

THE FOUR HUNDRED CHAPTERS ON
LOVE

Maximus Confessor

PROLOGUE

Here, Father Elpidius,¹ besides the discourse on the *Ascetic Life*,² I have sent this discourse on love to your Grace, arranged in four centuries³ in equal number to the four Gospels. While it is perhaps not at all worthy of your expectation, it is yet the best I could do. Your Grace should know that these are not the fruit of my own meditation. Instead, I went through the writings of the holy Fathers and selected from them whatever had reference to my subject, summarizing many things in few words so that they can be seen at a glance to be easily memorized. These I have sent to your Grace requesting that you read them with indulgence and look for only what is of profit in them, overlooking a style which lacks charm, and to pray for my modest ability which is bereft of any spiritual profit. I further request that you not be annoyed by anything that is said; I have simply fulfilled an obligation. I say this because there are many of us who give annoyance today by words while those who instruct or receive instruction by deeds are very few.

Rather, please pay careful attention to each chapter. For not all, I believe, are easily understandable by everyone, but the majority will require much scrutiny by many people even though they appear to be very simply expressed. Perhaps it might happen that something useful to the soul will be revealed out of them. This will happen completely from God's grace to the one who reads with an uncomplicated mind, with the fear of God, and with love. But if someone reads this or any other book whatever not for the sake of spiritual profit but to hunt for phrases to reproach the author so that he might then set himself up in his own opinion as wiser than he, such a person will never receive any profit of any kind.

FIRST CENTURY

1. Love⁴ is a good disposition of the soul by which one prefers no being to the knowledge⁵ of God. It is impossible to reach the habit of this love if one has any attachment to earthly things.

2. Love is begotten of detachment,⁶ detachment of hope in God, hope of patient endurance and long-suffering, these of general self-mastery, self-mastery of fear of God, and fear of faith in the Lord.

3. The one who believes the Lord fears punishment; the one who fears punishment becomes master of his passions; the one who becomes master of his passions patiently endures tribulations; the one who patiently endures tribulations will have hope in God; hope in God separates from every earthly attachment; and when the mind is separated from this it will have love for God.⁷

4. The one who loves God prefers knowledge of him to all things made by him and is constantly devoted to it by desire.

5. If all things have been made by God and for his sake, then God is better than what has been made by him. The one who forsakes the better and is engrossed in inferior things shows that he prefers the things made by God to God himself.

6. The one who has his mind fixed on the love of God disdains all visible things and even his own body as alien.⁸

7. If the soul is better than the body and God incomparably better than the world which he created, the one who prefers the body to the soul and the world to the God who created it is no different from idolaters.

8. The one who separates his mind from love and devotedness toward God and keeps it tied to any sensible thing is the one who prefers the body to the soul and things that are made to God their Creator.

9. If the life of the mind is the illumination of knowledge and this is born of love for God, then it is well said that there is nothing greater than love.⁹

10. When in the full ardor of its love¹⁰ for God the mind goes out of itself, then it has no perception at all either of itself or of any creatures. For once illumined by the divine and infinite light, it remains insensible to anything that is made by him, just as the physical eye has no sensation of the stars when the sun has risen.

11. All the virtues assist the mind in the pursuit of divine love, but above all does pure prayer. By it the mind is given wings to go ahead to God and becomes alien to all things.

12. When through love the mind is ravished by divine knowledge and in going outside of creatures has a perception of divine transcendence,¹¹ then, according to the divine Isaiah, it comes in consternation to a realization of its own lowliness and says with conviction the words of the prophet:

*Woe is me for I am stricken at heart; because being a man having unclean lips, I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips and I have seen with my eyes the King, the Lord of hosts.*¹²

13. The one who loves God cannot help but love also every man as himself even though he is displeased by the passions of those who are not yet purified. Thus when he sees their conversion and amendment, he rejoices with an unbounded and unspeakable joy.

14. The passionate soul is impure, filled with thoughts of lust and hatred.

15. The one who sees a trace of hatred in his own heart through any fault at all toward any man whoever he may be makes himself completely foreign to the love for God, because love for God in no way admits of hatred for man.

16. "The one who loves me," says the Lord, "will keep my commandments" and "this is my commandment, that you love one another."¹³ Therefore the one who does not love his neighbor is not keeping the commandment, and the one who does not keep the commandment is not able to love the Lord.

17. Blessed is the man who has learnt to love all men equally.¹⁴

18. Blessed is the man who is not attached to any corruptible or transitory thing.

19. Blessed is the mind which has gone beyond all beings and takes unceasing delight in the divine beauty.

20. The one who makes provision for the desires of the flesh¹⁵ and bears a grudge against his neighbor for transitory things—such a man serves the creature rather than the Creator.¹⁶

21. The one who keeps his body away from pleasure and sickness keeps it as a fellow worker in the service of better things.

22. The one who flees all the world's desires puts himself beyond every worldly grief.

23. The one who loves God surely loves his neighbor as well. Such a person cannot hold on to money but rather gives it out in God's fashion to each one who has need.¹⁷

24. The one who imitates God by giving alms knows no difference between evil and good or just and unjust in regard to the needs of the body, but distributes to all without distinction according to their need even if he prefers the virtuous person over the wicked because of his good intention.¹⁸

25. Just as God who is by nature good and free of passion loves all in an equal way as his creatures but glorifies the virtuous man for having become his friend through his intention and has mercy on the wicked out of his goodness and converts him by chastening him in this life, so also does the one who is good and without passion through his intention love equally all men—the virtuous because of his nature and good will and likewise the wicked because of his nature and compassion by which he pities one who is foolish and makes his way in darkness.

26. The disposition of love is made manifest not only in the sharing of money but much more in sharing the word of God and physical service.

27. The one who has genuinely renounced worldly matters and serves his neighbor without pretense through love soon frees himself of all passion and is rendered a sharer of divine love and knowledge.

28. The one who has acquired divine love in himself does not grow weary of closely following after the Lord his God, as the divine Jeremiah¹⁹ says; rather he endures nobly every reproachful hardship and outrage without thinking any evil of anyone.

29. When you are insulted by someone or offended in any matter, then beware of angry thoughts, lest by distress they sever you from charity and place you in the region of hatred.

30. Whenever you are suffering intensely from insult or disgrace, realize that this can be of great benefit to you, for disgrace is God's way of driving vainglory out of you.

31. As the memory of fire does not warm the body, so faith without love does not bring about the illumination of knowledge in the soul.

32. As the light of the sun attracts the healthy eye, so does the knowledge of God draw the pure mind to itself naturally through love.

