excitement of the soul and the desire acted upon and drawn, in those things which they are ignorant of or in their spontaneous ignorance bringing in curses, *they will perish in their own corruption, receiving the wages of unrighteousness*, that is, that which they have acquired for themselves.

"for the sake of pleasure as they count it pleasure to party in the daytime ." Indeed, they truly desire, placing true and desirable joy and pleasure in the daily enjoyment of the palate. Therefore, it should be known that when sacred Scripture reproaches something, it assimilates to brute beings those things which naturally happen to men, that is, those which occur to them as animals, saying: "Man, when he was in honor, did not understand; he was compared to the senseless beasts (Ps. 48:37)," and: "Do not be like a horse and a mule (Ps. 31:9)," and: "The horses became mad for the mares (Jer. 5:8)," and: "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves (Matt. 5:16)," not that by saying this it changes natures, for that is impossible, but it invites them to avoid these indeed natural inclinations of theirs, while embracing those naturally. When, however, it prescribes something salutary, it transmits the likeness to better things: as when it says: "Be merciful as your heavenly Father," (Luke 6:26) not even here transforming nature, but commanding to do this as much as virtue suggests.

2 Peter 2:13b-16 *Spots and blemishes party in their errors against you, having eyes full of adultery, and who cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having hearts exercised with covetous practices, accursed children, who have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; but was rebuked for his iniquity [Num. 22:6]: the dumb beast*

speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

"*Spots and blemishes.*" The order is taken as follows: *Spots and blemishes* (Σπίλοι καὶ μῶμοι) are the heart of those who are exercised in plunder, that is, exercised through plunder, *accursed children*, assaulting you, *having eyes full of adultery, and who cannot cease from sin*: they entice *unstable souls*, which Paul also called women burdened with sins. (2 Tim. 3:6) Furthermore, these *have forsaken the right way, and have gone astray following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor*, and the rest. These are wells without water, clouds carried with a tempest, etc. (2 Peter 2:17) And why is darkness reserved for them in the future world? Because of their immense vanity, by which they entice those who had previously walked in error, and had truly fled from it: so that through filthiness and the desires of the flesh, they return like a dog to its vomit. (Prov. 26:11) But those who are placed in the middle declare and confirm this vanity.

"*Spots and blemishes.*" They have nothing that is fixed in purity, but like stains on a clean garment, they cling to long-standing conversation and defile everything: when they have drawn some away and have been able to make them shameless, those who are together, men and women, they consider this act a delight, satisfying their own lust: but also, they say, those who are dining with you do this not out of love, or because they share (as they say) in salt¹¹, but to find this time suitable for deception among women. For these, having eyes, look at nothing but adulteresses, and in this, they sin continually, like children of abomination or abominable ones, ensnaring unstable souls.

Having hearts exercised with covetous practices, whether of filthiness or even of possessions, for which both, abandoning the way that would lead them to salvation, have strayed from it: and the same happened to them as to *Balaam the son of Beor*, since

he also *loved the wages of unrighteousness* for the sake of the gifts offered: but he *was rebuked for his iniquity*, namely by a *dumb beast* of burden, which *speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet*. And from this, therefore, we learn that Balaam, because of the affection of his desire, which he nourished with his insane prophecy, once prohibited by God, was again hastening to go to Balak steadfastly: but hindered by the fear of God, and by the terrors that met him on the way, he did not change the word of blessing, which was not of divination (for we have said that divination is uttered by a raging mind, and those things are said by one who is ignorant), but of prophecy. Indeed, the prophets speak knowing what they say. Hence, he called the prophet himself, as one who knows what he should say. For he certainly did not choose better while ignorant of what he was saying: therefore, the blessing was not of divination, but of the power of God.

2 Peter 2:17-22 These are the springs lacking water, the clouds carried by the storm, by which the darkness of gloom has been preserved for eternity. Indeed, where the proud words of vanity have sounded, they ensnare through the lusts of the flesh in their desires, those who have truly fled, who were wandering in error, while promising them freedom, when they themselves are slaves of corruption. For by whom anyone is overcome, to him he is also enslaved. For if, after having fled from the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome, the latter end has become worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according

to the true proverb: A dog returns to its own vomit, and a pig, having washed, to her rolling in the mud.

While Peter was saying many things, among which he also brought up the example of Balaam, he again took up the discourse about the impure Gnostics, and compared them to sources *lacking water*, as those who have lost the water of life, that is, the purity of preaching and drinkable water: which when the Lord had, he promised that he would satisfy many who came to it. (Jn. 1:6) But he also compared them to *clouds carried by the wind*, in a contrary manner: for this reason, he also called the wind a *storm*, as one that turns and disturbs what is agitated: for this is what a *storm* usually does. Therefore, they are not radiant clouds like the saints, but mists full of darkness. (Isa. 60:2)

“*by which the darkness of gloom has been preserved for eternity*” (but it is said to be eternal judgment); and for what reason? Peter added the cause, that through *proud words* stemming from *vanity*, *they ensnare* those who have truly fled and who once wandered in error through fleshly desire in corruption. Therefore, those who commit these acts are subject to impurities, arrogance, and impiety. But also, Peter says, since they are of the aforementioned filth, which he rightly calls *corruption*, they promise *freedom* to those who are deceived, not indeed of true life, but of that which is according to indulgence. Therefore, he also adds a reason why they are *slaves* of sin, saying something remarkable, that whoever is led astray by any passion is also bound to this in slavery. Then Peter again confirms this with another example, showing how one who is overcome by someone else is also a *slave* to him, and he makes an argument based on this assumption.

"*For if, after having fled.*" In the present discourse, Peter strives to establish two things: that it is necessary for the one who is overcome to serve the one by whom he is overcome; and that

those who, after the recognition of the Truth, embrace again the former things, fall into worse conditions than the evil things they previously experienced. He also adds a *proverb* for support. Therefore, the entire discourse should be arranged in this way: For if, after *the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, they have fled from the pollutions of the world, and *are again entangled and overcome* by them, they certainly serve them, and in their servitude they experience worse things than before the knowledge, greatly aided by our adversary Satan, so that they may be dragged down to worse in repayment for their former termination from evil deeds. Therefore, the Apostle also says that since this happens to them, that they sing a retraction of evils, *it would have been better for them not to have known the truth* at all than to be captured by worse things *after they having known it*.

For since *a dog returns to its own vomit* is more abominable. For what nature had hated, and thus had compelled it to reject, this again having in delight, and as if eating those things that corrupt, and as if ejected through a miscarriage of nature, is more abominable. And the *pig* again seeking to roll *in the mud*, if it does this, will appear dirtier than the previous filth.

CHAPTER 3

Repetition of the wickedness of heretical men: in which it is also discussed how Christ will suddenly come at the end of this age: therefore it is said that one must be adorned with every virtue.

2 Peter 3:1-4 *I am writing to you, dear ones, in these letters, in which I stir up your sincere mind in remembrance: that you should be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior Jesus: knowing this first, that there shall come in*

the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying: Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

From these, we learn that there are two universal letters of Peter. Furthermore, what he says, "*in which I stir up your sincere mind by way in remembrance,*" is to be understood in this way: In which letters, that is, through which letters, *I stir up the sincere mind* that is in you. For it is the nature of a sincere and pure mind to remember and be stirred up with all virtue and readiness of spirit regarding what has been heard or the useful things that have been deposited, in order to repeat the actions of these. However, these have been deposited through prophetic sayings and apostolic preachings. For this reason, Paul also says: "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets:" (Eph. 2:20) For all of them announced the coming of the Lord, both the first and the second, and it is not right to doubt such great and numerous witnesses. And what do I say, he asks, about the prophets and apostles, who announced both the first and the second coming of the Lord?

And this is how the order should be taken: *that you should be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior.* For the preposition ὑπὸ is taken from the common, that is, "by". And why Peter should order this remembrance to be stirred up, he adds: Because those who live addicted to passions according to their own desires, seeing the coming of God, are afraid, which the Lord himself also announced along with others divinely inspired, and therefore despising their dishonorable life: then also seeing that the words do not immediately take effect, but are delayed for the salvation of many, they approach the faithful as if they were deceivers, and say:

Where is the promise of his coming? For this one, who is not yet complete due to a certain arrangement, they also distort the other beneficial teachings of the Lord, so that faith is not held by them. However, in those times, the Gnostics or Naassenes were indeed quiet, as were the Lampetians and Euchites. All of whom, Peter says, willingly do not know. For they voluntarily close their eyes to the truth, as we have said before.

2 Peter 3:5-9 For they willingly do not know that the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water by the word of God: by which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

And what is it that they do not know? That just as in the flood, the heavens were from the water according to the creation of the world narrated by Moses: (for he himself says that God commanded that a firmament be made in the midst of the waters (Gen. 1:6), that is, a firmer substance than the waters): so also the earth appeared from the waters at the command of the Creator, which had also been submerged at first. And just as the flood unexpectedly came upon the heavens and the earth constituted from water, so it has now been established that the corruption of the universe will occur through fire, with which the wicked will also perish. Since these two elements, water and fire,

were created along with the universe, from which the other two elements are also derived: air indeed from the evaporated waters, but the earth from the compacted ones: namely, just as it was made from fire through evaporation and compression, with no one who has a mind objecting (for this virtue has been bestowed upon fire by God the Creator), since these two, I say, have always existed in this way, and previously the destruction of the wicked was made through water, it is necessary that the destruction of those who act wickedly will again occur through fire. Moreover, that the corruption of this universe is evident not only to Christians but also to the wise men of the Greeks, as is the case with Heraclitus of Ephesus and Empedocles of Etna¹². But someone might say: And what is the reason for its creation if the world must again be reduced to nothingness? And we will say that the world does not tend entirely towards corruption, but towards renewal; therefore, the Prophet also says: "And you will renew the face of the earth." (Ps. 103:32) For just as the creation, being from God from the beginning, was good, and not merely good by chance: through the transgression of man, the creation itself became subject to vanity, that is, not having a firm existence, but being in a state of instability and change.

Then in the flood, when few men had persevered in divine worship, the world again seemed to take on the beginning of its reconstruction through Noah and those who had been saved in the ark along with the animals for the establishment of seeds: nevertheless, even then, human nature did not persist in its previous state, but rather declined to worse conditions than those that had existed before, from which neither the law given by Moses turned them away, nor the presence of the Lord, except that a few turned aside to those things which led to salvation. For how great is the multitude of those who are saved if you compare it to the multitude of those who perish, who are generated daily? For this reason, it seems to me that the time of fulfillment is

delayed until the number of the saved is completed. Therefore, since the call to salvation has been made in various ways, and the destruction from unbelief is diverse: for this reason, a cataclysmic fire is necessary, indeed a destruction, although not entirely perfect: not indeed of souls, but neither of bodies. For we must all be revealed before the tribunal of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10), not with our souls naked, but together with our bodies, and with them incorruptible. For how could a naked soul account for those things which have been done through the body? Indeed, it is not the part of a just judge, when two have sinned in the same way, to dismiss one and transfer the whole crime to the other. Furthermore, if we are accustomed to melt certain corporeal things again with fire, not to attribute to them absolute destruction, but to provide them with purity and sincerity: let no one doubt that God, who has promised completion through fire, will either not bring about corruption, or will indeed do so in such a way that through the corruption of one, He makes another. But even if it were to corrupt, what would it corrupt? The superfluous and those related to present life: and what are those? Beasts, herbs, plants. Indeed, herbs are for the beasts, and the beasts are for the service of this corruptible life. "Producing," he says, "hay for the beasts and herbs for the service of men." (Ps. 103:14) As for the plants, some are indeed for covering and for building houses, while others are for providing food. Moreover, the fact that animals require food is a sign of corruption. For what else could the middle and fullness provide but corruption? Therefore, those things which are superfluous to immortal life would be corrupted. But He will create new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65:17), not another in terms of material. For even one who builds a new house does not indeed make it from non-existing material. Thus, God created the material and shaped it from the beginning, as much as was certainly necessary for the use of that time.

To the incorruptibility, however, which will corrupt that which is useless and unnecessary after the present state. If something is useful, it will allow for an improvement with immortal and incredible beauty, so as to perfect and complete another and incorruptible world.

"and the earth standing out of the water." The earth indeed from water as from a material principle, but through water as through a perfecting principle. For water contains the earth like a certain glue that is to it; unless it were to touch it, it would necessarily dissolve and be carried into the air. However, perhaps someone will approach us with vain thought saying: For what reason did God, who produced this visible world, not create it firm and unchangeable from the beginning, but subject to changes? Hence, it was also immediately necessary to be restored, indeed at the time of Noah through water, but *reserved unto fire*, as Peter now says? To which we will say that it was not possible for it to have changelessness.

How indeed, for he who has received his being from change? If indeed it was produced from non-being to being, which no wise person would say is not a change. And in what way has the change progressed to worse, mixed with worse, it was necessary for this Creator to restore it to better; indeed, at the time of Noah he purified through water, but in the end he will do so through *fire*. Just as we are accustomed to melt certain material things again with fire, not for destruction, but for purification.

"by which," namely heaven and earth, indeed submerged by waters, but the heavens sending down their gushes, that is, as if through gushes urging water downwards. *"by which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished."* It perished, not for the entire world, but for the living beings, which indeed represent the whole world.

If indeed the place was deserted of living beings, the world would not even be considered. Furthermore, what is stated, “*reserved for fire on the day of judgment of ungodly men,*” is thus arranged: reserved for the day of judgment and for the day of destruction; for “on the day” is resumed from common sense. However, *judgment* means condemnation:

“*The Lord is not slack.*” Having completed the discourse on the End, which will necessarily be through *fire*, all of which we have explained more fully, it transitions to the production or extension of the time until the world is ended, and says: *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise*, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient, waiting for our salvation, *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*: for certainly to him who is infinite and the sea of essence unconstrained, nothing is extended, but a *thousand years* are just like a single day with him. Or rather, according to David, there is no multiplication of days: for he says in this way: “A thousand years in your sight, O Lord, are like a day that has just gone by and like a watch in the night” (Ps. 89:4): by watch signifying the briefest span of the night. For the night is divided into four watches: since the Lord came to the holy apostles in the fourth watch. (Matt. 14:25)

2 Peter 3:10-14 *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements*

will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless, we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless, and consider that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation.

The uncertainty of the Lord's coming is signified as a theft, when it is least expected, through the *thief* and *the night*: through the night indeed, because of uncertainty; for all things in the night are uncertain: through *the thief*, because he is not expected; for no one will be robbed who expects a thief, but those who least expect him will be robbed. Therefore, the Lord also says that just as in the days of Noah there were men rejoicing in weddings and drinking, thinking nothing of the future calamity that would overtake them (Matt. 24:38), until the flood overwhelmed them: so too will the coming of the Lord suddenly come upon the wicked.

The word “noise” (ῥοιζήδον) indeed means *sound*. However, the sound of this kind is proper to fire in those things that are fed by fire. Note, however, that it has said the *earth* and what is in it must be *burned up*, but not men, but only destruction has been said concerning the wicked or their transgressions. For the way of the wicked will perish, but the wicked himself will not.

"According to his promise." For He promised the faithful, saying: "I will come and take you, etc. (Jn. 14:33) "In my Father's house there are many mansions." (Jn. 14:2) Therefore, Paul also says that, when the angel shall sound the trumpet from heaven, and the dead shall rise immortal (1 Thess. 4:15), they themselves will also meet the Lord in glory, signifying immortality by what he said about glory. But if they are immortal or incorruptible, surely they will also be new. If, however, these are new, it is evident that a new creature has been born to be

changed along with the establishment of men: corruptible indeed because of the corruptible downfall of men, but incorruptible because of the renewal of men. Consider, moreover, that both the delay of time until the Lord's coming and the long-suffering expectation itself are said to effect our salvation.

