METHOD OF CONFESSION, REVISED AND ENLARGED BY PEDRO DE SOTO (METHODUS CONFESSIONIS)

Claude de Viexmont; revised by Pedro de Soto, O.P.

1576
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Contents

Preliminaries **5**
- Title Page and Contents 5
- Soto's Dedicatory Letter to Cardinal Otto Truchsess 5
- Soto's Short Exhortation to the Reader 8
- The Author to the Reader 9
- Council of Trent, Session XIV: On the Sacrament of Penance 10
- Doctrine on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction 16

Verses on This Method **19**

Prologue of the Method of Confession **20**

Part I: The Articles of the Orthodox Faith **22**
- On God and the Creation of the World 22
- On the Redemption of Mankind 25
- Prologue to the Twelve Articles of the Faith 26
- The Apostles' Creed 26
- Exposition of the Apostles' Creed 27

Part II: The Precepts of the Decalogue **33**
- The Ten Precepts of the Law 33
- The First Commandment 33
- Sins against the First Commandment 35
- The Second Commandment 39
- The Third Commandment 42
- The Fourth Commandment 43
- The Fifth Commandment 45
- The Sixth Commandment 49
- The Seventh Commandment 49
- The Eighth Commandment 51
- The Ninth Commandment 54
- The Tenth Commandment 55
- Summary of the Ten Commandments 56
- The Precepts of the Church 58
- On the Venerable Sacrament of the Eucharist 59
- Soto's Additions on what was said concerning the precepts 62
- Soto's Additions, Chapter I: On the necessity of distinguishing lighter from graver sins 63
- Soto's Additions, Chapter II: On the manner of this discretion in general 65

Soto's Additions, Chapter III: On the several things said about the precepts in particular ... 68

Part III: On the Capital Sins and Their Remedies ... 77

On the Seven Capital Sins in General ... 77
On All the Virtues in General ... 81
On Pride ... 82
On Humility ... 84
On the Sin of Avarice ... 85
On Liberality ... 87
On Lust ... 88
On Chastity ... 89
On Envy ... 89
On Charity ... 90
On Gluttony ... 90
On Abstinence ... 91
On Wrath ... 92
On Patience ... 93
On Sloth ... 93
On Devotion ... 95
Soto's Additions on what has been said about the capital sins ... 95
Remedies against Pride ... 99
Remedies against Avarice ... 108
Remedies against Lust ... 112
Remedies against Envy ... 117
Remedies against Gluttony ... 119
Remedies against Wrath ... 123
Remedies against Acedia ... 131

Part IV: On the Remaining Sins, and the Circumstances of Sins ... 136

On the Five Exterior Senses ... 136
On the Causes of Another's Sin ... 137
On the Theological Virtues ... 139
On the Four Cardinal Virtues ... 139
On the Gifts of the Holy Spirit ... 141
On the Works of Mercy ... 141
On the Four General Sins ... 142
On the Eight Circumstances of Sins ... 143
On Threefold Sin ... 146
On the Sacraments ... 149

Soto's Additions on Part IV 149

Part V: On Penance and Its Parts 153

On Penance 153

On Contrition 153

On Confession 154

A Method of Preparing Oneself for Confession 156

A Useful Instruction for an Entire Confession 158

What Is to Be Observed During Confession 159

What Is to Be Observed After Confession 160

On Satisfaction 160

On Relapse into Sin 162

Soto's Additions on Part V 163

Part VI: On the Art of Dying Well 169

On the necessity of death 169

Preliminaries

Title Page and Contents

(sig.)(1r) Method of Confession, or more truly, an Epitome of the Chief Heads of Christian Doctrine and Piety. Revised by Master Pedro de Soto, an eminent theologian, and illustrated with learned Additions.

To it is added the Gospel History, which gathers in a compendium what the four Gospels contain about Christ, by Cornelius Jansenius, Bishop of Ghent.

Also the Directory of Juan Polanco, theologian of the Society of Jesus, for rightly carrying out the office of confessor and of penitent, revised by the Author in many places.

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(sig.)(1v) **Contents of this work.**

- Letter of Master Pedro de Soto to the Cardinal of Augsburg, and his exhortation to the reader.
- Doctrine of the Council of Trent on the Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction.
- The Author's Prologue.
- On God, the creation of the world, and the fall and redemption of man.
- Exposition of the Apostles' Creed.
- Explanation of the Decalogue and of the precepts of the Church.
- On the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.
- On sins, and the way of detesting and avoiding every sin in general.
- On the capital sins one by one, and the virtues contrary to them.
- Method of detesting and avoiding each of the mortal sins.
- On the five senses; the causes of another's sin; the theological and cardinal virtues; the gifts of the Holy Spirit; the works of mercy; the circumstances and differences of sins; a little on the Sacraments.
- On Penance and its parts.
- On the Art of Dying Well.
- Additions of Master Pedro de Soto, inserted here and there in their places.
- The Gospel History of Master Cornelius Jansenius.
- Formulas of absolution from sins and ecclesiastical censures.
- Formula of the profession of the Catholic faith, in Latin and German.
- The Directory of Master Juan Polanco, with its index.
- Letter of St. Jerome to Nepotian on the life of clerics.

Soto's Dedicatory Letter to Cardinal Otto Truchsess

(sig.)(2r) To the Most Reverend Lord and Most Illustrious Prince, Lord Otto Truchsess, Cardinal Priest of the Holy Roman Church of the title of Santa Sabina, and Bishop of Augsburg: Fr. P. de Soto sends greetings.

Most noble Father, you command—and you have carefully and wisely laid it down in this school and college of yours—that those who have charge of teaching theology should diligently

instruct and exercise not only their own hearers but all others as well, whether they are preparing for theology or have come here for any other reason to pursue honest and liberal studies, in the things that belong to piety: that is, the catechism and the first rudiments of the faith, the way of praying, and the guarding of one's life and conscience. Among many other plans and measures, you act through this very careful precept so that this school may be, like a truly ecclesiastical school and like those old schools of the ancient bishops, first a cultivator and teacher of piety, of Christian discipline and of a truly ecclesiastical life, and then of pure and sound doctrine. At the same time you take care that those who take refuge under these wings of yours, whether from this diocese or from more distant parts of Germany, may find antidotes ready, both against the errors that are spreading so like a plague through Germany and against the corruption of a looser life, which also does the Church no little harm.

By this one work and plan, therefore, you most wisely provide both for yourself and for the sheep entrusted to you. For yourself, *(sig.)(2v)* because you keep before your eyes that most severe judgement which "will be on those who are set over others",[1] and the account which that Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep will demand of them. You are preparing what you will answer, or rather what will answer for you even if you are silent, while you take care that teaching is not lacking. For you do not doubt that an account will be demanded above all of this, which is the chief portion of pastoral care, as Paul says to his Timothy: "Take care to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."[2] And elsewhere: "Attend to yourself and to doctrine; for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."[3] Here the Apostle adds that those under one's charge are also provided for in this way: "and those," he says, "who hear you." So this plan and this care, that teaching may not be lacking to the sheep: not I, but Scripture and the thing itself cry out that nothing is more worthy of a bishop, more fitting for a pastor of Christ, and in short more salutary. "It is not right," say the Apostles, "that we should leave the word of God and serve tables."[4] What just reason, then, will there be for neglecting the care of teaching, if the need to provide food for widows and the poor is not sufficient? And what is holier than that, what more pleasing to God? Only, what is holiest and most pleasing must not be left undone, namely the dispensing of the spiritual food of souls. This the Apostles handled themselves; the temporal care they handled through others.

Lastly, everywhere in Germany there is a dearth of the word, and everything is being filled with pestilent doctrines. With this double army our enemies attack us. On the right, ignorance and a pitiable silence withdraw the help that is needed; on the left, *(sig.)(3r)* their most importunate talkativeness inflicts deadly and most grievous wounds on souls. How could such great evils be more fittingly remedied than by having all people steeped in sound doctrine from the very first rudiments, and (as the saying goes) from their tender nails, each according to his ability and grasp? Would that the pastors of churches, roused at last by such scourges and dangers, cared for this—if not before all other things, as the Apostles did, then at least among the others—or at least with the care and diligence with which the heretics corrupt everything with their pestilent doctrines, neglecting no means and no opportunity, leaving no stone unturned to ruin everyone, the simpler folk above all. But let us leave aside for now the cause of so great a sorrow.

I return to you, most worthy Prelate, and to this solicitude and care of yours. It is so just and necessary that it is not right for us to obey it any less willingly, or to fail it in any way. We are doing, then, and have done, as far as our slender means allow, what we can so that this most worthy solicitude of yours may not be made vain through us. I too am the least of those who have taught theology in this school (you brought them from chosen Catholic universities, namely Paris and Louvain). Since I desire nothing more than to obey your commands, and, within my small strength, not to fail the needs of the little ones, I have tried in many ways, by word and in writing, from the very first rise of our school, to hand on the catechism and the rudiments of piety, adapted as far as I could to our times.

Among other things I often turned over anxiously in my mind how great a loss to souls it is that the true account of penance, of the detestation of sins, and of that most wholesome judgement and sacrament *(sig.)(3v)* has been altogether driven out among the heretics by perverse teachings, while among Catholics it is either carelessly kept or certainly in large part forgotten. So from the very beginning I took care both to hand on teaching about these things and to require it, and to exercise in it all who were capable of it. And now again I have done so, as soon as I returned here after the recent disturbances, drawn by your most ardent letters, most excellent Prelate, and at your command that I should do this—though (to tell the truth) you were spurring on a horse already running. As soon as I had returned, then, I was waiting for other teachers through whom our school might be restored to its former state, and above all we were all awaiting the arrival of Your Most Reverend Lordship. (We knew for certain that you desired it more than we did, out of your most ardent love for religion and the Catholic faith, and that it would be necessary for the restoration of our school.) Meanwhile I took care first of all, besides the ordinary daily exercises, to teach everyone the catechism again with all diligence.

When I had begun this, I was also seized by no small anxiety about instructing the little ones and the less educated for penance and confession, especially as Lent was at hand. I confess that this business has always seemed difficult to me. One reason is the immense and almost imperceptible variety of moral matters; another is that the senses of such people are not well exercised. In this matter there is a danger on both sides of leaning one way or the other: what ought to be valued less is valued more, or on the contrary, what should have been held of greater weight is reckoned of less. While I was in this anxiety, **this little book came into my hands, which is rightly called the Method of Confession.** I see in it, clearly and plainly set out, very many of the things I was looking for. And certainly, as far as I can judge, it treats this subject more fully, and with greater *(sig.)(4r)* prudence and learning, than many others do.

We therefore decided to give it to our students. Nor did we find it a burden, with others also helping, to lecture on it to them, so as to rouse them to read it and to show them what weight each thing should be given. For this use it was necessary to print it again, so that the students would not lack copies. This we have done, thinking it would be useful if it were repeated more often in this school from now on, as either the benefit of newcomers or the slowness of those present seemed to require. And so this little book would become our school's own.

Since it was to be printed, it seemed to us neither useless nor unjust to do with it what skilled physicians do with common medicines, herbs or ointments. When they apply them to various

diseases and to the various conditions of the sick, they adapt them to the patients' state. Sometimes they add other remedies of greater strength; sometimes contrary ones, or ones that somewhat temper their force, as they judge fitting. In the same way, so that this *Method* might suit the ailments and the minds of our people, and might be a more effective medicine against the present heresies, **we have sometimes changed some things, sometimes taken things away or added them.** We have done this in good faith, **finding no fault in the author, whom rather we warmly commend,** but only looking to what would be more useful to our people.

All of this, then—our labour, our care for the good of your school, and this new printing and edition—is owed by the best of rights to you, most worthy Prelate. It is through you that we are free to plan and do these things among your people. With the greatest kindness and the most ardent zeal for sound doctrine you protect us, and you rouse us to do these and other things for the *(sig.)(4v)* common good. We therefore offer them to you to approve or reject. If you approve them and judge that they should be kept in this school of yours, our desire, namely the good of souls, will be amply satisfied. And we hope that our plan, protected by your authority, cannot easily be faulted by others. But if you think otherwise, we shall gladly submit to this judgement as well. We desire nothing else than to serve the common good of souls, and not to fail your most devout efforts, Most Reverend Father and Most Illustrious Prince. Farewell. Given at Dillingen, on the Nones of April, 1553.

[1] Wisdom 6:6 (Vulgate): *iudicium durissimum his qui praesunt fiet*.

[2] 2 Timothy 2:15.

[3] 1 Timothy 4:16.

[4] Acts 6:2.

Soto's Short Exhortation to the Reader

(sig.)(5r) A short exhortation to the reader who is eager for saving doctrine, by Fr. P. de Soto.

If there is any matter in which we wish the truth to be sought with great attention of mind, with great study and in the fear of God, we desire it most of all in this one. Here the subject is the divine commandments, their fulfilment and transgression—that is, the way of salvation or of perdition—and lastly the nature of true penance, of confession, and of the acknowledgement of sins. Nothing can be found more necessary than these things, nothing to which one must more often have recourse. What is human life without the knowledge of God's commandments but a pilgrimage and a continual journey in the thickest darkness? And without penance, what do we do but live among the most dangerous diseases without feeling them and without medicine?

These things are necessary to every age (we leave aside the age that passes without the light of reason), to every order, sex and condition. Yet there are many—and this cannot be said without sorrow—so dull of sense, so little practised, and in short so far from themselves and from their own salvation, that they give no thought to these things, do not wish to be instructed, and certainly do not take it in if they are instructed. By this very fact they show

clearly enough how far they are from the Spirit of God. Such dullness of sense and blindness about spiritual things are the evils proper to the Jews, on whose heart (as Paul says) "a veil lies".[1] But that Spirit of the adoption of Christ, as the Lord himself cites from Isaiah, *(sig.)(5v)* makes all "taught of God",[2] and, as Jerome says, "God-taught".[3] We are greatly afraid, both for the greater and for the lesser, of negligence in teaching and learning these things. Most greatly, I say, we fear that word of Christ: "both fall into the pit."[4]

Everyone knows how to sin. What is easier, and, so to speak, more common from the very first use of reason than sinning? And what is more thrown behind our backs than even the knowledge of true penance? Yet how can it be done rightly unless it is first known? We see no other way to remedy this danger than by humble invocation of the Holy Spirit and diligent study. For the Spirit of God is not to be tempted, nor sought by another way while the fitting means he has handed down are neglected.

Since we saw that learning this is supremely necessary for all for salvation, we thought it no less necessary for us to teach it. For this reason, in former years, at the founding of this school of Dillingen, established by the Most Reverend and Most Illustrious Prince, the Cardinal of Augsburg, we instructed all who were capable about these things and took care, as far as we could, to exercise them in them. And now, concerned about the same matter again, **having found this *Method of Confession*,** which treats the subject diligently, devoutly and with restraint, we took care to exhort our people to read it, and for their sake we have had it printed again. We invite you too, excellent reader, to read it, and we earnestly beg you not to stop reading it until you know yourself to have been taught these things by the Holy Spirit.

However, **since we have changed some things in this edition,** we wish *(sig.)(6r)* to warn you of this. It is not that we find fault with them. We did it either for greater clarity, or for the authority and certainty of what is taught, so that the heretics might not mock anything less well proved, or lastly because some necessary doctrine had to be set out more fully for these times and places. Of this we wished to forewarn you here. **Besides the author's words, other things have also been added, marked with the title "Addition"**, which we judged necessary. By this care and labour of ours, such as it is, we wish to help you to salvation, studious reader. We hope you will feel that help if you read these things diligently, as the business of your soul's salvation requires, and apply yourself to them. But now hear the author himself, who is truly worthy of all praise and commendation.

[1] 2 Corinthians 3:15.

[2] John 6:45, quoting Isaiah 54:13: *et erunt omnes docibiles Dei*.

[3] (The word *theodidacti*, "taught by God", is from 1 Thessalonians 4:9.)

[4] Matthew 15:14.

The Author to the Reader

(sig.)(6v) The author greets the reader.

Last year, excellent reader, we published a little book on the instruction of boys. It was read and explained to the pupils in the College of Navarre in the same year, in Lent, on fixed days and at fixed

hours: namely (to use the language of churchmen) after Compline on every Saturday and on the eve of every other feast that occurred; on Sundays too, both straight after the morning Mass and in the afternoon exercises that are commonly called "Reparations." But by the second month after the book appeared, the printer had very few copies left of a large print run, and so he was preparing a second edition. We therefore decided not merely to revise the whole work so that it would come out in a more correct form, but to make it entirely new—so new that you will not recognise even a trace of the earlier form in it. We have therefore had this little work printed again, renewed in this way and made much richer *(sig.)(7r)* (with its title also changed, to suit our purpose better).

The aim of this undertaking of ours was that a boy, spurred on by reading these things to flee and hate sin and to love virtue, should become used from his earliest years to joining integrity of life and truly Christian piety with good letters and the study of eloquence. He should offer the first-fruits of his age to God and to Christ Jesus. He should keep the innocence recovered in the font of holy baptism pure and spotless from his earliest years to the last period of his life. And, having been well formed from boyhood, he should spend the rest of his life well and happily, so that [at last], supported by the grace and kindness of God, after doing good works, he may by God's promise share in heavenly glory and eternal life. Farewell, and live happily in God.

Council of Trent, Session XIV: On the Sacrament of Penance

(sig.)(7v) Catholic doctrine of the Council of Trent, Session XIV, on the Sacrament of Penance and its parts—Contrition, Confession and Satisfaction.

Chapter I. On the necessity and institution of the Sacrament of Penance

If in all the regenerate there were such gratitude towards God that they constantly kept the righteousness received in baptism by his gift and grace, there would have been no need for another sacrament, besides baptism itself, to be instituted for the remission of sins. But because God, rich in mercy, knew our frame,[1] he also bestowed a remedy of life on those who afterwards had handed themselves over to the slavery of sin and the power of the devil: namely the Sacrament of Penance, by which the benefit of Christ's death is applied to those who have fallen after baptism. Penance was indeed necessary, at every time, for attaining grace and righteousness, for all men who had defiled themselves by any mortal sin—even for those who asked to be washed by the Sacrament of Baptism —so that, casting aside and amending their perversity, they might [detest] so great an offence against God with hatred of sin and a devout sorrow of mind. Hence the Prophet says: "Turn and do penance from all your iniquities, *(sig.)(8r)* and iniquity shall not be your ruin."[2] The Lord also said: "Unless you do penance, you will all likewise perish."[3] And Peter, the prince of the Apostles, recommending penance to sinners who were about to be initiated by baptism, said: "Do penance, and let every one of you be baptised."[4] Further, neither before the coming of Christ was penance a sacrament, nor is it so after his coming for anyone before baptism. But the Lord especially instituted the Sacrament of Penance when, raised from the dead, he breathed on his disciples, saying: "Receive the Holy Spirit: whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you retain, they are retained."[5] By so signal an act, and by words so clear, the consent of all the Fathers has always understood that the power of remitting and retaining sins, for reconciling the faithful who have fallen after baptism, was communicated to the Apostles and to their lawful successors. And the Catholic Church, with good

reason, long ago cast out and condemned as heretics the Novatians, who obstinately denied the power of remitting. Wherefore this holy Synod, approving and receiving this most true sense of those words of the Lord, condemns the invented interpretations of those who falsely twist those words, contrary to the institution of this sacrament, into a power of preaching the word of God and announcing the Gospel of Christ.

[1] Psalm 102 (103):14 Vulgate: *quoniam ipse cognovit figmentum nostrum*.

[2] Ezekiel 18:30.

[3] Luke 13:3 (cf. 13:5).

[4] Acts 2:38.

[5] John 20:22–23.

Chapter II. On the difference between the Sacrament of Penance and Baptism

(sig.)(8v) For the rest, this sacrament is known to differ from baptism in many ways. For besides the fact that the matter and form by which the essence of a sacrament is completed are very far apart, it is certainly clear that the minister of baptism need not be a judge: for the Church exercises judgement on no one who has not first entered her through the gate of baptism. "For what is it to me," says the Apostle, "to judge those who are outside?"[6] It is otherwise with those of the household of the faith,[7] whom Christ the Lord once made members of his body by the washing of baptism. For these, if afterwards they have defiled themselves by some crime, he willed not that they be washed again by a repeated baptism—since that is in no way lawful in the Catholic Church—but that they be set as defendants before this tribunal, so that by the sentence of the priests they might be freed, not once only, but as often as, being penitent, they fled to it from the sins they had committed. Moreover, the fruit of baptism is one thing, and that of penance another. For by putting on Christ in baptism[8] we are made altogether a new creature in him, obtaining a full and entire remission of all sins; yet to that newness and integrity we can by no means arrive through the Sa[c]rament of Penance without great tears and labours on our part, divine justice requiring it: so that penance has rightly been called by the holy Fathers a kind of laborious baptism. And this Sacrament of Penance is as necessary for salvation to those who have fallen after baptism as baptism itself is to those not yet regenerated.

[6] 1 Corinthians 5:12.

[7] Cf. Galatians 6:10 (*domesticos fidei*).

[8] Cf. Galatians 3:27.

Chapter III. On the parts and fruit of this sacrament

*(sig. *1r)* The holy Synod further teaches that the form of the Sacrament of Penance, in which its force chiefly resides, is placed in those words of the minister: "I absolve you," etc. To these, indeed, certain prayers are laudably joined by the custom of holy Church; yet they in no way belong to the essence of the form itself, nor are they necessary for the administration of the sacrament. But the acts of the penitent himself—namely contrition, confession and satisfaction—are as it were the matter of this sacrament. Inasmuch as they are required in the penitent, by God's institution, for the integrity of the sacrament and for the full and perfect remission of sins, they are for that reason called the parts of Penance. Truly the thing and effect of this sacrament, as far as its force and efficacy are concerned, is reconciliation with God, which in devout men who receive this sacrament with devotion is

sometimes wont to be followed by peace and serenity of conscience with strong consolation of spirit. Delivering these things concerning the parts and effect of this sacrament, the holy Synod at the same time condemns the opinions of those who contend that the parts of Penance are terrors struck into the conscience, and faith.

Chapter IV. On Contrition

Contrition, which holds the first place among the said acts of the penitent, is a sorrow of mind and a detestation of the sin committed, with the purpose *(sig. *1v)* of not sinning thereafter. This movement of contrition has at every time been necessary for obtaining pardon of sins; and in a man who has fallen after baptism it prepares for the remission of sins only if it is joined with trust in the divine mercy and with the resolve to perform the rest of what is required for rightly receiving this sacrament. The holy Synod therefore declares that this Contrition contains not only a cessation from sin and the purpose and beginning of a new life, but also a hatred of the old, according to that saying: "Cast away from you all your iniquities in which you have transgressed, and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit."[9] And certainly anyone who has considered those cries of the saints —"Against you alone have I sinned, and done evil before you";[10] "I have laboured in my groaning, every night I will wash my bed";[11] "I will recount to you all my years in the bitterness of my soul"[12]— and others of this kind, will easily understand that they flowed from a certain vehement hatred of the life already lived and from a great detestation of sins. It further teaches that although this contrition is sometimes perfect through charity and reconciles a man to God before this sacrament is actually received, nevertheless that reconciliation is not to be ascribed to the Contrition itself without the desire of the sacrament which is included in it. But that imperfect Contrition which is called Attrition, because it is commonly conceived either from consideration of the turpitude of sin or from fear of hell and of punishments—if it excludes the will to sin and is joined with hope of pardon—the Synod declares not only does not make a man a hypocrite and a greater *(sig. *2r)* sinner, but is even a gift of God and an impulse of the Holy Spirit, who does not yet dwell in the penitent but only moves him, by which, being helped, the penitent prepares a way for himself to righteousness. And although by itself, without the Sacrament of Penance, it cannot lead the sinner to justification, yet it disposes him to obtain the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance. For, profitably struck with this fear, the Ninevites, at Jonah's preaching full of terrors, did penance and obtained mercy from the Lord.[13] Wherefore some falsely calumniate Catholic writers as if they had taught that the Sacrament of Penance confers grace without a good movement on the part of those who receive it—which the Church of God never taught or held; and they also falsely teach that Contrition is extorted and forced, not free and voluntary.

[9] Ezekiel 18:31.

[10] Psalm 50 (51):6.

[11] Psalm 6:7 (Vulgate numbering).

[12] Isaiah 38:15.

[13] Jonah 3.

Chapter V. On Confession

From the institution of the Sacrament of Penance already explained, the whole Church has always understood that an entire confession of sins was also instituted by the Lord, and that it is necessary

by divine law for all who have fallen after baptism. For our Lord Jesus Christ, about to ascend from earth to heaven, left priests as his own Vicars, as presidents and judges, to whom all mortal crimes into which the faithful of Christ may have fallen are to be brought, so that by the power of the keys they may pronounce the sentence of remission or retention of sins. For it is clear that priests could not have exercised this judgement *(sig. *2v)* without knowing the cause, nor could they have observed equity in enjoining penalties if the penitents had declared their sins only in general and not rather specifically and one by one. From this it is gathered that penitents must recount in confession all mortal sins of which, after diligent self-examination, they have consciousness—even if those sins are most hidden and committed only against the two last precepts of the Decalogue, which sometimes wound the soul more grievously and are more dangerous than those committed openly. For venial sins, by which we are not excluded from the grace of God and into which we fall more frequently, although they are rightly and usefully, and without any presumption, told in confession (as the practice of devout people shows), may yet be passed over without fault and expiated by many other remedies. But since all mortal sins, even of thought, make men children of wrath[14] and enemies of God, it is necessary to seek pardon of them all from God with an open and modest confession. Therefore, while the faithful of Christ strive to confess all the sins that occur to memory, without doubt they lay them all open to the divine mercy to be [forgiven]; but those who do otherwise and knowingly keep some back set nothing before the divine goodness to be remitted through the priest. For if the sick man is ashamed to uncover his wound to the physician, medicine does not cure what it does not know. It is further gathered that those circumstances also are to be explained in confession which change the species of the sin: because without them the sins *(sig. *3r)* themselves are neither fully set out by the penitents nor made known to the judges, and it cannot be that the judges should rightly estimate the gravity of the crimes and impose on the penitents the penalty that is due for them. Hence it is unreasonable to teach that these circumstances were invented by idle men, or that only one circumstance is to be confessed, namely that one has sinned against a brother. But it is also impious to say that confession, which is commanded to be made in this way, is impossible, or to call it a torture of consciences. For it is clear that nothing else is required of penitents in the Church than that, after each has more carefully examined himself and explored all the folds and recesses of his conscience, he confess those sins by which he remembers that he has mortally offended his Lord and God; but the remaining sins, which do not occur to one who thinks carefully, are understood to be included in the same confession as a whole: for which we say faithfully with the Prophet: "From my hidden faults cleanse me, O Lord."[15] The very difficulty of such a confession and the shame of uncovering sins might indeed seem heavy, if it were not lightened by so many and so great advantages and consolations, which are most certainly conferred by absolution on all who worthily approach this sacrament. For the rest, as to the manner of confessing secretly before a priest alone: although Christ did not forbid that someone, for the punishment of his crimes and for his own humiliation, both for the example of others and for the edification of the offended Church, might confess his faults publicly, *(sig. *3v)* yet this is not commanded by a divine precept, nor would it be wisely enough enjoined by any human law that faults, especially secret ones, should be laid open by a public confession. Hence, since secret sacramental confession, which holy Church has used from the beginning and still uses, has always been commended by the most holy and most ancient Fathers with great and unanimous consent, the empty calumny of those is plainly refuted who do not fear to teach that it is alien to the divine command and a human invention, and that it took its beginning

from the Fathers gathered in the Lateran Council.[16] For the Church did not, by the Lateran Council, ordain that the faithful of Christ should confess—something which it knew to be necessary and instituted by divine law—but that the precept of confession should be fulfilled at least once a year by each and every person who had come to the years of discretion. Hence throughout the whole Church, with great fruit for the souls of the faithful, that salutary custom of confessing is observed in that sacred and most acceptable time of Lent: a custom which this holy Synod most highly approves and embraces as devout and rightly to be retained.

[14] Ephesians 2:3.

[15] Psalm 18 (19):13.

[16] The Fourth Lateran Council (1215), constitution *Omnis utriusque sexus*, which required annual confession.

Chapter VI. On the minister of this sacrament, and Absolution

As for the minister of this sacrament, the holy Synod declares that all doctrines are false and altogether alien from the truth of the Gospel which perniciously extend the ministry of the Keys *(sig. *4r)* to any other men besides bishops and priests, thinking that those words of the Lord—"Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven";[17] and "Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose you retain, they are retained"[18]—were so spoken indifferently and promiscuously to all the faithful of Christ, contrary to the institution of this sacrament, that anyone has the power of remitting sins: public ones by correction, if the one corrected acquiesces; secret ones by a spontaneous confession made to anyone at all. It also teaches that even priests who are held by mortal sin, by the virtue of the Holy Spirit conferred in ordination, exercise the function of remitting sins as ministers of Christ; and that those think wrongly who contend that this power is not in bad priests. And although the Absolution of the priest is the dispensing of another's gift, yet it is not only a bare ministry either of announcing the Gospel or of declaring that sins have been remitted, but is after the manner of a judicial act, by which a sentence is pronounced by him as by a judge. And therefore the penitent ought not so to flatter himself about his own faith that, even if there be no contrition in him, or if the priest lack the intention of acting seriously and of truly absolving, he should yet think himself, because of his faith alone, truly and before God absolved. For faith without Penance would not grant any remission of sins; nor would he be anything but most negligent of his own salvation who knew that a priest was absolving him in jest and did not carefully seek another who would act in earnest.

[17] Matthew 18:18 (cf. 16:19).

[18] John 20:23.

Chapter VII. On the reservation of cases

*(sig. *4v)* Since, then, the nature and reason of a judgement require that sentence be passed only on subjects, it has always been held in the Church of God, and this Synod confirms it as most true, that that Absolution ought to be of no weight which a priest pronounces upon one over whom he has neither ordinary nor subdelegated jurisdiction. And it seemed to our most holy Fathers to belong greatly to the discipline of the Christian people that certain more atrocious and more grievous crimes should be absolved not by just anyone, but only by the highest priests: hence the Supreme Pontiffs have rightly been able, by the supreme power delivered to them in the universal Church, to reserve some more grievous cases of crimes to their own particular judgement. Nor is it to be doubted—since

all things that are from God are ordered[19]—that this same thing is lawful for all bishops, each in his own diocese, unto edification however and not unto destruction, by the authority over their subjects delivered to them above the other inferior priests, especially as regards those things to which the censure of excommunication is annexed. And it is consonant with divine authority that this reservation of offences has force not only in external polity but also before God. Yet most devoutly, lest anyone perish on this very occasion, it has always been kept in the same Church of God that there is no reservation at the point of death: and therefore *(sig. *5r)* all priests can absolve any penitents whatsoever from any sins and censures whatsoever. Outside that article, since priests can do nothing in reserved cases, let them strive to persuade the penitents of this one thing: that they approach the Superiors and lawful [judges] for the benefit of Absolution.

[19] Romans 13:1: *quae a Deo sunt, ordinata sunt*.

Chapter VIII. On the necessity and fruit of satisfaction

Lastly, as to Satisfaction—which among all the parts of penance, as it has been recommended by our Fathers to the Christian people at every time, so is it the one that in our age is especially attacked, under the highest pretext of piety, by those who have a form of piety but have denied its power[20]—the holy Synod declares that it is altogether false and alien from the word of God that guilt is never remitted by the Lord without the whole punishment also being forgiven. For clear and illustrious examples are found in the sacred writings by which, besides divine tradition, this error is most manifestly refuted. And indeed the reason of divine justice seems to require that those who before baptism have offended through ignorance be received into favour in one way, and in another way those who, once freed from the slavery of sin and of the devil and having received the gift of the Holy Spirit, have not feared knowingly to violate the temple of God[21] and to grieve the Holy Spirit.[22] And it becomes the divine clemency that sins should not be so remitted to us without any Satisfaction that, taking occasion, we should think sins lighter and, as it were insulting *(sig. *5v)* and contumelious towards the Holy Spirit, fall into more grievous ones, treasuring up for ourselves wrath in the day of wrath.[23] For without doubt these satisfactory punishments greatly call men back from sin and restrain them as with a kind of bridle, and make penitents more cautious and watchful for the future; they also heal the remains of sins and remove vicious habits, acquired by evil living, by contrary acts of the virtues. Nor was any way in the Church of God ever thought safer for turning away the punishment impending from the Lord than that men should frequently practise these works of penance with true sorrow of mind. To these things it is added that, while by making satisfaction we suffer for our sins, we are made conformable to Christ Jesus, who made satisfaction for our sins, from whom is all our sufficiency;[24] having thence also a most sure pledge that [if we suffer with him], we shall also be glorified with him.[25] Nor is this satisfaction of ours, which we pay for our sins, so much ours that it is not through Christ Jesus. For we who of ourselves, as of ourselves, can do nothing, can do all things with him cooperating who strengthens us.[26] Thus man has nothing wherein to glory: but all our glorying is in Christ,[27] in whom we live, in whom we merit, in whom we make satisfaction, bringing forth fruits worthy of penance,[28] which have their force from him, are offered by him to the Father, and through him are accepted by the Father. Therefore the priests of the Lord ought, as far as the Spirit and prudence suggest, to enjoin salutary and fitting satisfactions according to the quality of the crimes and the ability of the penitents: lest, if they perhaps connive at sins and deal too indulgently with penitents, by enjoining very light *(sig. *6r)* works for the most

grievous offences, they be made partakers of others' sins. And let them keep before their eyes that the Satisfaction they impose is not only for the custody of a new life and a medicine for weakness, but also for the punishment and chastisement of past sins. For the ancient Fathers both believe and teach that the Keys of the priests were granted not only for loosing but also for binding. Nor did they therefore think that the sacrament of penance is a forum of wrath or of punishments; just as no Catholic ever held that by such satisfactions of ours the force of the merit and satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ is either obscured or in any part lessened: which, while the Innovators refuse to understand, they so teach that the best penance is a new life as to take away all the force and use of Satisfaction.

[20] 2 Timothy 3:5.

[21] 1 Corinthians 3:17.

[22] Ephesians 4:30.

[23] Romans 2:5; cf. Hebrews 10:29 for contumely against the Spirit.

[24] 2 Corinthians 3:5.

[25] Romans 8:17.

[26] Philippians 4:13; cf. 2 Corinthians 3:5.

[27] Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:31; Galatians 6:14.

[28] Matthew 3:8 / Luke 3:8.

Chapter IX. On the works of Satisfaction

It further teaches that so great is the liberality of the divine munificence that we are able to make satisfaction to God the Father through Christ Jesus not only by punishments voluntarily undertaken by us for the avenging of sin, or imposed at the priest's discretion according to the measure of the offence, but also—which is the greatest proof of love—by temporal scourges inflicted by God and patiently borne by us.

Doctrine on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction

It has seemed good to the holy Synod to add to the preceding doctrine on Penance what follows concerning the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which has been thought by the Fathers to be the completion not only of Penance but *(sig. *6v)* of the whole Christian life, which ought to be a perpetual penance. First, then, as to its institution, it declares and teaches that our most merciful Redeemer, who at every time wished his servants to be provided with saving remedies against all the weapons of every enemy—just as in the other sacraments he prepared the greatest helps by which Christians might keep themselves whole, while they lived, from every more serious harm of the spirit—so by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction he fortified the end of life as with a most firm defence. For although our adversary seeks and seizes occasions throughout all life to devour our souls in any way he can, yet there is no time at which he more vehemently strains all the sinews of his cunning to destroy us utterly and, if he can, to cast us down even from trust in the divine mercy, than when he sees the end of life hanging over us.

Chapter I. On the institution of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction

This holy Unction of the sick was instituted as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament by Christ our Lord: hinted at in Mark,[1] and recommended and promulgated to the faithful by James the Apostle and brother of the Lord. "Is anyone among you sick?" he says: "let him bring in the priests of the Church, *(sig. *7r)* and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."[2] By these words, as the Church has learned from apostolic tradition handed down, she teaches the matter, form, proper minister and effect of this saving sacrament. For the Church understood the matter to be oil blessed by the bishop: for Unction most aptly represents the grace of the Holy Spirit, by which the soul of the sick person is invisibly anointed; and then that the form is those words, "By this anointing," etc.

[1] Mark 6:13 (the Apostles anointing the sick with oil).

[2] James 5:14–15.

Chapter II. On the effect of this sacrament

Further, the thing and effect of this sacrament is explained by those words: "And the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." For this thing is the grace of the Holy Spirit, whose Unction wipes away offences, if any still remain to be expiated, and the remains of sin; and it raises up and strengthens the soul of the sick person, exciting in him a great trust in the divine mercy, by which the infirm man, being lifted up, more lightly bears the discomforts and labours of the disease; more easily resists the temptations of the devil who lies in wait at the heel;[3] and sometimes obtains health of body, where it is expedient for the salvation of the soul.

[3] Genesis 3:15 (*ipsa conteret caput tuum, et tu insidiaberis calcaneo eius*), applied to the devil's final assaults.

Chapter III. On the minister of this sacrament, and the time when it ought to be given

*(sig. *7v)* Now as to the prescription of those who ought both to receive and to minister this sacrament, that too was handed down not obscurely in the aforesaid words. For it is shown there that the proper ministers of this sacrament are the Priests of the Church. By which name, in that place, are not to be understood those older in age or the chief men among the people, but either bishops or priests duly ordained by them through the imposition of the hands of the presbyterate.[4] It is also declared that this Unction is to be applied to the sick, and especially to those who lie so dangerously ill that they seem to be placed at the exit of life; whence it is also called the sacrament of those departing. But if the sick, after receiving this Unction, have recovered, they can again be helped by the aid of this sacrament when they fall into another similar danger of life. Wherefore those are by no means to be heard who, against so open and clear a sentence of the Apostle James, teach that this Unction is either a human fiction or a rite received from the Fathers, having neither a command of God nor a promise of grace; and those who assert that it has already ceased, as if it were to be referred only to the grace of healings in the primitive Church; and those who say that the rite and use which the holy Roman Church observes in the administration of this sacrament is opposed to the sentence of the Apostle James, and therefore ought to be changed into another; and lastly those who affirm that this Extreme Unction can be despised by the faithful without sin. For all these things most clearly fight against the *(sig. *8r)* plain words of so great an Apostle. Nor indeed does the Roman Church, mother and teacher of all others, observe anything else in administering this

Unction, as far as concerns those things which complete the substance of this sacrament, than what blessed James prescribed. Nor could contempt of so great a sacrament be without enormous crime and injury to the Holy Spirit himself. These are the things which this holy ecumenical Synod professes and teaches concerning the Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction, and sets before all the faithful of Christ to be believed and held.

[4] Cf. 1 Timothy 4:14 (*cum impositione manuum presbyterii*).

Verses on This Method

*(sig. *8v)* Hanc Methodum, facilemque viam peccata fatendi,
Floribus è sacris, candide lector, habes.
Hinc propriae nosces animae maculasque viamque,
Illas sacrificis qua reserare queas.
Peccati species, atque inde fluentia membra,
Vt meminisse iuuet, carmina pauca tenent.
Antidotum morbo subiunximus: inde medelam
Quaeres, si vitijs saucia mens fuerit.
Quòd si fortè tibi sit copia temporis, isthaec
Fronte leges placida, Viue valeque Deo.

You have this Method, candid reader, and an easy way of confessing sins, drawn from sacred flowers. From it you will rightly know the stains of your own soul, and the way by which you may open them to the sacrificing priests. A few verses hold the kinds of sin and the members that flow from them, so that remembering may be a help. We have added an antidote for the disease: from it you will seek a remedy if your mind has been wounded by vices. And if by chance you have time to spare, read these things with a calm brow. Live, and farewell in God.

Prologue of the Method of Confession

Since "the just man falls seven times a day,"[1] and no one can say, "My heart is clean, I am pure from sin,"[2] and "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,"[3] it is clear that all are sinners and need penance. No sinner is more to be wept over than the one who thinks he has nothing to weep for. For no evil deceives more easily than when it is not understood to be evil. In short, whoever wants God to pardon his sin must first acknowledge it. For if a sick man hides his wounds, how will the physician apply the remedy? The beginning of salvation, then, is the knowledge of sin, from which also arises the fear of the Lord, the beginning of wisdom. From these two is born contrition; from contrition, confession; from confession, satisfaction. Through these three parts of penance man is reconciled to God.

[1] Proverbs 24:16.

[2] Proverbs 20:9.

[3] 1 John 1:8.

It is fitting that a man should first know the invisible things of his own soul before he can be fit to know the invisible things of God. In vain does he lift up the eye of the heart to see God when he is not yet fit to see himself. For the chief and principal way of finding God is for the sinner to find himself. "Study to know yourself," says Bernard, "for you are much more praiseworthy if you know yourself than if, neglecting yourself, you know the courses of the stars, the powers of herbs, the temperaments of men, the natures of animals—than if you had knowledge of all things in heaven and on earth." Many know many things but do not know themselves, although the highest philosophy for each person is knowledge of himself.

But "who understands his sins?"[4] It is as if the Prophet said: No one can understand all his sins and know them perfectly. That is why he adds: "Cleanse me from my hidden faults." Nor is it enough for each to have acknowledged his sins, unless they confess them at the proper time and place.

[4] Psalm 18 (19):13.

For this reason, by the grace of God (without which we cannot even think anything good),[5] preventing and accompanying us, we have put together this METHOD OF CONFESSION, that is, an art or system and short way of confessing. We hope it will serve the salvation and benefit of all who profess the orthodox faith of Christ, and above all of the boys studying grammar at the College of Navarre in Paris. When they wish to examine their conscience and know their sins, they will be able, by reading this little work, to recognise them, and to understand how to confess what they have recognised.

[5] Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:5.

To make this easier for them, as far as we could, we have put into verse the kinds and (as they are called) branches of sins, and whatever else seemed to bear on confession. The verses are to be a kind of notebook of sins, by which the boys may more easily remember their faults in confession itself. To the verses we have added glosses, in place of a commentary, for a fuller (as they say) examination of conscience. In most places we have also inserted some notable saying, to stir and delight the reader's mind.

We have also kept the seven capital sins separate from the ten commandments of the Decalogue, although some have very aptly referred the former to the latter. We have followed instead the common, well-worn custom generally observed in confession, and have treated each separately. In this way the method of confession is easier for those who have not confessed for some time and have taken little care to commit their sins to memory. For men who search their consciences and confess often, their own examination of conscience is enough.

Further, against each capital sin we have set its own remedies: a method of detesting the sin, to check the desire for it; and likewise a method of avoiding the sin, to check the doing of it. And since (as the Philosopher says) "opposites placed side by side shine out more clearly," and the departure of vice brings about the entry of virtue, we have placed the contrary virtue under each capital sin. In this way one who cannot be kept from sin by fear of punishment may be kept from it by love of the virtue he has come to know.

Throughout we have used a plain style, after the manner of the divine Scriptures. Their truth needs no enticing words and no paint of worldly eloquence, since it appears clear and bright in its own light. It ought to feed the mind, not the ear. "Rough speech," says Jerome, "goes straight to the heart; polished speech feeds the ears. What use is a golden key if it cannot open what we want? Or what harm is an iron one if it can, since all we want is for what is closed to be opened?"

Finally, we have divided this little book into six parts:

- In the first, the creation of the world and the other articles of faith are treated.
- In the second, the commandments of the Decalogue and the five commandments of the Church.
- In the third, the capital sins and their remedies, and the seven virtues opposed to them.
- In the fourth, the remaining sins and the circumstances of sins.
- In the fifth, penance and its parts.
- In the sixth, the art of dying well.

We thought it right to give the future readers of this little work this short preface.

Part I: The Articles of the Orthodox Faith

On God and the Creation of the World

Everyone must be convinced, and there must be no doubt at all, that there is only one God in substance, but three in Persons, equal to one another in all things: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He is without end and without beginning, uncreated, immortal, impassible, unchangeable, infinitely powerful, absolutely complete in every kind of perfection, present everywhere by his substance and his power. To his eyes the most hidden thoughts of men lie open. He is the architect and maker of this structure of the world. Because he is good, and more than good, it pleased him in the overflowing of his goodness that certain things should be made on which he might bestow good, and which might share in his goodness.

The Fall of the Angels

In the beginning of the world, then, he created the angels, intellectual and incorporeal substances, ministers of the divine majesty. Some of them, out of pride, could not bear the illumination and honour that God, the most generous giver of all good things, had granted them. By the free power of their will they rebelled against God their maker and wished to be like God. That pride, in a moment and the twinkling of an eye, covered them with eternal darkness, though they shone more brightly than all the stars. It changed the most beautiful angels into the foulest demons and hurled them from heaven into the depths of hell.

God knew that no way of return lay open to them, because they were exceedingly proud and their pride did not admit the remedy of penance, and therefore not of pardon either. So, to repair this ruin, he was about to form man (who was to take the place of the demons in heaven) from a visible body and an invisible soul, as a kind of king and prince of the whole earth and of all that is in it. He had already prepared for him a kind of palace in which to live and lead a blessed and wholly happy life: the earthly Paradise, a storehouse of all joy and delight, adorned with evergreen plants, filled with sweet fragrance, full of light, and most lovely in all sensible charm and beauty.

In its midst he planted the Tree of Life, by whose fruit man's natural moisture would be renewed, so that old age would not break him down. He also planted the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, as a kind of trial, test and exercise of man's obedience and disobedience. By eating of it man would learn by experience how great the difference is between the good of obedience and the evil of disobedience. In this God showed perfectly how great a good obedience is: he forbade man, placed in paradise, a thing that was not evil in itself, so that obedience alone could win the palm there, and disobedience alone could bring punishment.

The Creation of Man

Then from the slime of the earth he formed man's body, and into it he poured a soul created in his own image, that is, intellectual, rational, and endowed with free choice and will; and in his likeness, that is, complete and perfect in the virtues, as far as its nature allowed. For these virtues are like the marks and seals of the divine nature.[1] He had made man upright, strong, good, secure, wise, just, graced with every virtue, adorned with all good things, wholly free from all malice, for fellowship

with himself. Once created, man was to acknowledge, love and worship God, his author and maker. By obeying his most excellent and loving commands, through good and meritorious works, after this temporal life he was to come in body and soul to an immortal life that would never end, receiving in heaven the place of the demons. If, on the contrary, following their example, he did not submit to God's commands, but like a beast, as if he had no soul sharing in reason, indulged his own pleasures, he would burn for ever with those demons in hell.

[1] Image vs likeness: traditional (cf. Peter Lombard, *Sent*. II d. 16)

On the Sin of Our First Parent

God, then, the maker of all things, put the first-formed man, Adam, whom he had created, into the paradise of delight and commanded him, saying: "Of every tree of paradise you may eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. For on whatever day you eat of it, you shall die the death"[2]—that is, because you will be dead in soul, you will also be subject to the sentence of bodily death.

[2] Genesis 2:16–17.

Nevertheless, persuaded by his wife Eve (who had been formed by God from his rib while he slept, and to whom Adam had made known God's command), he ate of the fruit of the forbidden tree. For this sin he and his wife Eve were cast out of the paradise of delight, disinherited of eternal beatitude and deprived of original justice. From that loss they fell into difficulty in doing good, a tendency to evil, and an inability to foresee the future. Beyond this they came into losses, miseries, diseases, hardships, hunger, thirst, cold, heat and countless other evils, and finally into the very necessity of dying. At once the flesh lusted against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,[3] and they felt another law in their members, fighting against the law of their mind.[4] By the just judgment of God it came about that those who would not be subject to God could not keep even their own members subject to themselves. Those who would not be ruled by him who rules all things and had ruled them before could no longer rule what they had ruled before. Their contempt of obedience to God was punished by the disobedience of the body.[5]

[3] Galatians 5:17.

[4] Romans 7:23.

[5] Thought as in Augustine, *De civitate Dei* 14.15.

All these evils, by the polished and just judgment of God, spread to all their posterity. For human nature, which was wholly in our first parents, was wholly corrupted by sin and lost all its justice and immortality. Hence it could beget only corrupt, unjust and mortal children. And the devil justly claimed into servitude the children whose freedom he had bought from their first parents. As they had been the parents of all, so they became the destroyers of all—and, what is most unhappy, destroyers before they were parents.

If our first parents and their posterity had obeyed God's command and kept the gift of original justice, they would have lived in great peace and tranquillity. Their reason (that is, the power of understanding what is to be done and what is to be known) could not have erred, but would have obeyed God and conformed itself to him in all things. The will would have obeyed reason, sensuality the will, and even the brute animals would have obeyed the command of man. While original justice

remained, the bond of body and soul was indissoluble. Men would have been free and exempt from cold, heat, thirst, hunger, sickness and every weakness of body and soul; and after a life lived well and happily, and after doing many good works, they would have been carried into heaven alive, without the penalty of death.

When this unique gift of original justice was lost through the fault of our first parents, we came into the necessity of dying and all the misery of the present life. For all who have been conceived from Adam's line by the embrace of man are subject to sin, that is, to the lack of the original justice that ought to have been kept. Against this sin Jesus Christ, that most skilful physician of the sick soul, in his inexhaustible goodness gave the human race a most effective remedy, namely the washing of baptism. Yet by this medicine the tinder of sin (*fomes*), the difficulty toward studious work, and the tendency to evil are not taken away. It takes away only the right and dominion that the devil claimed for himself, by right, over the souls of men.

Why Some Have Doubts about Heavenly and Invisible Things

After the first parent of the human race was driven from the joys of paradise (as his fault required), he came into the hardship of this blindness and exile, so that he could not see the joys of the heavenly homeland that he used to contemplate. In the paradise of delight he had been used to enjoying the words of God, and, while living in the body on earth, to keeping company in soul with the angels by contemplation. But after he fell to this place, he lost the light of mind with which he had been filled.

We, born of his flesh in the blindness of this exile, hear indeed that there is a heavenly homeland; we hear that its citizens are the angels of God; we hear that the spirits of the just and perfect are the companions of those angels. But because carnal men cannot know these invisible things by experience, they half doubt whether what they do not see with bodily eyes exists. This doubt could not exist in the first parent: shut out from the joys of paradise, he recalled with a remembering mind what he had seen and what he had lost. But it could exist in his children, who could not test by experience what they heard from the first parent.

It is as if a pregnant woman were sent into a foul prison and gave birth there, and raised the child born there. As he grows, his mother names for him the sun, the moon, the stars, mountains, fields, birds flying, horses running, the many colours and the variety of all things. But he, born and raised in prison and knowing nothing but darkness, will half doubt, when he hears these things from his mother, whether they are true, since he does not know them by experience. In the same way, men born in the blindness of their exile, when they hear of the highest and invisible things, doubt whether they are true, because they know only these lowest and visible things among which they were born.[6]

[6] The prison parable closely matches Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 4.1.

Hence it was that the Creator of things visible and invisible, pitying human misery, came to redeem the human race, so that, knowing God visibly, we might through him who became visible be caught up into the love of things invisible. Our hearts quickened and confirmed in faith by the Holy Spirit, we were to believe in him beyond all doubt, so that, breathed upon by his holy Spirit, we might believe what we cannot yet know by experience. All of us, then, who have received this Spirit, the pledge of our inheritance,[7] do not doubt the life of the invisible things. Whoever is not yet firm in

this faith ought without doubt to trust the words of his elders, and to believe those who already have experience of invisible things through the Holy Spirit. For the boy would be foolish to think his mother lies about the light because he has been able to experience nothing of the kind and has known nothing but the darkness of the prison.

[7] Ephesians 1:14.

On the Redemption of Mankind

God, then, best and greatest, the lover of human salvation, whose property it is always to have mercy and to spare, who is at once just and merciful, who keeps justice in mercy and mercy in justice, did not wish the whole race of men to perish for ever and to be exiled for ever from the glory of Paradise (for which he had created it). So he created no other creature afterwards in man's place, showing by this very fact that man was still to be redeemed: for since another's malice had tripped him up, another's charity could therefore help him.

Justice, then, was kept: he caused the devil, man's conqueror, to be conquered by none other than a man, so that like might be repaired by like. And in mercy, with his accustomed clemency, intending to grant well-being to man, to whom he had also given being, he willed to join human nature to himself without any corruption, so that he who had given the law might also give grace. The law he had sent through a servant; but with grace he came down himself into the immaculate womb of the Virgin Mary, made man, to be mediator between God the Father and the human race.[1] In him the union of the two natures, human and divine, in one person, the Son of God the Father, was so great and so wonderful that the true God was man and the true man was God.

[1] Cf. John 1:17: "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." The "servant" is Moses.

