

SAINT AMBROSE OF MILAN

APOLOGY OF THE PROPHET DAVID

Apologia Prophetæ David

SABBATISMUS

Saint Ambrose of Milan (340–397)
Apologia Prophetæ David · Apology of the Prophet David

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Facing-page bilingual edition: Latin on the left-hand pages, English on the right.
Sabbatismus is the imprint of the Inversiones San Juan Diego foundation, San Pedro Sula, Honduras.
Set in EB Garamond and Cinzel.
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Nonnulli (Cap. I, num. 1) cum historiam David perlegendo tantum prophetam ac regem tam sanctum in geminum scelus, adulterii scilicet atque homicidii, incidisse cognovissent, offensionem haud mediocrem passi fuerant. Quapropter hujus rei vulgato rumusculo sanctus Ambrosius, ad utilitates populi sui numquam non intentus, huic malo putavit mature occurrendum. Itaque sacrum suggestum conscendens, defensionem ejusdem prophetae ac regis aggressus est. Neque tamen ipsum ita suscepit defendendum, ut a crimine immunem assereret. Fatetur siquidem (Cap. 1 et seq.) illum duobus gravissimis peccatis maculatum fuisse: at vero contendit eumdem accelerata confessione (Cap. 2), prolixa poenitentia (Cap. 4), et indefesso bonorum operum studio (Cap. 6 et seq.) expiatum, ut jam peccatoribus eum accusare quem ipsemet Deus absolverat (Cap. 4 et alibi), minime liceret: caeterum haudquaquam insolitum videri, quod tentationis et concupiscentiae vi succubuerit homo fragilis (Cap. 1 et alibi), sed illud prorsus omnium admiratione dignum, quod rex potentissimus qui legum severitate non tenebatur, statim atque de commisso peccato fuit admonitus, culpam agnovit, eamque sincero ac vehementi dolore deleverit. Addit his memoratum lapsum eam ob rem divino permissum consilio, ut idem ille ad posteritatis exemplum humiliatus exerceretur ac probaretur (Cap. 2 et 3); neque non in hoc ipso mysterii figuram exstitisse (Cap. 3), quae atrocitatem noxae minueret. Postremo non paucis praeclaris ac sanctis actionibus (Cap. 6 et seq.) quibus Propheta delictum texerit suum, dinumeratis, affirmat eum alio patrono haud indigere; quandoquidem in psalmo L, quo et actam abs se poenitentiam et impetratam veniam testatus est (Cap 8 et seq.), suam ipse reliquit apologiam. Hoc vir sanctus probat brevi quidem, at eleganti omnium ejusdem psalmi versuum enarratione, in qua sicut et in toto opere mysticas quasdam expositiones, observationes, adhortationesque morales ad populi apud quem verba faciebat, institutionem spargit.

Ipsa hujus operis constitutione satis intelligas in editione Romana parum consulte illud contra manuscriptorum omnium, ac superiorum editionum auctoritatem, in duos tractatus esse divisum, quorum alter priscum titulum Apologiae David retinuit, alter accepta nova inscriptione ad enarrationes in psalmos amandatus est. Huic quoque divisioni refragatur beatus Augustinus; is enim (Lib. IV, cont. duas epist. Pelag., cap. 11, et lib. II cont. Jul. Pelag., cap. 7) testimonium ex enarratione psalmi L petiit proferens illud non alio sub titulo quam Apologiae David laudat.

Some people (Chap. I, no. 1), upon reading the history of David and learning that so great a prophet and so holy a king had fallen into a twofold crime, namely, adultery and homicide, had taken no small offense. Therefore, when this matter became a widespread rumor, Saint Ambrose, ever attentive to the needs of his people, thought that this evil should be addressed promptly. And so, ascending the sacred pulpit, he undertook the defense of that same prophet and king. Yet he did not undertake to defend him in such a way as to assert that he was immune from the crime. He admits, indeed (Chap. 1 et seq.), that he was stained by two most grievous sins; but he argues that he was expiated by a swift confession (Chap. 2), extensive penance (Chap. 4), and an unwearied zeal for good works (Chap. 6 et seq.), so that it was by no means permissible for sinners to accuse him whom God Himself had absolved (Chap. 4 and elsewhere). Furthermore, he argues that it should not seem at all unusual that a frail man succumbed to the force of temptation and concupiscence (Chap. 1 and elsewhere), but that it was altogether worthy of all admiration that a most powerful king, who was not bound by the severity of the laws, as soon as he was admonished of the sin he had committed, acknowledged his fault and erased it with sincere and vehement sorrow. To these points he adds that the said fall was permitted by divine counsel for this reason: that this same man, being humbled, might be disciplined and tested as an example for posterity (Chap. 2 and 3); and also that in this very event there existed a figure of a mystery (Chap. 3), which would lessen the atrocity of the offense. Finally, after enumerating not a few excellent and holy actions (Chap. 6 et seq.) by which the Prophet covered his transgression, he affirms that he needs no other defender; since in Psalm 50, in which he testified both to the penance he performed and the pardon he obtained (Chap. 8 et seq.), he left his own apology. The holy man proves this with a brief but elegant explanation of all the verses of that same psalm, in which, as in the whole work, he scatters certain mystical expositions, observations, and moral exhortations for the instruction of the people to whom he was speaking.

From the very structure of this work, you may sufficiently understand that in the Roman edition it was ill-advisedly, and against the authority of all manuscripts and earlier editions, divided into two treatises, one of which retained the ancient title of **Apology of David**, while the other, having received a new title, was relegated to the commentaries on the psalms. Blessed Augustine also objects to this division; for he (Book IV, against the two letters of Pelagius, chap. 11, and Book II, against Julian the Pelagian, chap. 7), when citing a testimony taken from the exposition of Psalm 50, quotes it under no other title than the **Apology of David**.

Non putamus etiam quempiam inveniri, cui aut inductae ab ejusdem editionis ἐπιμεληταῖς in auctoris textum immutationes approbentur, aut verborum quibus hujus lucubrationis, quam omnino unam esse oportet, partes inter se nectebantur, facta detractio non displiceat. Quocirca e scriptorum codicum ac veterum editionum fide omnia restituimus, ut suis locis submonuimus ad calcem paginarum.

Ambrosius conciones quibus hic tractatus componitur, more suo in Ecclesia pronuntiavit post recitatum Evangelium, quemadmodum aperte significant ea verba: ut hodie lectum est (Cap. 5, num. 20), quod homo quidam cum dives esset, abiit in regionem longinquam, etc. (Luc. XIX). Sed nec minus manifestum est id evenisse non ita multo post Gratiani imperatoris caedem, quando eam ille hisce vocibus lamentatur (Cap. 6, num. 27): Quam gravi, inquit, adhuc luimus vastitate, quam publico quodam totius orbis funere appetiti necem regis exsolvimus! etc. Plane hoc modo loqui sanctus Antistes non poterat nisi aut de Gratiano, aut de Valentiniano juniore, cum illis temporibus per vim nullus imperator praeter hos duos juvenis fuerit exstinctus: at quae adjuncta illic referuntur optime in violentum Gratiani interitum, minime vero in Valentiniani quadrare satis constat. Praeterea haec ipsa Apologia citatur in commentariis in Evangelium secundum Lucam (In cap. 3), quae circiter annum 385 scripta esse probabilius est, ac perinde diu ante necem Valentiniani. Colligendum itaque commentationem hanc post mensem Augustum anni 383, quo trucidatus fuit Gratianus, et ante annum 385, quo memorata commentaria lucubrata sunt, in lucem prodierit, anno videlicet, ut vero videtur similis, 384.

Codex Thuaneus ante mille annos, ut characteres indicant, exaratus, et alii aliquot probatae notae hanc eandem opellam exhibent ita inscriptam: Tractatus S. Ambrosii de Apologia prophetae David ad Theodosium Augustum. Sed forte suspicetur aliquis postrema verba fuisse ab imperitis quibusdam vel audaculis superaddita, cum Theodosius Magnus quo tempore eosdem sermones habitos esse demonstravimus, non potuerit esse Mediolani, quam in urbem nonnisi aliquot post annis cum de Maximo triumphasset, sese contulit. Verumtamen nihil admodum vetat quominus sanctus Praesul Theodosio a se aliquem e suis libris petenti hunc ipsum, licet ante annos non paucos compositum, tamen quasi maxime convenientem ob regiam personae de qua ibidem agitur dignitatem, potissimum tribuerit: aut etiam ipsemet sponte sua eidem principi forte post factam Thessalonicensium stragem, propterquam ipsi publicam satisfactionem indixit, mittendum putaverit, ut illum in poenitentiae firmaret proposito. Re ipsa inter plurima praeclare dicta quae leguntur in hoc tractatu, nonnulla etiam observare est, quae videantur eo spectare.

We also do not think that anyone can be found who would approve of the changes introduced into the author's text by the editors (ἐπιμεληταῖς) of that same edition, or who would not be displeased by the removal of the words by which the parts of this work, which ought to be entirely one, were connected to each other. Therefore, we have restored everything according to the fidelity of the written codices and old editions, as we have noted in their proper places at the bottom of the pages.

Ambrose, according to his custom, delivered in the Church the sermons of which this treatise is composed after the reading of the Gospel, as is clearly indicated by these words: "as was read today" (Chap. 5, no. 20), "that a certain rich man went into a far country," etc. (Luke 19). But it is no less manifest that this happened not long after the murder of the Emperor Gratian, since he laments it in these words (Chap. 6, no. 27): "With what great devastation," he says, "do we still atone, with what a public funeral, as it were, of the whole world do we pay for the sought-after death of the king!" etc. Clearly, the holy Bishop could not have spoken in this way except about either Gratian or Valentinian the Younger, since in those times no emperor besides these two youths was killed by violence; but it is quite certain that the circumstances related there fit perfectly the violent death of Gratian, but not at all that of Valentinian. Furthermore, this very **Apology** is cited in the commentaries on the Gospel according to Luke (On chap. 3), which were more probably written around the year 385, and therefore long before the death of Valentinian. It is to be concluded, therefore, that this commentary was published after the month of August of the year 383, in which Gratian was slain, and before the year 385, in which the aforementioned commentaries were composed, namely, in the year 384, as seems more likely.

The Codex Thuaneus, written a thousand years ago, as the characters indicate, and several other manuscripts of proven quality, present this same short work inscribed thus: **Treatise of St. Ambrose on the Apology for the Prophet David to Theodosius Augustus**. But perhaps someone might suspect that the last words were added by some unskilled or audacious persons, since Theodosius the Great could not have been in Milan at the time we have shown these sermons were delivered, as he only came to that city several years later after he had triumphed over Maximus. Nevertheless, nothing at all prevents the holy Bishop from having given this very work—although composed not a few years earlier—to Theodosius, who had requested one of his books, as being especially suitable on account of the royal dignity of the person discussed therein; or even that he himself, of his own accord, may have thought to send it to the same prince, perhaps after the massacre of the Thessalonians, for which he imposed public satisfaction upon him, in order to strengthen him in his resolve of penance. In fact, among the many excellent sayings that are read in this treatise, some can also be observed that seem to point in that direction.

Haec Ambrosius scriptioni suae antequam illam mitteret ad imperatorem, addere potuit. Quod si ita sit, praedicare possumus hoc opus postrema Auctoris cura perfectum et recognitum ad nos pervenisse.

Quare apologiam David scribere aggrediatur Ambrosius. Historia facti praemittitur. Deinde judicandus non esse ostenditur, quem Deus justificaverit: contra vero etiam laudandus, quod in tanta potestate non plura peccaverit.

Apologiam prophetae David praesenti arripuimus stylo scribere, non quod ille indigeat hoc munere, qui tantis meritis enituit, virtutibusque effloruit; sed quia plerique gestorum ejus lecta serie, non introspecientes vim Scripturarum, vel occulta mysteriorum, mirantur quomodo tantus propheta adulterii primo, deinde homicidii contagia non declinaverit.

Ideo nobis studio fuit ipsam recensere historiam, quae patuisse peccato videtur. Namque in secundo Regum legimus libro (II Reg. XI, 2 et seq.), quoniam deambulans David in domo sua regia, prospexerit lavantem se mulierem (nomenque illi Bethsabee), formae egregiae et gratia et vultu decora, praestantique admodum facie, quibus illecebris delinitum potiendi ejus sumpsisse affectum. Erat autem mulier viro nupta, Uriae nomen marito, cui mandatis regis composita est scena necis. Nam etsi nihil ad impedimentum cupiditatis, plurimum tamen ad verecundiam adulterii obstaré vita ejus aestimabatur.

Itaque ut a planioribus exordiamur, quem Deus justificavit, ne tu dijudices. Pro minimo mihi est, inquit Paulus, ut a vobis dijudicer, aut ab humano die: sed neque me ipsum dijudico (I Cor. IV, 3). Et adhuc erat in corpore situs, adhuc tentationi obnoxius: sed ideo se non dijudicabat, quia spiritalis a nemine dijudicatur, nisi a solo Deo. Denique subdidit: Qui dijudicat me Dominus est. Itaque nolite ante tempus quid judicare (Ibid., 4 et 5). Sed David jam tempus implevit, et gratiam meruit, et justificatus a Christo est; quandoquidem David se dici filium ipse Dominus gratulabatur, et qui eum ita confitebantur, illuminabantur. Cur hominem Dei a praemio in iudicium vocas? Judicavit jam de eo Dominus, de quo dixit ad Salomonem: Si ambulaveris in conspectu meo, sicut ambulavit David pater tuus in sanctitate cordis et justitia, ad hoc ut faceret secundum omnia quae mandavi ei (III Reg. IX, 4). Hic ergo iudicio dignus an praemio est, qui fecit secundum omnia mandata coelestia, ambulans in sanctitate et justitia cordis?

Ambrose could have added these to his writing before sending it to the emperor. If this is so, we can declare that this work has come down to us perfected and revised with the Author's final care.

Why Ambrose undertakes to write an apology for David. The history of the event is set forth. Then it is shown that he whom God has justified is not to be judged: but on the contrary, is even to be praised, because in such great power he did not sin more often.

We have taken up the present task of writing an apology for the prophet David, not because he needs this service, who shone with such great merits and flourished with virtues; but because many, having read the series of his deeds, without looking deeply into the power of the Scriptures or the hidden nature of the mysteries, wonder how so great a prophet did not avoid the contamination first of adultery, and then of homicide.

Therefore, it has been our endeavor to review the story itself, which seems to have been exposed to sin. For in the second book of Kings we read (2 Kings 11:2 ff.) that David, walking in his royal house, saw a woman washing herself (her name was Bathsheba), of outstanding beauty and lovely in grace and countenance, and with a very distinguished face, by which charms he was captivated and conceived a desire to possess her. Now, the woman was married to a man, Uriah was the husband's name, for whom a scene of death was arranged by royal command. For although his life was judged to be no impediment to desire, it was nevertheless considered a great obstacle to the shame of adultery.

And so, to begin with what is plainer, do not judge him whom God has justified. "It is a very small thing to me," says Paul, "that I should be judged by you, or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself" (1 Cor. 4:3). And he was still situated in the body, still subject to temptation: but he did not judge himself for this reason, because the spiritual man is judged by no one, except by God alone. Finally, he added: "He who judges me is the Lord." "Therefore do not judge anything before the time" (Ibid., 4-5). But David has already fulfilled his time, and has merited grace, and has been justified by Christ; since the Lord Himself rejoiced to be called the son of David, and those who so confessed him were enlightened. Why do you call a man of God from his reward to judgment? The Lord has already judged concerning him, of whom He said to Solomon: "If you walk before me, as David your father walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you" (1 Kings 9:4). Is this man, then, worthy of judgment or of reward, who did according to all the heavenly commandments, walking in holiness and justice of heart?

Ubi aliorum vitia et peccata delitescunt, ibi David virtutis et gloriae suae divinum accepit testimonium. Et de ejus peccato disputamus otiosi, pro cujus merito et gratia aliorum peccata revelata sunt. Nam cum offendisset Salomon, quod non custodisset mandata Domini, et regnum ejus disposuisset Deus scindere in plurimas partes, ait ad eum: Verumtamen in diebus tuis non faciam hoc propter David patrem tuum. De manu filii tui accipiam illud. Verumtamen non totum regnum accipiam, sceptrum unum dabo ei propter David servum meum (III Reg. XI, 12 et 13). Justificante igitur Domino, quis est qui tantum dijudicet virum? Quod Deus, inquit, mundavit, tu commune ne dixeris (Act. X, 15).

Salvo tamen iudicio coelesti, quo etiam ipse tantum honorifices prophetam, in ejus actus moresque ingredi. Non miraris hominem, et angelis adaequandum judicas, plurimum vitae suae, immo a pueritia in divitiis, honoribus, imperiis demorantem, in multis tentationibus positum, semel tantum locum errori dedisse, et ei errori quo etiam angeli coelorum, ut Scriptura commemorat (Gen. VI, 2), de sua virtute et gratia dejecti sunt. Sane et alter legitur error ipsius, quod numerari fecerit populum.

CAPUT II.

Laudatur David ab humilitate confessionis; ac tres causae, cur sanctis peccatum obrepere utile sit, idque Deus permittat, afferuntur.

Unusquisque nostrum per singulas horas quam multa delinquit, et tamen unusquisque de plebe peccatum suum confitendum non putat. Ille rex (De Poenit. dist. 3, cap. Ille rex) tantus ac potens ne exiguo quidem momento manere penes se delicti passus est conscientiam; sed praematura confessione atque immenso dolore, reddidit peccatum suum Domino. Quem mihi nunc facile reperias honoratum ac divitem, qui si arguatur alicujus culpae reus, non moleste ferat? At ille regio clarus imperio, tot divinis probatus oraculis, cum a privato homine corriperetur, quod graviter deliquisset, non indignatus infremuit, sed confessus ingemuit culpae dolore. Denique Dominum dolor intimi movit affectus (Ibid., § Denique Dominum), ut Nathan diceret: Quoniam poenituit te, et Dominus transtulit peccatum tuum (II Reg. XII, 13). Maturitas itaque veniae, profundam regis fuisse poenitentiam declaravit, quae tanti erroris offensam traduxerit.

Where the vices and sins of others lie hidden, there David received divine testimony of his virtue and glory. And we idly dispute about his sin, for whose merit and grace the sins of others have been revealed. For when Solomon had offended, because he had not kept the commandments of the Lord, and God had arranged to divide his kingdom into many parts, He said to him: "Nevertheless, in your days I will not do it, for David your father's sake." "From the hand of your son I will take it." "However, I will not take the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to him for the sake of David my servant" (1 Kings 11:12-13). Since the Lord justifies, therefore, who is there who would judge so great a man? "What God," he says, "has cleansed, you must not call common" (Acts 10:15).

Nevertheless, with due respect for the heavenly judgment, by which you yourself so honor the prophet, enter into his acts and morals. Do you not wonder at the man, and judge him to be equal to the angels, who, for most of his life, indeed from boyhood, dwelling in riches, honors, and power, placed in many temptations, only once gave place to error, and to that error by which even the angels of heaven, as Scripture relates (Gen. 6:2), were cast down from their virtue and grace? Indeed, another error of his is also read, that he caused the people to be numbered.

CHAPTER II.

David is praised for the humility of his confession; and three reasons are brought forward why it is useful for sin to creep up on the saints, and why God permits it.

Each one of us sins in so many ways every single hour, and yet each one of the common people does not think his sin should be confessed. That great and powerful king (De Poenit. dist. 3, cap. Ille rex) did not suffer the consciousness of his offense to remain with him even for a brief moment; but with a prompt confession and immense sorrow, he rendered his sin to the Lord. Whom can you now easily find, honored and rich, who, if he is accused of being guilty of some fault, does not take it badly? But he, renowned for his royal power, proven by so many divine oracles, when he was rebuked by a private individual for having sinned gravely, did not roar with indignation, but confessed and groaned with the pain of his guilt. Finally, the pain of his innermost feeling moved the Lord (Ibid., § Denique Dominum), so that Nathan said: "Because you have repented, the Lord also has put away your sin" (II Reg. XII, 13). Therefore, the promptness of the pardon declared that the king's repentance was profound, which had overcome the offense of so great an error.

Alii homines cum a sacerdotibus corripiuntur, peccatum suum ingravant, dum negare cupiunt aut defendere; ibique eorum lapsus est major, ubi speratur correctio. Sancti autem Domini (Ibid., § Sancti) qui consummare pium certamen gestiunt, et currere cursum salutis, sicubi forte ut homines corruerint naturae magis fragilitate quam peccandi libidine, acriores ad currendum resurgunt, pudoris stimulo maiora reparantes certamina; ut non solum nullum attulisse aestimetur lapsus impedimentum, sed etiam velocitatis incentiva cumulasse. Ergo si currentium non solvitur cursus, cum forte aliqui ceciderint, non luctantium contentio, sed inoffensa manent certamina; quin etiam plerique post unum aut alterum lapsum, gratia maiore vicerunt: quanto magis agonem pietatis ingressi non debent unius prolapsionis offensione censi, cum beatus sit qui se potuerit reparare post lapsum; quoniam post mortem quoque resurgere munus beatorum est.