2 Peter 3:15-18 *Just as our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, speaking in almost all his letters about these things: among which are some things hard to understand, which the unlearned and unstable distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. Therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, take care that you are not led astray by the error of the wicked and fall from your own commitment, but grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

"*Just as our beloved brother Paul,*" And where did Paul say anything of this sort? In these words when he says: "The goodness of God invites you to repentance." (Rom. 2:4) If the patience of God invites to repentance, then repentance is certainly beneficial for us, and the patience of God is for our benefit and salvation.

However, he says that the *things hard to understand* are interpreted by the wicked in a perverse way; for this means to be twisted, and to demonstrate the whole matter from one point, as Paul said, "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more," (Rom. 5:20) they perverted this to mean that we sin more so that we may be forgiven more abundantly.

However, *they do this*, he says, *to their own destruction*. Just as those who killed the prophets and apostles are liable to the same

judgment, so too are those who distort their words: for those killed them so that those who were being taught salvation by them could not be helped by them; and likewise, these *distort* the words so that no one may work salvation through them. Truly, he calls faith in the Lord its own *commitment*. And just as he concludes in his other Epistle with prayer, so in this one, he prays for an increase in faith in the Lord for them.

The end, with the help of divine favor, of the later Catholic Epistle of Peter.

Translation Footnotes for 1-2 Peter

1 This section had an odd placement of a number of verses from chapter one. I am not sure if it was a copyist error or if Oecumenius actually wrote it. I simply abbreviated it.

2 Irenaeus of Lyons, Fragments from the Lost Writings of Irenæus, 13

3 John Chrysostom, in his Homily 23 on Romans

4 Gregory Nazianzen, Oration 45.24

5 Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus", contained in Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Book X

6 Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle

7 Basil of Caesarea, Letter 155

8 Fragments of St. Justin Martyr, 4

9 For there is an ancient text called A Valentinian Exposition (150-350 A.D.), which is found in the Nag Hammadi Library, it demonstrates what Oecumenius says here about the Valentinians fleeing into profound depths and silence, in their own words. There is an English translation by John D. Turner.

10 Tartarus, a term from Greek mythology representing a deep abyss for torment and suffering, is mentioned in the New Testament once, in 2

Peter 2:4. Besides Hades and Gehenna, we find in the New Testament many other names for the abode of the damned. Tartarus is called "lower hell" (2 Peter 2:4), "abyss" (Luke 8:31 and elsewhere), "place of torments" (Luke 16:28), "pool of fire" (Revelation 19:20 and elsewhere), "furnace of fire" (Matthew 13:42, 50), "unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12, and elsewhere), "everlasting fire" (Matthew 18:8; 25:41; Jude 7), "exterior darkness" (Matthew 7:12; 22:13; 25:30), "mist" or "storm of darkness" (2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13). The state of the damned is called "destruction" (apoleia, Philippians 3:19 and elsewhere), "perdition" (olethros, 1 Timothy 6:9), "eternal destruction" (olethros aionios, 2 Thessalonians 1:9), "corruption" (phthora, Galatians 6:8), "death" (Romans 6:21), "second death" (Revelation 2:11 and elsewhere). [Catholic Encyclopedia]

11 Sharing bread and salt is an ancient custom, prevalent in the Middle East and parts of Europe, symbolizing welcome, gratitude, friendship, and trust.

12 Heraclitus of Ephesus (5th and 6th century B.C.) is renowned for his doctrine of flux. Empedocles on Etna (494–434 B.C.)

OECUMENIUS

on the Epistles of John

HYPOTHESIS OF THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES OF JOHN

This epistle was written by the same John who wrote the Gospel, suggesting these things to those who had already believed in the Lord. And indeed, just as in the Gospel, so in this Epistle he theologically discusses the Word, showing that it has always been in God, and teaching that the Father is light, so that we may also know the Word as a radiance from Him. However, in discussing the theology, John teaches that the mystery which is among us is not recent: but indeed, it has always been from the beginning, and now it has been manifested through the Lord, who is eternal life and the true God. And he states the reason for

His coming and manifestation, saying that it is to destroy the works of the Devil, and that we might be freed from death, and that we might know the Father and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. It is therefore written for all ages: for children, for adolescents, for the elderly, that God indeed be known, but that the diabolical energy has been defeated thereafter, taken away by death. Then the entire subsequent Epistle teaches about love and charity, wanting us to love one another: and showing that we ought to love each other, since Christ loved us. Therefore, it teaches about the distinction between fear and love, and the children of God and the children of the Devil, and about sin leading to death and that which does not lead to death, and about the diversity of spirits, and afterwards distinguishes which spirit is from God and which spirit is of error: and how we know the children of God and the children of the Devil, and for what sin that we should pray and for those who sin, and for what we should not pray: and that those who do not love their neighbor are not worthy of the calling, nor can they be called Christ's. It also shows the unity of the Son with the Father: and that he who denies the Son does not have the Father. However, in this Epistle, it argues that it is characteristic of the Antichrist to say that the Son, Jesus Christ, does not exist, so that when he does not exist, he falsely claims to be. Moreover, the entire Epistle encourages believers in the Lord not to be troubled if they are hated in the world, but rather to rejoice, as the hatred of the world shows that believers have migrated from this world and henceforth have a heavenly conversation. And at the end of the Epistle, it again brings to mind that the Son of God is eternal life and the true God, and that we should serve Him and be wary of idols.

THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JOHN.

SECTIONS

1. Evangelical theology of Christ; in which it also deals with confession and the observance of sin, which confirms the knowledge of God through the observance of His commandments.
2. Of love without which impiety remains: in which it also acts according to each one's age, and concerning the hatred from the love of the world.
3. Of false brothers denying God, and that piety in Christ is the confession of the Father: for the glorification of the Father is the theology of the Son. In which he also speaks of the divine and spiritual gift in sanctification for the hope of attaining the knowledge of God, that everyone who is in Christ is without sin: for whoever sins is of the Devil.
4. Of love towards one's neighbor and the affection for giving alms: in which it also deals with good conscience that is through faith in Jesus Christ: and with discerning spirits through the confession of the Lord's incarnation.
5. From brotherly love to divine worship.
6. Theology of the Son who is in the glory of the Father, and victory against the Evil One through faith in Jesus Christ unto life.
7. By assisting the sinning brother through prayer, and that it should not be sinful: in which it also deals with abstaining from the worship of demons.

THE APOSTLE JOHN
THE FIRST CATHOLIC EPISTLE

CHAPTER 1

Evangelical theology of Christ; in which it also deals with confession and the observance of sin, which confirms the knowledge of God through the observance of His commandments.

1 John 1:1-2b *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have touched, of the Word of Life; for the life was revealed, and we have seen it, and bear witness.*

This is directed towards Jews and Greeks, who also slander our mystery as being more recent. It shows therefore that it is also ancient, because *from the beginning*, that is, at the same time as the conceived [ἐννοηθείσῃ] beginning. Or that it is not only by law, but also of the visible creation itself, that this is more inspiring: for the former had a beginning, but this was even before that beginning. Therefore, when the mysteries of the Greeks arose yesterday or the day before, what can anyone say? Those things that are praised in the self-indulgence of the mind have received a substance that barely withstands late, when filthiness was already prevalent among men, of which both discipline and remembrance as we decline from the better to our confusion of night.

Therefore, demonstrating the magnificence of our mystery from its very antiquity, John added that this is also *life*, and *life* measured not by time-based space, but having persistence and always existing with the Father, saying things that are in accordance with what was said in his Gospel. For there it is: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn. 1:1) However, this "was" does not designate a time-based subsistence, but is the essence of a lasting thing, and the principle, basis, and foundation of all that have

come to be, without which not even these could exist. Each of them, as they are born, is said to be something determined, for example, to be an angel, to be the sun, to be the sky, and all other things. But the Son, being alone, comes to participate in all things for existence. Therefore, Paul says: "In Him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 18:28)

This to *have heard* according to the introductory doctrine, where one first receives, comes to live itself, not corporally, but perfectly knowing, after long exercise and consideration: which is also called contact with the Word of life, which said: "I am the life." (Jn. 14:6) However, this can also be said about the Word that was in the beginning: namely, *that we have heard* it would come through the law and the prophets. Therefore, *we have seen* and *touched* this one coming in the flesh: "for no one has ever seen God visibly²." (Jn. 1:18, 1 Jn. 4:12) Nor did we hastily decide from the appearance, but after a long examination, that is, the mutual questioning of the law and prophetic testimonies concerning Him, we believed in the Word appearing in the flesh. But, what we have seen, that is, we have admired with our eyes. For Θεασθαι "*to have looked upon*" is to gaze with wonder and astonishment. Therefore, we have not perceived or touched what was there, for who can declare this generation? (Isa. 53:8) But what has happened: either through interactions of understanding, as has already been said, or also through the senses, as Thomas after the resurrection. (Jn. 20:26) For he was one and inseparable, the same both visible and invisible, both seized and unable to be comprehended, both touched and unable to be touched, speaking in a human manner and performing miracles as God.

However, we say this because of the supreme union of the Word with the flesh. The series of words is this: 1:1-2c *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen*

with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have touched, of the Word of Life; for the life was revealed, and we have seen it, and bear witness: And I declare to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was revealed to us: therefore, what we have seen, we also declare to you.

Here therefore the discourse responds where it is said. *What therefore we have seen.* However, the discourse was not reported as we have: first indeed because of the use of abbreviated words, then also despising the trivialities of the Greeks, and showing that our salvation is not in words, but in works, and making us more attentive in these matters, lest we should immediately find what is proposed there and become negligent. Furthermore, dealing with divine matters, he wished to conceal in obscurity those things which were more uplifting than could be accepted by profane ears, nor should they be safely spread to them. For it is not the act of a sensible man, nor of a discerning consideration, to throw what is holy to dogs, and to cast pearls before swine. (Matt. 7:6)

1 John 1:2c-7 *And we declare to you eternal life, which was with the Father and was revealed to us. What we have seen and heard, we also declare to you, so that you may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ: And we write this to you, so that your joy may be complete. And this is the promise that we have heard from Him; and we announce to you that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

"And we declare to you the life." Therefore, what we have seen, we also declare to you, John says. What is that? That he who is eternal life has been revealed to us, and we have become witnesses of him both before his crucifixion and after his resurrection. For he was indeed nailed to the cross in the flesh, and in that same flesh he rose again. And what profit do we bring you from this announcement? Namely, that just as we have taken you as partners [κοινωνοὺς] through the words of what we have seen and heard, so you may also be partners of the Father and of his Son Jesus Christ.

However, having seized this, let us be *complete* with *joy* as if united with God. Or because while you are participants with us, we have our joy to the fullest; which the joyful sower will establish for the reapers, rejoicing in what they may enjoy from their labors.

Having said this, John resumes the conversation, explaining what the announcement he heard is: and he says that this is *that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all*. And where did John hear it? From Christ Himself, who said: "I am the light of the world (Jn. 8:12);" and: "I came as light into the world." (Jn. 13:46) *Light* therefore is, and darkness is not in it. Spiritual light, however, stirs the eyes of our soul to its reception, turning away from all these material things, and urging solely towards its desire with loving affection. However, *darkness* signifies either ignorance or sin. In God, indeed, neither ignorance nor sin can be found. For these refer to material things and the structure that is found among us. If it has been said elsewhere: "Darkness has been placed as a hiding place for Him," (Ps. 17:12) it was nonetheless said "has been placed;" not, however, "he is darkness," as it was said, "*God is light*." For it is one thing that is placed by Him who places. Here, then, *darkness* signifies ignorance, which consists in the fact that God cannot be comprehended: and this is ours, not God's. Therefore, something

is placed among those things that do not belong to anyone, nor for his own sake, but for someone else that concerns him. That he also calls *darkness* sin is evident from what has been said by the same in the Gospel. For what does John say there? "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (Jn. 1:5);" by calling *darkness* our substance, which is subject to sins, in which he was made or by which he was assumed, he did not contract impurities from it: for he did no sin, etc.

Since therefore we are called to *have fellowship with God*, who *is light*; furthermore, in such *light* the *darkness* cannot stand, as has been demonstrated, nor can we, who are partakers of the *light*, thereafter receive *darkness* in ourselves, lest we suffer the penalties of falsehood and be separated from the *fellowship* of light along with falsehood. Therefore, having mutual fellowship (namely, both among ourselves and with the light), we make ourselves difficult to sin.

But how will this happen to us, John says, who have previously offended in many sins? For no one who is truthful and accustomed to speaking the truth will dare to say that he is without sin. Therefore, if anyone is surrounded and occupied by this fear, let him be of good spirit, he says, for he has been purified by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ shed for us, having contracted a fellowship with Him. Therefore, observe that because of the supreme union, He also calls the Son of the Father the nature assumed from us, whose blood is undoubtedly of the assumed nature and not of God.

How then, is Nestorius³ mad and impious, who separating the flesh of the Son does not allow His mother to be called Θεοτόκον, that is, the Mother of God? "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light," (1 Jn. 1:7) it should be understood that the understanding of the whole sentence is the overturning

of the blasphemy of the Jews (see Rev. 2:9): for they indeed said of Christ: "We know that He is a sinner." (Jn. 9:34) John says therefore: If we do the works of light, we are partakers of him; but if we do not, we are strangers to him. How then, is he not truthful, he asks, and has committed no sin, although "he was rejected by us among sinners?" (Is. 53:12) If therefore we who said, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," (Matt. 27:24) boldly say that we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves (1 Jn. 1:8) or are deceived, as if it were not a sin to crucify Christ.

For it is indeed the greatest: that is why John did not say, "We lie," but: "We deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," (1 Jn. 1:8) because error is outside of the truth. If, however, we acknowledge and confess our sin, he will forgive us. (1 Jn. 1:9) By communicating in speech with others, John greatly lessened the harshness of reproach, saying: If we say.

1 John 1:8-9 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

"*If we confess our sins.*" John repeats the statement, using it more richly, so that the frequency of the produced refutation may restrain them by the degree of sin itself and invite them to confession. However, John indicated how much good arises from confession when he said: "Say your sins first, so that you may be justified." (Is. 43:26) However, it was also the custom of the Teacher of this beloved disciple to repeat the same things more frequently, first moderately, then more perfectly, wishing to

make the understanding of the words more effective, and striving to instill their habit into the listeners.

Indeed, John called God *faithful*. This means “truthful”. For "Πιστός", that is, “faithful”, is said not only of one to whom something is entrusted, but also of one who is confirmed in truth, who by his truthful manner causes others to become partakers of this as well. Therefore, God is called *faithful* in this way: *just*, indeed, as one who does not reject those who approach him, regardless of the sins they have committed. Therefore, he undoubtedly forgives the sins of those who run to holy baptism through repentance, whether they have sinned against him or against another.

There, *if we confess*, John says, we shall obtain appropriate forgiveness. But if we *shamelessly say that we have not sinned*, we shall commit a double evil, both showing ourselves to be liars and slandering God, who surpasses all truth, with falsehood. For He Himself says through the Prophet: “They have repaid me evil for good.” (Ps. 109:5)

And again from John’s own mouth: “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if rightly, why do you strike me?” (Jn. 18:23) If, with these things being so, we still *say that we have not sinned*, we deny his words, which are spirit and life. (Jn. 6:64) "For the words that I speak," he says, "are spirit and life." And if we no longer have his word dwelling in us: what could be more serious?

CHAPTER 2

1 John 2:1-6 *My little children, I write these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours*

only, but also for the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says, "I know him," but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Knowing our instability and inclination to sin, and that we always have a tendency towards worse things, and that there is a envious demon lurking against our salvation, it is necessary for those who have already become familiar with God to live cautiously to avoid sinning: John adds that even if we fall after remission, we should not despair of ourselves. For if we turn back, we will attain salvation through the Mediator, the Lord *Jesus Christ*. For He, interceding for us *with the Father*, will appease Him *not for ours only, but also for the whole world*. He said this either because He was writing to the Jews, so that the repentance would not be concluded only for them, but would also extend to the Gentiles; or because the promise was not made only to those who were alive at that time, but also to all who would come afterward.