He is Jesus Christ, our creator and at the same time our redeemer. Long ago, through many ages, he was foretold and promised by the Patriarchs and Prophets, inspired by the sacred breath of the Spirit; but at last, in this final age of the world, he was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He was recognised by the shepherds, adored by three kings from the regions of the East, and presented with gold, frankincense and myrrh as a sign of faith and allegiance. He was acknowledged and proclaimed as God by the aged Simeon, by Anna the widow, and by very many others. Blessed John the Baptist, his forerunner and precursor, pointed him out with his finger, and baptized him in the Jordan.

For about three years he preached and taught the divine law and the orthodox religion, and confirmed it by countless miracles; and he commanded that it be kept, as handed down to us most faithfully through his ministers. Finally, to redeem us, and to bring to completion that for which he had come down into this world, under Pontius Pilate he chose the bitterest and most shameful kind of death: to be fastened to a cross between two most wicked thieves. He was buried, and on the third day he rose again, alive. "To the Apostles he showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them for forty days and speaking of the kingdom of God."[2] On the fortieth day after the resurrection, while the disciples looked on, he ascended from the Mount of Olives to the heavenly palace, attended by a great company of patriarchs and prophets whom he had led out of the prison of limbo. And he sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. At the last he will come in glory to

judge all the living and the dead (who will then come back to life, body and soul, at the sound of the trumpet), at the consummation of the world, which is to be consumed by fire and restored to something better. Then he will give each man his reward with wonderful fairness: to the just, the glory of eternal blessedness; to the wicked, punishments that will never find an end.

[2] Acts 1:3.

Prologue to the Twelve Articles of the Faith

When, at the coming of the Holy Spirit, tongues of fire had settled on each of the Apostles, so that they spoke in different languages, so that no nation seemed foreign to them and no barbarous tongue beyond their reach or impassable, the Lord gave them this command: that each should go out to the various nations to preach the word of God. So before parting from one another they first settled together a rule for their future preaching, lest, once they had been drawn off in different directions, they should set out different things to those who were being invited to the faith of Christ.

So, all being together in one place and filled with the Holy Spirit, they composed this short token (as we have said) of their future preaching, each contributing to the common text what he held; and they decreed that this should be given to believers as their rule.

This Creed of the Apostles is divided and distinguished into twelve articles, according to the number of the twelve Apostles who contributed the things to be believed: for each of them composed one article.

The Apostles' Creed

Peter. I believe in one God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Andrew. 2. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

John the Evangelist. 3. Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.

James the Greater. 4. Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

Thomas. 5. He descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead.

James the Less. 6. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty.

Philip. 7. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Bartholomew. 8. I believe in the Holy Spirit.

Matthew. 9. The holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints.

Simon. 10. The forgiveness of sins.

Jude Thaddeus. 11. The resurrection of the flesh.

Matthias. 12. Life everlasting.

We must believe these twelve articles purely, sincerely, and beyond all doubt, setting aside the idle and empty objection of any trifles whatever. If difficulties arise, we must simply submit ourselves to the belief and faith of the devout and God-fearing doctors and prelates of holy mother Church, and

also of the holy men and women who fought bravely, even to death, in witness to this orthodox faith. For in this valley of exile we can only believe the writings of the Apostles, Evangelists and Prophets; we cannot also see, and know by experience, what they have written. The place for seeing, understanding and possessing what we believe and hope for here is paradise. Hence Isaiah says: "If you do not believe, you will not understand."[1]

[1] Isaiah 7:9 in the Old Latin / Septuagint form (*nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*), the form Augustine often quotes; the Vulgate reads *non permanebitis*.

Exposition of the Apostles' Creed

I believe in one God; I believe in the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth

This article sets before us two things to be believed. The first is the unity of the divine substance. For there is only one God, since there is no other. He is without beginning, without end, simple, without any admixture, invisible, incorporeal, ineffable, beyond reckoning; in him nothing is added, nothing created; he is without an author, for he himself is the author of absolutely all things. He is one in substance and three in persons. For the Father is not the same as the Son, nor the Son the same as the Father, nor the Holy Spirit the same as the Father and the Son: for they are three, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; but the Trinity itself is one God. Omnipotence is attributed to the Father, wisdom to the Son, goodness to the Holy Spirit.

Yet the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty. The Father is wise, the Son wise, the Holy Spirit wise. The Father is good, the Son good, the Holy Spirit good.

The second is the person of the Father. When you hear "Father," understand the Father of the Son. For by the very name by which God is called Father, the Son is also shown to subsist together with the Father. For there is no Father without a Son, nor a Son without a Father; and the Son is the image of the Father's substance. Through him, by the working of the Holy Spirit, the Father created heaven and earth, that is, the bodily heavens and the whole fabric of the earth, and all that is in them, both bodily and spiritual, both visible and invisible. The Nicene Creed explains this when it says: "Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible."

Creation is ascribed to the Father, as is power, although the Son too is creator, and the Holy Spirit also is creator: for the works of the Trinity are undivided, as there is one substance and one will. The reason is that to create, or to be creator, suggests power rather than wisdom or goodness; for activity proceeds from power.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord

This article concerns the person of the Son. When you hear "Son," I would not have you understand the begetting of a fleshly birth, but a Son begotten from eternity of God the Father, by a generation that surpasses all human understanding. For if no frailty is thought of when the heart begets a word, or the mind a thought, or light brings forth its radiance from itself, how much more purely and reverently must we judge of the creator of them all? For he is the only Son of the Father, as thought is to the mind, the word to the heart, wisdom to the wise.

He is therefore the only Son of God the Father: not by adoption, as all good Christians are born to the Father through the Son into the adoption of sons by the gift of the Holy Spirit; nor by creation, as all

men are, good and bad alike; but by eternal birth and by the truth of nature, consubstantial Son of God the Father.

He is also our only Lord ("only" can be referred both to "Son" and to "Lord"), because we have no other Lord by power that is not derived. We do have temporal lords, but by a power granted by the true Lord. He testifies to this himself through Solomon: "By me kings reign, and lawgivers decree what is just. By me princes rule, and the mighty decree justice."[1] "For there is no power except from God."[2]

[1] Proverbs 8:15–16.

[2] Romans 13:1.

For our salvation he became incarnate, was born in the flesh, and by his birth in the flesh became visible and capable of suffering. He was called Jesus, that is, Saviour, and was named Christ from chrism, that is, anointing: not a human anointing (as the priests and kings of old were anointed), but he was anointed by the Father with the oil of gladness and with the Holy Spirit (who is called the anointing). Acts 10: "How God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power."[3]

[3] Acts 10:38. "Oil of gladness": Psalm 44 (45):8, Hebrews 1:9.

I believe that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. I believe that he was born of the Virgin Mary

The next five articles concern the humanity of Christ. Since none but man ought to make satisfaction, and none but God could make it worthily, it was fitting that God should become man, who by an undeserved death, and by rising again, would set free those who were liable to eternal death; and so his death would become life and salvation for all who had once died in Adam's sin.

For this work it was in no way fitting that the Father should be sent, for he is from no one; it was not to be thought that he was sent by another. Nor was it fitting that the Holy Spirit be sent, lest anyone should think there were two sons in the most simple Trinity. It was fitting that the Son be sent: he who from eternity was begotten of God the Father without a mother should in time be born of a human mother without a father; so that he would be the only-begotten Son both of God the Father by eternal birth and of a human mother by the law of childbirth.

On the day of the Annunciation, when Mary consented to the angel's words, saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word,"[4] in one and the same moment a most sacred body was formed by the working of the Holy Spirit from the most pure blood of the Virgin Mary, by another law than that of nature; and at the same time a soul, all-knowing and most perfect, was created and infused into the body, and the ineffable Godhead was united to it. Thus Christ was perfect God, equal and consubstantial with God the Father, and perfect man, having a rational soul and human flesh, formed by the Holy Spirit.

[4] Luke 1:38.

For although the incarnation of the Son of God is the work of the whole Trinity (since what one person works, the three persons work: for the works of the undivided Trinity are undivided), yet because human nature was joined to the divine nature out of the charity, goodness, kindness and gift of God (which are attributed to the Holy Spirit), and because God, insofar as he is good and kind,

accomplished our redemption through the incarnation of Christ, the incarnation of Christ is attributed in a special way to the Holy Spirit, as goodness is.

So the only-begotten Son of God the Father, just as on the day of the Annunciation he was conceived, became incarnate and was made man by the working of the Holy Spirit, and kept his mother a virgin in conceiving, so after nine months he was born of her without pain and kept her virginity unharmed. Mary therefore remains a virgin after giving birth, and ever a virgin. She had indeed been given to Joseph in betrothal beforehand: so that the holy thing might be hidden from dogs,[5] so that her virginity might be attested by her husband, and so that both the virgin's modesty might be spared and her good name provided for. For the betrothal was a guard for the virgin, and a means of warding off the enemy of human salvation, who was watching for the virgin, so that he could not suspect the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God from Mary, betrothed to Joseph. For he was watching for a virgin because of the prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel," which is interpreted, God with us.[6]

[5] *Per quam à canibus sanctum absconderetur*: an allusion to Matthew 7:6 ("Do not give what is holy to dogs").

[6] Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23.

I believe that he suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried

Since (as we said before) none but man ought to make satisfaction, and none but God could make it fittingly, it was fitting that Christ, God and man, should reconcile the human race to God the Father whom it had offended, and should redeem the grave offence of our first parent by a grave punishment. He bore everything in the flesh, while his divine nature remained incapable of suffering. The flesh, being capable of suffering (as it was born to suffer), suffered; the divine nature, being incapable of suffering and admitting no passion, did not suffer with the body. So when Christ suffered in the flesh, the Godhead was affected by no loss or injury. But in order to work salvation through the weakness of the flesh, the true God went down into death: not to be held by death under the law of mortals, but so that Christ, who was to rise again by his own power, might open the gates of death.

It is as if a king were to go into a prison in order to go in and open the doors, undo the chains, break the fetters, bolts and bars, lead out the prisoners into freedom, and restore to light and life those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. The king is said to have been in prison, but not on the same terms as the others who were held there: they were to be kept in prison, he was to set free those kept there.

So Christ summoned death and swallowed up death, in order to make us heirs of eternal life. For us he deigned to undergo death (that is, the punishment of our sins) without sin: so that, just as he bore the punishment for us without any deserving of it, we through him might have grace without any merits of our own. For as nothing good was owed to us, so nothing evil was owed to him. But he willed to suffer an undeserved death for those to whom he was going to give an undeserved life.

He suffered, that is, in the flesh, under Pontius Pilate, that is, under the authority of Pontius Pilate. He was crucified and died, that is, a true death, by the separation of the soul from the body; yet the Godhead always remained united both to the body in the tomb and to the soul in limbo. And he was buried, but not, like other men, corrupted and reduced to ashes.

I believe that he descended into hell. I believe that on the third day he rose again from the dead

Christ, according to his soul, which was united to the Godhead (for meanwhile his body rested in the tomb), descended into hell, that is, into limbo, the upper part of hell, where the holy fathers who were to be saved were held until Christ should pay by his death the debt of our first parent and lead them out from there.

I believe that he rose from the dead on the third day: by synecdoche, the part is put for the whole. That is, the part of the day of Preparation on which he died is counted as one day; then the whole sabbath day; and after it the following night up to the dawn of the Lord's day, on which he rose, is counted as the third day.

The descent into hell and the resurrection from the dead are joined in one article, in which is set out everything that Christ merited for us by his death. For the redemption of our soul was completed by the breaking of hell, in the descent into hell; the redemption of our body was completed in the resurrection, by the glory of the body. "For if Christ has risen, we too shall rise."[7]

[7] A paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 15:12–22 rather than an exact quotation.

I believe that he ascended into heaven. I believe that he sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty

Christ, according to his humanity, that is, as man, did not ascend at once after his resurrection. Working out the salvation of us all with burning love, he waited forty days, during which he often appeared to his disciples, to strengthen their faith by his appearances and to prove to them the glorious resurrection of his body, which they had seen dead with their own eyes a little before. Then he ascended into heaven by his own power: with the angels' ministry, but not by their service. He did not go where the Son of God the Father had not been before, for he always remained in the Father and was always in heaven (since according to his Godhead he is wholly everywhere), but where the Son of God had not been before in the flesh.

"He sits": that is, Christ, now taken up into heaven, is at peace in glory and majesty, and judges and orders all things quietly and peacefully with the Father. "At the right hand of the Father": that is, in eternal blessedness, where a seat had been prepared for him from eternity.

I believe that from there he will come to judge the living and the dead

On the day of judgment Christ, in his glorified human flesh, will come down with majesty from there (that is, from the heavens to which he ascended) with the clouds of heaven. He will judge the living and the dead, that is, all men who are, have been, and will be, not only for their deeds but also for their thoughts, "rendering to each according to his works."[8] He will separate the sheep from the goats, that is, the just from the unjust: placing the just in the heavens, banishing the unjust into the depths of hell to everlasting punishments.

[8] Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6.

For although the Father never departs from the Son, yet it is not he but the Son who is said to be coming to judge the living and the dead. For there neither the Godhead of the Father nor that of the Son will be seen, but that form of the Son which he joined to himself through the mystery of the incarnation. In that form, then, he will be judge which stood before a judge; in that form he will

judge which was judged; so that the wicked may see the glory of him against whose meekness they raged. Such a judge, then, will appear as can be seen both by those whom he will crown and by those whom he will condemn. The Father will not appear, since he has not put on the form of a servant; but he has given the power of judgment to the Son, who was also made man.

I believe in the Holy Spirit

This article expresses the third person of the supreme Trinity, the Holy Spirit. He is a person proceeding from the Father and the Son ineffably and eternally, by an eternal procession; equal to the Father and the Son in all things in perfection, power and majesty; to be worshipped with the same adoration as they; and since the substance is one and simple, he is sent in time by the Father and the Son to sanctify souls, the fountain of life and sanctification. For as the soul is the life of the body, so the Holy Spirit is the life of the soul. And as the body dies if the soul leaves it, so the soul dies if the Holy Spirit leaves it.

I believe that the Catholic Church is holy. I believe in the communion of saints

I believe that the Church is one, gathered by God, in which there is one faith and one baptism, in which one God is believed, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Church is the whole gathering of the faithful reborn in Christ by baptism. Christ is its head, and all the best Christians are its members, joined to one another by the bond of charity. The wicked too are its members, but rotten, and dead through sin.

This Church is one, and not many. Just as there was one ark of Noah, in which alone men were saved from the flood, while the others (who were outside Noah's ark) were overwhelmed by the waters of the flood, so outside the one Church there is no salvation. It is also Catholic (that is, universal), because all are bound to belong to it. It is holy, and in the world to come it will have neither spot nor wrinkle:[9] for in this world it is always being cleansed of every stain of sin by the precious blood of Christ, its beloved spouse, so that in the world to come this cleansing may at last be completed. It is apostolic, that is, founded and established by the preaching of the Apostles, who after Christ were the architects and founders of his Church.

[9] Ephesians 5:27.

I believe in the communion of saints: that is, I believe that the just, by the favour and grace of God, share with one another, inasmuch as they are partakers of all the spiritual goods that are done in the universal Church. Psalm 118: "I am a partaker with all who fear you and keep your commandments."[10]

[10] Psalm 118 (119):63.

I believe in the forgiveness of sins

That is, I believe that however much and however often a man has sinned, yet through full contrition, confession and satisfaction he will obtain from God's mercy, in the Church, the pardon of his sins. For no sins overcome the infinite goodness of God: their number is finite, and God's mercy is infinite.

Under this article, besides the sacrament of penance, the other six sacraments of the Church can also be understood: the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Order, Matrimony, the most holy Eucharist, and the last Anointing. For these sacraments confer the forgiveness of sins and grace wonderfully and effectively on those who receive them rightly and who have no other impediment.

I believe in the resurrection of the flesh

I believe in the resurrection of bodies at the end and consummation of the world, but not of souls: for on the last day only that will rise which perished through death. Human souls survive the death of the body and do not suffer destruction. Only men's bodies undergo death and dissolution into dust; and so they alone will rise again, returning to the same soul they had before. And what is now mortal and corruptible will put on immortality and incorruption by the grace of the resurrection,[11] so that it will suffer corruption and death no more: not by casting off the nature of flesh (for it will always be flesh), but by a change in its condition and quality. For it will not be corruptible as before; and this holds not only for the bodies of the just but also for those of the unjust. Those of the just, not to live again on earth with the beasts, but to be able to remain in heaven with Christ and the angels; those of the unjust, not to indulge their pleasures again on earth, but to pay in hell, without being destroyed, the punishments due to them for ever. The just will rise to everlasting glory, in bodies shining like the sun;[12] the unjust to everlasting shame and punishment, in foul and unclean bodies.

[11] 1 Corinthians 15:53.

[12] Matthew 13:43.

I believe in life everlasting

That is, I believe that after the death of the body souls will live immortal: the just in heaven, the sinful in hell; before the day of judgment without the body, after the day of judgment with the body as well. For "as Christ, rising from the dead, dies now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him,"[13] so all will rise, never to die again. "For the Lord will cast death down for ever."[14]

[13] Romans 6:9.

[14] Isaiah 25:8 (Vulgate *praecipitabit mortem in sempiternum*).

Part II: The Precepts of the Decalogue

The Ten Precepts of the Law

"If you would enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19).[1] In the ten precepts of the law of Moses the whole reverence of divine worship shines out; and we should consider not so much what or how great the thing commanded is, as how great he is who commands it, and how great the things he promises to those who carry out his commands. For that reason God's precepts are to be kept by every good man; and if the labour of fulfilling them deters us, the reward ought to draw us on. For every work becomes light when its price is thought of, and the hope of reward is the solace of labour.

[1] Matthew 19:17 (Vulgate *si autem vis ad vitam ingredi serva mandata*).

Consider, I beg you, the greatness of your reward, if indeed what is beyond measure can be considered at all. After the departure of the soul, after the death of the flesh, after ashes and dust, you are to be restored to a better state; your earthly body is to be raised to heaven. If you keep these things, you are to be granted the company of the angels, to receive the kingdom of heaven, and to remain for ever with him who commanded you to keep them. What labour, then, will you think hard, when its rewards are so great? So, that you may enter into life, keep the commandments. That most indulgent Father asks of us only obedience to them, in return for all his great benefits towards us; but he has commanded them to be kept under pain of eternal death. And God commands nothing for his own profit, but for the profit of the one to whom he gives the command. That is why he is the true Lord: he has no need of the servant, while the servant has need of him.

The Precepts of the Decalogue

> Believe in one God; swear not vainly by his name. Keep holy the Lord's day; honour your parents. Be no killer, adulterer, thief, or false witness. Never covet another's wife, nor another's goods.

The First Commandment

> *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and him only shalt thou serve.* Matthew 4.[1]

[1] Matthew 4:10 (Vulgate *Dominum Deum tuum adorabis et illi soli servies*), quoting Deuteronomy 6:13.

This precept commands us *latria*, that is, the service, adoration, honour and reverence to be shown to God alone. It is given with the heart, by faith, hope and charity directed towards God; and with the body, by adoration, by vocal praise of God, by sacrifice, by fasting, and by other outward actions that turn to God's honour.

> Let faith be firm, hope conscious of right, love dear.

Faith

By faith we are commanded to believe the twelve articles of faith explicitly, and implicitly all that holy Church believes; and to have an inward devotion of mind towards God, and towards his saints for his

sake. But since faith without works is dead, as works are without faith,[2] and living faith is proved by works, and since the proof of love is the showing of the deed,[3] we are therefore commanded to adore and venerate God by outward acts also: bowing the head, joining the hands, bending the knee, striking the breast, praising God aloud, pricking up the ears to God's praise, mortifying the flesh, and the like.

[2] James 2:26 (*fides sine operibus mortua est*).

[3] *Probatio dilectionis exhibitio est operis*: Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 2.30.1 (*probatio ergo dilectionis exhibitio est operis*; CCSL 141, ed. Étaix, p. 256).

The holy and undivided Trinity, Jesus Christ, and the most holy Eucharist we are commanded to venerate with one and the same adoration, that is, with a worship that can be given to no creature. For in adoring the eternal Word himself, Christ as man, and the most holy Eucharist, it is him we look to and venerate. The Virgin Mary we are commanded to honour with *hyperdulia*, that is, an excellent reverence, but one owed to a creature; the Angels, and above all the angel appointed for our guardianship, and the holy men and women, with *dulia*, that is, an honour fitting for a creature. For the saints are not to be adored and honoured by us in such a way that we place our chief hope in them, and more than in God, or even as much as in God. The cross, the sign of Christ, his garments, the nails, the lance and the other things sanctified by Christ's touch; images of God and of the saints; and the bones and relics of the saints, we venerate with due honour for the sake of those to whom they belong.

Hope

By hope we are commanded to trust firmly in God that, of his mercy and grace, if we faithfully cooperate, he will grant us eternal blessedness.

Charity

By charity we are commanded to love God above all things, so that we love no creature more than God, or as much as God, and would not for any creature lose the love and grace of God. For the immeasurable God ought to be loved without measure, above all by us, whom he has so loved, so saved, and for whom he has done so many and such great things. God must therefore be loved by us with the whole heart, the whole soul, and the whole mind.[4] He who made the whole man requires the whole man.

[4] Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30.

To love God with the whole heart is not to be drawn away by flatteries, not to be led astray by deceits, not to be broken by injuries; but to love God so wholly, with the whole heart, that the heart is drawn to the love of nothing more than to God, and delights in nothing more than in God. For he does not love God with his whole heart who loves something together with God which he loves for its own sake and not for God's.

To love God with the whole soul is to love God so faithfully that we would rather have our soul separated from the body than from God. This love makes all heavy and hard things light and easy. That is why the holy martyrs bore every kind of torment as though it were sweet, not only patiently but even gladly, out of burning love. And the holy fathers in the deserts, in the great ardour of this love, found savour, delight and great sweetness in fasting, weeping and mourning: using herbs and

the bark of trees for food, dry bread and cold water, the earth for a bed, a stone for a pillow, and haircloth for clothing. For whoever has been made drunk with a taste of this love grows cheerful for every good work: he suffers and does not feel it, he labours and does not tire, he is mocked and does not notice. For that love is so constant and perfect that, if need be, a man will die for love of him who for love of man deigned to die gently and kindly.

To love God with the whole mind is to apply the whole memory to recalling the benefits received from God.

Ways of sinning

Against faith one sins by not believing, doubting, prying into the hidden things of faith, denying Christ with the mouth, tempting God, not adoring, using lots.

Against hope: despairing of God's goodness; trusting in that same goodness and sinning boldly; relying on one's own deeds.

Against charity: putting God second in love; breaking God's commands out of fear of the world; keeping them only out of fear of hell.

Sins against the First Commandment

Those who sin against this precept in faith

Heretics, idolaters, Turks, Jews, schismatics, and all who do not profess our orthodox faith in heart, word and deed.

Those who neglect to learn the ten precepts of the law and the twelve articles of faith. For each person is bound to the faith which his sponsors promised in baptism to holy Church on his behalf; and the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist should not be given to him until he has learned it.

Those who dissent from the Church in matters that belong to what is necessary to faith, obstinately believing the opposite.

Those who err in faith while believing that they think rightly, clinging to their error with their teeth and asserting it.

Those who do not fully believe the articles of faith, paradise, hell, purgatory, the most holy Eucharist, or the other sacraments of the Church. For he who doubts in faith is an unbeliever. Augustine: "Do not be alarmed, O Christian, that the things believed are deferred. For though the promise is hidden, let prayer persevere in hope; exercise yourself in works, grow in virtues: while the constancy of faith is being tested, the glory of the reward increases." And elsewhere: "The praise of faith is to believe what is not seen; its reward will be to rejoice in obtaining what was believed."

Those who presumptuously pry into the articles of faith, or dispute about the faith, doubting its truth. For simple people must believe explicitly what is contained in the Apostles' Creed, purely, sincerely, and without any doubt; and implicitly and in general they must believe and assent to all that holy Church believes, so that they explicitly dissent from no article. All of this the more learned profess and believe explicitly, insofar as they hold to divine Scripture.

Those who will believe nothing in matters of faith unless it can be clearly demonstrated to them by reason; this kind of man loses the merit of faith. Gregory: "Faith has no merit where human reason provides proof."[1] For no one can search out faith by reasoning.

[1] Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 26.1: *fides non habet meritum, cui humana ratio praebet experimentum*.

Those who deny the faith with the mouth, though they hold it in the heart, as Peter sinned. For every good Christian ought to have such constancy that his life is taken away sooner than his faith. Augustine: "Faith requires of us the service both of the heart and of the tongue."[2]

[2] The idea follows Romans 10:10.

Those who demand miracles from God or the saints, or want them to come to their aid miraculously, when they could help themselves in some other way.

Those who, being poor, or sickly, or in poor bodily health, or in any need, pray to God or his saints for riches, health, or safety from danger in such a way that, if they do not obtain them, they grumble, as though God were not just, good and merciful. "No wonder," says Gregory, "if we are heard slowly by the Lord when we ask, since we hear the Lord slowly, or never, when he commands. And what wonder is it if he is heard quickly in his prayer who has heard the Lord quickly in his precepts?" Let each person, then, seek a remedy as far as he can by natural means, without tempting God; and let him commit the rest, what passes human capacity, to divine providence, which will grant him what is most fitting. For poverty, affliction and ill health, if not useful to the body, are very often most useful to the soul. And, as Jerome says, "God often does not give us what we want, so that he may give us what we would prefer."

Those who do not pay God and the saints the honour and reverence due to them, or treat their relics and images irreverently.

Those who receive the most holy Eucharist unworthily.

Those who behave irreverently before the Eucharist, the relics of the saints and the Lord's cross, or in churches and places dedicated to divine worship.

Sorcerers, enchanters, magicians, interpreters of dreams, and all who use the arts forbidden by the divine law.

Those who make use of the help of such people to recover health or something lost.

Those who sin against hope

Those who, through the devil's temptation, faint-heartedness, or any other natural weakness, despair, that is, do not hope to attain future blessedness.

Those who think their sins too grave to deserve pardon, or for God to be willing or able to pardon them, and for that reason are ready to end their life in their sins.

Those who heap sin upon sin and, so as to be freer for sinning, will not make the effort to obtain forgiveness of their sins.

Those who are weary of this present life because not everything goes as they wish, or because they do not have as much honour and wealth as they hear others enjoy; and for that reason they neglect themselves and, cast down in mind, wish they had never been born, or to be taken away by any death

at all, in any state at all. But those who are weary of this present life out of desire for the heavenly homeland and love of God, considering how sweet, how delightful, how profitable it is to see God, to enjoy him, and to be among the hosts of the holy angels, for all of which they were created; and considering in turn how great is the darkness of the mind that does not know its creator, how grave the danger, how great the impurity, how great the instability of heart, how great the ingratitude, when they have received so many and such great benefits from him: these indeed gain merit by this weariness, like Paul when he said, "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ."[3] For this weariness is holy: it does not spring from a sinful conscience but from charity at work; it is not borne impatiently but taken up out of longing.

[3] Philippians 1:23 (Vulgate *desiderium habens dissolvi et esse cum Christo*).

Here it should be noted that despair is far graver than the gravest sins. For the first safety is to avoid sin; the second, not to despair of its pardon. Whoever despairs of pardon blocks his own way to obtaining God's mercy, by comparing his sins with it. For what else is despair than to compare God with one's sins? He who does not hope for pardon from God does not see that God's clemency can do more than his sins, nor that the goodness of the highest good is greater than his own wickedness. So let him alone despair who can sin as much as God is good. Since that cannot be, let him who fears because of his own evil trust in God, who is better. For a man could not commit so many sins, even if he had committed all that have been committed since the beginning of the world, that God could not forgive them. Their number is finite; but God's mercy and goodness are infinite; therefore through it they can be forgiven. More than that: the least drop of the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, shed for us in his passion, outweighs all the sins there have been since the beginning of the world.

Those who persist in their sins, hoping to obtain pardon without penance, or eternal glory without merits.

Those who sin boldly, saying that God did not create them to be damned. They say what is true: God created man so that he might share his glory and blessedness with him, and to this he calls Christians in particular through baptism. But many are called, few chosen;[4] and he who is truthful in promising is truthful also in threatening. And since faith without works is dead, no one can attain eternal life without good and meritorious works, when the need to do them arises in this life. For it is said, "If you would enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matthew 19).

[4] Matthew 20:16; 22:14.

Those who put off the amendment of their life until old age or the point of death, hoping to do penance for their past life then, and saying that contrition is enough for salvation at that point. I do not deny that this is so; but in so short a moment of time, when death is pressing and punishment terrifies, a just penance sufficient for salvation for so many sins is made scarcely and rarely. Besides, they may perhaps be overtaken by a sudden and unforeseen death; for, as Gregory says, "He who will not turn to God when he can, it is just that he be punished by being unable when he would."

Those who think their merits so great that for them God is bound to keep them free from troubles and to grant them eternal life by the sole power of their own merits. For none ascend to the fellowship of the heavenly Jerusalem except those who profess with their whole heart that their ascent is not their own work but God's gift. For reward is owed to good works if they are done; but grace, which is not owed, comes first so that they may be done.

Those who sin against charity

Those who love themselves and their own more than God. "For whoever loves himself and not God does not love himself; and whoever loves God and not himself, loves himself. For he who cannot live of himself surely dies by loving himself. So when he is loved by whom we live, he loves himself the more by not loving himself, who does not love himself so that he may love him by whom he lives."[5]

[5] Augustine, *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 123.5: *quisquis seipsum, non Deum amat, non se amat; et quisquis Deum, non seipsum amat, ipse se amat. Qui enim non potest vivere de se, moritur utique amando se … Cum vero ille diligitur de quo vivitur, non se diligendo magis diligit, qui propterea non se diligit, ut eum diligat de quo vivit*.

Those who, to gain some temporal profit, as in buying or selling something, or for some pleasure, as in fornication and drunkenness, or for worldly honours, as in pride and vainglory, act against God's precepts and spurn the love of God. For this kind of man does not love God above all things, but puts the world and its delights before God, best and greatest. Because he so loved us that he came down from the joys of heaven to share our misery and weakness; and he who was highest of all became lowest of all, put on our mortal flesh, willingly suffered for us wretches the most shameful and cruel death, and appeased the Father whom we had offended: we must therefore answer him in love, and love him back more than ourselves and all worldly things. Augustine: "God was made man; what then is man to do, for whose sake God became man?"

Those whose attachment to this world, or to remaining in the life of this present age, is so disordered that they would wish to stay in it for ever if they could, caring nothing for the happiness above. "For whoever wishes to be a friend of this world makes himself an enemy of God."[6] Augustine: "For a Christian the right cause of rejoicing is not the present age but the age to come. Temporal things are to be used so that they do not stand in the way of eternal ones; as on the road that pilgrims walk, what pleases is what leads to the homeland." For love of the world and love of God cannot live together in one heart, just as the eyes can never look at heaven and earth at the same time.

[6] James 4:4 (Vulgate *quicumque ergo voluerit amicus esse saeculi huius inimicus Dei constituitur*).

Those who serve God not for his own sake but for the good things they hope to obtain from him. For God is to be worshipped with this disposition and desire: that he himself be the reward of our worship. For he who worships God in order to gain something other than God himself does not worship God, but the thing he longs to obtain.

Those who, out of fear of someone (as servants for fear of their masters, pupils of their teachers), fail to obey God's precepts, neglecting his love; and so put a worthless creature before the most precious Creator. "To every good work," says Augustine, "love leads, and the fear of God; to every sin love leads, and the fear of the world. So, that good may be grasped and evil avoided, one must discern what is to be loved and what feared."

Those who avoid sins, not out of the love of God, but only to avoid the loss they would incur by such a sin, or to gain human praise.

Those who, dreading the words of mockers or slanderers, are afraid to carry out what is owed to divine worship. No one should be frightened by the tales and jeers of the foolish and the unbelieving into not doing what belongs to the law. For men's tales or laughter will not be able to free him from the fires of hell; but the fear of Christ and justice will.

Those who, though they are bound and ought to follow Christ and his teaching, are ashamed of it, or are afraid to utter and proclaim his name.

Those who fear and revere God, and keep his commandments, only for fear of the pains of hell due to sins, so that if the punishment of sins ceased they would go back to their sins. "For there are some," says Augustine, "who repent of having sinned because of present punishments; as a thief is displeased with his sins when the question is of punishment, but if the punishment is lacking he goes back to his crimes. This penance does not proceed from faith, nor is it armed with charity, but is barren and without mercy. It does not cleanse the conscience nor wash away crimes; in it there is no hope of pardon, no expectation of indulgence." They must therefore turn that servile fear into filial fear, and after fear rise to the love of God, like sons, whose part it is to fear offending their father, so as not to lie always under fear, like servants. For then they show the love of their conversion to God, if they love him as a Father whom before, with a servile mind, they dreaded as a Master. For God seeks freedom of choice, not compulsion; faithful charity, not servile fear. He is to be not only feared as a Judge but also loved as a Father. Whoever refrains from sin out of love for him shrinks from all evil and embraces the good of justice; sin does not delight him even if he were allowed it unpunished; for service with God is always free, where it is not necessity that serves but charity. But he who represses his vices only out of fear of punishment, even if he does not carry out the deed of sin, still has the will to sin living in him: he is sorry that what the law is known to forbid is unlawful for him, and he wishes that what he fears did not exist, so that he might boldly commit what is unlawful.

God is to be loved above all things, because

- he is supremely good;
- he loved us first;
- he is our Father;
- he provides for us;
- he redeemed us;
- he is present to us in the Eucharist;
- he promises a reward beyond imagining.

The Second Commandment

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.[1]

[1] Exodus 20:7 (Vulgate *non adsumes nomen Domini Dei tui in vanum*).

By this precept is forbidden every false, disordered, rash and thoughtless taking up of the divine name, as happens in blasphemy. Also forbidden is every oath without lawful cause, whether it is made by God, by the saints, by the cross, by the holy Gospel, by faith, by the soul, by the head, or by other creatures, inasmuch as God both is in them and is invoked in them. For in all these one swears by none other than God, who sanctified the saints, hung on the cross for us, and gave the Gospel and the faith; and you bind your soul and your head to the penalty that God will inflict. N. L. You shall swear what is true, reverently, when it is necessary.

You sin in swearing if three things are lacking.

In an oath three things must be present: truth, reverence for the divine name, and necessity. Oaths are not altogether forbidden. For it is lawful to confirm the truth by oath, with fear and reverence of God, whom we call to witness; and that only when our own benefit, or our neighbour's, demands it. In other matters, of no benefit or at most of slight benefit, one must not swear at all. We should use an oath like a medicine, which is taken only in necessity. Our speech, then, ought to be "Yes, yes; no, no."[2]

[2] Matthew 5:37 (Vulgate *sit autem sermo vester est est non non*)

How one sins against this precept

> I perjure, blaspheme, vow wrongly, and break my vows; out of levity I often call upon the names of God.

Those who sin against this precept

Those who in jest confirm by oath what is false.

Those who affirm on oath what is false, or what they believe to be false. Such people take up the name of God or of the saints to confirm a falsehood, since they call on the divine truth, or his saints, as witness to a falsehood or a deception. For to swear by God or by the saints is to call upon God or the saints as witnesses.

Those who affirm something under oath about which they are nevertheless in doubt, even if they afterwards find out that it was true. For such people expose themselves to danger.

Those who promise something to another under oath without the will to keep their promise.

Those who promise something to another under oath without the will to promise or to bind themselves, and so make use of some verbal disguise. Isidore: "By whatever art of words a man swears, God, who is witness of the conscience, takes it as he to whom the oath is sworn understands it."[3]

[3] Isidore of Seville, *Sententiae* 2.31.

Those who promise something to another under oath, with the intention indeed of fulfilling the promise, but afterwards do not fulfil it, without an excusing cause: at that point they commit perjury.

Those who swear that they will do some evil, whether by way of threat or in any other manner. For they sin whether or not they carry out what they conceived in their mind, because they apply an oath to a matter in which there is nothing but sin. For it is said: "In evil promises break faith; in a shameful vow change your decision."

Those who swear that they will omit a work of piety, even one to which they are not obliged: for example, those who swear that they will never enter religion, never show anyone a service of charity, never help another, and the like. For although they are not bound to that good, they are nonetheless bound not to put an obstacle in the way of the Holy Spirit. They apply an oath to matter that cannot be bound, since the force and effect of an oath is to bind a person to doing something.

Those who deliberately drive someone to perjury.

Those who in earnest swear by false gods.

Those who attribute to God what does not befit him: for example, those who call God unjust or unmerciful.

Those who deny something that befits God: for example, those who deny that God cares for mortal affairs.

Those who attribute to a creature what befits God alone: for example, those who attribute power and dominion over all things to the devil and to fortune.

Those who attribute to God members which, inasmuch as he is God, he does not have: for example, one who swears by God's belly, and by similar members.

Those who curse God and the saints, and wish them what cannot be in God and the saints: for example, those who would wish God not to be just. For as to an unhealthy palate food is a torment that is sweet, and to sick eyes the light is hateful in which a healthy gaze rejoices, so the justice of God displeases the wicked; yet if they submitted themselves to it, they would not be troubled.[4]

[4] Augustine, *Confessions* 7.16.22: *non esse mirum quod palato non sano poena est et panis qui sano suavis est, et oculis aegris odiosa lux quae puris amabilis*.

Those who do injury to God and the saints.

Those who vow to commit some deadly work, such as killing or maiming someone. For the matter of a vow is only a good work, acceptable to God.

Those who vow something against the divine counsels: for instance, not to enter religion, not to give alms. Such a vow is not lawful, for one promises God what does not please him.

Those who vow something that is in itself lawful, but for an evil end, so as to obtain an unlawful desire. They make God the author and patron of their crime.

Those who make indiscreet, foolish, unreasonable vows: for example, those who vow not to comb their hair, or not to wash their face, and the like. A vow ought to concern something discreet and reasonable, according to the saying of Paul: "Let your service be reasonable."[5]

[5] Romans 12:1 (Vulgate *rationabile obsequium vestrum*).

Those who do not pay their vows to GOD at the due time; that is, if they concern a good work which they are able to perform. For if a vow concerns a deadly work, it is not to be kept; indeed, one sins by carrying it out. Let each one, then, consider again and again what he vows and what by vowing he pays: let him who vows himself to God render himself to God. This is what is required, this is what is owed: let Caesar's image be rendered to Caesar, God's image to God.[6] Here it is to be noted that for a reasonable cause vows can be commuted by the Church, or dispensed for the one who made them.

[6] Prosper of Aquitaine, *Liber sententiarum ex operibus Augustini* 15 (*De vovendo Deo*): *Quisquis bene cogitat quid voveat Deo et quae vota persolvat, seipsum voveat et reddat. Hoc exigitur, hoc debetur. Imago Caesaris reddatur Caesari, imago Dei reddatur Deo*. Compare Matthew 22:21.

Those who swear even about certain matters when they would be believed without an oath.

Those who deliberately, without lawful and necessary cause, or from a perverse habit, inclination or levity, have constantly in their mouths "by God", "by the saints", "by the cross", and the like. This sin is very dangerous, because a man easily slips this way into perjury. Jerome: "Let your tongue know nothing whatever of lying and swearing; and let your love of truth be so great that whatever you say

you hold as sworn."[7] Isidore: "To swear is not against God's command; but when we make a habit of swearing, we incur the crime of perjury. Let him therefore never swear who fears to perjure himself. For as in much speaking sin is not lacking, so in frequent swearing perjury is not lacking." Therefore Ecclesiastes says: "Let not your mouth be accustomed to swearing; for in it there are many falls."

[7] Pseudo-Jerome, *Epistola 148 ad Celantiam* 19 (CSEL 56, p. 345), a letter now usually attributed to Pelagius; quoted as Jerome's in the *Manipulus florum*.

Those who swear without considering whether an oath is called for or not, and what may come of it, and also whether there is a reasonable and necessary cause. Hence it is dangerous to swear in anger, at banquets, and in other places of pleasure, because there a man is less in the habit of deliberating.

Those who swear irreverently, showing no reverence to the divine name. For to swear by God is to call upon God as witness. Hence in swearing the greatest reverence must be shown to the divine name, since God is named and brought forward as witness, who is to be honoured more than any earthly lord.

Those who put others on oath and force them to swear where there is no need of an oath.

The Third Commandment

> *Remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day.*[1]

[1] Exodus 20:8.

That is, keep it holy and as a day of rest, ceasing from all servile work. By this precept the Jews living under the law of Moses were commanded to observe the Sabbath, the seventh day, with a particular veneration. For when in six days God had made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, he rested, that is, he ceased, on the seventh day. For thereafter he made nothing new of which he had not already made a creature like it in kind. Yet he works daily, preserving and governing what he has created.[2] Under the law of grace, however, we do not keep holy the Sabbath, but the following day, that is, the Lord's day, on which our Lord Jesus Christ rose again. For on the day of the resurrection he created man (who had been created earthly) heavenly by a new creation. By this precept, therefore, we are commanded to sanctify the Lord's day, and also the other solemnities which our holy mother the Church has instituted.

[2] Compare John 5:17 ("My Father works until now").

> Do no work, hear Mass, bewail your sins; love God with your heart: so are feast days worthily kept.

Feast days are sanctified when they are given over to divine worship, if on those days we devote ourselves to the things of God and love God above all things, hearing Mass and abstaining from servile works. For he keeps the Sabbath badly who is idle from good works. It would also be useful on feast days to examine one's conscience; to ask God's pardon for sins committed; to call to mind the benefits one has received from God; to set before the eyes of the mind death, hell, purgatory, paradise, and the passion of Jesus Christ; and at that time above all to keep oneself from sin. For the Christian (says Augustine) keeps the true Sabbath by abstaining from all servile work, that is, from sin: since "whoever commits sin is the servant of sin."

How one sins against this precept

I do some forbidden work; what ought to be done I leave undone; I do not revere holy things, and I give the feast day over to games.

Those who sin against this precept

Those who on feast days do servile work, proper to servants alone, such as ploughing, digging and the like. Yet for reasons of piety, necessity or smallness some things are permitted: such as cooking food, preparing medicine, burying the dead, buying or selling some small thing, spending a little time on it. These things were forbidden on the Sabbath day under the old Law, because they used to be done beforehand on the eve of the Sabbath. But works that are free by their nature (such as the exercises of the liberal arts: disputing, studying, playing musical instruments) are permitted even on feast days. So too are works common to free men and servants, such as setting out on a journey, taking care of oneself, and the like.

Those who order their servants and subjects to do servile work.

Those who do not hear Mass on feast days.

Those who do not go to confession at Easter, or do not receive the most holy Eucharist; these can also be called sins against the precepts of the Church.

Those who do not say the divine office, although they are bound to it.

Those who hear the Sacrifice irreverently, chatting or doing something else unseemly, or who conduct themselves without sufficient reverence at the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Those who violate and pollute a sacred place, that is, a cemetery or a church, by doing forbidden things there, or by stealing and robbing there.

Those who spend the feast day in games, in joking, in idly wandering here and there, in watching shows, vainly, indecently and wastefully, at a time when they ought to devote themselves to the things of God.

Those who on feast days shamelessly frequent taverns, ball-courts, or other more disgraceful places.

The Fourth Commandment

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land.[1]

[1] Exodus 20:12.

By this precept we are commanded reverence, obedience and support towards our parents. Reverence, by loving them, doing them good, praying for them, and taking careful heed not to offend them in word or deed, rising for them and showing them honour.

Obedience, by complying with them in all things that belong to good conduct and to the good of the household: after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, the pattern of all virtue, who always showed himself compliant to Mary his mother, and to Joseph for Mary's sake.[2]

[2] Luke 2:51 (*et erat subditus illis*).

Support, by consoling them and supplying what they need. If we do this, a reward is promised us: length of natural life, if it profits us for salvation and for our greater good. For to live long, well and happily is a great benefit from God; just as, on the contrary, those who live long in their sins are damned the more heavily.

There is promised besides length of the life of grace in the present life, which is greater than natural life, and length of the life of glory in the world to come, which is the greatest.

The father who by this precept is commanded to be honoured is of many kinds:

- The heavenly Father, author of soul and body.
- The father according to the flesh: such as both parents, one's country, kinsmen by blood and by marriage.
- The spiritual father: such as the supreme pontiff, the bishop, the parish priest, our confessor, and priests.
- The father of authority and care: such as the king, the prince, the temporal lord, the guardian, and in short every superior.

Christ, both parents, the prelate and the king are fathers: revere them, obey them, and help them.

How one sins against this precept

I do not revere, I do not obey, I do not help my father.

Those who sin against this precept

Those who do not honour their parents by rising for them, or by uncovering their heads in their presence.

Those who neglect and mock their parents and kinsfolk when they are weak or poor.

Those who stir up their parents' anger with harsh words. Jerome: "Let no one wound a parent with harsh words."

Those who wish for their parents' death out of hatred of them, or from desire for their rank and inheritance.

Those who do not show, in word and deed, due honour, reverence and submission to prelates, princes, temporal lords, and in short to all who are set in dignity.

Those who disparage them and blacken their reputation, which mostly happens at shows and public games.

Those who do not obey their parents in things that belong to good conduct. For otherwise, if parents wished to call their children away from the divine precepts or counsels, the children would not be showing irreverence to their parents [by disobeying]: for instance, if they wished to deter a son, drawn by the spirit of divine love, from entering religion. Jerome: "Though your father lie across the threshold, trample on your father and go on; fly dry-eyed to the standard of the cross. In this matter the only kind of piety is to be cruel."[3]

[3] Jerome, *Epistola* 14.2 (to Heliodorus): *licet in limine pater iaceat, per calcatum perge patrem, siccis oculis ad vexillum crucis evola; solum pietatis genus est in hac re esse crudelem*.

Those who do not obey their parents in ordinary commands and in what belongs to the good of the household. For as regards the government of the house and the forming of conduct, the son is subject to his father.

Those who despise the commands of prelates and temporal lords in matters in which they are bound to obey.

Those who rebel against them.

Those who do not, as far as they can, supply the necessities of their parents when they are poor and in want. Chrysostom: "Christ teaches us to have care for our parents to our last breath. For in saying nothing to the other women who stood by, he teaches us to bestow something more on our parents."[4]

[4] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John* 85.2–3, on John 19:26–27.

Those who neglect to console them.

Those who do not help their departed parents with suffrages and prayers.

Those who withhold tithes and the stipends due to prelates, parish priests and temporal lords.

To lay violent hands on one's parents, although it belongs to the following precept, is nonetheless under this precept an aggravating circumstance.

Fathers too sin against this precept, and all superiors, who command their subjects things that ought not to be done.

Those who do not outwardly give good example of living to those entrusted to them, etc. For the Apostle, who enjoined, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing in the Lord," at once added: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to indignation."[5] But since these things do not concern children (for whom we are chiefly writing), let it suffice to have mentioned them briefly.

[5] Colossians 3:20–21 (Vulgate *filii oboedite parentibus per omnia hoc enim placitum est in Domino; patres nolite ad indignationem provocare filios vestros*). Compare Ephesians 6:1, 4.

In passing, we have thought it right to warn that many parents love their children so wretchedly that in making them rich and wealthy they acquire eternal damnation for themselves, and are very often the authors of that same eternal damnation for those same children. Such parents love the bodies of their sons but despise their souls. They want them to prosper in this world, and do not care what they will suffer in the next. Some fathers provide military posts for their sons, others honours, and none provides God for his sons. They buy their ruin at a great price, but will not accept their salvation even as a gift. If they see them poor, they grieve and sigh; but if they see them sinning, no one grieves: so they show that they are the parents of bodies, not of souls.

The Fifth Commandment

Thou shalt not kill.[1]

[1] Exodus 20:13.

By this precept homicide is forbidden by name; and implicitly every harm by which we can injure the soul or body of our neighbour: such as every blow, even short of death and the shedding of blood, ill will, hatred, anger and the like.

Not every killing, however, is forbidden by this precept, but only the unjust killing of men and unjust harm done to men. For the commonwealth, or a judge acting for the commonwealth, can punish the guilty and deprive them of life or of a living limb. A father too over his children, and a teacher over his pupils, have power, but an imperfect power: that is, only to inflict lighter punishments, and such as do no irreparable harm.

How one sins against this precept

> I kill, I maim, I wish evil, I do not help the needy; I do not appease one angry with me; of my own accord I expose myself to the dangers of committing crime; I lead my companions astray; I give scandal to someone; I do not rebuke one who sins.

Those who sin against this precept

Those who do violence to themselves and bring on the causes of their own death. For a man is then killed against charity towards himself and against justice, since no one is judge of himself or lord of his own life, and no one except God and the commonwealth has power to deprive anyone of life or of a living limb.

Those who wish to kill another unjustly.

Those who kill another under compulsion of a necessity that could nevertheless have been avoided: for example, those who kill their attackers when they could conveniently escape from their hands.

Those who procure abortion.

Those who shorten their own life and hasten their death by giving themselves to something useless and unlawful, as usually happens through excessive drinking and immoderate lust.

Those who order another to be unjustly killed.

Those who urge and give counsel towards the unjust killing of a man, or are in any other way the authors of another's death. For "they are worthy of death, not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them."[2]

[2] Romans 1:32 (Vulgate *qui talia agunt digni sunt morte non solum qui ea faciunt sed et qui consentiunt facientibus*).

Those who mutilate themselves by cutting off some limb, unless it is done from a necessity of health that requires the cutting off of the limb.

Those who unjustly beat another, or injure him in any other way.

Those who order, urge or give help so that unjust injury may be done to their neighbour.

Those who out of hatred of their neighbour wish him death, mutilation or eternal damnation. This kind of man makes himself worthy that God should inflict on him the evils he wishes for others.

Those who rejoice on hearing of another's calamity, or grieve on hearing of his good fortune.

Those who out of hatred give another bad advice.

Those who pray God that they may be able to take revenge on their enemies.

Those who neglect, as far as they are able, to free from death a man whom they know to be in extreme necessity and danger of life.

Those who do not feed a man dying of hunger. Ambrose: "Feed him who is dying of hunger: for if you do not feed him, you kill him."

Those who do not run to the help of a neighbour who has been attacked, when they can conveniently do so.

Those who know of conspiracies to kill or injure another, and yet do not take measures or prevent it, as far as they are able, by revealing it or by drawing the conspirators back, so that such an injury is not done to their neighbour.

Those who disdain to ask pardon of someone they have injured, while there is room to recover the friendship of one whom they see roused against them by excessive anger or a feeling of hatred. For if they have done another an injury, and have unjustly been the cause and occasion of his hatred, they must make satisfaction to the neighbour they have injured for the injury done, by humbly asking pardon, or by humbling themselves before him, or by doing him services of charity.

Those who refuse to forgive those who ask pardon.

Those who return evil for evil, which is far removed from the precept of Christ, "Pray for them that calumniate and persecute you."[3] From these things there commonly arise brawls, insults and homicides; that is why we have brought them under this precept.

[3] Matthew 5:44 (Vulgate *orate pro persequentibus et calumniantibus vos*).

Spiritual homicides

Here may be brought spiritual homicides, such as:

Those who act against conscience, doing what they think a sin, or a deed about which they doubt whether it is a sin or not. In this the will itself departs from right reason and from the love of God. For it prefers to do that deed with doubt of incurring the transgression of a divine precept, rather than to abstain from it with the certainty of not going wrong; and so the soul is its own murderer and builds towards hell.

Those who go to a place or a company where they know there is danger of sinning, because of what they will see, persuasions, opportunities, or something of the kind.

Those who apply young people of good disposition to evil and corrupt their good conduct. Such men are most truly likened to demons. For by their snares they bring about the damnation of souls for whose salvation Christ shed his blood; and they strive to make the members of Christ members of the devil, as enemies and adversaries of Christ himself. Bernard: "If Christ gave his own blood as the price of the redemption of souls, does it not seem to you that he suffers a heavier persecution from one who, by malicious suggestion, pernicious example and the occasion of scandal, turns away from him the souls he has redeemed, than from the Jew who shed that blood?" On the other hand, the greatest sacrifice to God is zeal for souls. For it is a greater miracle (says Gregory) to convert a sinner

by the word of preaching and the comfort of prayer than to raise a dead man. In the one case the flesh is raised, to die again; in the other the soul, to live for ever.[4]

[4] Gregory the Great, *Dialogues* 3.17: *maius est miraculum praedicationis verbo atque orationis solatio peccatorem convertere, quam carne mortuum resuscitare. In isto enim resuscitatur caro iterum moritura, in illo vero anima in aeternum victura.*

Those who hinder one who wishes to live well and blessedly, or to do a good work.

Those who imbue others with bad morals, or teach perverse doctrine, as heretics do.

Those who by their mockery or urging try to call people devoted to piety and religion away from the right way to a worse one. Jerome: "It is not enough for some that they will not weep for their own sins; on top of this they mock those who are seen to weep, and hold up to scorn those whom they ought to imitate."