Alias quoque prodesse peccatum possumus comprehendere, et providentia Domini sanctis obrepsisse delicta. Propositi enim ad imitandum nobis sunt; et ideo curatum est ut et ipsi aliquando laberentur. Nam si inoffensum a vitiis inter tot lubrica hujus saeculi curriculum peregissent, dedissent nobis occasionem infirmioribus aestimandi cujusdam superioris eos naturae ac divinae fuisse; ut delictum recipere, et culpaе consortium habere non possent. Quae opinio utique, ut exsortes nos illius substantiae, ab impossibili imitatione revocaret. Praeterit igitur paulisper illos 678 Dei gratia; ut nobis ad imitationem vita eorum fieret disciplina; et sicut innocentiae, ita et poenitentiae magisterium de eorum actibus sumeremus. Ergo dum lapsus eorum lego, consortes etiam illos infirmitatis agnosco: dum credo consortes, imitandos esse praesumo.

Admonet etiam apostolus Paulus (II Cor. XII, 7) prospexisse Dominum Deum nostrum, ne vel revelationum sublimitate, vel secundo operum continuante processu, humanus etiam in sanctis extolleretur affectus, nec sibi deputerent, virtutique attribuerent suae, quod divina sibi operatione foret collatum. Ergo ne in tantum praejudicium ruerent, atque in perfidiae foveam deciderent, passus est Dominus illis subintrare culpam; ut et ipsi adverterent divinis se auxiliis indigere, ducemque salutis suae quaerendum esse cognoscerent.

Other men, when they are rebuked by priests, aggravate their sin, while they desire to deny or defend it; and there their fall is greater, where correction is hoped for. But the saints of the Lord (*Ibid.*, § Sancti), who are eager to complete the pious struggle and to run the course of salvation, if by chance as men they have fallen more through the fragility of nature than the lust for sinning, they rise again more keenly to run, preparing for greater contests with the stimulus of shame; so that the fall is judged not only to have brought no impediment, but even to have piled up incentives for speed. Therefore, if the course of those running is not broken when some happen to fall, nor the struggle of those wrestling, but the contests remain unimpeded; indeed, if many have conquered with greater grace after one or two falls: how much more should those who have entered the contest of piety not be judged by the offense of a single slip, since blessed is he who has been able to restore himself after a fall; for to rise again even after death is the gift of the blessed.

We can also understand that sin is beneficial in other ways, and that offenses have crept up on the saints by the providence of the Lord. For they are set before us for imitation; and therefore it was arranged that they themselves should sometimes fall. For if they had completed the course of this life free from vice amidst so many slippery paths, they would have given us weaker ones occasion to judge that they were of a certain superior and divine nature, so that they could not admit an offense or have a share in guilt. This opinion, to be sure, would have deterred us, as being devoid of that substance, from an impossible imitation. Therefore, the grace of God passes them by for a little while, so that their life might become a lesson for our imitation; and that we might take from their actions a teaching of repentance just as of innocence. Therefore, when I read of their falls, I recognize that they too are partners in weakness: and believing them to be partners, I presume they are to be imitated.

The apostle Paul also warns (II Cor. XII, 7) that our Lord God has provided that human feeling, even in the saints, should not be exalted, either by the sublimity of revelations or by the continuous successful progress of their works, lest they should credit it to themselves and attribute to their own virtue what was conferred on them by divine operation. Therefore, lest they should rush into so great a prejudice and fall into the pit of faithlessness, the Lord allowed guilt to creep into them, so that they themselves might notice that they needed divine help and recognize that the leader of their salvation was to be sought.

Denique Paulus infirmitatem sibi profuisse testatur, dicente Domino roganti sibi, ut a se stimulus carnis suae discederet: Sufficit tibi gratia mea: nam virtus in infirmitate consummatur (Ibid., 9). Meritoque gloriatur in infirmitatibus; sciebat enim virtutis abundantia plurimos etiam sanctos sine remedio corruisse. Quanto igitur commodius uni aut duabus reprehensionibus locum dedisse, quam traxisse in perpetuum divinitatis offensam?

CAPUT III.

Davidem eo tentationi expositum fuisse, quod athletas suos variis certaminibus exerceri, et nobis exemplo esse Deus velit: praeterea ejusdem adulterium in figuram factum, adductis variis allegoriis, declaratur.

9. Quid etiam illa adjiciam quae ex ipso usu mundi conjicere possumus, quia plerosque cum probaverimus in aliquo officio, eosdem quasi industrios atque impigros in alio munere volumus experiri? Quam multi athletae cum isto certandi genere praevaluerint, ad aliud genus vocantur certaminis! Quid si et te Dominus Deus tuus cum aliquod specimen virtutis dederis tuae, in alio virtutum genere vult probare? Job sanctum currentem inoffense, tentari tamen filiorum interitu, et corporis totius ulceribus passus est: ut in hoc quoque ejus virtutem probaret, si nec injuriis, nec acerbitatibus coactus devotionem sui minueret affectus. Num liquet quod etiam sanctum David fide nobilem, praestantissimum mansuetudine, manu fortem probare voluerit, quemadmodum vitium tegetet, lapsum emendaret; ut nos doceret quemadmodum admissum possimus operire peccatum?

10. Nisi forte vilis causa alicui videtur, ut propter nostram correctionem tantus erraret propheta, cum propter omnium redemptionem infirmitates nostras Christus susceperit, qui peccatum pro nobis factus est, cum peccatum non cognoverit. Et indignum aestimatur, nec verisimile creditur, quod David propter posteritatis profectum in unius lapsus opprobrium inciderit; cum ipse Dominus sit pro nobis factus opprobrium, sicut ipse ait: Ego autem sum vermis, et non homo, opprobrium hominum, et abjectio plebis (Psal, XXI, 7). Et alibi: Et opprobria exprobrantium tibi ceciderunt 679 super me (Psal. LXVIII, 10). Ergo futurae dispensationis mysterium in suis ante praemisit. Et servuli quidem conditionis suae peccata portarunt, ideo non potuerunt etiam et ipsi exsortes esse peccati: Dominus autem onus suscepit alienum, ideo solus fuit sine consortio delictorum.

Finally, Paul testifies that his weakness was profitable to him, when the Lord said to him as he prayed that the thorn in his flesh might depart from him: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (Ibid., 9). And he rightly glories in his weaknesses; for he knew that very many saints had fallen without remedy from an abundance of virtue. How much more advantageous, therefore, to have given place to one or two reprehensions than to have incurred the perpetual offense of the divinity?

CHAPTER III.

That David was exposed to temptation for this reason: that God wishes His athletes to be exercised in various contests and to be an example for us; furthermore, it is declared, with various allegories adduced, that his adultery was done as a figure.

9. Why should I also add those things which we can conjecture from the very practice of the world, that when we have tested most men in some duty, we wish to try them, as if industrious and energetic, in another task? How many athletes, when they have prevailed in one kind of contest, are called to another kind of contest! What if the Lord your God, when you have given some proof of your virtue, wishes to test you in another kind of virtue? He allowed holy Job, who was running his course without offense, to be tempted nevertheless by the death of his children and by ulcers over his whole body, so that in this too He might test his virtue, to see if, compelled by neither injuries nor hardships, his devoted affection would diminish. Is it not clear that He also wished to test holy David—noble in faith, most excellent in meekness, strong of hand—on how he would cover his vice and amend his fall, so that He might teach us how we can cover a sin we have committed?

10. Unless, perhaps, it seems a trivial reason to someone that so great a prophet should err for the sake of our correction, when for the redemption of all, Christ took upon Himself our infirmities, He who was made sin for us, though He knew no sin. And is it deemed unworthy, and not believed to be likely, that David should have fallen into the disgrace of a single lapse for the benefit of posterity, when the Lord Himself was made a reproach for us, as He Himself says: "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people" (Psalm 21:7). And elsewhere: "And the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me" (Psalm 68:10). Therefore, He sent ahead in His own the mystery of the future dispensation. And the servants, indeed, bore the sins of their own condition, and for that reason they themselves could not be without a share in sin; but the Lord took up the burden of another, and for that reason He alone was without partnership in transgressions.

11. Ad summam, Apostolo quoque docente, cognovimus in figura gesta esse complura, quae temporibus gesta superioribus sunt. Nam cum dixisset in deserto patres a serpentibus vulneratos non aliter potuisse sanari, nisi Moyses serpentem suspendisset aereum, quo viso, lethales illi morsus infusionesque veneni noxiae curabantur, subiecit: Haec autem in figura facta sunt illis (I Cor. X, 6) ad nostram correctionem. In figura aereus serpens tamquam confixus cruci; quia verus crucifigendus generi annuntiabatur humano, qui serpentis diaboli venena vacuaret, in figura maledictus, in veritate autem qui totius mundi maledicta deleret. Alibi quoque, id est, ad Galatas ait: Quia duos filios habuit Abraham, unum de ancilla, et unum de libera (Galat. IV, 22). Et subdidit: Sed is quidem qui de ancilla, secundum carnem natus est: qui autem de libera, per repromissionem; quae sunt per allegoriam dicta (Ibid., 23). Quid sit per allegoriam, in sequentibus exposuit evidenter, dicens duas illas generationes, unam de ancilla, alteram de libera, duo esse Testamenta: unum quidem a monte Sina in servitutem generans, in quo monte Legem Moyses accepit a Domino: alterum autem ab Hierusalem quae est libera, quae in Isaac filios, hoc est, in libertate gratiae, non litterae servitute generavit. Servis enim poena decernitur, liberis confertur gratia. Nonne in typo geminae plebis Jacob duas accepit uxores, ex quibus diversam sobolem procreavit? Cur patriarcha Judas propriae nurus post filii sui mortem legitur expetisse concubitum (Gen. XXXVIII, 16), quo geminorum partus est editus, nisi ut figura utroque Jesu Domini praecederet Testamento: quorum alterum in typo futurae mortis ejus est conditum, alterum in Evangelii veritate, duos populos esse generandos, quorum posterior in crucis signo sepem omnem ac munitionem populi superioris incideret? Hic est populus manu prior, ortu posterior. Vel quia ipse Dominus Jesus natus ex Tribu Juda opera sua ante praemisit, quam nobis ex Virgine nasceretur.

12. Quid de Joseph loquar, qui a fratribus appetitus, exutus patrio vestimento, in lacum missus, in servitutem venditus, evidens Dominicae Incarnationis expressit indicium? eo quod ille dilectus 680 Patri cum esset in Dei forma, non rapinam arbitraretur esse se aequalem Deo, sed ipse se exinaniret: ut formam servi accipiens veniret, et se usque ad mortem crucis humiliaret: cujus pretio et emptus et venditus a suis fratribus genus redemit humanum.

11. In short, with the Apostle also teaching, we have come to know that many things which were done in former times were done in figure. For when he had said that the fathers in the desert, wounded by serpents, could not be healed otherwise than if Moses had lifted up the bronze serpent—by the sight of which those lethal bites and noxious infusions of venom were cured—he added: "Now these things were done in a figure for them" (1 Cor. 10:6), for our correction. In figure, the bronze serpent was as if fixed to a cross, because the true one to be crucified was being announced to the human race, who would empty out the venoms of the serpent, the devil; cursed in figure, but in truth He who would wipe away the curses of the whole world. Elsewhere also, that is, to the Galatians, he says: "For Abraham had two sons, one by a bondwoman, and one by a free woman" (Gal. 4:22). And he added: "But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise; which things are said by an allegory" (Ibid., 23). What "by an allegory" means, he explained clearly in what follows, saying that those two generations, one from the bondwoman, the other from the free, are two Testaments: one from Mount Sinai, generating into bondage, on which mountain Moses received the Law from the Lord; but the other from Jerusalem which is free, which in Isaac generated sons, that is, in the freedom of grace, not in the servitude of the letter. For to slaves punishment is decreed; to the free, grace is conferred. Did not Jacob, as a type of the twofold people, take two wives, from whom he procreated a diverse offspring? Why is the patriarch Judah read to have sought intercourse with his own daughter-in-law after his son's death (Gen. 38:16), from which a birth of twins was brought forth, unless it was so that a figure of the Lord Jesus might precede in both Testaments: one of which was established as a type of His future death, the other in the truth of the Gospel, that two peoples were to be generated, the latter of whom, in the sign of the cross, would cut down every hedge and fortification of the former people? This is the people that is first by hand, later by birth. Or because the Lord Jesus Himself, born of the Tribe of Judah, sent forth His works beforehand, before He was born for us of the Virgin.

12. What shall I say of Joseph, who, sought by his brothers, stripped of his father's garment, cast into a pit, sold into slavery, expressed a clear sign of the Lord's Incarnation? Inasmuch as He, beloved of the Father, though He was in the form of God, did not think it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, so that taking the form of a servant He might come, and humble Himself even unto the death of the cross; by whose price, both bought and sold by His own brethren, He redeemed the human race.

In cujus typo David minor electus ex fratribus, unctus in regnum, solus belli gravis periculo, singulari certamine universum populum liberavit, triumphavit in decem millibus; ita ut puellae cum tympanis psallerent: Saul triumphavit in millibus, David in decem millibus (I Reg. XVIII, 7). Quae figura in illis juvenculis, nisi animarum quae triumphalem psalmum concinunt Christo? Genuit ex se filios, unum incestum, alium parricidam; eo quod incestus et parricidalis populus affixam patibulo crucis carnem proprii violaturus esset auctoris. Denique in tertio psalmo Abessalon titulus praemittitur, et passio Domini prophetatur.

13. Quid de Salomone sancto loquar, cujus posteriora cum gravi errore non careant, vulgus tamen Judaicum ipsum existimat venisse pro Christo? Et quam multos gravis erroris offensa revocavit? Major itaque culpa plus profuit, ne supra hominem crederetur, qui vitio non caruisset humano. Fuit igitur in eo invidiosa sapientia, et culpa suasoria, quae hominem comprobaret.

14. Quid igitur obstat quominus etiam Bethsabée sancto David in figura sociata fuisse credatur; ut significaretur congregatio nationum, quae non erat Christo legitimo quodam fidei copulata connubio, quod transversariis quibusdam foret vestibulis in ejus gratiam praeter Legis ingressura praescriptum, in qua nuda mentis sinceritas, et aperta simplicitas lavacri justificante mysterio, veri David et regis aeterni mentem traduceret, laceraret charitatem? Merito venit occultus, et qui falleret principem mundi, tamquam Uriam illum qui interpretatione dicitur lumen meum, transfigurantem se in angelum lucis. Venit, inquam, in hunc mundum, et venit occultus, tamquam adulter intravit, ut jus legitimum vindicaret.

CAPUT IV.

Davidis poenitentia paulo fusius commendata, neminem a lapsu immunem inveniri sanctissimorum virorum inductione palam facit.

15. Distinximus allegationes validas, ut arbitramur, et in figura fuisse textum hujus historiae comprobavimus: nunc superiora repetamus, et tamquam exutum spiritualibus indumentis introspeciamus errorem. Peccavit David, quod solent reges: sed poenitentiam gessit, flevit, ingemuit, quod non solent reges. Confessus est culpam, obsecravit indulgentiam, humi stratus deploravit aerumnam, jejunavit, oravit, confessionis suae testimonium in perpetua saecula vulgato dolore transmisit. Quod erubescunt facere privati, rex non erubuit confiteri.

In his type, David, the youngest, chosen from among his brothers, anointed to the kingdom, alone in the grave peril of war, in single combat liberated the entire people, and triumphed in ten thousands; so that the maidens sang with timbrels: "Saul has triumphed in thousands, David in ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7). What figure is in those young women, if not that of the souls who sing a triumphal psalm to Christ? He begot sons from himself, one incestuous, the other a parricide; because an incestuous and parricidal people would violate the flesh of their own author, affixed to the gibbet of the cross. Finally, in the third psalm, the title of Absalom is prefixed, and the passion of the Lord is prophesied.

13. What shall I say of holy Solomon, whose later life, though not lacking in grave error, the Jewish populace nevertheless thinks came in place of Christ? And how many has the offense of this grave error called back? Therefore, the greater fault was more profitable, lest he who had not been free from human vice should be believed to be more than a man. There was in him, therefore, an enviable wisdom and a persuasive fault, which proved him to be a man.

14. What, therefore, prevents it from being believed that Bathsheba also was joined to holy David in a figure, so that it might signify the congregation of the nations, which was not joined to Christ by any legitimate bond of faith, because it was to enter into His grace through certain transverse vestibules, beyond the prescription of the Law, in which the naked sincerity of mind and the open simplicity of the justifying mystery of the bath would captivate the mind and provoke the love of the true David and eternal King? Rightly did He come hidden, and as one who would deceive the prince of the world, like that Uriah who by interpretation is called "my light," transfiguring himself into an angel of light. He came, I say, into this world, and He came hidden; He entered as if an adulterer, in order to claim His legitimate right.

CHAPTER IV.

David's repentance is commended somewhat more fully, and it is made clear by the example of the most holy men that no one is found to be immune from falling.

15. We have distinguished the valid arguments, as we judge, and have proved that the text of this history was a figure: now let us repeat what was said above, and let us look into the error as if it were stripped of its spiritual garments. David sinned, as kings are wont to do; but he did penance, he wept, he groaned, which kings are not wont to do. He confessed his fault, he begged for pardon, prostrate on the ground he lamented his misery, he fasted, he prayed, he transmitted the testimony of his confession to all ages by his publicized grief. What private citizens are ashamed to do, the king was not ashamed to confess.

Qui tenentur legibus, audent suum negare peccatum, dedignantur rogare indulgentiam, quam petebat qui nullis legibus tenebatur humanis. Quod peccavit, conditionis est (De Poen. dist. 3, cap. Ille rex, § Quod peccavit): quod supplicavit, correctionis. Lapsus communis, sed specialis confessio. Culpam itaque incidisse, naturae est: diluisse, virtutis, Quis gloriatur, inquit, castum se habere cor (Prov. XX, 9)? Nec unius diei infans mundus esse Scripturae testimonio declaratur (Job. XIV, 5).

16. Da mihi aliquem sine prolapsione delicti. Validissimus omnium Samson legitur (Judic. XIV et seq.), qui leonem etiam suis manibus strangulavit; sed utinam amorem suum suffocare potuisset. Messes incendit Allophylorum, et ipse mulieris unius arsit igniculo. Jephthe victor ab hoste remeavit: sed vexilla referens triumphalia, suo victus est sacramento, ut pietatem occurrentis filiae parricidio remunerandam putaret. Primum omnium quid opus fuit tam facile jurare, et incerta vovere pro certis, quorum nesciret eventum? Deinde ad quid sacramenta tristia Domino Deo reddit; ut cruentis solvat sua vota funeribus?

17. Nec de sacerdotibus silendum arbitror, ne nostra videar dissimulare delicta. Aaron ipse summus sacerdos (quo duce pariter ac Moyse, Rubrum pedes mare transivit populus Hebraeorum) rogatus a plebe ut deos sibi faceret quos adorarent, aurum poposcit, in ignem misit, et caput vituli figuratum est, cui sunt oblata sacrificia. Quo indicio claruit auri cupiditatem materiam esse perfidiae, et avaritiae studio sacrilegia solere generari. Iterum tantus sacerdos locum incidit offensionis cum sorore sua Maria. Nam dum fratri uterque obtreccat quod alienigenam accepisset uxorem, illico Maria contagio maculosae carnis effloruit.

18. Quo loci evidentis fuit figura mysterii, quod sacerdotalis ille populus patrum fraterno populo posterioribus temporibus derogaret, Aethiopissae illius nesciens sacramentum. Nam si cognovisset, non reprehendisset, quod cum veteri mysterio conveniret. Itaque cum Judaeus eum qui ex Gentibus credidit, dicit esse communem, et vult a Lege secernere, lepram habet, quam non poterit evadere, nisi spiritalis ei legis agnitio ad veniam fuerit suffragata.

19. Ergo et David qui sciret hominem se esse natum lapsui, veniam postulavit: Domini autem non desperavit misericordiam.

CAPUT V.

Those who are bound by laws dare to deny their sin and disdain to ask for the pardon that he sought who was bound by no human laws. That he sinned belongs to his condition (*De Poen. dist. 3, cap. Ille rex, § Quod peccavit*)); that he supplicated, to his correction. The fall was common, but the confession was special. To have fallen into fault, therefore, is of nature; to have washed it away, of virtue. "Who can say," it says, "I have a clean heart" (*Prov. 20:9*)? And by the testimony of Scripture, not even an infant of one day is declared to be clean (*Job 14:5*).