33. The mind is pure when it is removed from ignorance and illuminated by divine light.

34. The soul is pure when it has been freed from the passions²⁰ and rejoices unceasingly in divine love.

35. A blameworthy passion is a movement of the soul contrary to nature.²¹

36. Detachment is a peaceful state of the soul in which it becomes resistant to vice.

37. The one who has zealously acquired the fruits of love does not change from it even though he experiences countless ills. And let Stephen, Christ's disciple, and those like him, persuade you, as well as Christ himself who prays for his murderers and asks forgiveness of his Father as for those acting in ignorance.²²

38. If it is a mark of love to be patient and kind,²³ the one who acts contentiously or wickedly clearly makes himself a stranger to love, and the one who is a stranger to love is a stranger to God, since "God is love."²⁴

39. Do not say, as the divine Jeremiah tells us, that you are the Lord's temple.²⁵ And do not say that "mere faith in our Lord Jesus Christ can save me." For this is impossible unless you acquire love for him through works. For in what concerns mere believing, "even the devils believe and tremble."²⁶

40. The work of love is the deliberate doing of good to one's neighbor as well as long-suffering and patience and the use of all things in the proper way.

41. The one who loves God is not sad nor does he grieve anyone because of any passing thing. Only one salutary sadness makes him sad and grieves others, the one which the blessed Paul had and with which he grieved the Corinthians.²⁷

42. The one who loves God leads an angelic life on earth, fasting and being watchful and singing psalms and praying and always thinking good of everyone.²⁸

43. If anyone desires anything, he naturally strives to obtain it. Now the divine is incomparably better and more desirable than all good and desirable things. What great zeal, then, should we show to obtain what is good and desirable by nature!²⁹

44. Do not stain your flesh with indecent actions; do not defile your soul with evil thoughts; and God's peace will come upon you and bring love.

45. Afflict your flesh with fasting and vigils. Devote yourself diligently to psalmody and prayer, and holiness in chastity will come upon you and bring love.

46. The one who is deemed worthy of divine knowledge and who through love has attained its illumination will never be blown about by the spirit of vainglory. But the one who is not yet deemed worthy of di-

vine knowledge is easily carried to and fro by it. If such a one, then, should look to God in everything that he does, as doing everything for his sake, he will easily escape it with God.

47. The one who has not yet obtained divine knowledge activated by love makes a lot of the religious works he performs. But the one who has been deemed worthy to obtain this says with conviction the words which the patriarch Abraham spoke when he was graced with the divine appearance, "I am but earth and ashes."³⁰

48. The one who fears the Lord always has humility as his companion and through its promptings is led to divine love and thanksgiving. For he recalls his former worldly life and different transgressions and the temptations bedeviling him from his youth, and how the Lord delivered him from all these things and made him pass from this life of passion to a divine life. And so with fear he receives love as well, ever thankful with deep humility to the benefactor and pilot of our life.

49. Do not soil your mind by holding on to thoughts of concupiscence and anger, lest by falling from pure prayer you fall in with the spirit of discouragement.³¹

50. The mind falls from familiarity³² with God whenever it consorts with wicked and foul thoughts.

51. When the senseless man who is driven by his passions is moved by anger and becomes troubled, he will be eager to flee foolishly from the brethren. But when again he is aroused by concupiscence, he regrets this and runs back to them. The sensible man does the opposite in both situations. In time of anger he cuts off the causes of disorder and frees himself from grief toward the brethren; in time of concupiscence he controls any irrational impulse and relationship.³³

52. In a period of temptations do not abandon your monastery but bear courageously the waves of thoughts, especially those of sadness and discouragement. Being thus tested with tribulations by divine dispensation, you will have a firm hope in God. But if you leave you will be accounted reprobate, unmanly, and unstable.

53. If you desire not to fall away from divine love, do not let your brother go to bed with anger against you, nor should you go to bed angry against him. Rather, "go, be reconciled with your brother, and come offer" to Christ with a clear conscience the gift of love in fervent prayer.³⁴

54. If one has all the gifts of the Spirit, but not love, it profits him nothing, as the divine Apostle says.³⁵ How great a zeal should we show to acquire it!

55. If "love works no evil to one's neighbor,"³⁶ the one who envies his brother and is unhappy over his good name and smears his reputation with scoffing or in any way maliciously contrives against him, how does he not render himself a stranger to love and liable to eternal judgment?

56. If "love is the fullness of the law,"³⁷ how can the one who keeps a grudge against his brother and sets a trap for him and curses him and rejoices over his misfortune be anything but a transgressor and liable to eternal punishment?

57. If "the one who slanders his brother and judges his brother slanders and judges the law,"³⁸ and the law of Christ is love, how does the slanderer do anything but fall away from the love of Christ and become the cause of his own eternal punishment?

58. Do not lend your ear to the slanderer's tongue nor your tongue to the fault-finder's ear by readily speaking or listening to anything against your neighbor. Otherwise you will fall away from divine love and be found excluded from eternal life.

59. Do not allow any abuse of your father or encourage anyone who dishonors him, lest the Lord become angry at your deeds and destroy you utterly from the land of the living.

60. Silence the one who is slandering in your hearing lest you commit a double sin with him: by accustoming yourself to this deadly vice and by not restraining him from foolish talk against his neighbor.

61. "But I say to you," the Lord says, "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you."³⁹ Why did he command these things? So that he might free you from hate, sadness, anger, and grudges, and might grant you the greatest possession of all, perfect love, which is impossible to possess except by the one who loves all men equally in imitation of God, who loves all men equally and "wills that they be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth."⁴⁰

62. "But I tell you to resist evil, but should anyone strike you on the right cheek turn the other to him as well. And if anyone wants to go to court with you and take your tunic, offer him your coat as well; and if one forces you to go one mile, go two with him."⁴¹ Why is this? To keep you free from anger and sadness and to instruct him through your forbearance and to bring you both in his goodness, under the yoke of his love.

63. We carry along with us the voluptuous images of the things we once experienced. Now the one who overcomes these voluptuous images completely disdains the realities of which they are images. In fact,

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the battle against memories⁴² is more difficult than the battle against deeds, as sinning in thought is easier than sinning in deed.

64. Some of the passions are of the body, some of the soul. Those of the body take their origin in the body; those of the soul from exterior things. Love and self-control cut away both of them, the former those of the soul, the latter those of the body.⁴³

65. Some of the passions belong to the irascible, some to the concupiscible part of the soul. Both are moved by means of the senses; and they are moved whenever the soul is found outside of love and self-control.