Those who by an inordinate word or deed try to lead another into sin; and this is a special sin.

Those who commit a sin, or something that has the appearance of sin, whereby others are given a bad example and an occasion of sinning, even though they do not intend another's spiritual ruin, when they either foresee, or ought to foresee, that others will take a bad example from it.

Those who do not admonish by word a neighbour who does wrong, so as to call him back from sin. For chastisement belongs only to the prelate and to one endowed with authority; but admonition belongs to everyone: that is, when someone held fast in the death of sin is probably believed to be able to be freed by admonition and correction. For if he is believed to be going to rise from sin in any case, as a man who searches his own conscience, or if he is believed likely to become worse through admonition, then we are not bound to fraternal correction.

Those endowed with authority who neglect to punish their subjects in deed and to rebuke them in word. For fathers who do not punish their children when they do wrong are a cause to them of sinning again: they are indeed the parents of their bodies, but the murderers of their souls. Proverbs 13: "He that spareth the rod hateth his son." And chapter 23: "Withhold not correction from a child: for if thou strike him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell."[5]

[5] Proverbs 13:24 (Vulgate *qui parcit virgae suae odit filium suum*); Proverbs 23:13–14.

How one can sin in punishing another

> I rebuke the innocent, or the guilty more or less than is fair; punishing according to deserts, I am enraged; or I depart from the law.

Those who punish another can sin in four ways

If they punish a man who is guilty and deserving of punishment, but more heavily than the offence warrants; or less than is fitting, so that the offender does not fear to fall back into the same sin.

If they punish a man who is guilty with a just penalty, and with the order of law observed, but not with a just and kindly mind, rather with a desire for vengeance and for the other's harm. For every passion of anger is forbidden, above all in punishing another. They ought to grieve for the plight and the sin of the one they punish, which cannot be done in anger; they ought to correct the other with the will with which a father corrects his little son, whom he cannot hate.

If they punish a man who is guilty with a just penalty, but without observing the order of law: for instance, if they have no lawful power to punish, or if they punish without hearing the case, or at a time, in a place or in a manner that is not due.

The Sixth Commandment

Thou shalt not commit adultery.[1]

[1] Exodus 20:14.

By this precept adultery is forbidden by name. Implicitly also every unlawful intercourse outside marriage, and every unlawful and disordered, or even unnatural, use or touching of the members, done in order to procure, and for the sake of experiencing, venereal pleasure. Here it sometimes happens that the gravest sins are committed, which are above all to be avoided: on account of which the two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, with all their inhabitants and the surrounding region, fell into the abyss.[2] These are vices proper to idolaters, from which, as Jerome says, the Greeks and Romans suffered most grievously, until under the emperor Constantine, as the Gospel of Christ shone forth, both the unbelief and the foulness of all the nations were done away. Hence each one ought to take great care in these matters not to commit anything carnal for which his conscience would reproach him and he would naturally blush, or in which right reason tells him there is a foulness that he would not dare to do openly or make known.

[2] Genesis 19:24–25.

Of the species and causes of lust we shall speak among the capital sins.

The Seventh Commandment

Thou shalt not steal.[1]

[1] Exodus 20:15.

By this precept it is forbidden to keep another's property, or the use of another's property, by force, by fraud, or against the owner's will, so that the owner would be displeased if he knew of it; and in short, to do another damage in any way in temporal goods. For it is against charity towards the neighbour to whom damage is done. In this kind of sin true and sufficient penance cannot be had unless there is the resolve to restore what was taken, as far as one is able.

How one sins against this precept

> I lend at usury, I rob by force, I steal, I do damage to property; I do not return what I have found; I make bargains with fraud.

Those who sin against this precept

Those who lend money to another and, by reason of the loan, demand a temporal gain in money or in anything else that can be valued in money. Augustine: "O man, why do you lend at interest to man? Lend at interest to God, that is, by helping him in his poor; and you will receive a hundredfold and will possess eternal life. And so you are too ungrateful if you will not lend to God at such interest as you would lend to a Jew or a Saracen."[2]

[2] Compare Proverbs 19:17 (*faeneratur Domino qui miseretur pauperis*).

Those who lend without any agreement for gain, but in the hope of receiving some gain from the loan as if owed by virtue of the loan, and without that hope would not lend to their neighbour. In passing we have thought it right to warn that usurers are bound to restore the usury, and the damage done to their neighbour through usury. But to borrow at usury is not of itself a sin, unless someone undergoes this loss without reasonable cause and makes use of another's wickedness.

Those who unjustly take away another's property by violence. Augustine: "If he is sent into the fire who did not give his own property, where do you think he will be sent who seized another's? If he burns with the devil who did not clothe the naked, where do you think he will burn who stripped him? What will he receive who took what belonged to others, if he who did not give his own will burn for ever?" Gregory: "From this, then, we must gather with what damnation they will be struck who seize the goods of others, if those are smitten with such punishment who kept their own without discretion. Let them weigh to what guilt the thing seized binds them, if the thing not given subjects to such a punishment. Let them weigh what injustice inflicted will deserve, if mercy not shown is worthy of so great a blow."

Those who keep back the wages owed to others, or money they owe.

Those who impose new taxes not for the good of the commonwealth but for someone's private advantage, or who advise that they be imposed.

Those who unjustly take another's property from him without his knowledge and against his will, so that he would be displeased if he knew of it.

Those who spend lavishly and on vain things money given them by their parents to buy necessities.

Those who knowingly give others counterfeit money, or bad goods for good, even if these came to them in that way from others. For if they were deceived by others, they ought not straightway to deceive others.

Those who secretly or openly destroy and spoil another's property, even if nothing of that property remains with them.

Those who do not, as far as they can, make good damage of this kind unjustly done.

Those who hire out their labour to others and do not work faithfully. Such people are bound to restore the damage; and, in short, so are all others who in any other way unjustly do damage to another.

Those who take another's property that they have found, which is not considered abandoned, with the intention of keeping it for themselves, and hold on to it as their own. Augustine: "What you have found and not returned, you have stolen." For if the owner is known, or is found by using diligence, it must be returned to him; but if the owner is not found, because perhaps it fell from a traveller, it must be given to the poor.

Those who sell or buy with fraud, whether as to the price, the thing, the weight, the number or the measure.

Those who make unlawful contracts with others that tend to their neighbour's damage. Those who make them know them very well, and so there is no need to warn them about them.

On restitution

Let the thief, or the doer of the wrong, refund the principal and the damage. Command, counsel, consent, praise, refuge; partaking, silence, not hindering, not revealing.

These are bound to restitution

He who carries out an unjust action himself, whether he does it of his own accord or at the command of his lord, knowing the injustice; whether for his own gain or another's.

He who orders an unjust action to be done, and who by his command is the principal moving cause of carrying out the unjust action.

He who gives effective counsel for carrying out an unjust action, and by his counsel is the direct moving cause of it, or without whom that unjust action would not have been carried out.

He who by his consent is the whole cause, or with others a cause, of an unjust action, on whose consent the whole matter depends.

He who praises an unjust action and excuses it under the appearance of good, saying, "That is how fools must be tamed," and the like; provided that this flattery is a cause of that unjust action.

He who is the receiver and refuge of one who acts unjustly. For such sheltering is a cause of the unjust action, because it gives security for acting unjustly and makes a man persevere in unjust actions, while he makes himself the patron of iniquity by giving the wicked man protection in his iniquity.

He who has a share in an unjust action, whether as accomplice, as go-between, as spy, or in any other way.

He who, when he can, and is bound by his office, to rebuke the doer of an unjust action and to prevent him by forbidding it, so that no damage is done to the neighbour, nevertheless keeps silent and does not hinder the unjust action, which he can and by his office is bound to hinder. For he is a cause of it.

He who, when he can and by his office ought to give help to prevent an unjust action, nevertheless neglects to do so. For example, a temporal lord who does not oppose robberies and other plundering done in his territory, of which he is the guardian, is bound to restore the damage done.

He who, when he can and by his office ought to reveal the attacker to his neighbour, either before or after the deed, so that by revealing him he could prevent such damage being done to his neighbour, and yet does not reveal him, is bound to restore the damage that his neighbour suffers through his not revealing it, in so far as that not revealing is a cause either of the unjust action or of the unjust keeping of another's property.

The Eighth Commandment

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.[1]

[1] Exodus 20:16.

By this precept every harmful lie is forbidden by name, whether when you are called to give testimony or outside court, in ordinary everyday speech. Implicitly, all sins that belong to speech are forbidden too, at least those by which harm is done to the neighbour: such as detraction, calumny, mockery and the like. Every man is neighbour to every man, and nothing is so near as man to man. For let us consider Adam and Eve: we are all brothers already. And if we are brothers in that we are men, how much more in that we are Christians, who have one father, Jesus Christ, and one mother, holy Church?

How one sins against this precept

> I accuse falsely, I mock, I detract, I call down curses, I judge ill in my own mind, I stir up quarrels; I flatter, I dissemble, lies are mine, I do harm.

Those who sin against this precept

Those who out of ill will, or without the appearance of a sufficient cause, charge another with a false crime. This sin can be committed on the part of the judge, of the accuser, of the accused, of the advocate, and of whoever examines the case.

Those who, even of a true crime (but a hidden one), without sufficient necessity and reasonable cause, publicly accuse or reveal another, not keeping the order laid down by divine law.[2]

[2] That is, the order of fraternal correction in Matthew 18:15–17 (private warning before public denunciation).

Those who try to show another's good works and kindnesses as evil, or as done in pretence, so as to show him up as a hypocrite or to bring others' ill will upon him.

Those who in court answer the questions put to them with fraud and malice.

Those who, being the accused, will not confess the truth in a case in which they are bound to confess it.

Those who mock others with words or guffaws or a wrinkled nose, or make sport of them by mimicking their gestures and bearing: a sin that is the graver the greater the reverence owed to those who are mocked.

Those who, before many people, throw back in someone's face a kindness they did him in a time of need, to the loss of his honour.

Those who, intending to insult, reproach someone with something criminal, or with a fault of soul or body.

Those who say such things even without intending to insult, if the insult does the neighbour harm.

Those who blacken the good name of someone absent with the will to injure it: whether by telling the truth or a falsehood, by asserting or by reporting, by adding or by lessening, by interpreting, or in any other way. Such persons are bound to restore the good name, if the detraction brings infamy. For they take from a man his good name, which is a better good than great riches.[3] Hence Jerome, against detractors: "If you wish to correct me when I do wrong, rebuke me openly; only do not bite in secret. For what good does it do me if you tell my faults to others? if, without my knowledge, you wound someone else with my sins, or rather with your detractions, and vie in telling everyone, speaking to each as if you had told no one else? This is not to amend me, but to satisfy your own vice."

[3] Proverbs 22:1 (Vulgate *melius est nomen bonum quam divitiae multae*), not named in the text.

Those who recount other people's sins out of talkativeness, and not with the intention of injuring their good name, do not sin so gravely.

Those who prick up their ears to informers, for the pleasure they take in hearing of their neighbour's disgrace. Bernard: "Whether to detract or to listen to a detractor is the more damnable, I would not easily say." Jerome: "If you listen to a detractor with a cheerful face, you feed his detraction; but if you hear these things with a sad face, he learns not to say gladly what he has learned is not gladly heard."

Those who do not defend the good name of a neighbour unjustly defamed, when they both can and ought to, and the neighbour's good name has been injured as a result. For it should count for little with a Christian not to stir up or increase others' enmities by speaking ill, unless he also strives to put them out by speaking well.

Those who detract from themselves and defame themselves.

Those who call down curses either on themselves or on others.

Those who pray that others may suffer harm in soul, body, good name or goods: for these things are contrary to charity towards the neighbour.

Those who curse the day of their own or another's birth, cursing the man who was born and wishing that he had been born to ill or not been born at all.

Those who by habit constantly have foul words in their mouth, such as the name of the devil or the like.

Those who curse irrational creatures because they belong to another: for example, those who call down barrenness on someone's field, or death on his cattle.

Those who without sufficient cause take what others say or do in the worse sense, and interpret it so. Bernard: "Beware of being either a curious spy or a rash judge of another's conduct. Even if you catch something done amiss, do not even then judge your neighbour, but rather excuse him. Excuse the intention if you cannot excuse the deed: think it ignorance, think it surprise, think it accident. And if the certainty of the matter refuses all concealment, persuade yourself nonetheless, and say within yourself: The temptation was too strong. What would it have done with me if it had received the same power over me?"[4]

[4] Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica* 40.5: *tantum cave alienae conversationis esse aut curiosus explorator, aut temerarius judex. Etiamsi perperam actum quid deprehendas … Vehemens fuit nimis tentatio, quid de me illa fecisset, si accepisset in me similiter potestatem?*

Those who without sufficient certainty judge their neighbour's mind or will. For no one ought to assert definitely, even in his heart, what he does not know, when the matter is not clear from sufficient indications. Hence he who is a careless searcher of his own conscience is usually a curious spy on another's. For to judge rashly of the hidden things of another's heart is a sin. Indeed, it is unjust to blame on suspicion a man of whom only good works are seen, since of the things unknown to men God alone is the judge, who is just and the true searcher.

Those who provoke others to anger with quarrelsome words.

Those who stir up enmities between people, or nourish them.

Those who praise someone for a deed that is a mortal sin, which is a very grave sin. For in this way men's minds are easily corrupted, and towards the things that are praised (though criminal) they are kindled and grow accustomed, so that evil things not only cease to be held shameful, but are even held to be good and worthy of praise, honour and reward. What could be worse than that?

Those who praise someone by flattery, so as to harm his body or soul.

Those who by praising another become the occasion of mortal sin for him: such as vainglory, boasting and so on. Jerome: "Beware of flatterers as of enemies, whose words are softer than oil, and yet they are very darts; with feigned praises they corrupt light souls, and inflict a pleasant wound on credulous minds."

Those who by deeds, writings, nods, signs and other outward acts pretend to be what they are not, as hypocrites do. For by pretence a man lies in deed, as by a lie he lies in word. Ambrose: "Beware of lying, brethren, for all who love lying are sons of the devil. There is lying not only in false words, but also in pretended works."

Those who do not keep their promises (lawful ones, that is). For the neighbour to whom the promise was made is deceived.

Those who lie so as to bring harm to their neighbour's soul: for example, those who, with the will to deceive, assert something false, contrary to the Catholic faith or Holy Scripture, or to good Christian morals. This is the first kind of harmful lie.

Those who lie only wishing to harm another unjustly in body, goods or good name: so the lie profits no one and harms another. This is the second kind.

Those who lie wishing to do their neighbour harm in his goods, but to profit themselves or someone else, as merchants and false accusers do. This is the third kind. These three kinds of harmful lie are mortal, because "the mouth that lieth killeth the soul."[5]

[5] Wisdom 1:11 (Vulgate *os autem quod mentitur occidit animam*), not named in the text.

Every lie is to be avoided with the greatest care. For although some kind of lie is sometimes a lighter fault, as when someone lies for the safety of all, yet the fictions of lying are difficult and laborious, whereas he who wishes to speak the truth does not labour. For the good are more at peace than the wicked, and the words of the truthful are more straightforward than the inventions of liars. [Gregory]: "Nothing is safer for defence than purity, nothing easier for speech than truth. For while the liar is forced to defend his falsehood, his heart is wearied with hard labour." The same: "Those who could have been friends of truth without labour, labour in order to sin; and while they refuse to live simply, they demand with labour that they may die."[6]

[6] The thought recalls Jeremiah 9:5 (*ut inique agerent laboraverunt*).

The Ninth Commandment

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.[1]

[1] Exodus 20:17 (Deuteronomy 5:21).

By the sixth precept the carnal act is forbidden, and the will from which the outward act of lust arises. But lest anyone should think that the full and complete desire of sexual pleasure is not a sin unless it breaks out into outward action, this precept forbids by name the coveting of another man's wife, and implicitly also all unlawful carnal desires. For many who are chaste in body have committed adultery in will; and the will often sins without the deed, namely when some obstacle intervenes from elsewhere which prevents the will from breaking out into outward action. Human law does not judge these thoughts of the mind, but only what appears outwardly, that is, deeds and words. But the divine law judges even the inmost thoughts of our heart. For to the eyes of God all things are naked and open;[2] and with him every full and complete will, whether good or bad, is reckoned as the deed. Augustine: "A will inclined to act is counted as the work done."

[2] Hebrews 4:13 (Vulgate *omnia autem nuda et aperta sunt oculis eius*).

How one sins against this precept

> Whoever is ready in mind to violate another's bed; who fixes forbidden looks, touches and kisses; who speaks lewd things and pricks up his ears to them; who does not restrain the flesh but turns over foul things in his mind; who goes about dressed up, enticed by shameful love; and who in other ways contrives shameful loves: he sins, violating the teachings of the divine law.

Those who sin against this precept

Those who have the full and complete will to fornicate, if they had the opportunity and did not fear to incur some temporal harm from it.

Those who indulge in unlawful looks and touches, or give unchaste embraces and kisses, or willingly receive them. For a person ought rather to undergo the danger of death than allow unchaste filthiness to be accomplished on himself. One must defend one's chastity as one's own life, repelling force with force.

Those who delight in lascivious and unchaste songs or talk that can arouse lust. For "vain talk quickly defiles the mind, and what is gladly spoken is easily done."

Those who like to hear sexual matters spoken of. Jerome: "Never listen to an indecent word; or if you hear one, be angry. For the depraved minds of men often try the bars of chastity with a single light word."

Those who are negligent in restraining and curbing the passions of the flesh.

Those who linger with pleasure over lustful thoughts.

Those who adorn themselves to provoke others to lust and to desire for themselves, and to please women. In short, those who in any other way procure, plan or provoke lechery.

The Tenth Commandment

> *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.*[1]

[1] Exodus 20:17.

By the seventh precept the act of stealing is forbidden, and of doing harm to the neighbour and his goods, as well as the will from which the outward act of unjustly appropriating the neighbour's property arises. But lest anyone should think that interior coveting alone, without outward action, is not a sin, this precept forbids by name that interior, deliberate covetous will to steal, and to claim another's property for oneself by any right or wrong, if there were opportunity and means, and fear and shame did not stand in the way. Implicitly it also forbids that insatiable greed for having things unjustly or by unlawful ways, which like the mouth of hell devours everything, keeps the mind continually restless with worldly cares, calls it away from spiritual things, and is directly contrary to charity towards the neighbour.

How one sins against this precept

> If I could, I would seize; I contrive my neighbour's losses; I gamble for gain; I long to acquire much by bad means.

Those who sin against this precept

Those who are ready in their own mind to lend at usury, to rob, to steal, to damage others' property, to keep what they have found, and in any other way to do their neighbour some harm in his goods, if they had the means and the occasion offered itself, or if the penalty of punishment and fear of disgrace did not keep them from committing that crime.

Those who gamble with no other will than gain, to drain others of their money and grow rich by it.

Those who seek to obtain temporal goods or church benefices by unlawful ways, such as theft, simony or any other unlawful means, whatever good end there may be. For evil is not to be done that good may come of it.[2] The true Christian, in comparison with the heavenly goods for which he hopes, counts all gold as sand; for each man has his riches where he has his delight. They sin much more gravely who desire temporal goods so as to indulge their pleasures more comfortably.

[2] Romans 3:8.

Summary of the Ten Commandments

> *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.*[1]

[1] Matthew 22:37–40.

He loves God who does nothing other than what God is seen to love. For what it is to love God the teaching of the Lord our Saviour declares, when he says: "He that heareth my words and doth them, he it is that loveth me." And elsewhere: "If any one love me, he will keep my word." But "he who saith that he loveth God, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar."[2]

[2] John 14:23; 1 John 2:4.

He loves his neighbour as himself who does him no evil that he would not wish done to himself; who wishes for his neighbour too the good that he would wish done to himself; and who helps his neighbour as far as he can, as he wishes to be helped himself. And if the means of helping are lacking, let the will to help be present. This the Lord too commanded, saying: "All things whatsoever

you would that men should do to you, do you also to them."[3] And it is said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself": that is, when you set out to love your neighbour, you will take the beginning of love from yourself; when you set out to show mercy to your neighbour, you will first show mercy to yourself; and by living well and blessedly you will love your own soul and have mercy on it, as it is written: "Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God." But if by living unjustly you hate yourself ("for he that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul")[4] and are wicked towards yourself, how will you be able to be good towards others? "He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?"[5] You are going to say to me: "I love my neighbour as myself." I hear you plainly, I hear: you want to get drunk with the one you love as yourself; you draw him to yourself and invite him to what you love; and if you love yourself in such a way as to destroy yourself, you are certainly going to destroy him too whom you love as yourself. Either first love your own soul with a sincere love and have mercy on it, or reject the other's company and perish alone.

[3] Matthew 7:12.

[4] Psalm 10:6 (Vulgate; Hebrew numbering 11:5).

[5] Sirach 14:5 (Vulgate *qui sibi nequam est cui alii bonus erit*).

The neighbour whom this precept commands us to love is every man. The Saviour himself commanded this in Matthew 5, saying: "You have heard that it hath been said" (that is, to them of old) "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you: and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you, etc. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? do not even the publicans this?"[6] To whom, then, O Christian, can you be evil, who are commanded to be good to your enemies? But perhaps you even hate your neighbour, when you are not allowed to hate even a stranger; and you persecute your brother, when you are commanded to do good to your enemy; and you think yourself a Christian, who keep the precepts neither of the New Testament nor of the Old.

[6] Matthew 5:43–46. "Scilicet antiquis" is the author's gloss from Matthew 5:21.

> Love God with all your heart above all things; after him love your neighbour as you love yourself.

Whatever lies hidden and whatever lies open in the divine words and in the whole of Holy Scripture, love itself comprehends; for it is written: "Love is the fulfilling of the law."[7] For the whole law, indeed the whole of Scripture, either commands or counsels the things that make for the love of God and neighbour, as is clear in the affirmative precepts and counsels; or it forbids and dissuades the things that hinder and break love, as is clear in the negative precepts and counsels.

[7] Romans 13:10.

For if you love God as you ought, you will worship him in heart and thought by faith, hope and the highest charity; and his most holy name will be held in such honour by you that you will not dare to swear by it in vain; on feast days you will serve him alone; and you will be grateful to him for the benefits you have received.

If you love your neighbour as yourself, you will be towards him such as you would wish him to be towards you. If he is your father or mother, you will honour him just as you would wish to be honoured by your own children. If he is anyone else, you will do no harm to him, his wife or his

goods by your deeds; nor by your speech, since you will not lie against him falsely; nor again by your thought, since you will not covet his wife nor unjustly desire his goods. Hence there are those who assert that the Ten Commandments of the law, given to Moses on Mount Sinai, were written by the finger of God on two tablets of stone and so arranged that the first tablet contained the first three precepts, concerning God, and the second tablet the last seven, concerning the neighbour.

The Precepts of the Church

The precepts of the Church are many. Among them are five principal ones, to which all the orthodox are bound; otherwise they sin.

> Keep the feasts; be present at the sacrifice; observe the fasts. Let there be at least a yearly confession of sins, at Easter time, when you shall receive Christ's venerable body.

The first precept concerns the observance of the appointed holy days. For as in the Old Testament not only the keeping of the Sabbath was commanded but also of other solemnities, so in the New Testament not only the hallowing of the Lord's day is commanded but also of other solemnities. We shall hallow them if, observing what we said under the third precept of the Decalogue, we believe what is celebrated in the Church at that time, especially if it concerns the articles of faith. Thus:

On the feast of the Trinity we must believe that God is one in substance and three in persons, equal to one another in all things. On the feast of the Nativity, that Jesus Christ the Son of God was born of the Virgin Mary. In the Passion, that he suffered, died and was buried for us. On the feast of the Ascension, that he ascended into heaven. On the feast of Pentecost, that he sent the Holy Spirit to his disciples. On the feast of Corpus Christi, that Jesus Christ, only-begotten Son of God the Father and of a human mother, is most truly contained in the Eucharist. On the feast of All Saints, that the souls of those who lived well in this life now rejoice with Christ in heaven. On the feast of the Dead, that there is a Purgatory, after which souls will ascend to the life of glory, to take up again a glorious body on the last day. All these things are usually preached in the churches on those days. On the feasts of the saints, too, we ought to pour out prayers to them.

The second precept is that on feast days we should be present at the whole sacrifice in body and mind: that is, with the intention of giving ourselves to God during the time of the sacrifice.

The third precept is the keeping of the Lenten fast, of the Ember days, and, when the Church commands it, of the vigils of feasts, except for those whom the Church does not wish to bind. Among these are children, who, though they are not bound to fast the whole of Lent, ought nevertheless to choose some days on which to fast.

The fourth precept is that when we have reached the years in which we can sin, we should confess our mortal sins to a priest at least once a year, namely at Easter time, together with those of which it is doubtful whether they are venial or mortal. But since no sin is so small that it does not grow if neglected, and "he that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little,"[1] it would therefore be better to confess, together with the mortal sins, also the graver venial sins and those that gnaw at the conscience more.

[1] Sirach 19:1 (Vulgate *qui spernit modica paulatim decidet*).

By the same precept we are bound to the sacrament of confession whenever at other times we wish to receive the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist, if we are conscious of mortal sin. We are bound besides, at the point of death, to confess any mortal sin we have not confessed before, and this by divine law itself; for we must prepare ourselves for mercy as best we can when the judgement of damnation or of mercy hangs over us. But since it is dangerous to put off confession for long, because of forgetting many sins, the habit of sinning and the uncertainty of death, it would be wiser to confess often: for by frequent confession a man is drawn away from many sins and becomes more fearful of offending God. Holy Church does not require us to confess a sin to a priest immediately after it has been committed; yet every good Christian who wishes to fear God should take refuge in contrition and inward penitence of heart as soon as he recognises his sin, with the will to confess at the proper time and place. For a sin that is not wiped out by penance soon drags one by its own weight into another sin, and blinds the light of reason.

The fifth precept binds us to holy communion once a year, and that at Easter time, just as by the fourth precept we are bound to confession. And although it is only of precept to receive the most holy Eucharist at Easter time, it is fitting also to receive it on the more solemn feasts, since a good part of the laity, and nearly all people of the more respectable classes, are accustomed to take part in holy communion on those days. Care must nevertheless be taken not to bring children to receive so great a sacrament straight away in the same year in which they are brought to confession. The suitable time for giving this venerable sacrament to children is roughly the eleventh or twelfth year, when the child shows signs of a pious and religious disposition and knows how to distinguish material bread from sacramental, and bodily food from spiritual. And since, among all the things God most kindly bestows on us in this world, this venerable sacrament is the greatest and chief gift, we must not commit the fault of receiving unworthily what becomes eternal punishment for those who eat unworthily.[2] For what is good cannot be good for those who receive it badly, when they abuse what was given for salvation to their own perdition. But for those who receive it worthily it becomes the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as the Truth himself testifies, saying: "He that eateth me, the same also shall live by me."[3] On this sacrament we have thought it worth while to say a few things in passing.

[2] 1 Corinthians 11:27–29.

[3] John 6:58 (Vulgate numbering).

On the Venerable Sacrament of the Eucharist

Our Lord God Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, just as he did whatever he willed, and said, *Let there be light,* and there was light; *Let there be a firmament,* and it was made: by whose word heaven, earth, water, fire, air, and all their adornment were made perfect, and the human race was created: so, by no lesser power, by his word alone he makes bread into his body, and wine into his blood, which he commanded priests likewise to do in remembrance of him.[1] At their voice, in the hour when Christ's words are uttered, the heavens are opened; and in that mystery of Jesus Christ there is a throng of angels and the presence of the saints: earthly things are joined to heavenly; and the material and visible bread, yielding honour to the life-giving and heavenly bread of angels that comes to it as to its true Creator, leaves its place (that is, the visible species of the accidents) for ministry and sacramental service.[2] This, by Christ's almighty command, will be done by priests until he comes

to judgement: just as he said in the beginning, *Let the earth bring forth green herb,* and down to these times the earth, helped and strengthened by his command, brings forth green herb.[3] And because it is the custom of men to eat bread and drink wine, he changed those very things into his body and blood, so that the integrity of the spiritual refreshment of the hungry soul might be contained under only the two species of bread and wine, whose use for the human body is held the chief, the most common, the cleanest, and the least distasteful. And he asked for his body, in a supernatural manner, from things familiar to nature and according to nature: so that under either species, of bread and of wine, four things are miraculously contained.

[1] Genesis 1:3, 1:6; the consecration of the Eucharist by Christ's word, as priests are commanded to do in remembrance of him (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24–25).

[2] Hebrew 78:25) and Wisdom 16:20; applied to the Eucharist as in the sequence *Lauda Sion* and common eucharistic language.

[3] Genesis 1:11.

1. That most pure flesh of Christ and sacred body which he took from the Virgin Mary, formed by the Holy Spirit from her most pure blood: which was hung for us on the cross, laid in the tomb, and glorified in heaven. The body there is indeed living: because Christ, rising from the dead, dies no more; death will no longer have dominion over him.[4] 2. Because flesh does not live without blood: therefore the precious blood is necessarily there, which happily flowed in the passion for the salvation of the world. 3. Because a true man is not without a rational soul: therefore there is there the glorious soul of Christ, which God the Father poured into the body in the Virgin Mary's womb: in which soul are laid up all the treasures of the wisdom and knowledge of God.[5] 4. Because Christ, who is true man, is also true God: therefore there is there that glorious Godhead with its majesty.

[4] Romans 6:9.

[5] Colossians 2:3.

These four together, and each of them, are perfectly contained whole under the species of bread and of wine: no less in the chalice than in the host, and no less in the host than in the chalice. For although by the force of the sacramental words under the species of bread there is only the flesh, and under the species of wine only the blood, yet by concomitance (as has already been said) under either species the four are most truly contained: the living flesh of Christ, the precious blood, the all-knowing and most perfect soul, and the ineffable Godhead.

We must take the greatest care not to lean on natural arguments and human reasonings and curiously search out the manner of this sacrament: because God, who is above nature, and with whom all worldly wisdom is foolishness, is not bound by the laws of nature.[6] We ought rather to submit, and humbly to take our minds captive under the yoke of orthodox faith. For what doubt about this sacrament can remain for us, which we see so expressly handed down by Christ, preached by the holy apostles, prefigured in the old law by so many mysteries, and most lately, in this last age of the world, confirmed by so many miracles as by almost palpable testimonies—and given, lastly, under its veil for our benefit?

[6] 1 Corinthians 1:20, 3:19 (*sapientia huius mundi stultitia est apud Deum*).

Four reasons why Christ willed to give himself to us veiled

1. For the merit of faith. Because if we saw God bodily and visibly, we should certainly adore him even under compulsion: and we should not merit so much as we do now, when above all natural reason we believe that Christ is wholly contained under the species of bread, and wholly under the species of wine. For faith is of those things which do not appear. Things that appear have not faith but recognition. Nor has faith any merit where human reason offers experiment.[7]

[7] Hebrews 11:1 (*fides … argumentum non apparentium*); the last sentence, "Nec fides habet meritum, ubi humana ratio praebet experimentum," is Gregory the Great, *Homiliae in Evangelia* 26.1.

2. To avoid horror. For how could it be that we should eat the raw flesh of the living God and man, and drink his blood in its own form? Certainly the weakness of our nature would shrink from it.

3. Because of the feebleness of human sight, the glorious body of Christ ought not to appear to our carnal eyes under a glorious and shining form, for they could not bear Christ's infinite brightness: compared with which the brightness of the sun is darkness.

4. Because of our unworthiness, who in this valley of exile have not yet deserved to see him glorious: but that is reserved for us in heaven, where we shall see him face to face, as he is.[8]

[8] 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 John 3:2 (*videbimus eum sicuti est*).

What doubt can now remain, when we see plainly that this sacrament has been granted us by divine clemency for the necessity of our salvation? For unless we eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, we shall not have life in us:[9] which (as has been seen) we cannot eat and drink in its own form: therefore it was necessary that they be veiled, that we might receive them. Christ therefore, consulting our weakness, that he might give us food we could eat, veiled them under the species of bread and wine. For as of old the Godhead lay hidden in the virgin's womb, and the Son of God appeared visible to the world under the veil of human flesh: so also the glorified humanity, joined to the Godhead, lies hidden under the form of bread and wine, that it might be fitted to us mortals.

[9] John 6:54 (Vulgate numbering; 6:53 in many modern editions).

Leaving therefore in ourselves no room for doubt about the most certain mysteries of this sacrament, let us contemplate a little more deeply our God's great—indeed far the greatest—kindness towards us: which was great in that he gave us to ourselves; and when we had perished, restored us to ourselves; greater in that, by assuming the substance of human flesh, he dwelt visibly among men, made like one of them, and at last for us all offered himself wholly as an offering and victim to God the Father; greatest in that, far more wonderfully and fruitfully, in this sacrament he shows us his presence truly and substantially than when he walked among men: and has left himself to his servants not only to be touched and kissed, but even to be eaten. O wonderful thing: a poor and humble servant eats his Lord. Bodily he can easily be eaten every day: but spiritually much more easily and more often. As often as you believe the mysteries of this venerable sacrament, and with devout affection desire to obtain its fruit, so often you communicate spiritually and eat the body of Christ. Augustine: "Believe, and you have eaten."[10] O how sweet it is to sit often at that heavenly

banquet, in which no other food is set to be eaten than that life-giving bread of angels, that is, Jesus Christ: on whom the angels looking marvel and faint; they enjoy him and do not tire, and thirst the more to enjoy him. Away, then, with those who say to me daily: Where is your God?[11] I believe indeed, Lord (who art covered under the sacrament), that thou art the Son of the living God, who camest into this world. O happy Christians, again and again blessed, if they know their own goods, if they acknowledge their God's lavish kindness, who with his most sacred body deigns to make us most worthless little men the pledge and earnest of eternal blessedness: where we shall see with unveiled face the same whom we now receive in the sacrament under the species of bread and wine: where we shall enjoy more gladly and more securely him whom we now receive more fruitfully and more wonderfully in the Eucharist.

[10] Augustine, *In Iohannis Evangelium tractatus* 25.12 and 26.1 (*Crede et manducasti*)

[11] Psalm 41:4 (Vulgate; Hebrew 42:3).

Every good Christian, therefore, when he sees the living God between the priest's hands, ought to ask pardon of his sins from him who is present in the sacrament, just as he was present to Mary Magdalene, and to the thief hanging on the cross, when they asked pardon of their sins.[12]

[12] Luke 7:37–50 (Mary Magdalene traditionally); Luke 23:39–43 (the good thief).

Goods that come from receiving the Eucharist

- The incorporation of man with Christ.
- Companionship with the angels.
- Refreshment of the mind.
- Illumination of the mind.
- Remission of sins.
- Strengthening of the virtues.
- Softening of the fuel of sin.
- Raising of hope.
- Certainty of faith.
- Increase of devotion.
- Stirring of charity.
- Arming against the devil.

Who is fit to receive the Eucharist worthily

A man. A wayfarer. A Christian. Endowed with mind. An adult. Fasting. Not conscious of mortal sin. Who is without danger of vomiting. Who is borne with his whole heart towards God.

Yet it can be given even to the sick who are not fasting, when it is feared that they may leave this life without the viaticum. For every Christian is bound (if it can be done) to communicate at the point of death.

Soto's Additions on what was said concerning the precepts

We did not think we should go further without first admonishing you, excellent Reader, of certain things, as we promised from the beginning: which we judged should be done first in

this place, after the Author has spoken so diligently, clearly and fully of the precepts of the Decalogue and of the Church—the rule, that is, of the whole Christian life—that he has deservedly attained, in this as in the other teachings of this little book, a method both easy and learned.

Soto's Additions, Chapter I: On the necessity of distinguishing lighter from graver sins

Notice, then, that both for making a right and full confession of sins, and for ordering one's life rightly afterwards (the two ends at which the author's labour aims), it matters greatly to distinguish graver transgressions from lighter: mortal sins, that is (such as those who do them shall not possess the kingdom of God),[1] from venial: namely those with which we build wood, hay, stubble upon the foundation of faith working through love.[2] We say this is necessary for making confession: because in penance, of which confession is a part, those who teach first of all warn, taking it from Augustine, that there is one penance which is done for lighter and daily sins, and another for graver. For the latter requires a change of life and submission to the judgement of the Church and to the keys (as he says): the former requires none of these, but obtains pardon of those sins without which this life is not lived, either by mercy and alms, or by the Lord's Prayer. Next, because those graver and mortal sins must be brought back to memory and confessed entire. For it is not that one sin and not another is a sin, or shuts out from the kingdom: therefore neither is one remitted and not another without the power of the keys. As for those venial sins, however, there is no need, nor would it certainly be useful, either to remember them all or to declare them. For they are many and numberless: they can scarcely be known. And meanwhile the mind's intention, stretched towards things so diverse, manifold and scattered, is greatly distracted, and its fervour towards God is relaxed. For often, set among so many things as among the shouting voices of children, the mind is carried off by this or that, and is the more tightly entangled where it thought itself more free: so that of these we may think it can be said what the adversaries of the Church assert indiscriminately and falsely of all sins—that it is impossible and presumptuous to wish to confess everything, just as to promise that one will avoid everything. It will therefore be better to cast those either in common, or at least gathered as it were into certain bundles, into the fire of devotion to be consumed: which is better kindled by meditation on the divine goodness and his immense mercy than by too anxious care to confess all. Next, for ordering life rightly also, we have said this is most necessary: because first of all a life rightly ordered ought either to be wholly free of those mortal sins, or to admit them most rarely and wipe them out by swift penance; and at the least to make much of them, not to commit them as of no account, nor to make light of them when committed: according to what is written of the profane Esau: *He went away, making light of it, that he had sold his birthright*;[3] and to make daily progress in these things: otherwise the life is plainly to be called not pious, not well ordered, but profane, impious, stripped of every good. For the rest, not even the life of the saints is free from venial sins. Hence Paul said that one who is to be ordained ought to be without crime, not without sin.[4] But when without distinction we think of all these sins and try to avoid them: amid such throngs and such variety the power of the soul's keenness fails, the strength grows weary, and one somehow despairs of virtue—not to mention that a certain secret persuasion is bred, as if the divine

precepts were impossible: and, as the adversaries of the Church cry, given rather to convict us of sin than to be fulfilled. Whence it will follow that we either decline to impious assertions—that we are accounted just by faith alone—or take less care of our salvation, as of something most difficult; or, if we begin to take care, are occupied too perversely in attacking the lighter sins: which by their multitude and their very thinness are hard to know and can scarcely be overcome. And if they are partly defeated: their victory leaves the frailty of our mind more secure, not to say clearer, and more negligent towards other things. The eyes must therefore be cast upon the graver: first upon those by which we feel ourselves more often attacked: against those we must labour, those we must fear everywhere, from those we must keep ourselves. Which cannot be done unless it is known how they are distinct, and they have been recognised. We confess it is not easy to teach this in common, indeed scarcely possible, and that it can better be shown to each, in that secret judgement of confession, when all things have been well weighed, what belongs to him: which we think was prudently the author's intention. For he wished only to admonish of many, and of almost all, diseases, that he might bring the sick as it were into a sense of pain, and so moved and troubled, as it is in the Psalm, send them to be healed to the spiritual physicians.[5] Otherwise it is too troublesome, and indeed a sign of a soul labouring under lethargy and lacking spiritual sense, not to know how to show the physician whether the head hurts or the stomach is weak, but to wait for the priest to wring everything out—certainly with much useless outpouring of time and words: not to mention that it is never done enough. But to one who almost openly complains and points out the places of pain and hurt, it will not be hard for a prudent spiritual physician to show the gravity or lightness of the disease and to apply the needful remedies. This, we think, the author wisely and piously wished. Yet because it is not obscure how few of the spiritual judges there are who either can or will do this; and many of them could be instructed by this Method; and because again it will help greatly if the penitent has begun to think of this when he comes to that divine judgement, and has already set some principles of this discretion, as certain foundations, in his heart; and lastly lest anyone who reads these things (which we desire the simpler always to have at hand: which can be done often, long before confession) should at any time form for himself a weak conscience, by which he both falls himself and is scandalised at others' acts: we have judged it needful to add, on this distinction of lighter sins from graver, not indeed everything, but certain things, that will help to free weaker and simpler souls from many anxieties, and to persuade and make known the sweetness and lightness of God's precepts. Of which we shall say certain things in particular about the several precepts, following the author's own order: if first certain things have been set down in general.

[1] Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10.

[2] 1 Corinthians 3:12; Galatians 5:6 (*fides quae per dilectionem operatur*).

[3] Genesis 25:34 (Vulgate *et abiit … parvipendens quod primogenita vendidisset*).

[4] Allusion to 1 Timothy 3:2 / Titus 1:6–7 (*oportet … sine crimine esse*); "not without sin" is Soto's gloss (cf. 1 John 1:8).

[5] Psalm allusion for the sick being sent to physicians: likely Psalm 106:20 or the general sense of the sick seeking healing.

Soto's Additions, Chapter II: On the manner of this discretion in general

First of all, then, in general, we desire that one who meditates on the divine commandments should firmly settle with himself that both these of the Decalogue, and all others, are not only not impossible, but not even heavy or difficult. *His commandments,* says John, *are not heavy.*[1] And the Lord himself: *My yoke,* he says, *is sweet, and my burden light*.[2] The divine commandments are easy and light for those healed by grace, who have with them the divine anointing and that continual help of which Christ says: *Without me you can do nothing*.[3] To this end they are now proposed and commanded in the law of grace, the Saviour saying: *Keep the commandments:*[4] not that they may only kill and show us to be sinners, but that by grace they may be done and fulfilled: and so due obedience may be rendered to God, and to the brethren the justice commanded by him. So sweet are the divine commandments, so pleasant, especially to one who loves, and as it were akin and inborn to human nature itself, that it is much harder to transgress them than to keep them. How much harder are adulteries, murders, thefts and the like admitted, than abstained from? How much lighter and shorter is the difficulty in restraining the affections and the mind's evil leanings, in overcoming oneself, when the greed of sinning first rises: how much easier, so to speak, is that difficulty (if there is any, for often there is none) than that wretched difficulty and vexation of mind which follows after sins are committed—that anxiety, that accusation of conscience, that bitterness of spiritual taste, that emptiness of soul which, when the momentary delight of sin has passed (the only thing the sinful soul knows how to love), remains, forever to afflict the wretched soul? God's commandments are kept with difficulty: let us grant it. Certainly they are more hardly despised: *We have walked,* say the damned, *difficult and laborious ways.*[5] But perhaps you say: God's commandments are many and frequent; they meet us at every point, business and time: whether one must be silent or speak, do some work or cease, eat or abstain, sleep or watch: in short, everywhere and always we are bound by the divine commandments. First, let him who thinks this note that these are not some added bonds, not empires and laws laid on top: but the very condition of human nature, and (so to speak) its bent, demands all these things. For since our nature has many instruments and parts, many powers, various works, and over all these a freest dominion: it requires in all of them due harmony and consonance. And it is no wonder if many things are necessary in that nature in which somehow the universe of creatures is contained: of the whole world, of heaven and earth, of all that live and that lack life, of spiritual and bodily things, the perfections flow together into one man: and all indeed are to be governed by him with a single reason. Therefore, apart from the very few precepts of faith and of the Sacraments, all the others are conditions of human nature itself. If it was useful and good for you that man should be created: why do you count burdensome and heavy that without which you would not even be a man? Or if to be bound by so many things is hard and difficult, harsh and unwelcome: let it be equally so to have been created by God, and created with such excellence among the other creatures. But if these things are abhorrent to nature and piety: if to be a man is welcome and good to you: live as a man, be silent and speak, work and rest, in short do all things as a man. Next, that the reason of the divine moderation and equity towards us may be more inwardly known: see all these laws of nature itself, by his immense grace not only shortened, made lighter, and (so to speak) thinned out: but at last reduced to that one precept of which the author of grace himself says: *A new commandment I give*

you, that you love one another, as I have loved you.[6] And again: *This is my commandment, that you love one another,* etc. For this is the newness of grace, the liberty of grace, the sweetness of grace: that by loving all things are done: by loving, I say, the neighbour as beloved by God: and so from the love of God. Let all things (I say) be done, all things required and fitted to this measure and rule of charity. Of this charity, I mean—that is, of the new and wonderful friendship which is begun and contracted between God and men: by which God imparts himself and all that is his to men by his goodness alone: and wills that no one envy another, or try to take away or hinder what his goodness grants to each, beyond another's prejudice or loss, or even the least lessening of any good that can be loved. This is the whole Gospel law. No precept, no transgression of it, no work against the right rule of reason, and so against human nature itself, binds to what is mortal, or is mortal, except that by which something is commanded or done which true friendship itself judges necessary to true friendship, or contrary to it. Therefore although not to lie, not to play the fool, not to take food intemperately, or to do anything immodestly, are precepts from God: yet God does not will them, by his authority which is immense, to be so great that they must therefore be kept under peril of one's head and of eternal damnation or the loss of his goodwill and grace, because they are commanded by him; but he wills them to be held and kept only so far as that about which they are is necessary or contrary to true friendship. Which is certainly a work of a certain highest divine equity, and must always be kept before our eyes: that we may not only serve him gladly and gratefully in keeping his precepts, but may also begin, freed from many precepts, to look into the law of perfect liberty: that as James says, we may be not forgetful hearers but doers of the work, blessed in our deed.[7]

From all this, then, let this one most certain rule of discerning the graver from the lighter be held. Those sins alone are mortal and graver which are contrary to divine friendship, or to human friendship for God's sake: by which, that is, about some matter something is sinned, committed or omitted which clear reason says true friendship cannot bear, and judges worthy that for it friendship should be dissolved. All the rest are evil only so far as either through them one can come to these, or they agree less with the laws of friendship. To lie is evil; it does not agree with the character of God, our highest friend, who is truth: nor with the nature of the soul itself; therefore with a lie you will be less pleasing to God. But if the matter—the thing, that is, about which you lie—is not contrary to charity and friendship: as if you lie only for a joke and to please, apart from detracting from the divine glory (which is the case when it is against the truth of the faith and of his doctrine) and apart from harm to the neighbour: nothing mortal has been committed. By this sure rule you will be freed from many weaknesses of conscience: although it is not by our judgement, but by the divine shown us in his scriptures, that one must weigh what is against true friendship: of which we shall say something below. Meanwhile, from this rule as set down, two things are to be kept before the eyes: first, if the thing itself which is commanded, or about which one sins, is either necessary or contrary to friendship, then the precept itself of its own force binds to grave and mortal sin, and the sin is mortal of its kind: as theft and murder. But if what is commanded, or about which one sins, has neither of these: but either turns one a little from friendship, or somewhat helps towards it—yet beyond necessity in either case: precepts about such things, or sins about them, reach only to what is venial: as immoderate food, a too free joke, or laughter, do

turn one somewhat from friendship: but of themselves have nothing contrary to it: hence they are not mortal, unless things were added by which they would become graver: as drunkenness with danger of serious illness. Second, even when the thing itself is either necessary or contrary to charity, it can happen that what is sinned about them is so little that it does not reach a mortal and graver offence. Damage to another's substance true friendship judges contrary to charity, as has been said: but damage in a small coin, or in any least thing, true friendship does not count so much, nor does any reason, as to judge that for it friendship ought to be dissolved.

Now let us answer another complaint of our weakness. Many seem burdened not so much by the multitude of precepts as by the multitude of transgressions. The divine precepts can be violated in so many ways that sometimes one sins even by a sudden and unpremeditated movement, and sometimes even by the least forgetfulness: God requires so complete an observance of his precepts from us, as it is said in the Psalm: *Thou hast commanded thy commandments to be kept exceedingly.*[8] Whence it comes that enemies sometimes overcome the forgetful and unprepared, and drive them into transgression of God's commandments. To this murmur of weakness, then, let us first oppose the divine admonitions, exhortations, examples, helps: which God unceasingly supplies, as to those standing in battle-line against enemies. He proclaims that our life upon earth is a warfare,[9] in which the whole sum and head of the matter is at stake—eternal misery or happiness. He himself fought against these enemies, uncovered their engines, gave arms and skill, promised that he would never desert us with his help. Why then do we wish, against the command of our commander, to cast away before the time the belt of warfare and our arms, and to sink into a most foolish sleep? Those who think these things are never found unprepared. Let us next oppose also another most certain rule for discerning graver sins from lighter: namely, that no mortal sin is before God except what is committed with the full and entire consent of reason, and so with perfect deliberation, even if it be about things which are either necessary or contrary to friendship. This the very nature of reason teaches, and Paul witnesses: *If what I will not,* he says, *that I do, now it is no longer I that do it.*[10] And who thinks that what he does not do is to be imputed to him? Whence he also adds: *There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus: who walk not according to the flesh*[11]—that is, who do not consent with free assent, but resist evil affections. Use this rule, then, thus: Every thought, movement or affection of the mind, however suddenly risen towards blasphemous, filthy and most grave evils, and displeasing and unwelcome, does not hold the soul guilty. But if it lasts longer, reason nonetheless resisting and openly contradicting, although movements and rebellions are stirred, it is still only a light sin, if it is a sin at all. For it can happen that there is rather merit from the very resistance and hatred of reason. But if reason begins to grow drowsy and to wink, there is already danger: and the sin is complete if it fully consents. When this is not clear, it is to be laid open as doubtful in that secret judgement of confession: that if need be it may be decided by the spiritual father, or left to the divine judgement, if it cannot be discerned enough. Have therefore these four degrees: the first two are of manifest lighter sin: when the movement towards evil is sudden; or lasting, with reason openly contradicting. Another is of manifest graver sin: when there is full consent to the evil movement: which we put in the fourth place. The third is doubtful and uncertain: when there is torpor and sloth of mind towards evil movements. Use these degrees first in sins

of the heart alone, which are completed there: as heresy, despair, presumption, love of the creature, etc. Next also in sins of the mouth: whose gravity hangs chiefly on the intention. But in the works themselves too this rule must often be used: although the works themselves, for the most part, show plainly enough the full consent of the mind.

We think these things have not been said out of place here, that in thinking on and carrying out the divine precepts we may move with much breadth of mind, without burden and difficulty: and in recognising their transgressions may not be held by the fear of a weaker conscience. Now therefore from these let us come down to the particulars which the author has handed down concerning the transgressions of the precepts.

[1] 1 John 5:3.

[2] Matthew 11:30.

[3] John 15:5.

[4] Matthew 19:17 (*serva mandata*).

[5] Wisdom 5:7 (Vulgate *lassati sumus in via iniquitatis … ambulavimus vias difficiles*).

[6] John 13:34; 15:12.

[7] James 1:25.

[8] Psalm 118:4 (Vulgate; Hebrew 119:4).

[9] Job 7:1 (Vulgate *militia est vita hominis super terram*).

[10] Romans 7:20.

[11] Romans 8:1 (the clause *qui non secundum carnem ambulant* is present in the Vulgate tradition Soto uses; modern critical editions often omit it as a gloss from 8:4).

Soto's Additions, Chapter III: On the several things said about the precepts in particular

Thus admonished, let us now come to the several precepts, and the sins against them, running very briefly through what the author has set down: that at least those which are certain, whether venial or mortal, may be firmly set in their order; and those which are doubtful, whether in law or in fact, may likewise be separated in their place. Which we shall now do, only very briefly admonishing and touching them.

When therefore in the first precept fifteen sins against faith are set down, or fifteen ways of transgressing: among the first eight, which look directly to the faith, the first, the third, and the seventh are manifestly mortal. For nothing is more against friendship than to refuse to give faith to a friend. So do heretics, and those who stubbornly dissent from the Church, and those who will believe nothing except what is demonstrated by reason. Now the other four—to err, when you think it true, but to hold it tooth and nail; to doubt in the faith; to search presumptuously, or to dispute about the faith; to neglect to learn the articles of the faith—are not to be judged mortal in every case.

They do indeed turn about things necessary to friendship: yet meanwhile, according to the last rule, a doubt suddenly risen about the faith, or one to which reason contradicts, is only a light

movement.

A small dispute or presumption, or clinging a little too tenaciously to what you think true, or certainly a small negligence in learning the articles of the faith, are likewise lighter. But if these are too much enlarged, they will without doubt be graver: where one must stand by the judgement of a skilled priest.

Concerning this negligence of learning, however, we think there should also be added negligence of attending to, perceiving, and thinking on the doctrine of the faith, against that precept of God: *These words, which I command, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt meditate sitting,* etc.;[1] just as no less the negligence of teaching those whom you are bound to teach, against that: *And thou shalt tell,* etc.[2] For it is commanded us by God that we be studious of his law, in that place of Deuteronomy: *And these words, which I command thee, shall be in thy heart: and thou shalt tell them to thy children: and thou shalt meditate sitting in thy house, and walking on the way, sleeping and rising: and thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand: and they shall be and shall be moved between thine eyes: and thou shalt write them on the posts, and on the doors of thy house.*[3] Against which stand blindness of heart, and dullness of sense, which more often come from other sins: and these are to be taught prudently in this judgement.