16. Show me anyone without the slipping of sin. Samson is read of as the strongest of all (*Judges 14 ff.*), who even strangled a lion with his own hands; but would that he had been able to suffocate his own love. He set fire to the harvests of the Philistines, and he himself burned with the small flame of one woman. Jephthah returned victorious from the enemy; but as he brought back the triumphal standards, he was vanquished by his own oath, so that he thought the piety of his daughter who ran to meet him should be rewarded with parricide. First of all, what need was there to swear so easily, and to vow uncertain things for certain, the outcome of which he did not know? Then, to what end does he render sorrowful oaths to the Lord God, that he should fulfill his vows with bloody funerals?

17. Nor do I think I should be silent about the priests, lest I seem to conceal our own faults. Aaron himself, the high priest (under whose leadership, along with Moses, the Hebrew people crossed the Red Sea on foot), when asked by the populace to make for them gods to worship, demanded gold, cast it into the fire, and the head of a calf was formed, to which sacrifices were offered. By this sign it became clear that the desire for gold is the material of perfidy, and that sacrileges are wont to be generated by the pursuit of avarice. Again, so great a priest fell into an occasion of offense with his sister Miriam. For while both were speaking ill of their brother because he had taken a foreign wife, immediately Miriam broke out with the contagion of leprous flesh.

18. In this place there was a clear figure of the mystery, that the priestly people of the fathers would in later times disparage the fraternal people, not knowing the sacrament of that Ethiopian woman. For if he had known, he would not have condemned what was in accord with the ancient mystery. Therefore, when the Jew says that he who has believed from among the Gentiles is common, and wishes to separate him from the Law, he has a leprosy which he will not be able to escape, unless the recognition of the spiritual law should assist him toward pardon.

19. Therefore David also, who knew that he was a man born to fall, asked for pardon; but he did not despair of the Lord's mercy.

CHAPTER V.

Parabola quam Davidi proposuit Nathan, exponitur; et Christo, susceptaeque ab eo carni humanae accommodatur.

20. Nec parabola videtur a mysterio discrepare. Quis enim dives, nisi Dominus noster Jesus, qui de se ait, ut hodie lectum est, quod homo quidam cum dives esset, abiit in regionem longinquam accipere regnum et reverti (Luc. XIX, 13). Et vere dives erat majestatis suae opibus, et divinitatis propriae plenitudine, cui Angeli et Archangeli, Virtutes et Potestates et Principatus, Throni et Dominationes, Cherubim et Seraphim indefesso obsequio serviebant. Sed tamen cum dives esset, reliquit nonaginta novem in montibus oves, et unam ovem quae lassa remanserat, requisivit. Hanc princeps istius mundi, contemplatione illius divitis egenus et pauper, quasi filiam alimentis propriis nutriebat. Merito itaque defecerat, cui substantia erat cibus saeculi. Erraverat haec ovis in Adam, insidiis sollicitata serpentis.

21. Et non mala ovis, quae erat Verbi plena, utpote rationabilis hebdomadis filia, et sancti munus auctoris; tamen non pretiosis aliquibus, sed vilibus pauperis diu opibus alebatur. Denique de pane ejus, inquit, manducabat, et de calice ejus bibebat, et in sinu ejus dormiebat (II Reg. XII, 3). Non bona esca Aethiopum, noxius calix aureus Babylonis, qui gentes inebriat: non utilis somnus est dormientibus, malo vigilare. Denique turbati sunt omnes insipientes corde, obdormierunt somnum suum, et nihil invenerunt. Hospitii igitur gratia, quia susceperat hospitem, ut ei epulas exhiberet, illam pauperis ovem abstulit. De suis enim vel gregibus vel armentis si quod animal immolaret, nobis prodesse non poterat, quos nisi immolasset, non redemisset.

22. Infirmities igitur nostrae fragilitatis in sua carne hospitali quodam suscepit affectu, cujus levandae causa vel potius reficiendae, carnem suam salutari illi obtulit passioni, ut et cibum nobis vitae praeberet aeternae. Et bene agnam dixit Scriptura (Ibid.), quia erat Virginis partus. Bene dignus morte pronuntiatur dives iste iudicio prophetico; quia et Caiphas prophetavit dicens: Expediit unum hominem mori pro populo (Joan. XI, 50). Solus autem Dominus Jesus tali dignus electus est morte, qua tolleretur peccatum mundi. Pulchre quoque addidit: Agnam restituet (II Reg. XII, 6); quia carnem propriam resuscitavit, carnem illam virginalis integritatis reddidit. Nec illud otiosum quod ait: In quadruplum restituet. Quadruplatur enim resurrectio mortuorum, sicut docet Apostolus dicens: Seminatur in corruptione, surgit in incorruptione; seminatur in ignobilitate, surgit in gloria; seminatur in infirmitate, surgit in virtute; seminatur corpus animale, surgit corpus spiritale (I Cor. XV, 42 et seq.).

The parable that Nathan proposed to David is explained, and is applied to Christ and to the human flesh He assumed.

20. Nor does the parable seem to differ from the mystery. For who is rich, if not our Lord Jesus, who said of Himself, as was read today, that "a certain rich man went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return" (Luke 19:13)? And truly He was rich in the resources of His majesty and in the fullness of His own divinity, whom Angels and Archangels, Virtues and Powers and Principalities, Thrones and Dominations, Cherubim and Seraphim served with tireless obedience. But though He was rich, He left the ninety-nine sheep in the mountains and sought out the one sheep that had remained behind, weary. This sheep the prince of this world—needy and poor in comparison to that rich man—was nourishing as if she were his daughter with his own sustenance. Rightly, therefore, had she grown weak, whose substance was the food of the world. This sheep had gone astray in Adam, solicited by the snares of the serpent.

21. And she was not a bad sheep, who was full of the Word, as being a rational daughter of the week and a gift of the holy author; yet for a long time she was fed not with any precious things, but with the vile resources of the poor man. Finally, "she ate of his bread," it says, "and drank from his cup, and slept in his bosom" (2 Kings 12:3). The food of the Ethiopians is not good, nor the noxious golden cup of Babylon which inebriates the nations: sleep is not useful for those who are sleeping, it is better to be awake. Finally, all the foolish of heart were troubled, they slept their sleep, and found nothing. Therefore, for the sake of hospitality, because he had received a guest, in order to offer him a feast, he took away that poor man's sheep. For if he had sacrificed any animal from his own flocks or herds, it could not have profited us, whom he would not have redeemed unless he had been sacrificed.

22. Therefore, He took upon Himself in His own flesh the infirmities of our fragility with a certain hospitable affection, and for the sake of alleviating or rather restoring it, He offered His own flesh to that saving passion, so that He might also provide us with the food of eternal life. And Scripture well said "ewe lamb" (Ibid.), because she was the offspring of the Virgin. Well is this rich man pronounced worthy of death by prophetic judgment; for Caiaphas also prophesied, saying: "It is expedient that one man should die for the people" (John 11:50). But the Lord Jesus alone was chosen as worthy of such a death, by which He would take away the sin of the world. Beautifully also he added: "He shall restore the lamb" (2 Kings 12:6); because He resurrected His own flesh, He restored that flesh of virginal integrity. Nor is that which he says idle: "He shall restore it fourfold." For the resurrection of the dead is fourfold, as the Apostle teaches, saying: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42 ff.).

Restituet plane in quadruplum agnam etiam illo modo quo potest jam homo dicere: Si cui aliquid abstuli, reddo quadruplum (Luc. XIX, 8). Convenienter etiam illud adjecit: Quia non pepercit (II Reg. XII, 6); non enim pepercit sibi Christus, ut omnibus subveniret.

23. Ideoque dictum est a Domino Jesu Christo ad servum suum David, ut mysterium declararet: Quoniam tu hoc fecisti in occulto, et ego faciam hoc verbum coram omni Israel, et in conspectu solis hujus (II Reg. XII, 12). Et primo quidem nesciens sacramentum, commotus est David indignatione, sed non erravit affectu. Postea vero ubi cognovit mysterium magnum, magnum enim sacramentum Christi et Ecclesiae, videns remissionem futuram omnium peccatorum, praevidens fulgorem gratiae per lavacrum regenerationis, et infusionem Spiritus sancti, ait securus veniae: Peccavi Domino; ut et ipse in eorum veniret consortium, quibus culpa remissio proveniret. Advertis quemadmodum peccatum proprium deploraverit? Quis igitur miretur ei esse dimissum?

CAPUT VI.

Bonos et malos hoc inter se differre, quod illos peccata sequantur, hos praecedant; et quibus operibus David peccatum suum texerit.

24. Nunc consideremus opera ejus quibus potuit tegere peccatum. Etenim quia non potest sine peccato esse humana fragilitas, cavendum ne plura peccata sint, quam opera virtutum. Quod magna vi sapientiae suae sanctus Paulus expressit dicens: Quorundam hominum peccata manifesta sunt praecedentia ad judicium, quosdam autem et subsequuntur (I Tim. v. 24), hoc est, non invenitur quisquam illibatus a culpa; habet quis bona merita, habet et vitia atque peccata. Omnia itaque nostra quasi in trutina ponderantur: si bonis igitur factis peccata praeponderant, praecedunt ad judicium; vergunt enim peccata quasi in profundum, vergunt quae manifesta sunt vel pondere atque acerbitate, vel multitudine. Quosdam autem, inquit, et subsequuntur, hoc est, eos qui se egerint sobrie, sed fragilitate conditionis dederint aliquando etiam errori locum, bona facta praecedunt, mala sequuntur. Hi honestiores, sed tamen homines lapsi levioribus vitiis et erratis. Ergo justos sequuntur peccata, non praeceunt; injustos praecedunt. Praeponderant peccata quae vergunt; sequuntur autem si quae recte facta sunt, quasi quodam praejudicio peccatorum praeceuntium praegravata. Similiter et facta bona manifesta sunt. Lucent enim opere virtutum, et splendore meritorum; et quae aliter se habent, abscondi non possunt. Ergo talia non teguntur, non obumbrat ea charitas quae operit multitudinem peccatorum, non operit bonorum operum gratia, non abscondit virtutum multitudo, sed quasi nuda et intacta produntur. Non enim est in iis qui dicat: Sub umbra alarum tuarum protege me (Psal. XVI, 8).

He will plainly restore the lamb fourfold also in that way in which a man can now say: "If I have taken anything from any man, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). Fittingly he also added this: "Because he had no pity" (2 Kings 12:6); for Christ did not spare Himself, that He might come to the aid of all.

23. And therefore it was said by the Lord Jesus Christ to his servant David, to declare the mystery: "Because you did this thing in secret, I will do this thing before all Israel, and before this sun" (2 Kings 12:12). And at first, indeed, not knowing the sacrament, David was moved with indignation, but he did not err in his feeling. But afterwards, when he understood the great mystery—for it is a great sacrament of Christ and the Church—seeing the future remission of all sins, foreseeing the splendor of grace through the bath of regeneration and the infusion of the Holy Spirit, he said, secure of pardon: "I have sinned against the Lord"; so that he himself might come into the company of those for whom remission of sins would be granted. Do you notice how he lamented his own sin? Who then can wonder that it was forgiven him?

CHAPTER VI.

That good and evil men differ in this, that sins follow the former and precede the latter; and by what works David covered his sin.

24. Now let us consider the works by which he was able to cover his sin. For since human frailty cannot be without sin, care must be taken that there are not more sins than works of virtue. Saint Paul expressed this with great force of his wisdom, saying: "The sins of some men are conspicuous, going before them to judgment, but the sins of others follow after them" (1 Tim. 5:24), that is, no one is found unstained by guilt; a person has good merits, and also has vices and sins. Therefore, all our deeds are weighed as if on a scale: if, then, sins outweigh good deeds, they go before to judgment; for sins incline as if into an abyss, those sins incline which are manifest either by their weight and bitterness, or by their multitude. "But the sins of others," he says, "follow after them," that is, for those who have conducted themselves soberly, but through the frailty of their condition have sometimes given place even to error, their good deeds go before, their evil deeds follow. These are more honorable, but still men who have fallen into lighter vices and errors. Therefore, sins follow the just, they do not go before them; they precede the unjust. The sins that incline downwards outweigh; but if there are any righteous deeds, they follow, as if weighed down by a certain prejudice of the preceding sins. Likewise, good deeds are also manifest. For they shine by the work of virtues and the splendor of merits; and those things that are otherwise cannot be hidden. Therefore, such things are not covered, charity which covers a multitude of sins does not overshadow them, the grace of good works does not cover them, the multitude of virtues does not hide them, but they are brought forth as if naked and uncovered. For there is no one among them who says: "Protect me under the shadow of your wings" (Ps. 16:8).

CruX enim Domini omnes abolet atque abscondit errores.

25. Quis igitur magis operuit et texit quam sanctus David, qui et alibi ait: Et in umbra alarum tuarum speravi, donec transeat iniquitas (Psal. LVI, 2); et sic dilexit Dominum, ut nimia charitate peccatum omne tegeter atque absconderet. Etenim si sanctus 684 apostolus Petrus lapsum suum confessione charitatis abolevit, et ille interrogatus a Domino dicente ei tertio: Simon Joannis, amas me (Joan. XV, 16)? ut quem tertio negaverat, tertio fateretur, atque ita trino quodam dilectionis velamine lapsum trinae negationis absconderet: si quia semel Petrus flevit, veniam reportavit, quanto magis David, qui lavabat per singulas noctes lectum suum, et lacrymis stratum suum rigabat; cui erant lacrymae suae panis die ac nocte; qui cinerem tamquam panem manducabat, et potum suum cum fletu miscebat? Etenim si ejus qui conversus ingemuerit, miseretur Jesus; si Petrum aspexit, et ille flevit: quanto magis qui diu flevit, a conspectu Domini non recessit? Negavit Petrus, et non flevit, quia non respexerat Jesus; negavit secundo, et non flevit, quia non respexerat Dominus; negavit tertio, respexit Jesus, et statim flevit, et flevit amarissime. Ideo David qui semper flebat, dicebat: Oculi mei semper ad Dominum (Psal. XXIV, 15). Qui semper videbatur a Christo, dicebat: Per exitus aquarum descenderunt oculi mei (Psal. CXVIII, 136).

26. Sed jam etiam facta ejus consideremus. Quis non tantarum laude virtutum unius criminis obumbraret invidiam? Divino electus examine, statim probavit indignum se tanto non esse judicio. Processit in praelium, et trepidantibus caeteris, solus allophylum Goliam verborum jactantia, et immanis corporis mole terribilem concurrente simul fide ac virtute prostravit. Unius fortitudo facta est universorum victoria. Conferatur, si placet, privatum crimen, et triumphus omnium: mors unius, et tantorum quos liberavit a morte, vita populorum.

27. Veniamus ad alia. Insidias patiebatur a rege, vitam ejus quaerebat extinguere; sed dispositione divina in ejus rex potestatem traditus, cum totus pateret ad vulnus, ferituris sociis David sanctus occurrit, et a corpore perituri vulnus lethale retorsit dicens: Nolite tangere Christum Domini (I Reg. XXIV, 7). Quin etiam inimici illius ultus est mortem, flebiliter satis deploravit interitum, et debitum sibi imperium diu distulit, quod sciebat Deo auctore deberi. Quo solo docuit omnes homines ad non praeiipiendum regnum, etiamsi debeatur; sed exspectandum ut suo tempore deferatur.

For the Cross of the Lord abolishes and hides all errors.

25. Who, therefore, covered and concealed more than holy David, who also says elsewhere: "And in the shadow of your wings I have hoped, until iniquity shall pass away" (Ps. 56:2); and he so loved the Lord that with exceeding charity he covered and hid every sin. For if the holy apostle Peter abolished his fall by a confession of charity—and he, being asked by the Lord for the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" (John 21:17), so that he whom he had denied three times, he might confess three times, and thus hide the fall of his triple denial under a threefold veil of love—if because Peter wept once, he obtained pardon, how much more David, who washed his bed every night, and watered his couch with tears; for whom his tears were his bread day and night; who ate ashes as bread, and mingled his drink with weeping? For if Jesus has mercy on him who turns and groans, if He looked upon Peter, and he wept, how much more did he who wept for a long time not depart from the sight of the Lord? Peter denied, and did not weep, because Jesus had not looked upon him; he denied a second time, and did not weep, because the Lord had not looked upon him; he denied a third time, Jesus looked upon him, and immediately he wept, and wept most bitterly. Therefore David, who was always weeping, said: "My eyes are ever toward the Lord" (Ps. 24:15). He who was always seen by Christ, said: "My eyes shed streams of water" (Ps. 118:136).

26. But now let us also consider his deeds. Who would not overshadow the odium of one crime with the praise of so many virtues? Chosen by a divine test, he immediately proved himself not unworthy of so great a judgment. He went forth to battle, and while the others trembled, he alone, with faith and valor combined, laid low the foreigner Goliath, who was terrible for the boasting of his words and the immense size of his body. The fortitude of one became the victory of all. Let the private crime be compared, if you please, with the triumph of all: the death of one man, and the life of the peoples, so many of whom he freed from death.

27. Let us come to other matters. He suffered snares from the king, who sought to extinguish his life; but when by divine disposition the king was delivered into his power, and was entirely exposed to a wound, holy David ran to his companions who were about to strike, and turned back the lethal wound from the body of the one who was about to perish, saying: "Touch not the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:6). Moreover, he avenged the death of that enemy, mourned his demise with sufficient weeping, and long deferred the rule owed to him, which he knew was owed by God's authority. By this alone he taught all men not to seize a kingdom prematurely, even if it is owed; but to wait for it to be conferred in its own time.

Utinam hunc virum imitati essent posterī, non tantas bellorum pertulissemus acerbitates! Arguis quod unum occiderit, non consideras quod docuerit quemadmodum pax orbi Romano perpetua servaretur. Quam gravi adhuc luimus vastitate, quam publico quodam totius orbis funere appetiti necem regis exsolvimus? Heu dira supplicia! Inde adhuc nobis barbarus hostis insultat, dum parata adversum se in nos arma vertuntur. Sic vires ceciderunt publicae, sic Romana virtus suis motibus fracta consenuit, dum publico rapitur parricidio, quod paternae sollicitudinis religione suscipitur. Idque eo usque praecavit, ut cum Adoniam filium regnum sibi usurpare comperisset, et serere conventus, non eum qui praeripere gestiebat, sed eum qui exspectaret, eligeret.

28. Saltabat ante arcam Domini potentissimus regum, et cum a propria reprehenderetur uxore, quod denudatus esset ante faciem puellarum, respondit: Coram Domino nudabor adhuc, et ero nugax ante oculos tuos; ut honorificetur, inquit, Dominus, qui me pro patre tuo adscivit in regnum (II Reg. VI, 21), docens contuitum regalis potentiae non habendum, ubi religioni exhibetur obsequium. Honestum est enim pro religione facere, etsi id incongruum potestati sit.

29. Specta aliud memorabile. Parricida filius regnum patrium violenter invaserat, cedebat primo pater ejus furori, et locum praelii declinabat; ut vel sic impius a furore resipisceret. Bello quoque interesse noluit, rogavit ad praelium profecturos ut parcerent filio. Securus erat de victoria, qui rogabat ut parcerent: nec pietatis alienus, qui perire debere etiam impium filium non putabat. Flevit, et magno luctu deploravit exitum parricidae dicens: Filius meus Abessalon, quis dabit mihi mortem pro te, filius meus Abessalon (II Reg. XVIII, 33)? Vindicandum putabat eum qui pro paternae vindicta pietatis occiderat.

30. Quam vero injuriae patiens et doloris! Cedebat, ut dixi, filii sui Abessalon furori, vallatus dextra laevaue validis bellatoribus. Maledicebat ei vir cui nomen Semei, cruentum appellans, et virum sanguinis, dignoque iudicio Domini dejectum esse de regno: sed ne talibus quidem movebatur conviciis; movebantur autem comites ejus. Denique unus ex sociis (Abessa nomen viro) minitatus est quod injuriae pretium caput ejus auferret: sed rex conversus ad Abessa: Quid mihi, ait, et tibi est, fili Sarviae? Ideo maledicit mihi, quoniam Dominus dixit illi, ut maledicat (II Reg. XVI, 10).

If only posterity had imitated this man, we would not have endured such great bitter-nesses of war! You argue that he killed one man, you do not consider that he taught how perpetual peace might be preserved for the Roman world. With what grave devastation do we still atone, with what public funeral, as it were, of the whole world do we pay for the sought-after death of a king? Alas, dire punishments! From this, the barbarian enemy still insults us, while the arms prepared against him are turned against us. Thus have the public strengths fallen, thus has Roman valor, broken by its own commotions, grown old, while it is seized by a public parricide, which is undertaken with the religious scruple of paternal solicitude. And he took care of this to such an extent that when he found that his son Adonijah was usurping the kingdom for himself and gathering assemblies, he chose not the one who was eager to seize it, but the one who would wait.