66. It happens that the passions of the irascible part of the soul are harder to combat than those of the concupiscible. Thus it is that a better remedy for it was given by the Lord: the commandment of love.⁴⁴

67. All the other passions lay hold of either the irascible or the concupiscible part of the soul only, or even of the rational part, as forgetfulness or ignorance. But sloth, by grasping onto all the soul's powers, excites nearly all of them together. In this way it is the most troublesome of all the passions. Well, then, did the Lord tell us in giving the remedy against it, "In your patience possess your souls."⁴⁵

68. Never strike any of the brothers, especially not without reason, lest sometime he not endure the trial and go away. For then you will never escape the reproof of your conscience, always bringing you sadness in the time of prayer and excluding your mind from familiarity with God.

69. Do not tolerate suspicions or people that would be occasions of scandal for you against anyone. For those who take scandal in any way from things which happen, intentionally or unintentionally, do not know the way of peace, which through love brings those who long for it to the knowledge of God.

70. The one who is still affected by human judgments does not yet have perfect love, as for example when he loves one and hates another for one reason or another; or even when he loves and then hates the same person for the same reasons.

71. Perfect love does not split up the one nature of men on the basis of their various dispositions but ever looking steadfastly at it, it loves all men equally, those who are zealous as friends, those who are negligent as enemies. It is good to them and forbearing and puts up with what they do. It does not think evil at all but rather suffers for them, if occasion requires, in order that it may even make them friends if possible. If not, it does not fall away from its own intentions as it ever manifests

the fruits of love equally for all men. In this way also our Lord and God Jesus Christ, manifesting his love for us, suffered for all mankind and granted to all equally the hope of resurrection, though each one renders himself worthy either of glory or of punishment.

72. The one who does not disdain glory and dishonor, riches and poverty, pleasure and pain, does not yet possess perfect love. For perfect love disdains not only these things but also this very transitory life and death.

73. Listen to what those who have been rendered worthy of divine love have to say: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword? As it is written, 'for your sake are we put to death the whole day long.' We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. But in all these things we more than overcome through the one who has loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁴⁶ All who say and do this concerning the love of God are saints.

74. And concerning love of neighbor, listen again to what they say: "I speak the truth in Christ; I do not lie, and my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit. I have great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I would wish to be anathema myself from Christ for my brethren who are my kinsmen according to the flesh and Israelites."⁴⁷ And similarly Moses⁴⁸ and other saints.

75. The one who does not disdain glory and pleasure and greed which increases them and which is in turn produced by them cannot cut away the occasions of anger. And the one who does not cut them away cannot attain perfect love.

76. Humility and distress free man from every sin, the former by cutting out the passions of the soul, the latter those of the body. The blessed David shows that he did this in one of his prayers to God, "Look upon my humility and my trouble and forgive all my sins."⁴⁹

77. By means of the commandments the Lord renders detached those who carry them out; by means of the divine doctrines he bestows on them the enlightenment of knowledge.⁵⁰

78. All doctrines are concerned either with God or with visible and invisible things or with Providence and judgment about them.⁵¹

79. Almsgiving heals the irascible part of the soul; fasting extinguishes the concupiscible part,⁵² and prayer purifies the mind and pre-

pare it for the contemplation of reality.⁵³ For the powers of the soul the Lord has granted us the commandments as well.

80. "Learn of me," he says, "because I am meek and humble of heart."⁵⁴ Meekness⁵⁵ keeps the temper steady, and humility frees the mind from conceit and vainglory.

81. The fear of the Lord is twofold. The first type is produced in us from threats of punishment, and from it arise in proper order self-control, patience, hope in God, and detachment, from which comes love. The second is coupled with love itself and constantly produces reverence in the soul, lest through the familiarity of love it become presumptuous of God.⁵⁶

82. Perfect love casts out the first fear from the soul which by possessing it no longer fears punishment. The second fear it has always joined to it, as was said. The following passages apply to the first fear: "By the fear of the Lord everyone turns away from evil";⁵⁷ and, "The beginning of wisdom is fear of the Lord."⁵⁸ And to the second fear: "The fear of the Lord is pure and remains forever and ever,"⁵⁹ and, "There is no want in those who fear him."⁶⁰

83. "Put to death your members which are on earth: fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence, and greed."⁶¹ He names the care of the flesh "earth"; he speaks of actual sinning as "fornication"; consent he calls "uncleanness"; passionate thoughts he names "lust"; the mere acceptance of a lustful thought is "evil concupiscence"; the matter which gives life and growth to passion he calls "greed." All of these things as members of the wisdom of the flesh the divine Apostle ordered us to put to death.⁶²

84. First the memory brings up a simple thought to the mind, and when it lingers about it arouses passion. When it is not removed it sways the mind to consent, and when this happens the actual sinning finally takes place. Thus the all-wise Apostle, in writing to Gentile converts, bids them to remove first of all the effect of the sin, then to backtrack in order to end up at the cause. As previously mentioned, the cause is greed which gives life and growth to passion. And I think that here it signifies gluttony, which is the mother and nurse of fornication. Now greed is evil not only in regard to possessions but also in regard to food, in the same way that self-control is good not only in regard to food but also in regard to possessions.

85. As a little sparrow whose foot is tied tries to fly but is pulled to earth by the cord to which it is bound, so does the mind which does not

yet possess detachment get pulled down and dragged to earth when it flies to the knowledge of heavenly things.

86. When the mind is completely freed from the passions, it journeys straight ahead to the contemplation of created things and makes its way to the knowledge of the Holy Trinity.

87. When the mind is pure and takes on ideas of things it is moved to a spiritual contemplation. But when it has become impure by carelessness, it imagines mere ideas of other things, so that receiving human ideas it turns back to shameful and evil thoughts.

88. When in time of prayer no ideas of the world ever disturb the mind, then know that you are not outside the limits of detachment.

89. When the soul begins to feel its own good health, then does it regard as simple and undisturbing the imaginings which take place in dreams.

90. Just as the beauty of visible things attracts the eye of sense, so also the knowledge of invisible things attracts the pure mind to itself; by invisible things I mean those without a body.

91. It is a great thing not to be affected by things; but it is much greater to remain detached from the thought of them. Therefore, the demons' battle against us through thoughts is more severe than that through deeds.

92. The one who has had success with the virtues and has become rich in knowledge as at last discerning things by their nature does and considers everything according to right reason and is in no way misled. For it is on the basis of whether we make use of things rationally or irrationally that we become either virtuous or wicked.