The eighth that is set down, denial of the faith, is manifestly mortal against true friendship: to which it also belongs if only the confession of the faith is omitted, when thence its reproach, or danger to the weaker, follows. Where there is need also of the special judgement of a prudent priest.

The two things that are said about tempting God—of one who seeks miracles, or who murmurs if he is not heard, etc.—if they are done from simplicity or ignorance, are lighter: as are movements towards these things to which one does not consent. But what he sets down about irreverence towards God, if honour is not paid to the Saints, images, sacraments, or if they are unworthily received, etc., are frequently lighter: as not rising enough, or uncovering the head, receiving the sacraments with less devotion. But when this irreverence is contrary from intention, they are without doubt graver.

What he says of Magic, enchantments, and sorceries, etc., like other superstitious things, are mortal: and they contain an invocation, at the least a hidden one, of a demon. Where ignorance also excuses. For it takes away the intention from which these sins are.

Those sins which are referred against hope, with full consent indeed, are most grave, and are found only in the worst. There are, however, certain lighter movements of the heart of presumption or despair, which disturb weak consciences: wherefore they are rather to be taught to make light of these: as in weariness of life, and the like. You will also observe certain rash presumptions, of which he speaks there (as those who put off penance until death, hoping that they will then do it) to be rather occasions of sins than new sins. However it be, these are to be weighed when one sees them prevailing not a little in oneself: but those that pass lightly by are to be omitted.

In the sins against charity the first two, which are set down about the love of temporal things, are manifestly mortal. For they prefer the creature to God. But in the other two there is need of judgement. To be inordinately affected to the world, and to wish to remain in it, is an

affection of the weak and carnal: from which they are to be dissuaded, that as they progress they may rise: yet it is not mor-tal except in great malice and contempt of heavenly things. Likewise to serve God for the goods which one hopes to obtain from him: as what he sets in the second place under worldly fear, of him who flees sins not from charity but to avoid evil: and what he says last of servile fear, of him who does so by the sole fear of the pains of hell: these three, I say, have need of great judgement. They can move so, that weak minds seem to themselves to be moved more by these than by the charity of God, and to think of those things, not of God: which weakness is rather to be cherished than disturbed by a certain disputation. There is in them much of subtler scrutiny. Of these therefore we do not think consciences are to be troubled. All are to be exhorted to love God's goodness both more, and more purely, every day. Meanwhile where there is not the fullest consent to the transgression of the divine law, it is better to be silent, and to exhort to renouncing every love, one's own and another's.

But the first thing that is said of human fear is a manifest transgression of the divine precept: and therefore mortal, if that precept binds to what is mortal. The other two—to fear the words of detractors, or to blush at the name of God and the imitation of Christ—are sometimes human weaknesses, not of themselves mortal, but only when on their account that is omitted to which we are bound under mortal sin.

In the second precept the first six, which are set down under perjury, are openly mortal, and against the truth most necessary in an oath: and so are full and entire perjuries: as also the last that is set down there. The other two—namely to swear that one will do some evil, and that one will omit some pious work even to which one is not bound—need judgement. For in the first, if one swears only that he will do what is venial, it does not seem mortal: although they are not bound to fulfil it. But if he swears that he will do what is mortal, it is clear that the purpose itself is mortal. And certainly that the divine name is added seems enough to add great malice and gravity. But in the second, just as the hardening of the mind against perfection can be so great, and so obstinate, that it is even despised: so that oath: and then the sin is mortal. Simply, however, and without contempt, it is judged only venial. In all of which it must first be discerned with what words one swears. For although of some it is certain, as by God, the Saints, all divine and sacred things: of others nevertheless there is doubt, either because they are ambiguous, as by faith, which can be referred to divine and human things: or because they are doubtful, and it is not clear enough to all: as by creatures, by life, by salvation, etc. In which this is certain, that in every oath God is invoked as witness either in himself, or in some effect of his. Therefore if all those things, when one swears, are referred to God, and are brought forward as belonging to him, it is an oath: not otherwise. Where intention, and each person's sense, and the property of idioms, do much, and are especially to be considered.

What are set down under blasphemy are all most manifest and most grave mortal sins, and consist more in the affection than in the intellect: from which one who is of sound mind is not excused, except only in the consideration if something has slipped out from a slip of the tongue.

What are set down under an illicit vow: the first three indeed are to be judged as those oaths about committing evil, or not doing good. The fourth is to be judged only venial—to vow indiscreet things: which simplicity will sometimes excuse. The breaking of vows is likewise mortal, and against true friendship.

Now what are set down under the inconsiderate taking of the divine name—of one who swears without necessity, whether it be done from levity or from custom: or driving another to it—are venial. To do that is to deal more uncivilly and irreverently with God: that is, less reverently than is due to him: yet not against the truth of friendship. Likewise also the other two—to swear inconsiderately, or not to show reverence to the divine name when it is uttered —are rather venial: and there are many degrees in them. For inconsideration whether what is sworn is true, or a less sufficient consideration, is of itself mortal, and perjury, next to those first ones: when namely one knowingly, or doubting, swears what is false: so that it is the third: if erring from inconsideration. And because then even if he does not err, it happens by chance: as far as the sin is concerned it is the same as if he erred. Everyone who swears is therefore bound to bring such consideration that by a rational cause, which could move a prudent person, he judges to be true what he swears.

In the third precept, what are said about servile work, and the omission of divine worship, are manifestly mortal, against the Church's most useful and neces-sary precepts. Concerning which, however, it is diligently to be observed that the Church does not impose these precepts harshly, but most sweetly, as befits a pious mother. Wherefore not necessity alone, but usefulness also, and piety towards neighbours, and finally any reasonable cause, excuses from their observance: so far that a cause believed in good faith to be reasonable, even if in truth it is not, suffices to excuse one who so judges. Yet rashness is to be avoided in these things, and in doubt the prelates are to be consulted: whose it is to dispense and to decide in these common burdens.

What have been said about irreverence towards sacred things are thus distinguished. To hear the Sacrifice irreverently is not mortal: especially when the irreverences are least. And who is free from all irreverence? To chat, since it is not to hear, nor to be present in mind, indeed even worse (for an impediment is added): if indeed it is a grave sin not to hear, this will be graver; but if only venial, this likewise: as if one chats in an office which he is not bound to hear: or in a few words. But to do something dishonest in the divine office is graver even than elsewhere. Hence to do something wanton or base there are grave: but the ridiculous, light, or joking, are lighter. The same is to be thought of irreverence about the sacrament of the Eucharist. For it can be least.

Likewise of those things which he says last about games, jokes, and wandering discourses, spectacles, vain, lavish and dishonest acts on feast days: or about frequenting taverns, and baser places. All these are grave dangers, deservedly to be avoided, signs of a mind forgetful both of God and of itself: but they are not judged mortal of themselves: unless perhaps one exceeded too much about them, so that at last one came to grave desires or works.

But what have been said about the pollution and violation of sacred places are commonly mortal sacrileges: which nonetheless could be excused, either from the smallness of the work, or from a simple intention of the mind.

In the fourth precept, what are said about irreverence are to be taken thus: the omission of honour to parents and superiors is frequently light: unless it is done from great malice of mind, or the omission is so great that it would redound to a grave injury. But neglect, or the mocking of elders, or moving them to anger with harsher words, are in the same way to be weighed from the malice of the mind, or the gravity of the work: as also to detract from them. But the laying on of violent hands, or hatred, and a deliberate desire of their death, are manifestly mortal, against true friendship.

What have been said about disobedience are all to be weighed from the things themselves. In small matters disobediences are not graver sins, but in those which are of graver moment.

Likewise what are said about ingratitude: the omission of supplying, helping, consoling, praying for parents, the poor, the needy, etc., when great, and in necessity, is without doubt mortal: but there are in these many lighter things. The withholding of tributes and stipends which are due to superiors is also mortal.

The sins of superiors against inferiors, as the omission of correction, of teaching, of good example, of due solicitude in caring for soul and body, are to be weighed according to their quantity: as also the commissions against these, of which there is mention here: to command unjust things, to give scandals: it likewise happens in lighter or graver.

In the fifth precept, what are said about homicide and mutilation are manifestly mortal: although whether to kill in self-defence, when one could escape, is a sin, is doubted by many: and the sentence is not to be rushed, but we think it is to be judged prudently in the particular case: but in general that which is better is to be consulted. The shortening of life also from intention belongs to homicide: but apart from intention, after one has noticed, it seems to belong to the same: especially when it is done by illicit works, as by immoderate gluttony and lust.

What are said about malevolence and hatred, with full and deliberate consent indeed, are mortal, but not sudden and involuntary movements: according to what was said in general.

But what are said about the omission of help in dangers of death, of hunger, or of conspiracy, are openly mortal.

Now what are said about the omission of fraternal reconciliation, of asking pardon, and of satisfaction for injury, are likewise mortal in graver matters and those of some moment: as not to be reconciled to one who asks pardon and offers just satisfaction. For indignation of mind and hatred are to be remitted even beforehand. Also to render evil for evil unjustly, or with a mind to hurt, except in the least things, is mortal.

Concerning spiritual homicides, although they do not properly belong to this precept, yet the author has noted many things worthy of consideration. And indeed all that he said about voluntary danger of sinning, the seduction of others, and scandal, are of themselves mortal, against the charity of God and of the neighbour: greatly to be observed by adolescents and youths.

But the omission of fraternal and private correction, which ought to be done by anyone, when it is believed that it will be necessary and useful, about grave things, is also mortal. But there

is need of much judgement in the particular case, because of many circumstances to be observed. But what are said about the omission of correction due from superiors, how they are to be taken, we have shown about the fourth precept.

The sins which can be committed in punishing another are clearly explained by the author: and they are of themselves indeed mortal: unless perhaps there is a small defect or excess in the moderation of the penalty, or an involuntary movement of anger or hatred. All which belong to superiors and judges.

In the sixth precept this only is to be admonished, that the author has prudently and most briefly hinted that one must flee lest anything carnal be committed of which conscience and natural modesty would convict the one who commits it. And indeed about this every experience of venereal delight, or of what closely approaches it, outside the limits of the lawful use of marriage, is of itself mortal, against the true friendship due to the human species itself and to our nature, for whose conservation alone that is ordained. But sudden and involuntary movements, according to what was said above, are lighter. Of these, however, the author speaks diligently under the sin of lust.

What have been said about the seventh precept—of usury, robbery, theft, damage, retention of what is found, fraudulent contracts—are all of themselves indeed mortal: unless sometimes the smallness of the thing or of the damage would excuse.

But what is said of one who vainly and sumptuously spends what was given by parents for necessities is not to be judged mortal, nor truly theft: those are rather domestic sins. From great damage inflicted, or great disobedience, it could be mortal.

What he also says of one who retains a wage, or a thing due, or does not make good damage inflicted, do not understand always to be new sins. For they are the perseverance of a former sin: sometimes they are not even sins. For sometimes those things can be deferred for a rational cause.

What he says about restitution explains many things briefly enough: especially, namely, the causes and roots by which one is bound to restitution: in which if there is any special doubt, it ought to be treated in the particular case.

Concerning what have been said in the eighth, and in general about all vices of the tongue, two things are to be observed for their discernment. First, that they are completed and consummated from intention: which if it is lacking, they do not truly reach their species. Blasphemy, perjury, detraction, are not consummated if something is said belonging to these: but if they are done with the intention of blaspheming, of perjuring, of detracting: when that is lacking, words can be called blasphemous, perjurious, or detractory: which some call materially: but not the sins of blasphemy, of perjury, etc., which they call formally. But the second, which more contracts this preceding liberty, is that in sins of the tongue, even when intention is lacking, the evil that follows is to be considered: for this too is imputed, when it ought to be thought of and guarded against: as one who did not detract with a mind to hurt the neighbour's fame, but from garrulity and levity, yet relating another's sins among those who did not know, and who could be believed likely to pass them on.

Instructed by these things, we must now come to the several. Calumny, therefore, when namely in judgement a crime is falsely or unjustly charged against another, is manifestly mortal: such are the three which he first reports under this word; the other two also—namely to answer craftily or falsely in judgement—are contrary to justice, and of themselves mortal.

What are set down under derision: reviling indeed, contumely, and reproach (which are set there in the second and third place), from the intention of hurting honour, are grave: unless they were about the least things: but with a mind to correct, in those who have authority, they are even lawful: yet always, even when a good mind is present, care must be taken lest damage which is not intended should follow: much more when these things are said from levity of mind. If one did not take care, when reason taught that care should be taken, it is imputed.

What belongs to the fourth, which he sets there. Derision is also mortal when the neighbour's confusion is intended, and a certain bitterness of mind: which are not small damages, but truly against charity: and so much the more dangerous, the less they are sometimes cared for. And sometimes by the least word or sign a grave confusion has been inflicted on the neighbour.

The four which he sets under detraction, two namely on the part of the one who detracts, and two on the part of the hearer, are to be distinguished thus: that we judge the first of itself mortal and against charity: unless the matter were so small that it would be counted for nothing. But the second, when namely the intention of detracting is lacking, is to be judged from the effect that follows, as we have said. For he is bound, when he does not intend to hurt, to take care lest he hurt. But to hear detractions gladly, or not to defend the fame of him of whom detraction is made, when iniquity and injustice against the neighbour is perceived in the detractor, and he who hears does not lend his ears from any useful and just cause, are of themselves likewise, as they are moderated there, without doubt against charity: but especially in prelates and superiors, whose it is to forbid these things.

All that he sets under cursing are mortal only from a perverse intention of the mind. But the intention, and an efficacious desire of evil for oneself or for another in matters of some moment, is manifestly against charity: otherwise imprecations of evils from levity, or from a bad custom, are to be fled: but not judged mortal.

What are set under rash judgement, if indeed they are about mortal matters with full and entire con-sent, are against charity, and are manifestly called mortal by Christ: *With what judgement* (he saying) *you shall have judged, you shall be judged,* etc.[4] Yet light or involuntary movements about these, it is already clear from what was said above, are not mortal. But there is need of much judgement about these, especially in timid consciences.

What he sets under whispering are openly against charity. Likewise the first two under flattery. For the third, if indeed it is done with a mind to draw into sin, or in such a way that it may deservedly be feared that thence he who is praised is to be drawn into what is mortal, is likewise mortal: not otherwise.

Simulation, like a lie, is not of itself mortal, unless from the end, or unless another transgression were joined from elsewhere.

Not to stand by lawful promises is likewise to be weighed from the damage that follows for the neighbour, how great the sin is.

The three kinds of lie, which he next sets down, and which are deservedly called pernicious, are manifestly against charity.

Concerning the ninth precept, the first four venereal sins, not indeed consummated in work, but by corruption of the mind, are of themselves indeed mortal, and especially to be guarded against by adolescents: although about the last two, delight in hearing baser things can sometimes be excused, if it is not about the baseness, but about the invention, or the like. But all those are most dangerous, and corrupt good morals, as Paul says:[5] among which also the reading of unchaste books, as also the looking at like images, are deservedly to be numbered: whose authors sin most gravely: and commonwealths are to be purged of them no less, and boys and adolescents withdrawn, than from the most present poisons.

Concerning the last three, note that negligence in restraining the passions of the flesh, or movements of the soul towards them, are often mortal, especially in those who without fear live more licentiously. For the rest, these things sometimes disturb the timid beyond measure. In the particular case, therefore, many things are to be weighed for judging these: how great namely the negligence, how vehement and dangerous the passion, what finally the condition of the mind. But the second—namely to dwell on unclean thoughts with the full consent of the will—manifestly belongs to the graver, which were set in the first place. Ornament also for provoking to evil likewise belongs to scandal, and is against charity. Where even what happens beyond intention is to be fled: and there is need of a prudent judgement about it.

Of the three which he sets about the tenth precept, the first and the last are manifestly mortal, and are unjust wills. But what he sets in the second place, of play with the sole will of gain, that namely one may grow rich thence and drain others, is against the reason of play, yet not against charity, if otherwise, apart from frauds and illicit ways, it is done with one who is master of his own, and who exposes himself with the same mind either to fortune or to skill: although in these an excessive excess of exposing more, with grave loss of one's own or another's substance, is deservedly judged grave prodigality: and so mor-tal.

Concerning the Epitome, as he calls it, of the ten precepts—namely the love of God and of the neighbour—there is nothing of which we should admonish: except that you notice how certain are those things which we have said about the manner of discerning mortal from venial, from this one reason alone, namely the love of God and of the neighbour.

But concerning the precepts of the Church you are to be admonished of this only, Reader: that you think on what was said about these in the third precept: that both in the divine precepts and in those of the Church you may recognise how great is the sweetness.

Thus then, somehow admonished, pious Reader, submit with a glad mind to the most sweet yoke of God's commandments, not as a servant, but as truly free: think of them with breadth and nobility of mind, and exercise yourself in them: you will experience your heart to be dilated more every day, so that you may say: *I have run the way of thy commandments, when thou didst dilate my heart.*[6]

End of the Additions.

[1] Deuteronomy 6:6–7 (Vulgate: *eruntque verba haec… in corde tuo… meditaberis*).

[2] Deuteronomy 6:7 (*et narrabis ea filiis tuis*).

[3] Deuteronomy 6:6–9, quoted more fully (heart, children, sitting, walking, sleeping, rising; sign on the hand; between the eyes; posts and doors).

[4] Matthew 7:2 (*in quo enim iudicio iudicaveritis, iudicabimini*).

[5] 1 Corinthians 15:33 (*corrumpunt bonos mores colloquia mala*), applied here to unchaste reading and images.

[6] Psalm 118:32 (Vulgate; Hebrew 119:32): *Viam mandatorum tuorum cucurri, cum dilatasti cor meum.*

Part III: On the Capital Sins and Their Remedies

On the Seven Capital Sins in General

There are seven kinds of sins which are called capital, because they are the heads, roots, beginnings, and first fuel of all the sins that men commonly commit. They are seven in number, gathered under this word *Saligia*: S. Pride. a, avarice. l, lust. i, envy. g, gluttony. i. wrath. a, acedia.

Pride, avarice, and lust, envy, gluttony, anger, Sloth: these are the seven capital crimes.

These seven sins are avoided by the seven contrary virtues.

Pride — by Humility. Avarice — by Liberality. Lust — by Chastity. Envy — let him use Charity. Gluttony — by Abstinence. Wrath — by Patience. Acedia — by Devotion.

Be humble, generous, chaste, a sincere lover, Sober, and patient, and strenuous for what is commanded you. So you will well avoid the seven capital crimes.

Method of Detesting Every Sin in General

Consider, O man, how great your dignity is, by how great an Artificer you were created, in how excellent a state he set you, at how immense a price you were redeemed, and to how great a happiness you are called. For your sake God built this wondrous fabric of the world: he created you unto his image and likeness: he washed you with the saving water of baptism: he redeemed you not with gold, not with silver, but with his most precious blood, that he might make you a fellow-citizen of the angels: he adopted you as a son to himself, to be co-heir of his natural Son. Will you then, forgetful of your origin, forgetful of so many benefits, for so slight a little taste of a momentary, false, and poisoned pleasure, cast yourself from so great a dignity into so great an unworthiness: that you who before were worthy of heaven and of spiritual graces should after sin not be worthy of the bread you eat? Will you from so noble, so loving, so well-deserving a parent toward you desert to his enemy —indeed your most hostile foe—ungrateful and thoughtless of your own salvation? Will you of your own accord make yourself over to a most foul, most cruel, and most wicked master? Will you from a son of God make yourself a son of the devil? nay even his slave, and (what is worst) the slave of as many masters as you have sins? For by sinning you make your God your enemy, and set the devil as lord over you. Consider the benefits of the one toward you, the injuries of the other. With what goodness did that One create you? With what mercy redeem you? With what liberality enrich you? With what gentleness does he daily bear with you when you offend, until you turn from your iniquity? With what joy does he receive you when you return to him? Against all this, with what envy has the devil long lain in wait for your salvation? Into what dangers has he cast you? And what does he daily plot, if not to drag you yourself with him into everlasting ruin?

Consider that after a mortal sin is committed you are so under the devil's dominion and power that he could at once by his right claim you for himself and snatch you with him to everlasting punishments (as you deserve): unless the supreme mercy of our Lord God, who waits for you unto penance, and the watchful custody of your guardian angel, hindered the devil from acting against you by his right.

Consider that the true life of the soul is God, and that sin alone separates them. And the soul itself robs itself of its own soul, and sets a barrier between itself and God, when it admits sin. And as a body without a soul is dead: so the soul without God (who is its life) is plainly dead in itself. To live infected with so many plagues of sins is not to live: but to confound life, and to draw nearer and nearer to the gates of death: for whom it would be better not to live at all than so to live: and better not to be born than so to die daily through sin. Besides this it deprives itself of every good, that is, of God, who is every good, the highest good, and without whom nothing is good. Whence, deprived of that highest good, it falls into the highest misery.

Consider that sin is so heavy a burden to the soul itself that neither heaven, nor even at last the earth itself, can bear it. Whence (such is its weight), descending into the abyss, it will hurl its author (that is, the sinner) with itself into the deepest depths of the infernal pit.

Consider that God, who did not make sin, so abhors sin that he has neither in heaven nor on earth so dear a friend whom, if he finds him stained with any mortal sin, he does not abhor: and that so far, that he forever banishes the very vessel of sin (that is, the sinner) from himself into the gehenna of fire: although before the sin he had burned with such love for him that none of carnal lovers could so flame with love of his bride: inasmuch as he had redeemed him not with gold, not with silver, but with his most precious blood, and had suffered so many and so great things for him. As if a kindly mother should cast her little child, whom she clasps with a mother's love, into a burning furnace, never to be freed from it—must it not have been something great, and to the mother most hateful, for which she dared to do that to her beloved little son?

Consider that sin so pleases the enemy of our God, and our most hostile foe the devil, that for six thousand years and more he has watched without wearying in the committing of sins and in drawing men to them, as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.[1] With which he could never be sated, though he has swallowed countless sins of men. For he does not demand temporal things from us, but only our souls, saying with that king of Sodom: *Give me the souls: take the rest for yourself.*[2] Since you now understand that sin is so hateful to our God, and so pleasing to his enemy: will you, turned away from your God, cast so great a joy upon his enemy (why do I say his—nay your own most bitter foe) to your own great harm? And will you not rather gladden the kindly angels of God, for whom there is joy over one sinner doing penance?[3]

[1] 1 Peter 5:8 (*tamquam leo rugiens circuit, quaerens quem devoret*).

[2] Genesis 14:21 (the king of Sodom to Abram: *Da mihi animas, cetera tolle tibi*).

[3] Luke 15:7 / 15:10 (joy in heaven over one sinner who repents).

Consider how much our Lord God has endured, that he might lead you back (who for your sins were without doubt rushing into everlasting damnation), a sinner cleansed of all filth, to the heavenly homeland. Which being so—that by his pains you are healed, by his passion freed from everlasting punishment, and by his death raised to everlasting life—you must not by sin of your own accord deprive yourself of the fruit of his passion, and cast yourself of your own accord into that same abyss of everlasting damnation from which by his so great pains he most kindly delivered you.

Consider that sin makes a man most wretched even in the present life (of the future there is doubt for no one), because it strips him of all the goods and merits he has done in this life, and of all the virtues and graces which God had formerly given him. For if anyone had done as many good works as

can be done, and had as many virtues as can be had: he would lose them all by one mortal sin, so that for all of them he would never have any reward in heaven. As Solomon witnesses, saying: *He who offends in one will lose many goods*. Further, as long as a man is in mortal sin, he can do no good work that is meritorious for him unto eternal life.

Consider that as long as a man is in mortal sin, like a rotten and dead member of the Church, he is shut out from and has no share in the many goods that are done and have been done in the universal Church: of which all good Christians who are free from mortal sin are partakers. O how wretched it is to be deprived of so many suffrages that are made in the Church of God.

Consider how dangerous it is to cast yourself into the pit of sin, from which you cannot get out by yourself. Into it the descent is slippery and easy: but to recall one's step, and to escape out to the upper air, this is the work, this the labour.[4] Few whom Christ has loved have been able to do this. For how do you know whether the Lord will have mercy on you, and in the day of his wrath will not remember your iniquity? How do you know whether he will give you time to repent? Suppose God will indeed give you time for doing penance: ought you then, in hope of a future confession, to sin? For what you say—*I will sin, and afterwards confess*—is just as if you said: I will wound myself, and afterwards heal my wound.

[4] Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.128–129 (*facilis descensus Averno; … sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras, / hoc opus, hic labor est*), adapted to the pit of sin.

Consider how much wiser it is not to admit sin at all; which must be expiated with so great grief of mind, with such labours, with so many tears: if by chance it happens (as it must) that by God's singular favour you come to your senses.

Consider how unlike is the end of virtue and of sin, how unequal the reward. For what is more unequal than eternal life and eternal death? Than to enjoy without end the highest good, in that most blessed company of angels and saints: and without end to be tormented with the highest evils in the most wretched fellowship of demons and the damned? Grant indeed that you took no account of the age to come: even in this life the reward of virtue and of sin is unequal. For virtue has joined to it the tranquil security of a mind of good conscience, and a certain foretaste and slight tasting of divine sweetness: which whoever has once tasted holds nothing so honeyed, nothing so delicate, nothing so pleasant that this world possesses, which he does not despise and count as dung. On the other hand, besides the thousand other evils that follow sin: that most wretched torment of a mind of evil conscience pursues the soul wherever it goes: and while the worm of conscience does not die, already in this life the soul itself suffers its own hell.

Consider how brief is the little stay of the present life, how fleeting, how transitory, how exposed to the hidden snares of death: and since you are not secure even of a moment of your life, how huge is your danger in being in that state in which if sudden death (as often happens) catches you, you have perished forever. On the other hand, how easy it is for you, in so small a moment of time, to stand upon your watch, and with Christ to keep vigil in the hour of this present life. Death will steal upon you unawares, the end of your labours: at which time from light and passing labour you will pass into the highest and everlasting rest.

If it seems hard to you, for Christ's sake, during the time of your life to abstain from vain pleasures: consider what torments he endured for love of you, how much of his most sacred blood he shed for

you, how bitter, how shameful a death he suffered for you. And you, forgetful of all this, crucify the Son of God again, while you repeat your sins, which drove our Lord God to such dread torments. For which, though you can return no equal thanks: yet he asks no other, than that for his sake you should consult your salvation, abstain from mortal sins, and turn your mind to the love of him.

Whoever you are who often commit mortal sins: but because they do not seem dreadful to you, as most other things do, you therefore neglect to keep yourself from them: consider that sometimes one can sin worse in a lesser fault than in a greater. For a greater fault, because it is more quickly recognized, is the more quickly amended: but a lesser, while it is thought as it were nothing, is the worse, because it is also more securely kept in use. Whence it often comes that a mind used to lighter evils does not even shudder at graver ones, and, nourished by faults, arrives at a certain authority of wickedness: and so much the more scorns to fear in graver things, the more in lighter ones it has learned to sin without fear.

Whoever you are who, neglecting venial sins as light, repeat them often, consider that just as small but countless drops fill the deep pools of rivers: so small sins multiplied become great, and for the most part slowly destroy the constancy of charity toward God.

Method of Avoiding Sin in General

Poverty is a most effective remedy against all vices. For poverty takes away from a man the enticements to every sin, that is, riches, by which a man gains the power of committing any sin whatever, and of obtaining the desire of any sin whatever, and by which a man can be helped toward having any temporal goods whatever.

Contempt from men, namely that you be blamed, despised, held cheap, and in nothing singularly honoured: until the swelling of elation in you is wholly pressed down: and so humbled you learn humility.

Some state of life in which you are compelled to do good works which otherwise you would not do: to leave sins which you would gladly admit: in short, where you are not forgiven, but rather are harshly rebuked and punished, until the crookedness of your own will is fully bent back in you to the form of rightness.

Flight from perverse company: because (as Chrysostom says) as often as a good man is joined to a bad, the bad is not made better by the good: but the good is contaminated by the bad.[5] Gregory: While we are incautiously joined to the friendships of the wicked, we are bound by their faults. For from him who is most right our life already differs by this very fact, that it agrees with the friendships of the perverse. Whence it is better to suffer the hatred of the wicked than to have their company.

[5] Given as Chrysostom on the good joined to the bad; common theme in Chrysostom's homilies on bad company (e.g. on 1 Cor 15:33), exact locus not.

Withdrawal from place, from people, and from other enticements to sin: because just as the farther anyone is from adversities, the less he feels adversities: so he is less spurred by pleasures who is not where the throng of pleasures is: and he suffers less the troubles of avarice who does not see riches. Therefore as far as we can, let us withdraw from the slippery place, who do not stand firmly enough even on dry ground.

Frequent and devout prayer, which lifts the mind above itself to God, and from him obtains the cure of languors and vices, and also the health of the virtues. Isidore: This is the remedy of one who burns with the temptations of vices, that as often as he is touched by any vice, so often he turn himself to prayer: because frequent prayer extinguishes the assault of vices.

Tribulation and adversity. Gregory: He who desires to conquer vices fully, let him strive humbly to bear the scourges of his purgation. And if at first adversity is hard to bear, yet by assiduity it becomes daily more tolerable; until at last it is not minded, or is even loved for the progress of health which is felt to come from it.

Frequent meditation on the Lord's passion, on the reward of the good in heaven, on the punishment of the wicked in hell, on inevitable death, on one's particular judgement at death, on the general judgement at the consummation of the age: where an account will have to be rendered of every idle word.[6] *In all your works remember your last things, and you will never sin.*

[6] Matthew 12:36 (*de omni verbo otioso … rationem*).

On All the Virtues in General

When the utmost effort, zeal, and diligence have been applied to rooting out sins, no less must be applied to the acquisition of the virtues contrary to those sins. For I would not have you think that justice consists in this, that you do not do evil, when not to do good is also evil. In both there is contained a transgression of the law. For he who commanded: *Decline from evil:* at once added, *and do good.*[1] If you have withdrawn from evil and have not done good, you are a transgressor of the law: which is completed not only in the abomination of evil works, but also in the perfection of good works. But since no one suddenly becomes highest, but with advancing time: therefore that circle, that harmony of all the virtues, must be acquired little by little. For absolute and perfect virtue, like one body, is composed of these members and virtues: which have among themselves a certain conjunction and communion, and in God's sight support one another with vicarious help; nor are they true virtues, if by any diversity they discord from one another. For one virtue without another is either altogether none, or certainly very small. Nor can the human mind have the kingdom of the virtues unless it has first shaken off the yoke of the vices: because every virtue suffers loss from one vice. For if chastity forsakes humility, or humility abandons chastity, since God detests pride as much as uncleanness, how will proud chastity, or unclean humility, be acceptable in his eyes? For goods are not acceptable to God which are stained by the mixture of evils: and he who has offended in one has become guilty of all: because a little leaven corrupts the whole mass.[2] For example: there are some who live chastely, but are sluggish from good work: others do many good things, but do not live chastely: yet chastity is not great without good work, nor is good work without chastity: others live chastely, but indulge gluttony: others the converse: others are endowed with chastity and abstinence, but swell through pride: others are sober, chaste, and humble, but neglect to carry out the works of mercy. Therefore the spiritual tree that would be rightly fruitful ought to bring forth fruits, that is, the works of all the virtues.

[1] Psalm 33:15 / 36:27 Vulgate (*declina a malo et fac bonum*); also 1 Peter 3:11.

[2] 1 Corinthians 5:6 / Galatians 5:9 (*modicum fermentum totam massam corrumpit*); James 2:10 (*qui … in uno offenderit, factus est omnium reus*).

On Pride

Pride is an inordinate appetite for one's own excellence: by which one contemns God, or one's superior, by refusing to obey or be subject to them and to their precepts. Not without reason does this claim first place among the capital sins: because first of all it draws the mind away from God: and it was the first sin both in heaven and on earth, and is the root and beginning of all sins, and of all sins the most dangerous, because it is taken up by very many men, and often by the highest. For it arises more often from a work of justice and virtue, and takes occasion from good works themselves. Augustine: The other vices have force in evil deeds: pride alone is to be guarded against even in right deeds. The same: The other vices indeed are in sins, but pride is to be feared even in right deeds: lest things that have been done praiseworthily be lost by the desire of that very praise. The same: Every other iniquity is practised in evil works, that they may be done: but pride lies in wait even for good works, that they may not be done. It is more often the cause of vain or empty glory.

Pride inordinately desires its own excellence in its mind. Vain or empty glory desires the manifestation of that excellence.

The proud man desires to excel in a hidden mind. Vain glory wants to be seen excelling by all.

They sin through pride and empty glory

Those who think that a good which is in them from another they have from themselves. Jerome: This is the first rule of living, that the soul not be ignorant to whom it owes itself.

Those who confess indeed that a good which they have freely from another they have from another and not from themselves: but think it is due to them by their own worth and by the force of their own merits.

Those who from the appetite for their own excellence are moved to attribute to themselves a good they do not have, or a greater than they have.

Those who, despising others, think that they alone have some good.

These four species of pride are also reduced to empty glory, if the manifestation of them is desired.

Those who desire glory beyond measure for goods they do not have, or for transitory and temporal goods.

Those who glory in sin, and rejoice when they have done evil, and exult in the worst things: as that they have defamed or hurt this one or that: which kind of sin is very dangerous. For it is evil never to remember a sin: worse, to remember and not grieve: worst, to remember and to rejoice and glory in it.

Those who are so affected by human glory that they prefer it to the keeping of the precepts: as are those who, for love of gaining glory, or fear of losing glory, commit a mortal sin.

Those who set their last end in human glory, putting aside the love of eternal glory.

The nine daughters of pride and empty glory

Making oneself great, opinionated, hypocrite, boaster, Ungrateful, scorning others, refusing to obey. Swelling with ambition, whom the court forms into a hateful man: He indeed will deservedly be judged to be proud.

They sin from pride and empty glory

Those who rashly, by an interior or exterior act, attack a work that is above their ability or dignity.

Those who haughtily and from love of their own glory think themselves better, more learned, or in some other respect more excellent, and more worthy of temporal goods, than others.

Those who will not be rebuked by others for things they have said or done amiss.

Those who, holding their own opinion as it were with their teeth, will not acquiesce in the opinion of the wiser: who, unless they thought themselves better than the rest, would by no means set the counsels of all after their own deliberation.

Those who will not desist from an evil work once begun, however much the more prudent dissuade. For they ought to beware lest, while they scorn to be overcome outwardly by the right persuasions of others, they be held captive within by pride.

Those who never wish to confess that they have done amiss: but either excuse their fault, or contend that it is light, or turn it back upon God, or upon someone else.

Those who, though they are evil and still propose to be so: yet by signs and words pretend to be good. And this is perfect hypocrisy, shutting out from the kingdom of heaven. For to speak well and live badly is nothing other than to condemn oneself by one's own voice.

Those who in confession, from worldly shame, disguise a sin or the species of a sin, or necessary circumstances: which confession is useless, nay brings a new crime.

Those who accuse themselves in the presence of others, that they may seem religious and humble.

Those who do some good works in order thereby to gain worldly glory and praise, or that they may appear better to others.

Those who say more of themselves in word than is or appears, by extolling themselves.

Those who on account of temporal goods which they possess, or rich benefices, or precious clothes: or on account of gifts of the body, namely beauty, strength, sound health, and the like: or on account of gifts of the mind, namely learning, sharpness of wit, tenacity of memory, wisdom, knowledge of God, and the like, walk swollen and proud.

Those who recount their good works for empty glory rather than that others may take example from them. Jerome: If we seek human praise, we lose the divine.

Those who proclaim their riches for ostentation's sake.

Those who are proud of the title of magistracy or dignity.

Those who for benefits received do not return thanks in deed to God, or to any other benefactor, when there is time or place; or do not have gratitude in mind, by acknowledging the benefit received from him, and thence having a kindly affection: or do not give thanks in word, when time and the matter call for it.

Those who disdain to give thanks to God, that they have been created by him as men: that they are Christians: that they have been endowed by him with many goods, both temporal and spiritual. For nothing, says Bernard, so displeases God, especially in the children of grace, in men of conversion, as

ingratitude. For it blocks the ways of grace: and where it is, grace no longer finds access, has no place. Is not that which has been given to an ungrateful person rightly counted as lost? Does one not regret having given what seems to have perished? A man ought therefore to be grateful and devout who desires the gifts of grace he has received to remain with him: because he who is faithful in a little is counted worthy of a larger gift.[1]

[1] Luke 16:10 (*qui fidelis est in minimo, et in maiori fidelis est*).

Those who after dinner or supper scorn to give thanks to God, who has fed them.

Those who hold all others in contempt before themselves.

Those who contemn others because they are poor, sickly, sinners, or ignorant.

Those who will not be subject to those to whom they ought to be subject: as to God, parents, teachers, and their other lords.

Those who from a will not to obey transgress the precepts of God or of superiors.

Those who transgress the precepts of God or of superiors: not indeed with a will not to obey, but with any other will—which disobedience is found in every sin.

Those who inordinately desire honours, dignities, and prefectures, that they may be over others, not that they may profit them. For no one, as Gregory says, does more harm in the Church than one who, acting perversely, has the name or order of holiness. For no one presumes to rebuke this delinquent: and the fault is vehemently spread for an example, when for reverence of the order the sinner is honoured.

Those who desire precious clothes exceeding their state, or an excessive superfluity of them, or take excessive care of them.

Those who from elation of mind have an immoderate appetite for knowing, whether by intellect or by sense, vain things, and such as can hurt the soul's salvation more than help it: of which sort were certain of the ancient philosophers, who invented mere trifles.

Those who for vanity's sake are too intent on the books of philosophers and poets, the sacred scriptures and the sayings of the saints being for that reason postponed and little valued.

Those who interpret sacred scripture not according to the exposition of the holy doctors of mother Church, but according to secular wisdom and the vanity of their own sense.

Those who wish to know more than is fitting.

Those who bring into inquiry and controversy things about which there is no doubt at all.

Causes of pride

Wealth, nobility, voice, fame, learning, virtue. Strength, honour, beauty, success, food, clothing. Sound health, piety, and sharpness of mind. These for the most part are wont to make a man proud.

On Humility

Humility is contempt of one's own excellence. For it tempers and reins the mind, lest it tend immoderately toward high things. It draws and gives a man the other virtues, their strongest keeper.

For what is done perishes unless it is guarded by humility: just as, conversely, pride is the mother and nurse of all vices. Bernard: O humility, queen of virtues, death of vices, nurse of virtues, adornment of knowledge, strength of religion, lodging of the Trinity, receptacle of the Holy Spirit. When the nets which the devil had stretched through the whole world had been shown to blessed Antony, and he said: Who can escape these? the answer was: Humility. For upon whom does the Spirit of the Lord rest, if not upon the humble, and quiet, and him who trembles at his words?[1] Bernard: Virginity is a praiseworthy virtue, but humility is more necessary. You can be saved without virginity: without humility you cannot: Humility can (I say) please, which bewails lost virginity: without humility (I dare say) not even Mary's virginity would have pleased: because even that virginity might please, humility without doubt brought it about. But true humility of the faithful (says Augustine) is, to be proud in nothing, to murmur in nothing, not to be ungrateful, not to be complaining: but in all God's judgements to give thanks to God, and to praise God: whose every work is either just or kind.

[1] Isaiah 66:2 (*ad quem autem respiciam, nisi ad pauperculum et contritum spiritu et trementem sermones meos?*); applied to the humble resting-place of the Spirit.

The height of humility is perfected by obedience and by patience of injury. Humility alone is not wont to glory, does not know how to presume, is not accustomed to contend. Gregory: Just as the proud rejoice in honours, so for the most part the humble rejoice in their own being despised: and when they see themselves cheap in others' eyes, they therefore rejoice because they understand that by this judgement is confirmed what they themselves also have held about themselves.

There are three degrees of humility. To submit oneself to a greater, and not to prefer oneself to an equal. To submit oneself to an equal, and not to prefer oneself to a lesser. To submit oneself to a lesser, and to prefer oneself to no one.

By these degrees of humility, the more anyone descends, the more he ascends to the likeness of God: who, remaining great above all things, deigned to become little among all things: and therefore one does not ascend to his height except by humility: to which the subject draws near, and the elated withdraws far: to whom we cannot return except by humility, from whom pride and disobedience have separated us far. This alone is the way to God, and there is no other besides it. He who goes otherwise falls rather than ascends. Humility alone is what exalts. For the more abject anyone is in this age, the more he will be exalted in the age to come. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled; and everyone who humbles himself will be exalted.[2]

[2] Luke 14:11 / 18:14; Matthew 23:12 (*omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur, et qui se humiliat exaltabitur*).

On the Sin of Avarice

On Avarice

Avarice is to keep one's own unlawfully, or to covet another's. Its species are four: I myself desire another's goods too much; I acquire many things by deceit; I do not restore what was ill gotten; I am tight-fisted. They sin by avarice. Those who have an unjust will to take or to keep what is another's. For the hope of gaining or keeping temporal things is the poison of charity. Those who have an disordered appetite for acquiring money, or superfluous goods, by any right and by any wrong. Those who with deliberate will seek priesthoods, dignities, and temporal goods, that they may the more

conveniently indulge their pleasures. Those who unjustly and by an illicit contract forbidden by divine or human law, as by simony, rapine, and the like, acquire goods: or through works that are mortal sins: as by adultery, pandering, and the like. Those who refuse to restore what is unjustly detained or possessed: who remain in sin so long, until they restore what is another's—provided only that they have the means to restore. For the sin is not remitted unless what was taken away is restored. But if the means to restore are wanting: contrition with the purpose of restoring when means shall exist is enough.

Those who are ready to act against the commandments of God rather than lose temporal goods. Those who from an affection of avarice, and not to ward off their own or another's want, heap up treasure: which in churchmen is far more damnable. For the goods of God are the patrimony of his poor. Ambrose: The Church has gold, not to keep it, but to lay it out.[1] Those who from an insatiable desire of having are so tight-fisted, sparing, and avaricious that they will not show works of mercy to their neighbour, and will not help one set in need, where charity and right natural reason dictate that it should be done, and where they can do it most conveniently, and are able by their means. Those who are so cruel to themselves that they do not help themselves with their own goods, and in the midst of wealth are in want: and for them there is lacking both what they have and what they have not: nor do they possess goods, but are possessed by them. Branches of avarice. From it come deceits, cares, perjuries, the breaking of laws. And countless other first beginnings of fault. They sin from avarice. Those who by fraud and an illicit way, by any right and by any wrong, resolve to pile up riches. Those who for the sake of greater gain unjustly adulterate merchandise, or anything of the kind, and to others' hurt. Those who are continually anxious by what way, whether by right or by wrong, the fear of God not held before their eyes, they may come to wealth and to priesthoods.

[1] Ambrose, *De officiis* 2.28.137 (Church's gold for the poor, not to be hoarded).

Those who are too anxiously solicitous how for the rest of their life's time they will be able to get food and clothing: not having hope in the Lord, that if they serve him worthily he will add all things needful. For the Truth itself, teaching his own disciples in Matthew 6, says: *Be not solicitous for your soul, what you shall eat or drink: or for your body, what you shall put on: but seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.*[2] *If you keep my commandments, you shall eat the good things of the land.*[3] Those who, selling anything, for the sake of greater gain swear that they bought it for so much, when yet they bought it for far less: and (that they may impose on the simplicity of the people) put a far higher price on their goods than is fair. Those who, corrupted and bribed by money, do not judge according to equity and the prescription of the law, or bear false witness. From avarice as from a fountain countless other sins draw their origin, which it would be superfluous to insert here. Daughters of avarice. Thefts of a sacred thing are graver, and of a profane thing. Hence let usury, rapine, simony, pledges be numbered. They sin from avarice. Those who steal secretly, or by force snatch, the relics of the saints, their images, sacred vessels, movable or immovable goods assigned to the use of the Church, or of the ministers of God: whereby great irreverence is done to a sacred thing.

[2] Matthew 6:25, 33 (*Nolite solliciti esse… quaerite… regnum Dei*).

[3] Isaiah 1:19 (*Si volueritis et audieritis me, bona terrae comeditis*), adapted; given here as continuation of the Truth's teaching.

Those who steal a profane thing in a sacred place. Those who secretly take away another's, or do not restore what they have found. Those who steal money, or anything else, from their parents. Those who give money, or anything else, at interest, that after a set day they may receive back what was lent, and by force of the loan something beyond the principal: of which usury it has been said among the commandments. Rapine differs from theft: for what theft takes away secretly and by guile, rapine snatches by force and violence. Those who either buy, or sell, or possess when bought, ecclesiastical priesthoods. Gregory: Then only is the custody of prelates useful, when they preside over God's people in the spirit of God: and when they deign to guard not only the flocks, but the pastors themselves also. Those who for spiritual things, and for what are held only by the gift of the Holy Spirit, look for temporal gain (as a price owed merely by reason of the spiritual thing): although no spoken bargain has been made. Which does great injury to the Christian religion. For spiritual things are held cheap when they are set under a price. Here it is to be noted that money received simoniacally ought not to be restored to him who gave it, but ought to be distributed to the poor, or to that Church upon which such injury was done.

On Liberality

Liberality is the virtue of dispensing riches to good uses for oneself, for one's own, and for others.

This virtue keeps itself from illicit gain, from rapine, theft, usury, and so of the rest: for otherwise that alms does not please the Redeemer's eyes which is heaped up from illicit things and from injustice: which unjustly takes from one what under the appearance of right is shown to another: but that which is spent from things given by a just possessor, or well and justly acquired. Augustine: Do you wish to be the best merchant, a prudent hireling? Give what you cannot keep, that you may obtain what you cannot lose: give a little, that you may obtain a hundredfold: give a perishing thing, that you may obtain an eternal. But to whom will you give? Give to the needy (says Chrysostom) and not to the dancer: lest with your alms you lose your own soul, and his to whom you give. Method of doing alms. He whose free virtue is in giving will duly look to: To whom, what, why, how much, at what time and in what place he should give: From his own, gladly, not upbraiding, nor delaying. Alms is to be given and liberality shown to the needy, not to a harlot or a player. Jerome: It is a part of sacrilege to give the goods of the poor to those who are not poor. What may be useful to the needy, not that whereby he himself is ruined and hurt in body or soul. For God's sake, and to relieve the poor man's want: not for the sake of hunting human glory.

Not exceeding measure: so that the greatness hurt neither the giver nor the receiver. For it would hurt the giver, if he were more bound to others to whom for that reason he could not give or make satisfaction: as to himself, his wife, children, kinsfolk, creditors. It would also hurt the receiver, if he used it ill, if for that reason he indulged drunkenness and surfeit, or idleness. Alms is to be given to the poor in good time, not waiting until the poor man die of hunger, when we can no longer free him. Therefore we ought even to anticipate the poor man's petition: because he who gives quickly gives twice. Proverbs 3: *Say not to your friend: Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give to you, when you can give at once.*[1] Besides, one must be free for alms at every time, and most of all on feast days, that those days may be the more sanctified. In a secret place, if it can be done: that the left hand may not know what the right does: or at least in an honest place.[2] Things unjustly taken by usury, theft, rapine, or extortion ought to be restored to the true owners, if it can be done: and not distributed to the poor.

Isidore: You profit nothing, if you refresh one from that whereby you do injury to others. Augustine: Some think themselves justified in this, that from the substance of the poor they make a small alms: and from what they have taken from many, they bestow some least thing on one. One is fed, from which many hunger: and from the spoils of many scarcely a few are clothed. God does not seek such an alms: nor does he will that piety be shown to one from another's cruelty: nor that anything be violently taken from anyone, which is then mercifully shown.

[1] Proverbs 3:28 (*Ne dicas amico tuo: Vade, et revertere: et cras dabo tibi, cum statim possis dare*).

[2] Matthew 6:3 (*nesciat sinistra tua quid faciat dextera tua*).

That alms God approves which is ministered from just labours. For he who offers sacrifice from the substance of the poor is as one who slays a son in the father's sight. And what can be more intolerable than the death of a son before his father's eyes? But if things unjustly taken cannot be restored to the true owners, they are to be distributed to the poor. Alms is to be given from the heart, and not from compulsion, nor to avoid the annoyance of a poor man importunately begging an alms. For God loves a cheerful giver.[3] Augustine: In the judgement of the heart the alms of the giver is to be considered: and it is not so much to be considered how much, but with what mind, with what affection he gives what he can. All that men have has been most kindly given them by God: which, just as he does not upbraid us with them, so neither ought we to upbraid, if of them we have distributed anything to the poor. For the richest of all ought to acknowledge that they have been set by the heavenly householder as stewards of temporal goods: of all indeed: since of their stewardship they are to render an account to God: yet more especially of those which overflow beyond moderate use. In distributing which they ought to show themselves the more humble, the more they understand that what they dispense is another's: and when they consider that they are set in the ministry of those to whom they give what they have received, they think no matter of pride left to themselves: but rather matter of fear, lest they distribute unworthily what was committed to them: lest they offer some things to those on whom nothing ought to have been

[3] 2 Corinthians 9:7 (*hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus*).

spent: lest nothing to those on whom something: lest much to those on whom little: lest they distribute little to those on whom much ought to have been bestowed: lest by precipitation they scatter uselessly what they distribute: lest by slowness in distributing they torment those who ask. When you give anything to a poor man in alms, you ought not to hope that it will be returned to you by him: otherwise it would be a loan, not alms: but hope that it will be returned to you by the Lord, from whom you will receive a hundredfold, and will possess eternal life.[4] You may, however, hope for prayer from the poor man.

[4] Matthew 19:29 / Mark 10:30 (hundredfold and eternal life); cf. Luke 6:35 on lending without hope of return.

On Lust

Lust is the disordered appetite of libidinous pleasure. Its species are seven. You may say the species of lust are six in number: If a harlot, and not a woman married to a man, is violated, let it be reckoned fornication: if a virgin, call it stuprum: If married to a man, by adultery: if joined by blood, by incest: he who violates a nun is a sacrilegious man: against nature, he becomes a Sodomite. And a spouse exceeding measure with a spouse sins. Fornication is the natural intercourse of an unbound

person with an unbound. Stuprum, whereby a virgin woman is deflowered outside marriage. Adultery is illicit intercourse, whereby the marriage bed is violated.

Incest, whereby carnal mingling is made among blood-kin or affines, without matrimonial dispensation. Sacrilege is illicit intercourse, whereby a nun dedicated to divine worship is violated: or if a priest, who has been sanctified to chastity, fornicates. Sodomy, whereby venereal acts are practised against nature. Which sin is of all by far the gravest and most dangerous: inasmuch as in it the order of nature is violated, which aims at generation and offspring: but in this it cannot follow. Conjugal excess, whereby between husband and wife measure is exceeded according to circumstances alone: as from immoderate concupiscence: and also in time, place, or other undue circumstances. Cause of lust. Talk, a woman's look, and kisses, touch. And lascivious speech, and a lascivious page, drink. And too much food, long meditation on Venus. Idleness, and frequent company of a lascivious friend: These often seem to storm the chastity of the young. Fornication and the other species of lust are mortal sins, contained under this sin. Under this sin is also contained every consent to the delight of lust concerning an object forbidden to oneself, whether it be in conversation with women, in impudent looking and touching, in kisses and immodest

songs, or in the reading of authors too lascivious, in a lingering and delightful thought of venereal things. All of which are for the most part the cause and first fuel of carnal action. And therefore of these also confession is to be made.

On Chastity

Chastity is continence from venereal things. It is threefold. Virginal, Widowed, Conjugal. Bernard: Conjugal chastity is good: widowed continence is better: but virginal purity is best. As much as an angel is above a man, so much is virginity more honourable than marriage. Abstinence from marriage is the imitation of the angels.