28. The most powerful of kings danced before the ark of the Lord, and when he was reproached by his own wife for having uncovered himself before the handmaids, he replied: "Before the Lord I will uncover myself still more, and I will be base in your eyes; that the Lord may be honored," he said, "who chose me for the kingdom instead of your father" (2 Sam. 6:21-22), teaching that regard for royal power should not be had where obedience is shown to religion. For it is honorable to act for religion's sake, even if it is incongruous with power.

29. Behold another memorable thing. His parricidal son had violently invaded the paternal kingdom; his father at first yielded to his fury and avoided the place of battle, so that even so the impious one might recover from his madness. He also refused to take part in the war, and asked those going forth to battle to spare his son. He who asked them to spare him was sure of victory; nor was he a stranger to piety, who did not think that even an impious son ought to perish. He wept, and with great mourning lamented the end of the parricide, saying: "My son Absalom, who will grant me to die for you, my son Absalom?" (2 Sam. 18:33). He thought that he who had killed him in vindication of paternal piety should be punished.

30. How patient he was of injury and sorrow! He yielded, as I said, to the fury of his son Absalom, surrounded on the right and on the left by strong warriors. A man named Shimei cursed him, calling him a bloody man and a man of blood, and saying that he had been cast down from the kingdom by the just judgment of the Lord; but he was not moved even by such insults, though his companions were moved. Finally, one of his companions (the man's name was Abishai) threatened to take off his head as the price of the injury; but the king, turning to Abishai, said: "What have I to do with you, son of Zeruiah?" "He curses me because the Lord has told him to curse" (2 Sam. 16:10).

Quam moraliter docuit quod injuriarum vel periculorum nostrorum tempora, temptationum certamina, et examina probationum sint; et ideo non sine divino ea irrogari solere iudicio? Exercetur bonus athleta conviciis, exercetur laboribus et periculis, ut dignus sit cui deferatur corona iustitiae; et ideo ferenda patienter sunt quae putantur adversa. Denique et alibi id te docet Scriptura divina, dicente iusto: Si bona accepimus de manu Domini, quae mala sunt cur non sustineamus (Job. II, 10).

31. Et addidit sanctus Propheta dicens: Ecce filius meus qui exivit de ventre meo, quaerit animam meam. Si autem Jemineus maledicit mihi, dimitte illum ut maledicat; quoniam dixit illi Dominus, ut videat humilitatem meam; et retribuet mihi Dominus pro maledicto hoc (II Reg. XVI, 11 et 12). O altitudo prudentiae! o insigne patientiae! o devorandae contumeliae grande inventum! Moveris, inquit, Abessa, quod mihi maledicat extraneus, quem parricidio petit filius; Dominus dixit ei ut maledicat mihi. Sed non est maledicus Dominus, nec delectatur contumeliis.

32. Vide quam singula diligenter custodiat. Non accusat Dominum quasi auctorem injuriae; sed magis laudat quod patiat nos minora perpeti, ut majorum veniam peccatorum adipiscamur. Ecce verborum contumelia parricidii levavit aerumnam, absolvit procacem, cujus maledicta plus prosint, quae divina remuneratione donantur. Quis secum talem non compenset injuriam; ut quem homo laesit, eum Deus meliorum retributione soletur?

CAPUT VII. De pugnis David contra gigantes, et aquae Bethleemiti lacus libatione; ex quibus aliisque praeclare factis concluditur suum ab eo peccatum tectum fuisse: praesertim cum illud non cruento affectu patrauerit, et postea se Deo, quam hominibus maluerit committere; nec non crimen sibi dimissum ipse docuerit.

33. Alia quoque ejus gesta consideremus. Pugnavit adversus progeniem gigantum, quando unus ex illis versantem in praelio regem pene percusserat, quos ausus tamen adversarius exceptae pretio mortis exsolvit.

34. Hoc quoque percepto victae gentis ferocis triumpho, iterum in valle Titanum bellum immane suscepit, non minus adversus hostem, quam adversus naturam. Sitiens enim cum versaretur in bello, quod biberet non habebat: Quis mihi potum, inquit, dabit de lacu qui est in Bethleem ad portas (II Reg. XXIII, 15). Erat autem inter lacum et sanctum David interfusus hostis, et media hostilium septa castrorum. Praeciderunt tres viri multitudinem adversariorum, et impleverunt aquam de lacu qui erat in Bethleem, et obtulerunt regi bibendam: sed rex noluit bibere, et profudit illam Domino.

How morally he taught that the times of our injuries or dangers are contests of temptations and tests of probation; and that therefore they are not usually inflicted without a divine judgment? The good athlete is trained by insults, he is trained by labors and dangers, that he may be worthy for the crown of justice to be conferred on him; and therefore, what are thought to be adversities must be borne patiently. Finally, the divine Scripture teaches you this elsewhere, when the just man says: "If we have received good things from the hand of the Lord, why should we not endure the evil things?" (Job 2:10).

31. And the holy Prophet added, saying: "Behold, my son, who came forth from my womb, seeks my life." "But if this Benjamite curses me, let him alone that he may curse; for the Lord has told him, that He may see my humility; and the Lord will repay me for this curse" (cf. 2 Sam. 16:11-12). O depth of prudence! O signal of patience! O great discovery for swallowing insults! "You are moved, Abishai," he says, "that a stranger curses me, whom my son seeks with parricide; the Lord told him to curse me." But the Lord is not a curser, nor does He delight in insults.

32. See how diligently he observes each point. He does not accuse the Lord as the author of the injury, but rather praises Him for allowing us to endure lesser things, so that we may obtain pardon for greater sins. Behold, the insult of words has lightened the affliction of parricide; he absolves the insolent man, whose curses are more profitable, as they are rewarded with divine remuneration. Who would not compensate such an injury to himself, so that whom man has harmed, God may console with the retribution of better things?

CHAPTER VII. Concerning David's battles against the giants, and the libation of the water from the pool of Bethlehem; from which and other glorious deeds it is concluded that his sin was covered by him: especially since he did not commit it with a bloodthirsty intent, and afterwards preferred to commit himself to God rather than to men; and also taught that the crime had been forgiven him.

33. Let us also consider his other deeds. He fought against the offspring of the giants, when one of them had nearly struck the king as he was engaged in battle; a daring act for which the adversary, however, paid the price of death he received.

34. Having also achieved this triumph over a fierce and conquered people, he again undertook a huge battle in the valley of the Titans, no less against the enemy than against nature. For, being thirsty while engaged in battle, he had nothing to drink: 'Who,' he said, 'will give me a drink from the pool that is in Bethlehem at the gates?' (2 Samuel 23:15). But between the pool and the holy David the enemy was spread out, and the enclosures of the enemy camp were in the middle. Three men broke through the multitude of adversaries, and drew water from the pool that was in Bethlehem, and offered it to the king to drink; but the king would not drink, and poured it out to the Lord.

Dignum etenim tanto munere fuit, ut quae erat vividae virtutis insigne, fieret pietatis sacrificium. Dixitque dignam prophetico spiritu sententiam: Non contingat mihi hoc facere; ne sanguinem virorum qui abierunt ex animis illorum, bibam (Ibid., 17). Vicit ergo naturam, ut sitiens non biberet; et exemplum de se praebeuit, quo omnis exercitus tolerare sitim disceret. Exercuit etiam subditos ad virtutis officium, ut etiam per pericula regali imperio voluntarii milites obtemperarent. Quod autem noluit bibere, declaravit probandorum militum se imperasse gratia, non sitis victum necessitate: prospexisse etiam ne cui regum bibendi usus alienis periculis quaereretur. Postremo pia vulneris conscientiae deprecatur, eo quod aqua tot virorum quaesita sanguine, suavitatem bibendi habere non posset, quae propositae mortis horrore constaret.

35. Quod si altius velis spectare, et introspicere mysterium, sitiebat David non aquam de lacu qui est in Bethleem, sed oriundum ex Virgine Christum in spiritu praevidebat. Volebat ergo bibere non aquam fluminis, sed potum gratiae spiritualis, hoc est, non aquarum sitiebat elementum, sed sanguinem Christi. Denique non bibit oblatam aquam, sed Domino fudit, significans sitire se Christi sacrificium, non naturae fluentum: illud sacrificium in quo esset remissio peccatorum, illum sitire se fontem aeternum, non qui periculis quaereretur alienis; sed pericula aliena depelleret.

36. Tot igitur operibus tam mirandis unius sanguinem tectum non credimus? Merito vox sanguinis Abel iusti clamabat ad Dominum; quia nullis Cain impius bonis operibus tegebatur, quia 687 parricidalis erat, quia non confitebatur flagitium, sed negabat. David vero occiderat quidem virum minime reum; sed occiderat non studio crudelitatis impulsus, sed ut obumbraret pudorem, tegeret verecundiam concupiscentiae. Non audeo dicere quod vi criminis fuerit oppressus (neque enim oppressus est, qui scivit quemadmodum a ruina illa peccati se posset levare), dico tamen quod vi tentationis inflexus sit. Dixerat enim supra: Proba me, Domine, et tenta me: ure renes meos et cor meum (Psal. XXV, 2). Et alibi: Ego autem dixi in mea abundantia, non movebor in aeternum (Psal. XXIX, 7). Et: Igne me examinasti, et non est inventa in me iniquitas (Psal. XVI, 3). Voluit eum subjacere Dominus tentationi, ne supra hominem sibi aliquid arrogaret; nam virtus in infirmitate consummatur.

For it was worthy of so great a gift that what was a sign of living virtue should become a sacrifice of piety. And he spoke a sentence worthy of the prophetic spirit: 'Far be it from me to do this; lest I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives' (Ibid., 17). He therefore conquered nature, in that being thirsty he did not drink; and he offered an example of himself, by which the whole army might learn to endure thirst. He also trained his subjects to the duty of virtue, so that even through dangers the volunteer soldiers would obey the royal command. But by his refusal to drink, he declared that he had commanded it for the sake of testing his soldiers, not overcome by the necessity of thirst; and he also foresaw that the custom of drinking for any king should not be sought through the dangers of others. Lastly, he prayed against the wound to his pious conscience, because water sought by the blood of so many men could not have the sweetness of drinking, which consisted in the horror of the death they faced.

35. But if you wish to look more deeply, and to peer into the mystery, David was thirsting not for water from the pool that is in Bethlehem, but in spirit he foresaw Christ born of the Virgin. He wished, therefore, to drink not the water of a river, but the drink of spiritual grace, that is, he thirsted not for the element of water, but for the blood of Christ. Finally, he did not drink the water offered to him, but poured it out to the Lord, signifying that he thirsted for the sacrifice of Christ, not for a natural stream: that sacrifice in which there would be remission of sins, that he thirsted for that eternal fount, not one sought through the dangers of others, but one that would drive away the dangers of others.

36. Therefore, do we not believe that the blood of one man was covered by so many and such wondrous works? Rightly the voice of the blood of righteous Abel cried out to the Lord, because the impious Cain was covered by no good works, because he was a parricide, because he did not confess his crime, but denied it. David, however, had indeed killed a man who was not at all guilty; but he had killed him not driven by a desire for cruelty, but to conceal his shame, to cover the disgrace of his concupiscence. I do not dare to say that he was overcome by the force of the crime (for he who knew how he could lift himself from that ruin of sin was not overcome), but I do say that he was bent by the force of temptation. For he had said above: 'Prove me, O Lord, and try me: burn my reins and my heart' (Psalm 25:2). And elsewhere: 'But I said in my abundance, I shall not be moved forever' (Psalm 29:7). And: 'You have tested me with fire, and no iniquity was found in me' (Psalm 16:3). The Lord willed him to be subject to temptation, lest he arrogate anything to himself above what is human; for virtue is made perfect in weakness.

Neque enim cruento fecit affectu: nihil minus sancto Prophetae ascribi potest, qui etiam vita decedens suprema voce convenit Salomonem filium: ut innocentem sanguinem a se tolleret, quem fuderat dux ejus exercitus Joab, quando Abenner, cum de ineunda societate tractaret, dux licet adversarii agminis insidiis appetitus occubuit; quem flevit, et post luctum ejus ambulans, depositis infulis potestatis, exsequiarum justa curavit. Quo facto docuit etiam adversariis fidem promissam esse servandam, honorandam quoque et in hoste virtutem. Nonne tam miti suae haereditate pietatis, etiam hujus naevum deterisit erroris?

37. Quam praeclarum autem, quod tribus oblatis sibi conditionibus quam vellet eligeret, quando numerato populo contraxit offensam, cum propositum esset utrum triennio famem super terram fieri vellet, aut tribus mensibus fugere a facie inimicorum suorum persequentium se, aut triduo fieri mortem in terra; tertium elegit, quod Domini se mallet, quam hominum committere potestati! Dominus enim cito miseratus ignosceret. Itaque sic ait: Angustiae sunt mihi valde in his tribus: sed magis incidam in manus Domini (quoniam magna est misericordia ejus valde) quam in manus hominum incidam (II Reg. XXIV, 14). Hac humilitate, prudentia, mansuetudine fecit, ut verbis Scripturae utar, habere Dominum propriae commotionis poenitentiam. Denique sic scriptum est: Quia poenitentiam habuit Dominus super malitiam (Jerem. XVI, 19).

38. Quam vero illud etiam admirabile (De Poenit. dist. 3, cap. Illud vero), quod Angelo ferienti plebem se obtulit dicens: Grex iste quid fecit! Fiat manus tua in me, et in domum patris mei (II Reg. XXIV, 17). Quo facto statim dignus sacrificio judicatus est, qui absolutione aestimabatur indignus. Nec mirum si tali sua oblatione pro populo, peccati sui adeptus est veniam, cum Moyses offerendo se Domino pro plebis errore, etiam plebis peccata deleverit.

39. Texit igitur peccata sua, an non? Sed quis hoc neget, cum ipse docuerit Propheta, quod remittantur iniquitates, tegantur peccata, non imputentur a Domino? Peccatum remissum sibi 688 ipse docuit, sicut scriptum est: Delictum meum agnosco, et injustitiam meam non operui. Dixi, Pronuntiabo adversum me injustitiam meam Domino, et tu dimisisti impietatem cordis mei (Psal. XXXI, 5). Si dixit, Pronuntiabo, et veniam meruit antequam pronuntiaret; quanto magis ubi de se pronuntiavit dicens: Iniquitatem meam ego agnosco (Psal. L, 5), remissum est ei omne peccatum? Licet specialiter de hoc et Nathan propheta responderit: Et Dominus traduxit peccatum tuum (II Reg. XII, 13).

For he did not do it with a bloodthirsty intent: nothing less can be ascribed to the holy Prophet, who, even as he was departing this life, with his last words charged his son Solomon to remove from him the innocent blood which Joab, the commander of his army, had shed when Abner—though a commander of the opposing army—was attacked by treachery and fell while negotiating an alliance; David mourned for him and, walking in his funeral procession after laying aside the insignia of power, arranged the proper rites. By this deed he taught that faith promised even to adversaries must be kept, and that virtue must be honored even in an enemy. Did he not, by such a gentle inheritance of his piety, wipe away even the stain of this error?

37. How glorious, moreover, that when three conditions were offered to him from which to choose whichever he wished, after he had incurred offense by numbering the people—whether he wanted a three-year famine to come upon the land, or to flee for three months from the face of his enemies pursuing him, or for there to be death in the land for three days—he chose the third, because he preferred to commit himself to the power of the Lord rather than to that of men! For the Lord, quickly taking pity, would forgive. And so he said: 'I am in great distress among these three: but I will fall into the hands of the Lord (for his mercy is very great) rather than fall into the hands of men' (2 Samuel 24:14). By this humility, prudence, and meekness, he caused—to use the words of Scripture—the Lord to repent of His own commotion. Finally, it is thus written: 'For the Lord repented of the evil' (Jeremiah 16:19).

38. How admirable also is that (De Poenit. dist. 3, cap. Illud vero), that he offered himself to the Angel who was striking the people, saying: 'What has this flock done? Let your hand be against me, and against my father's house' (2 Samuel 24:17). By which deed he was immediately judged worthy of sacrifice, who was esteemed unworthy of absolution. Nor is it a wonder if by such an offering of himself for the people, he obtained pardon for his sin, since Moses, by offering himself to the Lord for the error of the people, also blotted out the sins of the people.

39. Did he, therefore, cover his sins, or not? But who would deny this, when the Prophet himself taught that iniquities are forgiven, sins are covered, and are not imputed by the Lord? He himself taught that his sin was forgiven him, as it is written: 'I acknowledge my transgression, and my injustice I have not concealed.' 'I said, I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord, and you forgave the impiety of my heart' (Psalm 31:5). If he said, 'I will confess,' and merited pardon before he confessed, how much more, when he did confess of himself, saying: 'I acknowledge my iniquity' (Psalm 50:5), was every sin forgiven him? Although the prophet Nathan also responded specifically about this: 'And the Lord has taken away your sin' (2 Samuel 12:13).

40. Ergo et remissionem meruit iniquitatis, et texit charitate atque operuit peccata sua, et texit operibus bonis. Nec imputatum est ei peccatum, quia non fuit in eo dolus malitiae, sed lapsus erroris. Deinde quia non fuit improbitatis aestus, sed umbra mysterii. Et tamen confessus est delictum suum, agnovit iniquitatem, vidit lavacrum, et vidit, et credidit. Dilexit multum, ut nimia charitate tegere quemvis posset errorem.

CAPUT VIII.

Cur psalmus L aliis quibusdam in res anteriores compositis praemissus; et quae mysteria in quinquagesimo numero comprehensa? Quomodo Davidis exemplum agendam poenitentiam doceat; quamve multipliciter mundetur quis ab iniquitate?

41. Sed jam se ipse defendat, nam quinquagesimum psalmum ad eam scripsit historiam. Et cum priorum gestorum suorum historiam subjecerit, ut de proditione Doeck Syri, cujus est titulus in psalmo quinquagesimo primo, et Zyphaeorum, quae comprehendere titulo videtur psalmi quinquagesimi tertii; istam quae posterior est, praemisit historiam, cum Doeck ante prodiderit, vel Zyphaei, quam regnum David propheta susciperet. Quandoquidem regem Saul fugiens, adhuc per diversa secreta exsul errabat; Bethsabée autem cum jam regnaret, accepit.

42. Cur ergo secundum gestorum ordinem psalmorum quoque ordo non quadrat? Quia non tam ordinem ordini, quam mysterium gestis voluit convenire; ideoque numerum remissionis aptare huic voluit historiae. Quinquagesimus enim numerus remissionis est numerus, sicut in Evangelio Dominus ipse nos docuit dicens: Duo debitores erant cuidam feneratori; unus debebat denarios quingentos, alius quinquaginta; non habentibus illis unde redderent, donavit utrisque. Quis ergo eum plus diligit (Luc. VII, 41 et 42)? Et in Lege habes (Levit. XXV, 10 et seq.), quia jubilaus dicitur numerus quinquaginta annorum recursus, celebrabilis admodum, quo debita vacuantur, confirmantur Hebraeorum libertates, possessionum refusiones. Hunc numerum laeti celebramus post Domini passionem, remisso culpae totius debito, chirographo quoque vacuato, ab omni nexu liberi; et suscipimus advenientem in nos gratiam Spiritus sancti die Pentecostes: vacant jejunia, laus dicitur Deo, alleluia cantatur. Denique (36, quaest. 2, cap. Denique) et puellae pater illius quae per vim, concubitus nulli desponsata pertulerit quinquaginta didrachmata argentea accipiet; ipsa autem in conjugio permanebit (Deut. XXII, 29). Hoc ergo numero etiam vitia vertuntur in gratiam. Magnus igitur psalmus, quo docemur quemadmodum agenda poenitentia sit.

40. Therefore, he both merited the remission of his iniquity, and covered and concealed his sins with charity, and covered them with good works. Nor was the sin imputed to him, because there was in him no deceit of malice, but a lapse of error. Then, because it was not a surge of wickedness, but a shadow of a mystery. And yet he confessed his offense, acknowledged his iniquity, saw the font of washing, and he saw, and believed. He loved much, so that with abundant charity he could cover any error.

CHAPTER VIII.

Why Psalm 50 is placed before certain others composed about earlier events; and what mysteries are contained in the number fifty? How the example of David teaches how repentance should be performed; and in how many ways one may be cleansed from iniquity?