93. A sign of lofty detachment is that the ideas of the things which are always arising in the heart are just mere thoughts, whether the body is awake or asleep.⁶³

94. Through the working out of the commandments the mind puts off the passions. Through the spiritual contemplation of visible realities it puts off impassioned thoughts of things. Through the knowledge of invisible realities it puts off contemplation of visible things. And finally this it puts off through the knowledge of the Holy Trinity.

95. Just as the sun in rising and lighting up the world manifests both itself and the things which it lights up, so the sun of justice in rising on a pure mind manifests both itself and the principles which have been and will be brought to existence by it.⁶⁴

96. We do not know God from his being but from his magnificent

works and his Providence for beings. Through these as through mirrors we perceive his infinite goodness and wisdom and power.⁶⁵

97. The pure mind is found either in simple ideas of human things or in the natural contemplation of visible realities, or in that of invisible realities, or in the light of the Holy Trinity.

98. The mind which is settled in the contemplation of visible realities searches out either the natural reasons of things or those which are signified by them, or else it seeks the cause itself.

99. Dwelling in the contemplation of the invisible it seeks both the natural reasons of these things, the cause of their production, and whatever is consequent upon them, and also what is the Providence and judgment concerning them.

100. Once it is in God, it is inflamed with desire and seeks first of all the principles of his being but finds no satisfaction in what is proper to himself, for that is impossible and forbidden to every created nature alike. But it does receive encouragement from his attributes, that is, from what concerns his eternity, infinity, and immensity, as well as from his goodness, wisdom, and power by which he creates, governs, and judges beings. "And this alone is thoroughly understandable in him, infinity"; and the very fact of knowing nothing about him is to know beyond the mind's power, as the theologians Gregory and Dionysius have both said somewhere.⁶⁶

SECOND CENTURY

1. The one who truly loves God also prays completely undistracted, and the one who prays completely undistracted also truly loves God. But the one who has his mind fixed on any earthly thing does not pray undistracted; therefore the one who has his mind tied to any earthly thing does not love God.

2. The mind which dallies on a thing of sense certainly has some passion about it, such as desire or sorrow or anger or resentment; and unless he disdains the thing he cannot be freed from that passion.

3. When the passions hold sway over a mind they bind it together with material things, and separating it from God make it to be all-engrossed in them. But when love of God is in control, it releases it from the bonds and persuades it to think beyond not only things of sense but even this transient life of ours.

4. The purpose of the commandments is to make simple the thoughts of things; the purpose of reading and contemplation is to ren-

der the mind clear of any matter or form; from this ensues undistracted prayer.

5. The active⁶⁷ way does not suffice by itself for the perfect liberation of the mind from the passions to allow it to pray undistracted unless various spiritual contemplations also relieve it. The former frees the mind only from incontinence and hatred while the latter rid it also of forgetfulness and ignorance, and in this way it will be able to pray as it ought.

6. There are two supreme states of pure prayer, one corresponding to those of the active life, the other to the contemplatives. The first arises in the soul from the fear of God and an upright hope, the second from divine desire and total purification. The marks of the first type are the drawing of one's mind away from all the world's considerations, and as God is present to one, as indeed he is, he makes his prayers without distraction or disturbance. The marks of the second type are that at the very onset of prayer the mind is taken hold of by the divine and infinite light and is conscious neither of itself nor of any other being whatever except of him who through love brings about such brightness in it. Then, when it is concerned with the properties of God, it receives impressions of him which are clear and distinct.⁶⁸

7. What anyone loves he surely holds on to, and looks down on everything that hinders his way to it so as not to be deprived of it. And the one who loves God cultivates pure prayer and throws off from himself every passion which hinders him.

8. The one who throws off self-love, the mother of the passions, will very easily with God's help put aside the others, such as anger, grief, grudges, and so on. But whoever is under the control of the former is wounded, even though unwillingly, by the latter. Self-love is the passion for the body.⁶⁹

9. On account of these five reasons men love one another whether to their praise or blame: for God's sake, as when the virtuous person loves everyone and the one not yet virtuous loves the virtuous person; or for natural reasons, as parents love their children and vice versa; or out of vainglory, as the one who is honored loves the one who honors him; or for greed, as the one who loves a rich man for what he can get; or for the love of pleasure, as the one who is a servant of his belly or genitals. The first of these is praiseworthy, the second is neutral, and the rest belong to the passions.

10. If you hate some people and some you neither love nor hate, while others you love only moderately and still others you love very

not grieve when they are deprived of them, as those who accepted with joy the seizure of their goods.¹¹⁸ But others possess with attachment and become filled with grief when about to be deprived, like the one in the Gospel who went away sad;¹¹⁹ and if they are deprived, they grieve until death. So it is that deprivation attests the condition of whether one is detached or attached.

90. The demons make war on those who are at the summit of prayer to prevent them from receiving simple representations of material things. They war on contemplatives to cause passionate thoughts to linger in their minds, and on those who are struggling in the active life to persuade them to sin by action. In every way these accursed beings struggle against everyone in order to separate men from God.

91. Those whose piety undergoes trial in this life by divine Providence are proved by these three temptations: by the gift of pleasant things, such as health, beauty, fine children, wealth, reputation, and the like. Or by the inflicting of sorrowful things, such as the loss of children, wealth, and reputation; or by painful afflictions of the body, such as sickness, disease, and so forth. To the first the Lord says, "If anyone does not renounce all he possesses, he cannot be my disciple."¹²⁰ To the second and third he says, "In your patience you shall possess your souls."¹²¹

92. These four things are said to modify the bodily temperament and thereby to give thoughts to the mind whether passionate or without passion: angels, demons, the weather, and life-style. The angels are said to modify it by reason, the demons by touch, the weather by its variations, the life-style by the quality and quantity of food and drink, whether too much or too little. In addition to these there are the modifications which come to it from the memory, from hearing and sight since it is the soul which is first affected by things which give it grief or joy.¹²² And when the soul approves of these, it modifies the temperament of the body; and when this is thus modified, it supplies thoughts to the mind.

93. Death is, properly speaking, separation from God, and "the sting of death is sin."¹²³ In taking it on, Adam was banished at once from the tree of life, from Paradise, and from God, whereupon there followed of necessity the death of the body. On the other hand life is, properly speaking, the one who says, "I am the life."¹²⁴ By his death he brought back to life again the one who had died.

94. The written word is taken down either for one's own memory or

for the profit of others, or both, or to harm certain people, or for ostentation, or out of necessity.