On Envy

Envy is sadness at another's good. Its species are two. The envious man rejoices in adversity, and is sad in prosperity. Five branches. He detracts, is discordant, murmurs, hates, hinders. They sin by envy. Those who from hatred rejoice at another's inconvenience, calamity, adversity, affliction, loss, death, or ill

health: or from malevolence say that the same have deserved those evils, or even far greater. Those who do not rejoice at another's good, or do not grieve at another's evil. For it is against the charity of the neighbour, whom they are bound to love as themselves: since no one fails to rejoice at his own good, and to grieve at his own evil. Those who wish ill to another, or pray ill for him. Those who grieve and take it ill that others are rich, learned, well-spoken-of, beautiful, devout, dear to others, wise, of good manners. And if it could be that the envious had eyes everywhere and saw everyone's happinesses: they would certainly be tormented by every success. Those who are the more inflamed to envy, the more happily it goes with another. Those who grieve that in others nothing can be found worthy of blame. Gregory: The ancient enemy, from the quarter where he sees the good shine forth to glory, thence snatches the perverse by envy to punishment. They sin from envy. Those who secretly

or openly, manifestly or latently, malevolently charge another with a false crime. Those who by their words enlarge and aggravate others' sins. Those who divulge and make known others' vices or sins not known to all, without sufficient necessity and without a great cause. Those who interpret others' good sayings or deeds in the worse

sense, and judge ill of others. Those who deny that certain virtues are in others, when yet they know that they are endowed with those virtues. Those who malevolently keep silence about others' virtues. Those who gladly prick up their ears to informers. Those who from hatred and envy are unwilling to be reconciled to an angry neighbour. Those who stir up enmities among friends: of which sort of men, while they perpetrate one wickedness, root out at once all virtues from human hearts: and in one evil do countless things: while they tear asunder mutual charity among some. Those who before someone report another's name, that he may be held in hatred: when for a Christian man it ought to be too little not to excite or increase others' enmities by speaking ill, unless he also strove to extinguish them by speaking well. Those who murmur against God, because they see others happier in some respect. Those who from envy think that goods have been undeservedly bestowed on others, and that those others are unworthy of them. Those who do not gladly hear others' praises, but contradict the praisers. Those who hate someone because he is happier in some respect. Those who bear enmities with someone, and foster inward hatred in their minds. Those who for hatred's sake and envy's inflict harm on another, or are the cause of another's harm.

On Charity

Charity is the love whereby God is loved for his own sake, and the neighbour for God's sake. The charity of God and of the neighbour is the proper and special virtue of the pious and the saints, whereas the other virtues can be common to both good and bad: without which no good is present—nay, the other goods are held in vain and to no purpose, at least as regards obtaining eternal salvation: but if it is present, the other goods are held. For as many branches of a tree come forth from one root: so many virtues are generated from one charity. Nor has the branch of a good work any vigour, unless it has flowed from the root of charity: of which more fully it has been said in the epitome of the commandments. Effects of charity. The dear love of God and of his brother rejoices In another's fruits, and is patient and kind, envious Of none, doing nothing wrongly, not ambitious, Not puffed up, nor forward, not envious, nor seeking its own, Rejoicing with the truth, thinking no evil, nay Bearing all things, believing, hoping, never failing: It covers all crimes, perfects all virtues.[1]

[1] Verse paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13:4–8 (*charitas patiens est… omnia suffert… numquam excidit*), with *crimina cuncta operit* echoing 1 Peter 4:8 / Proverbs 10:12.

On Gluttony

Gluttony is a voracious greediness, not content with the bounds of nature. Its species are eight. Beforehand, greedily, often, sumptuously, too much, and studiously

I take foods, I delight in them, I feed also on forbidden things. They sin by gluttony. Those who eat against the custom or constitution of holy Church before the due hour, especially in a fast, or early in the morning before the set prayers enjoined on them, or on feast days before hearing Mass. Those who eat too eagerly, and from voracity swallow foods not sufficiently chewed. Those who eat more

often than they ought, or than nature can bear. Those who without sufficient excuse do not observe the fasts enjoined by the Church. Those who have delicate foods or drinks prepared for themselves above their state and means, or more than is fitting. Those who, not content with the foods set before them, would feast more sumptuously if they could, for this cause alone, that they might enjoy their pleasures. Those who, that they may indulge their pleasure alone, drink neat wine, or wine not sufficiently diluted with water, to the ruin of body and mind. Those who gorge themselves with too much food, or overwhelm themselves with more abundant wine. Whence follow indigestion, drunkenness, and other evils, of which we shall soon speak. Those who seek out diversity of foods, affect variety of flavours, and desire meals too exquisite and carefully prepared. Those who despise sufficiency, and desire superfluity, and set their desire on various dishes and sumptuous

fare, the thought of divine things being left, and of those things to the doing of which they are bound. Those who take too great pleasure in foods, and make their belly as it were their god.[1] Those who eat things harmful, or wont to hurt them, whether in the soul, as Adam and Eve: or in the body, as those who against the orders of faithful physicians eat something. Those who eat flesh or dairy foods on those days on which the Church has ordained abstinence from them. Daughters of gluttony. A dull sense, a crude body, scurrilous, insolent, A talkative tongue, sleep, nausea, foul lust. They sin from gluttony. Those who from surfeit so overturn and blunt the eyes of the mind and the sharpness of the other senses that after feasting they can neither pray nor do any other due studious work. For a fat belly does not beget a fine sense. Those who from too great surfeit fall into languor or disease. Those who by impudent gesture of body and limbs, and by disordered gesticulation, provoke others to laughter. Those who, alienated from their mind by surfeit, grow angry, threaten, hurt, or commit far fouler things. Those who, loaded with food and drink, speak inconsiderately and rashly, and vomit forth detractions, foul words, or blasphemies.

[1] Philippians 3:19 (*quorum deus venter est*).

Those who from too great gluttony of food and drink corrupt nature, and stifle it so that deep sleep is needed to breathe out the surfeit. Those who from the vice of gluttony nauseate, hiccup, belch, have a foul breath, or fall into libidinous uncleanness.

On Abstinence

Abstinence is continence from food and drink for the chastisement of the body alone. God created many good things for man's eating: but lest he should exceed the measure of eating, he commanded abstinence, by which all carnal desires and all vices might be rooted out: just as, conversely, all the virtues of the soul are destroyed by the vice of gluttony. Let him abstain (says Augustine) from many things that are allowed, who by freedom of will has committed many that are forbidden. And we who by forbidden things (says Gregory), flowing down, have fallen, let us rise by restraining ourselves even from things allowed. For in return for this (says Bernard), that we abstain even from things themselves allowed, those forbidden things which we formerly committed are forgiven us. And what is it for committed things to be forgiven, if not by a short fast to redeem everlasting fasts? For we have deserved Gehenna, where there is never any food, no consolation, no end, where the rich man asks for a drop of water and does not deserve to receive it. Abstinence therefore is good and saving, by which eternal punishments are redeemed, while sins are in this way remitted. Therefore, since

food cast us out of paradise, let hunger lead us back thither. But in vain is the flesh worn down by abstinence, if, let loose to disordered

motions, the mind is scattered by vices. For what does it profit to thin the body by abstinence, if the mind swell with pride? What praise shall we deserve for the pallor of fasting, if we are livid with envy? What of virtue has it, not to drink wine, and to be drunk with anger and hatred? Then at last is abstinence excellent: then is the chastisement of the body fair and magnificent, when the mind is clean from vices. For the good of abstinence perishes in so far as it least keeps itself from spiritual vices. Hence Joel: *Sanctify* (he says) *a fast*.[1] But to sanctify a fast is, by other good works joined to it, to show a bodily abstinence worthy of God. Bernard: But I wish my brothers to be admonished that a fast is to be observed not from foods only, but from all allurements of the flesh and from every pleasure of the body: nay indeed one must fast far more from vices than from foods. For those who abstain from foods and act wickedly imitate the demons, who have no food, and always have wickedness. And so it is not to be believed that this fast of visible foods alone can suffice for the perfection of the heart and the purity of the body, unless to it there has also been joined a fast of the soul. For that too has its own harmful foods, with which when it is fattened, even without abundance of meats it tumbles down to the precipices of lust. But let those who abstain know that then they offer an abstinence pleasing to God, when what they withdraw from themselves of food they bestow on the needy, not on money-boxes. For they do not fast to God, but to themselves, if what they withdraw for a time from the belly they do not

[1] Joel 1:14 / 2:15 (*Sanctificate ieiunium*).

give to the needy, but keep to be offered afterwards to the belly.

On Wrath

Wrath is a movement of a mind stirred to vengeance. Its species are two. Heavy wrath is rolled under a silent breast: then Outward things show what the mind's wrath is bringing forth. They sin by wrath. Those who gather heavy wrath in their minds, which they do not show by an outward sign. Those who by a confused outpouring of voice show the anger of their mind. Wrath has seven daughters. An impatient mind, curses, blasphemy, insult. Revenge, quarrel, threats: these are wrath's seven pledges. They sin from wrath. Those who, when injured by another, think him unworthy from whom they ought to suffer such things. Those who, angry at another, apply their mind to various bitter thoughts, thinking how they may avenge themselves on him. Those who by disordered shouting and confused speech show with how great grief of mind they hear themselves rebuked by others, or attacked with insults. Those who bear more heavily than they ought the losses, calamities, diseases, or other evils with which they are afflicted by God.

Those who from anger imprecate curses on another, and rail. Those who, blazing with wrath, as it were tear God limb from limb: or swear the name of God and of the saints in vain, or forswear. Those who deal with someone in insults, and mock him, and defame him before others. Those who cast in someone's teeth his poverty, or a fault of mind or of body. Those who from anger, and for the sake of satisfying their own mind, desire harm or evil for others. Those who keep up quarrels with someone with a desire of revenge, and an appetite of hurting through themselves or another, by words or deeds. Those who for revenge's sake bring harm or evil upon another. Those who, with a mind

kindled by wrath, go as far as blows. Those who in very deed from anger inflict hurt on their neighbour in his goods or body: as those who fly at his hair, shove, strike. Those who carry arms, sticks, stones, and the like, for the sake of hurting. Those who would gladly hurt, if by opportunity and strength it were allowed. Those who unjustly threaten an unjust evil to another: not by reason of justice and correction, but for vengeance alone.

On Patience

Patience is that by which we bear evils with an even mind: that is, without the disturbance of sadness. By just men the world's hatreds and tribulations are to be borne patiently. For it is necessary that the world hate those whom it sees to hate what it loves. Gregory: We can be martyrs without iron and flames, if we truly keep patience in the mind. For present evils ought to be borne, until the promised beatitude come. Let the injuries of unbelievers be sustained by the faithful, and among the grain of the gardens let the plucking of the tares be deferred: however much the wicked rage.[1] Even in this time the cause of the just is better: who, the more sharply they are attacked, the more gloriously are they crowned. But the good are scourged by God the judge of all, by the ministry of the wicked: whom, as torturers, he uses to pursue his justice against his guilty ones: among whom, although the just have not deserved to be afflicted by them, yet before God they have deserved to be so punished. And as a father after the chastisement of his son casts the rods into the fire: so our God, the father of all, afterwards casts into everlasting fire the wicked, whom in this age he uses for the chastisement of his sons. Therefore every best Christian ought gladly to bear tribulations, to spare enemies, and gladly in the present age not to desire vengeance: but by enduring, to ask pardon from God for his enemies: after the example of Christ, who for his crucifiers prayed to the Father, saying: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*[2]

[1] Wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24–30): *inter hortorum frumenta zizaniorum auulsio differatur*.

[2] Luke 23:34 (*Pater, dimitte illis: non enim sciunt quid faciunt*).

On Sloth

On Sloth (Acedia)

[The heading DE ACEDIA *stands at the foot of image 190; the text begins overleaf.]*

Sloth (*acedia*) is a certain sadness or weariness of spiritual good, and a kind of torpor of mind, by which one neglects to begin certain good things that are owed, or loathes to finish what has been begun.

Of it there are seven species:

He loathes the work of virtue; he flees hard things; he turns over
Foul things in his mind; he despairs of pardon, and passes his time in idleness:
He does not restrain the affections of his mind; he leaves out what is useful.
These seven sins sloth commits in me.

They sin by sloth.

Those who, from a certain sadness of mind, think it heavy to fast, to pray, to confess their sins, and to fulfil the other commandments, saying that these things are too heavy and that they cannot fulfil them. Bernard: The reason we cannot is that we do not much will; for there is no serving under hard necessity where what is commanded is loved.

Those who put off for a long time beginning some work that is owed, or, having begun it, do it lukewarmly, not caring whether it is done well or badly so long as they are rid of it. This commonly happens in the prayers of the Hours and in other prayers of divine worship.

Those who desire the sweet fruit of everlasting life, but, finding the way that leads to eternal life bitter, throw the whole thing away and will suffer nothing for the sweetness of the heavenly fatherland. But he has not deserved sweet things who has not tasted bitter ones.

Those who, out of distaste for guarding themselves and keeping themselves from sin, put off the amendment of their life from day to day, and meanwhile give themselves over to their passions.

Those who make various resolutions and attempt many good works that are owed and that tend to the honour of God, but often change their resolution, not from inability or for a reasonable cause, but because of the weariness they feel in carrying those works out.

Those who choose rather to remain in great misery than to take on some labour.

Those who from smallness of soul, and more than is right, draw back from great works that do not exceed their power, as though they did exceed it.

Those who do not gather themselves together, but let themselves go without governance, neglecting their salvation.

Those who neglect their good name when it has been falsely taken from them, especially when this harms others or is feared to harm them by reason of scandal. For care must be had of keeping one's good name, that it be not lost, and of seeing to it that it be restored, especially when it has been unjustly taken away. Two things are necessary to us: a right conscience, for our own sake, and a good name, for our neighbour's. It is the sign of a noble soul to love the advantage of a good name.

Those who idly think now of this, now of that: either of the foul pleasures of lust, or of evil about their neighbour, or of things against the honour of God or of just men. Of all these idleness is the material. Jerome: What one is ashamed to say, let one be ashamed even to think.

Those who in the midst of praying call their mind away from God, not attending to how great a King it is to whom they address their speech. This wandering of the mind takes away the fruit of prayer, whose power (if it is pure) is great. For pure prayer, like a faithful messenger, carries out its commission and pierces where the flesh does not reach. If it is pure, if it is chaste, it will pierce the heavens and will not come back empty. This wandering of the mind in prayer and devotion most often comes from the craft of the devil, who knows that prayer is directed to God against himself and his machinations. Therefore, as far as he can, he hinders the fervour of the one praying, so that he may not turn fully to God, and so that prayer may not prevail against him.

Of despair enough has been said under the first commandment.

Those who, from weariness of labour, betake themselves to idle conditions of life as to refuges of laziness, thinking it too laborious to earn their food and clothing by their own craft and labour.

Those who give the time that ought to be spent on divine worship or on the study of letters to idleness, sleep, idle words, or other useless works. Yet inward and outward leisure for the rest and recreation of nature is not to be condemned, but only that which gives material for many evils, above all for evil thoughts, desires or schemes.

Those who, though they have a right will to avoid sin, are nevertheless overcome by the craving for honour, by anger, or by carnal pleasure.

Those who leave out the things that are known, or ought to be known, to be necessary for the soul.

Those who from a disordered affection of mind give up the resolution of a good work, even if it is not of precept: for one must not desist from a good resolution in a disordered way.

Those who, being endowed with an ecclesiastical benefice, or enrolled in sacred orders or in monastic profession, omit to say both Hours daily, the canonical Hours and those of the Blessed Virgin. Profane and lay men, hindered by worldly business and unable to give due labour every day to the worship of God, have for this reason given clerics yearly revenues and rich incomes, so that these might take their place in pouring out prayers to God and, after the manner of good shepherds, *keep the watches of the night over their flock*,[1] and watch in prayer. For the benefice is given for the sake of the office.

[1] Luke 2:8 (*custodientes vigilias noctis super gregem suum*).

Likewise clerics, that is (so to speak) the tonsured, who say neither the psalms nor the Hours of the Virgin Mary according to the custom of their diocese.

Those who from a certain numbness and languor of mind omit to give thanks to God for benefits received, to receive the most holy Eucharist, to examine their conscience before confession, to receive the sacraments, to fulfil their vows, to hear Mass, and to pour out to God the seven penitential psalms and other prayers; in short, whoever omits what belongs to his duty.

On Devotion

Devotion is a ready will to do what belongs to the service of God.[1] It is the contrary of sloth. For as a man who labours under the vice of sloth does the work he owes sadly and unwillingly, and therefore negligently, so the devout man rejoices in fulfilling the commandments of God, carries them out with cheerfulness, and burns with the love of God. The works of penance, too, and the labours of abstinence, to which his strength would otherwise be unequal, he seasons with the fervour of devotion and the sweetness of spiritual grace. And so he climbs from one virtue to another and by degrees reaches even to heaven, where, seeing God, he will be the happier in his reward the more he has striven here to cleave to the highest good. Devotion is born of the love and the fear of God.

[1] This definition matches Aquinas, *ST* II-II q. 82 a. 1 (*devotio … voluntas quaedam prompte tradendi se ad ea quae pertinent ad Dei famulatum*).

Soto's Additions on what has been said about the capital sins

Additions of the Reverend Father Pedro de Soto on what has been said about the capital sins.

About these seven capital vices there is no need to give the reader many admonitions. The Author has explained them most fittingly for his purpose, and (as you will see immediately after this) he has set beside each its proper remedies so diligently and so devoutly, and has laid bare the ugliness and foulness of each so aptly, that in these two things you may think you have a Method and compendium in the brevity of its words, but in the number and weight of its thoughts and matters an immense and most choice treasury of heavenly ointments and medicines. Yet about these sins themselves, their modes, branches and daughters (that brood of vipers, namely), we shall not judge it useless to give the readers a few admonitions on certain points, according to the plan we kept with the commandments.

First, then, notice that these seven vices are wisely called by the Author not *mortal* but only *principal*. Do not think this is because they are the greatest of all sins: others are greater than they, unbelief, hatred of God, despair, blasphemy and many such. They are called principal and capital because many other sins arise from them, as members from a head. For these vices have certain ends, namely goods towards which they tend, or evils which they flee, that are very desirable to human weakness and move it greatly, since they share not a little in true happiness and blessedness, although in them some happiness is found falsely indeed, yet plausibly to human ignorance and sickness. For excellence, which vainglory seeks; sufficiency, which avarice hopes for from riches; delight, which gluttony and lust pursue: these, when true and solid, are blessedness itself. But this is the wretched condition of human blindness, that, exiled from these true goods, it embraces their shadows in these earthly things. What do carnal men desire more ardently than glory and praise, sufficiency and abundance of all things, delight and joy? If they sought these in their true form, they would not go astray: the glory, that is, which is from God alone; true and proper riches, not false and alien ones (of these two it is said, *Glory and riches are in his house*);[1] and finally pure and abiding delights, of which it is said, *Delights at thy right hand even to the end*,[2] that is, without end; not momentary ones, which, both by their own brevity and by the changeableness of the things in which they are placed, are mixed with many sorrows. *Laughter*, says the wise man, *I counted error: and to joy I said, Why art thou vainly deceived?*[3]

Meanwhile, however, into how many sins does the love and craving for these three goods (false though they are), or for any one of them, clinging to the carnal mind, drive a man headlong in order to obtain them? These sins are rightly called the daughters of the craving from which they sprang. Here then are four capital vices: Vainglory, Avarice, Gluttony and Lust. For the three others are nothing but the champions of these, their defenders, as it were, and avengers. And because they flee from what is contrary to those goods, they move most powerfully the mind that is given over to the first four. For envy, the champion of glory, how it is tormented by another's good, which takes away from its own! And into what evils does it drive one in order to hinder that good! Anger, the avenger of all desires: how strong it is in the soul it has taken hold of! And finally sadness and sloth, belonging to a soul that gives way and grieves in dejection at the lack of the false goods it loves: how much power they have in a man who tries to escape them! This then is the reason and the name of these seven capital vices, and their bastard offspring. Blessed Gregory devised the scheme most holily in Book 31 of the *Moralia*, and Cassian, though somewhat differently, in Book [5] of the *Institutes of the*

Monasteries and the seven books that follow. The author has followed it, as have all later writers.[4]

Notice next that all these vices are not always mortal and graver, nor indeed are most of them so of their own proper nature (what they call *ex suo genere*, "of their kind"), even if they are committed with full and entire consent. Such are an excessive and immoderate love of money or of glory, or certainly too great a greed for some food, or surfeit of it. Therefore, regarding any of these sins, the rules laid down above under the commandments must be carefully considered. First, following those rules, the matter itself about which each of them offends must be examined more closely, so that it may be seen whether it is necessary to charity or contrary to it. For from this one must judge whether such a sin is mortal or venial of its kind. Next, how far one offends by any given act about such matter. For, as has been said, what is of itself mortal becomes venial through smallness of matter, like a slight injury to a neighbour's body or the theft of a very small thing. Lastly, the deliberation itself and the will must be weighed, whether it is full and entire, for without this there is no mortal sin either. These three things, rightly considered, will show how much the acts of those sins must be reckoned at. We shall show this more specially, by way of example as it were, in each of them, as briefly as possible.

Notice finally that, because we have said that not all these sins are of themselves mortal and graver, you must not think them of small account. They are called capital so that you may understand that each brings many other vices with it, as a body brings many members. Hence Gregory calls these sins the captains of an army, since, he says, they go before and take possession of the mind, and countless other troops follow them, like an army.[5] So there is none of these vices which, if it has taken possession of the mind, does not often drag it into many mortal sins as well, or into the danger of them; and then the vice itself becomes mortal through this wretched begetting of offspring. Disordered love of having produces perjuries, thefts, usuries and simonies: see what wretched daughters!

Use this knowledge of the seven capital vices, then, first for examining your conscience and knowing yourself, so that you may plainly understand to which of them the corruption of your nature inclines. For there is hardly anyone who is not, through the weakness of our nature, more prone to some one of them; and sometimes indeed one passes from one to another by a wretched kind of linkage. Yet it will help very much to know which is the first root in the heart, from which the others spring. So, just as the commandments of God are to be used first, that God himself and his will may be known, so let us use these sins for knowing ourselves and our own wickedness. Those are to be followed; these are to be fled and avoided. In those you will learn when these sins are mortal and graver; in these, whence you have come to the transgression of those, that is, by what outlet and progress one has come to disobedience to God.

As for the tribunal of confession, use these also, so that you lay open not only your transgressions of the divine commandments (thefts, namely, perjuries, detractions, hatreds) but also make known from what root you committed them, whether from avarice, or rather from vainglory or envy. For these so increase one another that (for example) avarice, breaking out into those sins, is shown to be mortal; and those sins, done from avarice or envy, take on a

new malice. As for the pursuits of life: in the commandments you have what is to be done and from what one must abstain; in these sins, what you must fight against in yourself and what draws you to transgress the commandments.

On these things we have thought it not out of place to admonish readers in general. Now, to make them plainer, consider what follows in particular.

About pride, then, which the author puts first, notice first that blessed Gregory does not put it among the capital vices, but above them all, as their queen, that is, and beginning, the principle and source of all the others, according to what is written: *Pride is the beginning of all sin.*[6] Therefore Scripture and the Fathers judge it the most pernicious of all vices, and a mortal sin of its kind and by its own nature. Blessed Gregory set down those four modes or species of it which the author here enumerates.[7] If these are committed with full and entire consent, they are most grievous mortal sins, very like and very close to the sin of the angels who fell. Yet sometimes they steal into the mind so very subtly that the sin is scarcely detected. The doctors, however, grant that these movements very often occur without the full consent of reason, and must therefore be judged only venial. So when someone catches himself intent on considering the goods he has, whether natural or of grace, pleased with himself in them, preferring himself to others and despising them: if he detests this, drives it from himself and at once suppresses it, or even if such movements persist against his will, it is only venial pride, which is scarcely overcome entirely even by the most perfect. Yet one must take great care not to dwell on such thoughts knowingly, willingly and with full advertence. And when one has happened to dwell on them, it must not be thought a light matter; it must be blotted out by serious and weighty penance, made known in the tribunal of confession, and carefully guarded against afterwards.

Vainglory is put by Gregory as the first capital vice; the author not unfittingly joins it here to pride.[8] Of its own nature it is not mortal, unless it reaches the point of transgressing divine charity. This is well explained here: when someone glories in things that are against God, or puts glory before the divine commandments, or loves it more than God. Otherwise the mere desire of glory is venial.

As for the nine that he puts as daughters of pride and vainglory, namely presumption, obstinacy, hypocrisy, boasting, ingratitude, contempt of others, disobedience, ambition and curiosity: for the most part he has set them among the transgressions of the commandments, and from these it is easy to judge of them all.

The same is plain in every respect about avarice and its daughters. For avarice taken in general, as an immoderate love of money, whether of keeping it or of acquiring it, is not mortal unless injustice is added, or a transgression of God's commandments against charity.

About gluttony and lust, those carnal sins, the same must likewise be held. The former, gluttony, is more often found without mortal sin, although voluntary drunkenness is always mortal. The second, lust, is more rarely venial, as perhaps some excess between married persons; all the rest, when voluntary, are mortal, being against charity towards oneself and towards nature itself.

Envy, being by its own nature contrary to charity, is mortal; but it is certain that movements without the consent of reason, or about some very small thing, are only venial. How grave, then, are joy at another's evil and grief at his good (which are given as its branches), and detraction, discord, murmuring, hatred or injury (which are given as its daughters), is clear from the commandments.

Anger likewise is not mortal universally or by its nature, whether inward or outward, unless vengeance is unjustly desired. And the same must be held of its daughters as well.

Sloth the doctors judge mortal by its nature, for it is sadness about spiritual goods and weariness of doing good. But in it and in its modes one must carefully consider that these movements are very often found from mere weakness or the malice of the flesh, with reason resisting. These are in no way to be judged mortal, and this is to be weighed above all from the actual doing of the work. However much distaste for good work, then, or faintheartedness, wandering of mind, idleness, lack of restraint or omission there may be in the heart: if the things necessary for salvation are not omitted, and nothing is done against them, they are not to be judged mortal. Let these things, then, be said to you by way of example, so that at least about those in which you catch yourself slipping you may seek judgement either from the spiritual judge himself or from some other prudent person, and so learn what you are to hold as certain and what as doubtful.

End of the Additions.

[1] Psalm 111:3 (Vulgate; RSV 112:3), *Gloria et divitiae in domo eius*.

[2] Psalm 15:11 (Vulgate; RSV 16:11), *delectationes in dextera tua usque in finem*.

[3] Ecclesiastes 2:2 (*Risum reputavi errorem, et gaudio dixi: Quid frustra deciperis?*).

[4] Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Iob* 31.45.87–90: pride as queen and root, with seven principal vices beginning with vainglory. Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum*, Books 5–12, one book for each of the eight principal vices.

[5] Gregory, *Moralia* 31.45.87–88 (*duces … exercitus*: the principal vices as captains, followed by the army of the vices that spring from them).

[6] Ecclesiasticus 10:15 (Vulgate), *Initium omnis peccati superbia*.

[7] Gregory, *Moralia* 23.6.13: the four species of pride (thinking one has good from oneself; or from God but by one's own merits; boasting of what one has not; despising others and wishing to seem singular).

[8] In Gregory's list (*Moralia* 31.45.87) vainglory is the first of the seven principal vices, and pride stands above them as their root.

Remedies against Pride

A Method of Detesting Pride

Consider, O man, what you were at your birth, what you are at the present time, and what you will be in death. You were foul seed; now you are a sack of dung; you will be food for worms. If you consider carefully what comes out through the mouth and nostrils and the other passages of the body, you have never seen a viler dunghill than your own body.

Why is man proud, whose conception is guilt,
Whose birth is pain, whose life is toil, whose lot is death?
After man the worm, after the worm stench and horror:
So every man is turned into no man.

Bernard: Consider, O man, whence you come, and blush; where you are, and groan; whither you go, and tremble. Why then are you proud, *earth and ashes*?[1] When God did not spare the angels who grew proud, do you think that you, rottenness and a worm, will be proud unpunished? They did nothing, they wrought nothing; they only thought pride, and *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*,[2] they fell beyond repair and were cast headlong from heaven. *Pride is the beginning of all sin*:[3] it so swiftly darkened with eternal gloom even Lucifer, who shone more brightly than the stars; it changed not merely an angel, but the first of the angels, into a devil. If it went so with the angels, what will become of you, earth and ash? They grew proud in heaven; you on a dunghill. Who would not reckon pride more bearable in a rich man than in a poor one? If punishment fell so harshly on those heavenly angels because their heart had been lifted up, how heavy will be the penalties exacted of you, who are both wretched and proud? Be sure that he who did not spare the proud angels will not spare proud men either. He is not contrary to himself; *he is no respecter of persons*;[4] his judgements are alike; humility alone pleases him, whether in angel or in man.

[1] Ecclesiasticus 10:9 (*Quid superbit terra et cinis?*).

[2] 1 Corinthians 15:52 (*in momento, in ictu oculi*).

[3] Ecclesiasticus 10:15 (Vulgate).

[4] Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11.

Consider the singular humility of the Lord your God, Jesus Christ, who for you *emptied himself, becoming obedient* to the Father *unto death*, and that the most shameful, *even the death of the cross*.[5] Augustine: The remedy of elation is the contemplation of the Lord's Cross. And however much you humble yourself (says Bernard), you will not be humbler than CHRIST, who *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*,[6] and who willed to be the least of men on earth, though in heaven he is the glory of the blessed and the Lord of angels. Of whom Luke says: *And he was subject to them.*[7] Who? To whom? God, indeed, to men; the master to his disciples; the wisdom of God the Father to a carpenter and a woman. God, I say, co-highest with God the Father, to whom the angels are subject, whom principalities and powers obey, was subject to Mary; and not only to Mary, but also to Joseph for Mary's sake. That God should obey a woman: O humility without example! Learn then, O man, to obey; learn, earth, to be subject; learn, dust, to submit. Learn humility, O Christian, from Christ your Lord and God, who is *meek and humble of heart*,[8] who for you came down even to the earth, nay even to hell.

[5] Philippians 2:7–8.

[6] Matthew 20:28.

[7] Luke 2:51.

[8] Matthew 11:29.

Blush to be proud, most vile creature, whose most glorious Creator was so humble. God came down from heaven to earth, humbling himself: will you climb proudly from the dunghill above your God?

God is humble: will you be proud, worthless little man? The head humble, and shall the member be proud? God humbles himself, and do you exalt yourself? God subjects himself to men, and do you, eager to lord it over men, put yourself before your Maker? For as often as you desire to be over men, so often do you strive to go before your God. If, O man, you disdain to imitate the example of a man, surely it will not be beneath you to follow GOD your Creator, who appeared in the flesh not only to redeem us by his Passion, but also to teach us by his manner of life. Giving an example to those who follow him, he would not be made king; he fled the glory of high place when it was offered; he charged his disciples to tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God;[9] and at last he sought the penalty of a shameful death, so that his members might learn to flee the favours of the world, not to fear its terrors at all, to love adversity for the truth's sake, and to turn aside from prosperity in fear of it. For what cause was there, or what necessity, that the Lord of majesty should empty himself, humble himself, make himself small, unless that we Christians should do likewise? For every action of Christ was our instruction.

[9] John 6:15 (he fled when they would make him king); Matthew 16:20.

Augustine: The Christian bears a likeness to the name of Christ; he ought also to have a likeness of conduct. Therefore no one is rightly called a Christian unless he is made equal to Christ in conduct. The same: That man takes the name of Christian in vain who does not imitate Christ at all. For what does it profit to be called what you are not, and to usurp a name that is not yours? But if it delights you to be a Christian, do the things that are Christ's, and then rightly take for yourself the name of Christian. But perhaps you desire not to be, but to be called: this is wretched and shameful enough, that you wish to be called what you are not.

Consider that Mary, and all the holy men and women, pleased God above all by humility, and were exalted from earth to heaven because they humbled themselves; just as, conversely, the demons, who wished to exalt themselves, were thrust down from heaven to hell and the bowels of the earth. Augustine: Humility makes men like the holy angels; but pride made demons out of angels. Bernard: Pride casts down from the heights and the heavens to the depths; humility raises from the depths to the heights. The angel in heaven fell to hell; man in the world ascends to heaven. Augustine: The proud devil led proud man to death; the humble Christ led obedient man back to life. For as the one cast down him who consented, so the other, humbled, rose again, and raised up him who believes.

Consider that you have nothing which you have not received from God; *and if you have received it, why do you glory*,[10] above all in fleeting and perishable things that are easily lost? For these greater thanks are owed to GOD the more excellent the gifts you have received from him; otherwise you will be condemned all the more.

[10] 1 Corinthians 4:7.

Consider that temporal goods, fleeting and perishable, give you no occasion for pride. For they have been given you by God either to call you to a better life, so that, while you receive something present from God who promises many goods, you may be called to hope for things eternal and invisible; or they have been given you to heap up your eternal damnation, so that, since you are wicked and *receive good things in your life*,[11] and are not turned to God by them, you may be the more condemned on their account.

[11] Luke 16:25.

Consider that perhaps you will be damned, while he whom you despise, and over whom you are proud, will be saved; and that perhaps he has some hidden virtue which you lack, for which he is worthier than you and dearer to God. Wait a little, and death will come, which will make him your equal, which will level him with you. For all are born unequal, by the condition of their birth; but all die equal, by the necessity of death; except that after death those who were greater in the present life, and received more temporal goods, will render account for more.

Chrysostom: Look now at the tombs of the proud, and see whether there is any trace of their boasting in them, whether you can recognise any signs of riches or luxury. Ask now where are the foreign garments and ornaments, where the pleasure of shows, where the crowds of hangers-on. The abundance of banquets is gone; laughter, jesting and unbridled, unrestrained mirth, where have they gone? Where have they withdrawn? Where are those things now, and where are the men themselves? What is the end of both? Look more closely, and come nearer to the tombs of each: see only ashes and rotting flesh and the leavings of worms; and remember that this is the end of bodies, even if they spent their life in delights and gladness, even without labour or restraint. And would that our whole affair and our whole case went no further than ashes and worms! These losses would seem small, and such as the condition of nature could easily excuse. But now turn your eyes from these ashes and tombs, and call your thought back to that dreadful tribunal of divine judgement, where there is *weeping and gnashing of teeth*, where the *outer darkness* is, where that *worm* of conscience is *which never dies*, and the *fire which is never quenched*.[12]

[12] Matthew 8:12; Mark 9:43–47 (Isaiah 66:24).

Augustine: You boast of flourishing riches and the nobility of your ancestors; you exult in your country, the beauty of your body, and the honours paid you by men. Look at yourself: you are mortal; you are earth, and to earth you will go. Look round at those who shone before you with like splendours. Where are those who canvassed for power over their fellow citizens? Where are the unconquerable emperors? Where are those who ordered assemblies and festivals? Where are the splendid riders of horses? Where are the captains of armies? Where are the tyrannical satraps? Now all is dust, now all is ashes; now the memory of their life is in a few lines. Look at the tombs, and see who is servant, who master, who poor, who rich. Tell apart, if you can, the prisoner from the king, the strong from the weak, the fair from the misshapen. Be mindful then, lest you be lifted up at any time; and you will be mindful if you look at yourself.

Consider now how frivolous, how perishable, how vain, how counterfeit worldly glory is: lightly it flies, lightly it enters, lightly it passes; yet it inflicts no light wound, but quickly kills, and is changed from temporal glory into eternal confusion.

Whoever you are who burn so greatly with the desire of honours, consider first by whom these honours are paid you. Either from fear, by those who fear you; and for that very reason you in turn must fear them and be on your guard against them. Or in hope of some advantage that they hope to obtain from you; and so they mock you, for they do not pay you those honours from the heart. Or from ignorance, because to them there is no difference between honourable and dishonourable, and so they admire things of no worth and deserving no honour; and so you are to be pitied rather than admired.

Secondly, consider for what these honours are paid you. Either for indifferent things, such as beauty, wealth, strength, birth and the like; and because these come from nature, we are neither praised nor blamed for them. Or you are praised by base men for base things, which is a great disgrace, not an honour.

Thirdly, consider to whom these honours are paid: to you, either unworthy or worthy. If you are unworthy of these honours, and men falsely suppose you adorned with the gifts to which honour is due, by that very fact you have no matter for pride, but rather for thinking humbly of yourself and taking care to become what they think you are. If you are worthy to be praised, refer your honours to God, to whom you owe also the things for which honour is given you. It no more befits you to claim honour for yourself than to claim virtue, which *is from above, coming down from the Father of lights*.[13] Whatever favour you catch at here, and do not refer to God, you steal from him. And what is more wicked than a servant who usurps for himself his master's glory? Whence comes glory to you, rotten dust and useless worm?

[13] James 1:17.

Consider how foolish it is for you to measure your worth by the opinion of little men, who have it in their hand, as soon as they please, to take away again the very honour they bestow, and to dishonour you, whom they have just honoured. If you set your glory on their lips, you will be now great, now small, now nothing, as it pleases the tongues of flatterers either to blame or to praise you. It is foolish to store your treasure where you cannot take it back when you wish, but must begin to beg it from those to whom you entrusted it for keeping. So lay up your glory, the most precious treasure of your soul, rather with God himself for safe keeping, who is *able to keep that which is committed* against the time,[14] who is careful in guarding and faithful in restoring. If you despise human glory, your glory with God will be safe: he will keep it for you while you live, and restore it to you when you are dead.

[14] 2 Timothy 1:12 (*potens est depositum meum servare in illum diem*).

Consider that worldly honours are common to the worst and most wicked men; indeed that they fall to none more plentifully than to the most unworthy. So think that honour alone to be honour which proceeds from true virtue; and even that one must sometimes flee, as Christ taught us by word and example. The one honour a Christian should seek is to be praised not by men but by God. *For not he whom man commends is approved, but he whom God commends.*[15]

[15] 2 Corinthians 10:18.

Whoever you are who aim to be over others, who seek *the first places at table*,[16] who canvass for the heights of ecclesiastical rank, which are to be dreaded even by angelic shoulders, consider how passing are the things you seek, how eternal the things you lose. For what does it profit to reign over the earth for a few days, and to be deprived of the eternal kingdom of heaven? How will you be able to be over others, who have not learned to be under yourself? To rule others, who do not know how to rule yourself? And if it is through your fault that a single one of those committed to your care is not saved, how will you be able to be saved? How will you render account for others, who can scarcely render it for yourself? With what countless sins you load yourself, adding sins to sins; and to these are added also the sins of your subjects, which overflow upon your head. Hence *a most severe judgement* will be for those who are over others. *For the mighty shall be mightily tormented;*[17] and at their hands GOD will require the sins of their subjects.[18]

[16] Matthew 23:6.

[17] Wisdom 6:6–7 (Vulgate 6:6–7: *iudicium durissimum his qui praesunt fiet … potentes autem potenter tormenta patientur*).

[18] Ezekiel 3:18, 20; 33:6, 8 (*sanguinem eius de manu tua requiram*).

Consider that those who strive to rise above their neighbours meet many difficulties, have many rivals, many plotters against them, many who oppose them. But nothing is easier, for one who wills it, than to humble himself. Hence a certain king, when the royal crown was handed to him, held it long in his hands and looked at it before he set it on his head, and said: O crown more noble than happy! If anyone knew thoroughly with how many cares, dangers and miseries it is filled, he would not even pick it up if it lay on the ground.[19]

[19] Valerius Maximus, *Facta et dicta memorabilia* 7.2 ext. 5, where a king says this of his diadem (*O nobilem magis quam felicem pannum!*).

Consider, proud man, that you please no one at all. Not God, whom you have as your adversary, for he *resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble*.[20] O what an evil it is, that has God for its adversary! Not the humble, for the lovers of humility shudder at your pride. Not other proud men like you, who envy you for the very reason that you exalt and lift yourself up, fearing lest you seem happier than they in anything. Not even yourself, in the end, will you please: neither in this world, when you come back to yourself and recognise your worthlessness, and find nothing whatever in yourself in which you can in any way glory; nor in the world to come, when for your pride you will burn for ever. Bernard: O man (says God), if you saw yourself, you would displease yourself and please me; but because you do not see yourself, you please yourself and displease me. The day will come when you will please neither yourself nor me: not me, because you have sinned; not yourself, because you will burn for ever. Your pride pleases the devil alone, who is exceedingly proud: who from a most beautiful angel was changed through pride into a most foul demon, and in like manner tries to make you like himself.

[20] James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5 (Proverbs 3:34).

Consider your sins, for which you have deserved every kind of punishment, and are not worthy of the bread you eat. But you will say: I have confessed my sins. You speak truly; but how do you know whether you were truly contrite? Whether you are *worthy of hatred or of love?*[21] *Who knows whether God will turn and forgive, and leave a blessing behind him?*[22]

[21] Ecclesiastes 9:1 (*nescit homo utrum amore an odio dignus sit*).

[22] Joel 2:14.

Consider that you do not know certainly and evidently whether in the whole time of your life you have done a meritorious work. For vices often wear the appearance of virtue; vainglory often spoils a whole work that would otherwise be good and meritorious; our justice, brought to the test of divine justice, is often injustice;[23] and what shines in the eyes of the doer is often foul in the sight of the strict Judge. For the judgements of men are one thing, the judgements of God another; and to him a humble sinner is more pleasing than a proud just man.

[23] Compare Isaiah 64:6 (*quasi pannus menstruatae universae iustitiae nostrae*).

Consider that perhaps you have done more evil than good; and if you have done any good, it was mixed with so much lack of devotion that you can by no means glory in it. For hardly anything that

we have done praiseworthily is without some sin, if we are judged with mercy set aside. Gregory: Woe to the praiseworthy life of men, if it be judged with mercy set aside; for it is overwhelmed by the very thing in which it supposes it pleases before the eyes of the Judge. For our evils are pure evils, made grave by many circumstances and deserving grave punishments; but our goods are not pure goods, but are mixed with many impurities.

Consider that it is God who works in you or with you that you may do good works; who *gives you both to will and to accomplish*;[24] without whom you cannot even *think* any good thing;[25] without whom you can neither rise to good nor stand in good; by whose power you must be held, since by his hand you have been raised up; and according to whose grace, given you or freely offered, you have worked negligently and not faithfully enough. Therefore you must ascribe the glory of those works not to yourself but to God; lest, when you have received temporal glory here as your wage, you lose with your works, in the world to come, the eternal glory that you would otherwise have had by reason of those good works. For no one can have both the temporal glory of the present age and the eternal glory of the age to come, and be glorious both on earth and in heaven together. For what eternal reward do you hope to have in heaven, who have chosen to receive a temporal reward in the world? You preferred that worldly glory be paid you by men, and now you have lost the heavenly and eternal glory that God would have paid you.

[24] Philippians 2:13.

[25] 2 Corinthians 3:5.

Gregory: When passing praise is sought for a right work, a thing worthy of eternal reward is sold for a cheap price. Of which price, once received, the Truth says: *Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.* Moreover, you often think a work good which is evil; or greater than it is; or meritorious when it is not; or of greater merit before God than it is. For the malice of our enemy cloaks itself with such art that it often makes faults look like virtues before the eyes of the deceived mind;[26] and so one expects as it were rewards where he deserves to find eternal torments. For often *that which is high to men is an abomination before GOD*.[27] So if you consider carefully, you ought rather to fear on account of all your works than to glory in them, according to that saying of Job: *I feared all my works, knowing that thou didst not spare the offender.*[28]

[26] Compare Gregory, *Regula pastoralis* 2.9 (*vitia virtutes se esse mentiuntur*).

[27] Luke 16:15.

[28] Job 9:28.

A Method of Avoiding Pride

Because pride is born in you from ignorance of yourself, when your thought, itself deceived and a deceiver, lies to you that you are better or happier than you are; and in your own eyes you are greater than you are before God, greater than you are in truth: therefore you cannot meet rising pride more truly or more usefully than if you know yourself in the truth, than if you find yourself. Only examine yourself by the light of truth; look upon yourself without pretence and judge yourself without flattery, lest you lie to yourself about yourself, lest there be deceit in your spirit.[29] For how will you not be truly humbled in this true knowledge of yourself, when you perceive yourself laden with sins, weighed down by the bulk of this mortal body, entangled in earthly cares, infected with the dregs of carnal desires, caught in a thousand errors, exposed to a thousand dangers, trembling with a

thousand fears, anxious amid a thousand difficulties, liable to a thousand suspicions, worn by a thousand necessities, ready for evil, hard for good?

[29] Psalm 31:2 (*in spiritu eius non est dolus*); John 1:47.

There is no danger that you will humble yourself too much, that you will think of yourself too humbly, that you will reckon yourself less than you are—that is, less than the truth holds you to be. On the other hand it is a great evil, and a dreadful danger, if you lift yourself even a little above what is right, if even in your thought you prefer yourself to a single person whom the truth perhaps judges your equal, or even your superior. And if you see someone sinning openly, or someone committing grave deeds, you must not for that reason think yourself better, because you do not know how long you can stand in the good. We are all fragile: yet you will reckon no one more fragile than yourself.

Consider others' virtues more than their vices: for in that the fullness of humility consists. For although in some one thing a greater grace has been given you by God than to your neighbour, yet if you weigh it rightly you will be able to judge yourself inferior in many things. Why are you proud over your neighbour, if you can labour or fast more than he, when he surpasses you in patience, goes before you in humility, and excels you in charity? Be therefore more careful to know what you lack and what he has, than what you have and what he lacks: and this thought will keep you in humility and kindle in you the desire to advance. But if you reckon with yourself what you seem to have that another lacks, you will raise yourself in pride, while you set yourself before him: hence you will neglect to advance, while you think yourself great and excellent. Hence you will begin to fail, while by comparison with another you seem to yourself to have done even too much: and so you will fall into lukewarmness, and begin to act more remissly than usual.

But if by a wise and not a rash judgement you recognise that you have some gift beyond the rest: then think of it only when for that cause you wish to give thanks to the Lord your God and to acknowledge yourself his debtor; or when, for the grace of consolation in God, that you may hope for greater things from him, you wish by the consideration of that gift to drive away a sadness that threatens from another cause.

When you have done some good work, believe better things of others, that you may be humbled and be able to keep humility.

If for some good work you feel your mind within raised beyond measure by a certain secret pleasure: then you must take great care lest *philautia* (that is, self-love and complacency) contaminate in any way a good work done for the glory of God, or lest empty glory, the pest of all good counsels, corrupt it. But, claiming nothing for your own merits, you will ascribe the whole of it to the free [beneficence] of God, and at once restrain yourself with the words of Paul: *What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*[30]

[30] 1 Corinthians 4:7.

But if you wish to glory in that good work, glory in the Lord: that is, ascribing that whole good work to God, for the sake of that work you will desire to please God alone, who alone is the judge of conscience: and to please whom is the only true and highest glory.

Whatever in you is great, whatever beautiful, whatever excellent, reckon it God's gift, not your own good. On the contrary, whatever is lowly, whatever sordid, whatever small in you, refer that entirely

to yourself alone.

Hide as best you can the good works that are done rarely and by few: so that *your left hand may not know what your right hand does*.[31] For it is easy to seek empty glory for those things that are done openly.

[31] Matthew 6:3.

When you feel your mind rising into pride, at once turn your own evils into a remedy, as if driving out poison with poison: if you set before the eyes of your mind some great fault of body or soul that fiercely gnaws your conscience, and, after the example of the peacock, contemplate yourself in that part of yourself in which you are most deformed.

Do not estimate yourself by others' praise, but by your own conscience. If you hear yourself praised, ask yourself whether you are such as others proclaim. And if your mind answers that you are far other than they make you, believe yourself more, to whom you are better known than to others. And if you acknowledge that you are such, nevertheless, as far as in you lies, take care to drive from yourself with the shield of truth the dart of favour, giving glory to God and saying: *By the grace of God I am what I am*.[32] Prove your own work: and so you will have glory in yourself, and not in another.[33]

[32] 1 Corinthians 15:10.

[33] Galatians 6:4 (*opus autem suum probet unusquisque, et sic in semetipso tantum gloriam habebit, et non in altero*).

Against blind pride, think humbly of yourself; against vain glory, do not consent to those who think otherwise.

It is more just and safer to choose the lowest place, from which afterwards you may be brought up with honour, than to seek the first seats, from which you must soon withdraw with a blush.[34] The greater you are, the more submissively bear yourself. For it is no great thing to be humble in lowliness. Humility in honour is a virtue altogether great and rare. So if you are outstanding, still be of the flock: if you are over all, do not disdain to be under: remember that your subjects are men, not cattle. That they are subject to you has not come about by your merits: but that they are men, in this they are by nature your equals. Humility in honour is the honour of honour itself, and the dignity of dignity. Every dignity is unworthy of the very name of dignity if it disdains lowly things.

[34] Luke 14:8–10.

If you seek the virtue of humility, do not refuse the way of humiliation: if you will not suffer to be humbled, you cannot be advanced to humility.

For although there are many who have been humbled who are not humble, yet humiliation is the way to humility: as patience is to peace, and reading to knowledge.

Acquiesce in God, and let your will be subject to the truth. And do not think yourself truly subject to your Creator—to whom you owe all that you are and all that you have, who both made you and did you good—unless for his sake you are also subject to a human creature, to superiors (I mean) and prelates.

But if you wish to be perfect in justice: go to the younger, and defer honour to the inferior, and bow yourself to the younger.[35]

[35] Compare Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3.

Abhor your own counsel and the affection of your own will: acquiesce in the counsel of superiors and of the wiser, to whom the truly humble gives his willing and his unwilling.

Fill your heart with a threefold fear: that you may fear indeed for grace received; more for grace lost; far more for grace recovered. Fear when grace has smiled on you, lest you not work worthily from it. Fear when it has gone, because where grace fails, there you fail, your guardian leaving you. Fear if, once lost, it returns again, lest it happen that you suffer a relapse. You cannot at once fear in this way and be high-minded: you cannot [put away] pride when you are filled with the fear of the Lord.

Have patience in adversities. True humility is shown by patience under injury: as Christ taught us by his example, *who when he was reviled, did not revile: when he suffered, he threatened not*.[36]

[36] 1 Peter 2:23.

Do not despise, nor mock, the wretched. For that is a great proof of arrogant folly, especially when calamity deserves mercy, not insult.

You must take care that your dress is not too exquisite from vanity or curiosity, or too costly. For he who loves a garment too splendid cannot have humble thoughts: and no one seeks clothes beyond measure precious except for empty glory; for he does not put them on where he cannot be seen by men.

You must also take care that your dress is not cheaper and humbler than is fitting: lest in fleeing glory you seem to seek the same. For many desire to please in this very thing, that they neglect to please: and while praise is avoided, it is strangely sought. So be neither too luxurious in dress, nor too sordid, but of elegant neatness. The truly humble does not disdain lowly services as unworthy of himself: but gladly, for the keeping of his humility, he does not refuse to undertake lowly offices, who reckons himself vile in his own eyes.

Remedies against Avarice

A Method of Detesting Avarice

Consider, O avaricious man, and bottomless gulf of earthly goods, that your Lord and God, the fullness of all riches and an inexhaustible treasure, coming down from the unspeakable riches of heaven into this world, would not have these riches of whatever kind: but came in such poverty that he deigned to be born of the poor and most humble virgin Mary, not of a most wealthy queen; and being born, the King of kings and Lord of lords willed to be laid not in elaborate palaces and a soft bed, but in a lowly manger upon hay: wrapped only in as many swaddling-bands as the young maiden, unprepared for the birth, carried with her. And poor shepherds found the infant himself poor, with poor Mary his mother, in a poor place, not in a pompous palace. Moreover, as long as he was in this life, he always loved poverty and despised temporal riches, while he entrusted them, as most worthless things, to a most worthless keeper, Judas the traitor. To this is added that he always loved the poor. For he chose as his apostles not leaders, not magnates, not other wealthy men of any sort, but the poorest fishermen. O truly great abuse, and too great, that a vile little worm should wish to be rich, for whom the GOD of majesty and the Lord of hosts willed to become poor. Therefore whoever you are that for God's sake are poor voluntarily and gladly, or of necessity and patiently, look at poor Christ and poor Mary: and from your poverty you will receive consolation.

Consider how miserable is your abjection and pusillanimity: that for these temporal and fleeting goods you should lose your soul, created to the image and likeness of God, whose price the whole world cannot match, and for whose sake God made this wonderful fabric of the world. God would not give his own soul for the whole world, which he gave for the human soul. Greater therefore is the price of your soul, which could be redeemed only by the precious blood of Christ. What then have you to do with earthly riches and temporal glory, which are neither true nor yours? True riches are not wealth, but virtues, which conscience carries with it that it may be rich for ever. Take away the error of men: what will gold and silver be, but yellow earth and white? What all the philosophers of the Gentiles despised: will you, a disciple of poor Christ, and called to a far better condition, admire as something great, and serve them? For he (says Jerome) who is a servant of riches keeps them as a servant: but he who has shaken off the yoke of servitude distributes them as a Lord. For this is the difference between having riches and serving riches. If you know how to use them, they serve you: if you do not know how to use them, you serve them.

Consider that you cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon:[1] because a mind that gapes after the desires and lusts of this world cannot be free for the contemplation of God. For the eye cannot look at heaven and earth at once. Just so holy delight flees a mind preoccupied with temporal things: nor can true things be mixed with vain, eternal with fleeting, spiritual with bodily, highest with lowest: that you should at once savour the things that are above and the things that are on the earth.[2] Precious indeed is divine delight: and it is not given at all to those who admit what is alien. Do you think you can receive that Spirit of God unless you renounce these carnal delights? Whence, do you think, does the insatiable desire of your heart take its origin, if not from hunger and forgetfulness? For this reason your soul begs what is another's, because it has forgotten to eat its own bread: therefore it gapes after earthly things, because it meditates least on heavenly. Let your soul therefore refuse to be comforted in earthly things, if you wish to delight in the memory of GOD.