41. But now let him defend himself, for he wrote the fiftieth psalm about this story. And although he placed after it the story of his earlier deeds, such as the betrayal by Doeg the Syrian, which is the title of the fifty-first psalm, and that of the Ziphites, which seems to be included in the title of the fifty-third psalm, he placed this later story first, since Doeg or the Ziphites had betrayed him before the prophet David undertook the kingship. For at that time, fleeing King Saul, he was still wandering as an exile through various secret places; but he took Bathsheba when he was already reigning.

42. Why then does the order of the psalms not also correspond to the order of events? Because he wished the mystery to suit the events rather than the order to suit the order; and therefore he wanted to fit the number of remission to this story. For the number fifty is the number of remission, as the Lord Himself taught us in the Gospel, saying: A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, the other fifty; since they did not have the means to repay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore loves him more (Luke 7:41-42)? And in the Law you have it (Leviticus 25:10 ff.), that the return of fifty years is called the Jubilee, a number to be greatly celebrated, in which debts are cancelled, the liberties of the Hebrews are confirmed, and possessions are restored. We joyfully celebrate this number after the Lord's passion, with the debt of all guilt remitted, the bond also cancelled, free from every chain; and we receive the grace of the Holy Spirit coming upon us on the day of Pentecost: fasts cease, praise is given to God, alleluia is sung. Finally (36, q. 2, c. Denique), the father of a girl who, being unbetrothed, has suffered intercourse by force will receive fifty silver drachmas; and she will remain in marriage (Deuteronomy 22:29). By this number, therefore, even vices are turned into grace. Great, therefore, is the psalm by which we are taught how repentance should be performed.

43. Miserere, inquit, mei, Domine, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam. Et secundum multitudinem miserationum tuarum dele iniquitatem meam. In multum lava me ab injustitia mea, et a delicto meo munda me. Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego agnosco: et delictum meum contra me est semper. Tibi soli peccavi, et malum coram te feci; ut justifieris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum judicaris. Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum; et in delictis peperit me mater mea (Psal. L, 3 et seq.). Quis nostrum etiamsi confiteatur delictum suum, non perstringendum potius, quam repetendum putet? Quis secundo repetat, aut tertio? Vide quot versibus tantus Propheta peccatum suum resonet, quam nullus versus sine confessione delicti sit. Congessit omnia simul, iniquitates suas et injustitiam personando, jungens delicta peccatis; atque ea saepe repetendo, merito magnam misericordiam poscit; nec solum magnam misericordiam, sed etiam multitudinem miserationum. Quod ergo peccatum talis non diluat deploratio, quam culpam precatio hujusmodi non emundet? Ille pro uno peccato miserationum multitudinem deprecatur: nos pro pluribus peccatis vix semel ejus misericordiam credimus obsecrandam. Deinde legimus (Psal. CXXXV, 11 et 12) quia in virtute sua magna, et brachio suo excelso populum suum de terra Aegypti liberavit, quando traduxit eum per mare Rubrum, in quo fuit figura baptismatis. Si ergo virtus magna in figura fuit sacramentorum, quanto magis in veritate eorum magna misericordia est? Recte quoque illic poscitur miserationum multitudo, ubi multitudo peccantium est.

44. In multum lava me ab injustitia mea, et a delicto meo munda me (Psal. L, 4). Non tam saepius, quam plenius lavari petit, ut conceptam sordem possit eluere. Noverat secundum Legem (Levit. XI et XIII) pleraque mundandi esse subsidia, sed nullum plenum atque perfectum. Ad illud ergo perfectum tota intentione festinat, quo justitia omnis impletur, quod est baptismatis sacramentum, sicut ipse docet Dominus Jesus. Nam cum venisset ad Joannem, ait Baptista: Ego a te debeo baptizari, et tu venis ad me (Matth. III, 14)? Respondit Dominus: Sine modo; sic enim decet nos implere omnem justitiam (Ibid., 15). Sed posteaquam baptizatus est Christus, et Spiritus sanctus super eum tamquam columba descendit, et Pater Filium signavit e coelo, justitia omnis impleta est. Ideo Propheta dicit: In multum lava me ab injustitia mea. Grandis enim squalor et macula non exiguo, sed multo aufertur lavacro.

45. Quod si quis aliter accipere vult, potest ita suum formare intellectum; mundat sermo divinus, mundat nostra confessio; ille dum auditur, ista dum promitur; mundat bona cogitatio, mundat honesta operatio, bonae quoque usus conversationis. His mundatus unusquisque facilius haurit, et tamquam in se rapit splendorem gratiae spiritalis.

43. Have mercy on me, he says, O Lord, according to your great mercy. And according to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out my iniquity. Wash me thoroughly from my injustice, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity: and my sin is always before me. Against you only have I sinned, and done evil in your sight; that you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities; and in sins did my mother bear me (Psalm 50:3 ff.). Which of us, even if he confesses his sin, would not think it should be touched upon rather than repeated? Who would repeat it a second or third time? See in how many verses so great a Prophet proclaims his sin, how no verse is without a confession of his fault. He piled everything together, sounding out his iniquities and his injustice, joining transgressions to sins; and by repeating them often, he rightly asks for great mercy; and not only great mercy, but also a multitude of tender mercies. What sin, therefore, would such a lamentation not wash away, what fault would a prayer of this kind not cleanse? He, for one sin, begs for a multitude of mercies: we, for many sins, believe His mercy should be implored scarcely once. Then we read (Psalm 135:11-12) that in His great strength and with His outstretched arm He delivered His people from the land of Egypt, when He led them through the Red Sea, in which was a figure of baptism. If, therefore, there was great strength in the figure of the sacraments, how much greater is the mercy in their reality? Rightly, too, is a multitude of mercies asked for there, where there is a multitude of sinners.

44. Wash me thoroughly from my injustice, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm 50:4). He asks to be washed not so much more often as more fully, so that he might wash away the filth he has contracted. He knew that according to the Law (Leviticus 11 and 13) there were many aids for cleansing, but none that was full and perfect. He therefore hastens with all his intention to that perfect one, by which all justice is fulfilled, which is the sacrament of baptism, as the Lord Jesus Himself teaches. For when He came to John, the Baptist said: I ought to be baptized by you, and do you come to me (Matthew 3:14)? The Lord replied: Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all justice (Ibid., 15). But after Christ was baptized, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father acknowledged the Son from heaven, all justice was fulfilled. Therefore the Prophet says: Wash me thoroughly from my injustice. For a great filth and stain is removed not by a small, but by a great washing.

45. But if anyone wishes to understand it differently, he can form his understanding thus: the divine word cleanses, our confession cleanses; the former when it is heard, the latter when it is uttered; a good thought cleanses, an honest deed cleanses, the practice of good conversation also cleanses. Cleansed by these, each person more easily absorbs, and as it were draws into himself, the splendor of spiritual grace.

Denique non una infusione velleris statim pretiosus succus irradiat, sed primum succo ignobili vellus inficitur; deinde aliis atque aliis succis naturalis ejus species frequenter eluitur, et diverso saepius colore mutatur; ac sic postea velut plenioris lavacri adhibetur infectio, ut purpurae verior atque perfectior fulgor irrutilet. Sicut igitur muricum plurimorum in purpurae infectione, ita in lavacro regenerationis miserationum est multitudo coelestium, ut iniquitas deleatur. Itaque qui in multum lavatur, ab injustitia mundatur et a delicto, et peccandi quamdam inolitam studiis ac moribus deponit habitudinem, et obliviscitur qualitatem. Et bene lavatur ab injustitia vel iniquitate, quae major est: mundatur et a delicto quod minus est.

CAPUT IX.

Paucos cum David peccata sua agnoscere, immo plures de illis gloriari; sapientem delicti sui numquam deponere memoriam; et quanta sit conscientiae vis? Inter peccatum et iniquitatem discrimen esse: quove pacto illa baptismo ac poenitentia charitati conjuncta deleantur.

46. Ideoque addidit: Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego agnosco; et delictum meum contra me est semper (Psal. L, 5). Non mediocre est, ut agnoscat unusquisque peccatum suum. Ideoque et supra ait: Lapsus quis intelliget (Psal. XVIII, 13)? id est, quis est tantus ut intelligat? Quomodo illud: Quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo, aut quis ascendet in montem Domini (Psal. XIV, 1)? Non utique nullus, sed rarus. Qui enim potest agnoscere, potest declinare, potest quid sequatur, eligere. Plerique in suis lapsibus gloriantur, et putant ea laudi esse quae crimini sunt. Si alienum coinquinavit thorum, et pudicae feminae expugnavit affectum, si viduae propositum aliqua fraude mutavit: alius nece hominis, latrocinii insidiis, et rapto vivere putat esse virtutis: nonnulli circumvenire ac fallere arbitrantur esse sapientiae. Ex his nullus potest dicere: Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego agnosco: sed ille qui potest dolere quod fecerit, condemnare quod deliquerit, quem sua vitia compungunt. Unde et Propheta ait: Quae dicitis in cordibus vestris, et in cubilibus vestris compungimini (Psal. IV, 5).

Finally, the precious dye does not immediately radiate with a single immersion of the fleece, but first the fleece is stained with a common dye; then its natural appearance is frequently washed out with other and yet other dyes, and it is often changed with a different color; and so afterward, the dyeing is applied as if by a fuller washing, so that a truer and more perfect brilliance of purple may shine forth. Therefore, just as in the dyeing of purple there are many murex shells, so in the washing of regeneration there is a multitude of heavenly mercies, so that iniquity may be blotted out. And so, he who is washed thoroughly is cleansed from injustice and from sin, and he lays aside a certain habit of sinning ingrained in his pursuits and morals, and forgets its quality. And he is well washed from injustice or iniquity, which is greater, and cleansed from sin, which is lesser.

CHAPTER IX.

That few, like David, acknowledge their sins, but rather most glory in them; that the wise man never lays aside the memory of his offense; and how great is the power of conscience. That there is a distinction between sin and iniquity: and in what way they are blotted out by baptism and penance joined with charity.

46. And so he added: *For I acknowledge my iniquity; and my sin is ever before me* (Psalm 50:5). It is no small thing for each person to acknowledge his own sin. And therefore he also says above: *Who can understand his errors* (Psalm 18:13)? that is, who is so great as to understand? In the same way as that passage: *Who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord* (Psalm 14:1)? Not that no one shall, but that it is rare. For he who can acknowledge, can also avoid, and can choose what to follow. Most people glory in their own falls, and think that things which are criminal are praiseworthy. If one has defiled another's marriage bed, and overcome the affection of a chaste woman, if he has changed a widow's resolution by some fraud; another thinks it is a virtue to live by the murder of a man, by the snares of robbery, and by plunder; some consider it wisdom to circumvent and deceive. Of these, no one can say: *For I acknowledge my iniquity*; but he can who is able to grieve for what he has done, to condemn what he has committed, who is pricked by his own vices. Whence the Prophet also says: *The things you say in your hearts, be sorry for them on your beds* (Psalm 4:5).

Plerique equorum cum ceciderint, se jactare consuerunt; et quos casus non laeserit, jactando se debilitant et frangunt. Alii (qualis Graecorum equorum fertur natura) cum vel in certamine curuli elisi fuerint vel fortuito ceciderint, nequaquam se movere consuerunt, et quamdam tenent quietis et patientiae disciplinam. His si casus non nocuit, quies prodest; certe non acerbatur offensio. Nonne mutis animalibus deteriores aestimandi, qui se in flagitiis suis jactant, et putant insigne esse virtutis, ubi lapsus est criminis? Ideo quasi muto dicitur jumento: Peccasti, quiesce (Gen. IV, 7).

47. Unde pulchre addidit: Et delictum meum contra me est semper. Insipiens enim delectatur erroribus suis, et novis vetera obumbrando, peccatis se existimat adjuvari; ideoque exultat in crimine. At vero sapiens adversum se judicat esse delictum suum, et tamquam hostiles acies, ita lapsus culparum suarum adversantium modo sibi arbitratur obsistere. Quidquid personuerit, quidquid increpuerit, culpa ei propria semper occurrit; quidquid fuerit dictum aut lectum, in se dictum putat; quidquid intenderit, se nutu, se oculis signari putat. Si epuletur, si cogitet, si oret ac deprecetur, ante oculos ejus semper est error proprius, et momentis omnibus culpa pulsat conscientiam, nec quiescere, nec oblivisci sinit, velut gravis censor exagitat se terrore perpetuo. Omnia igitur adversa habet, qui ipse sibi displicet, ipse sui accusator, ipse sui testis est, nec invenit quo fugiat, qui ipse se perurget, et stimulat. Sed hoc bonae mentis est, vulnus sentire peccati. Nam qui expertes doloris sunt, non sentiunt vulneris acerbitem, quod est immedicabilis aegritudinis: qui autem aliquo dolore punguntur, sicut doloris sensu non carent, ita etiam non carent sanitatis profectu. Ubi enim doloris sensus, ibi etiam sensus est vitae; sentire enim vitalis vigoris ac muneris est. Unde et ille qui errorem suum non agnoscit, insanit, furit, desipit; qui autem agnoscit, utique resipiscit, non respuit remedia sanitatis, sed se ipse restringit, poenitet eum culpa, de ipsa semper cogitat, et cogitando se ipse condemnat. Justus enim in primordio sermonis accusator est sui. Qui se accusat, justus est; qui justus est, sobrius est, sanus est. Justus favere sibi nescit, rigorem judicii etiam circa se non novit inflectere, recordationem lapsus proprii perhorrescit, et commissum erubescit errorem, omnem ejus memoriam pavet, metuit, reformidat; gravem sibi se judicat, se ipsum arbitrum refugit, nec sese sibi audet committere; quod nullum putat sibi esse graviorem, quam eum quem latere non possit, fallere non queat, fugere ac vitare non reperiat, nisi ut se sibi abneget, et Domini crucem tollat.

Many horses, when they have fallen, are accustomed to toss about; and those whom the fall has not injured, weaken and break themselves by tossing. Others (such as is said to be the nature of Greek horses), when they have been thrown in a chariot race or have fallen by chance, are accustomed not to move at all, and they maintain a certain discipline of quiet and patience. If the fall has not harmed them, the quiet is beneficial; certainly the injury is not made worse. Are not those to be judged worse than mute animals, who boast in their own wicked deeds, and think it a mark of virtue where there is the fall of a crime? Therefore it is said as to a dumb beast: *Thou hast sinned, be quiet* (Genesis 4:7).

47. Whence he beautifully added: *And my sin is ever before me.* For the foolish man delights in his errors, and by obscuring old ones with new, he thinks he is helped by his sins; and therefore he exults in his crime. But the wise man judges his own offense to be against himself, and just like hostile battle lines, so he considers the falls of his own faults to stand against him as adversaries. Whatever may sound, whatever may resound, his own fault always comes to his mind; whatever has been said or read, he thinks it said of him; whatever he may notice, he thinks he is being singled out by a nod, by a look. Whether he is feasting, or thinking, or praying and beseeching, his own error is always before his eyes, and at every moment his fault strikes his conscience, and does not allow him to rest or forget, but like a stern censor, it agitates him with perpetual terror. Therefore, he who is displeased with himself has all things against him; he is his own accuser, his own witness, nor does he find anywhere to flee, who himself pursues and goads himself. But this is the mark of a good mind, to feel the wound of sin. For those who are devoid of pain do not feel the bitterness of the wound, which is a sign of an incurable sickness; but those who are pricked by some pain, just as they are not without the sense of pain, so also they are not without progress toward health. For where there is a sense of pain, there is also a sense of life; for to feel is a function and gift of vital vigor. Whence also he who does not acknowledge his error is insane, rages, is foolish; but he who does acknowledge it, certainly comes to his senses, does not reject the remedies of health, but restrains himself, repents of his fault, thinks of it always, and by thinking, condemns himself. For the just man is his own accuser in the beginning of his speech. He who accuses himself is just; he who is just is sober, is sound. The just man knows not how to favor himself, he knows not how to bend the rigor of judgment even concerning himself, he shudders at the recollection of his own fall, and blushes at the error committed; he dreads, fears, and shrinks from all memory of it; he judges himself to be a burden to himself, he flees from himself as judge, nor does he dare entrust himself to himself; because he thinks no one is more severe to him than he whom he cannot hide from, cannot deceive, and from whom he finds no way to flee or escape, unless he deny himself and take up the Lord's cross.

48. Magna vis obnoxiae conscientiae, magna supplicia. Timebant Adam et Eva; et cum Domini vocem in paradiso ambulantis audierunt, cupiebant se abscondere, quos nemo quaerebat. Cain quoque metuebat, ne omnis eum quicumque inveniret, occideret: ita in se ipse ferebat sententiam, quod dignus esset cui nullus ignosceret. Unde bene ait: Et delictum meum contra me est semper, hoc est, sine intervallo aliquo recordatio et species ipsa mei me erroris impugnant. Considera quomodo nos confundat, cum aliquid deliquimus, quomodo incurset oculos, quomodo in memoriam semper recurat. Quem commissi pudet, nescit postea aliquid tale committere, unde similiter erubescat.

49. Praecedit autem iniquitas, peccatum sequitur. Radix est iniquitas, fructus autem radicis est culpa. Unde videtur iniquitas ad mentis improbitatem referri, peccatum ad prolapsionem corporis. Gravior iniquitas tamquam materia peccatorum, levius peccatum. Denique iniquitas per lavacrum remittitur, peccatum tegitur bonis factis, et tamquam aliis operibus obumbratur. Unde bene supra hic ipse ait: Beati quorum remissae sunt iniquitates, et quorum tecta sunt peccata (Psal. XXXI, 1). Charitas enim abscondit errorem, et operit multitudinem peccatorum. Multa quoque charitas remittit etiam ipsa peccata, sicut scriptum est de muliere, quae super Dominum fudit unguentum: Remissa sunt peccata ejus multa, quoniam dilexit multum (Luc. VII, 47).

50. Sunt etiam qui accipiant priorem versiculum de lavacro esse, secundum de poenitentia. Qua etiam gratia Petrus qui ante fuerat baptizatus, interrogatur, postquam visus est Dominum negasse: Simon Joannis diligis me? Dixit ei: Utique tu scis, Domine, quia diligo te (Joan. XXI, 15 et seq.). Et iterum interrogatur: Simon Joannis, diligis me? Et iterum respondit: Tu scis quia amo te. Et tertio interrogatur: Simon Joannis, amas me? Et contristatus est, quia dixit ei tertio: Amas me; et dixit ei: Domine, omnia tu scis, tu nosti quia amo te. Et dictum est ei trina vice: Pasce oves meas; sequere me (Ibid., 18), quasi qui peccatum suum nimia charitate texisset. Nec otiose post confessionem nimiae charitatis jubetur plebem regere, qui etiam turbatus non amiserat, quemadmodum ipse se regeret? Haec propter gratiam diximus charitatis, eo quod peccatum tegat. Denique nonnulli ideo trinam interrogationem dilectionis factam esse dixerunt, quia trina fuerat negatio; ut trinae lapsus negationis professio charitatis toties repetita deleat.

48. Great is the power of a guilty conscience, great are its torments. Adam and Eve were afraid; and when they heard the voice of the Lord walking in paradise, they desired to hide themselves, though no one was seeking them. Cain also was afraid, lest whoever found him should kill him: thus he bore the sentence in himself, that he was worthy of no one's pardon. Whence he says well: **And my sin is ever before me**, that is, without any interval the recollection and the very image of my error attack me. Consider how it confounds us when we have done something wrong, how it rushes before our eyes, how it always returns to memory. He who is ashamed of what he has committed does not know how to commit such a thing again, for which he would be similarly ashamed.

49. Iniquity precedes, sin follows. Iniquity is the root, but the fruit of the root is the fault. Whence iniquity seems to refer to the wickedness of the mind, sin to the lapse of the body. Iniquity, as the material of sins, is more serious; sin is lighter. Finally, iniquity is remitted through the washing (of baptism), sin is covered by good deeds, and as it were, overshadowed by other works. Whence this same psalmist says well above: **Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered** (Psalm 31:1). For charity hides error, and covers a multitude of sins. Much charity also remits the sins themselves, as it is written of the woman who poured ointment on the Lord: **Her many sins are forgiven, for she loved much** (Luke 7:47).

50. There are also those who take the former verse to be about the washing (of baptism), the latter about penance. By which grace also Peter, who had been baptized before, is questioned after he was seen to have denied the Lord: **Simon, son of John, do you love me?** He said to him: **Indeed, Lord, you know that I love you** (John 21:15 ff.). And again he is questioned: **Simon, son of John, do you love me?** And again he answered: **You know that I love you.** And a third time he is questioned: **Simon, son of John, do you love me?** And he was grieved, because he said to him a third time: *Do you love me;* and he said to him: **Lord, you know all things, you know that I love you.** And it was said to him three times: **Feed my sheep; follow me** (Ibid., 18), as one who had covered his sin with exceeding charity. And not without reason is he, after the confession of exceeding charity, commanded to rule the people, who even when troubled had not lost the ability to rule himself. We have said these things because of the grace of charity, in that it covers sin. Finally, some have said that the threefold questioning of his love was made for this reason: because his denial had been threefold; so that the profession of charity, so often repeated, might blot out the fall of the threefold denial.