John indeed calls Him *an Advocate* who prays or pleads *with the Father* for us. However, these things are said with regard to human nature and a certain privilege: just as that saying, "The Son can do nothing of Himself." (Jn. 5:19) For He says this so that He does not appear to oppose God. For he had shown that the Son also had the power to forgive sins in the case of the paralyzed (Matt. 9:2-6), and by giving His disciples the authority to forgive sins, He demonstrated that He conferred this power by His own authority. (Jn. 20:23)

But as we said, either the Apostle is saying this as a certain privilege, or he is showing the same nature of the Son with the Father and the same power, and that whatever one of the three holy persons would do, it would be common to the others.

"And *by this we know*." When John had said above that those who believed in the Lord have fellowship with him (1 Jn. 1:6), he now presents what confirms that fellowship towards him, and he says: "*And by this we know that we have come to know him*." This divine man often uses similar expressions in the same way: as when he says: "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him." (Jn. 1:10)

Thus, therefore, John now uses the word "*to know*." That we know him, that is, that we are mixed with him, from this we know if we observe his commandments. The word γινώσκειν, that is, "*to know*", signifies two things, especially in sacred Scripture, namely to know something: as when it is said: "I have known that the Lord will execute judgment on the poor." (Ps. 139:1) Moreover, it signifies an all-encompassing connection and confirmation towards someone, which is called knowledge: as when it is said, "The Lord knows the ways of the innocent," (Ps. 37:18) and as Paul says, "That we may know God just as we are also known by Him." (1 Cor. 13:12) Similarly, it must be said about ignorance that it is understood in two ways. For just as it seems to external writers that there is one knowledge of opposites. According to this, therefore, *to know* is taken in two ways in this context. Indeed, when it says, "*By this we know*," it is taken for knowing; but when it is said, "*That we know him*," this means that we are firmly joined with him. For he who has a partnership with someone is also joined and connected to him in what he shares.

Therefore, John also adds, "*we keep His commandments*." From this, that is also resolved: "The Lord knows who are His," (2

Tim. 2:19) and that: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us:" (2 Cor. 5:21) and anything else that is discussed in Sacred Scripture regarding knowledge or ignorance. Then, on the contrary, he confirms the same, using a more abundant proof, and says: *Whoever says, "I know him," or "I have fellowship with him," and does not keep his commandments is a liar.* For how can it be that the same person is joined to him and yet not joined? Certainly, keeping the commandments indicates obedience, while not observing them indicates that one is by no means a friend.

Therefore, whoever knows God is also known by Him, either having become a partner with God and united with God; and in this, *the love of God* is evident, through which love he will have the perfection that is in God, and by this, he will judge his closeness to God. For perfect love is indeed exhibited through works. However, since it happens that someone may convey precepts rightly and precisely, while their own affections are sluggish: this is far from God. Therefore, it is said that one who abides in God should also direct the paths of their own life according to Him.

Of love without which impiety remains: in which it also acts according to each one's age, and concerning the hatred from the love of the world.

1 John 2:7-11 *Brothers, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning. Again, I write a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you: because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining. He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no*

cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

It concerns the *love* for one's neighbor, and it states that the connection to God or love is first known through love for one's neighbor. For it cannot happen that one who has been enlightened by the knowledge of God and filled with His love has *darkness* due to hatred against *his brother*. Indeed, *light* and *darkness* cannot coexist in the same and according to the same. Therefore, one who is illuminated by love for God is ignited towards the *love* of *his brother*, and having God, he also has light towards his brother.

He who says he loves God and hates his brother is in continuous darkness, always blind in his intellectual eyes as one who has lost the light that was from the connection with God and with his brother: nor does he know how to proceed thereafter. Since this letter was general and directed commonly to all, both Jews and Greeks: to the Jews indeed he directs his speech when he says, "*I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old one*," speaking of love. For it is written in the tablets of Moses: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Lev. 19:18) To the Greeks, indeed (let someone say), what is written about the ancient *commandment*, when this is found nowhere? Therefore, we say that there was also a written law concerning love for neighbors. Where and how? Indeed, it is written on the tablet of the heart through natural understanding. And that the natural intelligences sown in us are called law, Paul is correct to confirm this statement, who says: "I see another law opposing the law of my mind which is in me." (Rom. 7:23) The law, therefore, or the *old commandment*, was also received by the Greeks, as nature itself is a lawgiver, that they should be kind to all relatives and love one another, inasmuch as man is a social animal: which

could not happen without love. Moreover, the ancients write in history that many men have exposed themselves to death for one another. Our Savior gives a greater sign of love when he says, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." (Jn. 15:13) Thus, concerning the *commandment* of love for one's neighbor, which has long been established for both Jews and Greeks, John says: "Besides the *old commandment* that you heard about loving your neighbor, I am writing a *new commandment* to you: which is true in him who made you familiar with God, and in you who have communion with Him. For he himself says: "I have come as a light into the world," (Jn. 12:46) and the true light, according to his word, now shines (Jn. 1:9); furthermore, in the light, darkness cannot stand (Jn. 1:5): let the true light of love shine from now on (Matt. 5:16), with genuine affection towards your brother, and let the darkness of hatred pass away, that is, let it depart, let it perish."

The phrase means *passing away* also, as the blessed Paul, where he says, "For the form of this world is passing away." (1 Cor. 7:31) — In another manner concerning this: "*I write a new commandment to you.*" This *commandment* is *new*, in that the commandment of Moses was not universal, but distinct according to those who were of the same kin or tribe, urging to love only friends (Lev. 19:18), while having hatred for enemies, as it says: "You shall love your friend and hate your enemy." (Matt. 5:43) The command of the Lord and His apostles, however, is very new, instructing: "Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you," (Luke 6:27) holding to natural existence, and not to that natural affection which clings to wicked men given over to evil arts out of malice.

"*he who hates his brother.*" This kind of thing is said in these words: *He who says* he is of Christ *and hates his brother* is a liar and is not of Christ. For if Christ loved him so much that he laid

down his life for him, how can he who claims to be of Christ hate his brother for whom Christ died? Or even in this way: Whoever says he is of God and hates his brother who is Christ (for he himself says, "I will declare your name to my brothers" Ps. 21:23) is not of God, but of the Devil. For if he were of God, he would surely love his brother, and thus also Christ.

1 John 2:12-14 *I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. I write to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father. I wrote to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I wrote to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.*

Since John had said: "I write a new commandment to you" (1 Jn. 2:8), it also signifies the nature of those who are to receive the letters: this, however, is designated by progress and promotion according to physical growth. For he knew that not all would receive the message with equal honor nor with equal spirit and zeal: but these, indeed, like *little children*, more in the manner of instruction; to whom, however, he promises the remission of sins through faith in Christ.

But others, like those who have advanced to the perfect man, to the full stature of Christ, (Eph. 4:3) and live so that they can also make others sons: to whom it is also testified that they have knowledge of him who is from the beginning. But who is he who is from the beginning (1 Jn. 2:8), except the Word of God, which was in the beginning with God? (Jn. 1:1)

Moreover, others are like *young men*, who, have *overcome* energetically and strongly against affections and the afflictions of insults, are testified to be about to receive the palm of victory (see Rev. 7:9). Thus, approaching in another way, John repels the same, adapting the discourse of doctrine to the measure of spiritual understanding. Therefore, I say, since I know you will receive in various ways what has been written by me, it is necessary for me to measure my doctrine according to the nature of your age: and with these, certainly as with *children* who *have known the Father*, I truly say God: but with those as with fathers, who have something more than *children* in knowledge, not only that they have known him as a *Father*, but also as One who is without beginning, and whose beginning no one can describe: for he was in *the beginning*.

It is right and proper to add more perfect treatises: indeed, to those *strong young men*, suitable for struggle and contests, to anoint them: to whom, while declaring the clarity of victory, it shows that discussions on theft and military matters are necessary. Thus, therefore, according to the ages, with the spirit tempered by its own discourse: while these were indeed affected by his treatises, others would approach faith in such a way that they ought to be instructed in various ways according to their quality, John subsequently adds a discourse of exhortation, and says:

"*Do not love the world.*" (1 Jn. 2:15) He speaks these things as if to *children*. For *children* are always affected by apparent pleasure. Then, stating the reason why one should *not love the world* and the things that are in the world, he confirms the doctrine handed down to the *fathers* and the *young men*: for they are helped by a more perfect disposition. And do not think that he has signified by his discourse what *the world* is, gathered from heaven and earth; he adds who the world is, and what *those things are that are in the world*.

And indeed, it says that the world is a vile crowd, which has no love of the Father in it. But what are those *things that are in the world*? They are the *lust of the flesh* that are fulfilled by the *lust* stirred up by *the flesh*. For *the eyes*, which hold the foremost place among the senses, encompass everything else as well. All evil revolves around *lust*: adultery, drunkenness, inappropriate love; arrogance, wanting to surpass everyone, suggested by lust so that whatever arises is accomplished by arrogance; murders, indeed these for greed, those to destroy adversaries; deceit, and these so that whatever is a barrier to us, we undermine by deceit. And to sum it up in one word, whatever is opposed to God is born from the *lust of the flesh*.

1 John 2:15-17 *Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, namely the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it: but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

We have already mentioned what John is calling the world, “a vile crowd”, for which the Lord also says to the disciples: “You are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.” (Jn. 17:16) The father of this world is the Devil (see Jn. 8:44 and 2 Cor. 4:4), I say, of worldly pleasure and confusion. Therefore, the Lord says to the Father about His disciples: “I do not ask that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the Evil One,” (Jn. 17:15) or from the world: whom He also says elsewhere is “established in the evil one” (1 Jn. 5:19). — In another way: If the Evil One opposes the good Father, then he who serves the desires of the world *is not from the Father, but is of the world*; it is clear that he who is not from the Father, but

from the world, is also from the Devil: as He says to the Jews in the Gospels: "You are not from the Father, but from the Devil" (Jn. 8:44): that is, from worldly pursuits and exercises, of which the Devil is the sower and planter. (see Matt. 13:24-43)

And he said, these *lust of the flesh* do not have durability and subsistence, but pass away: those, however, that are done according to *the will of God abides forever*. But the persistence of the wise is not to despise by contempt and to cling to things that perish: they do something similar to one trying to build a house with a shadow, "*but he who does the will of God.*" But what is the will of the Father? That they believe in Him Whom He has sent. (see Jn. 6:29)

Of false brothers denying God, and that piety in Christ is the confession of the Father: for the glorification of the Father is the theology of the Son. In which he also speaks of the divine and spiritual gift in sanctification for the hope of attaining the knowledge of God, that everyone who is in Christ is without sin: for whoever sins is of the Devil.

1 John 2:18 *Little children, it is the last hour: and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.*

"*it is the last hour.*" In this way, the discourse can be more easily understood: Since the Catholic Epistle is suited to each person regardless of the time, and there is no prescribed end of life for each individual, yet each one has an uncertain end, it is rightly applied to each one's end, so that, as the final time of life that threatens each individual, forethought and sobriety may follow: and thus a life irreproachable and pure may always be conducted in actions by Christians. Nor does any madman have a place for mocking this, if it has been said for so many years: *it is the last hour*, and yet until now it has not been measured or calculated

that last moment. Indeed, if you compare the span of time from the creation of the world, how much has been elapsed from that time until now? I mean the time since Christ was born.

Furthermore, if anything is divided into three parts, namely the first, the middle, and the last, whatever follows from the middle can certainly be called *the last* without any absurdity. Certainly, if the Lord came according to the middle of ten thousand years (since His coming to earth was almost in the fifth millennium), whatever follows from this, as that which follows the middle, could be justifiably called the extreme and *the last*; for instance, from a hundred years, even the first, namely ten or twenty, and so on for the subsequent ones, could be called *the last*.

Therefore, here too, since the time of the Lord's coming had passed through the middle of the thousand years, whatever follows from this can rightly be called *the last* or extreme. This is therefore most true, even according to John Chrysostom [Easter Sermon]. *The last* or extreme can also be understood as the worst, as when we say: He has reached the extreme of evil. Therefore, since the world was then shaken by great evils, the Devil developing these things after the coming of that Savior, whether for the temptation of the good or for the confusion of those things which are better, so that no one could discern what was good and what was not good: for this reason, that time is called *the last hour*, as it brings forth that which is worst, when it has the character of the most foul and thickest waste.

However, it confirms that *it is the last hour*, or the worst, even according to the substance of time from *the Antichrist*. For if we expect *the Antichrist*, he says, in *the last* times, but *now many antichrists* are present in this life (he mentions Cerinthus⁴ and those like him), it is evident that the time of the end is imminent, while *many antichrists* precede one and prepare the way for him.

Then John adds to this saying whom *the antichrists have come*, namely that they are from among us, etc.

1 John 2:19-21 *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be revealed that they were not all of us. But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.*

"*They went out from us.*" However, John adds this, having laid down or started nothing for the explanation of the speech: I say, as if John had asked himself: And where do these "antichrists" (1 Jn. 2:18) come from? Then he would have added, *They went out from us.* Since it ought to have been done this way, he does not do this, but rather in a confused manner, perhaps showing through the confusion of speech the distress John had concerning them. But why are those who went out from the Lord's disciples called antichrists? So that they could be regarded as trustworthy by those who were being led astray, as if they were from the disciples, and they made their preaching in accordance with the teacher's and instructor's opinion: nor did they have a completely contrary preaching. Therefore, it is said of them, "*They went out from us.*" For when they became disciples, they departed from the truth and found their own blasphemy. It must be understood, however, from where these antichrists came, so that the statement may be clearer.

"*but they were not of us.*" That is, concerning the sort of those who are saved: *for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.* But now it has happened to them that they became *revealed*, that is, it became known to all that they were

completely alienated from us, and joined to those who *were not of us*. For there are among them some who were never *of us*, to whom they have joined themselves, who have *went out from us*. Because of these things, John said, "*not all are of us*." For among us, who were domestic and familiar, others followed those who were external to us: choosing rather to live self-indulgently in the manner of the pagans than moderately and honorably with us.

Having said this, lest it seem to him that he alone attributes knowledge of these things and thereby becomes arrogant against the faithful, as if he alone knew them, he adds: "*But you have an anointing*." As if to say: But why do I tell you these things as if you were ignorant? There is no ignorance of these matters among you. For you have received the sacred *anointing* through holy baptism, and through this, the divine Spirit, who leads you into all truth. (Jn. 16:19)

Since this is the case, *you know* that *I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it*. What are these? The last hour, the coming of the Antichrist (1 Jn. 2:18), that all things are full of lies. Therefore, because lies abound, he says: I also say that many antichrists have come. For if Christ is *the truth*, whom you also *know*, you have *the truth* in yourselves, certainly since the liar is contrary to the truth or Christ, he is an antichrist.

1 John 2:22-27 Who is the liar, except for the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the Antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either. Therefore, let what you heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is the

promise that he himself made to us, eternal life. I have written these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you. And as for you, the anointing that you received from him remains in you. And you do not need anyone to teach you, but as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Here too, we must hear the conjunction καὶ, that is, “and”, for the sake of clearer understanding, so that the sense is this: And *who is the liar, except for the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?* But the wicked Simon was raving, claiming that there was one Jesus and another Christ: the Jesus who was born of the holy Mary; but the Christ who descended from heaven into the Jordan. Therefore, he who applauds this lie, John says, *is the Antichrist*. This, however: *This is the Antichrist*, must be understood in two ways, both regarding *the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ*, and regarding *the one who denies the Father and the Son*. For he, John says, who denies the Father and the Son, is also a liar and an antichrist.