[1] Matthew 6:24; Luke 16:13.

[2] Colossians 3:1–2 (*quae sursum sunt sapite, non quae super terram*).

Consider that although the things which the world sometimes bestows on its lovers may seem great and honourable in the present age, yet who does not know that they are unfaithful? Certain is their brevity: and of that very brevity how uncertain the end? Often they desert the living: but they never follow the dying. O wicked age, which is wont so to bless its own friends alone as to make them enemies of GOD, and unworthy of the company of the blessed. For plainly *he who will be a friend of this world is constituted an enemy of God*.[3]

[3] James 4:4.

Consider that if in the abundance of earthly things the happiness you longed for has smiled on you, by that very fact you are the more unhappy, the more vehemently you embrace as happiness that very unhappiness. How much unhappiness (do you think) does this so vain happiness itself beget? For the insatiable love of riches torments the soul far more by desire (to say nothing for the moment of eternal punishments) than it refreshes it by use: inasmuch as it stings the soul, tears and afflicts it: for it leads it into various temptations, provokes it to sin, takes away charity, removes quiet. And besides the fact that riches are momentary: yet they are scarcely acquired without labour of mind and body, possessed without fear, or lost without pain. For scarcely ever are great riches prepared or kept without sin: and it often happens that a rich man is either the master or the heir of an unjust man.

But poverty neither burns its lovers inwardly by avarice, nor hurts them outwardly by dispute: but kindles them upward by desire, and makes them secure from the twin assault by which the lovers of this world are attacked: namely from their own envy and from another's. For while poverty is thought miserable, it is free from another's envy: and because it is voluntary, it envies no one anything.

Consider how absurd it is that the whole world should scarcely suffice for your heart so small, when that heart would scarcely suffice for the feeding of a single kite. How foolish too, and of extreme madness, always to desire things which, multiplied, never satisfy, and do not even lessen the appetite: nay rather increase the thirst of avarice, as drink does for the dropsical. And while you have any such things: nonetheless you covet what you have not, and always restless pant after what is lacking. So it comes about that your wandering mind, running about with empty labour among the various and deceitful delights of the world, is wearied and not satisfied: while whatever the hungry man has swallowed he reckons little beside what remains to be devoured: and he always desires no less anxiously what is lacking than he gladly possesses what is at hand: nor is he satisfied with gold sooner than the body with air. Augustine: What is this greed of concupiscence, when even the beasts themselves have a measure? For they seize when they hunger: but they spare the prey when they have felt satiety. Insatiable is the avarice of the rich alone: it always seizes, and is never satisfied. What is that madness of souls: to lose life, to desire death: to acquire gold, and to lose heaven?

Consider that where there are many riches, there are also many who spend them, both of those who consume and of those who subtract. Nor has even the richest man anything in this world beyond his food: which you likewise have, and about which you need not be much concerned, if only you cast your thought upon the Lord and commit yourself wholly to his care: who does not forsake those who hope in him.[4] For he who so made man that he needs food will not suffer him to perish by the withdrawal of necessaries. When the goodness of God kindly both feeds and clothes the little sparrows: will it forsake a pious man who trusts in it? Of course not.[5] Besides, few things suffice for necessity: life is short: death hastens; what need have you of so great a provision for the journey? What need have you of such great riches? With which, the less you are burdened, the more readily you will finish this pilgrimage of yours. When you have reached its goal, it will go no worse with you than with the richer, who had brought with them more provision for finishing the same road: except that either nothing or very little will be left you to leave behind at the very end of the pilgrimage. But for them the wealthiest treasures, heaped up in vain for so short a journey, will have to be left at the goal of the journey not without great anguish of mind.

[4] Psalm 54:23 (*iacta super Dominum curam tuam*); compare 1 Peter 5:7.

[5] Matthew 6:26; Luke 12:24.

Consider, O avaricious man, for whom you prepare so great a heap of money, for whom you pile up such wealth: although you have laboured as much as you like for accumulating goods, yet just as you came naked into the world, so naked you will depart from the world.[6] Destitute you were born into this life: destitute you will depart from this life. If you believe the goods of this world are perishable: why do you embrace [perishable things] with so great a love? He easily despises all things who always thinks that he is about to die. In the moment of death you will leave all temporal goods, and will carry with you to the judgement of the strict Judge only good and evil works: where you will lose all the spiritual goods done by you, if, holding them of little account, you have been wholly given in this life to temporal goods. Your things will then be divided into three parts: the body will be given to

worms, the soul to demons, temporal goods to heirs either ungrateful or prodigal. Therefore it would be better, according to the counsel of a certain holy man, by distributing superfluous and overflowing wealth to the poor, to send it on ahead into heaven, whither you wish to go, after the manner of the heroes of the Gentiles, who send on ahead their packs and baggage to the place where they are about to turn aside: rather than after your death leave as spoil to strangers things that will profit you nothing. O what folly, to leave your treasure there whence you are about to go out: and not to send it on ahead to the place whither you are about to go.

[6] Job 1:21; 1 Timothy 6:7.

Consider that God, the heavenly householder, distributing the ranks and offices of the servants of an earthly house, has appointed some to rule, but others to be ruled by others: he commands these to provide necessaries for the rest: but those to take what they have received from others. But when you have been set as steward of those things which beyond moderate use overflow for you: do you think it is allowed you with impunity to keep what you have received as another's, to be dispensed by the heavenly Lord? For (says Ambrose) the bread of the hungry is what you hold back: and the clothing of the naked what you shut away: and the ransom and absolution of the wretched is the money which you bury in the earth. Know therefore that you invade the goods of as many as you could help with what you are able.[7]

[7] Ambrose, *De Nabuthae* 7.37 (or the related passage in Gratian, Dist. 86); the substance matches the famous *panis esurientium* saying.

Consider what a sacrifice of mercy you render to God who gives you all things, if you do not feed him in his poor. For whatever you have done to one of the least of the poor, you have done to Christ: conversely, what you have not done to one, you have not done to Christ:[8] when you uselessly keep what could have benefited many.

[8] Matthew 25:40, 45.

Consider that the goods which have been given you by God in this world are consolations of calamity, not rewards of retribution. So take care lest, while all things are at hand for you as you wish, you neglect to seek the giver of them all: lest you fix your mind on the things that are given, lest you love the pilgrimage instead of the homeland, lest you turn the helps of the journey into obstacles to arrival: lest, delighted by the nocturnal light of the moon, you refuse to see the brightness of the daytime sun, and at last turn the favour of passing life into an occasion of perpetual death.

A Method of Avoiding Avarice

If riches are taken away, or do not come to you: do not be greatly tormented. For in the things that truly belong to a man, kings have no more than you, a poor man. You will live as they do (though not so sumptuously) until death: which perhaps today, or very soon, will come unexpectedly: at which time what will riches have profited, which then will not be needed?

Live content with your present condition, mindful that (as Jerome says) he is rich enough who does not lack bread: powerful enough who is not forced to serve. Besides, few things suffice for necessity: and our life is short: the more tightly you pass it, the more happily.

Having food and that with which you may be covered, be content with these: I do not say, with which you may be adorned. For a servant of God (says Chrysostom) ought not to have clothing for the

beauty of appearance, nor for softness or the delight of the flesh, but for the covering of nakedness.

Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all things necessary for your body shall be added unto you.[9] For God, who gladly wishes to give you heavenly and great things, will not deny you the least and earthly: from whom if you do not hope for the least, how will you be able to hope for the greatest?

[9] Matthew 6:33.

Poverty is not a virtue, but the love of poverty: by whose love the poor are conformed voluntarily and gladly to Christ, who left all things for us: and also the poor of necessity and patiently, who despise riches they do not have as if they had them, and by patience make necessary poverty voluntary. While the poor are conformed to Christ by poverty: the rich are reformed to Christ by almsgiving. For not only did poor shepherds find poor Christ with poor Mary in a poor place: but also rich kings: and that only through almsgiving and the offering of gifts. So whoever you are for whom means are at hand, you will gladly bestow alms on the poor for Christ's sake. For what you have done to them, you have done to Christ.

Reckon as yours alone, and reserved for you in heaven where you have your homeland, what you have bestowed on the poor. For if you have placed your treasure in this foreign land: there is nothing you may hope to receive in heaven, where you have nothing laid up. For those are not to be called a man's goods which he cannot carry with him, which he loses against his will. But spiritual goods are truly goods: which even in death do not desert the soul: nor can they be lost except by your willing it.

Beware of rashly squandering your means, lest you either be shamefully in want, or more shamefully make good what is lost. Rather so use what is yours that you need not another's: so reasonably hold your own that you do not covet another's.

The most effectual remedy for avarice is to leave all things to the poor, and to live under the holy rule and provision of a prelate, and to be in nothing of one's own right: as in the primitive Church the faithful were under the Apostles. But this is of counsel, not of precept.

Remedies against Lust

A Method of Detesting Lust

Consider the extreme vileness and corruption of those women who are loved carnally. Gregory: If beautiful flesh is coveted, let it be weighed what it is when lifeless, and it will be understood what is loved. Isidore: Nothing so avails to tame the desire of carnal appetites as that each one should weigh what that which he loves while living is like when dead. Chrysostom: But if you carefully consider what things are covered within that skin, what within the nostrils, what within the throat and belly, and if the things that seem fair to you were laid open: you will pronounce that beauty of the body to be nothing else than a whitened sepulchre, which outwardly indeed appears fair to men, but inwardly is full of filth and uncleanness. You, then, if on a garment you see phlegm or spittle, shudder, and refuse to touch it even with the tips of your fingers, and turn your gaze away: and how do you love and covet the very cellars and storehouses of phlegm?

Consider that the more you indulge in pleasures, and wish to fill your mind with them, the less you will be filled and satisfied. For this pleasure begets hunger, not satiety. And a woman's love for a man

is insatiable; always, when extinguished, it is kindled again, and after abundance it is again in want; it makes the manly spirit womanish, and except for the passion it sustains it allows no other thought.

Consider that the pleasure of fornication is brief, and the fornicator's punishment perpetual. Gregory: Momentary is what delights: but eternal is what torments. O how unjust an exchange—for the filthiest and briefest pleasure of a single little hour, to lose in this life a joy of mind far sweeter and more excellent, and in the life to come to be cheated of everlasting joys: and moreover to buy never-ending pains with so short a little delight.

Consider how unclean, how filthy, how unworthy of any human being is that pleasure which in unworthy ways profanes and pollutes the living temple of God—that is, the human body, which Christ consecrated to himself with his most precious blood.

Consider how the same pleasure is momentary, how insincere, how always having more of aloes than of honey, what evils it brings with it. First of all it snatches away reputation, that most precious treasure. For no vice has a worse name among men than lust. It enervates the body's strength, destroys a man's beauty; it grievously harms health, begets countless diseases, and those foul ones; it strips the flower of youth of its charm before its day, hastens untimely old age, and shortens a man's life. And therefore those who keep chastity are kept longer in life. For eunuchs live longer: but sparrows, because of excessive lust, live but little. Besides, it dulls and clouds the keenness and perspicacity of the mind. For since God has given man nothing more excellent than the mind: nothing is so hostile to this divine gift as pleasure. For when lust dominates there is no place for temperance: nor can virtue stand in the kingdom of pleasure. A man's reason too is swallowed up by venereal pleasures, the intellect grows foolish, and the senses are perverted, nor does he any longer perceive anything of the things that are of God: because blindness of mind takes away the knowledge of almost all spiritual things.

Consider that there is no inheritance so rich, no riches so overflowing, no revenue so great, no treasury so opulent, that luxury does not exhaust, squander, sink, and prodigally waste it. For the belly and the genitals are neighbours to each other: and one supplies the other: and from the neighbourhood of the members follows a confederation of vices: and according to the order of the members the order of vices is chosen. Therefore whoever is entangled in that impure love must of necessity squander and sink his whole substance on feastings, pompous garments, and little gifts to be sent to mistresses. Never are little harlots satisfied with handkerchiefs, rings, ribbons, perfumes, or other like little gifts. They love the little gifts themselves more than the lovers themselves, their givers. Of which thing that prodigal of the Gospel can be an example to us.[1]

[1] Luke 15:13–14 (the prodigal son who wasted his substance).

Consider how great a crowd of crimes the admitted pleasure of lust is wont to bring: which are wont to accompany it, as a shadow does the body. With other vices there is perhaps some association with certain virtues: but with lust none at all: rather it is always coupled with the greatest and most numerous sins.

Whoever you are that have thus far kept virginity unstained for your GOD, know that virginity excels marriage: and that virgins already in this life begin the angelic life, and by virginity are peculiarly made like to the holy angels. For to live in the flesh beyond the flesh is more angelic than human. The chaste man and the angel do indeed differ from each other, but in happiness, not in virtue: and if

the chastity of the one is happier, yet that of the other is known to be stronger. Virginity alone is what in this place and time of mortality represents a certain state of immortal glory: alone among the solemnities of marriage it claims the custom of that blessed region in which they neither marry nor are given in marriage:[2] offering in some way already on earth the experience of that heavenly converse: through which in heaven is given an aureole and a certain reward peculiar to virgins alone: of whom it is written, Apocalypse 14: *These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins: these follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*.[3] Virgins imitate Christ: because as he was a virgin, so they too keep virginity: and because in the present age they follow him before the rest, therefore in the future they will cling to him more familiarly, and with Christ forever before all the faithful they will rejoice even in the incorruption of the flesh: to whose rewards the other elect will not be able to rise: although through charity they will be glad in their height, will applaud them, and congratulate them.

[2] Matthew 22:30; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:35–36.

[3] Revelation 14:4.

Consider how honourable, how flowering, how pleasant, and how acceptable to God is the purity of body and mind: which makes a man very familiar to the holy angels, and capable of the Holy Spirit. For that Spirit of God, lover of purity, flees no vice so much as the uncleanness of lust: nowhere does he rest more gladly than in virgin minds. Whence the Son of God so loved and honoured virginity that he willed to be born not of a corrupted married woman, but of the immaculate virgin Mary.

Whoever you are conscious of sins of the flesh, at least after shipwreck fear the sea, and shudder at the known dangers of your perdition; and you who would not keep intact the goods of nature you had received, at least mend what is torn: and returning to the Lord after sins of the flesh, show yourself so much the more ardent in good works, the more damnable you see yourself from your sins. For it often happens (says Gregory) that a life burning with love after a fall is more pleasing to GOD than an innocence torpid in security. Therefore you who have been piously preserved after evils committed, do not commit that by wickedly repeating them you should die: and that the last error should be worse than the first.[4]

[4] Matthew 27:64 / 2 Peter 2:20 (*fiant novissima peiora prioribus*).

If you are a priest, consider how unworthy it is that you, sanctified to perpetual chastity, should with that same mouth kiss the putrid flesh of a little harlot with which you both consecrate and receive that most sacred body of Christ: with the same hands handle abominable filth with which, while angels stand by, you handle that virgin flesh of Christ. How absurd, in the reception of so great a sacrament, to wish to become the same body and the same spirit with God: and by fornication to become one body with a harlot.[5] Truly if you had right faith: you would either fear to sin, or cease to celebrate.

[5] 1 Corinthians 6:15–16.

A Method of Avoiding Lust

Because among all the contests of Christians, the battles of chastity alone are hard: where the fight is daily, and victory rare: and the ancient enemy knows that the contest of continence is greater than that of money: for what sticks outwardly is easily cast off: but an intestine war is more dangerous: and a familiar enemy is harder to avoid—that is, carnal concupiscence, which dwells not far off, but near: not without, but within: for *his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly*:[6]

therefore to tame and restrain this carnal concupiscence you need the greatest diligence. And although the enemy can stir up in you the motion of temptation: yet it is in you to give or refuse consent; it is in you whether you wish to be conquered or not. In this fight you will not be cast down unwilling. Your appetite is under you (O man), and you shall have dominion over it:[7] it is in your power (if you will) to make your enemy your servant, that all things may work together for you unto good:[8] only do not consent. As often as you resist, so often will you be crowned.

[6] Job 40:11 (Vulg.; of Behemoth: *fortitudo eius in lumbis eius et virtus illius in umbilico ventris eius*)

[7] Genesis 4:7 (*sub te erit appetitus eius, et tu dominaberis illius*), applied here to one's own appetite.

[8] Romans 8:28.

First of all, resist manfully the beginnings of temptations. For fault is not permitted to go forth to the deed if it is extinguished within where it is born; but if it is not resisted manfully at the beginning, temptation at once grows strong and is fortified: and often so much that it can never be extinguished, or at least only with great difficulty: because (as Gregory says) from the moment lust has once occupied someone's mind, it scarcely allows him to think good things. Therefore the beginnings of temptations must be resisted manfully, by driving out base and venereal thoughts: because as wood feeds fire, so thoughts feed desires: which if they are good, the fire of charity blazes up: but if evil, the fire of cupidity. Therefore one who is tempted ought in the time of temptation to call upon God, and the intercessions of the saints, and to say devoutly: *Father of heaven, God, have mercy on us*, etc., or other like prayers.

Diligently guard all the senses of the body, and especially sight and hearing, from vanities, and from the sight or hearing of women. For often any thing whatever is looked upon with an innocent mind: but by the very looking the soul is pierced with the sword of concupiscence. Therefore since the vain looking upon women either inclines, or at least makes soft, the hearts of those who look, therefore according to the precept of Ecclesiasticus: *Look not round about thee in the ways of the city, nor wander thou in the streets thereof: turn away thy face from a woman dressed up, and gaze not upon another's beauty*.

Beware of remaining alone with a woman: Chrysostom: Then especially does the devil attack some: and he tempts more heavily when he has seen them alone and separated from others: because where a rebuker is not feared, the tempter approaches more easily. Jerome: Never sit alone with a woman alone in secret and without arbiters (that is, witnesses): because solitude persuades all evils. Nor trust in past chastity, as if you have lived chastely for a long time. For thence the elders burned in desire for Susanna: because they saw her often walking alone in her husband's orchard.[9]

[9] Daniel 13 (Susanna and the elders).

Flee the company of women: because their sight infects the hearts of the men who look, their hearing entices, their speech inflames, and their touch defiles; finally from the sole of the foot to the crown there is no place in women in which a snare is not set for catching the eyes of men.[10] Gregory: Let him who dedicates his body to continence not presume to dwell with women. For as long as heat lives in the body, let no one presume that the fire of concupiscence is utterly extinguished in him. Bernard: To be always with a woman, and not to know a woman—this I reckon greater than to raise the dead. Who therefore cannot do what is less: how shall I believe you in what is greater? Therefore in temptation of the flesh one must flee the place and the people that suggest the temptation.

[10] Compare Isaiah 1:6 (*a planta pedis usque ad verticem*); the "snare for the eyes" wording is a moral commonplace, not a direct quotation.

Likewise flee the gifts, letters, and greetings of women: because they are birdlime for holding carnal love, and a breath for kindling the ardour of lust already in part extinguished. But if you love a chaste and holy woman, whom you have seen living well: love her in mind, and do not frequent her with bodily affection, mindful that a woman cast the settler of paradise out of his possession.[11]

[11] Genesis 3 (Eve and the expulsion from paradise).

Occupy your heart in the divine scriptures, holy meditations, and good works of the body. Because to an idle mind (says Bernard) malignant spirits send evil thoughts: and if it rests from work, it does not rest from the delight of evil thoughts. Isidore: Always be doing some work, that the devil may always find you occupied: because unless he finds you occupied in some good works, he himself will occupy you in evil works, namely of cupidity or of evil love.

Never hear a dishonest word: or if you hear one, be angry. For what is gladly heard is easily done: and the ruined minds of men often with one light word try the gates of modesty. Beware lest a dishonest word flow from your mouth: because *evil communications corrupt good manners*.[12] And vain speech quickly pollutes the mind: and what is gladly said is more gladly done. The tongue unfolds a man's manners: and as the speech is shown, such is the mind approved, since *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*.[13]

[12] 1 Corinthians 15:33 (*corrumpunt mores bonos colloquia mala*).

[13] Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45.

Temper yourself from food and drink. For chastity cannot be safe except through abstinence: because when the belly is stretched with satiety, the stings of lust are stirred: and a belly seething with wine easily froths over into lust: and it is hard to put a bridle on flesh that feeds on flesh.

Flee every occasion. Augustine: Against the onset of lust take flight, if you wish to obtain the victory: and let it not be a shame to you to flee, if you desire to obtain the palm of chastity.

When the temptation of carnal pleasure creeps upon you: imagine in your heart that you have had that pleasure and are sated with it, and that the hour has passed. Because pleasure is as it were the dream of a night that is over, nay even more contemptible: because pleasure that has been committed makes the conscience sorrowful: but pleasure avoided makes it glad and secure.

In every temptation, but especially when you are solicited to lust, set before your eyes your guardian angel, and your accuser the demon, assiduous spectators and witnesses of all that you either do or think: and the Judge God himself, inspector of your crime, to whose eyes all things are open. And a thing so foul that you would be ashamed to do it in the presence of a little man—will you not fear to do it before your guardian angel, your accuser the demon, and your God the future Judge?

By the examples of others restrain yourself, whom you have known to have followed this pleasure basely and unhappily.

When by the impulse of demons the mind is driven to the delight of fornication, let the fear of the divine judgement, and the torments of eternal fire, be set before the eyes: because indeed every pain is overcome by the dread of a heavier punishment. For as nail drives out nail: so often the remembrance of the heat of gehenna shuts out the heat of lust.

Remedies against Envy

A Method of Detesting Envy

Consider that we are all natural brothers: for whom there was one father, Adam, one mother, Eve: spiritual brothers also, for whom there is one father, God: one mother, holy Church: one common brother of all, Jesus Christ the Son of God. Besides, we were created for the same end: namely that someday we may together possess the paternal inheritance (that is, the heavenly kingdom), together dwell there forever, rejoice together, congratulate one another, and that the goods of each may through the charity of all become the goods of all. But if we are brothers in the Lord, co-heirs in Christ, members of the same body (that is, of the Church), redeemed by the same blood, partners of a common faith, called to the same grace and happiness of the life to come: it is certainly fitting that brother should wish well to brother, pray well, do well: so far is it from right that he should rejoice in his adversities and grieve in his prosperities.

Consider that in heaven, the greater the happiness and glory in one's neighbour, the more would an envious man placed there be tormented and afflicted within himself over it: but because that happiness will be the greatest, therefore the pain over it in the envious man would be the greatest. For that reason he will not be set by God in heaven, but in hell, where there is no order, but everlasting horror dwells, and weeping and gnashing of teeth,[1] and every kind of calamity in one's neighbour, which he will not be able to envy in one remaining there with him: because he will be in the same damnation.

[1] Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 22:13, etc. Job 10:22 (*ubi nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat*) for the "no order / everlasting horror" clause.

Consider that the envious are like the demons, who are wont to be afflicted with grief at the good deeds of men, and to envy men the things above and heavenly: not that those things may pass to themselves which they have irreparably lost: but lest poor men raised from the dust should ascend thither whence they themselves have irreparably fallen. Not otherwise are the envious wont to envy virtue to others, not because they wish to set themselves to acquire it: but because they would have all be equally miserable as they themselves are, and in nothing happier.

Consider that if another did not have those goods which you envy him: nonetheless you would not have them: which if he has without your loss, there is nothing why you should be tormented over his happiness.

Consider that of all the good works of your neighbour you are a partaker, if only you are in grace: and the more he merits, the more he himself profits your soul. For that reason there is no cause why you should envy his virtue: but rather there is cause why you should congratulate him, nay rather yourself: who are a partaker of those good works.

Consider of how great unhappiness and misery it is, that while your neighbour is made better, you become worse: and while you look upon the increases of another's prosperity, you die within yourself anxious with the plague of your afflicted heart: and while the happiness you see afflicts you, your punishment makes you more wicked. But if you loved others' goods which you cannot have: those things which you loved in others would become yours as a lover's, and the works of another's labour, without your labour, you would make your own.

Consider that envy burns the heart, dries the body, continually solicits the mind: nor does it allow a man to be well, or to live pleasantly. For it is like a worm born of wood, which first begins to gnaw the wood from which it goes out. So envy, which is born from a man's heart, first afflicts and hurts the heart from which it is born. But after the rot of envy has corrupted the heart of the envious man, the livid face itself also shows how heavily the madness of envy has goaded his mind.

Nothing is more just than envy: because at once it hurts its very Author, and torments his own heart.

Consider how contrary it is to charity (which is God)[2] and to the common good (which God's bounty bestows commonly on all) to envy others their goods, and to hate those whom God created, redeemed with his blood, and loves, and of whom there is hope that they will come to eternal life: who [perhaps] will be saved, and you will be damned: with GOD they will rejoice forever in heaven, and you perhaps with the demons will be tormented forever in hell.

[2] 1 John 4:8, 16 (*Deus caritas est*).

A Method of Avoiding Envy

Embrace humility: flee the mother of envy, pride. For the proud man, who cannot bear not only a superior, but not even an equal, most easily envies those whom he has seen happier in some respect: fearing this, lest he should seem inferior to them.

Love or covet none of those things which the world has and loves: such as honours, riches, pleasures. Yet seek the heavenly inheritance and spiritual goods: which the number of co-heirs does not narrow: which are both one for all, and whole for each, which are shown to be so much the more abundant, the more the multitude of those who receive them is enlarged. But temporal things become so much the smaller for each, the more they have been divided among many: and therefore spite tortures the desiring mind: because what it longs for, another by receiving either takes away altogether, or lessens its quantity. For it is hard that a man should not envy another that which he longs to obtain.

When temptation will tickle your mind with envy, you will most conveniently conquer it by this means: if you ask God that it may be well with him whom the temptation was first soliciting you to envy, and if you resolve to show him the services of charity.

Hate no one at all: love your friends in God, and your enemies for God's sake: who first so loved you while you were still his enemy, that he laid down his soul to redeem you.[3] Whence also he says through himself: *Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you*.[4]

[3] Romans 5:8–10; compare John 15:13.

[4] Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27.

Do not hate a wicked man more than a faithful physician hates a sick man: be an enemy only to his vice. Gregory: To hate the enemies of God with a perfect hatred is both to love what they have been made, and to rebuke what they do: to press down the manners of the wicked: to profit their life.

What you do not wish to be done to you by another, see that you do not do it to another: but whatsoever you would that men should do to you, the same do you also to them.[5] By the former malice is checked: that by not doing to another the evil you do not wish to suffer, you may cease from the work of harming. By the latter kindness is commanded: that by bestowing on another the good you desire to be done to you by another, you may exercise yourself about your neighbour's benefit

out of kindness. But beware of thinking thus with yourself: What have I to do with this man? He is unknown, he is a stranger, he has never deserved well of me, he hurt me once, he never helped. Only remember by what desert Christ bestowed so great things on you, who willed that his beneficence toward you be repaid not in himself (for he needs not your goods) but in your neighbour. Only see what he lacks, and what you can do.

[5] Matthew 7:12; Tobit 4:16 (negative form)

In others' prosperities and adversities do not bear yourself otherwise than if they had befallen yourself. If prosperities have come to others just as if they had come to yourself, congratulate their happiness. If adversities: you will weep with those who weep:[6] mindful that the same can befall you that befalls them. For in one Church, as members in one body, they ought so to mourn together, and mutually to help one another: that whatever has befallen one has befallen all.

[6] Romans 12:15 (*flere cum flentibus*).

Briefly, this is the whole love of neighbour: that the good you wish conferred on yourself you should wish also for your neighbour: and the evil you do not wish inflicted on yourself you should not wish for your neighbour either: and that you should believe the advances of all to be your own: and that you should mercifully mourn over others' sins as over your own.

Remedies against Gluttony

A Method of Detesting Gluttony

Consider that through the sin of gluttony death entered into the whole human race.[1] Whence against it is your first battle, which you must conquer: and the less it has been overcome, the stronger the other vices are against you, and the weaker you are against them. Unless you first restrain gluttony, you will not be able to restrain the other vices: you must begin from gluttony if you wish to overcome the other vices: unless it is first bridled, labour against the other vices is in vain. For then the enemies that are outside us are more strongly overcome by us, when first the vices that are within us are extinguished. In vain does he wage war without, who has danger within. Whence also the devil first tempted our Saviour concerning gluttony, as beginning from the doorway of the other vices.[2]

[1] Compare Romans 5:12 (*per unum hominem peccatum in hunc mundum intravit, et per peccatum mors*); Genesis 3 (the forbidden fruit).

[2] Matthew 4:1–4; Luke 4:1–4 (the first temptation: stones to bread).

Consider Christ's singular abstinence, who coming into the desert fasted forty days and forty nights, eating nothing meanwhile: that by fasting he might waste the innocent flesh for us, and give the faithful an example of offering themselves to God by fasting.[3] Who indeed afterwards hungered. If he who gives food to every flesh, and through whom not even the birds of the heaven hunger, hungered for you while fasting: how much more ought you to fast for him? What sort of Christian are you, who, while Christ hungers, glut yourself? and while Christ for your salvation endures hunger, refuse to fast for your sins?

[3] Matthew 4:2; Luke 4:2.

Consider with how bitter a drink Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords,[4] was made to drink on the cross by the most cruel Jews: while because of excessive labour, and the outflow of the

blood poured out as the price of our souls, inwardly dried out, withered, and wholly scorched, he thirsted beyond measure. In which most vehement thirst the most cruel Jews offered to the Lord our God vinegar mixed with gall on a sponge set upon a reed.[5] O how bitter a cup, in what a vessel it was offered to him who gives the earth rain and makes it spring! If you would bring back to mind, O Christian, the vinegar mixed with gall offered to Christ, you would find savour in food and drink however mean: for the sake of Christ who was made to drink gall and vinegar, you would resist your sensuality. How do you take up your cross and follow Christ, when he was made to drink gall and vinegar on the cross for you: yet precious wines and magnificent arrays of dishes do not satisfy your gluttony? There is no food so dry (says Bernard) that it is not made savoury if it has been tempered with the seasoning of that vinegar which was offered.

[4] 1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16 (*Rex regum et Dominus dominantium*).

[5] Matthew 27:34, 48; John 19:28–30; Psalm 68:22 (Vulg.).

Consider that Christ allowed his apostles, whom he loved most tenderly, in his presence to pluck the ears of corn and rub them with their hands, and to be sustained with such fare after the manner of animals: although he could miraculously have created foods for them, or multiplied those already created: yet leaving us an example of abstinence, he willed to exercise them in abstinence, that by their example he might show us the pomp of the world to be despised, sumptuous and savoury fare to be avoided, and might bridle in us the voracity of gluttony and its insatiable appetite.[6]

[6] Matthew 12:1; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:1 (the disciples plucking ears of corn).

Consider the abstinence of many saints who, having gone forth into the desert, crucified their flesh for Christ's sake with its passions and desires.[7]

[7] Galatians 5:24 (*qui autem sunt Christi carnem crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis*).

Consider that many of the poor reckon bread and water as delicacies for themselves, and yet cannot have them even to satiety: and then you will see how kind toward you he has been who hungered for you and was made to drink vinegar mixed with gall: that he has added something for you beyond these.

Consider how unworthy and wicked it is that that same mouth with which you receive the most sacred body of Christ often, or at least once a year, should become an instrument of gluttony, detraction, blasphemy and many other sins: so that through the same doorway you sometimes introduce life, and far more often death: and with the same mouth daily devour pleasurable foods and the foulest excesses more greedily than you sometimes receive that most precious bread of the angels: and what was given you for blessing the Lord you turn into an instrument of wickedness and of every sin, and into an obstacle to reaching the fatherland what was given you for acquiring eternal glory.

Consider that the pleasure of the tongue has scarcely the breadth of two fingers: and for this so small a part, for so brief a delight, air, earth, and sea scarcely suffice. Hence the poor are stripped, and robberies are done, that the hunger of the poor may pass into the delicacies of so small a particle of one little man. How wretched, that a momentary little delight of so small a particle should shut out both soul and even the body itself from heavenly glory, and thrust them down into everlasting misery.

Consider that while you wish to save the body, and not to allow that it should want for anything, at that very time you thrust it down into extreme want and poverty: because you lead both it and its soul into everlasting damnation: where there is want and scarcity of all things, except of miseries. Truly you are a man of a greatly perverse judgment: who fatten with delicate foods the body which worms will soon devour in the tomb: but refuse to fatten your soul with good works, which will soon be presented to be judged at God's tribunal: which if you have not fattened here with the fruit of good works, however fat the belly may be, it will be sent into the gehenna of fire. The soul thus neglected, you will not even be able to save the body. For the soul was not made for the body, but the body for the soul. You who neglect what is first, and exalt what is later: you corrupt both, and slay yourself with your own sword. Because the flesh (which was given you for a help, that you might use it for every good work) you turn for yourself into ruin and a snare. But if you keep the order, and care for what is first, even if you neglect what is second, by the salvation of the first you will save the second also. Because if after your death your soul is blessed, in the final judgment your body joined to it again will rise glorious. But if your soul will be damned (which omen may GOD avert) your body, bound again by the unhappy bond to its most wretched soul, will be companion to it in penal torments: that those which here were companions in vices may there also be companions in torments.

Consider how quickly the delight of gluttony passes by, how briefly it lasts, and that when it is past it is as if it had never been: and it leaves behind it the traces of a gnawing conscience, of regret, of confusion, and the fear of the everlasting damnation due to it, and in death it leads the soul from temporary joys into everlasting pains and punishments. For brief is what delights, but eternal what torments: pleasure is little, but the punishment infinite. Just as, conversely, by resisting temptation the suffering is little, the glory perpetual. Gregory: Whence the flesh for a time lives sweetly, thence the spirit is tormented forever: and the more the flesh is punished in this life, the more it will rejoice in the life to come.

Consider that those who at this world's dinner have filled themselves with the husks of swine, and while journeying toward the fatherland have preferred the stable to the house, will never come to the heavenly banquet, but only those who at this world's dinner have abstained from pleasures and reserved themselves for the everlasting banquet.[8] For no one can both rejoice here with the world and there with Christ, enjoy present and future goods: so as to fill the belly here and the mind there: so as to pass from delicacies to delicacies. For he who has preferred temporal things will lack eternal ones: he who has set bodily things first will be deprived of spiritual ones: he who has preferred earthly things will not have heavenly ones. Whence Lazarus, who had received evil things in his life, was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. But that rich feaster, clad in purple, fat and sleek, who feasted sumptuously every day, dead and buried, was thrust down into hell.[9] For hunger and gluttony, pleasure and continence, do not have the same reward: because in death miseries are exchanged for delicacies, and delicacies for miseries.

[8] Luke 15:16 (the prodigal and the husks of swine); compare Luke 14:15–24 (the heavenly banquet).

[9] Luke 16:19–23 (Dives and Lazarus).

Consider how much better it is, by distributing superfluous foods and drinks to the poor, to keep them for yourself unto an everlasting recompense, than to fatten yourself with them for a short time unto the ruin of mind and body, and afterwards not only to lose them, but with them also body and

soul. You have feasted sumptuously in former years: what remains to you from so many delicacies of food? Nothing, of course, except perhaps that most hostile remorse of conscience. Truly, what you received—namely by excess—that you do not have: but what you did not receive, but distributed to the poor, that you have, and it is reserved for you in your heavenly fatherland.

Consider that in death corpses are so much the viler and more foul-smelling, the more delicately they were nourished in excesses and pleasures. For the flesh which is now fed with delicate foods will a little later be known to swarm with worms: and in the tomb it will be the more delightful food of worms, the more delightfully it was fattened here with abundance of dishes: and the more it now takes care to have the softness of sweeter foods prepared for itself, so much the heavier a stench will it, when putrefied, exhale. And that to such a degree, that those who (while it lived) held nothing more pleasing than its sight and company: when it is dead find nothing more foul, nothing viler, nothing more horrible: and shudder at its sight and company.

Consider that rich and delicate foods fight for the body, not for the spirit: by them the soul is not fattened, but the flesh: and they indeed excite the palate, but stir up lust. Ambrose: Hunger is a friend to virginity, an enemy to wantonness: but satiety squanders chastity and nourishes enticement.

Consider how many evils accompany gluttony. First of all, excessive, disordered, and too hurried eating harms nature and nourishes less: the more the belly is refreshed, the more the intellect of reason and the keenness of the mind are destroyed and blunted: because a fat belly does not beget a fine sense. It also diminishes the clearness of the eyes, begets many languors and diseases, and often hastens death upon a man. For gluttony kills more than the sword.

A Method of Avoiding Gluttony

Since while necessity seeks to have its due paid to it, pleasure lurking under it desires its own longing to be filled, and so much the more easily creeps upon men the more honourable the name of necessity under which it covers itself: therefore there is need of great caution and prudence to tame and restrain that voracity of pleasure, and to keep it under the dominion of reason. But if you wish that your flesh should serve your soul and reason, and be subject: see to it that your soul serve God, and that reason be subject to him. It is altogether necessary that the soul be ruled by God, that it may be able to rule the body. Since we have been so wonderfully fashioned by GOD that God should govern reason, reason the soul, the soul the body. But the body refuses to subject itself to the dominion of the soul, unless the soul has first subjected itself to the empire of reason, and reason has conformed itself to God.

When temptation will tickle your mind with gluttony, imagine in your mind that you have had that little delight of delicate food and drink, and are sated with it, and that the hour has passed: because the pleasure of palate, tongue, and throat is as it were the dream of a night that is over, nay even more contemptible and fouler: because that past pleasure leaves a grieving conscience: but when avoided, a glad and secure one. Moderate and temperate food is useful both to flesh and to soul.

It is much better to take a little every day than too much rarely. Sparing food, and a belly always hungering, is to be preferred to three-day fasts. For that rain is best which descends gently upon the lands: a sudden and excessive shower overturns the fields headlong.

When you eat, think that you must not obey the belly: but that you must at once apply yourself to study, to reading, or to accomplishing some other good work: for which you cannot stand with a loaded belly. Therefore in all foods and drinks you will consider not what pleasure, but what necessity requires.

Hunger is to be conquered only by measure. For they report that Galen lived a hundred and twenty years, because he never left the table full. Yet we do not require here that you destroy yourself with hunger: but that you not serve an implacable voracity beyond what the use of life demands. For the ass (that is, your body) needs fodder, lest it fail: and a burden (that is, exercise and abstinence), lest it grow wanton. Bernard: The flesh must be restrained, not extinguished: repressed, not oppressed: that it may serve, and not rage: that it may be a handmaid, and not a mistress.

Do not impose on yourself more fasting than you can bear. Let your fasts be pure, chaste, simple, moderate, and not superstitious.

Flee satiety of wine as much as hemlock: lest a belly seething with wine, in which is lust, reach even to the titillation of lust, and drive a youthful body of its own accord inclined to vehemence into madness.[10] But you will temper the heat of wine by mixing water with it.

[10] Ephesians 5:18 (*nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria*).

Be content with foods that are ready to hand and common. For what has a young man, whose stomach by nature is ready for digestion, to do with partridges, game, capons, and delicacies of that kind, which necessity itself reserves to be used by a stomach already sluggish and a half-dead body? For what hope will there be of fostering old age, if youth by intemperance has made distasteful those things which ought to refresh a languishing stomach?

Remedies against Wrath

A Method of Detesting Wrath

Consider that living creatures without reason dwell civilly and concordantly each in their own kind: elephants live in herds: swine and sheep feed in flocks: starlings and jackdaws fly in troops: by turns, with a certain just polity, cranes keep their watches: by mutual offices cranes, dolphins, and stags protect one another: known is the concordant polity of ants and bees among themselves. Even among the most savage beasts there is agreement. The fierceness of lions does not fight among themselves: the boar does not brandish his lightning tusk against the boar: there is peace between lynx and lynx: the dragon does not rage against the dragon: wolves among themselves live concordantly. Even the wicked spirits themselves, through whom the concord of the heavenly ones and of men was first broken, and is broken today, nevertheless have a compact among themselves, and by consent maintain that tyranny of theirs, such as it is. But men alone, whom unanimity most of all became, and for whom it was most necessary, quarrel among themselves with intestine hatreds. To whom irrational creatures, by agreeing with one another each in their own kind, show how great an evil rational creatures commit by discord, when these for the sake of reason lose that which those keep by natural impulse.

Consider that to the other living creatures, apart from man, nature has given an instrument of vengeance and of retaliation: to the horse a kick, to the stag a horn, to the boar a tusk, to the bee a

sting, to the bird a beak and claws, and finally it has even added a bite to the flea itself. But you I have brought forth unarmed and naked unto meekness and patience: that you might not have whereby to repel force with force. Consider therefore how contrary it is to your nature to avenge yourself on another, and to repel force with force, especially with weapons sought from elsewhere, when even the most cruel beasts and those born to cruelty avenge their injury only with their own weapons and those given them by nature. If you see a wild beast, you fear for yourself: if a man, you more often dread, nor have you peace even in yourself: finally you are not safe even from fleas. But a man (says Augustine) rails at you, and you swell and are angry: resist the fleas, if you can, that you may sleep.

Consider what, how great, and how often you have sinned against God. If you forgive the injury done to you to your neighbour, the doer of that injury: he himself will also forgive you your injury against him. There is no more convenient way by which after an offence you may be reconciled to God, than if you, being offended, be reconciled to your brother. Forgive a light fault to your neighbour (for light is whatever a man sins against a man) that GOD may forgive you so many thousands of faults. But it is hard, you say, to restrain an angry mind. Does it not come into your mind how much harder things our Lord GOD has borne for you? What were you when he laid down his precious soul for you? Were you not an enemy? With what kindness does he daily bear with you, repeating old sins? With what mercy, even when most heavily offended, does he receive you returning to him? Lastly, with what meekness did he bear insults, bonds, stripes, and finally a most shameful death? Gregory: If the passion of Christ is recalled to memory, there is nothing so hard that it may not be borne with an even mind. But my enemy, you say, is unworthy to be forgiven. Were *you* then worthy that God should forgive you? Do you wish God to exercise his mercy toward you, and toward your neighbour do you wish to exercise severe justice? A great thing it is for you, forsooth, if a sinner forgive a sinner: when our Lord God prayed the Father for his crucifiers.[1] Lastly, if your enemy is unworthy that a benefit should be repaid him for an injury: yet you are worthy to do it: and Christ himself is worthy, for whose sake it is done.

[1] Luke 23:34 (*Pater, dimitte illis*).

Consider that so long as you are at variance with your neighbour through anger you offer no sacrifice of a good work. For it is written: *If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath anything against thee: leave there thy gift before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift*.[2] From which precept consider how intolerable the fault of those is shown to be whose sacrifice is rejected. For since all evils are washed away by following goods: the evils of discord must needs be great, which unless they have been utterly extinguished do not permit a good work to follow.

[2] Matthew 5:23–24.

Consider that perhaps you have elsewhere far more heavily offended your neighbour, by whom you have been offended: and yet he has not avenged himself on you, but has patiently borne the injury done him. Therefore, because one ought to bear another's burdens:[3] you ought in turn to bear with him patiently. For there are no goods which we do, says Gregory, unless we bear with even mind the evils of our neighbours. Consider to whom you are an enemy, namely either to a just man or to an unjust. If to a just, it is certainly most wretched that you should be an enemy to him to whom God is a friend: that you should wish to hurt him to whom God wishes well. Besides, you are angry at a stone. For by your annoyance you do not move his bile, but you exercise his patience. If to an unjust:

it is no less wretched that, to avenge another's wickedness, you should become more wicked: and that while violently in your own cause as judge you try to punish another's injustice, you should admit a new iniquity. Further, what end at last will there be of mutual injuries, if each goes on to avenge his own injury? Enmities grow on both sides, the pain grows raw. For the inconvenience received is by no means taken away by vengeance, but is propagated: and your unjust enemy is often rendered more unjust and more wicked, and more hardened in evil. But by gentleness and patience even he who did the injury is sometimes healed, and returning to himself becomes from an enemy a most certain friend. But if even by this means you cannot soften his heart; yet you will certainly thus soften your own.

[3] Galatians 6:2 (*Alter alterius onera portate*).

Consider that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof:[4] and in this age so many and so great adversities occur, that however much you labour, you can scarcely enjoy peace in yourself. For that reason it is foolish to exasperate your mind, already restless enough of itself, with hatred and enmities. But if you wished to crush all whom you suffer as adversaries, others would rise up again, and you would succumb before you could crush them all. All of whom you will most conveniently overcome: if you do not render evil for evil, but rather conquer yourself by patience.

[4] Matthew 6:34 (*sufficit diei malitia sua*).

Consider that while you try to repel force with force, and not to allow yourself to seem conquered in any thing: then you are most conquered, while you yield to the affections of anger, and cannot govern your own mind: which if you could govern, you would be stronger than a taker of cities. For lesser indeed is the victory of cities: because those things which are subdued are without: but much greater is what is conquered by patience: because the mind itself is overcome by itself, subjects itself to itself, and compels itself to be bridled within, and overcomes the most cruel beast of anger shut up in itself.

Consider that if you will not bridle your affections and the passions of anger, fury will drive the mind whither desire will not draw it: and being stirred you will act as one not knowing, whence afterwards you will grieve knowing: and your sins, after they have been perpetrated, you will scarcely recognize: because to scarcely any angry man does his own anger seem unjust, but he commonly thinks the goad of his anger to be zeal for justice. But when vice is believed to be virtue, fault is heaped up without fear.

Consider that unless you withstand your perturbation, you will also pour away even those things which had been well done by you with a tranquil mind: and by a sudden impulse you will destroy whatever perhaps you had long constructed with provident labour.

Consider all the evils which are wont to come from anger: such as injuries, dissensions, blows, wounds, homicides, and the like.

Consider that it is not unworthy that you, a Christian, an imitator of Christ, should be affected by the laughter or mockery of others: since you also know that our Lord God has been mocked by such men: but you ought rather to exult and rejoice, if you also bear all those things which our Lord also beforehand bore for your sake, about to receive a reward for that very mockery. For there is nothing that is inflicted on us for Christ's name without a prize. See therefore how blessed and happy Christians are: for whom even the laughter of the foolish profits unto salvation. So the Lord loves those who love him, so he honours those who fear him, that he does not even suffer them to be

mocked for nothing, to whom for mockery also he will repay vengeance: and he says to them: *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay*.[5]

[5] Romans 12:19; Deuteronomy 32:35 (*Mihi vindicta, et ego retribuam*).

Whoever you are that bear adversities and the scourges of God more impatiently than is right, consider that unless God disposed to give an inheritance to those corrected by him through tribulations: he would not care to instruct them through tribulations: hence the Lord says to John through the angel: *I, whom I love, I rebuke and chastise*.[6] Hence again it is written: *My son, neglect not the discipline of the Lord: neither be thou wearied when thou art rebuked by him. For whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth: and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth*.[7] Hence the Psalmist says: *Many are the tribulations of the just: and out of all these the Lord will deliver them*.[8]

[6] Revelation 3:19 (*Ego quos amo arguo et castigo*).

[7] Hebrews 12:5–6 (citing Proverbs 3:11–12).

[8] Psalm 33:20 (Vulg.; Heb. 34:19) (*Multae tribulationes justorum*).

Consider that for the receiving of earthly inheritances parents chastise their carnal sons with hard scourges of discipline. What then ought the penalty of divine correction to be, through which an inheritance never to be lost is received, and punishments always to remain are avoided? For if (says Gregory) the happiness which is attained without passing away is attended to, light is what is laboured in passing. Hence also Paul says: *We have had fathers of our flesh for instructors, and we reverenced them: shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits, and live? And they indeed for a time of a few days chastened us according to their own will: but he for our profit, that we might receive his sanctification*.[9]

[9] Hebrews 12:9–10.

Consider that all that you suffer, your sins have deserved: and yet God does not deal with you according to them, nor repay you according to your iniquities: but for these light and transitory tribulations he remits the everlasting punishments which you have deserved: in respect of which those things which you suffer are nothing. Besides, they are nothing unto the future glory which shall be revealed in you. For the tribulations of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory which shall be revealed in us.[10] Since so great is the beauty of justice, so great the joy of the everlasting light: that even if it were not permitted to live or remain in it longer than the space of a single day, for this alone the innumerable days of this life full of delicacies and abundance of temporal goods ought rightly and deservedly to be despised: compared with which every sweetness from elsewhere is pain: every joy, sorrow; every sweet thing, bitter; every fair thing, foul; everything else whatsoever that could delight, troublesome.

[10] Romans 8:18 (*Non sunt condignae passiones hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam quae revelabitur in nobis*)

Consider that prosperous things more often defile the heart by swelling.: but adverse things purge the heart by pain In the former the mind raises itself: in the latter, even when it had raised itself, it casts itself down. In the former a man forgets himself: in the latter he is recalled to the memory of himself, even unwilling and compelled. In the former goods already done often perish: in the latter the offences even of a long time are wiped away, and those which could have been committed are checked. For commonly by the schooling of adversity the mind is pressed under discipline: and he who before was led outside himself into elation remembers, from the stricken flesh which he bears, to what condition he is subject.

Consider that the minds of the elect so much the more sweetly exult in the secure meditation of everlasting happiness, the heavier tribulations they suffer. And when they gather nothing from the world except the fruit of sadness, they hold God alone to be their joy. And when the inequalities of worldly perversity begin to grow bitter to them: then first they can feel the sweetness of inward quiet: whose crosses many see, but they do not see the anointings. Such love all things except sin: they fear nothing except sin: nothing affects them except God: nothing saddens them except fault: they rejoice more in sufferings and bodily pains than in carnal consolations: because they see those to be the matter of patience and of merit: but these to be dangerous, and easily to lead a man into sin.

Consider that God, foreseeing that certain persons can sin much, scourges them with infirmity of body, lest they sin: that it may be more useful for them to be broken by languors unto salvation, than to remain unharmed unto damnation. For it is good to enter into life maimed, or lame, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire: and it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the gehenna of fire.[11] Augustine: When GOD tosses me with adverse things: either he examines merits, or he chastises sins, or he keeps for me an everlasting reward for temporal evils borne.

[11] Matthew 18:8–9; Mark 9:43–47.

Consider that merciful GOD is not fed by our torments, but by contrary medicines heals the diseases of our offences: that we who departed delighted by pleasures may return again embittered by tears: and that we who fell by flowing away through unlawful things may rise by restraining ourselves even from lawful ones: and that what vain gladness had poured into the heart, healthful sadness may burn out: and that what the elation of pride had wounded, the abjection of a humble life may cure.

Consider that the divine goodness is therefore most angry in this age, that it may not be angry in the future: and mercifully applies temporal severity, lest it justly inflict everlasting vengeance. For it is a great anger (says Jerome) when God is not angry with sinners: and he who will not be scourged here with men will be scourged with the demons in hell. Therefore burn us here, cut us here, O Lord: that in the future thou mayest spare.

Consider how great a grace the creator and dispenser of all goods watches over you, who does not relax you into your desires. Because unless the divine providence saw you to be saved forever, it would not bridle you to be instructed under the rule of discipline. For whom the physician despairs of, he allows to receive all that he covets: but to him whom he believes can be saved, he forbids many things that he desires. Even parents take coins away from children, for whom at the same time they reserve whole patrimonies.

Consider how many and how great insults of railings our Redeemer bore from those whom he had created: how many blows of those who mocked him he received: how many scourges he bore in silence: how patiently he did not hide his face from the spittings of the faithless: how meekly he submitted that divine head to thorns: how calmly in his thirst he received the bitterness of gall: how meekly, worshipped in mockery, he was silent: how fervently he himself, the life of all, for freeing you from everlasting punishments, came even unto death. It ought not therefore to seem harsh to you that you, a vile little man, should bear scourges from God for your evils, when for his good works God has borne so many evils from men: nor did he go forth from here without a scourge, who lived here without sin. For it behoved Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory:[12] with whom no one

will reign in heaven, unless he has been afflicted with him in the world: with whom no one will be crowned, unless he has lawfully striven with him.[13] But how will one strive, if there is lacking one who attacks? What have you to do with victory, if you have not even been in the battle? Most impudently do you claim for yourself either glory without victory, or victory without a fight.

[12] Luke 24:26 (*Nonne haec oportuit pati Christum, et ita intrare in gloriam suam?*).

[13] 2 Timothy 2:5 (*non coronatur nisi qui legitime certaverit*); compare 2 Timothy 2:12.

Therefore it is better that by bearing present evils with an even mind they should avail you unto the remission of the penalty due for your sins, and unto the acquisition of everlasting glory: than impatiently and with [perturbation] of mind, without profit and the fruit of salvation, unto the increase of damnation to bear those things which otherwise (whether you will or nill) must be borne by you. Because so it has pleased the Lord God: therefore also so it must needs be.