David licet legibus humanis liberum, se tamen Deo subjecisse, cui soli peccavit; et quot modis ultimum hoc intelligendum? Magnum scelus praesente Deo peccare. Qui peccatorem se neget, mendacii ab eo accusari ipsum Deum, cujus patientia et moderatio commendatur. Ad haec Deum ab illo etiam justificari, qui poenitentiam agat erroris.

51. Sequitur, Tibi soli peccavi (Psal. L, 6). Rex utique erat, nullis ipse legibus tenebatur, quia liberi sunt reges a vinculis delictorum; neque enim ullis ad poenam vocantur legibus, tuti sub imperii potestate. Homini ergo non peccavit, cui non tenebatur obnoxius. Sed quamvis tutus imperio, devotione tamen ac fide erat Deo subditus: et legi ejus subjectum se esse cognoscens, peccatum suum negare non poterat; sed quasi reus cum amaritudine fatebatur, qui sciret majoribus vinculis se teneri, quia majora deberet; quoniam plus ab eo exigitur, cui plus commissum est. Possumus etiam et ita accipere. Quis me dijudicat, cum omnes sub peccato sint? Denique Dominus de illa adultera: Qui sine peccato, inquit, est, prior lapidet 693 eam (Joan. VIII, 7). Et nemo eam lapidavit. Hoc igitur ait Propheta: Tibi soli peccavi, qui solus sine peccato es. Qui autem peccato obnoxius est, quasi peccatorem non potest judicare. Inexcusabilis est enim omnis homo qui in alio ea quae agit ipse, condemnat; in quo enim alium judicat, semet ipsum adjudicat. Tibi, inquit, peccavi, et malum coram te feci; ut justifieris in sermonibus tuis, et vincas cum judicaris (Psal. L, 6). Tibi peccavi, qui me ad virtutis studia provocasti, qui me erudisti in lege tua. Tibi soli peccavi, quem solum abscondita cogitationum, et mentis occulta non fallunt.

52. Et malum coram te feci, quem solum sanctificatio decet. Hominis testimonium declinamus, et in conspectu tuo ea quae sunt indigna committimus. Injuria est homini spectare flagitia. Deum arbitrum omnium esse scimus, et eo ipso teste, peccamus: et tamen in his justificatur magis Dominus Deus noster; quia injustitia nostra Dei justitiam commendat, et mendacium nostrum concelebrat veritatem Dei. Sit enim Deus verax, omnis autem homo mendax.

That David, although free from human laws, nevertheless subjected himself to God, against whom alone he sinned; and in how many ways this last point is to be understood. It is a great crime to sin in the presence of God. That he who denies he is a sinner accuses God himself of falsehood, whose patience and moderation are commended. Furthermore, that God is also justified by him who does penance for his error.

51. It follows, "Against you only have I sinned" (Psalm 50:6). He was, to be sure, a king, and was not himself bound by any laws, because kings are free from the chains of their offenses; for they are not called to punishment by any laws, being safe under the power of their rule. Therefore, he did not sin against man, to whom he was not held liable. But although safe by his authority, he was nevertheless subject to God in devotion and faith: and knowing himself to be subject to His law, he could not deny his sin; but as if guilty, he confessed with bitterness, he who knew he was bound by greater chains, because he owed greater things; since more is required of him to whom more has been entrusted. We can also understand it in this way. Who judges me, when all are under sin? Finally, the Lord said of that adulteress: "He who is without sin," he said, "let him be the first to cast a stone at her" (John 8:7). And no one stoned her. Therefore, the Prophet says this: "Against you only have I sinned," who alone are without sin. But he who is liable to sin cannot judge another as a sinner. For every man is inexcusable who condemns in another the same things he himself does; for in that which he judges another, he condemns himself. "Against you," he says, "I have sinned, and done evil in your sight; that you may be justified in your words, and may overcome when you are judged" (Psalm 50:6). Against you I have sinned, you who have called me to the pursuit of virtue, who have instructed me in your law. Against you only have I sinned, whom alone the hidden things of thoughts and the secrets of the mind do not deceive.

52. "And I have done evil in your sight," before you whom alone sanctification befits. We shun the testimony of man, and in your sight we commit those things which are unworthy. It is an injury for a man to behold wicked deeds. We know that God is the judge of all, and with him as the very witness, we sin: and yet in these things our Lord God is the more justified; because our injustice commends the justice of God, and our falsehood celebrates the truth of God. For let God be true, but every man a liar.

53. Ut justificeris in sermonibus tuis. Sermones Dei pleni veritatis sunt atque iustitiae, ideoque vera sunt quaecumque locutus est Dominus de fragilitate humana, quia inclinatum est cor eorum ad nequitiam, propendet ad fraudem; et quia definivit eo quod non sit homo qui non peccet: omnes enim declinaverunt, et inutiles facti sunt (Psal. XIII, 3). Ideo vincit dum iudicatur, quoniam prolapsione universorum probavit quaecumque de nostra iudicavit fallacia. Ergo si dixerimus quia iniquitatem fecimus, justificamus Deum in sermonibus suis: si autem dixerimus quia non peccavimus, mendacem facimus Deum: sed impossibile est mentiri eum: nos igitur omnes sub peccato esse manifestum est.

54. Quantum igitur crimen, ut homo peccatorem se neget? Quoniam quantum in ipso est, summi Dei videtur arguere ac refutare mendacium, qui tam moderatus et patiens est, ut vincat cum iudicatur. Venit enim ad iudicium Deus et dicit: Popule meus, quid feci tibi, aut quid contristavi te, aut quid molestus fui tibi? Quia eduxi te de terra Aegypti, et de domo servitutis liberavi te, et misi ante faciem tuam Moysen, Aaron, et Mariam. Plebs mea, in mente habeto quid cogitaverit de te Balach (Mich. VI, 3 et seq.). Singula in conspectu tuo locat beneficia sua, ut tamquam de his iudices quae servare debueras, quo magis reus fias, qui divinis non potueris stare beneficiis. Quid feci, inquit, tibi? Tamquam reum se constituit, et te iudicem. Aut quid contristavi te? Offensi vultus non abnuit crimen, si tu Deo es contristatus auctore. Aut quid molestus tibi fui? Interpellationis injuriam confitetur, si molestior aestimata est: addidit beneficia quorum gratia non erubuit, qui existerat ingratus. In hac quoque causa considera quomodo Dominus 694 se ipsi David iudicandum prae-buit, ut vinceret; dicit enim Nathan: Haec dicit Dominus Deus Israel: Ego unxi te in regem super Israel, et ego liberavi te de manu Saul, et dedi tibi omnia quae erant domini tui, et uxores illius in sinum tuum dedi, et dedi tibi domum ipsius Israel; et si pauca sunt, adjiciam tibi. Et quare pro nihilo duxisti Dominum, ut faceres nequiter in conspectu ejus (II Reg. XII, 7 et seq.). Horum commemoratione conventus, cum videret inferiorem se esse, cum iudicaret, ait: Peccavi Domino (Ibid., 13). Ita justificavit Dominum, qui peccatum suum negare ausus non est.

53. "That you may be justified in your words." The words of God are full of truth and justice, and therefore whatever the Lord has spoken concerning human fragility is true, because their heart is inclined to wickedness, it tends toward deceit; and because he has defined that there is no man who does not sin: "for all have turned aside, and have become worthless" (Psalm 13:3). Therefore he overcomes when he is judged, because by the fall of all he has proved whatever he judged concerning our deceitfulness. Therefore, if we say that we have committed iniquity, we justify God in his words: but if we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar: but it is impossible for him to lie: therefore it is manifest that we are all under sin.

54. How great a crime, therefore, for a man to deny he is a sinner? Because, as far as in him lies, he seems to argue against and refute the falsehood of the most high God, who is so moderate and patient that he overcomes when he is judged. For God comes to judgment and says: "My people, what have I done to you, or how have I grieved you, or how have I been troublesome to you?" "Because I brought you out of the land of Egypt, and freed you from the house of bondage, and sent before your face Moses, Aaron, and Miriam." "My people, keep in mind what Balak devised against you" (Micah 6:3 ff.). He places his benefits one by one before your eyes, so that you may judge, as it were, concerning those things you ought to have kept, by which you may become more guilty, you who could not stand by the divine benefits. "What have I done to you?" he says. He makes himself as if guilty, and you the judge. "Or how have I grieved you?" He does not deny the crime of an offended countenance, if you are grieved with God as the author. "Or how have I been troublesome to you?" He confesses the injury of the interruption, if it was deemed too troublesome: he added benefits for the grace of which he who was ungrateful did not blush. In this case also, consider how the Lord offered himself to be judged by David himself, that he might overcome; for Nathan says: "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul, and I gave you all that belonged to your master, and I gave his wives into your bosom, and I gave you the house of Israel itself; and if these are too little, I will add more to you." "And why have you despised the Lord, to do evil in his sight?" (2 Samuel 12:7 ff.). Confronted by the remembrance of these things, when he saw that he was inferior, when he judged, he said: "I have sinned against the Lord" (Ibid., 13). Thus he justified the Lord, he who did not dare to deny his sin.

55. Possumus et ita accipere: justificat Dominum qui peccatum suum fatetur. Denique in Evangelio (Luc. VII, 29) habes quia Publicani justificaverunt Deum, baptizati baptismo Joannis. Baptista autem Joannes baptismum fecit poenitentiae. Qui autem agit poenitentiam delicta non abnuat. Ergo quia David contra se habebat semper delictum suum, utique non negabat quod et erubescere, non negabat quod et agnoscebat. Non negando autem utique commissi poenitentiam gerebat erroris; atque ita confitendo delictum, justificabat Dominum, et ipse justificabatur a Domino. Justificatur enim Dominus, dum ejus praedicatur justitia, et ab eo venia postulatur. Simul et ipse justificat confitentem, et justificatur in sermonibus suis, sicut scriptum est: Dic iniquitates tuas, ut justificeris (Esai. XLIII, 26).

Prophetae verbis doceri, qui in iniquitate non concipiatur, esse neminem. Utrum parentum an proles ea sit iniquitas, a qua solus Christus immunis fuisse ostenditur?

56. Sequitur: Ecce enim in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in delictis peperit me mater mea (Psal. L, 7). Quis tanto affectu agit poenitentiam? Humi stratus jacuit fusus in lacrymas, cibum non gustavit, lavacro se abdicavit. Quid jam reliqua dicam, quod abstinerit ornatu et comptu regio (Conf. S. Aug., lib. IV cont. duas epist. Pelag., cap. 11)? Adjunxit confessionem iniquitatis suae, et in perpetua saecula toto canendam orbe transmisit. Ecce, inquit, in iniquitatibus conceptus sum, et in delictis peperit me mater mea. Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis: et omnes iniquitates meas dele. Ne projicias me a facie tua, et Spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me. Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae. Antequam nascamur, maculamur contagio; et ante usuram lucis, originis ipsius excipimus injuriam, in iniquitate concipimur: non expressit utrum parentum, an nostra. Et in delictis generat unumquemque mater sua: nec hic declaravit utrum in delictis suis mater pariat; an jam sint et aliqua delicta nascentis. Sed vide ne utrumque intelligendum sit. Nec conceptus iniquitatis exsors est, quoniam et parentes non carent lapsu. Et si nec unius diei infans sine peccato est, multo magis nec illi materni conceptus dies sine peccato sunt. Concipimur ergo in peccato parentum, et in delictis eorum nascimur. Sed et ipse partus habet contagia sua, nec unum tantummodo habet ipsa natura contagium. Bonum quidem (Conf. S. Aug. lib. II, cont. Jul. Pel., cap. 7) conjugium, sancta copula; sed tamen qui habent uxores ita sint, ac si non habentes. Ipse thorus incoinquinatus: et nemo alterum fraudare debet eo, nisi forte ad tempus, ut vacent orationi.

55. We can also understand it this way: he justifies the Lord who confesses his sin. Finally, in the Gospel (Luke 7:29) you have that the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But John the Baptist performed a baptism of repentance. But he who does penance does not deny his offenses. Therefore, because David always had his offense against himself, he certainly did not deny that of which he was ashamed, he did not deny that which he also acknowledged. By not denying, he was certainly doing penance for the error he had committed; and thus by confessing his offense, he was justifying the Lord, and he himself was being justified by the Lord. For the Lord is justified when his justice is proclaimed, and pardon is asked of him. At the same time, he both justifies the one who confesses, and is justified in his words, as it is written: "Declare your iniquities, that you may be justified" (Isaiah 43:26).

That it is taught by the words of the Prophet that there is no one who is not conceived in iniquity. Whether that iniquity is of the parents or of the offspring, from which Christ alone is shown to have been immune?

56. It follows: For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins my mother bore me (Psalm 50:7). Who performs penance with such great feeling? He lay prostrate on the ground, dissolved in tears, he tasted no food, he forsook bathing. What more shall I say, that he abstained from royal ornament and attire (Conf. S. Aug., lib. IV cont. duas epist. Pelag., cap. 11)? He added the confession of his iniquity, and transmitted it to be sung throughout the whole world for all ages. Behold, he says, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins my mother bore me. Turn away your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Cast me not away from your face, and take not your holy Spirit from me. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation. Before we are born, we are stained by a contagion; and before we enjoy the light, we receive the injury of our very origin, we are conceived in iniquity: he did not specify whether it is our parents' or our own. And in sins his mother brings forth each one: nor here did he declare whether the mother gives birth in her own sins, or whether there are already some sins of the one being born. But see lest both must be understood. Neither is conception free from iniquity, since the parents too are not without a fall. And if not even an infant of one day is without sin, much more are the days of maternal conception not without sin. We are conceived, therefore, in the sin of our parents, and we are born in their transgressions. But birth itself also has its own contagions, nor does nature itself have only one contagion. Marriage is indeed a good thing (Conf. S. Aug. lib. II, cont. Jul. Pel., cap. 7), a holy union; but yet let those who have wives be as though they had none. The marriage bed itself is undefiled: and no one ought to defraud the other of it, except perhaps for a time, that they may give themselves to prayer.

Tamen secundum Apostolum non vacat orationi quis eo tempore, quo usum corporae illius conventionis exercet, et mulieris menstruatae coinquinatus est pannus, nec potest illis diebus purgationis suae offerre sacrificium. Et mulieris quae generaverit dies partus et plerique alii a sacrificio feriati sunt, donec legitimo ritu feta mundetur.

57. Ideo in quo voluit Dominus nulla hujusmodi originis esse contagia, dicit illi Dominus: Priusquam te formarem in utero matris tuae, novi te; et priusquam exires de vulva, sanctificavi te, et prophetam in gentibus posui te (Jerem. I, 5). Quis tantus, cui tam magna delata sunt? Numquid Hieremias? Sed ille non utique in gentibus propheta propositus, sed in Judaea tunc temporis, nunc autem etiam in nationibus, quae in Jesum Christum Dominum crediderunt. Vide tamen ne illi dicatur, qui antequam nasceretur ex Virgine, jam dudum erat, et erat semper, et operabatur etiam in utero Mariae constitutus; et ita sanctus erat, ut sanctificaret prophetas suos: in quo solo et conceptus virginalis et partus sine ullo fuit mortalis originis inquinamento. Dignum etenim fuit (Conf. S. Aug. lib. IV cont. duas epist. Pelag., cap. 11), et qui non erat habiturus corpore peccatum prolapsionis, nullum sentiret generationis naturale contagium. Merito ergo David flebiliter in se deploravit ipsa inquinamenta naturae, quod prius inciperet in homine macula quam vita.

CAPUT XII.

Confitenti peccatum coelestia sacramenta divinitus pateferi: cum haec incerta in psalmo dicuntur, significari non esse manifesta; sed praecipue hoc loco baptismatis lavacrum praefigurari.

58. Dum haec dicit, et peccatorum specialium atque communium colluviem confitetur, subito ei splendor veritatis, et candor gratiae spiritalis affulsit. Supergressus enim umbram, spiritu prophetico ipsa vidit mysteriorum sacramenta coelestium, quorum typum Moyses praefiguravit in Lege (Exod. XXIV, 7 et seq.). Vulneratus igitur charitatis vulnere, et indagandae captus veritatis cupiditate, in superiora suae mentis extendit intuitum, et in futura prospiciens, thesauros sapientiae et scientiae vidit in Christo, praevidit baptismatis sacramentum, et miratus gratiam exclamavit subito dicens: Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti: incerta et occulta 696 sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi (Psal. L, 8). Non incerta mysteria, quia certa sunt; nec incerta secreta et arcana sapientiae, sed non manifesta. Hoc enim significat, quia nullis adhuc essent manifestata.

Yet, according to the Apostle, one is not free for prayer at that time when one engages in the use of that bodily union, and the cloth of a menstruating woman is defiled, nor can she offer sacrifice in those days of her purification. And for a woman who has given birth, the days of childbirth and many others are free from sacrifice, until the new mother is cleansed by the lawful rite.

57. Therefore, concerning him in whom the Lord willed there to be no contagions of this origin, the Lord says to him: Before I formed you in your mother's womb, I knew you; and before you came forth from the womb, I sanctified you, and I appointed you a prophet to the nations (Jeremiah 1:5). Who is so great, to whom such great things were granted? Was it Jeremiah? But he was not appointed a prophet to the gentiles, but in Judea at that time, though now also in the nations which have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. But see lest it be said of Him who, before He was born of the Virgin, already was, and always was, and was working even while established in Mary's womb; and was so holy that He sanctified His prophets: in Him alone were both the virginal conception and the birth without any defilement of mortal origin. For it was fitting (Conf. S. Aug. lib. IV cont. duas epist. Pelag., cap. 11) that He who was not to have in His body the sin of the fall (prolapsionis), should feel no natural contagion of generation. Rightly, therefore, did David mournfully bewail in himself these very defilements of nature, that the stain should begin in man before life itself.

CHAPTER XII.

That to one confessing his sin, the heavenly sacraments are divinely revealed: that when these things are called "uncertain" in the psalm, it signifies that they are not manifest; but that especially in this place the laver of baptism is prefigured.

58. While he says these things, and confesses the filth of his particular and common sins, suddenly the splendor of truth and the brightness of spiritual grace shone upon him. For having passed beyond the shadow, he saw with a prophetic spirit the very sacraments of the heavenly mysteries, the type of which Moses prefigured in the Law (Exod. 24:7 et seq.). Wounded, therefore, by the wound of charity, and seized by the desire of seeking out the truth, he extended the gaze of his mind to higher things, and looking into the future, he saw the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ, he foresaw the sacrament of baptism, and, marveling at the grace, he suddenly exclaimed, saying: For behold, you have loved truth: the uncertain and hidden things of your wisdom you have made manifest to me (Ps. 50:8). Not that the mysteries are uncertain, for they are certain; nor are the secrets and arcana of wisdom uncertain, but they are not manifest. For this is what it signifies: that they had not yet been made manifest to anyone.

Quod enim oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, hoc praeparavit Deus diligentibus eum. Videns igitur ea dicit: Ecce jam non in umbra, nec in figura, nec in typo, sed in veritate lux aperta resplendet: ecce nunc veritatem aspicio, splendorem veritatis agnosco: nunc te majori, Domine Deus noster, veneror affectu. Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti, non per speculum, non in aenigmate, sed facie ad faciem te mihi, Christe, demonstrasti; in tuis te invenio sacramentis. Haec sunt tuae vera sacramenta sapientiae, quibus mentis occulta mundantur.

59. Itaque jam laetus atque securus, quod vibrasset ei sapientiae plenitudo, dicit ad Dominum: Asperges me hyssopo, et mundabor; lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor (Psal. L, 9). Bene et veteris Testamenti sacramenta non evacuat, et Evangelica docet mysteria praeferenda; hyssopo mundari secundum Legem postula (Exod. XII, 22); lavari secundum Evangelium concupiscit; et supra nivem se existimat, si lotus fuerit, dealbandum. Per hyssopi fasciculum aspergebatur agni sanguine (Levit. XIV, 6), qui mundari volebat typico baptismo. Lavatur autem qui diluitur aeterni fontis irriguo; et supra nivem dealbatur, cui culpa dimittitur. Denique de ipsa anima dicitur: Quae est haec, quae ascendit dealbata (Cant. VIII, 5)? Antequam baptizaretur, ipsa est quae dicebat: Nigra sum et decora, filiae Hierusalem (Cant. I, 4). Erat enim nigra, tenebrosa, peccatorum horrore deformis; sed postea quam abluta per baptismum remissionem meruit delictorum, dealbata ascendit ad Christum. Inde et per Esaiam Dominus locutus est dicens: Si fuerint peccata vestra sicut phoenicium, ut nivem dealbabo (Esai. I, 18), id est, si cruenta, si tetra, mundabo. Haec est nix intelligibilis, de qua ait quod Domini Jesu in Evangelio (Matth. XVII, 2) refulserint vestimenta sicut nix; eo quod peccatum non cognoverit. Caro enim qua se induit, ab omni fuerat munda delicto. Quid miraris si vidit baptismatis sacramenta; cum supra dixerit, ubi descripsit passionem Domini: Dominus pascit me, et nihil mihi deerit: in loco viridi ibi me collocavit, super aquam refectionis educavit me (Psal. XXII, 2). Et alibi: Vox Domini super aquas, Deus majestatis intonuit (Psal. XXVIII, 3). Et de ipso sacramento plenius dixit: Parasti in conspectu meo mensam, impinguasti in oleo caput meum, et poculum tuum inebrians, quam praeclarum est (Psal. XXII, 5)?