For some heretics, from whom the impure Valentinus arose, claimed that there is another unnamed Father besides him who is called the Father of Christ. They also deny the Son, because they say he is merely a unveiled man and not God by nature, as if he were from God. *"Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father,"* just as the Jews, while denying the Son, pretend to know the Father and claim this for themselves. But let them know that they have not known the Father either; for if they had known, they would have known that He is also the Father of the Only Begotten Son. The same nonsense was also uttered by those who followed Simon. Therefore, John says this: but you, *let what you have heard from the beginning*, namely the divine teaching about Christ, *remain in you*. The name means, *"Let it remain in you."*

"For *if what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you will also remain in the Son and in the Father.*" This is, you will be his partners.

"*And this is the promise.*" For the conjunction καί, that is, "and", must be taken causally for "indeed". But what *is the promise*? It is that which the Lord says to the Father: "That as I am in you and you are in me, so they may be one in us." (Jn. 17:21) And again: "That they may have eternal life. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent." (Jn. 17:3)

"Truly, concerning *these things*", John adds: "*I have written to you about those who deceive you*": that is, because of the heresies that have emerged.

Then he again adds what we mentioned before, making it so that his speech is not burdensome to them, "*the anointing that you received from him remains in you.*"

What that is, John already has said, namely that the Holy Spirit speaks. Therefore, since you have the Holy Spirit, you have it firmly within yourselves, *you do not need anyone to teach you*: but as the *anointing* or the Spirit itself *teaches you about all things, just as it has taught you*, abide in Him (verse 28): *for it is true, and it is not a lie, that which it has taught you.*

"*And the anointing that you have received.*" This is the sequence of the letters: And you, since *the anointing which you have received from him remains in you, do not need anyone to teach you.*

1 John 2:28-29 *And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If you know that*

He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

CHAPTER 3

1 John 3:1-3 *See what kind of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, we are now children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we shall be. But we know that when He appears, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure.*

After John spoke about the assembly of antichrists and their perverse doctrine, by which they have made themselves revealed as if by a certain mark [χαρακτηρί]: and he sufficiently strengthened them, so that they would persist immovably in those things in which they had been instructed, he then adds the reward also set aside because of these things, making them stronger through the clarity of the rewards, and says: "abide in Him." (1 Jn. 2:27) Why? "So that when He appears we may have confidence." (1 Jn. 2:28) For what is clearer or more desirable than the confidence with which we will present our labors completed in life to Christ, doing this with confidence and not experiencing shame at his coming? And since it was likely that some would ask by what works they could become pleasing to Him, John teaches this also and says: If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him: (1 Jn. 2:29) for the righteous produces righteous ones. Furthermore, no one is unaware of how this relates to our

glory and confidence: just as no one is ignorant of the greatness and quality of the love and kindness he has shown towards you.

For see what he *has given us*, that we should be called his *children*. And if this is hidden from those who are in the world, that *we are the children of God*, do not marvel at this: *for this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him* who adopted us as children. That the world is called a chaotic multitude, we have demonstrated in many places. Then, after John confirmed the adoption, he clearly says after this the glory and confidence or freedom that is reserved for those who have been adopted, and he says:

"*Beloved, now we are children of God.*" But if he were to say: Indeed, *Beloved*, from the preceding you know that we are adopted as *children of God*: and if this has not yet been revealed, do not be troubled: for what is now uncertain will be revealed when He is revealed. Indeed, we will display the glory of adoption appearing as His likeness; for *children* are altogether like their father.

But having confidence toward *Him* as *children*, *we shall see Him as He is*: not certainly according to His nature; for this is impossible for created nature: but what? the righteous of the righteous, the pure of the pure. For like follows the *like*. For this reason, I said a little earlier that *we shall be like Him*: not according to nature; for otherwise He would have said not "like," but "the same," but now because this will not happen, He said "*like*," according to the quality of glory, indeed. It should be noted, however, that he did not say previously, "Everyone who has done or will do righteousness," but "He who does." For virtues always operate: and while they are being done, they have being; but those that cease or are to come, do not even have being.

1 John 3:4-8 Everyone who commits sin also commits iniquity, and sin is a transgression of the law. And you know that He appeared to take away our sins: and in Him, there is no sin. Everyone who abides in Him does not sin. Everyone who sins has not seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. Whoever commits sin is of the Devil, for the Devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was revealed, that He might destroy the works of the Devil.

Confirmed in the previous discourse about *righteousness* from the good of *righteous*, now also takes on demonstration from the opposites and those things that happen to them, and says: "*Everyone who sins.*" Saying something like this: You who have been adopted, do *righteousness*, nor present yourselves idle in this. For just as in sin it is not he who has done or will do it, that one is called a transgressor or a sinner, but he who clings to evil and is its operator: so too the righteous one is not called he who accomplishes nothing, or the lazy one, but the diligent.

It should be noted, however, that *sin* (ἁμαρτία) is indeed a fall from that which is good; *iniquity* (ἀνομία), on the other hand, is a *transgression* against the established *law*. And both of these have their origin: namely, *sin* is an erosion from that which is good; whereas *iniquity* is to commit an offense against the established *law*.

They agree among themselves and are concerned with the same thing. For he who *sins* strays from the goal that is according to nature and in nature itself: for the goal of human nature is to live according to reason, so that it is far removed from foolishness. Similarly, he who acts unjustly *transgresses the law* given in

nature, affected by greed. Therefore, the disciple of the Lord rightly transformed both into the same.

"*And you know that He appeared.*" You can no longer have a place for sinning. For when Christ came *to take away our sins*, since he was not a partaker *of sin*, it has not been left to you to sin any longer, you who have come to him and have been confirmed in his faith. For this is what he means when he says:

"*Everyone who abides in Him.*" But this is the one who approaches virtues seriously and without pretense, and never ceases from their operation.

"*and in Him, there is no sin.*" The conjunction "καὶ" is taken for "and."

"*Everyone who sins*" and so on. When John had said that he had appeared, and the reason for his appearing, namely *to take away our sins*, that is, to remove and erase them from the midst, as one who had not sinned, he adds: "*Everyone who sins has not seen him.*"

But if you, John said, who saw him while he was revealed, also received a sign [σημεῖον] that you have seen him, namely that you are not easily caught by sin as if perfectly confirmed in him, certainly those *who sin have not seen him*, and therefore *nor have known him*: saying that they have seen and known not according to the bare sight of the eyes, nor that they have acted towards knowledge according to a simplistic imagination, but that they have approached him with some judgment and knowledge, as we said above.

But he proceeds more firmly with these words, saying: "*let no one deceive you.*" For it cannot be otherwise than this: He who *does righteousness* knows the Righteous One, and is *righteous*, just as He is, that is, God. And just as this is true, so also equally: he who easily sins is from the sinner; however, this one is the

Devil, as he who *sinned from the beginning*. Therefore, God, providing for His creation, became righteousness and sanctification, was revealed or *appeared* in the world, to take away *the works of the Devil*, which are sin.

"*Whoever commits sin is of the Devil.*" Since the Devil was changed by sinning, anyone who acts sinfully operates under his influence: for the Devil first enters the sinner through the prompting of wicked thoughts, just as in Judas. But someone may say: How does the Devil enter those who sin (Luke 22:3; Jn. 13:27), since they have already sinned by giving him a place? (Eph. 4:27) To which it must be said that *commits sin* is the same as to sin by giving place to the Devil. For he gives place to him who is subject to lust, after he has effectively received him, perfecting sin: for this signifies to do it. And he rightly said here: "*Whoever practices,*" not "*Whoever practiced*"; since he who repents is no longer of the Devil: but only he who still *commits sin*. For thus also he is a servant of sin who *commits sin*, and not who did. Therefore John says: "Everyone who does sin is a servant of sin." (Jn. 8:34)

Of love towards one's neighbor and the affection for giving alms: in which it also deals with good conscience that is through faith in Jesus Christ: and with discerning spirits through the confession of the Lord's incarnation.

1 John 3:9-18 Everyone who is born of God does not sin, because His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. By this, the children of God and the children of the Devil are obvious. Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother; for this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him?

Because his works were evil and his brother's was righteous. Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us, and we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

"Everyone who are born of God." For everyone who commits sin is of the Devil, and inasmuch as he sins, he is also called the *child of the Devil*; thus, blessed Paul said to Elymas: "O full of all deceit and all cunning, son of the Devil, enemy of all righteousness" (Acts 13:10); it is evident that even he *who is born of God*, as the Son of God, does not sin, and the reason is that his seed, namely, of God, or the Spirit that we have received as a gift, which remaining in us or being established, prevents our mind from receiving sin.

But Christ himself, as dwelling in the faithful, makes them *children of God*, inasmuch as all nations are blessed in the seed of Abraham, who is Christ. (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:9) Now, however, John proceeded in such a way in his speech, confirming what he had said before, I indeed say that the faithful are *the children of God*, and making that *obvious*, both from the same matter, namely, not to sin; and from the contrary, as we said a little earlier. For just as this contrary relates to that contrary, so again that contrary relates to this contrary according to dialectical arguments⁵. But consider the exact statement. For John did not first say that one is born of God or of the Devil,

unless the works of either justice or iniquity are accepted beforehand. For from these indeed comes the adoption, either of God or of the Devil.

Although we have been saved by grace, this is said because of God's exceptional kindness, for although we had sinned permanently, He does not remember the evils for our salvation. (Eph. 2) Indeed, He does not give salvation to the idle. Paul confirms this by shouting: "To those who were called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28) Similarly, those who have been adopted by the Devil as children, although they are alienated from the womb (Ps. 58:3), since they have not yet acted according to the proposed evil: nonetheless, this is said because of their fiery hatred; for it does not happen without the operation of evil that one becomes proper and domestic to the Devil: but he who commits sin is taken by the Devil, whether as a child, so that he may further willingly commit evil, or as a servant, because he has been overcome by the wicked one, and led captive and condemned to his service.

However, it should also be noted that John did not say that he who is born of God does not sin, lest he also include infants, who from the womb have that they do not sin: but he said, "*he cannot commit sin.*" Indeed, that: "He does not sin," corresponds totally to the denial; however, this: "*He does not commit sin,*" signifies that he does not touch it out of affection. For this reason, John also adds that he *cannot sin*, not saying this according to the impossibility of nature, just as we say of irrational beings that they cannot receive knowledge: but he discusses this because of voluntary freedom or abstinence from sinning, and saying that not sinning is a sign of the *children of God*: just as again the *children of the Devil* sin. Therefore, having explained these things, he repeats after many points made in between, love for one's neighbor, as if he had treated all that was in between for its

sake, since love is also the fullness of everything (Rom. 13:10), and he says:

"He who does not love his brother is not of God." But against this, this member is also placed: *He is not of God*, saying this: For if he who does righteousness *is born of God*, it follows that he who is therefore born loves his brothers; but he who does not do righteousness, because he does not do it by hating his brothers, is not of God, not in any other way except that he is not born of him. And how he is not of him is shown by saying: *"for this is the message that you heard from the beginning."* (see Lev. 19:24) What this announcement is, we have already said, both naturally received and through teaching; but also by the legal command to love one's neighbor, as the Lord's command says: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another."* (Jn. 13:34) The natural command regarding those of the same kind and condition also urges one to do this. Therefore, since there are so many such commands in accordance with the Lord's declaration, whoever keeps and does His word has eternal life and has *passed from death to life*. (Jn. 5:24)

Therefore, let us *love our brothers*, taking nothing harmful to imitate: for example, if we are hated by the world, let us not also hate our brothers: but let the word of the Lord be more effective in us. For *whoever hates his brother* is not only cast out from *eternal life*, but is also *a murderer*. For it necessarily follows that if he is *a murderer*, he has no *eternal life*. Behold *Cain*, John says, for he too, having hated *his brother*, *murdered him*, although he was his brother. But because *Cain* had *evil works*, he was the son of the Devil: whereas *Abel*, by doing *righteous works*, was called the son of God: the Devil is opposed to God, and evil works to good ones: therefore, *Cain*, being contrary to *his brother*, *murdered him*. Thus, indeed, the course of the discourse was consequent, but blessed John changed the order, always serving what was more pressing. For it was pressing,

because he had mentioned the Devil and those who had been adopted by him due to their wicked actions, so as to propose him as an example who, from the *beginning* of the world, escaped as the wicked son through evil works.

However, having been freed from *Cain* and those who imitate him, who receive the same inheritance with him, John again turns to love, showing how many good things have come from it: and he says that love persuaded the Lord *laid down His life for us*, and that moved by this example that *we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*. And since this is rare and found among few, as if encouraging them, he begins to make an admonition of brotherly love from ordinary matters, in a way arranging his discourse: "What do I say about laying down our lives for our brothers?" when we see some not even providing the necessary support for their brothers; and I do not mean those who themselves lack the necessities of life, but those who are abundant in riches almost throughout the whole world. Therefore, let them be ashamed, for if they have *shut their hearts* to these least things, and have shown themselves unworthy and empty of God's love, what would they offer in greater matters, namely when it is necessary to die for their brothers? Then John adds another point to exhort those who have indeed received *love in word*, and would only profess it with their *tongues*, and he says: "*let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*"

1 John 3:19-23 *By this we know that we are of the truth, and before Him we shall assure our hearts. For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God; and whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His*

commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ.

"*By this we know.*" By what? From the fact that we do not love in word, but in action and in truth. And what do *we know*? That we are of the truth. How? For he who says one thing and does another, not having an action conforming to his speech, is a liar and not truthful.

"*and before Him we shall assure our hearts.*" That is to say, what John means is that by this, namely that we are truthful (furthermore, we will be truthful when our actions continue according to our words), we will *assure our* conscience, for he wishes to signify this by "hearts".

And *how shall we assure*? By placing this among ourselves, as we express our words with God as our witness. For this means in His sight, or *before Him*. Indeed, if we do not do so, John says, but our conscience or *heart condemns us*, it does not hide that we are sinning. If our conscience, which is small as it comes from a small creature, cannot be hidden while we sin, much more can God, who is limitless and everywhere, not be hidden. Therefore, the whole discourse is this: My little children, let us not lie to one another, loving only in word, but let us also show our love through actions: for by this we will be known that we are of the truth, that is, from God; and let us speak as if God were watching. Indeed, no one, even if he were more shameless than demons, could bear to lie in the presence and sight of God.

For if we do not act so, but by saying that we love, *our heart* will accuse us of falsehood; we err. How? By thinking that God is hidden, who is present everywhere? And not knowing that if it cannot be that *our heart*, when it is small, is hidden, much less will He be hidden who is never absent.

Therefore, after we have prepared ourselves in such a way, *beloved*, that we are *not condemned by ourselves*, namely in being truthful with one another, *we will have confidence towards God*: through which confidence, *whatever we ask, we will receive entirely from Him*. Why?

because we keep His commandments: for this is of utmost importance for obtaining what is requested, namely the obedience of those who ask, when it has been without any hesitation, towards Him to whom the request is directed.