95. The active life is "a place of pasture"; knowledge of created things is "water of refreshment."¹²⁵

96. Human life is a "shadow of death." Thus if anyone is with God and God is with him he clearly can say, "For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because you are with me."¹²⁶

97. A pure mind sees things rightly, a straightforward speech brings what it sees into view, and a keen hearing hearkens to it. But, the one who is deprived of these three things abuses the speaker.

98. The one who knows the Trinity and its creation and Providence and who keeps the emotional part of his soul unattached is with God.

99. The rod is said to signify God's judgment and his staff his Providence. Thus the one who has obtained knowledge of these things can say, "Your rod and staff have given me comfort."¹²⁷

100. When the mind has become stripped of passions and enlightened in the contemplation of beings, then it can be in God and pray as it ought.

THIRD CENTURY

1. The reasonable use of thoughts and things is productive of moderation, love, and knowledge; the unreasonable use, of excess, hate, and ignorance.

2. "You have prepared a table for me, etc."¹²⁸ *Table* here signifies practical virtue, for this has been prepared by Christ "against those who afflict us." The *oil* which anoints the mind is the contemplation of creatures, the *cup* of God is the knowledge of God itself; his *mercy* is his Word and God. For through his incarnation he pursues us *all days* until he gets hold of those who are to be saved, as he did with Paul.¹²⁹ The *house* is the kingdom in which all the saints will be restored. The *length of days* means eternal life.

3. The vices, whether of the concupiscible, the irascible, or the rational element, come upon us with the misuse of the faculties of the soul. Misuse of the rational faculty is ignorance and folly, of the irascible and concupiscible faculty, hate and intemperance. Their right use is knowledge and prudence. If this is so, nothing created and given existence by God is evil.¹³⁰

4. It is not food which is evil but gluttony, not the begetting of children but fornication, not possessions but greed, not reputation but vainglory. And if this is so, there is nothing evil in creatures except misuse, which stems from the mind's negligence in its natural cultivation.

5. The blessed Dionysius says that among the demons this is what evil is: irrational anger, senseless lust, reckless imagination. But among rational beings unreasonableness, recklessness, and rashness are privations of reason, sense, and circumspection.¹³¹ Now privations follow upon habits; so then the demons once had reason, sense, and religious circumspection. If this is correct, then neither are the demons evil by nature; rather they have become evil through the misuse of their natural faculties.

6. Some passions are productive of intemperance, others of hate, and still others of both intemperance and hate.

7. Excessive and sumptuous eating are causes of intemperance; greed and vainglory cause hatred of neighbor. But their mother, self-love, is the cause of both.

8. Self-love is the passionate and irrational affection for the body, to which is opposed love and self-mastery. The one who has self-love has all the passions.

9. "No one," says the Apostle, "hates his own flesh," of course, "but mortifies it and makes it his slave,"¹³² allowing it no more than "food and clothing" and these only as they are necessary for life.¹³³ So in this way one loves it without passion and rears it as an associate in divine things and takes care of it only with those things which satisfy its needs.

10. When a person loves someone, he is naturally eager to be of service. So if one loves God, he is naturally eager to do what is pleasing to him. But if he loves his flesh, he is eager to accomplish what delights it.

11. What pleases God is love, temperance, contemplation, and prayer. What pleases the flesh is gluttony, intemperance, and what contributes to them. Therefore, "those who are in the flesh cannot please God. And those who are Christ's have crucified their flesh with its passions and lusts."¹³⁴

12. When the mind inclines toward God, it keeps the body as a servant and allows it nothing more than what is necessary for life. But when it inclines toward the flesh, it becomes a servant of the passions and always makes provision for its lusts.¹³⁵

13. If you want to prevail over your thoughts, take care of your pas-

sions and you will easily drive them from your mind. Thus for fornication, fast, keep vigil, work hard, keep to yourself. For anger and hurt, disdain reputation and dishonor and material things. For grudges, pray for the one who has hurt you and you will be rid of them.

14. Do not compare yourself to weaker men, but rather reach out to the commandment of love. For by comparing yourself to these you fall into the pit of conceit; in reaching out for the latter you advance to the heights of humility.

15. If you are really observing the commandment of love of neighbor, for what reason do you bear him the bitterness of resentment? Is it not clearly because in preferring transient things to love and in holding on to them you are making war on your brother?

16. Not so much out of necessity has gold become enviable by men as that with it most of them can provide for their pleasures.

17. There are three reasons for the love of money: pleasure-seeking, vainglory, and lack of faith. And more serious than the other two is lack of faith.

18. The hedonist loves money because with it he lives in luxury; the vain person because with it he can be praised; the person who lacks faith because he can hide it and keep it while in fear of hunger, or old age, or illness, or exile. He lays his hope on it rather than on God the maker and provider of the whole creation, even of the last and least of living things.

19. There are four kinds of people who acquire money, the three just mentioned and the financial administrator. Obviously only he acquires it for the right reason: so that he might never run short in relieving each one's need.

20. All passionate thoughts either excite the concupiscible, disturb the irascible, or darken the rational element of the soul. From this it comes about that the mind is hampered in its spiritual contemplation and in the flight of prayer. And because of this the monk, and especially the solitary,¹³⁶ should give serious heed to his thoughts and both know and eliminate their causes. Thus, for instance, he should know that passionate memories of women arouse the concupiscible element of the soul and are caused by incontinence in eating and drinking, as well as by frequent and unreasonable association with these same women. Hunger, thirst, vigils, and solitude eliminate them. Again, passionate memories of those who have hurt us stir up the temper; their causes are pleasure-seeking, vainglory, and attachment to material things, for the aroused person is saddened because he has either lost

these things or not attained them. Disdain and contempt of these things for the love of God eliminates them.¹³⁷

21. God knows himself and the things created by him. The holy angels also know God and they know, too, the things created by him. But the holy angels do not know God and the things created by him as God knows himself and the things created by him.¹³⁸

22. God knows himself of his own sacred essence, and the things created by him from his wisdom, through which and in which he made all things. The holy angels, however, know God by participation, though he is beyond participation, and they know things created by him by a perception of what is contemplated in them.

23. Created things are indeed outside the mind, but it receives their contemplation inside it. This is not so with the eternal, infinite, and immense God, who freely bestows being, well-being, and eternal being on his creatures.¹³⁹

24. A nature endowed with reason and understanding participates in the holy God by its very being, by its aptitude for well-being (that is, for goodness and wisdom), and by the free gift of eternal being. In this way it knows God; and things created by him, as was said, it knows by a perception of the ordered wisdom to be observed in creation. This wisdom exists in the mind as simple and without substance of its own.