A Method of Avoiding One's Own Wrath

Blot out from your mind the disordered love of yourself and of all that is yours: otherwise you will easily blaze up into wrath, as soon as you see yourself or your own lightly injured in any way.

The more by nature you are inclined to wrath, the more diligently you will fortify yourself long beforehand for patience: thoughtfully rehearsing both the words and the deeds that may meet you. For weapons foreseen hurt less. Therefore have it altogether settled in your mind that, when wrath is hot, you will say or do nothing precipitately: that you will trust nothing to yourself when angry: that you will hold suspect whatever the impulse of a stirred mind dictates, even if it seem honourable: but that you will put off the doing of it until wrath has boiled down, or that you will devoutly say once or often the Lord's Prayer, or something like it, before you set about it: because meanwhile perhaps the wrath will cool.

When someone else challenges you with insults, take care not to drive back insult with insult, and evil with evil: if you wish to extinguish the wrath of your mind. For from the strife of words it is wont to blaze more and more. Because while each goes on to avenge his own injury, and to drive force back with force: on both sides enmities grow, the pain grows raw, and at last scarcely any end of mutual injuries can be found. Therefore let no evil speech go forth from your mouth: let all bitterness, and wrath and indignation, and clamour, and blasphemy be taken away from you:[14] and against the onset of insults take up the arms of patience, not of fury.

[14] Ephesians 4:29, 31 (*omnis sermo malus… omnis amaritudo et ira et indignatio et clamor et blasphemia*).

Thus within yourself you will lessen your own disadvantage, and make light the injury brought upon you by another: He has hurt me, but it will easily be made good: then, he is a boy, inexperienced in things: a youth: she is a woman, she did not act by her own counsel, but at another's prompting: he acted imprudently, well in drink, it is fair to pardon. Or on the contrary: He has indeed hurt me gravely: but he is a father, a brother, a teacher, a friend: it is fair that I forgive this my pain to his authority or to his charity. Or, setting things even, you will compare the injury brought upon you by another with his benefits toward you, or with your offences against him, in this way: This man has indeed hurt me, but at other times he has more often done me good. It is of a mean spirit to forget so many and so great benefits of his toward me, and to remember one little injury. Now he has offended

me: but how often has he been offended by me? I will spare him, just as he also has spared me: that, provoked by my example, he too may at another time pardon me when I offend.

If because of bitterness you cannot altogether swallow the injury, you must have recourse to a superior. For to return insult for insult, and to twist back the contumely upon him who gave it: is nothing else than to become such as he is whom you condemn.

Let not the sun go down upon your wrath:[15] but as quickly as you can, be reconciled to your brother. Because unless you quickly return to the gentleness of meekness: a stubborn movement of wrath will easily grow into hatred of your brother, and you will make a beam out of a mote,[16] and you will make your soul a murderer.

[15] Ephesians 4:26 (*Sol non occidat super iracundiam vestram*).

[16] Matthew 7:3–5 (the mote and the beam).

You will be able to be reconciled to your neighbour in three ways: either by words, asking pardon of the offended for the offence, saying: I beseech you by the meekness of Jesus Christ, if I have hurt you, forgive me: or by the humility of the body, casting yourself down before him whom you have offended, asking that he not reckon it to you for iniquity, nor remember the injury done to him: or by the service of charity and by a benefit you will appease your enemy toward yourself: according to that: If your enemy hunger, feed him: if he thirst, give him drink.[17] Because by these things you will appease him, and will return into favour with him. But if you wish to be perfect in justice, do not say: He has harmed me, I have not harmed him. For if for the glory of your salvation God commands you to be reconciled to your enemies: you who are offended ought to go before the one who offends, that you may gain a double glory: one, namely, because you have been unjustly offended: another because you first invite the enemy to friendship.

[17] Romans 12:20 (citing Proverbs 25:21).

When offended by another, you will easily pardon him: you who know that you are pardoned by him who has reconciled you to himself, blotting out all that is past, and calling you to eternal life. Until you come to that life, you cannot be without sins: and therefore so kind a condition is to be embraced, which God has of himself offered you, that by forgiving others' sins God may forgive you yours. Augustine: It is altogether to be believed that in no way are the things we sin forgiven us, if we have been inexorable toward forgiving sin.

When angry, turn yourself to other business, by which your heart, occupied, may forget its own agitation and blazing.

While outwardly you bear heavy things, take care not to grieve over them inwardly: lest, when among men the sin is not recognized, but it is only under the divine examination that one sins: the fault of the grief become so much the worse, the more it claims for itself before men the appearance of virtue.

If you have shown patience at that time when, either suffering adversities or hearing insults, you are struck by no pain: take the utmost care afterward not to lose the innocence of heart: while, calling back to memory those very things which you have borne, you blush to have borne them even-temperedly, and grieve that you did not return the insults: and so seek out grounds for vengeance: and turn into malice the meekness which you had by bearing, while you remember the injury.

Study to love those whom it is necessary for you to bear: lest, if love do not follow patience, the virtue shown be turned into the worse fault of hatred. Whence Paul, when he said: Charity is patient, at once added: It is kind:[18] namely showing that charity does not cease to love out of kindness those whom it bears out of patience.

[18] 1 Corinthians 13:4 (*Caritas patiens est, benigna est*).

Do not be angry at those who take from you things that pass away, who cast insults, who inflict punishments, and beyond these do nothing. Be angry only at your own iniquity, which alone can hurt you, alone can make it that the rest do not profit you. For no adversity will hurt: if no iniquity has the mastery. He who is perfectly angry at this is not moved by the rest.

Persecution, and every temporal adversity, are sometimes to be fled by you according to place and time: but when it is necessary, they are to be borne manfully.

Count it all joy, when you fall into various tribulations.[19] For tribulation is a necessary thing, which is turned into glory: and sadness which is changed into joy. Joy indeed long, which no one will take from us: joy manifold: joy full. Greater therefore is the good of tribulation than of pleasure: which, since they quickly pass, the one will be about to bring forth punishment, but the other a crown and a reward.

[19] James 1:2 (*Omne gaudium existimate, fratres mei, cum in tentationes varias incideritis*).

In the day of evils be mindful of goods, lest you become faint-hearted, and impatient. In the day also of goods be not unmindful of evils, lest you be lifted up and grow proud. For it is necessary that, just as the lovers of the world suffer many adversities: so also for the servants of God not all things desired succeed in this world. Because to them God for the most part denies earthly things which they wish: that he may grant heavenly things which they prefer.

A Method of Avoiding Another's Wrath

If you turn aside from an angry man in the very agitation of his wrath, you will give place to wrath.[20] And to him who is angry with you, answer mildly and in a friendly way: because a soft answer breaks wrath:[21] But if peace be thrown into confusion in his heart: yet let it be kept inviolate in your heart, and let it not depart even denied from your heart.

[20] Romans 12:19 (*Date locum irae*); compare Ephesians 4:27.

[21] Proverbs 15:1 (*Responsio mollis frangit iram*).

It will be worthy of a Christian man: if, indignant at the vice only and not at the man, you repay a benefit for an injury, the office of charity for contumely: and so from an enemy win for yourself a most certain friend: which for the most part comes about in practice.

You will be peaceable even with the enemies of peace, in hope of their correction, not by consent to their malice: that if they follow neither your example nor your exhortations: they may yet have no causes for which they ought justly to be angry with you.

When you try to restrain one who is raging, by no means raise yourself into a rage: lest you kindle the coals of sinners, wishing to extinguish them: but whatever there is in you of tranquillity and modesty, that you will show.

Remedies against Acedia

A Method of Detesting Acedia

Consider how many labours Christ has borne for you from that day on which he began to do and to teach,[1] even to the last breath of his life: while in prayers he passed the night sleepless: while now into this region, now into another he went to gain souls: while in the things that were his Father's he diligently took part: while he often taught in the temple: and last of all, while in the time of his passion, already worn out even by excessive labours, he carried on his most sacred shoulders that most long and most heavy cross, and sank under so great a burden. But if for your salvation he has laboured so much: how much ought you yourself to labour for the same? For the taking away of your sins that most tender Lamb of God has borne so many and so heavy things: and do you shirk even the least labour for the same? Cursed indeed are you, who do the work of God negligently.[2]

[1] Acts 1:1 (*quae coepit Jesus facere et docere*).

[2] Jeremiah 48:10 (Vulg. *Maledictus qui facit opus Domini fraudulenter*

Consider how many labours the apostles bore: while according to Christ's precept they went into the whole world, and preached the Gospel to every creature.[3] How many troubles of mind and of body the holy martyrs, confessors, and virgins have endured: and finally as many human beings as already reign with God: by whose teachings and labours the orthodox faith of Christ has been propagated far and wide.

[3] Mark 16:15 (*Euntes in mundum universum praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae*).

Consider that all things labour, and do some work. For that army of the heavenly host without end sings praise to GOD, proclaiming Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.[4] Besides, the sun and moon, and the firmament, daily circle the circuit of the earth. Herbs and trees, having a least beginning, come to a great height. Ants store up grain in summer, with which they may pass the winter.[5] The honey-bearing bees keep the idle race of drones from the hives. And so in other kinds of living things you can find. Are you not then ashamed, a man sharing in reason, for the sake of that same reason to embrace the sloth which things without reason by natural impulse abhor?

[4] Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8.

[5] Compare Proverbs 6:6–8 (the ant); Virgil, *Georgics* 4.168 (*ignavum fucos pecus a praesepibus arcent*) — the Virgilian tag on the drones is close.

Consider that if the traders of the present age sustain so much, that they may heap up uncertain and perishable riches, and keep those sought with many dangers at the risk of their mind: what must you do, a trader of Christ, for the acquiring of spiritual riches eternal and lasting without end?

Consider that just as the riches of this age are then most increased, when no gains at all, even the least, are despised: so also in spiritual riches not even the least good work is to be despised. For when that is despised, you will little by little fall away: conversely if you have not despised small and least spiritual gains, little by little you will come to great ones. If you try to have added little things upon little ones, And do that often: a great heap is piled up.

Consider that if you will not do well when you can: perhaps you will not be able to do well when you wish. Opportunity is headlong: and therefore to be seized when it is present. The time of life in

which you live is short, scant, and with weariness. Therefore while it is day, and while you have time, work the good. For night will come, when no one will be able to work.[6]

[6] John 9:4 (*Venit nox, quando nemo potest operari*).

Consider that your most grievous sins require a most grievous penance and a great fervour of devotion, that satisfaction may be able to be made for them. That threefold denial of Christ Peter mourned for the whole time of his life: although it had been pardoned him by Christ. Mary Magdalene even to the last breath of her life bewailed her past sins: although they had long since been forgiven her by Christ, because she had loved much.[7] For brevity's sake we pass over very many others, who ended the penance of their sins together with the present life: although those sins were much lighter than yours. But for you, who sin daily, and add sins to sins: how does that labour seem heavy, by which so many and so great sins are blotted out? How lukewarmly do you act, that those debts may be remitted: for which eternal death is due? Great indeed is the satisfaction needed for those sins, on account of which everlasting fire is prepared: whose burden, or the wound of his soul, he who has perfectly felt, he indeed will in no way, or certainly little, feel the pain of the body: nor will he reckon the labour by which he knows past sins to be blotted out, and future ones to be avoided. Therefore in the time of grace and of mercy (that is, in the time of the present life) bring forth fruits worthy of penance,[8] and redeem the most grievous pain of purgatory by the labour of present penance.

[7] Luke 7:47 (*dimissa sunt ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum*); the lifelong penance of Peter and Magdalene is a hagiographical / pastoral commonplace.

[8] Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8 (*Facite ergo fructus dignos paenitentiae*).

Consider that if while you live you will wish to watch and pray with Christ: your labours will quickly be finished. For most brief is the time of our life, given us for meriting eternal glory: after which no other time of meriting will be given: in which the more and the greater goods we have done on earth, so much the greater awaits us in heaven: which if they seem little in the work: yet are great in the retribution: in the work indeed temporal: but in the retribution they are eternal. Brief is the goal of this labour: but the crown perpetual. Labour is done here for a little time: that one may live there in eternity. Gregory: If the happiness be attended to, which is not attained without passing: let that be light, which is laboured in the passing. Therefore we ought not to allow that this time of grace and of merit flow away for us without meritorious work: After the example of a certain devout man: who whenever he heard the clock strike the hours, said these things with himself: O Lord my God, already again I have consumed one hour of the time of my life: of which I am to render you an account, how I have spent it. For no time has been spent upon me by you, of which an account is not to be rendered by me, how it was spent.

Consider that the love of God is never idle. For it works great things, if it is; but if it refuses to work, it is not love. Jerome: nothing is hard to those who love: no labour is difficult to those who desire. Let us also love Christ, and seek his embraces: and everything difficult will seem easy: we will think brief all things that are long. Besides, it is necessary to enter the kingdom of God through many tribulations.[9] For no one is crowned without a contest.[10]

[9] Acts 14:22 (*per multas tribulationes oportet nos intrare in regnum Dei*).

[10] 2 Timothy 2:5 (*non coronatur nisi qui legitime certaverit*)

Whoever you are, who judge that you have merited enough in former time, and therefore act more remissly than usual, and little by little fall away from your former fervour: consider that not he who has begun well, but he who has persevered even to the end, this one will be saved.[11] Because without perseverance neither does the work have merit, nor labour a reward, nor the course a prize, nor service grace, nor pain however afflictive a crown. Therefore one must persevere in the good work which we have begun. For the works of God are perfect: who of himself says to the Father: I have finished the work which you gave me to do.[12] Whence to the faithless Jews, themselves urging him to come down from the cross, while he was working our salvation in the midst of the earth: he in no way consented: lest he leave the work of our redemption imperfect. We also, if we wish to follow our head, let us not fear to be justified even unto death: because the reward of the Lord remains forever.[13] Let us not cease to do penance: let us not cease after Christ to take up our cross, persevering in it, just as he also persevered: confident that he will perfect that good work in us which he has begun in us:[14] and that he who has given to will, will also give to accomplish.[15] For what does it profit, to have sailed well and long, and to perish in the harbour? to have fought strongly with enemies, and to have failed in the very hour of victory?

[11] Matthew 24:13 (*qui autem perseveraverit usque in finem, hic salvus erit*).

[12] John 17:4 (*opus consummavi quod dedisti mihi ut faciam*).

[13] Compare Sirach (Ecclus.) 18:22 / Psalm 110:3 (Vulg.) tags on the Lord's reward.

[14] Philippians 1:6 (*qui coepit in vobis opus bonum, perficiet*).

[15] Philippians 2:13 (*Deus est enim qui operatur in vobis et velle et perficere*).

A Method of Avoiding Acedia

There is no one whose soul the corruptible body and the earthly dwelling do not weigh down.[16] But you must strive that the desires of the flesh you overcome by the vigour of the spirit. And because you feel yourself assailed by three most stubborn enemies, the world, the flesh, and the demon (if you do what is in you) always expect to be helped by divine aid. For God exhorts you, that you may fight: he helps, that you may conquer: he watches the one contending, lifts up the one failing, crowns the one conquering.

[16] Wisdom 9:15 (*Corpus enim quod corrumpitur aggravat animam, et terrena inhabitatio deprimit sensum multa cogitantem*).

If the labour which must be undergone in resisting temptations will terrify you, this will be the remedy. Do not compare the labour of resisting with the pleasure of sin: but compare the present bitterness of resisting with the future bitterness of sin: the present sweetness of the fault, which allures you to sinning, with the future sweetness of heavenly glory, and the tranquillity of mind which follows the conqueror of temptation: and soon you will see how unfair the comparison is. For in this most people are deceived, that they compare the bitterness of resisting with the delight of sin: nor do they look to what follows upon this and upon that. Bernard: If labour terrify you: let the reward invite. For each one will receive a reward according to his own labour.[17]

[17] 1 Corinthians 3:8 (*unusquisque autem propriam mercedem accipiet secundum suum laborem*).

Since life is nothing else than warfare upon the earth,[18] with so many demons watchful for your ruin, and armed against you with a thousand wiles, a thousand arts of harming, the world also (which is wholly set in wickedness)[19] attacking you from the right and the left, from the front alike and from

behind, and enticing you to desire of itself: besides the flesh goading your mind to deadly pleasures, and busying itself that it may open the citadel of your mind to the other two enemies, and betray the garrison (for it is a domestic enemy)—when, I say, your business is with enemies so sworn to your ruin: do not allow yourself, just as if you had overcome those three most hostile enemies, to sleep on either ear, as in most certain peace: and to say peace, peace, when there is no peace.[20] Therefore stand continually upon your watch, in the first, second, third and fourth watch expecting the Lord, until he return from the wedding: that when he comes, and knocks, you may open to him at once.[21]

[18] Job 7:1 (Vulg. *Militia est vita hominis super terram*).

[19] 1 John 5:19 (*mundus totus in maligno positus est*).

[20] Jeremiah 6:14; 8:11 (*Pax, pax, et non erat pax*).

[21] Luke 12:36–38 (watching for the master's return from the wedding; the watches).

Against the assaults of temptations you will fortify yourself either with the sign of the cross, or with some prayer, or with some sentence drawn from sacred Scripture. But if you have conquered the temptation: so carry yourself, as one about soon to return into battle: and expect another, secure, or rather more fearful: because just as the sea cannot be without waves, so neither can this life be without temptations. Besides, he who enters upon the way of penance is more strongly tempted by the enemy. For the tempter neglects to tempt those whom he feels that he possesses by quiet right. Therefore nowhere are watches not to be kept by you: never are you to depart from arms, so long as you will serve as a soldier in this garrison of the body.

But if at some time in this fight it should happen that your soul is lethally wounded with the wound of mortal sin: take care that you do not at once, casting away the shield and leaving the arms, surrender yourself to the enemies, and give yourself wholly over to their passions: but think of recovering liberty. For having fallen into sin, not only do not despair: but imitate strenuous soldiers, whom not rarely the shame of disgrace, and the pain of a wound received, not only do not cast into flight, but rather sharpen to fighting more strongly than before. Not otherwise hasten to take up courage again, and to renew the contests with the enemies. Soon you will see yourself putting to flight those whom you fled: and pursuing those who pursued you. But if by chance (as the condition of contest has it) you are wounded again, or fall: you ought not at once by the shame of your wound or fall to despair: but remember that this is the law of contest, not that one never be wounded or fall, but that one never yield. Because not he who has often been wounded or has fallen is said to be conquered: but he who has yielded to the last. When a wound is received, at once apply the remedy. For you will more easily heal one wound than many: more easily a fresh one than one inveterate and putrid.

When tempted to set about an evil work, not only will you not yield to the temptation, and sin: but even from it you will snatch for yourself an occasion of virtue: and you will take care that by the devil's temptations you not only do not become worse, but even come out better: that all things may work together for you unto good.[22] If you are solicited to lust or to gluttony: withdraw from yourself a little even of lawful pleasures, and add something to holy and pious occupations. If you are spurred to tenacity and avarice, increase alms. If you are goaded to vain glory: so much the more humble yourself in all things. So it will come about that the tempter will perhaps fear to provoke you again to evil: lest he who rejoices to be the author of an evil work should furnish the occasion of a good work.

[22] Romans 8:28 (*diligentibus Deum omnia cooperantur in bonum*).

Accurately you must take care that you do not despise any vice as light, and deceive yourself, while with yourself you wink at one or another vice (which you will think venial): because the venial, although it does not kill the soul: although it does not separate from God, yet it calls away from the former fervour of devotion, and renders a man lukewarm toward a good work, heavy, clouded, and undisposed to doing well, and little by little leads from the least sins to the greatest. Therefore all sins are to be detested by you, and at the same time avoided, both venial and mortal. But if perhaps you cannot yet pluck out all vices by the root: yet you will daily cut something from your vices: and will always add something to good manners.

Take care not to think that justice consists in this, that you do not do evil: when also not to do good is evil: but that you also do a good work. For he who commanded: Depart from evil: at once added: And do good.[23] Therefore when the greatest diligence has been applied in rooting out vices, no less diligence is needed for acquiring virtues.

[23] Psalm 33:15 (Vulg.; Heb. 34:14) (*Declina a malo, et fac bonum*).

Be not so idle, that in the same idleness you do not think of the neighbour's profit: nor so active, that you do not seek the contemplation of God.

Part IV: On the Remaining Sins, and the Circumstances of Sins

On the Five Exterior Senses

There are five exterior senses: which unless they are carefully and with the utmost diligence guarded and as it were reined in, through them as through windows always open death enters into the soul: which are: Sight, Hearing, Smell, Taste, Touch.

The senses of the human body are five and open:
Hearing, sight, taste, touch, and smell.

On the Sense of Hearing

The marvellous Craftsman of all things, God, willed that man should have two ears, but one tongue: hinting that there is more to be heard than spoken.

Ears have been given us for perceiving the doctrine of God, for hearing the praises of God with delight, and for aiding the body by their service, not for abusing them.

They sin by hearing:

Those who grow angry and are more than justly affected, if they hear something that does not please them.

Those who grow proud and glory when they hear their own praises.

Those who hear lascivious, scurrilous, and idle words with delight.

Those who give their ears to flatterers or to informers.

Those who, for songs, games, dances, chatterings, and worldly delights of that kind, put off hearing the divine sacrifice, psalmody, or those things which are known, or ought to be known, to be necessary for the soul's salvation. Jerome: We who hasten to our fatherland ought to pass by the deadly songs of the Sirens with a deaf ear.

On the Sense of Sight

The sense of sight, by which it is more excellent than the other senses, is for that reason the more dangerous. For unless it has been reined in by the dominion of reason, it entices a man to many sins.

They sin by sight:

Those who, pleasing themselves, after the manner of a peacock repeatedly look back and are admired either for the elegant adornment of the body, or for learning, or for anything of the kind.

Those who superciliously turn wandering eyes hither and thither.

Those who apply impure eyes to lusting after a woman. Augustine: Do not say that you have chaste minds, if you have impure eyes: because an impure eye is the messenger of an impure heart.

Those who idly observe the gestures of others, their adornment, their gait, and the like, passing sentence upon them.

Those who grieve at another's happiness when they see it, or exult at his calamity when they see it.

Those who out of hatred disdain to look upon some.

Those who, when they see another's thing, desire it for themselves.

Those who prefer to see vain pleasures, foul things, novelties of things, rather than those which belong to divine worship and look to the soul's salvation.

On the Sense of Taste

In the tongue is the power of tasting and discerning flavours, and those things which substantially nourish the body. This sense, unless it be governed by the dictate of reason, is the material of many illnesses and of many sins.

They sin by taste, whoever sin by gluttony: of which see in its place.

On the Sense of Touch

The other four senses have their seat in the head: touch alone is diffused through the whole body, yet it thrives most in the hands, because there a multitude of nerves, which are the instrument of touch, runs together.

They sin by touch:

Those who strike, beat, wound, or kill their neighbour.

Those who steal or snatch what is another's.

Those who make impure and unclean touches upon their own members or another's.

Those who give impure kisses, or gladly receive the same.

On the Sense of Smell

The instrument of smell is the nose, through which the odour is drawn even to the brain.

They sin by smell:

Those who, more than justly delighted by the smell of the best wine, of foods, of cakes, or of the like, desire them for themselves.

Those who for lust and pleasure smell ointments, or are delighted beyond measure by that odour.

Those who from contempt and pride shrink more than is fair from the poor and the sick, over-careful lest they perceive any smell from them.

On the Causes of Another's Sin

There are times when another sins, and yet an account of that other's sin is to be rendered by you: and for it you will be condemned just as for your own proper sin, namely if you were the cause to your neighbour of its being committed. Nor does only the sin already committed flow back upon your head: but also all that will afterwards be committed from the same cause. For which, if you depart this life without penance, even to the day of judgement in hell your accidental punishment will be

increased day by day, provided that a sin once arisen by your cause is transmitted into a long posterity: which sins are ten in number.

I counsel, I command, I consent, I provoke, I praise,
I do not uncover the fault, I do not punish, I do not rebuke.
I take part, I defend: these things flow back upon my head.

They sin by reason of another's sin:

Those who counsel evil to another.

Those who give counsel from which harm is brought upon a neighbour.

Those who imbue and instruct others with perverse manners and doctrine.

Those who are a scandal to others.

Those who command their subjects something beyond what is fair and good.

Those who command others to commit a sin, to hurt another, or in any other way to do harm.

Those who consent to evils being done, without whose consent they would not have been committed: even if they did not counsel, nor command, when they ought to have hindered them. To the Romans 1: They are worthy of death, not only those who do such things, but those who consent to those who do them.[1]

[1] Romans 1:32 (*digni sunt morte non solum qui ea faciunt, sed etiam qui consentiunt facientibus*).

Those who by words or deeds unjustly provoke others to wrath: whence those provoked blaspheme, or design other fouler things.

Those who by a wager, or in any other way, goad others to sinning.

Those who, flattering another, praise the things that have been wrongly done: such men are for the most part the cause that another sins again. For the tongues of flatterers bind souls in sins: because it delights one to do those things in which not only is no rebuker feared, but even a praiser is heard.

Those who even silently within themselves rejoice and approve the evil done by another.

Those who, when they conveniently can, yet do not make known the sins of men to those who ought and can correct and amend the delinquents: provided they know that by their revelation the neighbour is to be called back from sin, and some friend is to be freed from danger.

Those who, when they can and by office ought to correct and amend their subjects, and to forbid that harm be done to another: yet either connive at their sins, or lightly punish the delinquents, so that they do not care about sinning again.

Those who beyond what is fair and good absolve the guilty from a crime.

Those who allow the poor and the weaker to be unjustly oppressed, when they can withstand that unjust oppression.

Those who are silent at others' sins, and neglect to call the delinquent neighbour back from sin according to their strength. Bernard: Let no one stroke a neighbour's vices: let no one dissemble sins.

For to be silent when you can rebuke is to consent: and we know that a like punishment awaits those who do and those who consent.

Those who come into a share of the gain with thieves and robbers.

Those who grow rich on others' spoils.

Those who patronise malefactors, or keep them in their house, receive them, or hide them, or excuse their sins.

On the Theological Virtues

There are three theological virtues, to which both all knowledge and all prophecy are in service, by which our soul is borne into the most high Trinity.

Faith, by assenting to God.

Hope, by trusting in God.

Charity, by loving God supremely.

Which succeed one another, so that charity cannot be without hope and faith: yet faith can indeed be without them, but cannot profit. For when faith wavers, charity itself also languishes: if anyone has fallen from faith, he must also fall from charity. For no one can love that which he does not believe. Further, if he believes and loves, by doing well and obeying the precepts of good manners he brings it about that he also hopes that he will come to that which he believes and loves.

Against these virtues one sins, as has been said under the first commandment of the Decalogue.

On the Four Cardinal Virtues

The cardinal virtues, in which the whole reason of living well and blessedly turns, as a door upon its hinges, are to be called back to memory: that a diligent inquiry and examination of sins may be able to be made. There are therefore four.

Fortitude in adversities.

Temperance in prosperities.

Justice in rendering to each what is his.

Prudence in guarding against snares, and in the choice of things to be done.

Strong in adversities, modest in a happy lot,
Just toward others, prudent in things to be done.

They sin against these virtues:

Those who bear more heavily than is fair the diseases, poverty, losses, and other evils with which they are afflicted by God. For in the present life, although temporal delights are sweet, and temporal tribulations bitter: yet he ought gladly to drink the cup of tribulation who fears the fire of Gehenna: to despise the sweetness of the age who aspires to the joys of heaven.

Those who bear another's troubles more impatiently than is fair.

Those who fear where there is nothing to be feared.

Those who in adverse things fall in spirit: when from the conscience of virtues they ought to stand with unmoved mind among adversities.

Those who are light, and for a light cause, according to the variety of places and times, vary their mind also.

Those who desist from a good work begun, and do not persevere in it.

Those who are rash: and attempt things which they know to be beyond their strength.

Those who are faint-hearted: and will not attempt things which they know to be equal to their strength, for the sake of ease.

Those who in prosperous things exult and grow proud more than is just.

Those who squander and pour out all their substance in games, harlots, and other illicit things.

Those who are negligent in restraining evil delights.

Those who are dissolved into all pleasures.

Those who by the allurements of pleasures are called away from God and the divine precepts.

Those who are too greedy of honours and dignities.

Those who are affected with too great a love toward this world and worldly things.

Those who against the dictate of right reason, in the distribution of common goods, or of ecclesiastical benefices, or in public judgements, are respecters of persons, and by reason of friendship, kinship, faction, or another illegitimate cause prefer the less worthy to the more worthy, and pervert right and equity.

Those who do not help a neighbour placed in necessity: because in necessity all things are common.

Those who do not render due reverence and obedience to those to whom they owe it.

Those who neglect to correct a delinquent neighbour.

Those who in punishing another either exceed the measure, or are more indulgent than is fair. For justice, when it exceeds its measure, begets the vice of cruelty: just as in turn too much pity brings forth the dissolution of discipline: and it often happens that vice is thought a virtue.

Those who do not apply just diligence to consider the things which of necessity of salvation are to be done, said, sought, or avoided: as those who, not considering (as they ought) that a fast has been proclaimed, eat: or, not advertising that a contract is illicit, make it, when yet they ought to have adverted.

Those who act indiscreetly either by exceeding the measure or by falling short. For discretion is not so much a virtue as the moderatrix and charioteer of all the virtues, the orderer of the affections, the teacher of manners, and the consummation of perfection: which taken away, virtue will be vice. Which if it be present, sets order upon every virtue: order gives measure: measure beauty and perpetuity. For it cuts round, that neither more nor less than is fair may be done.

Those who rashly and without counsel attempt a hard work. Solomon: My son, do nothing without counsel: and after the deed you will not repent.

Those who, when they can and ought to know something, whether of law or of fact, yet do not strive with their strength to know it: of which kind are the common things of the faith, and those which ought to be done by reason of office, grade, or vow.

Those who prefer a lesser good to a greater good that is owed: as those who prefer temporal things to spiritual, earthly to heavenly, the love of man to divine grace. For those who cannot rejoice in spiritual delights transfer themselves to bodily pleasures.

Those who less carefully guard themselves from the deceits and blandishments of the world, the flesh, and the demon.

Those who do not guard themselves from any other damages, snares, or diseases foreseen and known beforehand, and neglect to avoid future evils.

On the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The spirit of wisdom and of understanding shall rest upon him (that is, upon Christ), the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety: and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him, Isaiah the eleventh.[1] Here the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are expressed. For although every good is to us from above, descending from the Father of lights:[2] yet there are some above the rest which the Trinity by its infinite and inexhaustible goodness pours into men, which are attributed to the Holy Spirit, as also is goodness.

[1] Isaiah 11:2–3 (*Et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini: spiritus sapientiae et intellectus…*).

[2] James 1:17 (*Omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum desursum est, descendens a Patre luminum*).

They are seven.

Fear of God. Piety. Understanding. Wisdom.
Fortitude. Counsel. Knowledge.

Be fearing of GOD, strong, pious, and well counselling,
And of good wit, knowing, and wise: GOD gives these things.

Of the abuse of these gifts those ought to confess who, although they have been most kindly given them by God for use, not for abuse: yet abuse them.

On the Works of Mercy

Corporal Works of Mercy

To give food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty. To clothe the naked. To redeem captives. To visit the sick. To receive strangers with hospitality. To bury the dead. And briefly, to help all the wretched.

Feed the starving, give drink to those who thirst too much;
Clothe the naked, loose those held in prison.

Visit those badly afflicted, gather strangers at your gates.
Bury the dead: briefly, have mercy on the needy.

Otherwise: I visit, I give drink, I feed, I redeem, I cover, I gather, I bury.

Spiritual Works of Mercy

To correct those who sin. To teach the ignorant. To counsel the doubting rightly. To pray for the neighbour's salvation. To console the sorrowful. To bear injuries. To forgive the delinquent.

Correct those who sin, and instruct those who know little.
Counsel the unlearned, pray for the afflicted;
Comfort the sorrowful, patiently bear inconveniences.
And of your own accord remit offences to your enemies.

Otherwise: Counsel, chastise, console, remit, bear, pray.
Under this word, Counsel, doctrine and counsel are comprehended.

Of the omission of the corporal works of mercy, or of their not sufficiently just execution, those must confess who can and ought to show them, if they have omitted them, or have not sufficiently justly completed them, when right reason and charity dictated that they were to be fulfilled. But if faculty be not present, at least they ought to pity the needy, and to grieve at their lot and calamity. By which, although meanwhile from want and poverty they can be excused: yet from the execution of the spiritual works of mercy they can scarcely be excused. Because although not all can teach the ignorant, counsel the doubting rightly, nor correct those who sin: as being rude and ignorant: yet they can pray for the neighbour's salvation, console the sorrowful, bear injuries, and forgive the delinquent. Jerome does not remember that he has read of anyone dying a bad death who has gladly practised the works of piety.

On the Four General Sins

There are four degrees of sins, to which all other sins are reduced: namely of Heart, of Mouth, of Deed, of Omission. For all sins are done by thinking, speaking, working, or omitting.

He thinks, or speaks, or commits a deed, or omits,
Whoever is made conscious of sin.

All sins take their origin from the heart, as from a foundation: because if we first resist a wicked thought, we do not fall into the slip of the deed. Therefore with great zeal one must resist superfluous thoughts, not giving them assent and delight: because they can scarcely be cut away from the root. For the flesh always generates superfluities, which the spirit ought to cut back with the iron of carefulness. Otherwise a wicked thought begets delight, delight consent, consent operation, operation custom, custom necessity, necessity despair, despair the defence of sin, the defence of sin boasting, boasting obstinacy, obstinacy everlasting damnation. With which chain of vices a man entangled and implicated can in no way be loosed from it, unless divine grace specially stretch forth a hand. Great observance therefore is to be applied about the custody of the heart: whose sins are these. Proud thought: Arrogant: Cupidinous. Simoniacal: Foul: Impure. Hatred: Dissimulation:

Indignation: Swelling of mind: Rash judgement: Machination: Hypocrisy: A various and wandering running of the mind.

Of vain, obscene and impure thoughts one must confess, and also of wicked deliberate wills: even if they have not gone forth into an exterior work. Therefore the penitent will confess of these in their place, saying: I had a deliberate will of committing such or such a sin, which I would have committed if there had been faculty: and unless I had feared shame, or temporal punishment, or something of the kind.

In the tongue we carry about both a lethal poison and a most wholesome medicine. For nothing among men is more harmful than an evil tongue: nothing more wholesome than the same, if one use it as he ought. Besides, the tongue discloses a man's manners: and as the speech is shown, such the mind is approved: because for the most part out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.[1] Great custody therefore is needed to restrain the bars of our mouth. A stone once cast, a word once uttered: and while we neglect to beware of idle words, we come to harmful words. But the sins of the mouth are these: Vain taking of the divine name: Blasphemy: Perjury: Murmuring: Defence of sin: Lying: Detraction: Flattery: Cursing: Insult: Derision of the good: Wicked counsel: Sowing of discords: Revelation of a secret: To feel one thing in the heart, to say another with the mouth: Indiscreet threatening or promise: Boasting: False rumour: Idle word: Much speaking: Foul speaking: Scurrility: Indiscreet silence.

[1] Matthew 12:34; Luke 6:45 (*ex abundantia cordis os loquitur*).

These sins of the mouth are especially to be considered from the affection and will of the speaker.

The consummation of sin is in the deed: but because the sins of deed are almost infinite: therefore consulting brevity, we omit them.

Of omission enough has been said under acedia.

On the Eight Circumstances of Sins

Confessors, and likewise those confessing their own sins to them, ought according to their strength to examine with what circumstances the sins are wrapped. For for the most part they either change or increase the species of the sin. But a circumstance then changes the species of the sin, when it is forbidden by a distinct prohibition, and draws the sin into another kind of mortal sin. Therefore it is not enough to confess of the kind of the sin, but also of all the circumstances that either increase or change the species of the sin.

There are eight circumstances.

Who, what, where, by whom, how often, why, how, when.

You have sinned, you will say; that the confession may be true.

On the Circumstance of the Person

The first circumstance looks to the condition of the man who sins: namely of what dignity, of what age, of what office, of what order. For the status of the one who sins increases the sin: because what in one is praised, in another is meanwhile blamed: what in one is light and worthy of pardon, in

another is meanwhile grave, and to be punished with chastisement. This circumstance therefore ought diligently to be examined. For if a father, who by office ought to show an example of virtue to his son, sins before him, he sins more gravely by reason of the person from the circumstance of scandal, which is wont to arise from such a person.

The same is to be said if a teacher admits a crime before a disciple, whom he judges, or ought to judge, about to take a bad example.

On the Circumstance of Quantity

The second circumstance considers the condition of the sin: namely the property, quality, and quantity of the deed.

They sin more gravely:

Those who strike, detract, wish ill to a parent, a master, or a benefactor, than if to another.

Those who kill, or inflict a wound, than if they inflicted only a buffet, or some light injury.

Those who steal from a poor man, than if from a rich. Let it shame one to take from those to whom we are commanded to offer: Beyond all cruelties it is, to wish to become rich from the scantiness of a beggar.

Those who steal a thing of great value, than if of little.

Those who envy another a spiritual good, than if a temporal.

Those who violate a virgin, than if one already corrupted.

Those who fornicate with a woman married to another man, than if with an unmarried.

Those who hurt one who has well deserved and is benevolent, than if some other.

Those who unjustly desire the goods of a poor man, than if of a rich, to whom goods would overflow.

And so in other sins it is to be considered of what sort the sin is, and against whom it is committed.

On the Circumstance of Place

The place in which the sin is done is to be considered. For for the most part it draws the sin to another species. For theft, even of a profane thing, if it be done in a sacred place, is called sacrilege: which is graver than simple theft.

The violent shedding of another's blood, or fornication done in a sacred place, is graver than if elsewhere. For injury is not at all to be done to a sacred place, namely one dedicated to divine worship. To bear false witness in judgement is graver than outside judgement.

A sin done in public is graver than if it be done in a private place: when the sinner foresees, or ought to foresee, that someone's scandal is about to arise therefrom. Isidore: It is of greater fault to sin openly than secretly. For he is doubly guilty who sins openly: because he acts and teaches.

On the Circumstance of the Agent's Instrument

All helps, all means by which a sin is perpetrated are called instruments of the sin: and by reason of this circumstance the sin becomes graver.

They sin more gravely:

Those who by an adulterine key, or by opening a lock with subtle instruments, or the like, enter a house for the sake of stealing, or in any other way of harming, than if they enter by a door found open by chance, or by an unblocked opening in a wall.

Those who for carrying out their sin stir up many and use the help of many, giving them occasion of sin, than if they use the help of one only.

Those who are authors of sin to many, than who to one.

Those who hurt with a sword or an iron blade, than who in a lighter way.

Those who sin deliberately and from certain malice, than who from weakness.

On the Circumstance of Number

The number of sins is diligently to be discussed. For they sin more gravely who design many sins of the same species, than who few. Wherefore not only the number of sins of deed is to be called back to memory, but also of heart and of thought, as far as it can be done: and not only as to number, but also as to gravity.

But if the number of sins committed hide from you: you ought to conjecture how often more or less you could have sinned by such or such a sin; you ought also to explain how long you persevered in your sin, not doing penance: as whether a year, a month, a week, a day, etc. For a sin is graver when it longer holds the unhappy man bound.

On the Circumstance of the End

Since moral acts take their species most of all from the end: for that reason the circumstance of the end is the chief of all: because a perverse will is more to be considered than the harm that flows from it: and the greater the will has been toward sinning, so much the graver is the sin.

They sin more gravely,

Those who of set purpose, than who without set purpose.

Those who of their own accord, than who compelled, or led by another to sinning.

Those with intent to harm, than who with intent to jest.

Those without any temptation, and anticipating temptation, than who driven by temptation.

Those from too great avarice, than who from poverty.

On the Circumstance of the Manner

The manner of the sin is diligently to be discussed, and how the sin was committed. For the fouler the manner in which the exterior act is consummated, the graver it is.

They sin more gravely,

Those who hurt strongly, than who lightly.

Those who from wrath and spleen cast anything in others' teeth, than who only from lightness of mind.

Those who take another's things by force, than who secretly.

Those who in sinning hold themselves actively, than who merely passively.

Those who violate one reluctant and unwilling, than who one willing, or offering herself of her own accord.

Those who sin beyond the natural manner, than who in the natural manner.

Those who sin with long premeditation, than who by a sudden movement of mind.

On the Circumstance of Time

The last circumstance aggravating sin is time. For it makes a great difference whether one sin at this time or at that.

On solemn feast days, when we ought to be of pure conscience, and void of all fault: or when we wish to receive the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist, a sin then done is graver than at another time.

To plot and think evil against a neighbour, while you are pouring out the Hours to God, or while you hear Mass, is graver than at another time.

These things aggravate sins.

Order, condition, most worthy status, age.
Means, cause, manner, delay, struggle, smallness,
And knowing,
And time, teaching, place, number, relapse.

These for the most part are wont to make faults graver.

On Threefold Sin

There are three sins in general: Original, Venial, Mortal: of which we shall treat one by one, if first we have declared what difference there is between venial and mortal. Among other commandments of God there are some which we ought to keep under pain of losing his grace and of incurring eternal death: and they are those which require the subjection due to God, and society among men: as it is to love God at every time and place, that is, not to hate him: not to kill one's innocent neighbour, and not to take his things from him violently, or in any other unjust way. There are other precepts, constitutions, and ordinances, which do not bind us except to a temporal penalty: because to transgress them does not take away the subjection due from us to God, nor the society which we are bound to have with men. To act against the first precepts is mortal sin: against the other ordinances is venial sin. Just as we see that a king commands some things under pain of death or of the head: and some under a temporal penalty: as of money, or of prison for a time.

We perpetrate every sin in three ways.

By Suggestion, Delight, Consent. The first is perpetrated through the enemy: the second through the flesh: the third through the Spirit. For the plotter suggests wicked things: the flesh subjects itself to delight: at last the spirit, conquered, consents.

By suggestion we know the sin: by delight we are overcome: by consent we are also bound.

The crime will be threefold: born to us from the origin.
This worthy of pardon: worthy also of the death of Gehenna.

Original sin is the lack of original justice, which ought to have been preserved. Which from the first-formed Adam, because of the eating of the forbidden fruit, has been transferred into the whole posterity, and by baptism (which was instituted expressly against it) is blotted out, together with all sins, if any have been committed before.

Venial sin is that which is not without pardon, even without confession. Which although it does not kill the soul: yet makes it less fervent toward a good work. Therefore even from every venial one must beware with the utmost effort and diligence. But take care lest you say in your heart: this sin is light: I do not care to correct it: it is not a great thing if I remain in this venial and least sin. For this is impenitence: this is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Venial sins are remitted.

By Extreme Unction: By sorrow for that sin: By aspersion of lustral or holy water: By the priest's absolution in the sacrifice: By striking the breast with acknowledgement of fault: By fervent prayer: By meditation on the Passion: By making the sign of the cross: By love of God and neighbour: By fulfilment of the works of mercy: By patience in tribulation: By affliction of the body: By eating blessed bread: By fasting: By receiving the most holy Eucharist: By forgiving a neighbour's fault.

Provided these things are done with a pious movement and a holy affection.

Mortal is that which, without contrition and confession, or the intention of confessing at the time and place appointed by God and holy Church, leads to eternal death. Against which sin the sacrament of penance and confession was instituted. Among which sins those are the most grievous which are against the Holy Spirit, which cry to God for vengeance: and those whose absolution is reserved to the supreme pontiff or to the bishop.

The sins against the Holy Spirit are six:

Despair of the mercy of God.
Presumption upon the mercy of God.
Obstinacy. Final impenitence.
Envy of a brother's grace.
Impugning of known truth.

Sins that cry to God for vengeance.

Homicide. The sodomitical sin. Oppression of the poor. Withholding of wages.[1]

[1] The four sins that "cry to heaven": Genesis 4:10 (Cain); Genesis 18–19 (Sodom); Exodus 3:7–9 / Sirach 35:18–19 (oppression); Deuteronomy 24:14–15 / James 5:4 (withheld wages).

Sins reserved to the supreme pontiff.

Enormous mutilation of a cleric. Simony. Burning of churches. Falsification of Apostolic instruments. A sacred act done in the time of major excommunication, or of an interdict from divine things.

Excepted are boys, monks, old men, the poor, women, and those to whom because of war access to the Pope is not open, or who have another legitimate and necessary impediment. For such can be

absolved by their own Bishop from the aforesaid crimes.

Among others, by the Bishop of Paris, in the year 1515, these were reserved to himself.

Homicide. Sorcery. Sacrilege. Heresy. Simony. Adultery. Debauchery and rape of virgins and of women living honestly. Violation of nuns.

Incest with blood-kin and affines within the fourth degree.

The sodomitical sin.

Fornication with her whom you have received from the sacred font of baptism, or have heard in confession.

A contract of marriage either clandestine, or against the Church's prohibition.

Procurement of sterility and of abortion.

To practise lust in a consecrated church.

Profanation of a temple and of a sacred place.

To hinder ecclesiastical liberty or jurisdiction.

To hinder the divine office.

Profane abuse of sacred things, as of the Eucharist, of Chrism, and the like.

To do a sacred thing on an altar or in vestments not consecrated, or after food has been taken.

To bury an excommunicate in a sacred place.

Excommunicates who will not go out of the temple at the time of divine worship.

To be ordained by a strange bishop, faculty not first obtained.

To be promoted by a leap [skipping grades].

To celebrate in the time of an interdict from divine things.

Oppression. Manifest usury.

Conspiracy and conjuration against one's own ecclesiastical prelate.

Striking of parents.

Violent striking of a priest or cleric.

Burning of houses: favour and counsel in that matter.

Violation of faith solemnly exhibited.

Falsification of public instruments.

Lying and perjury in judgement.

Transgression of vows.

Blasphemy against God and the saints.

To plot death against one's wife or husband.

To enter religion while a wife is living after carnal union. And all other sins, by the commission of which delinquents fall under the sentence of major excommunication.

On the Sacraments

The sacraments of the Church are seven, given and instituted for us by GOD for curing our infirmities:

Baptism, against original sin.

Confirmation, against infirmity and difficulty toward the good.

Order, against ignorance of true things. For the ordained ought to be learned, that he may be able to instruct others.

These three higher sacraments cannot be repeated.

But the four that follow can be repeated.

Penance, against mortal sin.

Matrimony, against unbridled lust.

The Eucharist, against affection for earthly things: that by seeing God visibly under the sacrament, through him made visible we may be caught up and stirred into the love of invisible things.

Extreme Unction, against venial sin.

Baptism blots out the old sin; Extreme Unction the venial;
True confession blots out the mortal.
Confirmation also strengthens in virtue and in faith.
Order teaches many things. The venerable body of Jesus
Drives away human affections. And wanton Venus
Matrimony. These seven thus heal the wounds of the mind.

The seven sacraments dispose toward having the seven virtues.

Baptism is the sacrament of faith.

Confirmation, of hope.
The Eucharist, of charity.
Penance, of justice.
Order, of prudence.
Extreme Unction, of perseverance in faith, which is the complement of fortitude.
Matrimony, of temperance.

Soto's Additions on Part IV

Additions of the Reverend Father Pedro de Soto.

Concerning what has been handed down in this fourth part, let the diligent reader note that much of it (so far as concerns sins and their confession) is not altogether necessary; yet the

Author's diligence ought not for that reason to be judged superfluous. He wished to set out whatever is customarily taught to the less instructed in the Catholic Churches in the teaching of the Catechism, and he did not avoid repeating the same things now and then, because this is necessary for the less instructed. Yet among these things there are not a few that are necessary for the very uncovering of sins.

To speak briefly, then, of each: among the sins against the five senses there is nothing that does not belong to one or other of the capital sins, and they are to be judged by the rules set down above. Where, speaking of the sense of taste, he refers us to gluttony, we wish to give a warning that we omitted there. Among the sins of gluttony he speaks of those who eat against the custom or the constitution of the Church before the due hour, placing among these those who eat first thing in the morning before the prayers enjoined on them, or on feast days before hearing Mass. Here the Author took care to train boys and young people in a certain devout decency and civility of manners, and rightly so, lest like brute beasts they run to the body's food, leaving God and their own mind behind. Yet you are not to think that by any precept or custom this is even a venial sin. One can indeed sometimes sin lightly in this matter through disordered haste, beyond all decency and necessity.

Concerning all the sins of the senses, then, be warned: do not confess again what concerns them, if you have already confessed it under the sins or under the commandments. They are not new sins, for they are abuses of the senses. And great care must be taken that the same things are not repeated over and over in confession. Besides useless tedium, some of them carry a danger as well, being foul and indecent. It will be better, therefore, after all one's sins have been made known, or gone over privately, to grieve, among the other causes of sorrow, for the abuse of one's senses and powers and members, which have been given us by the most good God for his glory. Yet do not leave off reading these things: perhaps you will be reminded more explicitly of something you had not weighed before.

The same is to be judged of the theological virtues. Sins against them, as he himself says, have been sufficiently explained under the first commandment of the Decalogue. Here we wish to point out that the book printed at Lyon reads differently from the one printed at Antwerp. For in the place where he speaks of the connection of these virtues, the Antwerp edition has a Catholic but somewhat obscure opinion, the other a plainly heretical one. They follow one another in turn, he says (speaking of those three), so that one plainly cannot exist without the other. We have therefore removed both, although the first is Catholic, and have put instead what is most directly against the present heretics, adding the passage of Augustine in the margin, so that it may not be imputed to us, and the authority of so great a father may be set against the heretics.

Concerning the four cardinal virtues, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and the sins of heart, mouth, deed and omission, the judgement is altogether the same, as also of the Sacraments of the Church, which he puts in the last place.

There remain three things in this part that are more necessary for the recognition and confession of sins. First, the ten causes he sets down by which another's sin is imputed to someone: these are rightly to be recognised and disclosed in confession. What is said about

them has been sufficiently explained in other places, namely concerning spiritual homicides and the causes of restitution.

The second concerns the eight circumstances of sins, where much is necessary for confession. In general the Author has rightly taught that all circumstances that either aggravate or change the species of the sin must be confessed: when the sin is mortal, beyond doubt, not when it is venial. That is plainly what he means. But in particular there would be much to say, if everything were to be explained. Take it, however, at least briefly, so that you may notice that more careful instruction is needed when anything of the kind comes up. The circumstance *Who* (which concerns the quality of the person) carries a new transgression when one sins against the things to which one is bound by that state: as if a cleric commits fornication, or a monk takes another's property. But that either of these blasphemes, or hates his neighbour, is not a new transgression. The examples the Author brings seem rather to belong elsewhere: as if a father or a teacher sins.

The same holds of the circumstance *against whom* one sins, of which he gives many examples when speaking of the quantity of the sin: as one who detracts from his teacher, one who injures a person who has deserved well of him, and so on.

The rest that belong to quantity, as stealing a thing of great value and so on, he rightly warns must be confessed. Sometimes they carry a new transgression, namely that of ingratitude; sometimes they so increase the sin that they contain (so to speak) many sins, any one of which is a sin by itself. One theft of a thousand gold pieces is certainly equivalent to a thousand others. So this quantity must be made known as it is held in memory, as he says of the circumstance of number. What he says of the circumstances *where* and *by whom*, that is, of place and instruments, must also be weighed by the other rules. Doing in a sacred place things that are forbidden there, namely theft, or the shedding of human blood or of seed, is sacrilege. In the others, too, some things carry a new transgression, but not all.

In the circumstance of the end, to sin without any temptation is certainly not a new transgression, although there is greater malice in it; so also what he puts under the circumstance of manner, to sin after long premeditation. In all these, then, keep the saying *Nothing too much*, and the other: *He who blows hard draws blood*.[1]

In the circumstance of time, although to sin on feast days is not thought by many to be a new transgression, it is nevertheless safer to confess it.

The third, finally, what he says of the threefold sin, namely original, venial and mortal, belongs in no small part to the purpose of confession; but it truly needs a longer and more attentive explanation: namely, the distinction of mo[r]tal sin from venial. For original sin is to be left aside for now. The Author explained that distinction, as suits the less instructed, with a homely wit (as they say), but in a way that can be sufficient: provided that you do not think venial sin is only an obligation to temporal punishment and not truly guilt. As for what he says at the end, that one must beware of saying: *this sin is light, I do not care to correct it*, and so on, *for this is impenitence and blasphemy against the Holy Spirit*: as though the intention of remaining in venial sin were mortal, or contempt of it because it is very small, beware of understanding it so.[2] Certainly, where nothing else greater is added to the venial sin, no contempt of God, no

hardening of the soul against growth in charity, no other graver circumstances, however firm the intention of remaining in it may be, it is still not to be judged mortal simply because it is venial and therefore its correction is not cared for. It is certainly dangerous, and all are rightly to be deterred from it. The desire of sinning venially sometimes drags one into mortal transgressions; and by the very habit and the weakness it brings to the soul, venial sin is beyond doubt a kind of indisposition, and as it were, not indeed a corruption of the humours, but a not sufficiently fit tempering of them.