Since therefore *we also keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight*, let us trust that we shall not suffer rejection in our requests: since the affection that is in both parties greatly desires to repay the service that comes to the use of the other. And what *commandment* do we keep? That which says: Have mutual love among yourselves. (Jn. 13:35)

Therefore, since we have received the command to love one another with the faith that *is in the name of His Son Jesus Christ*, we have done this; through this we know that the grace He has given us through His Spirit is firmly established in us. It should be noted that it is often found in the New Testament, "Believe in the name of our Lord Jesus." (Act 16:31) But what does this *name* mean? Nothing other than glory, purpose, or good reputation. Indeed, glory and good reputation, as when it is said: "How wonderful is your name in all the earth (Ps. 81:1):" purpose and will, as in this place, and when it is said: "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 2:38) For that is, in His will. But what is the will of the Lord Jesus? "That all nations be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19)

1 John 3:24 *And let us love one another, as he commanded; and whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.*

This is, he says, *let us love each other* with true affection. And where did he command this? In these words, when he says: "As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." (Matt. 7:12) Therefore, if we desire that our neighbors are truly and sincerely affectionate towards us, we must be entirely similarly affectionate towards them. If this is the Lord's command, much more if we *abide in Him* or are established in Him, He will also present Himself to us. (1 Tim. 2:15) For He cannot deny Himself: that is, He cannot be taken away, while He provides us with *His commandments*, but He first establishes these in Himself. However, if this is the case, certainly *if we keep His commands*, we will have Him listening to us in all that we ask of Him, and His gift will be firm in us. The whole sentiment of the rule is this: That we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another truly, as His commandment is.

For *whoever keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in them. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit* or gift which *He has given us*. Indeed, as long as this sanctuary remains, we undoubtedly have an indestructible gift of His. But how will it be a sanctuary? If we do not neglect anything of what He has commanded us regarding love.

CHAPTER 4

1 John 4:1-6 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you*

know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the Antichrist, of which you heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. You are from God, little children, and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are from the world, therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

After John has completed his discourse on love for one's neighbor, and has demonstrated that this is a sign of the permanence of the Spirit we have received, he now adds a judgment concerning those who are truly brothers and neighbors, so that having this, we do not fall into the occasion of the commandment of love concerning false brothers, false apostles, and *false prophets*, bringing great harm upon ourselves from this.

Indeed, by embracing them as if they were of similar character, we will first harm ourselves while we communicate with those who are faithless, and we present holy things to dogs (Matt. 7:6): then, to those who associate with us, our love towards them will persuade many to take them as teachers and to believe what is said by them, while not observing, as if they were stealthily drawn away because of their conduct with us, and what is the indication of these, this is what follows:

"every spirit that confesses." Every spirit, whether of prophecy or the dignity of apostleship, *that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is from God*: but whatever does not confess this is not from God, but this dignity *is of the Antichrist, of which you have heard*.

When? From these words which he said a little earlier, that many antichrists are in the world, (1 Jn. 2:18) that is, forerunners of *the Antichrist*. Furthermore, he says that the confession of the Lord's coming is not made by the tongue, but by works. How? As blessed Paul says: "Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made evident in our body." (2 Cor. 4:10) Therefore, whoever has Jesus working in him, and is dead to the world, no longer lives to the world but to Christ, and carries Him not only in the flesh of Christ, but also in his own, he is *from God*. But whoever lives not for Christ, but for the world, that is, for the pleasures of the world, such a person is not from God. Therefore, Paul says, "When there are contentions and factions among you, are you not carnal and walking according to man?" (1 Cor. 3:3) He who walks according to the flesh does not have the spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9); that is, he who does not live according to Christ, in such a way that he has died to the world, this one is not of Christ.

"and now it is already in the world." In the world, John says, the Antichrist is already present, not physically, but because of the presence of those who prepare the way for him, namely, *false prophets*, false apostles, and heretics. This *Antichrist*, however, will be a man who conveys Satan, exalted against all that is called God or divinity. (2 Thess. 2:4)

Therefore, he will also reject the worship of idols, which he signified as gods: moreover, by adding this: Every divine being also signifies Christianity: and he will only attempt to show himself as God. Whereby he gave knowledge of the Lord to the prophets and apostles: he adds: But you, beloved, since *you are of God, have overcome them*, namely the *false prophets*. How? Because the God *who is in you is greater than he who is in the world*, according to whom the false prophets chose to live. Then John adds another sign of their false prophets, which also greatly saddened the simpler believers. For it was likely that some of

these found it hard to accept, while they saw that many held them in esteem, but they themselves were despised, and John said: "Do not be affected by sorrow if you are despised by many; they are indeed accepted by these."

For a similar thing runs to its like. "*They are from the world, therefore they speak from the world.*" They are of the world, and when they speak of the world, that is, they teach according to fleshly desires, they have those who obey them, the perverse with the perverse. But *we*, being *from God* and alienated from fleshly desires, cannot be received by them.

However, *He listens to us* who lives temperately, and *whoever knows God*, ready to give us hearing. Therefore, Christ also said: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," (Matt. 11:15) testifying that only he who is prepared for obedience has ears.

Having distinguished these, John then adds as a seal of those things already said, that through this (namely, what has already been said) we recognize those who have *the spirit of truth* or true prophetic dignity, and those who have *the spirit of error* or false prophecy.

From brotherly love to divine worship.

1 John 4:7-11 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this, the love of God was revealed in us, that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

Again, after the aforementioned, John resumes the discourse on *love*. For when he had shown whom one ought to love, namely those who are conformed in character, he adheres to what was said at the beginning, stating that both *love* and the one who loves are *from God*, and that only *he who loves is born of God and knows God*: while *he who does not have love also does not know God*, confirming opposites with opposites. How, then, does *he who does not love not know God*? He proves it in this way: "*God is love*." And how will this be revealed? From the fact that he *sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might have true life through Him, and that we might live through Him*. For just as goodness is said to exist because it has produced the intellectual and sensible world for the sake of goodness, so that He who truly is, might have some participants in Himself; likewise, also for the love with which He *sent His Only Begotten into the world* for us, He shows, even through this, that love exists. Therefore, He Himself adds: "*By this, is love*," that is, in this it is shown that *God is love*. Then, praising the goodness of God's love, he says: *Not that we have loved Him*, but that God did this, giving *His Son* for us, as if He ought to repay the beloved with an equal affection; but through love, first anticipating the benefit towards us, He sent His Son; and not only did He send Him, but also, *for our sins*, He was an atoning sacrifice by His own blood.

1 John 4:12-14 *No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son as the Savior of the world.*

We have also said before that it is customary for this blessed man to repeat the same things about them, and to wish to instill the habits of what is said in those who are being taught, and to lead the discourse to what is clearer and more perfect. For by approaching in one way and another from those things that are seen in reality, and as if fulfilling what is lacking in the discourse, John makes a most perfect demonstration of what is said. According to this instruction, even now using discourse, he says:

"No one has ever seen God." For in making a discourse about love for the brethren, he had brought forth God as an example, who gave His only begotten Son to death, because of the love He had for us: it was therefore fitting that someone would say: And how or in what way do you say this about invisible and incomprehensible things, and you confirm to us what no one has ever known? Therefore, responding to those who would speak thus, John himself says: Indeed, *no one has ever seen God*, and I also assert: but from mutual love for us, we know that God is *in us*. And he speaks rightly. For we certainly perceive many things that are invisible to us through actions. Indeed, just as no one has seen the soul, yet we discern its existence through actions and movements within us: in the same way, we recognize God's love for us, as if through a certain motion and operation. If this is not absurd, then this man also shows God to be present in us through actions beyond dignity. And what is this operation? Pure and sincere love for one's neighbor.

For this is effective and has no defect, when it is pure. This is the sign that *we abide in Him and He in us*, which *He has also given us through His Spirit*. For He who is pure grants us purity and is perfect from all filth. Therefore, since we communicate with Him through pure love, we also, He says, who have seen Him according to the flesh, have known Him, and we *testify that the Father sent Him as the Savior of the world*. But besides our own

knowledge, He also instructed us, leading us more perfectly into this understanding, when He said: "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world." (Jn. 16:28) This pertains to the fact that He sent His Only Begotten Son into the world for our love. Again, He made it clearer to others: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish." (Jn. 3:16) And: "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world." (Jn. 12:47) Therefore, we have, from our own sight, He says, and from the teaching of the Only Begotten who is in the bosom of the Father (Jn. 1:18), as it is said in the Gospels, and from the operation through mutual love, that God *is in us*, and *He has given us of His Spirit*, and we participate with Him.

1 John 4:15-17 *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. In this, love is made perfect with us, so that we may have confidence on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.*

This refers to what has been said a little earlier, namely that every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. (1 Jn. 4:2) For John has sufficiently demonstrated that they are children of God and that God abides in them: this has been demonstrated through great love, which confirms that the Holy Spirit or spiritual gifts have been given to them: again, he refers to those words and says: "*Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him;*" saying something of this kind: John said above, Everyone who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God (1 Jn. 4:2): furthermore, in the course of the conversation, something else was revealed, and

therefore he proposed this: that those who confess these things also have the Spirit abiding in themselves, or God and his spiritual gifts, and they themselves abide in God. And this we do not say lightly, but with firm knowledge and faith through mutual love.

But having mentioned love, John also refers to all that he has said about love, attributing great faith to the discourse on love. "*In this, love is made perfect.*" He wishes, he says, for us to be perfect in love, *so that we may have confidence on the day of judgment*, towards Him who was incarnate: for He himself will be the judge, according to his own statement, where he says: "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son." (Jn. 5:22) And that there will be confidence towards him who was incarnate, John signified through what he said in the following, that just *as he is, we are in this world*, saying this: Since it has been shown before that *God abides in us, and we are in God*, he says, we attest to the perfection of love for ourselves. Just as he was blameless and pure in the world, he also said: "The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me (Jn. 14:30):" so also we, John says, will be *in the world*. For there is and we are placed through ἀντιχρονίαν (where one time is taken for another time), as is the custom of Scripture. Or it signifies something deeper through this. For John has often said that God is in us and we are in God. If this is indeed the case, He is holy in us, that is, the Leader and Prince of holiness: so we should also refer to him in this world sacredly and purely, dead to the world, always bearing his mortification in the body. (1 Cor. 4:10) Furthermore, he says, living this way, we will *have confidence* towards him, and we will be without fear then. For the "perfect love"⁶, (1 Jn. 4:18) through good works, will be far from fear. And he adds this confirmation, namely that "perfect love casts out fear". What fear? He himself says it is the "fear has torment": for it happens that someone loves because of fear, lest he be

punished: but this fear is not perfect, that is, it is not of perfect love. Having said these things about “perfect love”, he completely convinces that we should love God, for John himself first, he says, “loved us”. However, we must, since he has been the first good beginning for us, strive to repay, as has been said more broadly by us above. However, some have asked how, when David says: "Fear the Lord, all his saints, for nothing is lacking to those who fear him," (Ps. 34:9) he does not say: "perfect love casts out fear." Are the saints of God not perfect in love, to whom it is commanded to “fear”? And we say that there are two kinds of “fear”: one is indeed initial, which also brings with it “torment”, because of the evils perpetrated by oneself: fearing him because he approaches God, and therefore approaching lest he be punished, and this is indeed initial. “Perfect”, freed from such fear, is therefore called holy and endures forever: for "The fear of the Lord is holy," David says, "and endures forever." (Ps. 19:9) Since initial fear is neither holy nor enduring, but ceases to exist in “perfect love”. Who then and for what reason is fear called perfect? It is because, having been perfectly taken into love, it strives and fears that it may lack those things which are fitting for them to do towards the beloved, whom they love intensely.

1 John 4:18-21 *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear: for fear has torment. He who fears is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

He who genuinely loves God does so not out of fear of punishment, but because of a passionate love for morality and love towards God; yet he does not consider himself safe due to a noble fear, which is the love of what is honorable. Equally, he who acts out of *fear* of falling into *torment* is the same as the former; therefore, he adds: "*for fear has torment.*"

"*If anyone says, 'I love God.'*" Where John shows with compelling reasons that love is transmitted from God to us, and from us to God, he adds again that if God has loved us in this way, we also must love one another: now referring again to this matter, he says that because it is our duty to love our *brother*, we fulfill the obligation by referring to the example of God's love for us, which we also return to God: it is necessary, he says, to love our brother exceptionally, as the most perfect sign of love towards God. For if this is not the case, neither would our love towards God be preserved, since the obligation that exists between us is interceding, which we have contracted out of love towards God.

"*For he who does not love his brother.*" Moreover, he adds a most effective saying to convince those who attempt to corrupt divine love, saying: *Love*, in any case, consists of the habitual relations towards one another: relations, however, has the aspect of a brother, and from this, it is especially gathered to that *love*. If this is true, whoever does not act on what more strongly attracts to *love*, and *does not love the brother whom he sees*, how can he claim to love God whom he does not see, with whom he has neither conversed nor can be perceived in any sense, how will he be found to be truthful? Therefore, if anyone shamelessly says that he loves God, but hates his brother, is he not found not only to corrupt divine love but also to be a transgressor of His command? Of whom? Of Him who says: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (Jn.

13:35) Therefore, whoever loves God, and claims to be His disciple, must also love his brother according to His command.

CHAPTER 5

Theology of the Son who is in the glory of the Father, and victory against the Evil One through faith in Jesus Christ unto life.

1 John 5:1-5 *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And whoever loves the one who created him loves also the one who is born of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*

John confirms the discourse again with others, thereby strengthening it in a certain way: If we have received the command from the Master to love one another mutually, surely if we believe that our Master and Teacher is Jesus Christ, who is Christ in the same way that God and man are: we shall also observe his commandments as both a Teacher and as God. Furthermore, believing him to be God, we are called his *children*: just as it is said in the Gospels: "But as many as received him, that is, as many as believed in him, he gave them the power to become the children of God." (Jn. 1:12) If, therefore, we are born of him, we shall also fulfill what is fitting for him who begot us. What is this? That we love him who *created* us, since it follows from the nature of children that they

love their parents. Since this is the case, all of us who have believed are born of the same. If we are born of the same, we are also indebted to love one another: both because we are brothers and because we are born of the same.

And John adds this persuasion: that *whoever loves the one who created him loves also the one who is born of him*. Then he uses a change of discourse and says that love for brothers or the children of God confirms love for Him who created. For John previously said: "he who loves God must love his brother also. (1 Jn. 4:21):" now, however, in an inverted discourse, he says that *whoever loves the children of God also loves God*: and he places the sign of love for God as love for the brother. Then he also says that love for God brings about the observance of His commandments: rightly saying this: for "Whoever loves me," says the Savior, "keeps my commandments." (Jn. 14:21

"*For this is the love of God.*" In the superlative (ὑπερβατῶ), that what is proposed should be understood in this way: For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments, because whatever is born of God overcomes the world. Furthermore, *and his commandments are not burdensome*, it has been interpolated.

"*and His commandments are not burdensome.*" Not as Christ said, "My yoke is easy (Matt. 11:30);" thus He Himself said that the commandments are light, but that they *are not burdensome*: for to him who is brought to virtue, even what is light is considered very heavy; just as to one who has lost strength and health, everything that makes for good, even what is very light, seems heavy. Indeed, because *the commandments of God* seemed *burdensome* to some, as they are God's, for this reason He says that His *commandments are not burdensome*. For what burden is there in loving a brother?

Furthermore, what *burdensome* does it cause to visit one who is in prison? For he does not command to free him who is in prison,

which would be difficult, but only to visit; nor does he command to free the sick from their illness, but only to visit; nor does he command to set a lavish table for the hungry, nor to provide clothing to the naked prepared with unnecessary embellishment; but he requires what provides necessary use for him who is hungry or naked. After he has arranged these things in this way, he adds to what has already been said another thing that leads to the showing of love, what is that? *Victory* (ἡν νίκην). For John says: you who establish yourselves as sons of God by love for your neighbor, you already have this that accompanies that excellent deed, namely, to conquer the world; *For whatever is born of God overcomes the world*. Then John adds *victory*, and what is the cause of *victory*, and he says that both agree with *faith*, namely, that which is towards God, which also *born of God*, has conquered and driven away all disbelief; neither Jew, nor Greek, nor Heretic can do anything against it.