25. In bringing into existence a rational and intelligent nature, God in his supreme goodness has communicated to it four of the divine attributes by which he maintains, guards, and preserves creatures: being, eternal being, goodness, and wisdom. The first two of these he grants to the essence, the second two to its faculty of will; that is, to the essence he gives being and eternal being, and to the volitive faculty he gives goodness and wisdom in order that what he is by essence the creature might become by participation. For this reason he is said to be made "to the image and likeness of God":¹⁴⁰ to the image of his being by our being, to the image of his eternal being by our eternal being (even though not without a beginning, it is yet without end); to the likeness of his goodness by our goodness, to the image of his wisdom by our wisdom. The first is by nature, the second by grace. Every rational nature indeed is made to the image of God; but only those who are good and wise are made to his likeness.¹⁴¹

26. All national and intelligent nature is divided into two, namely, angelic and human nature. And all angelic nature is again divided into two general sides or groupings, holy or accursed, that is, into holy

powers and impure demons. All human nature is divided as well into only two general sides, religious and irreligious.¹⁴²

27. God as absolute existence, goodness, and wisdom (or rather, to speak more properly, as transcending all these things) has no contrary quality whatever. But creatures, because they all have existence, and rational and intelligent ones their aptitude for goodness and wisdom by participation and grace, do have contrary qualities. To existence is opposed nonexistence, to the aptitude for goodness and wisdom is opposed vice and ignorance. For them to exist forever or not to exist is in the power of their maker. To share in his goodness and wisdom or not to share depends on the will of rational beings.¹⁴³

28. When the Greek philosophers affirm that the substance of beings coexisted eternally with God and that they received only their individual qualities from him, they say that there is nothing contrary to substance but that opposition is found only in the qualities. We maintain, however, that the divine substance alone has no contrary because it is eternal and infinite and bestows eternity on the other substances; furthermore that nonbeing is the contrary of the substance of beings and that their eternal being or nonbeing lies in the power of the one who properly is being, "and his gifts are not subject to revision."¹⁴⁴ And therefore it both always is and will be sustained by his all-powerful might even though it has nonbeing as its opposite, as was said, since it was brought into being from nonbeing by God and whether it has being or nonbeing depends on his will.¹⁴⁵

29. Just as evil is the privation of good and ignorance that of knowledge, so is nonbeing the privation of being—but not of being properly so called, for it has no contrary—but of true being by participation. Privations of the former depend on the will of creatures; privation of the latter depends on the will of the Creator, who out of goodness ever wills his creatures to exist and to receive benefits from him.

30. Of all creatures, some are rational and intelligent and admit of opposites such as virtue and vice, knowledge and ignorance. Others are various bodies composed of opposites such as earth, air, fire, and water. And there are some completely without body or matter, though some of these are united to bodies, and others have their makeup only of matter and form.

31. All bodies are by nature without movement. They are moved by a soul, whether rational, irrational, or insensitive.¹⁴⁶

32. The soul's powers are for nourishment and growth, for imagina-

tion and appetite, for reason and understanding. Plants share only in the first powers, irrational animals share in the second as well, and men in the third in addition to the first two. Moreover, the first two powers prove to be perishable, but the third is imperishable and immortal.

33. The holy angels, in communicating their illumination with one another, also communicate to human nature either their virtue or the knowledge which they have. Thus with their virtue, as an imitation of the divine goodness, they benefit themselves, each other, and those beneath them by making them Godlike. With their knowledge, as either something loftier about God ("You, Lord, are forever most high," says Scripture¹⁴⁷), or deeper about bodies, or more accurate about incorporeal beings, or clearer about Providence, or more manifest about judgment.

34. Impurity of mind means first to have false knowledge; next to be ignorant of any of the universals—I speak of the human mind, since an angel is not ignorant of particular things; thirdly in having passionate thoughts; and fourthly in consenting to sin.

35. Impurity of soul means not acting according to nature, for from this are begotten passionate thoughts in the mind. Now it acts in accord with nature when its sensitive drives, that is, anger and concupiscence, remain free of passion under the assault of material things and the representations they bring.

36. Impurity of body is a sin in deed.

37. The one who is not affected by the things of the world loves solitude; the one who does not love anything human loves all men; and the one who takes no offense at anyone, either because of faults or suspicious thoughts, possesses the knowledge of God and of divine realities.

38. It is a great thing not to be affected by things; but it is far better to remain detached from their representations.

39. Love and self-mastery keep the mind detached from things and from their representations.

40. The mind of the one who loves God does not engage in battle against things nor against their representations, but against the passions joined to these representations. Thus it does not war against the woman nor against the one who offends him, nor against their images, but against the passions that are joined to these images.

41. The whole war of the monk against the demons is to separate the passions from the representations. Otherwise he will not be able to look on things without passion.

42. Thing, representation, and passion are all different realities. A

thing is, for instance, a man, a woman, gold, and so forth. A representation is, for instance, a simple recollection of any of these things. Passion, however, is an irrational affection or senseless hate for any of these things. Therefore the monk's battle is directed against passion.

43. A passionate representation is a thought made up of passion and representation. Let us separate the passion from the representation, and the simple thought will remain. We can, if we wish, make this separation through spiritual love and self-mastery.

44. The virtues separate the mind from the passions; spiritual contemplations separate it from simple representations; then pure prayer sets it before God himself.

45. The virtues are related to the knowledge of creatures, knowledge to the knower, the knower to the one who is known in ignorance and whose knowing transcends knowledge.

46. God who is beyond fullness did not bring creatures into being out of any need of his, but that he might enjoy their proportionate participation in him and that he might delight in his works seeing them delighted and ever insatiably satisfied with the one who is inexhaustible.¹⁴⁸

47. The world has many poor in spirit, but not in the right way; and many who mourn, but over money matters and loss of children; and many who are meek, but in the face of impure passions; and many who hunger and thirst, but to rob another's goods and to profit unjustly. And there are many who are merciful, but to the body and to its comforts; and clean of heart, but out of vanity; and peacemakers, but who subject the soul to the flesh; and many who suffer persecution, but because they are disorderly; many who are reproached, but for shameful sins. Instead, only those are blessed who do and suffer these things for Christ and following his example. For what reason? "Because theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and "they shall see God," and so forth.¹⁴⁹ So that it is not because they do and suffer these things that they are blessed (since those just mentioned do the same), but because they do and suffer them for Christ and following his example.

48. In everything that we do God looks at the intention, as has frequently been said, whether we do it for him or for any other motive. Therefore when we wish to do something good, let us not have human applause in view but rather God, so that always looking to him we might do everything on his account; otherwise we shall undergo the labor and still lose the reward.