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For what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, this God has prepared for those who love him. Seeing them, therefore, he says: Behold, now not in shadow, nor in figure, nor in type, but in truth the open light shines forth: behold, now I behold the truth, I recognize the splendor of truth: now with greater affection, O Lord our God, I venerate you. For behold, you have loved truth, not through a mirror, not in a riddle, but face to face, O Christ, you have shown yourself to me; in your sacraments I find you. These are the true sacraments of your wisdom, by which the hidden things of the mind are cleansed.

59. And so, now joyful and secure, because the fullness of wisdom had flashed upon him, he says to the Lord: You will sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed; you will wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow (Ps. 50:9). Well does he not invalidate the sacraments of the Old Testament, and yet teaches that the mysteries of the Gospel are to be preferred; he asks to be cleansed with hyssop according to the Law (Exod. 12:22); he desires to be washed according to the Gospel; and he considers that he will be made whiter than snow, if he has been washed. He who wished to be cleansed by a typical baptism was sprinkled with the blood of a lamb by a bunch of hyssop (Lev. 14:6). But he is washed who is cleansed by the stream of the eternal font; and he is made whiter than snow to whom guilt is remitted. Finally, of the soul itself it is said: Who is this that comes up all white (Cant. 8:5)? Before she was baptized, she is the one who said: I am black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem (Cant. 1:4). For she was black, dark, deformed by the horror of sins; but after she was washed through baptism and merited the remission of her offenses, she ascended all white to Christ. Hence also the Lord spoke through Isaiah, saying: If your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow (Isa. 1:18), that is, if they are bloody, if they are foul, I will cleanse them. This is the intelligible snow, of which it is said in the Gospel that the garments of the Lord Jesus shone like snow (Matt. 17:2); because he had not known sin. For the flesh with which he clothed himself was clean from all offense. Why do you wonder that he saw the sacraments of baptism, when he said above, where he described the passion of the Lord: The Lord is my shepherd, and I shall want nothing: he has placed me in a green pasture, he has brought me up on the water of refreshment (Ps. 22:2). And elsewhere: The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of majesty has thundered (Ps. 28:3). And of the sacrament itself he spoke more fully: You have prepared a table before me, you have anointed my head with oil, and your inebriating cup, how wonderful it is (Ps. 22:5)?

CHAPTER XIII.

David solo futurae remissionis auditu recreatus, fore ut ossa humiliata exsultent, praedicat; et quae sint illa? Rogandum Deum ut faciem avertat a peccatis nostris, illam vero ad nos convertat; item sicut peccatum, ita et iniquitatem quae ejus origo est, triplici ratione tolli, quae aperitur.

60. Merito ergo istic quoque exsultans ait: Auditui meo dabis gaudium et laetitiam: et exsultabunt ossa humiliata (Psal. L, 10). Probasti, Domine Jesu, quia numquam verba tua praetereunt (Matth. XXIV, 35). Probasti illud Evangelicum quod dixisti: Multi prophetae et justi voluerunt videre quae videtis, et audire quae auditis (Matth. XIII, 17). Ecce David solo laetatur auditu, quia futura esset peccatorum remissio; et prophetat quia exsultabunt ossa humiliata. Sicut omnia justi ossa dicunt: Domine, quis similis tibi; sic exsultabunt ossa humiliata (Psal. XXXIV, 10), humiliantis scilicet animam suam justi. Dicuntur ergo ossa virtutes; dicuntur ossa velut quidam animi motus, vel animae, qui motus humiliantur peccatis, et exsultant gratiae coelestis munere: dicuntur et ossa populi Ecclesiarum; unde habes dictum et in psalmo: Non est absconditum os meum, quod fecisti in abscondito (Psal. CXXXVIII, 15). Os suum Ecclesiam dixit, et plebis devotae conventus sacros; quoniam sumus membra corporis Christi de carne ipsius, et de ossibus ejus. Hoc igitur dicit, quia Ecclesia Domini omnia opera divina cognoscet, et fidem resurrectionis accipiet.

61. Sequitur: Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis, et omnes iniquitates meas dele (Psal. L, 11). Usitata est deprecatio, ut eos quos laesimus, oblivisci offensionis propriae postulemus. Morali ter ergo Deum rogat Propheta, ut avertat faciem suam a peccatis ejus, et tamquam obliviam peccatorum ejus assumat. Sed quia omnia spectat, et nihil eum praeterit, oblivisci non potest, sicut nos, quos brevi intervallo temporis eorum quae cognoverimus, memoria subterfugit. Ideo bene ait ut faciem suam avertat, non ab ipso, ne deficiat destitutus: sed a peccatis, ut vires non possint habere peccata ipsius. Quos enim aspicit Dominus, illuminat, et in vultu Domini pietas atque indulgentia est. Ideoque hic ipse ait: De vultu tuo iudicium meum prodeat (Psal. XVI, 2), de vultu enim Domini venia, non poena procedit. Rogandus est ergo ut nos aspiciat, avertat autem faciem suam a peccatis nostris, ut deleat ea. Quae enim non aspicit, delet; et quae deleverit, ea memoria sepelientur, sicut ipse Dominus ait: Ego sum, ego sum qui deleo iniquitates tuas, et memor non ero: tu autem memor esto, et iudicemur (Esai. XLIII, 25).

David, refreshed by the mere hearing of the future remission, predicts that the humbled bones will exult; and what those are. That God must be asked to turn His face from our sins, but to turn it toward us; likewise, how not only sin, but also iniquity which is its origin, is taken away in a threefold manner, which is explained.

60. Rightly, therefore, exulting here also, he says: You will make me hear of joy and gladness: and the humbled bones will exult (Ps. 50:10). You have proved, Lord Jesus, that your words never pass away (Matt. 24:35). You have proved that word of the Gospel which you spoke: Many prophets and just men have desired to see what you see, and to hear what you hear (Matt. 13:17). Behold, David rejoices at the mere hearing that there would be a remission of sins; and he prophesies that the humbled bones will exult. Just as all the bones of the just man will say: Lord, who is like you? so the humbled bones will exult (Ps. 34:10), that is, of the just man humbling his own soul. Therefore, the bones are called virtues; the bones are called, as it were, certain movements of the mind, or of the soul, which movements are humbled by sins, and exult in the gift of heavenly grace: the bones are also called the people of the Churches; whence you have it said also in the psalm: My bone is not hidden from you, which you made in secret (Ps. 138:15). He called the Church his bone, and the sacred assemblies of the devout people; for we are members of the body of Christ, of his flesh, and of his bones. This, therefore, is what he says: that the Church of the Lord will know all divine works, and will receive the faith of the resurrection.

61. It follows: Turn your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities (Ps. 50:11). It is a customary prayer that we ask those whom we have offended to forget our offense. Morally, therefore, the Prophet asks God to turn His face from his sins, and, as it were, to assume forgetfulness of his sins. But because He beholds all things, and nothing escapes Him, He cannot forget, as we do, whose memory of things we have known escapes us after a short interval of time. Therefore, he rightly says that He should turn His face, not from him, lest he, being destitute, should fail: but from his sins, so that his sins might not have power. For those whom the Lord looks upon, He illuminates, and in the countenance of the Lord there is piety and indulgence. And therefore, this same one says: Let my judgment come forth from your countenance (Ps. 16:2), for from the countenance of the Lord comes pardon, not punishment. He is to be asked, therefore, to look upon us, but to turn His face from our sins, that He may blot them out. For what He does not look upon, He blots out; and what He has blotted out will be buried in memory, as the Lord Himself says: I am, I am he that blots out your iniquities, and I will not remember: but you, remember, and let us be judged (Isa. 43:25).

62. Peccatum autem aut donatur (De poenit, dist. 3, cap. Ille rex, § Peccatum aut donatur), aut deletur, aut tegitur: donatur per gratiam, deletur per sanguinem crucis, tegitur per charitatem. Similiter et iniquitas, quae estimatur habitudo mentis injustae. Licet Joannes in epistola eum qui fecerit peccatum, 698 et iniquitatem fecisse dixerit, sicut habemus scriptum: Omnis qui facit peccatum, et iniquitatem facit (I Joan. III, 4), peccatum est iniquitas, quia in peccato ipso iniquitas est; tamen ut nobis videtur, peccatum opus est iniquitatis, iniquitas autem operatrix culpaе atque delicti. Plus est ergo ut ipsa iniquitas deleatur, excidatur radix et seminarium peccatorum; mala tollatur radix, ne malos fructus faciat; aboleatur erroris omnis affectus, universa iniquitatum genera tollantur.

63. Itaque quemadmodum intrans in animam sapientiae disciplina imprudentiam tollit, et scientia ignorantiam: sic perfecta virtus iniquitatem, et remissio peccatorum delet omne peccatum. Unde praeclare Apostolus ait: Quia donavit nobis peccata Dominus Jesus, delens chirographum decreti, quod erat contrarium nobis, et ipsum, inquit, de medio tulit, affigens illud cruci (Coloss. II, 14). Delevit sanguine suo atramentum Evae, delevit obligationem haereditatis obnoxiae. Fides igitur peccatum minuit. Et ideo Dominus dimittens peccata dicebat: Fiat tibi secundum fidem tuam (Matth. VIII, 13).

CAPUT XIV.

Cor mundum solis inesse renovatis; atque inibi quaenam sint viscera, quisve spiritus, quorum hoc loci sanctus Propheta meminit? Aversum Domini vultum, gravis supplicii loco esse; et quomodo idem a facie sua projiciat? Atrocissimae huic poenae quinam obnoxii? Post quae nonnihil perstringitur de libertate ac unitate voluntatis in Trinitate.

64. Sequitur: Cor mundum crea in me, Deus, et spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis (Psal. L, 12). Superius mundari ab occultis se petit (Psal. XVIII, 13); hic postulat cor mundum creari sibi, quod ei provenit qui renovatur spiritu: in novo enim homine cor mundum est, in quo veterum delictorum fuerit deleta colluvies, nec inscripta remanserit aliqua iniquitatis effigies. Grande autem munus est, cordis esse mundi. Unde pulchre Salomon: Quis gloriabitur castum se habere cor (Prov. XX, 9)? Et Dominus in Evangelio: Beati mundo corde; ipsi enim Deum videbunt (Matth. V, 8). Propheta etiam David cor mundum habere cupiebat, ne a facie Domini projiceretur.

62. Sin, however, is either forgiven (*De poenit*, dist. 3, cap. *Ille rex*, § *Peccatum aut donatur*), or blotted out, or covered: it is forgiven through grace, it is blotted out by the blood of the cross, it is covered by charity. Likewise also iniquity, which is considered a habit of an unjust mind. Although John in his epistle said that he who has committed sin has also committed iniquity, as we have it written: Everyone who commits sin also commits iniquity (1 John 3:4), sin is iniquity, because in sin itself there is iniquity; yet, as it seems to us, sin is the work of iniquity, while iniquity is the worker of fault and offense. It is a greater thing, therefore, that iniquity itself be blotted out, that the root and seed-bed of sins be cut out; that the evil root be removed, lest it produce evil fruits; that every affection for error be abolished, that all kinds of iniquities be taken away.

63. And so, just as the discipline of wisdom entering the soul removes imprudence, and knowledge removes ignorance: so perfect virtue removes iniquity, and the remission of sins blots out all sin. Whence the Apostle says excellently: Because the Lord Jesus has forgiven us our sins, blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, and this, he says, he took out of the way, fastening it to the cross (Col. 2:14). With his blood he blotted out the ink of Eve, he blotted out the bond of the guilty inheritance. Faith, therefore, diminishes sin. And for this reason the Lord, forgiving sins, would say: Be it done to you according to your faith (Matt. 8:13).

CHAPTER XIV.

A clean heart is only in the renewed; and what are the inward parts, or what the spirit, which the holy Prophet mentions in this place? That the averted face of the Lord is a grave punishment; and how does He cast one away from His face? Who are subject to this most atrocious penalty? After which, something is briefly touched upon concerning the freedom and unity of will in the Trinity.

64. It follows: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within my inward parts* (Ps. 50:12). Above, he asks to be cleansed from his secret faults (Ps. 18:13); here he asks that a clean heart be created for him, which comes to him who is renewed in spirit: for in the new man the heart is clean, in which the filth of old offenses has been wiped away, and no image of iniquity has remained inscribed. But it is a great gift, to be of a clean heart. Whence Solomon beautifully says: *Who will boast that he has a pure heart* (Prov. 20:9)? And the Lord in the Gospel: *Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God* (Matt. 5:8). The Prophet David also desired to have a clean heart, lest he be cast out from the face of the Lord.

65. In quo autem cor mundum est, innovatur in ejus interioribus spiritus. Viscera enim velut interiora sunt corporis: ita sunt et intelligibilia viscera animae, ut sunt viscera misericordiae (Coloss. III, 12), ut sunt interiora quae benedicunt Dominum, de quibus ait: Benedic, anima mea, Dominum, et omnia interiora mea nomen sanctum ejus (Psal. CII, 1). Viscera autem animae adinventiones sensuum sunt, bonae cogitationis studia, virtutum perseverantia, postremo illae quae Graece *ἐννομίαι* dicuntur.

66. Rectus autem spiritus qui bene dirigit, qui deducit in viam rectam, hic est spiritus veritatis; vel certe recta hominis conscientia nullis inflexa peccatis, vel spiritus qui in homine est. Non praetermisimus quid alii sentiant; tamen nobis videtur 699 quoniam de mysteriis dicit lectio, et futurae gratia renovationis exprimitur, Spiritusque sancti infusio postulat.

67. Deinde sequitur: Ne projicias me a facie tua; et Spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas a me (Psal. L, 13). Si quis nos offenderit servulorum, avertere ab eo vultum solemus. Plerique autem divitum amandare consueverunt mancipia sua, et per agellulos relegare, et haec poena gravior aestimatur. Denique solent magis se offerre verberibus. Si apud homines hoc grave ducitur, quanto magis apud Dominum Deum nostrum. Quasi non hinc dolor parricidalis (reprimendus quidem, si qua eum pietas temperare potuisset) eruperit, quod faciem suam Deus a Cain muneribus avertit; respexit autem super munera Abel. Itaque tacito vultu, alterum innocentem pronuntiavit, alterum peccatorem. Ergo quasi ultimus servus humiliat se; et quasi in peccato deprehensus, et offensae reus, obsecrat ut flagelletur potius, quam projiciatur a facie Domini.

68. Quomodo projiciat Deus a facie sua, audi dicentem: Tollite eum in tenebras exteriores, ibi erit fletus et stridor dentium (Matth. XXII, 13). Qui non emendatur, a facie ejus in tenebris constituitur. Ideo justus ne tenebras patiatur, ait: Vultum tuum, Domine, requiram (Psal. XXVI, 8). Ubi enim Domini vultus, ibi lumen est, sicut scriptum est: Faciem tuam illumina super servum tuum (Psal. CXVIII, 35). Denique ubi primum intuitus Petrum vidit, et illuminavit.

69. Grande igitur supplicium, projici a facie Dei. Projectus est Adam cum de paradiso exiret, nec immerito; ipse enim ante se absconderat a facie Dei. Exivit et Cain a facie Dei, non solum post parricidale commissum; sed etiam postquam Deum putavit esse fallendum, ut crimen negaret. Peccator igitur excluditur a facie Dei: justus autem dicit: Ecce ego (Esai. VI, 8). Denique ipse David cum videret interire populum, semetipsum obtulit dicens: Ego sum, ego peccavi, et ego pastor male feci (IV Reg. XXIV, 17): et sic ira Domini mitigata est, et venia donata.

65. In whom there is a clean heart, a spirit is renewed in his inner parts. For just as the viscera are the inner parts of the body, so too there are intelligible viscera of the soul, such as the bowels of mercy (Col. 3:12), such as the inner parts that bless the Lord, of which he says: **Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all my inner parts, his holy name** (Ps. 102:1). But the viscera of the soul are the inventions of the senses, the pursuits of good thought, the perseverance of virtues, and finally those things which in Greek are called **eunomia**.

66. But a right spirit is that which directs well, which leads into the right way; this is the spirit of truth; or certainly the right conscience of man, not bent by any sins, or the spirit which is in man. We have not overlooked what others think; yet it seems to us, since the reading speaks of mysteries, and the grace of future renewal is expressed, and the infusion of the Holy Spirit is requested.

67. Then follows: **Cast me not away from your face; and take not your holy Spirit from me** (Ps. 50:13). If one of our servants offends us, we are accustomed to turn our face from him. Moreover, many of the rich were accustomed to send away their slaves, and to banish them to their small estates, and this punishment is considered more severe. Finally, they are accustomed to offer themselves more to beatings. If this is considered serious among men, how much more so with the Lord our God. As if the parricidal grief (which should indeed be repressed, if any piety could have tempered it) did not break out from this, that God turned His face from Cain's offerings, but looked upon the offerings of Abel. And so with a silent countenance, He pronounced the one innocent, the other a sinner. Therefore, as the lowliest servant he humbles himself; and as one caught in sin and guilty of an offense, he begs to be scourged rather than be cast from the face of the Lord.

68. How God casts away from His face, hear Him saying: **Take him away into the outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth** (Matt. 22:13). He who is not corrected is placed in darkness away from His face. Therefore the just man, lest he suffer darkness, says: **Your face, Lord, I will seek** (Ps. 26:8). For where the face of the Lord is, there is light, as it is written: **Make your face to shine upon your servant** (Ps. 118:35). Finally, when He first looked upon Peter, He saw and enlightened him.

69. A great punishment, therefore, to be cast from the face of God. Adam was cast out when he left paradise, and not undeservedly; for he himself had previously hidden from the face of God. Cain also went out from the face of God, not only after committing parricide, but also after he thought God could be deceived, so as to deny the crime. The sinner, therefore, is excluded from the face of God: but the just man says: **Here I am** (Isa. 6:8). Finally, David himself, when he saw the people perishing, offered himself, saying: **It is I, I have sinned, and I the shepherd have done wickedly** (2 Sam. 24:17): and so the anger of the Lord was mitigated, and pardon was granted.

70. Simul ostendit quia sancti permanent, criminosi projiciuntur. Ideoque servanda est nobis gratia spiritalis, ne propter peccata nostra auferatur a nobis. Non enim projicitur in quo Spiritus sanctus est: sed inoffenso muneris sui fructu studet se Domino semper offerre, sicut ille qui dicenti Domino: Numquid et vos vultis discedere, respondit: Domine, ad quem ibimus? Verba vitae aeternae habes, et nos credimus (Joan. VI, 68 et 69).

71. Simul illud considerandum, quia non aufertur Spiritus nisi Domini voluntate; sicut non datur nisi Domini voluntate: qui utique cum datur, non quasi coactus operatur, sed pro sua voluntate dividitur, sicut scriptum est, dicente Apostolo: Haec autem omnia operatur unus atque idem Spiritus, dividens singulis prout vult (I Cor. XII, 11). Cum igitur non auferatur nisi Domini voluntate, apparet quia una Trinitatis voluntas est.

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Rationalem naturam laetitiae salutaris solam capacem esse; eamque principali spiritu confirmari; et quis ille spiritus?

72. Redde mihi laetitiam salutaris tui: et spiritu principali confirma me (Psal. L, 14). Cui debetur, et redditur: redditur rationali naturae laetitia salutaris. Laetitia autem et gaudium fructus est Spiritus. Firmamentum quoque nostrum spiritus principalis est. Denique is qui principali confirmatur spiritu, non est obnoxius servituti, nescit servire peccato, nescit fluitare, nescit errare, nec studio nutat incertus; sed firmatus in petra, solido stabilitur vestigio.