And since *faith* does not conquer alone, but together with the one who possesses it, John adds: "And *who is it that overcomes the world, except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?*" But who is this Jesus? "He who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ". (1 Jn. 5:6)

1 John 5:6-12 *This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater: for this is the testimony of God, which he has testified of his Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. He who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he does not believe the*

testimony that God has given of his Son. And this is the testimony, that God has given us eternal life: and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Since John also remembered the birth of children, saying: "Everything that is born of God" (1 Jn. 5:4): these things, however, happen to us through sacred baptism; therefore he says: "*This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ.*" And for what purpose did he come? To renew us and make us children of God. For this is also understood as a consequent statement, so that this is the meaning. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world." But how was it born? He says, *by water and blood*. Indeed, Jesus Christ who came renews through *water and blood*. John adds again, repeating the statement, saying: *not by water only*, namely regenerating, *but by water and blood*. For he wishes first to show the name of Christ who adopted us: since the man who was in him, the first adopted by God, also gave us through his adoption such dignity, which has been demonstrated three times: namely in the baptism in the Jordan, when the heavenly Father testified that he who was being baptized was his beloved Son. (Matt. 3:17)

But who was he that entered the water except the man who was taken up together with the Word of God? Certainly, he who appeared in secret, for he needed a testimony. Therefore, *by the water*, that is, in the baptism that takes place through *water*; the Son of God, Jesus, was demonstrated to be so by the testimony of the Father. And by the *blood*, when he was to be crucified, he said: "Glorify me, Father," (Jn. 17:1) and a voice was heard: "And I have glorified and will glorify again;" (Jn. 12:28) which those who heard thought to be thunder.

By the *Spirit*, however, when He rose from the dead as God. For it is left to God alone to raise Himself. Furthermore, by the term

Spirit, God is signified: since *the Spirit* is God. (Jn. 4:24) Therefore, since *three bear witness* to Jesus' adoption, namely baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection, there is no uncertainty in the Lord's adoption: by which adoption He also granted us, as He who was the first fruits of the entire human mass (Rom. 11:16), to be children of God. And *these three* are united in *one* Christ: for this is what it signifies, saying: "*These three are one*," that is, as a testimony concerning Christ. It should be noted that some of the fathers received *the Spirit*, not because of the resurrection, but the Father Himself when He cried out in the Jordan: "This is my beloved Son (Matt. 17:5);" because God is also called *Spirit*, as we have predicted.

Having said these things, he adds a persuasion of the things that are said, by a lesser argument, saying: *If we receive the testimony of men* about any common matter, ought we not to receive *the testimony from God* who is *greater*? Indeed, is not this testimony about *His Son* or Christ from *God*? Therefore, whoever *believes in the Son of God*, that He is God as the Son of God, *has testimony in himself*, that is, in himself, believing that he too has been adopted by God through Jesus, the adopted one. *Whoever does not believe* the truth is subject to two evils, namely disbelief, *making God a liar*: and furthermore depriving himself of adoption, and thus also of *eternal life*, which Christ has promised to those who would be adopted by Him: which he also has in himself as it is written in the Gospel: "In Him was life." (Jn. 1:4)

Therefore, whoever *has the Son* through holy baptism *has life*. For as many as we have been baptized into Christ, we have also, according to His command, put on Christ. But whoever does not have the Son of God through baptism does not have life, but is dead. For indeed, receiving the dead through sins, He awakens them through holy baptism. (Rom. 6:4) How? As it has often been said, that having been buried with Christ through the

immersion that takes place in baptism, he is dead to the world (Gal. 6:14; Col. 2:20), or to worldly desires, and now lives not for himself, but for Christ (Gal. 2:20), walking according to His commandments in newness of life (Rom. 6:4), and no longer giving sin an opportunity to enter covertly.

1 John 5:13-15 *I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God: that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe in the name of the Son of God. And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him.*

As if in a summary at the end, John repeats the aforementioned and says: I have written these things to you as heirs of eternal life: for these things would not be written for those who do not live according to the hope of eternal life: because neither should holy things be given to dogs nor pearls be scattered before pigs, (Matt. 7:6) for they do not deserve praise. Therefore, writing these things as heirs of eternal life, John briefly repeats, as we have said, suggesting to them what has already been said: first, that it is necessary to firmly *believe in the name of the Son of God*, that is, in the divine worship handed down to us by Him: for this is what *the name of the Son of God* signifies, as we have said, to whom, namely, the grace of sacred baptism prepares the way.

Then, since there is no other sign of this unquestionable faith except trust, which we find in Him through irreproachable faith, as we have also said before. Again, He has set a sign of this trust, that we are not to be frustrated in all that is asked of us. But since not everyone achieves all that *they ask* for, nor are they always

heard in what they *request*, He adds: *according to His will*: revealing indeed that the one asking, outside the will of the Master, is not to be heard, in accordance with blessed James: for he also said, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives," (James 4:3) that is, as it does not benefit you. However, converting this sign into a clearer indication, John says: "*And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him:*" saying something like this: If we ask according to His will, He hears us: and if He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we make our requests according to His will, and we have in ourselves the requests that we have asked. These, however, are His kingdom and righteousness (Matt. 6:33): which He also commanded us to ask for. Having said this, He also clearly proposes something of what He wants us *to ask according to God's will*.

For the entire letter is largely about extolling love for the brother and expressing the desire that we keep our love for the brother incorrupt, John now says that this is one of his wills, that "if anyone sees his brother sinning not unto death, he should ask, and it will be given to him." (1 Jn. 5:16) And what will be given? "Eternal life." To whom? To those who "sin not unto death."

By assisting the sinning brother through prayer, and that it should not be sinful: in which it also deals with abstaining from the worship of demons.

1 John 5:16-21 If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not leading to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. There is sin leading to death; I do not say that he should pray about that. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not leading to death. We know that whoever is born of God does not sin, but he who has been born of God

guards (τηρεῖ) himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

"If anyone sees his brother sinning." This is one will. For it is righteous to feel compassion for the brother who has sinned and to be of help for salvation.

"There is a sin leading to death." Let this be the order: There is a sin that leads to death, *and there is a sin that does not lead to death. I do not say that one should pray* for the one that leads to death, but for the one that does not lead to death. Then he explains the distinction making between the sin that leads to death and the one that does not lead to death. For John simply divides it as a kind of sin and says: *All unrighteousness is sin*: whether it leads to death or does not lead to death.

But because it is unto death, let him not pray or ask, for he will not be heard because he asks with wrong motives (James 4:3), especially when he shows no sign of conversion. For this alone is the *sin that leads death*, which does not regard repentance: when Judas fell ill with this, he was taken to eternal death. And those also *sin that leads death* who are mindful of injuries. For the paths of those who remember injuries lead to death (Prov. 12:28 LXX.), says Solomon. Nor do they convert by remembering, retaining the memory of injuries, and keeping anger against their neighbor, but they sin without repentance. Having declared this, he subsequently indicates whose sin is the sin leads to death; and he says that *whoever is born of God does not sin*.

For when he has once entrusted himself to the one dwelling in him through adoption in Christ, he remains inaccessible to sin. However, lest anyone think that such a nature has been completely changed, so that he can no longer be seized by sin, he adds:

"He guards himself," as if to say: Unless he were to keep and guard himself from the evil one, he would certainly sin. Therefore, it is not nature that leads to perfection, but rather the glory of God, who, because He has adopted us, has deemed us worthy of such grace: that by keeping and guarding what has been given to us by Him, we may also have it, so that we do not sin. For unless it were so, since the world is established in evil (and the world refers to those who have not committed themselves to God through good works), nothing would prevent us from being examined along with those who perish: because the mind of man is continually inclined to evil from early youth, as God revealed during the time of the flood. (Gen. 8:22) But since, John says, *the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding by which we may know the true God* through internal understanding, and be *in His true Son Jesus Christ*: we have come to know through this glory that He is *the true God and eternal life*, and by knowing we are safe from the onslaught of evil and its offenses. *"This is the true God."* This, also, serves as a demonstrative article. Here, the article indicates relationship. *"keep yourself from idols."* Some have questioned: If John writes this to the perfect, why does he now command them to beware of idols? We therefore say that because he wrote to the whole Church, which was not made up of a select people, but there were also some among them who were less affected. Therefore, he commands all these, looking at their slippery nature.

The end, with the help of divine favor, of the first letter of John, the Catholic Epistle.

THE APOSTLE JOHN
THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE

HYPOTHESIS OF THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLES
OF JOHN

John writes this as an elder to the lady and her children. The occasion for the Epistle was this: When he saw her children walking in the truth, and many deceivers going around and saying that Christ has not come in the flesh, he writes the Epistle, and first indeed commends her children for walking rightly. Then, teaching us that there is a new mystery that is among us, he again exhorts us about love, and to remain in the doctrine that has been taught to us, and consequently teaches that he is the Antichrist who says that Christ did not come in the flesh. He commands, however, that no one receive such a person into the house, nor say to them, "Greetings": and thus he concludes the Epistle.

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JOHN.

SECTIONS

1. In which, after the preface, he discusses the right life in the love of God, through the faith of unchanging devotion: and that it is not appropriate to lead a heretic into the house for salvation because of sin.

2. A promise about his coming for the hope of future usefulness.

THE APOSTLE JOHN
THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE

2 John 1 *The elder, to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all who have known the truth: because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever: grace, mercy, and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.*

Some have thought that this Epistle and the one that follows are not from John the Beloved, but from another who had the same name: because in these he writes of himself as an *elder*, and to a *lady*, and to another Gaius, and he writes of one just as he does of *the lady*; which does not happen in a Catholic Epistle. Furthermore, he did not make a title according to the previous epistle: for he did not begin it in that way. But we say that in the former he did not propose in that manner, because he did not write to a specific person, nor to the Church of certain places: just as blessed Peter did, clearly signifying that he was writing to the Jews who were dispersed; and before him, the holy James clearly defining that he was writing to the twelve tribes of the Jews: but addressing all the faithful in common, whether

gathered or not gathered, He omitted the type of the pre-written text.

However, John writes of himself as *an elder*, and not as an apostle or servant of Jesus Christ, as the other apostles do. Indeed, he does not write of himself as an apostle, perhaps because he did not preach the Gospel first in Asia, but after Paul; nor did he travel around, like him, who was going through the circuit of the Gospel: but remaining there, he was present and explained the message to those present. Nor does he call himself a servant of Jesus Christ; for he was confident, because he was greatly loved, that he was free from the fear of servitude. He only wished to call himself *an elder*: either because he was already old when he wrote these things (for that is what an elder means) or even calling himself a bishop by the name of elder, since at that time the name elder was commonly used also for bishops: as is evident from the Acts (20:17) written by blessed Luke, and from the Epistle of Peter (5:2).

Moreover, John was not afraid to write to a faithful *lady*: because in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. (Gal. 3:28) However, writing to one Gaius, he has Paul who also wrote to Titus and Timothy, indeed even to Philemon, a common man (ἰδιώτην). And indeed, this is about the title. It is shown also from the announcement and promise and from the remaining arrangement of the discourse, that these letters are genuine: since in these John frequently repeats the discourse, saying the same things about the same matters whenever a slight occasion arises, and this way confirms the discourse. Moreover, he testifies two things to this *elect lady*: one indeed that she walks in truth, the other that she avoids heretics. He indeed calls her *elect*, either by name or from great imitation concerning virtue: whom John also says *he loves in truth*: not only her alone, but also all who are of similar morals with her, who truly have a firm truth within

themselves: for this is signified by saying: *that abides in us*; this, however, is faith in Christ.

In fact, to *love her in the truth*; just as John himself indicated in the previous letter regarding certain corrupted believers. But where he said: "*what abides in us*," that is, what is true and firm, he added: "And it will be with us forever." (1 Jn. 3:24) Signifying the certain perseverance of the gift. For it happens that even those who have been confirmed in something are shaken again, because they have not rightly used the confirmation. Again, after these things, he adds: "*Grace and mercy will be with us*:" designating the goods that arise from perfect love.

Speaking of *God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ*, John adds, "*the Son of the Father*:" for only here is He properly the Father. Therefore, Paul also says, "From whom," he says, "every family in heaven and on earth is named." (Eph. 3:15)

He further adds: "*in truth and love*," bringing firmness to the discourse, and a certain indication of the love that he speaks of.

In which, after the preface, he discusses the right life in the love of God, through the faith of unchanging devotion: and that it is not appropriate to lead a heretic into the house for salvation because of sin.

2 John 4-7 *I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, as we received a command from the Father. And now I ask you, lady, not as writing a new commandment to you, but what we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it: for many deceivers*

have entered into the world, who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.

"I was very glad." For certainly, the greatest cause of joy is to find someone who *walks* without offense in the straight path of faith in Christ according to His *command*. But what is that *command*? It is what Christ says in the Gospels: "Whoever loves me will keep my commandments." (Jn. 14:21) But now John calls Christ *Father*: since He Himself is also the Father of the children who have been given to Him by a certain privilege from His Father: according to what has been said: "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me." (Isa. 8:18) Moreover, notice the genuine wording of this epistle, which confirms what has been said previously: "And we know that whoever loves God keeps His commandments." (1 Jn. 5:3)

For it is the same to *walk* according to the commandments and to *receive* them. For virtues operate and exist according to their operation. Therefore, whoever ceases to progress in these, neither keeps nor guards them. To *walk*, indeed, is said according to development and growth. For as much as one operates according to virtue, so much further one progresses, acquiring a greater habit of honor. For the way of virtue is infinite and never failing. According to this, I think that this has also been said: "In which things the angels desire to look." (1 Peter 1:12) For such is the magnificence of the goods that have been granted to us by Him who was incarnate, that it is desirable even for the angels to take a slight understanding of these things; for this is what "to look" (παρακύψαι) indicates.

However, someone desires not what ceases, but what continually progresses, and is illuminated by sincere glory. And since that which is inexhaustible cannot be fully embraced by anyone, it is at least desirable to become a participant in it to some extent. John said: "*not as writing a new commandment to you,*" and this

he firmly states to those who are mentioned in the preceding epistle, simultaneously demonstrating that it shows what they themselves had experienced by acting according to it, and not from difficult and foreign matters, affecting them with sorrow by approaching the unfamiliar. "*not as writing a new commandment to you.*" He also adds the work of the commandment, *that we love one another*, and he explains that love consists in *that we love one another*.

Nor for any other reason was it given *from the beginning*, John says, except *that you might walk* in it, revolving and turning the same things in the higher and lower realms: and indeed by *love* urging them towards inseparability, and that they should not be led away by seducers, who were already walking in the world and rejecting the coming of the Lord in the *flesh*: but by this that he admonishes *to walk* according to the Lord's *command* which was from the beginning, revealing the erroneous opinion of the heretics which is recent: and exhorting that by embracing *the command which was from the beginning*, they should not be led away by their deceit. For Christ also commanded the disciples about these seducers, saying: "Many will come in my name", saying: I am Christ, and they will deceive many. "Therefore do not follow them." (Luke 21:8) Therefore, *keeping these commands*, John says, he commands that you should not be deceived, but that you should consider him who hides these things to be "an antichrist".

2 John 6c-11 *This is the seducer and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes*

to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor greet him. For he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

"*This is the seducer and an antichrist.*" With this, it must be understood for a more perfect explanation, therefore "*who do not confess that,*" as it should be properly added, "*This is the seducer and an antichrist.*" Without this, the discourse will be disordered and independent, namely passing from the plural to the singular.

This is, John says, *an antichrist and seducer*. However, by saying, "Those *who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh,*" he reveals that he is speaking of those who reject the Lord's coming: since the Lord himself, saying, "Many will come in my name," (Matt. 24:5) does not speak of the first coming, but of the second: Nevertheless, in truth, those who reject the second also reject the first. For if he who came *in the flesh* also promised a second coming, certainly he who rejects the second also rejects the first: for if he believes that he has come, he would also consider the promise of the one who has come to be certain: but if he despises the promise, it cannot be said in any way that he believes even in the first. Therefore, I believe the beloved disciple used the word "*to come,*" not "to have come," so that he might comprehend those denying both of the Lord's coming *in the flesh*. Therefore, John instructed them to beware of these: and he adds the reason: "Lest by adhering to them, you lose what you have previously worked for, but receive your full reward without any weakness." But perhaps someone might say in such matters: "What if I do not believe in Christ's coming in the flesh, yet I lead a life in good works, can I not be counted among the pious and religious through these works, nor receive a reward for them?"