49. In time of prayer chase from your mind the simple representa-

tions of human matters and the ideas of every creature, lest in creating images of lesser things you be deprived of the one who is incomparably better than them all.

50. If we sincerely love God we cast out the passions by this very love. Love for him means to prefer him to the world and the soul to the body. It means to despise worldly things and to devote oneself continually to him through self-mastery, love, prayer, psalmody, and so forth.

51. If we devote ourselves to God for a considerable period and give heed to the sensitive part of the soul, we no longer run headlong into the assaults of thoughts. Rather, in very carefully considering their causes and in eradicating them we become more perceptive and have the words fulfilled in us, "My eye also has looked down on my enemy, and my ear shall hear the malignant who rise up against me."¹⁵⁰

52. When you see that your mind is conducting itself devoutly and justly in representations of the world, know then that your body, too, remains pure and sinless. But when you see that your mind is giving itself over to sins in thought and you do not resist, know that your body, too, will not be long in falling in with those sins.

53. Just as the body has material things for its world, so does the mind have representations for its world, and just as the body commits fornication with a woman's body, so does the mind commit fornication with the representation of a woman's body through its own body's fantasies. For in its mind it sees the shape of its own body joined with that of a woman. In the same way the mind wards off the picture of the one who has offended us through the shape of its own body. And similarly for other sins. For what the body does through action in the world of material reality, the mind also does in the world of representations.

54. There is no reason to be disturbed, shocked, or astonished by the idea that God the Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son.¹⁵¹ The Son cries out, "Do not judge lest you be judged. Do not condemn lest you be condemned."¹⁵² And the Apostle likewise, "Judge not before the time until the Lord comes," and, "With the judgment that you judge another you condemn yourself."¹⁵³ But in neglecting to lament their own sins, men take judgment away from the Son and they themselves, though sinful, judge and condemn each other. And "at this heaven is astonished,"¹⁵⁴ earth is disturbed, but they in their insensitivity are not ashamed.

55. The one who meddles in the sins of others or even judges his brother on a suspicion has not yet laid the foundation of repentance nor

sought to know his own sins (which are truly heavier than an enormous weight of lead). Neither does he know how it comes about that the man who loves vanities and seeks after lies¹⁵⁵ becomes heavy-hearted. Thus as a foolish person going about in the dark he takes no mind of his own sins and imagines those of others whether they actually exist or he only suspects them.

56. Self-love, as has frequently been said, is the cause of all passionate thoughts. From it are begotten the three capital thoughts of concupiscence: gluttony, greed, and vanity. From gluttony the thought of fornication arises; from greed, that of covetousness; and from vanity, that of arrogance.¹⁵⁶ All the rest follow one or the other of these three: the thoughts of anger, grief, resentment, sloth, envy, back-biting, and the rest. These passions, then, bind the mind to material things and keep it down on the earth, weighing on it like a very heavy stone, though by nature it should be lighter and livelier than fire.

57. The beginning of all passions is love of self, and the end is pride. Self-love is irrational love of the body, and if one eliminates this he eliminates along with it all the passions stemming from it.

58. Just as parents have affection for the offspring of their bodies, so also is the mind naturally attached to its own reasonings. And just as to their parents who are emotionally attached the children appear as the fairest and handsomest of all even though in every way they might be the most hideous of all, so it is with the foolish mind. Its reasonings, even though they might be the most depraved of all, still appear in its view as the most sensible of all. However, this is not the case with the wise man and his reasonings. Rather, when it seems convincing that they are true and correct, then especially does he distrust his own judgment but makes use of other wise men as judges of his own reasonings (so as not to run or have run in vain),¹⁵⁷ and from them he receives assurance.

59. When you overcome any of the dishonorable passions, such as gluttony, fornication, anger, or covetousness, suddenly the thought of vanity lights upon you. But when you overcome this, that of pride follows in short order.

60. All the dishonorable passions that hold sway over the soul drive out the thought of vanity from it, and when all these have given way, they set it loose on the soul.¹⁵⁸

61. Vanity, whether it is eliminated or whether it remains, begets pride. When eliminated it produces conceit, when remaining it produces pretentiousness.

62. Discreet practice eliminates vainglory; ascribing our right actions to God removes pride.

63. A person who has been honored with the knowledge of God and is abundantly enjoying the pleasure it provides disdains all the pleasures begotten from lust.

64. The one who lusts after earthly things lusts after food, or what serves the lower passions, or human applause, or money, or something else associated with them. And unless the mind finds something better than these to which it can transfer its desire, it will not be completely persuaded to disdain them. And better than these by far is the knowledge of God and of divine things.

65. Those who disdain pleasures do so either out of fear or hope or knowledge and love of God.

66. Knowledge of divine things without passion does not persuade the mind to disdain material things completely, but rather resembles the mere thought of a thing of sense. Thus one finds many men with considerable knowledge who yet wallow in the passions of the flesh like pigs in mud.¹⁵⁹ For in reaching through their diligence a certain degree of purification and in acquiring knowledge but in later growing careless they can be compared to Saul, who after being given the kingship conducted himself unworthily and was dismissed from it with terrible wrath.

67. Just as the simple thought of human realities does not oblige the mind to disdain the divine, so neither does the simple knowledge of divine things persuade it fully to disdain human things, for the reason that the truth exists now in shadows and figures. Hence there is a need for the blessed passion of holy love, which binds the mind to spiritual realities and persuades it to prefer the immaterial to the material and intelligible and divine things to those of sense.

68. The one who has eliminated the passions and produced simple thoughts has still not yet completely turned them into divine things but can be drawn neither to human nor to divine things. This is the case of those in the active life who have not yet been given knowledge and who abstain from the passions out of fear or out of hope of the kingdom.

69. "We walk by faith, not by sight," and have knowledge in mirrors and riddles.¹⁶⁰ Because of this we need to be very occupied with these so that through lengthy exercise and discussion we might forge a tenacious habit of contemplation.

70. If after eliminating only to some extent the causes of the passions we devote ourselves to spiritual contemplations but are not constantly

occupied with them, we can while doing this easily revert once more to the body's passions. In this event we can expect to gather no other fruit except simple knowledge with conceit. The result of this is the gradual obscuring of this knowledge and the complete turning of the mind to material things.

71. The blameworthy passion of love engrosses the mind in material things. The praiseworthy passion of love binds it even to divine things. For generally where the mind devotes its time it also expands, and where it expands it also turns its desire and love, whether this be in divine and intelligible things which are its own or in the things of the flesh and the passions.