End of the Additions.

[1] *Ne quid nimis*: the proverb (Greek *mēden agan*), as in Terence, *Andria* 61. *Qui multum emungit, elicit sanguinem*: Prov. 30:33 (Vulg. *qui vehementer emungit, elicit sanguinem*), quoted freely.

[2] This matches the common scholastic teaching (e.g. Aquinas, *ST* I-II q. 88 a..

Part V: On Penance and Its Parts

On Penance

THE FIFTH PART OF THE METHOD OF CONFESSION: ON PENANCE AND ITS PARTS.

Since the plan of the work undertaken requires that we treat of penance rather than of the other sacraments, we shall therefore leave aside the others, which do not serve our purpose, and speak of penance.

Penance in general is the amendment of a sin committed, with inward contrition and a firm purpose of not sinning again: and it is the beginning of returning to God.

Penance:
gladdens the Angels;
justifies the ungodly;
recovers good things lost;
invites to eternal life.

Bernard: Three things are necessary for the penitent: abstinence, by which the pride of the flesh is tamed; reading, by whose fruit the mind that is to be reformed is fed into vigour; prayer, by whose protection and guard the swarms of the virtues are sheltered.

Necessary for the penitent:
hope of pardon;
contrition of heart;
confession of guilt;
fulfilment of what the priest enjoins;
flight from sin.

The parts of penance:
contrition of heart;
confession of mouth;
satisfaction of deed.

On Contrition

Contrition (which is called the gate of salvation) is the displeasure at sins committed and the hatred of them above every hateful thing, and the purpose of avoiding sins above every thing to be avoided, together with the will to confess and to make satisfaction at the proper time and place. It arises from the consideration of one's own iniquity and from fear of the judgements of God, joined with hope of pardon; for fear of God without hope of pardon would bring forth not contrition but despair. Hope in the divine mercy must therefore be a cause of contrition.

Attrition is displeasure at sin, but not above every hateful thing, and a purpose of avoiding sin, but not above every thing to be avoided; and this does not suffice for the blotting out of mortal sin.

Requirements for True Contrition

That the penitent, out of an actual love of GOD, detest sin for the sake of GOD, because it is offensive to GOD and against his honour; and that he resolve within himself, with GOD as his guide, to abstain in future not only from the sins committed, for which he grieves, but also from all mortal sins: so that he would not, for anything whatever, deliberately commit a mortal sin.

That he be ready to make satisfaction to those whom he has offended by word or deed. And if he cannot do it, at least that he grieve from his heart that he was hostile to his neighbour. Further, that he have the will to make satisfaction to his neighbour when his means or the opportunity allow.

That he spare those who have offended him in any way: for we must believe that what we have committed is plainly not forgiven us, if we are inexorable in forgiving the sins of others.

That he be ready to resign an office or a business that cannot be carried on without mortal sin, and to avoid the occasions of sins as far as he can.

That he have a firm purpose of confessing and of making satisfaction to God, at the proper time and place, for the sins committed: and in case of necessity this purpose has the effect of confession and satisfaction.[1]

[1] Cf. Trent, Sess. XIV, ch. 4 (contrition perfected by charity reconciles before the sacrament is received, but not without the desire for it, *votum*, which is included in it).

These five things mentioned must all be present together in one who is truly penitent, so that the contrition may be true and not feigned. Whoever says the following truths from the heart and devoutly, let him know that he is in grace, even if he had committed all the sins mentioned above.[2]

[2] Compare Trent, Sess. VI, ch. 9 and can. 13–14, against claiming certainty of faith that one is in grace.

Lord Jesus Christ, I have sinned in this way or that against your infinite goodness; and this displeases me above all: for which reason I do penance, because I have offended you, who are wholly to be revered and worshipped, and because I have transgressed your commandment.

Lord Jesus Christ, I have a good purpose, with the help of your aid, of taking care for myself in future not to fall back into sin, and of avoiding the occasions of sins as far as I can.

Lord Jesus Christ, I have a good will to make the confession of my sins entire at the proper time and place, according to your precept and that of holy mother Church, and also to restore to each person what was taken, when I have the means.

On Confession

Confession is the lawful declaration of sins before a priest, with the lawful absolution of the same by the priest. For mental contrition is not enough unless there be also spoken confession at the proper time and place.

Confession Ought to Be

Voluntary, Premeditated, Diligent, Entire, Self-accusing, One's own, Contrite, Shamefaced, Humble, Full of hope, True, Bare.

Every good Christian ought to confess freely and willingly, not only from custom, fear, or human shame; otherwise the confession would be neither acceptable to God nor saving to the man, since it would not proceed from charity, but only from the wish that the man should not be despised by everyone as one who had departed from ancestral custom.

A man ought to think beforehand how he will speak in confession: what separately, what together. And he ought to use as much diligence in calling his sins to memory, and in drawing up the account of his past life for the priest, God's vicar, as he would use if an account had to be rendered for a temporal matter, and that a hard one and of great moment. Some need more time to examine their conscience, others less, according as they have put off confession for a shorter or longer time, or in the meantime have been more or less careful to commit their sins to memory.

Just as every kind of diligence is used to avoid bodily death, so it is fitting that all care and diligence be used still more carefully to recover eternal life. Augustine: He who will be immortal ought to do with joy what, being mortal, he would do to put off death. Let the penitent therefore be ready to do, to recover the life of the soul, whatever he would do to avoid the death of the body.

In confession no mortal sin, whether certain or doubtful, together with the necessary circumstances, may be deliberately kept back. For God does not accept a halved confession, nor does he give a halved pardon: for he never absolves anyone from one mortal sin without by the same act absolving him from all.[1] And if the penitent neglects to search his conscience, making light of it in his own mind, and omits something necessary to confession, he does not make an entire confession of his sins.

[1] The sense, not the wording, is in ps.-Augustine, *De vera et falsa poenitentia* 9.23 (*quaedam enim impietas infidelitatis est, ab illo qui iustus et iustitia est dimidiam sperare veniam*), and 15.30 (*non confiteri dimidiate uni, dimidiate alteri*)

The sinner ought to accuse himself, to set out his sins to the priest, and to examine his conscience before he presents himself to the confessor, and not wait until the priest questions him about each thing. And while he sets out his sins he ought not to spare himself: not ascribe his fault to God, not to fortune, not to the stars, not to the devil, not to companions, not to the world, not to his temperament, not to the flesh; but he ought to explain the aggravating circumstances and keep silent about the excusing ones, and he ought to transfer all the blame to himself. For there is no sin unless it is voluntary. Augustine: He is upright and calls rightly upon God who, in all the evils he suffers, accuses himself and not God; and in the good things he does, praises not himself but God. For just as God repels one who defends his sins, so he receives one who confesses them. Before this just and merciful judge, he who accuses himself of sin excuses himself; and he who excuses himself from sin accuses himself.

He who confesses his sins should confess his own only, not those of others. And let him pass over in silence the names of those who were partners in the crime, unless the species of the sin cannot be expressed without declaring the one who was aware of the crime and a partner in it. In that case a priest is to be chosen who cannot come to know the partner in the crime. Moreover, nothing is to be mixed into confession that is foreign to its purpose.

One must confess one's sins with displeasure at all the mortal sins committed, above every hateful thing, and with the purpose of avoiding every mortal sin, above every thing to be avoided. The more we are pierced with compunction for them, the more the bonds of sins are loosened as to the punishment. Sins are therefore to be called to mind with sorrow and bitterness of heart. For he by no

means truly does penance who has no tribulation of spirit at the remembrance of his sins; and that is the mark of the reprobate.

The penitent ought to set out his sins with shame and modesty, so that he blushes at the foulness and ugliness of his own soul. And this shame, by God's grace, is counted as part of the satisfaction, if it is overcome for the love of God that is to be embraced. Bernard: We are commanded to confess our sins for this reason, that we may have the blush as a punishment: for blushing is a great punishment; and so he who blushes for Christ becomes worthy of mercy. Indeed, as much as the shamelessness of the sinner displeases God, so much does the shame of the penitent please him. Yet there are some who, so as to be less ashamed, since they often fall back into the same sin, frequently change their confessor; whereas they ought rather, for the sake of greater shame, to confess more often and more clearly to the same one.

Confession ought to be humble in four ways. As to the understanding: that the penitent recognise himself to be a most wretched sinner, and unworthy of pardon. As to the affection: that he submit himself to the confessor and to the divine judgement. As to the tongue: that he set out his sins with reverence and trembling, as though before Christ. As to outward acts: that the penitent man, with head uncovered (if his health allows), out of reverence for Christ and the Sacrament, and on bended knees, humbly set out his sins. For better is humble confession in evil deeds than proud boasting in good deeds. But the heart cannot be humbled before the priest in confession unless it has first been contrite. Hence it is said in the Psalm: *A contrite and humbled heart, O God, you will not despise.* It is first called contrite, and afterwards humbled.

The penitent ought to be in the hope that he can obtain pardon from God however much he has sinned, provided that in making his confession he performs his part vigorously. For penance that does not proceed from confidence is useless and barren of pardon, and remains without mercy.

In confession a man ought not deliberately to insert anything false, by feignedly praising or blaming himself: for it would be a lie in the sacramental judgement, and would do injury to the judge, that is, to the confessor, the vicar of Christ.

Confession ought to be bare, without obscurity of words that hides the sins or the circumstances of the sins. For all sins, however foul, are to be set out in such a way that the confessor fully and clearly understands the species of the sin, with the aggravating circumstances.

A Method of Preparing Oneself for Confession

Whoever wishes to confess entirely, let him rest a little within the secret chamber of his mind (so that he may be able to know himself), shutting out everything except God and the searching out of his sins. And first of all let him pray God to enlighten his mind to know all his sins; and so that they may come to mind, five things are to be considered and diligently examined.

They are: Time, Inclination, State, Company, the Species of the sins.

First, he must reflect from what time no confession of his sins has been made. Whether that confession was entire, so that the penitent deliberately kept nothing back. Whether he then had the will to abstain from sin thereafter (for otherwise the confession would have to be repeated); whether he fulfilled the penance enjoined by the priest. Further, whoever wishes to confess entirely should

search out and diligently examine what seasons have passed since his last confession, and what things are customarily done in those seasons, publicly or privately, so that he may be able to recall the offences committed in those times.

Second, let him consider to what sins he is inclined and prone, and how many times in a day or a week he could have committed that sin. For nature has made some prone to this sin, others to that; and no one, unless he is out of his mind, fails readily to recognise the goads that nature has planted in him toward this sin or that.

Third, let him consider what his condition and state are: whether a student or a teacher; a servant or a master; a cleric or a layman; a religious or a secular. Then let him go over again and again what the duties of his office are, and in what things men of the same condition are accustomed to sin.

Fourth, let him consider with whom he has dealt at home and in daily intercourse, and with whom outside the home in extraordinary dealings.

Fifth, let him consider in what he has sinned: and to do this conveniently, let him run through the ten commandments, the capital sins, the five senses, and the rest. And let him consider whether he has sinned by thought, by speech, by deed, by omission, or by sharing in a crime, or whether he has in any way been the cause of another's sinning.

For although all mortal sins are against one or other of the ten commandments, yet because some maintain that a given capital sin is against this commandment and others against that, so that it is not easy to tell against which commandment it should be said to be, we therefore, wishing to help the less instructed, have distinguished these things: the five senses, the causes of another's sin, the cardinal virtues, the works of mercy, distinguishing them also from those (the commandments). All of these could have been reduced to them; but the method of confession is easier with each arranged in this order. But enough of this: meanwhile let us return to the point from which we digressed.

When one sin has come to the penitent's mind, let him not go on to search out other sins until he has grieved for this sin specifically and detested it, so that he would wish it undone, and resolves never to fall back into it. For he ought to grieve and be contrite for each mortal sin one by one, if he has enough time for it; otherwise one general contrition would suffice. Then let him go over and weigh within himself again and again all the circumstances belonging to the number and species of that sin, namely:

Who he was when he sinned: of what condition and state; whether by that sin he was a scandal and stumbling block to another.

What he did: whether perjury, whether a lie, and so on. Whether he sinned by speech, by consent, by will, by deed, or by omission. What damage the sin caused.

Where he sinned: whether in a sacred place, whether in public.

By whom, or with what persons, and of what condition and state.

How often: whether once only, or more often. And if the number of the sins escapes him, he must consider how many times, more or less, he could have sinned; and further, how long he remained or persisted in the sin.

Why: whether from fear, from compulsion, from gross and supine ignorance, or from pure malice.

In what manner, and how enormously he sinned: whether in this way or in that.

When he sinned: whether on a feast day, and when his conscience ought to have been pure and free of all fault, or on a working day. When these eight circumstances have been turned over in the mind long and much, then at last let him go on to search out his other sins, and in each sin he finds he has committed let him search out the circumstances in the same way.

And when he has tracked down each of his sins as best he can, let him grieve in general with great sorrow of heart for all his sins, known, unknown, and forgotten; and also for the forgetting of sins that has come about through ignorance, if he thinks he has committed some things that have slipped his mind.

Afterwards let him consider not only in what he has offended, but also whom he has offended: how good, how kind, how loving, how gracious a father, his creator and benefactor. That he has cast him away from himself and let in the devil, his enemy. That he has driven innocence from his soul and brought in iniquity, its enemy.

Then let him consider the pains of hell, which he has justly deserved by his sins; the sorrowful passion of Jesus Christ, of whose fruit he would have been deprived (had he departed this life in that state); the joys of Paradise, from which he has of his own accord disinherited himself.

Lastly, let him choose for himself a confessor from among those who can absolve him: the best, and not aware of the crime he wishes to confess, discreet, and one who can apply a remedy to his sins. Augustine: He who confesses, let him confess to a better priest than he can.[1] And if the penitent cannot confess to a priest, because neither time nor place offers one to him who desires it, so great is the power of confession that, if a priest is lacking, he should confess to his neighbour.[2]

[1] ps.-Augustine, *De vera et falsa poenitentia* 10.25: *Qui igitur omnino confitetur sacerdoti, meliori quam potest confiteatur*.

[2] ps.-Augustine, *De vera et falsa poenitentia* 10.25: *Tanta itaque vis confessionis est, ut si deest sacerdos, confiteatur proximo. Saepe enim contingit, quod poenitens non potest verecundari coram sacerdote, quem desideranti nec locus nec tempus offert*.

A Useful Instruction for an Entire Confession

So that you may be able to confess better, it would be useful once a day, and especially before you give yourself to sleep, to examine how you have spent your time, and to run through each hour, thinking of the places where you were and the persons with whom you were: what you thought, what you said, what you heard, what you did, what you omitted; whether by that sin you gave others matter for sinning; and so of the other circumstances. Then let it grieve you that you have offended the Lord your God by those sins. Have also the purpose of confessing at the proper time and place, and of guarding thereafter against offending God as far as you can. And that he may deign to grant you this, you will implore his help: for without his aid you could not be set free even from the least sin; and unless God preserved you, you would fall headlong into all the gravest sins. Nor is there any reason why it should irk you to exercise your mind in such an examination: for the peace and gladness of mind you gain from it surpasses all worldly joy. And if you wish to keep this way of preparing for confession without great difficulty of mind, study to offend in few things, so that you may have few things to recall and confess.

Do not let sleep in before you have three times explored
all the acts of the day, marking each, good or bad:
"Where have I gone too far? What wrong have I done? What have I omitted?"
Beginning from where error first led me astray.
Then, steadfast of mind, try to drive out what is foul;
but the good, if there has been any, you will greet with gladness.

What Is to Be Observed During Confession

When the penitent has carefully examined and weighed everything with himself, then at last, with the greatest shame, contrition and humility, and with trust that pardon is to be obtained from God, not as though he were about to recite a story of his sins, let him present himself to the priest, make the sign of the cross, and say:

Bless me, father.

And after a few words from the priest, let him say:

I confess to almighty GOD, and to blessed Mary ever virgin, to my good angel and to all the saints of God, and to you, father: that from the hour in which I could sin until the present day I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, deed and omission. Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault.[1]

[1] It differs from the Mass *Confiteor* of the 1570 Roman Missal.

Here let him begin to say how he has sinned: first in faith and the articles of faith, then in the commandments of the Decalogue, in the capital sins, in the five senses, whether he has been a cause of another's sin, and in what way. And let him say whether he sinned in thought only, or also in deed, in word or by omission, not omitting at the same time to confess the circumstances that aggravate the sin. But if he does not wish to keep this order while confessing, he can set out his sins in two ways.

In the first way: let him begin from the day of his last confession and, running through each day or week up to the present day, tell the sins he committed in those periods. Or let him begin in reverse order from the present day and, setting out his sins, go back step by step to the day of his last confession.

In the second way: let him set out first all the gravest sins that he knows for certain he has committed, and afterwards the lighter sins. When these have been set out, let him tell the general and light sins, which can scarcely be told by number: such as light and idle thoughts, light and idle words, negligence and sloth, waste of time, turning of the heart away from God during prayer, insufficiently due thanksgiving for God's benefits, excessive care for the body and for temporal things, light disturbances against one's neighbour, light judgement of another's heart, and the like.

While confessing, the penitent who speaks of vainglory over some spiritual good he has, or of omitting some good he is accustomed to do, must take the greatest care not to fall through that very declaration into greater vainglory, as one who wishes on that account to be judged devout by his confessor. And let him take care not to seek his confessor's praise for a humble, frequent and pure confession, or for having few and light sins. If he feels himself wounded by this, let him not be afraid

to uncover the wound at the end of the confession. And when the penitent has humbly and carefully declared to the priest whatever he knows, he shall add:

In these and in many other sins I, a most wretched sinner, have offended my creator; therefore I say: through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. And I ask pardon of God, and I beseech the most blessed virgin Mary, my good angel with all the saints, and you, father, to pray for me, a most wretched sinner, to our Lord God JESUS CHRIST almighty, that he may have mercy on me. If more came to mind, I would gladly confess them. And of you, my father, I humbly ask that you absolve me from my sins and reconcile me to the most holy Church.

Excommunication, Reserved Cases and Faculties

One who is under the greater excommunication must first be absolved by the one who has power to absolve from it, before he can be absolved by his parish priest from his other sins.

But from reserved sins that are not subject to excommunication he can be absolved by the parish priest (to whom he is to confess all his sins), on this condition, however: that afterwards he goes to the Bishop or his vicar about the reserved sins. Or if he first confesses only the reserved sin to the latter, then afterwards, confessing all his sins to his parish priest, let him ask for full absolution from all his sins, reserved and not reserved.

Nevertheless, in extreme necessity every priest can absolve not only from every sin but also from every sentence of excommunication. If, however, the penitent recovers, he will be obliged to go to the bishop.[2]

[2] Compare Trent, Sess. XIV, ch. 7: in danger of death (*in articulo mortis*) any priest may absolve any penitent from all sins and censures.

Here it is to be noted that we cannot be absolved from our sins indiscriminately and by any priest at all, but only by the supreme pontiff, our Bishop and our parish priest, or by priests to whom they have given this power.

If the penitent sees that for a reasonable cause he either cannot or ought not to fulfil the penance enjoined by the priest, let him humbly explain the cause to the confessor and ask for another penance.

What Is to Be Observed After Confession

The first care must be to fulfil the penance. Then thanks are to be given to God's long-suffering and patience, by which he waited for the sinner himself to come to penance, not wishing to judge him at once, but patiently bearing with his sins; nor did he for that reason withdraw his benefits from him. Lastly, dangerous occasions of sinning by the same sin that the penitent has previously confessed are to be avoided.

On Satisfaction

Satisfaction is to cut off the causes of sins and not to give their suggestions an entry. The causes of sins are the occasions that entice to sinning. By contrition, together with the purpose of confessing at the proper time and place, God absolves a man from guilt and restores sanctifying grace; yet he does

not by this very fact remit the whole punishment owed to the sin, but changes the eternal punishment into a temporal one, to be paid in this world or in purgatory. But since the punishment of purgatory exceeds every punishment of this world, and since, if we ourselves punished our sins in the present, we would find no one to punish them in the world to come, it would therefore be better to do penance and make satisfaction for our sins in the time of grace and mercy (that is, in the time of our life), when by a light penalty we can avoid the most grievous punishment of purgatory, than to pay the full punishments due in the time of justice and severity, where what is lacking on the side of the will is made up in torment. So it is much better that we ourselves do the good works which we expect our friends to do for our soul after our death, than to entrust them to our friends, who may perhaps forget. For it is more blessed to go out free than to seek freedom after chains.

The priest enjoins a penance on the one confessing for two reasons: either so that, by the labour of fulfilling the penance, the penitent may be kept from such a sin in future, or so that it may make satisfaction for part of the punishment owed to the sin, which would otherwise have to be paid in purgatory.

Graver sins require a graver penance, lighter ones a lighter. For as the offence was that went before, such must be the reconciliation that follows; and we ought to be as much readier to avenge our sin as we were more inclined to the fault; and as great as was the will to sin, so great must be the devotion to repentance: so that the measure of the punishment may match the measure of the guilt. For it is not by a light contrition that those debts are to be remitted to which eternal death is owed, nor is a sparing satisfaction enough for those sins for which eternal fire is prepared. Whoever has perfectly felt their burden, or the wound of his soul, will feel the punishment of the body not at all, or certainly little, and will not count the labour by which he knows his past sins are blotted out and future ones are guarded against.

Let the penitent count all the fruits of his penance small; let him never believe that they suffice; let him always grieve, always blush before the Lord before whom he sinned; let him end his sorrow only with his life. Where sorrow fails, penance fails too; and if penance comes to an end, what is left of pardon?[1]

[1] ps.-Augustine, *De vera et falsa poenitentia* 13.28: *omnes fructus suae poenitentiae parvos habeat, nunquam sufficiat, semper doleat, semper de Domino ante quem peccavit erubescat, dolorem cum vita finiat … Ubi enim dolor finitur, deficit et poenitentia. Si autem poenitentia finitur, quid relinquitur….*

The best way of making satisfaction is frequent detestation of the sin committed. For when GOD absolves a man from the bond of sin, he binds him with the bond of perpetual detestation of the sin, at least habitually: so that if the sin ever comes to mind, he should detest it expressly; otherwise he would seem to approve it and to offend again. Bernard: The true penitent is always in sorrow and in labour: he grieves for the past, he labours to guard against the future.

It is not enough to leave off sin (though that is something) unless sufficient penance is done for the sin. For a writer, if he stops writing, has not erased what he had written because he has added nothing more. Nor in like manner has he who heaps insults on another made satisfaction if he merely falls silent, since he must certainly counter the words of his earlier pride with words of humility that follow. Nor is a debtor released because he does not add other debts, unless he also pays what he had borrowed. So too, when we have offended God, we by no means make satisfaction if we leave off iniquity, unless we also pursue the pleasures we loved with laments set against them.[2]

[2] Gregory the Great, *Regula pastoralis* 3.30 (*Neque enim scriptor, si a scriptione cessaverit…*), checked in the Bibliotheca Augustana text.

Satisfactory works:

Contrition.
Confession.
Shame, the companion of confession.
Detestation of sin.
Almsgiving.
Fasting.
Prayer.

By almsgiving is understood the carrying out of the works of mercy, both corporal and spiritual, and whatever we do for the good of our neighbour. By fasting, every affliction and tribulation of the body.

By prayer, every interior and exterior work belonging to the worship of latria: such as all the gestures of the body by which we serve God, holy affections, and the like.

A satisfactory work ought to be voluntary, good, well done, tending to God's honour, and laborious by its own nature.

On Relapse into Sin

He alone does penance worthily who so bewails his past evils that he resolves not to commit them again in future. Augustine: Penance that a following fault defiles is empty; laments are of no use if sins are repeated; it avails nothing to ask pardon for evil deeds and to repeat the evil deeds anew.[1] The same elsewhere: Let him whom true penance delights beware of the future. For confession of sin is good if healing also follows. For what use is it to uncover the wound and not apply the medicine? Do you wish to be a true penitent? Cease from sin, and sin no more. But beware of saying that you cannot abstain from sin, however hard you have tried. For God is kind (says Bernard), who does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear; and especially at the beginning of conversion he soothes the sores with the oil of mercy, so that neither the size of the disease nor the difficulty of the cure becomes known more than is expedient. Since, then, many grieve for their sin, confess and make satisfaction, and yet soon fall back into the same sin, we must speak of fleeing sin.

[1] Peter Lombard, *Sentences* IV d. 14, quotes these three sentences as *Augustinus in Soliloquio*.

Sin is avoided by avoiding the occasion of sinning: for instance, pleasure, forbidden games, foul spectacles, a bad companion, and the rest of that kind.

Whoever knows himself to be prone to some sin, and often to fall back into the same sin, will use three remedies to avoid it.

Let him resolve with himself that as often as he falls back into the same sin, he will at the first opportunity fulfil part of a satisfaction: for example, fast on bread and water, or say the penitential psalms, or give some money to the poor, or confess that sin within three days, or do some other similar good work.

Let him resolve with himself that as often as he is tempted to that sin, he will say the seven penitential psalms, or the history of the Passion, or this or that prayer to the virgin Mary or to some other saint, or will bend his knees as many times before an image of the crucified, before he turns the thought of his mind to that sin.

Let him resolve with himself that as often as he is tempted to that sin, he will turn his mind to thinking of the evil that will come to him from it: for instance, eternal damnation, the danger of death, death threatening at every hour, the loss of the joys of paradise and of the fellowship of God and his saints, the company of demons and the damned, and similar things of that kind.

Your death, Christ's death, the world's deceit, the glory of heaven,
and the pain of hell: these you must meditate.

Soto's Additions on Part V

Additions of the Reverend Father Pedro de Soto.

The plan of this work, as the Author says, rightly requires that penance be treated above all, since everything else taught here tends toward it. He has in fact set out here, clearly and briefly, the manner of doing penance, and what he says would suffice if it were well understood. Even so, it seemed to us most necessary to add some things at this point, so that the less instructed and the slower may be roused to grasp what has been taught and spurred on to carry it out.

First, then, whoever you are who are conscious of mortal sin and wish to rise from it by true penance (for there is no other way), take note that this is no light work and of no small moment, and that it calls for more than the least care, attention and concern. Put far from you the belief that true penance is done with very little effort. In truth, nothing does more harm to every pursuit of piety, every duty and every work of virtue (above all of Christian virtue, such as God requires) than a perfunctory performance that is for show only. Paul marked this evil as belonging especially to the last and perilous times: "having," he says, "an appearance of godliness, but denying its power." And this plague is far more ruinous to penance; would that it were not so very common. True penance is the remedy for all the evils of one's whole life and the one defence of human weakness; who has no need to take refuge in it? If it is not done truly, if we begin to be content with its mere appearance and think we have done true penance when we are far from it, will not that saying of the Gospel befall us: "The last state of that man becomes worse than the first"? For why does this happen, except that the wicked spirit that had gone out of him returns and finds his house swept with brooms and adorned (that is, pleased with itself over a perfunctory penance that has changed only the surface of the conscience), but empty (that is, bare of the solid truth of repentance and sorrow), and brings with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself? For in that surface cleansing of the conscience he had not really gone out at all; he had only pretended to. We greatly fear that this easy return of Christians to mortal sins, this short perseverance in penance, and finally this custom and conviction of putting penance off to the last place (that is, to the last hour of the time the Church has assigned for it) and of getting it over with in so short a moment, are a sign that it is done only perfunctorily and not in truth. Believe me, it takes a great effort and

straining of the soul's powers to return and rise from that deepest pit of sin to union with God, from the lowest hell to the highest heaven, from the far country to your father's house. It was of this above all that Christ the Lord said: "The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Great violence must be done to our very nature for true penance to be done. Nothing is harder for a neck that is untamed and lifted up by sin, nothing more bitter, than truly to hate oneself, to be displeasing to oneself, and to wait in anguish for God's mercy; nothing is heavier for human weakness than to give oneself over to sad and heavy cares. And yet both of these are most necessary for penance. One's years must be gone over again in bitterness of soul, and one must grieve with the closest attention. "Be in pain and labour, daughter of Zion," says the prophet, "like a woman in birth." We do not say this to frighten anyone away from the work of repenting, nor so that it be thought impossible, but so that it be not done sluggishly and half asleep. If we set about it vigorously, the divine arms are ready and open to receive us; if we do it too drowsily, we insult even this divine grace.

We also say this because we see so many varied and different things being taught, partly from a certain piety of excessive mercy, partly from ignorance or from too little careful thought, while these matters are weighed by human opinion and usage and not by the truth of the spirit of Holy Scripture and the Fathers, so that we greatly fear these various and strange doctrines. Some are persuaded that true penance is done with a mind and intention however slack. Others hold that at least by receiving the sacrament whatever is lacking is in the end supplied, so that that reception alone, without the intention to sin, ought to suffice, even if so great an integrity of sorrow and repentance is lacking. Others, for other reasons of piety and mercy, wish to console penitents at once and make them secure. To all these the following words of Cyprian reply, which we want those who wish to do penance to keep before their eyes: "Since it is written: Those who call you happy lead you into error and confuse the paths of your feet, he who soothes the sinner with flattering blandishments supplies fuel for sinning; he does not check offences but feeds them. But he who with firmer counsel rebukes and at the same time instructs his brother, advances him toward salvation. So the priest of God must not deceive with misleading compliance but provide with saving remedies. He is an unskilled physician who handles the swelling folds of wounds with a sparing hand and, by keeping in the poison shut up in the deep recesses of the body, increases it. The wound must be opened and cut; let the sick man, impatient through pain, cry out and shout and complain: he will give thanks afterwards when he feels himself healed." So far Cyprian.[1] If you think this is said only of the gravest crimes, note that all mortal sins, however small some may be compared with others or in the judgement of men, are in truth the gravest evils: they are disobedience to God's commandments, the provoking of his wrath, and finally the deserving of eternal damnation. What graver thing can be thought of? But those lesser ones (as we call them) have this about them that is much graver and more dangerous: they are held of less account, less thought about, penance for them is done less carefully, and we are more easily drawn into consenting to them, though they are enough to damn us for ever.

Not to keep you longer, then, nor to spend time in subtler speculations on so necessary a matter, take now the very practice and working of penance, as far as we can fit what we desire in this matter to the grasp of simple people and beginners; for this is no small task. We now set out how one who truly desires to do penance is to prepare himself.

The sum of this whole business plainly lies in contrition and sorrow. Penance is a kind of tree: its fruits are its works, namely satisfaction; its leaves are words, namely confession; and its root is contrition and sorrow itself. If this is whole and sound, the rest must be whole as well. Of it this is most true: "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit." So on the contrary, if the root is rotten and without sap, everything else must be false, even though for a time it deceives by some appearance of good. Here, then, we think all care and attention of mind must be brought to bear, that the contrition may be true and worthy. For this, take what follows.

First: when you have begun to wish to rise from sin, before all else ask God in humble and fervent prayer for the grace of true repentance, certain that you cannot truly repent of your sins unless God in his great mercy grants it to you. Pray, then, with Jeremiah: "Convert me, O Lord, to thee, and I shall be converted, for thou art the Lord my God. For after thou didst convert me, I did penance; after thou didst show me, I struck my thigh." Pray urgently and fervently, as one set among the gravest evils and in far graver dangers than if you were sunk in the deepest abyss, from which you cannot come up unless God's hand draws you out. Say, then: "Put forth thy hand from on high; deliver me from many waters, and out of the depths of the waters." Say: "My life has drawn near to hell." For there is no doubt that nothing is nearer to hell than sin, from which one must fall into it unless the grace of God comes first. Say again, therefore: "Let not the deep swallow me up, nor the pit shut its mouth upon me." Finally, recognise that you are set under the power of the gravest and deadliest enemies, and cry out: "Deliver me from those who hate me." And to take in everything, and to recognise the evils and dangers of the state of sin, say with Jeremiah: "My enemies have hunted me like a bird without cause." (For so we are caught in sin, by a deceitful bait.) It goes on: "My life has slipped into the snare; they have laid a stone over me; the waters have flowed over my head; I said, I am lost. I called upon thy name, O Lord, from the lowest pit; thou hast heard my voice; turn not away thine ear from my sobbing and my cries." Nothing truer or more fitting than all these words can be said of the fall into sin. Pray most humbly, as one utterly unworthy of what you ask, since you threw yourself into this snare though the very one you ask (God) deterred you and forbade it by the gravest commandments, and you chose these things rather than the most sweet obedience to your God, indeed rather than his friendship and grace. Pray, then, as one who deserves to be abandoned, that you may not be abandoned; but pray faithfully. Remember the centurion of the Gospel: "I am not worthy," etc., and the Canaanite woman. Say to God: "Thou hast said: Not for your sakes will I act, but for my name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations." "For thy name's sake, therefore, O Lord, pardon my sin."

We say this is to be done first of all, and we think it belongs most of all to the matter. Certainly all human effort in teaching, learning or carrying out what belongs to perfect sorrow for sin is the lesser part. God's grace alone teaches this and works it in the hearts of his own, many times in people neither taught by man nor even knowing it, as far as human judgement goes. These human aids are not to be left out; but one must lean above all on divine grace, without which the rest are nothing, while grace without the rest is sufficient; but it does not wish to be despised. Because of this we have good hope that God gives perfect contrition to many even when they have not yet been well taught about it by men.

Second: after this frequent prayer, and with it and in the midst of it, take care to gather most diligently all the powers of your soul, that is, your reason and all your affection. Having gathered them, exercise yourself most attentively in considering the divine goodness, that is, his beauty, his wisdom, and all his good things, both in himself and toward you. Then exercise yourself also in considering the gravity and ingratitude of sin, and do this by the light of the words of Holy Scripture: "See that it is an evil and a bitter thing to have forsaken the Lord thy God, and that his fear is not with thee." And this: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have dug for themselves broken cisterns." And the whole sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel: "Make known to Jerusalem her abominations." And amid these things stir up all your affection, with every effort and straining of your spiritual powers, to the love of God and the hatred of sin. Do not doubt that sin is not remitted otherwise than when, in God's eyes, his love so prevails in your heart that he is loved above all things, and the hatred of sin is so great that it is hated above all other evils. In the eyes of God, I say, who alone looks into the abyss of the human heart, the state of the soul must be such that he himself sees the mind so disposed at present that whatever good comes before it, it values less than God, and whatever evil, it flees less than sin. The mind sometimes changes; that is why the just sometimes fall, when some affection prevails in their minds over the love of God. But as long as they are just, or are being justified, the love of God and the hatred of sin must prevail. This, we say, is necessary. Yet to bring it about we do not want you to be anxious in comparing God, in your affection, with other goods, or sin with other evils, whether in general or in particular. It does not much matter that you say: "I want God above all goods; I hate sin above all evils"; or, "I would rather die than sin; I would rather be poor," and the like. You can be deceived in saying these things. Increase, then, as much as you can, the love of God in you; increase the hatred of sin; lessen the desire for all other goods, as also the detestation of evils other than sin. This is done by effort of the powers, by attentive consideration, by fervour of spirit. These things, then, are to be cared for above all.

Third, and finally, we commend to you that when you have done all this, because of the uncertainty of the human heart, you first humble yourself before God in fear and trembling. So Paul wills that we work out our salvation, not with rash security, as Luther does. Say, then, when you have done all this: "I am an unprofitable servant." Next, not content with what is in the heart alone, seek, as Gregory wills, the testimony also of the tongue and the hand; that is, learn from your very works how truly you detest sin. For John teaches that these are the true testimonies of love: "Let us not love," he says, "in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Many signs of true charity and penance taken from works are given by the doctors. We think one only, from Augustine, is to be thought of before the rest: namely, change of life. He believes it necessary for the remission of mortal sins (that is, those whose doers "will not possess the kingdom of God"), and because we greatly wish his words to be before the eyes of all, we bring them in here: "Care must be taken," he says, "that no one think that those unspeakable sins, such that those who do them will not possess the kingdom of God, may be committed daily and daily redeemed by alms. For life is to be changed for the better," etc.[2] He plainly teaches, then, that change of life is necessary: he does not say the purpose of change, but change. Nor can we understand change otherwise than as change away from sin, or from the sins committed: that he who used to steal now steal no more, and so on. And indeed,

when sins do not present themselves to be done here and there or at once, let us understand that a man has changed his life who has truly purposed not to commit them. But what kind of purpose this is, and how great, we believe Augustine explained when he required change of life: change, certainly, of a life that was led in the habit of sin, or in the ease of sinning, sinning as it were freely and for nothing, or finally among particular occasions of sin known to oneself. Therefore, although human frailty must be pardoned for falling even often (pardoned, I say, in that one need not despair on that account), nevertheless, both by that word of Augustine and by a truly most compelling reason, we believe it necessary for true penance to be done that a life led amid those three things which we noted for closer consideration (for we think them the most dangerous of all, and we see them to be the most frequent: namely habit, ease of sinning, and not avoiding open and known occasions) should be changed from all of them. Otherwise, what kind of purpose of abstaining from sin is it that does not avoid these things in act and effectively? Those who fall even often, driven by various temptations, and then also often rise again, we wish to be of good hope for their salvation, provided that sorrow for sin and care to avoid it increase in them daily. But those whose mortal sins are daily and committed for nothing, who lead their life amid habits and occasions of them, ought to fear greatly for their salvation and hasten to change their life. For we wish this also to be gathered from that passage of Augustine: that penance for mortal sins is not a daily matter, that is, something that can be done for daily and new sins. We grant that penance can be done in the briefest moment, as is shown in David, especially by those who are accustomed to exercise themselves in the love of God and the hatred of sin but have fallen through weakness, as David did. But one who falls daily, again and again, into mortal sins, let him see to changing his life, if he believes Augustine, and not think that these sins may be committed daily and penance done for them daily. This change, we think, should be made by the prudent and mature counsel of priests or friends who fear God and know his teaching. In this we want those three things, which have for this reason been urged so often already, to be considered above all, and fitting remedies applied to them. For these are that wide way and broad gate that leads to destruction; therefore the truly penitent must change them in deed and effect now, not by a purpose for the future.

These things seemed to us rightly to be added at this point, as necessary for the slower and less capable. May the Lord grant that they be of use to them. From them also take the sense of what the Author said about contrition: what "hatred of sin above every hateful thing," etc., means. And from this, understand too how those three truths taken from Gerson are to be received (of which he says, "whoever says them from the heart and devoutly, let him know that he is in grace"). First, this cannot be known with certainty; but there is sometimes a testimony of conscience about it which can console us, if they are said truly, as he teaches, and not by word only, as other prayers sometimes are. We want you to have them so that you are admonished by them to true compunction; and indeed we think them most useful because of those sins which are sometimes committed in ignorance, or for which we have already done penance. But amid daily mortal sins, we think they can be said with the lips rather than with the heart.

We have said these things about contrition, the first part of penance. Of confession and satisfaction, the remaining two parts, enough has been handed down by the Author, as far as

concerns the purpose of the work. Certainly he teaches diligently about confession: the care to be taken in the examination of conscience, its manner, and the other conditions of confession. Likewise on satisfaction nothing has been left out that suits his plan. For this reason we did not think more should be added; and also because, if sorrow is right and perfect, it will rouse all the rest, and nothing will be wanting to confession and satisfaction. For this is the root of this tree, as we said.

End of the Additions.

[1] Cyprian, *De lapsis* 14(PL 4).

[2] Augustine, *Enchiridion* 19.70.

Part VI: On the Art of Dying Well

On the necessity of death

The Sixth Part of the Method of Confession: On the Art of Dying Well.

It is appointed for all men once to die, as a most grievous penalty for the sin of our first parents. Our first parents passed on this mortality (that is, the necessity of dying) to their descendants, because by eating of the forbidden fruit they sinned against God. Sin went before, and death followed: by sinning they lost life and found death. Just so, on the other hand, they would have passed on immortality to a long posterity if they had not sinned. From this general sentence of death no one is exempt, so that no one may be proud.

On the uncertainty of death

Nothing is more certain than death; nothing is more uncertain than the hour, place and manner of death. For who can know when he will die? Where? How? Well or badly? By the sword, by fire, by water, or by some other kind of death? No one, surely. Death lays its snares for us in every place and at every time, waiting for us and following us as a shadow follows the body. Who is so foolish, even if he is young, as to be sure that he will live till evening? What else is our life but a race toward death? Whoever is wise, then, will expect death every hour, ready every hour, as if he were without doubt to die in that same hour. For death stands at the doors of the old and lies in ambush for the young. God willed its hour to be hidden from us, so that while we are uncertain when we shall die we may always be found ready for death. Therefore a man, while alive and in health, ought to acknowledge his God and turn to him, and not wait until the hour of death. For death usually catches a man off guard and unprepared; and as death finds a man, so the man finds death. The perfect die with security and joy; the just with hope and trust; the unjust with trembling and distrust.

That death is desirable to just men

We walk continually among countless dangers: among the snares of demons, the swords of men, the unlawful motions of the flesh, the pains of the body, sorrows and excessive labours. The house of the body in which we live is falling down; the sea of the world on which we sail is stormy; whatever earthly thing we love is dangerous. For in the things in which we seek pleasure we usually find misery; and where happiness is believed to dwell, greater unhappiness is usually found. It is not without reason that heavenly Providence has heaped so many and such great evils on this present life. In the depth of his wisdom he has mercifully ordained that by the temporal things we suffer we should be cleansed from past sins and be more careful about future ones; that our pride be blunted, our negligence or sloth driven off, and our merits increased; indeed, that we be compelled to despise the world, to think little of this passing life, to lift up our minds, hearts and desires to God, and to long for the life of glory with our whole heart. For the saints, who have tasted a little of that heavenly glory and sweetness, loathe all earthly things, shrink from the delights of the world, despise the present life, pant with their whole heart for the abyss of heavenly sweetness, and bear the waiting for God's embrace with great impatience, with the Apostle who says: "Unhappy man that I am, who will

deliver me from the body of this death?" "For I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ"; because "as the hart longs for the fountains of waters, so my soul longs for thee, O God."

Although death brings us so many and such great goods, and leads the soul to where it will be for ever, yet the rest of our life, as God has prescribed it, is not to be abandoned by us. Nor may we leave the garrison and post of life without the command of our general (that is, God), just as we did not come here of our own accord. So those seem to me wholly forgetful of themselves, and to have taken too little thought and care for themselves, who are not content with the time given them for living, especially since the short time of life is long enough for living well and honourably. For what does it matter whether one dies young or old, and arrives at death, the end of the human race, as at a harbour out of the stormy waves of this world, since the number of years by itself makes a man neither wretched nor happy?

On the death of the just

Nothing is more precious than to be in the hand of God, in which are the souls of the just; therefore "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his just ones." If indeed that is to be called death which turns to the gain of the one who dies, and which, as the end of labours, the completion of victory, the gate of life, the entrance into perfect security and the beginning of reward, joins the soul to the highest good. For the just, departing from this life, pass from labour to rest, from lowliness to glory, from poverty to a kingdom, from fear to security, from sorrow to joy, from death to life: to that life which alone deserves the name. For to them death is nothing but going out of prison, the end of exile, the completion of labour, the coming into port, the end of the pilgrimage, the laying down of a most heavy burden (that is, the body), release from a house that is falling down, the end of all evils, escape from all dangers, the paying of nature's debt, the return to the fatherland, the entrance into glory. Hence the day on which the saints, passing from this world, are received into heaven is called their birthday, as though they only then begin to live when they have departed this bodily life; for to them death is the exit from the present life and also the entrance into a better.

On the death of the wicked

The death of sinners is very evil: bad in the loss of the world and of those whose presence was pleasant, whose sight was welcome and whose company was familiar; worse in the separation of the flesh from the soul; and worst of all in the torment of the fire of hell. For the punishment of the damned exceeds all the torments of the holy martyrs, even if they were all put together. The sinner has horror at his going out, pain in his passing, shame in the sight of the most just Judge, and exceeding dread when, leaving the world, he comes into a region wholly unknown, where the angels of hell and the foulest creatures meet the soul and drag it off to everlasting torments. And his goods are divided into three parts: the soul is given to the demons, the corpse to the worms, and his temporal goods to his heirs, who are usually either ungrateful or spendthrift.

On the danger at death

At the point of death, unless God comes to a man's help in a special way, the devil lies in wait for him as much as he can. First he tempts him about the truth of the faith and urges him to unbelief; he also sets before the eyes of his mind the sins he has committed, to lead the sinner into despair. Besides this, the pain when the soul is separated from its body is usually beyond words, so much so that a man can hardly think of anything except what he feels in his body, namely the greatest and most

grievous pain. Therefore it is written: "In death there is no one who is mindful of thee, O Lord." Augustine: "The sinner is struck with this punishment, that in dying he forgets himself, who while he lived forgot God." Of this danger at the point of death Bernard speaks very well: "Evil spirits besiege our door, and those horrible shapes await our coming. So I dread to go out, and I tremble at the very entrance of the harbour. I am not confident that there will be one standing near to receive me as I go out. I do not go out safely unless the Lord himself guards my going out. Alas, I shall be the sport of demons who seize me, with no one standing by to redeem me or to save me."

How the dying are to be helped

Since we must learn to die throughout our whole life, so that each may know how he can die happily, or help the dying, we shall add some things on the art of dying well, the material taken for the most part from the *Tripartite Work* of John Gerson.

By three exhortations we can provide for the salvation of the dying

Consider, dearest brother, that it is appointed for all, of whatever condition and state, once to die, some later, some sooner, according to the course of life that they have received from God. We are all subject to his most powerful hand, to pay the debt of nature when it pleases the Lord our God, who has given us in this world an inn to stay in, not a home to dwell in.[1] There is no reason, then, to long so eagerly for this life, in which often the longer one lives the more one sins: the longer it is, the greater the guilt. For evils grow daily and goods are taken away. You ought rather to rejoice that by this death you are passing from this temporal and wretched life to eternal and blessed life.

[1] The contrast of inn and home is from Cicero, *De senectute* 23.84 (*commorandi natura deversorium nobis, non habitandi dedit*).

Acknowledge, dearest brother, with thanksgiving, the benefits God has bestowed on you: that he has kindly granted you knowledge of himself until now, even in this last period of your life; that he has not willed you to be overtaken by sudden death; that he has mercifully called you, his creature, through the religion of the orthodox faith to the heavenly inheritance. For these and countless other benefits give thanks to the Lord our God, taking refuge in his inexhaustible mercy and humbly asking pardon for your sins.

Consider, dearest brother, that God the Father willed his beloved Son, guiltless and innocent, in whom he was well pleased, to bear so many and such great tribulations for us wretched sinners. So, since in the course of your life you have committed many sins, and very grievous ones, for which you have deserved punishments far harsher than these, you ought to bear patiently the pain of this illness and of death, humbly asking God that the present pain may avail you for the [r]emission of your sins, and that by his mercy he may exchange the horrible torments of purgatory for this affliction of yours, and give you present tribulations in place of future punishments; these present ones are nothing compared with those to come. If you ask this with a contrite heart, you will bear as voluntary a punishment that is necessary, and you will make your purgatory here in the world, by paying for your sins with these punishments that are otherwise necessary and that you can by no means avoid. Christ and the martyrs bore death patiently. Believe that whatever you suffer in the flesh is lighter than their torment. Willing or unwilling, you will die. Make a virtue of necessity, then, so that while you pay nature's tribute you may find merit with God.

In this manner you will question the dying person

Do you not wish, dearest brother, both to die and to live in the solid[it]y of the faith of Jesus Christ, as a true Christian?
R. I do.

Do you not ask God's pardon for the sins you have committed against his supreme majesty, and because you have not honoured him worthily?
R. I ask it.

Have you not resolved to change your life for the better, if you are granted to be freed in health from this illness?
R. I have resolved it.

Do you not ask God of his goodness to grant you the grace not to turn aside from this holy purpose, but always to advance in good works, with contrition for your former sins?
R. I ask it.

Are you not conscious of any mortal sin which you have not confessed to a priest?
R. No.

Would you not gladly confess any forgotten sins, if they came to mind?
R. I would confess them.

Do you not desire your heart to be enlightened by God, so that you may recall forgotten sins to memory and confess them?
R. I desire it.

Do you not from your heart forgive all who have been troublesome to you in any way?
R. I forgive them.

Having put all old enmities out of your mind, are you not ready to be reconciled with your enemies?
R. I am ready.

Do you not ask pardon of those whom you have at any time offended in word or deed?
R. I ask it.

Do you not wish everything taken by you to be restored?
R. I do.

Do you not bear with an even mind, for God's sake, all the pain you are suffering?
R. I bear it.

Short prayers to be said at death

Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth.

Jesus Christ, Father of mercies, have mercy on me, thy poor little creature. Help me in this last need; succour a needy and desolate soul, O Lord our God, that it be not devoured by the hounds of hell.

Sweetest Lord Jesus Christ, for the honour and power of thy blessed passion, bid me be written in the number of thine elect.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, set thy passion, cross and death between thy judgement and my soul.

My Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, I give myself wholly to thee; do not refuse me. I come to thee; do not drive me away.

Now, Lord, according to thy will, deal mercifully with me, and command my spirit to be received in peace.

Let that sweet voice sound in the ears of my mind, Lord Jesus: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise."

Then let him greet the Virgin Mary, saying:

Mary, mother of grace,
Mother of mercy,
Protect us from the enemy,
Receive us at the hour of death.

Next let him invite the angels with prayers, saying:

Spirits of heaven, most blessed angels, stand by me (I pray) as I depart from this world, and mightily snatch me from the snares of the unclean spirits, and take my soul into your company. Thou above all, my good angel, my guardian.

Lastly let him invite with prayers to his help the saints, men and women, whom he honoured with particular devotion, saying:

O most glorious Saint N. (or Saint N.), while I lived I placed in thee my hope and trust that thou wouldst plead for me with God. Now most of all (if ever) I need thy help. Succour me, then, and make haste to help me at this point of extreme need.

How one must provide for the dying

If the sick person strays in any way from the truth of the faith, let the example of the holy martyrs be put before him, who suffered so many and such great kinds of torments in witness to this orthodox and true Christian religion.

If he despairs of the pardon of his sins, let it be put before him that, if the impiety of the sinner himself is very great, greater still is the pity of God who shows mercy. For it exceeds all crimes in their quantity and number; it is set before all in common and offered to all; no one is without a share in it except one who refuses it; and it is infinite. But the number of sins committed even from the

beginning of the world is finite, and the smallest drop of the most precious blood of the Lord our God, shed in the passion, outweighs them all.

Further, that the singular clemency of our God was ready to receive Judas (who is held the most wicked of all) into mercy, calling him "friend"; yet because he despaired he was damned, and he sinned more by despairing than by betraying Jesus Christ. Lastly let it be put before him that the remission of sins is an article of faith, by which it is meant that however much and however often a man has sinned, he can still obtain remission of his sins by true penance; and unless he believes this, he is not a true Christian.

If he puts off receiving the sacraments of the Church, let it be shown him that receiving the sacraments in good time can help and cannot harm, and that perhaps such an opportunity of receiving them will never be given again. Let him be shown, besides, their great power and efficacy, and the danger he would fall into if he neglected them. If he is excommunicated, his friends must take care diligently that he be absolved.

If the coming of death is delayed for a while, then in the meantime the history of the Passion should be read in his presence, or some other devout and pious reading in which he took delight while he was well; or the commandments of God and of holy Church, so that he may consider with more exact care whether he has offended against them in any way.

If the sick person, his tongue hindered by the illness, cannot answer the questions and admonitions, yet is of sound and whole mind, let him answer at least by some outward sign, or by the sense of his heart alone. For this suffices for salvation.

Let an image of the Crucified be shown to him, or of the Blessed Mary, or of the saint he venerated with particular devotion while he was well.

On no account should his friends according to the flesh, such as his spouse, children or other friends, or his riches, be brought back to his memory, unless his spiritual health requires it.

He should not be given too much hope of recovering bodily health, lest it drive out of the dying man's mind the care for his spiritual health. Rather, he ought to ask God for bodily health through the health of the soul, and only if it is useful for the soul's salvation.

Since an agent acts on a patient that is well disposed, and the sickness of the soul often produces bodily illness, care must first be taken for the soul's salvation, and sins must be confessed first, before any thought is given to bodily health.[2]

[2] This matches the decree of the Fourth Lateran Council, c. 22 (*Cum infirmitas*), that physicians should first urge the sick to call for the physicians of souls, "since bodily sickness sometimes comes from sin".

End of the Method of Confession.