The Apostle first removes this objection by saying: Let no one think that by rejecting the coming of the Lord in the flesh, one

can either achieve the perfect justice owed to the faithful through works or be regarded as a worshiper of God at all. *But whoever transgresses* this commandment of His, namely of Christ who has come, and does not remain in His doctrine, does not have God.” For if He came to teach men the perfect knowledge of God, He would seem to be rejected; how then could He be a worshiper of God who disapproves of the interpreter of divine contemplations? Therefore, he would be ἄθεος, that is, “without God”, just as on the other hand, ἑνθεος, that is, divine and “a friend of God”, having all the fullness of divinity within himself, namely the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who is firm and solid *in the doctrine of Christ*.

For Jesus teaches about the Father, saying: "All things that the Father has are mine." (Jn. 16:15) He often teaches both about the Father and about Himself, that indeed He is the Father, but He is the Son; and concerning the Holy Spirit, when He says: "The Spirit who proceeds from the Father." (Jn. 15:26) However, when he says: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matt. 28:19) And although in this place the mention is made only of the Father and the Son by the Lord's disciple, and not of the Holy Spirit, do not be offended. For it was only concerning this that he was compelled and desired to speak, about the Father, I say, and the Son. And indeed, these things have been said in the present context, lest we be more lengthy. However, John remains in the teaching of Christ or the Gospel, who according to it feels and acts, living by contemplating and working together; but whoever separates himself from this, is godless. For just as one who has a perfect way of life makes himself familiar with God, as Abraham did, according to what he heard from God Himself: "I am your God," (Gen. 17:1) so too, whoever lives outside the command of the Gospel, is godless, separating himself so that he may *not have God*.

But since here he is godless, namely, who has alienated himself from divine discipline, certainly he who remains in it has both the Father and the Son, for the Son said of such: "We will come to him, I and the Father, and we will make our dwelling with him." (Jn. 14:23) For by observing the commandments, he has made himself a temple and dwelling place of God, and he has God dwelling within him: since God is said to be had in two ways. For all creatures are also said to have God, according to what Paul said: "For in him we live and move and have our being." (Acts 17:28) This, however, has been said according to the manner of existence. In another way, through the good operation of one who worships God, for example, it is said to "have God"; according to which it is signified that God is called the God of Abraham and Isaac, and universally the God of the friends of the Hebrews. (Ex. 30) And this must be attributed to what is now to be said: He who has the Son has the Father. (1 Jn. 2:23) For "he who has seen the Son," as the Son himself says, "has seen the Father." (Jn. 14:9) And again: "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me," (Jn. 14:11) says the same Savior, so that even from this the consubstantiality (ὁμοούσιον) of the Father and the Son may be known. And if anyone says that he who receives the disciples also has the Son and the Father: For the Savior says of these: "He who receives you receives me; and he who receives me receives him who sent me," let him know that he is speaking wrongly in this way, nor does he understand as he ought. Since these things have been said about *doctrine*, seeing that he who received the apostles, by confessing their *doctrine*, *received* through them both the Son and the Father teaching. — Likewise in another way.

Since he who *abides in doctrine* has both the Son and the Father, the apostles also remained *in doctrine*, so that they preached it as well. Therefore, whoever receives those who are temples of God,

by that very act of receiving them, has the Son and the Father who are in them.

"If anyone comes to you" (2 Jn. 10) confirms those to whom he writes. If anyone, he says, comes to you without this confession, not only will he not receive protection from you, but he will also not receive the prayer for salvation from you, rightly and cautiously saying this, as if this prayer for salvation is owed only to those who agree with us in morals and faith. For whom do we pray for salvation, except for those who are of similar morals and faith? Therefore, if such a prayer for salvation is offered by us to the wicked, it is certainly presented as if it were offered to the faithful and those of similar morals, and thus they have been accepted as companions by us, and they have dragged us down to their abyss.

2 John 12-13 *Since I had many things to write to you, I did not want to do so by paper and ink. But I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that our joy may be complete. The children of your sister the Elect greet you. Amen.*

The reason for the briefness of the letter, both in this and in the following one, is that John hoped to come to them and to add in person and by his presence what was lacking. However, by what he adds, "*The children of your sister, the Elect, greet you,*" some wish to argue that the letter is not addressed to a woman but to the Church; concerning which I have decided not to dispute.

The end, with the help of divine favor, of the second letter of John.

THE APOSTLE JOHN
THE THIRD CATHOLIC EPISTLE

HYPOTHESIS OF THE THIRD CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF
JOHN

The letter is about hospitality. First of all, it acknowledges Gaius, for whom many bore witness regarding his hospitality, and encourages him to remain committed in that purpose, receiving and welcoming the brothers caringly. Again, it acknowledges his offering as well: and it accuses Diotrephes of not giving anything to the poor and preventing others from doing so, and John says many things against them. However, he says that such people are alien to the truth and do not know God. He acknowledges Demetrius, bearing the best testimony about him.

ANOTHER FORM OF HYPOTHESIS.

John also writes a letter, commending certain brothers. He writes to Gaius and gives testimony of the great hospitality he shows, which he praises with many tributes. For John says that the one who does good works is from God. Furthermore, he is stirred even more by the fact that Diotrephes slanders and criticizes him, as he has determined that these things should not happen. He praises Demetrius, who does the same, and exhibits faithful testimony of him. However, this letter is brief, due to the reason mentioned in the preceding letter. (see comment on 2 Jn. 12-13)

THE SECOND CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JOHN.

SECTIONS

1. Prayer for perfection, and thanksgiving for the testimony of the reception of brothers acting abroad for the sake of Christ: in which he also addresses the wickedness and cruelty of Diotrephes.
 2. About Demetrius, to whom he gives the best testimony.
 3. About his own brief future arrival for their benefit.
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THE APOSTLE JOHN

THE THIRD CATHOLIC EPISTLE

3 John 1 *To the beloved Elder Gaius, whom I love in truth.*

It has been said in the preceding letter about such a greeting: and now to repeat explaining the same things over the flow would be excessive, "*whom I love in truth.*" He loves in truth who loves with affectionate love according to the Lord: as has also been frequently stated above.

Prayer for perfection, and thanksgiving for the testimony of the reception of brothers acting abroad for the sake of Christ: in which he also addresses the wickedness and cruelty of Diotrephes.

3 John 2-4 *Dearly beloved, I wish that you may prosper in all things and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and bore witness to your truth, as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.*

"*just as your soul prospers.*" It acts prosperously, namely in the state that is according to the Gospel.

"*you walk in the truth.*" He walks in truth who walks in the righteous simplicity of the Gospel. However, to *walk* does not refer to the motion of limbs, since such steps, passing from one place to another, are common to all animals that have feet; but it signifies an ordered and measured progress according to the keen affection of the mind, which few attain, even among those who are not lacking in understanding.

"*no greater joy than.*" The term "*greater*" (μειζοτέρων) according to the practice of the Greek language is not a suitable comparative expression, but it is placed as if seeking a more fervent exaggeration, and thus the comparative is formed from the comparative.

3 John 5-8 *Dearly beloved, you faithfully do whatever you work for the brothers and for the guests, who have borne witness to your love in the sight of the Church; if you have led them to God worthily, you will benefit. For they went forth for His name, taking nothing from the Gentiles. Therefore, we ought to receive such as these, that we may be fellow workers for the truth.*

"you faithfully do," this is what befits a faithful man.

"we ought to receive." Ἀπολαμβάνειν is taken for ἀναλαμβάνεσθαι, that is, *to receive* as when it is said: "They received me like a lion ready for prey." (Ps. 17:12) Moreover, this instructs us not to wait for the needy until they come to us, but rather to run to and follow them: like Abraham and Lot. (Gen. 8)

3 John 9-11 *I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will bring to light the works he is doing, gossiping wickedly about us. And not content with that, he not only does not receive the brothers himself, but also forbids those who want to receive them and expels them from the congregation. Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.*

"I will bring to light the works he is doing." If it is commanded that evil should not be repaid with evil (Rom. 12:17), what is it that he now threatens? Therefore, we say that this command is so that we do not repay evil to him who has sinned only against ourselves: For if it is a sin against us, and it brings an obstacle to faith, it should be referred to such, as Paul did to Elymas who was perverting the ways of the Lord. (Acts 13:10)

"gossiping wickedly." That is, throwing insults and cursing.

"do not imitate what is evil." Since there is no unity of light with darkness, nor any unity between Christ and Belial (2 Cor. 6:14), it is not appropriate for one who has been illuminated by the knowledge of Christ to mix with darkness through the imitation of the wicked, or through their lustful and shameless works. For just as he who *does good is from God*, and has composed the eye

of his understanding in the light of that knowledge, and thus is wholly light, and *sees God*, who is true light, and is seen by others as a luminary in the world (Phil. 2:15), sustaining the Word of life; so also he who does evil, walking in darkness, cannot see God, that is, cannot do the things that are of God, nor can he be seen by others, if he rebukes or corrects anyone: but all hate and abominate him, according to that wise oracle: "I have hated iniquity and have abominated it." (Ps. 118:163 LXX)

About Demetrius, to whom he gives the best testimony.

3 John 12 *Demetrius has been testified by all, and by the very truth itself: but we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.*

"*by all*:" say those who keep the truth.

"*and by the very truth itself*:" which is the effectiveness of speech. For there are some to whom virtue bears witness, but it is frustrated by ineffective speech or lacking in deeds. If someone accepts the part "by all," even from the unfaithful, because "*all*" comprehends everyone, he would not be wrong to take the speech in a good sense. It commands the Jews and Greeks and the Church of God to strive, just as I, John says, please all in all things." (1 Cor. 10:35)

3 John 13-14 *I had many things to write, but I do not want to write to you with ink and pen. However, I hope to see you soon, and we will speak in person. Peace be with you. Your friends greet you. Greet your friends by name.*

Similar things have been said and interpreted at the end of the preceding letter; therefore, it would be unnecessary to repeat the same things again.

The end, with divine assistance favoring, of the third Catholic letter of John.

OECUMENIUS
on the Epistle of Jude

HYPOTHESIS OF THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JUDE

This letter is written to those who have already believed. The occasion was this: when some had come in who taught that sin is something common and indifferent and denied the Lord, it was necessary to write to them and confirm the brothers. And first, Jude urges them to resist and remain in the faith that was entrusted to them. Then he reveals such seducers and warns them to have no relationship with such people: knowing that it is not enough to be simply called, unless they also walk worthily of the calling. For although the Lord had previously brought the people out of Egypt, He did not spare those who did not remain in the faith; nor did He spare the angels who did not keep their own order. Therefore, it is necessary to depart from such things. Indeed, even Michael the archangel did not tolerate the blasphemy of the Devil. Therefore, he teaches about their future destruction like that of Sodom, then he urges them to have good morals, and having prayed for them to the Lord for the firmness of their faith, he concludes the letter.

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF JUDE.

SECTIONS

1. From the diligent observance of faith in Christ, because of the uprising of impious and lustful men, in which he also speaks of their future punishment, similar to the evil ones that had sinned in times past.

2. The lamentation of the wicked because of error and impiety and profanity and blasphemy and false pretense through bribery, by which they more easily deceive.

3. On the firmness of faith of those to whom Jude writes: that one should be compassionate and kind towards one's neighbor for the sake of the salvation that is in sanctification: and about pure confidence with the glorification of Christ.

THE CATHOLIC EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE JUDE

Jude 1-2 *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James, to those who are called, beloved in God the Father and called for Jesus Christ: may mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you.*

It was satisfactory for this present apostle, I say, to the splendor of glory, that Jude was celebrated as a *servant of Christ* even by

James. Indeed, since James was extolled by all for his great virtue, it resulted that he was more easily received by the listeners into the doctrine of the discourse, because the relationship of birth and blood did not seem at all foreign to the morals of the one with whom he shared kinship: and especially if, living under one Lord Christ, Jude proposed to bear the yoke of servitude equally with his brother.

"Those who are beloved in God the Father, and who are called, are saved by Jesus Christ." The Lord's word, in which He said, "No one comes to me unless the Father draws him," (Jn. 6:44) this blessed man now shows to be true. For those who are *beloved* by *the Father*, Jude says, have been saved by Jesus Christ. Therefore, he also calls them the *called*: for they do not have it from themselves, but from *the Father*, in that they are drawn, so that they may also be *called*. He truly prays for them that *mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you*.

Indeed *mercy*, for we have been recalled and taken by Him into ministry because of the bowels of the *mercy* of God: *peace*, however, because God the Father Himself has granted this to us, bringing us who had sinned back to His friendship through His Son Jesus Christ: and *love*, indeed, because of the *love* He had for us, His only-begotten Son was exposed to death for us. Therefore, he prays that these may be abundantly granted to them, saying in harmony with blessed David, who says: "Extend your mercy to those who know you." (Ps. 36:10)

From the diligent observance of faith in Christ, because of the uprising of impious and lustful men, in which he also speaks of their future punishment, similar to the evil ones that had sinned in times past.

Jude 3-4 My dearest, I have had such a strong desire to write to you about our common salvation that I could not cease from writing to you: urging you to contend again

for the faith once delivered to the saints. For certain ungodly men have secretly entered in, who were long ago marked out for this condemnation: who turn the grace of our God into vileness and deny the only Master God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through this, the argument of the epistle is hinted at, which, for the providence of their *salvation*, is now presented to prevent them from being ensnared by the most wicked heretics due to simplicity: it renders their speeches as if marking and making them obvious to the ignorant through the exposure of their lustful lives. Peter also spoke about these matters, but here it is stated more openly and extensively. Jude describes them as abandoned: because both Peter and Paul spoke of those who will be such seducers in the last times. And before these, Christ himself said: "Many will come in my name and will deceive many: therefore do not follow them." (Matt. 24:5) For claiming to be Christians, they deceive many in this name. He mentions Nicholas, Valentinus, and Simon, and those who followed them, the most wicked and impure. For being gluttons and lustful, they pretended to teach, so that under this pretext they might gain a hidden entrance into homes and lead captive women burdened with sins. (2 Tim. 3:6)

For they have given themselves over to nighttime mysteries in their beds and lasciviousness (Rom. 13:13). What he says, "They turn to lasciviousness," means that they corrupt themselves, twisting away from abstinence to lasciviousness; therefore they even deny our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, how do they not deny Him, who, through the impurity of life, reject the Teacher of all temperance with a vulgar and loud voice? For what unity is there between light and darkness? (2 Cor. 6:14)

"urging you to contend again." Jude urges those who have once received Christ the Savior and believed in Him, to continue

striving or to endeavor, that is, not to be affected with a disheartened mind, but to contain themselves and embrace even greater zeal regarding this.

For we have received the incarnate Word; if we were to say that there is another who was with the Father before the ages, and another who was born in His own hypostasis (ὑπόστασιν) from the Mother in the last times, would we not *deny* that there is one *Lord and Master*? For there is one Lord Jesus according to a certain privilege of union. For the Word and God before the ages, having assumed flesh for the glory of divinity, which He received from the divine Virgin from the moment of conception, is one and the same Lord of all.

"*turn the grace*:" that is, they transform, corrupt.