73. Quem putamus dici spiritum principalem? Plerique spiritum rectum ad Dominum referunt Jesum, qui peccatum mundi abstulit, et omne hominum genus sui sanguinis effusione renovavit; et ideo dictum est: Spiritum rectum innova in visceribus meis: spiritum autem sanctum, de quo dicit: Spiritum tuum ne auferas a me, Spiritum intelligunt veritatis: sanctum Spiritum vero principalem, Deum Patrem arbitrantur. Quam moraliter autem ait: Ne projicias me a facie tua. Fideliter timet auferri sibi quam accepit gratiam; ideoque alibi ait: Oculi mei semper ad Dominum (Psal. XXIV, 15). Et in posterioribus: Ecce sicut oculi servorum in manibus dominorum suorum, et sicut oculi ancillae in manibus dominae suae: ita oculi nostri ad Dominum Deum nostrum, donec misereatur nobis (Psal. CXXII, 2). Certe hic est Spiritus doctor et princeps, qui regat mentem, confirmet affectum, quo velit trahat, et in superiorem vitam dirigat.

70. At the same time, it shows that the holy remain, the criminal are cast out. And therefore spiritual grace must be preserved by us, lest it be taken from us on account of our sins. For he is not cast out in whom the Holy Spirit is: but with the unoffending fruit of his gift, he strives always to offer himself to the Lord, like him who, when the Lord said: *Do you also wish to go away?*, replied: *Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we believe* (John 6:68-69).

71. At the same time, this must be considered, that the Spirit is not taken away except by the will of the Lord; just as He is not given except by the will of the Lord: who, when He is given, certainly does not operate as if compelled, but is distributed according to His own will, as it is written, with the Apostle saying: *But all these things one and the same Spirit works, dividing to each one as He wills* (1 Cor. 12:11). Since, therefore, He is not taken away except by the will of the Lord, it is apparent that the will of the Trinity is one.

CHAPTER XV.

That the rational nature alone is capable of salutary joy; and that it is confirmed by a governing spirit; and what is that spirit?

72. *Restore unto me the joy of your salvation: and with a governing spirit confirm me* (Ps. 50:14). To whom it is owed, it is also restored: the joy of salvation is restored to the rational nature. But joy and gladness are the fruit of the Spirit. Our support is also the governing spirit. Finally, he who is confirmed by a governing spirit is not subject to servitude, he knows not how to serve sin, he knows not how to waver, he knows not how to err, nor does he hesitate with uncertain purpose; but established on the rock, he is stabilized with a solid footing.

73. Whom do we think is called the governing spirit? Most refer the 'right spirit' to the Lord Jesus, who took away the sin of the world and renewed all mankind by the shedding of His blood; and therefore it was said: *Renew a right spirit within my inward parts*: but the 'holy spirit,' of which he says: *Take not your holy Spirit from me*, they understand as the Spirit of truth: but the 'governing Holy Spirit,' they believe to be God the Father. But how morally he says: *Cast me not away from your face*. He faithfully fears that the grace he has received may be taken from him; and therefore he says elsewhere: *My eyes are ever toward the Lord* (Ps. 24:15). And in the latter parts: *Behold, as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maid are on the hands of her mistress: so our eyes are on the Lord our God, until He has mercy on us* (Ps. 122:2). Certainly this is the Spirit, the teacher and prince, who governs the mind, confirms the affection, draws it where He wills, and directs it to a higher life.

74. Sunt et qui acceperint spiritum hominis, qui in ipso est. Ideo ait Apostolus: Quis enim scit hominum, quae hominis sunt, nisi spiritus qui in ipso est (I Cor. II, 11)? Qui potest scire omnia, quem hominis occulta non fallunt, potest in homine habere principatum.

Sequitur: Docebo iniquos vias tuas, et impii ad te convertentur (Psal. L, 15). Ille praecipuus est gubernator, qui scopuloso in littore navim gubernat: ille doctor bonus, qui duriora acuit ingenia ad eruditionis profectum: ille bellator egregius, dux mirabilis, qui timidiore accendit in praelium, exploratisque locorum ingeniis, fulcit; ut infirma virium commoda stationis opportunitate compenset: ille similiter magnus etiam fidei zelator, qui iniquos docet. Unde pulchre ait: Docebo iniquos. Non dixit: Docebo justos; noverunt enim justis vias Domini: sed, iniquos, inquit, docebo. Denique auctor prudentiae et magister omnium dicit: Non veni justos vocare, sed peccatores (Matth. IX, 13). Et medicus ille coelestis: Non opus est sanis, inquit, medicus, sed infirmis (Ibid., 12).

Sive igitur ex persona illius qui gentes vocavit, sive ex sua, bene posuit: Docebo iniquos vias tuas, quia commutari vitiosos affectus potest, propositumque convertere doctrina coelestis, et operatio divina sacrilegis pectoribus studia pietatis infundere; ut hi qui sine lege vivebant, convertantur ad Dominum verum, qui ante avertabantur: regalis quoque exemplo poenitentiae, hi qui iniquitates et acerba exercent flagitia corrigantur; et fide atque opere conversi, doctrinae remedium salutaris accipiant, ingrediantur Domini vias, in quibus nullos erroris anfractus, nulla diverticula praecipitis prolapsionis offendant. Sicut enim bonae vitae specimen, et virtutis exemplar in iis viris est, qui inoffensa vitae suae tempora percurrerint: ita qui anteactis renuntiantes flagitiis, vel incrudelitatis erroribus, emendaverint cursum posterioris aetatis, his ad imitandum propositi sunt, qui vel opere vel cogitatione labuntur.

Sequitur: Libera me de sanguinibus, Deus, Deus salutis meae (Psal. L, 16). Et ad Uriae mortem potest referri, quod mandatae necis ejus conscius, veniam tanti poscat admissi, et quamvis rex legibus absolutus, suae tamen reus sit conscientiae; quibus vinculis se enodari desiderans, divinum sibi precatur auxilium, ut ab omni criminis perpetrati labe mundetur.

74. There are also those who have understood it as the spirit of man, which is in him. Therefore the Apostle says: *For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man which is in him* (1 Cor. 2:11)? He who can know all things, whom the secrets of man do not deceive, can have dominion in man.

It follows: I will teach the unjust thy ways, and the wicked shall be converted to thee (Psalm 50:15). He is an outstanding helmsman who steers a ship on a rocky shore; he is a good teacher who sharpens duller minds for progress in learning; he is an excellent warrior, a wonderful leader, who incites the more timid to battle and, having explored the nature of the terrain, supports them, so as to compensate for the weakness of their strength with the advantage of position; similarly, he is also a great zealot for the faith who teaches the wicked. Hence he beautifully says: I will teach the unjust. He did not say: 'I will teach the just,' for the just already know the ways of the Lord; but, the unjust, he says, I will teach. Finally, the author of prudence and master of all says: I came not to call the just, but sinners (Matthew 9:13). And that heavenly physician says: They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick (Ibid., 12).

Therefore, whether from the person of him who called the Gentiles, or from his own, he has well put it: I will teach the unjust thy ways, because vicious affections can be changed, and heavenly doctrine can convert one's purpose, and divine operation can infuse the pursuits of piety into sacrilegious hearts; so that those who lived without the law may be converted to the true Lord, from whom they previously turned away. Also, by the example of the king's penitence, may those who practice iniquities and bitter crimes be corrected; and, converted in faith and deed, may they receive the remedy of salutary doctrine and enter the ways of the Lord, in which they will encounter no winding paths of error, no byways of headlong falling. For just as a model of a good life and an exemplar of virtue is found in those men who have run the course of their lives without offense, so those who, renouncing their past crimes or errors of cruelty, have amended the course of their later life, are set forth as an example for imitation to those who fall either in deed or in thought.

It follows: Deliver me from bloodguilt, O God, thou God of my salvation (Psalm 50:16). And this can be referred to the death of Uriah, in that, being conscious of having ordered his murder, he asks pardon for so great a crime, and although as king he was absolved by the laws, he is nevertheless guilty in his own conscience; desiring to be freed from these bonds, he prays for divine help, that he may be cleansed from every stain of the crime committed.

Et re vera cum mitis et corde mansuetus egregia semper dederit sanctus Propheta suae mansuetudinis et pietatis insignia, ita ut adversariis suis frequenter ignoverit, atque ab eorum nece putaverit abstinendum; non est mirum quod tam graviter doleat fundendi sanguinis innoxii sibi obrepisse peccatum. Ideo liberari se a sanguinibus, hoc est a peccatis mortalibus, postulavit. Laudavit Dominum Deum suum, justitiam Domini praedicavit; ideoque addidit: Exsultabit lingua mea justitiam tuam.

Davidem verbis suis peccatum sibi dimissum significare, cum Deus peccatori os occludat. Eadem verba etiam Christo convenire, quippe qui verus sit David, a quo futura gentium congregatio, et Ecclesiarum fundatio praesignetur, postremo nonnullis de sacrificio Christi atque Martyrum propositis opus clauditur.

Domine, labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam (Psal. L, 17). Qui laudat Dominum, ab inimicis suis erit salvus, ut scriptum est (Psal. XVII, 4). Et certe supra dixerat in quadragesimo nono psalmo: Peccatori autem dixit Deus: Quare tu enarras justitias meas (Psal. XLIX, 17)? Cum ergo per os suum dixerit quod peccatorem prohibuerit Deus suas enarrare justitias, utique ipse enarrando justitiam Dei, declaravit commissum hoc nequaquam sibi imputatum esse peccatum.

Et addidit: Labia mea aperies, et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam. Os peccatoris Deus claudit, ne loquatur justitias Dei; justus aperit, ut loquatur. Cujus ergo labia aperit, hunc peccati absolvit reatu. Illius autem aperit labia Dominus, 702 qui accipit verbum in apertione oris sui. Unde et Apostolus petit se adjuvari orationibus plebis, ut aperiatur sibi ostium verbi ad loquendum mysterium Christi (Colos. IV, 3). Linguam vero pro sermone accipimus ejus, qui exsultat in Dei laudibus. Unde et illud sic aestimatur: Lingua mea calamus scribae velociter scribentis (Psal. XLIV, 2), sermo infusus Prophetarum.

Quod si ex persona Christi dictum accipimus, vide ne scriba sit velociter scribens Verbum Dei, quod animae viscera percurrat et penetret, et inscribat in ea vel naturae dona vel gratiae: lingua autem sit sanctum illud corpus ortum ex Virgine, quo vacuata sunt venena serpentis, et Evangelii opera toto orbe celebranda decursa sunt. Accedit ad evacuandum peccatum, quod humilitatem suscepit; contrivit cor suum, quod magis sacrificium Dominus elegit, quam holocausta pro peccatis, quae secundum Legem offerri solebant.

And truly, since the holy Prophet, being meek and gentle of heart, had always given outstanding signs of his gentleness and piety, so that he frequently forgave his adversaries and thought it right to abstain from their slaughter, it is not surprising that he grieves so gravely that the sin of shedding innocent blood had crept up on him. Therefore he asked to be delivered from bloodguilt (*sanguinibus*), that is, from mortal sins. He praised the Lord his God, he proclaimed the justice of the Lord; and therefore he added: *My tongue shall extol thy justice.*

That David, by his words, signifies that his sin has been forgiven him, since God closes the mouth of the sinner. That these same words also apply to Christ, who is indeed the true David, by whom the future gathering of the nations and the foundation of the Churches is prefigured; finally, the work is concluded with some points proposed concerning the sacrifice of Christ and of the Martyrs.

"Lord, you will open my lips, and my mouth will announce your praise" (Psalm 50:17). He who praises the Lord will be saved from his enemies, as it is written (Psalm 17:4). And certainly, he had said above in the forty-ninth psalm: "But to the sinner God has said: Why do you declare my justices?" (Psalm 49:17). Since, therefore, he had said through his own mouth that God had forbidden the sinner to declare His justices, surely he himself, by declaring the justice of God, declared that this sin he had committed was by no means imputed to him.

And he added: "You will open my lips, and my mouth will announce your praise." God closes the mouth of the sinner, lest he speak the justices of God; He opens the mouth of the just, that he may speak. Therefore, he whose lips He opens, He absolves from the guilt of sin. But the Lord opens the lips of him who receives the word in the opening of his mouth. Whence the Apostle also asks to be helped by the prayers of the people, that a door for the word may be opened to him to speak the mystery of Christ (Colossians 4:3). Indeed, we take "tongue" to mean the speech of him who exults in the praises of God. Whence also that passage is thus understood: "My tongue is the pen of a scribe writing swiftly" (Psalm 44:2), that is, the speech infused into the Prophet.

But if we take this as spoken in the person of Christ, see if the swiftly writing scribe is not the Word of God, which runs through and penetrates the depths of the soul, and inscribes in it either the gifts of nature or of grace; and if the tongue is not that holy body born of the Virgin, by which the poisons of the serpent were emptied out, and the works of the Gospel to be celebrated throughout the whole world were accomplished. It contributes to the emptying out of sin that He took on humility; He crushed His heart, a sacrifice which the Lord chose more than the holocausts for sins which were accustomed to be offered according to the Law.

Denique supra ait: Holocausta et pro peccato non postulasti, tunc dixi: Ecce venio (Psal. XXIX, 7 et 8), id est, non rapinam arbitratus esse me aequalem Deo, venio formam servi accipiens; venio in specie susceptionis humanae, in veritate crucis, mortis humilitate obedientiam probaturus; ut in obedientia deleatur.

Merito ergo et hic dicit: Quoniam si voluisses, sacrificium dedissem utique, holocaustis non delectaberis. Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus: cor contritum et humiliatum Deus non spernit (Psal. L, 18 et 19). Et sicut supra dixi, certum est mysterio convenire quod ipse Dominus Jesus videtur hic quoque ex sua persona loqui, qui superius illud personae suae evidenti testificatione deprompsit. Ipse enim verus David, manu fortis, verus humilis, atque mansuetus, primus et novissimus, aeternitate primus, humilitate ultimus: per cujus obedientiam humani generis culpa deleta, refusa justitia est. Ipse, inquam, Jesus umbrae finis et Legis, advenit humilitatis magister docere superbos sensu, et tumore cordis inflatos ad mansuetudinem et simplicitatem esse migrandum. Quomodo igitur in typo ejus mysterii peccatum imputari potest, cum in ipso mysterio sit remissio peccatorum? Nisi forte ideo David iniquitatem suam, peccatumque confessus est ejus admissi; ut et ipse ad remissionem peccati, et gratiam mysterii pertineret.

Nam quid sibi vult quod vir peccatum suum confitens, de Sion et Hierusalem psallit dicens: Benefac, Domine, in bona voluntate tua Sion, ut aedificentur muri Hierusalem (Ibid., 29); nisi quia accelerari ei placet Ecclesiae congregationem per vocationem gentium; quae non ancillae filii, sed liberae Hierusalem, illius, quae in coelo est, fidei suae prosapiam toto orbe diffunderet et spiritalium septa murorum doctrinae apostolicae fundaret assertione?

Muri itaque Hierusalem fidei propugnacula, disputationum munimenta, virtutum culmina sunt; muri Hierusalem Ecclesiarum conventus sunt toto orbe fundati. Ecclesia enim dicit: Ego murus, et ubera mea turris (Cant. VIII, 10). Et bene muri Hierusalem Ecclesiarum conventicula sunt; quoniam quisquis bona fide atque opere ingreditur Ecclesiam, fit supernae illius civis et incola civitatis quae descendit de coelo. Hos muros lapidum aedificat structura vivorum.

Finally, he says above: "Holocausts and sin offerings you did not require, then I said: Behold, I come" (Psalm 39:7-8), that is, not considering it robbery to be equal with God, I come taking the form of a servant; I come in the appearance of human assumption, in the truth of the cross, to prove obedience by the humility of death; so that in obedience [sin] might be blotted out.

Rightly, therefore, he also says here: "For if you had desired sacrifice, I would have given it; you will not be delighted with holocausts. A sacrifice to God is a troubled spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, God does not despise" (Psalm 50:18-19). And as I said above, it is certain that it befits the mystery that the Lord Jesus Himself seems here also to speak in His own person, He who earlier brought forth that other passage with evident testimony of His own person. For He is the true David, strong of hand, truly humble and meek, the first and the last, first in eternity, last in humility: through whose obedience the guilt of the human race was blotted out, and justice poured back. He, I say, Jesus, the end of the shadow and of the Law, came as a master of humility to teach the proud in mind and those inflated with the swelling of their heart that they must pass over to meekness and simplicity. How, therefore, can sin be imputed in the type of that mystery, when in the mystery itself there is remission of sins? Unless, perhaps, David for this reason confessed his iniquity and the sin he had committed: that he himself might also pertain to the remission of sin and the grace of the mystery.

For what does it mean that a man confessing his sin sings of Zion and Jerusalem, saying: "Do good, O Lord, in your good will to Zion, that the walls of Jerusalem may be built" (Ibid., 20); unless it is that he is pleased that the congregation of the Church be hastened through the calling of the gentiles, which, not as a son of the handmaid but of the free Jerusalem, that which is in heaven, would spread the lineage of its faith throughout the whole world and would found the enclosures of its spiritual walls by the assertion of apostolic doctrine?

Therefore, the walls of Jerusalem are the bulwarks of faith, the defenses of disputations, the heights of virtues; the walls of Jerusalem are the assemblies of the Churches founded throughout the whole world. For the Church says: "I am a wall, and my breasts are like a tower" (Canticles 8:10). And well are the walls of Jerusalem the small assemblies of the Churches; since whoever enters the Church in good faith and work becomes a citizen and inhabitant of that supernal city which descends from heaven. The structure of living stones builds these walls.

Videns igitur Hierusalem veram et Sion dixit: Cum benedixeris in bona voluntate tua Hierusalem et Sion, tunc acceptabis sacrificium justitiae (Psal. L, 21), hoc est sacrificium corporis Christi, qui ait, cum de propria passione loqueretur: Aperite mihi portas justitiae, et ingressus in eas confitebor Domino (Psal. CXVII, 19). Et in Evangelio ait ad Joannem: Sine modo; sic enim oportet nos implere omnem justitiam (Matth. III, 15). Et infra: Beati qui persecutionem patiuntur propter justitiam (Matth. V, 10). Justitia Christus est. Sacrificium ergo Christi acceptabile futurum Patri asserit. Hoc est ergo de quo et supra ait: Sacrificate sacrificium justitiae, et sperate in Domino (Psal. IV, 6). Haec est justitiae spiritalis oblatio, et holocaustum ferventis devotionis, et infusionis Spiritus sancti, quod dicit futurum, cum ad illud spiritale Domini altare coeperint admoveri 704 animae credentium, quae renuntiantes voluptatibus atque deliciis, tamquam aratrum in visceribus suis ducant, ut fructus possint ferre piae culturae.

Vel certe ita: Cum benedixeris Ecclesiam ex gentibus acquisitam, et spiritale sacrificium justitiae coeperit frequentari, tunc et martyres sancti qui suum pro Christo corpus obtulerint exarandum, tamquam vituli sacris altaribus offerentur; sicut in Apocalypsi Joannis scriptum invenimus (Apoc. VI, 9), quia sub altari erant animae eorum, qui pro Domini Jesu nomine corpora sua obtulerunt martyrio, ut Christi sibi gratiam mercarentur: cui est honor et gloria, laus, perpetuitas cum Deo Patre et Spiritu sancto a saeculis et nunc et semper, et in omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Seeing, therefore, the true Jerusalem and Zion, he said: "When you have blessed Jerusalem and Zion in your good will, then you will accept the sacrifice of justice" (Psalm 50:21), that is, the sacrifice of the body of Christ, who said, when speaking of His own passion: "Open to me the gates of justice, and entering into them I will confess to the Lord" (Psalm 117:19). And in the Gospel He says to John: "Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all justice" (Matthew 3:15). And below: "Blessed are they who suffer persecution for the sake of justice" (Matthew 5:10). Christ is justice. Therefore, he asserts that the sacrifice of Christ will be acceptable to the Father. This, therefore, is that of which he also says above: "Sacrifice the sacrifice of justice, and hope in the Lord" (Psalm 4:6). This is the spiritual oblation of justice, and the holocaust of fervent devotion and of the infusion of the Holy Spirit, which he says will come to pass when the souls of believers begin to be brought to that spiritual altar of the Lord, souls which, renouncing pleasures and delights, draw, as it were, a plow in their own depths, so that they may be able to bear the fruits of pious cultivation.

Or certainly thus: When you have blessed the Church acquired from the gentiles, and the spiritual sacrifice of justice has begun to be frequented, then also the holy martyrs who have offered their own body to be plowed up for Christ will be offered like calves upon the sacred altars; as we find written in the Apocalypse of John (Revelation 6:9), that under the altar were the souls of those who for the name of the Lord Jesus offered their bodies to martyrdom, that they might merit for themselves the grace of Christ: to whom is honor and glory, praise, perpetuity with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, from all ages, and now and always, and for ever and ever. Amen.