Jude 5-10 *I want to remind you, when we know once that the Lord, after He had saved the people from Egypt, again destroyed those who did not believe: and that He kept the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their own dwelling, in eternal chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day. Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring cities, which were similarly defiled with them through sexual immorality and pursued strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the punishment of eternal fire. Likewise, these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and blaspheme glorious beings. Yet Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the Devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not think to pronounce a condemning judgment against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" But these people blaspheme what they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that they, like irrational animals, understand instinctively.*

After Jude spoke of the corruption of the impure Nicolaitans, Valentinians, and Marcionites, and as if by a certain branding he marked them out from their own foul filth, he also adds this: "*after He had saved the people from Egypt*," etc., indeed showing through these things that the same God is the author of both the Old and the New Testament: and not, as these wicked ones say, that there was one God of the Old Testament, vengeful and cruel, and another of the New, gentle and humane: and Jude also states that neither those who now sin will remain unpunished, just as neither did those who were brought out of Egypt.

For indeed, by the enormous power of God, and because of the oath made to their ancestors, God had freed them from the slavery and tyranny of Egypt: yet those who acted immorally did not remain unpunished, but they received deserving penalties; and it did them no good that God had been generous towards their ancestors: nor did the enormous evidence of signs presented for them have any effect: just as neither did the angels who had fallen, although they were formed by God and endowed with intellectual nature; nor did the Sodomites, because they dwelt with Lot.

But those who first crossed the Red Sea as if it were dry land, later became unbelievers and perished. Those who had indeed received the honor of angelic *position*, since they did not remain in their origin, but corrupted the gift given to them from the goodness of celestial life, were *reserved* and kept for *judgment* or condemnation on the day of great and intolerable punishment. For this also now signifies *kept* (τετήρηνε). According to what Christ said: "Who is prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. 25:41)

And certainly, the Sodomites are presented as a sign of the eternal fire that will receive them. "*and pursued strange flesh*," and committed fornication, that is, turning aside, which means to

engage in prostitution (πορνεύειν). But *strange flesh* refers to male flesh, which does not benefit the union that is for the sake of generation. For the flesh that engages in union is the flesh of a woman, according to what was said by the first parent: "Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." (Gen. 2:23)

The flesh of men, however, is *strange*, I say, from sexual intercourse. Although in a woman, indeed joined by the laws to one man, her *flesh* is her own and moral: but that which is poured out and public is foreign and *strange*, and left almost to the atonement of male wickedness. But when Jude had set forth these examples, he left it to the listener to understand what followed from them. What is that? To bear what follows from it. If, therefore, he has so destroyed these, not satisfied by their previous happiness, does he now allow these to act immorally and lustfully, when the Son of God came into the world for men and suffered injuries and afflictions for them? No one would ever say this. For although he is kind and compassionate, yet he is also truly just: and for the sake of true justice, he did not spare those who have sinned (2 Peter 2:4): but for the sake of kindness, he introduced harlots and tax collectors into the kingdom (Matt. 21:31). Since it was thus necessary that the discourse should promise, he himself omitted it, for the reason we have mentioned.

Or also speaking in a similar manner with blessed Peter, when he said: "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned," etc. (2 Peter 2:4) And indeed it has been said of these things. Furthermore, what he says: "*Likewise, these dreamers defile the flesh,*" it is worthy of admiration that Jude has expressed the speech so modestly. For he indeed testifies much filthiness and nerve about them, saying that their life is impure, and their tongue is especially lustful: however, he rightly comprehends the fervent immorality of their actions through this word ἐνὺπνιαζόμενοι (that is, dreaming or agitated by sleeplessness),

which we will briefly and appropriately reveal, taking understanding from the work that blessed Epiphanius, bishop of Cyprus, published about these, which he called the Panarion (26).

For he says here that those wicked Borborites (that is, those filled with filth and sludge) when they mixed with foul women, did not dispense semen into the womb, but with an imperfect abomination, they received it with their own hands, and immediately inserted it into the mouths of the women with whom they had been corrupted: and thus they departed from each other impure, thinking they had accomplished something great. This unclean drama is called a *dream* because such things are also found in *dreams*. Therefore, by this filthy assumption, they further rage against the divine nature, Jude says, despising its dominion and the authority it has over the universe. Moreover, blessed Irenaeus of Lyons spoke more broadly about these things in his *Refutation of the So-called Knowledge*, from which anyone who wishes may gain understanding.

They *reject authority*, that is, the perfection of the mystery that is according to Christ: in order and in turn, fulfilling their shamelessness through the mysteries of angels. However, the term "*glorious*" (Δόξας) that is, splendors, is mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments: as Paul says, "For if what was brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory." (2 Cor. 3:11) And again: "For if the ministry of condemnation was glorious, much more will the ministry of righteousness abound in glory." (2 Cor. 3:9) Or it also refers to the ecclesiastical authorities, upon which they heap *blasphemies*: as can be learned even from the third Epistle of John the beloved, among whom he mentions Diotrephes, who gossiped against them with malicious words. (3 Jn. 10)

Since he remembers the *blasphemy*, he restrains not only them alone, but also all men, so that they may have pure tongues from such evil, and do not use it against those who are worthy of *blasphemy*, saying: "*Michael the archangel*," etc. But what does this mean? That these indeed rashly and intemperately use *blasphemies* against all. However, this should not happen, since it is not even fair to attack those who are worthy of *blasphemy* with curses, as is evident *from the archangel Michael*. For when there was a dispute between him and *the Devil* about *the body of Moses*, an opportunity was given to him to attack him with a *blasphemy* because of his boldness, But the archangel did not dare to bring a railing accusation against the Devil, but said, "*The Lord rebuke you!*" How do these men dare to *blaspheme* the glorious beings?

It is written in another way: If the archangel was in this condition, we should not heap up *blasphemies* and curses against the brother of a man of the same condition as us. And indeed, these things have been said about them. Furthermore, this is the judgment concerning *the body of Moses*. It is said that Michael the archangel provided ministry in burying *Moses*: the Devil could not bear this but brought an accusation because of the killing of the Egyptian (Ex. 2), as if it were Moses' own, and therefore did not allow him to obtain an honorable burial.

But also wishing to signify through this, the Apostle presents in the open that the law is prescribed to all men after their departure from the body, and that the same God is of the Old and New Testament. For when God wished to reveal the hidden things to men who were then more grossly affected, namely that the Devil, with his wicked demons, rises against our souls after they have been freed from here, wanting to hinder their journey to the heavens (and indeed he resists, but the good angels of God are there to assist them: as blessed Anthony also saw): He permitted these things to happen at that time. Nevertheless, Michael then

dared to repel the Devil, not with the authority to rebuke, but he granted judgment to the Lord of all, and said: "May *God rebuke you*, O Devil." But these do not know what they speak. Michael indeed acted so, nor did he bring any accusation against a man or Moses: but these compose slanderous speeches about doctrines *they do not understand*; those who, by natural motion or judgment, as beings experienced in reason, pursue these things like maddened horses towards mares, or like swine.

The lamentation of the wicked because of error and impiety and profanity and blasphemy and false pretense through bribery, by which they more easily deceive.

Jude 11-13 *Woe to them, for they have gone the way of Cain, and for profit they have abandoned themselves to the error of Balaam, and in the contradiction of Korah they perished. These are the blemishes who are in your love feasts, feasting without fear, shepherding themselves; they are clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead and uprooted; wild waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.*

“*The way of Cain*”: this is, through the murder of a brother: for those teaching such things also kill their brothers, or men of the same sort, with wicked doctrines. Or even by absorbing the seed, they kill the brother in virtue, whom the fruitfulness of the seed would bring forth to life.

“*the error of Balaam*”, because they, like him, do these things for the sake of gain.

Furthermore, the way of *Korah*, because they, like him, seized the office of teacher, being unworthy.

“These are the blemishes who are in your love feasts (ἀγάπαις).” There were still at that time, tables that were prepared in the churches, of which Paul speaks in the Epistle to the Corinthians (11): which were also called ἀγάπας, that is, “loves).

Jude says, “They come together not for the purpose that is in them, but to find an opportunity “enticing unstable souls”: as Peter also says in the second Epistle (2:14).

And what he says: *without fear*, or with the preceding, it should be arranged that there is this sense: “Like the stones of the sea living together,” that is, when they expect nothing to fear, they suddenly take on one form, like the stones of the sea leading to the punishment of souls.

But, fearlessly *shepherding themselves*, or rather to be arranged towards the *blemishes*, so that the meaning may be this: Fearlessly feasting like blemished ones, that is, not anticipating any fear from the fellow diners, suddenly, like *blemished* ones, bringing upon them the destruction of souls. As for the shepherding, *feeding themselves without fear*. *Without fear*, he says, the judgment from not knowing how to shepherd, but blind, leading the blind, and into the abyss, as the Lord will say, falling in with those being shepherded.

And he likens them to cliffs, and to *clouds without water*, and to *autumn trees*, and to wild *waves*, and to *wandering stars*. For they have that which exists by nature, these things by choice. For if the whirlpools are deadly to those sailing, unexpectedly arising, they also present a trustworthy evil to those dining together. And the *waterless clouds*, driven by *the winds*, wherever they may be carried, do not refresh with rain, for they do not have it; rather, they work out darkness for them. Likewise, these also do not save the souls of those who encounter them with a saving word, but they darken them with their most

polluted teachings, being driven by the wicked practices of the demons.

But even the *autumn trees*, dying *twice*, both in the shedding of their *fruit* and in the falling of their leaves (for they seem then to be deprived of beauty, both from the splendor of the fruit and from the flowery elegance of the leaves), suffer something appropriate to them. For they are twice cast out due to the eating of the seed, and they are deprived of the good behavior that comes from a temperate state. Therefore, they are also uprooted from the paradise of the Lord of the Church. And being cast out from this, they are gathered to the eternal fire.

For what standing or root will he have, who is being thrown by all into the heap of pleasure? The *stars* also wander and engage in business, not because they are transforming to the firmament of our faith, having the sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2), Christ, arising through them, and producing the hours of virtues, and giving life to the faithful arranged according to these, but because they seem to be transformed into an angel of light, as the wicked demon who is their precursor, on the contrary, only bear the doctrines of the Lord, by which they also darken those approaching, and acquire for themselves eternal *darkness*.

But even when compared to *wild waves*, they do not deny their similarity to them. For they themselves, driven by the spirits of wickedness, blaspheme against God without restraint, *foaming up their own shame*, ultimately coming to a *foam* with the height of blasphemy, from the weak and easily broken filth of their lives. Such is the *foam* of the waves to which they have been compared.

Jude 14-17 But the seventh from Adam, Enoch, also prophesied, saying: Behold, the Lord comes with

thousands of His saints to execute judgment on all and to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly works which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against God. These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, flattering people to gain advantage.

Jude adds to these things *Enoch*, who previously *prophesied* the punishment reserved for them by God, in the final judgment of God⁸. "*all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly works.*" The *ungodly* differs from the sinner in that the *ungodly* has sin against God, while the sinner deviates from the goal of righteousness in the actions of life.

After this, however, having been freed from the accommodation of these *ungodly* ones, Jude now also addresses the matter itself, accusing their vices, calling them *grumblers and complainers*. There is indeed a *grumbler*, one who, under his breath and without speaking out, complains to the one who is displeased. The *complainer*, on the other hand, always and constantly engages in contempt.

These wretched ones *are murmurers and complainers*, Jude says. For they do not have the boldness to engage in their teaching through shameful means. For it is not without danger to publicly proclaim recklessness with wickedness and blasphemy. And *they are complainers*, slandering both other people and the truth, in order to set up their own evils and obscenity as if they were something good. As he has said concerning Balaam, that they have poured themselves out for profit just like him, he now states more clearly that they *flattering people to gain advantage*, admiring indeed, by flattering those in authority, but the profit is actually the *gain*.

On the firmness of faith of those to whom Jude writes: that one should be compassionate and kind towards one's neighbor for the sake of the salvation that is in sanctification: and about pure confidence with the glorification of Christ.

Jude 17-25 But you, beloved, remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they said to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following their own ungodly desires." These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly people, lacking of the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. And have mercy on those who doubt; save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

"remember the words spoken beforehand by the apostles," those by Peter in the second Epistle, and by Paul in almost every epistle. From this, it is clear that this was written last after the apostles had passed away. "These are the ones who are causing divisions." Behold, another accusation against these very small men.

For they are not the only ones, Jude says, who perish, but they also rob the nourishments of those of the Church, (for this is what the term "cause division" intends to signify), that is, making them outside the ecclesiastical boundaries, either of the faith or even of the very holy tabernacle of the Church. For

having shown their gatherings to be a den of thieves, they lead away from the Church, but bring to themselves. And they do this, being *worldly people*, that is, living according to the behavior of the world. For we have already said that the divine Scripture often calls the soul and life, as in Job; "All that a man has, he will give for his soul," (Job 2:4) that is, for his life. Of these, Paul says that they are natural men, unable to accept the things of the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. 2:14) Being worldly, they are taught by natural means, concerning which it has been said: This wisdom is not from above, descending from the Father of lights (James 1:17), but is earthly, demonic, not having the Spirit of God speaking.

"*But you, beloved.*" Therefore, Jude says, but you *building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit*, that is, making your own gatherings according to the teaching of the Holy Spirit in your prayers. "*keep yourselves in the love of God,*" that is, safeguard yourselves, waiting for the mercy of our *Lord that leads to eternal life*. And those, if they separate from you (for this is what "to distinguish" means), rebuke them, that is, make their wickedness evident to all.

If they are aimed at healing, do not reject them, but receive them with your love, *snatching them out of the fire* that threatens them. But receive them with caution and with fear, considering that the reception of these may become a cause of distress for you if you are careless in your dealings with them, leading to the theft of those already established into the same overflow of their wickedness. For wickedness is very zealous. Therefore, let their reception be, Jude says. But approach them with fear, either with careful consideration, and let the hatred towards their small deeds be accompanied by *mercy, hating* and detesting them, and the *garment stained by their flesh*, or their defiled garment, as it touches their flesh and becomes disgusting. Those who receive them with the fear of the coming punishment, Jude says, should

see mercy granted to them, preparing for repentance. Having said these things, he seals the letter with a prayer.

The end, with the help of divine favor, of the Catholic Epistle of Jude.

Translation notes for 1-3 John and Jude

1 John Chrysostom, Eight Orations Against Judaizing Christians, Homily 2

2. “visibly.” The Greek word is *Γυμνὸν*, which literally means “naked”.

3. The term Nestorianism takes its name from Nestorius (c. 386–c. 451), whose theological position on Christ sparked controversy across the Christian world. At its core, Nestorius maintained that Christ assumed a human body that could suffer and undergo change, while his divinity remained unable to suffer and change. Yet the way he argued his case made it sound like Christ as a person was not born of a virgin, did not die, was not buried, nor was resurrected. Instead, his argument suggested that only the human body Christ assumed experienced these things, leaving his Godhead unchanged. [Understanding Nestorianism: A Controversy Over Christ's Natures, Wyatt Graham, Apr 30, 2025]

4. A Gnostic-Ebionite heretic, contemporary with St. John; against whose errors on the divinity of Christ the Apostle is said to have written the Fourth Gospel.

5. A dialectical argument is a method of reasoning that involves exploring opposing viewpoints to arrive at a deeper understanding or a more nuanced truth.

6 The rest of this paragraph, Oecumenius is commenting on the following citation of the Scripture text of 1 John 4:18-19. Oecumenius has done this in many places, that is, instead of waiting until he cites the Scripture text and then comment on it, he will sometimes start commenting on the upcoming section of Scripture text, and then add the Scripture. In those place, what I do, is instead of putting the Scripture

text in his comments into italics when he comments, I will put quotation marks. This is because I don't want the readers to think those comments are concerning the Scripture text that he had already provided above and commented on.

7. Jude quotes the apocryphal writing called The Assumption of Moses, but unfortunately Oecumenius does not appear to be aware of that.

8. Oecumenius does not appear to be aware that Jude is quoting from the Book of Enoch.