72. God created the invisible world and the visible world, and naturally he made the soul and the body as well. Now if this visible world is so beautiful, what sort of world will the invisible be? If it is better than the former, how much better than both is the one who created them? If then the Maker of everything that is beautiful is better than all creatures, for what reason does the mind leave the best of all to be engrossed in the worst of all, by which I mean the passions of the flesh? Or is it not clear that having lived and associated with the flesh from birth, the mind has not yet received a perfect experience of the one who is best of all and who transcends all? Therefore if by a prolonged exercise of self-mastery over pleasure and of attention to divine things we gradually break it away from such a relationship, it expands and gradually advances in divine things and recognizes its own dignity and finally transfers its whole longing¹⁶¹ onto God.

73. The one who speaks in a detached way of his brother's sins does so for two reasons, either to correct him or to help someone else. If he speaks apart from these either to him or to another, he does so with reproach and disparagement. He will not escape being forsaken by God but will surely fall into the same or another failure, and dishonored and reproached by others he will find disgrace.

74. There is not just one reason why sinners commit the same sin in deed, but several. For instance, it is one thing to sin from habit and another to sin by being carried away. In this case the sinner did not fully reflect either before or after the sin but rather was deeply grieved over the incident. The one who sins from habit is quite the reverse, for first he does not cease sinning in thought and after the act he maintains the same disposition.

75. The one who seeks after the virtues out of vainglory obviously seeks after knowledge as well out of vainglory. Clearly such a person

neither does nor says anything for the sake of improvement but is in all circumstances pursuing the approval of the onlookers or hearers. The passion is detected when some of these people impose censure on his deeds or his words and he is enormously grieved thereby, not because he did not edify, for such was not his purpose, but because of his own disgrace.

76. The passion of greed is revealed when one is happy in receiving but unhappy in giving. Such a person cannot be a good steward.

77. A person endures suffering for these reasons: for the love of God, for the hope of a reward, out of a fear of punishment, out of fear of men, through nature, for pleasure, for profit, out of vainglory, or out of necessity.

78. It is one thing to be delivered from thoughts and another to be freed from passions. In fact someone may be often delivered from thoughts of those objects in their absence toward which he has acquired a passion, but the passions are hidden in the soul and are revealed when the objects appear. Therefore it is necessary to observe the mind when the objects are present and determine for which of them it holds an attachment.

79. That is a genuine friend if in time of temptation he supports his neighbor by bearing as his own, without clamor or display, his incidental tribulations, suffering, and misfortunes.

80. Do not disregard your conscience when it always recommends the best choices. In fact, it proposes to you divine and angelic advice; it frees you from your heart's secret defilements, and grants you familiarity¹⁶² before God at the moment of departure.

81. If you want to become judicious and moderate and no servant of the passion of conceit, always seek in things what is hidden from your knowledge. You will indeed find a great many diverse things which have eluded you, and you will be astonished at your own ignorance and temper your pride. And in knowing yourself you will understand many great and wonderful things, since to think that one knows does not allow one to advance in knowledge.

82. A person definitely wants to be healed if he does not put up any resistance to the healing remedies: These are the pains and hurts brought on by many different circumstances. The one who resists does not know what is being worked out here nor what advantage he would draw from it when he leaves this world.

83. Vainglory and greed are mutually begotten of each other, for

while the vain grow rich, the rich grow vain, but only in a worldly sense. Since the monk is without possessions he becomes all the more vain, and when he does have money he hides it in shame as something unbecoming to his calling.

84. It is characteristic of a monk's vainglory that he become vain about his virtue and whatever is associated with it. It is characteristic of his pride that he be elated over his good deeds, dismiss other people, and ascribe these deeds to himself and not to God. It is characteristic of the worldly person's vainglory and pride that he be vain and elated over appearances, wealth, position, and pride.

85. The achievements of those in the world are misfortunes for monks, and the achievements of monks are misfortunes for those in the world. For instance the achievements of those in the world are wealth, fame, position, luxury, bodily comfort, fine children, and what is associated with these. If a monk comes to this, he is lost. On the other hand the monk's achievements are to be without possessions, fame, or influence, also self-mastery, endurance, and what is associated with these. If these things happen to a man of the world against his will he considers it a great misfortune and often comes close to hanging himself; indeed, some have done so.

86. Food was created for two reasons, for nourishment and for healing. Therefore those who take it for any other reason misuse what has been given for their use and are condemned for their luxury. And as with everything, misuse is sin.

87. Humility is continual prayer with tears and suffering. For this constant calling on God for help does not allow us to trust foolishly in our own strength and wisdom nor to be arrogant toward others. These are the dangerous diseases of the passion of pride.

88. It is one thing to fight against a simple thought so as not to arouse passion. It is another thing to fight a passionate thought to avoid giving consent. But in both of these ways the thoughts are not allowed to linger.

89. Hurt is linked to resentment. Thus when someone's mind associates the face of a brother with hurt, it is clear that he bears him a grudge. But "the ways of the resentful lead to death," because, "every resentful man is a transgressor of the law."¹⁶³

90. If you bear a grudge against anyone, pray for him and you will stop the passion in its tracks. By prayer you separate the hurt from the memory of the evil which he did you and in becoming loving and kind

you completely obliterate passion from the soul. On the other hand, if someone else bears you a grudge, be generous and humble with him, treat him fairly, and you will deliver him from the passion.

91. You will check the hurt of the envious person with great difficulty, for he considers what he envies in you as his misfortune. It can be checked in no other way but in hiding something from him. But if the thing is helpful to many yet gives him grief, which side will you choose? It is certainly necessary to be of service to the many while still taking as much care as possible that you be not carried off by the vice of passion, since you could be retaliating not against the passion but against the one who is experiencing it. Instead, you will through humility regard him as above yourself and in every time, place, and situation prefer him to yourself. You will be able to check your own envy if you join the one you envy in rejoicing at what he rejoices at and grieving over what he grieves over. In this way you fulfill the Apostle's words, "Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep."¹⁶⁴

92. Our mind is in the middle of two things, each one active at its own work, the one at virtue, the other at vice, in other words between angel and devil. The mind has the power and strength to follow or oppose the one it chooses.¹⁶⁵

93. On the one hand, the holy angels urge us on to the good, and natural tendencies and a good will assist us. On the other hand, passions and an evil will support the assaults of the demons.

94. Sometimes God himself lights on a pure mind and teaches it, sometimes the holy angels propose fine things, sometimes the nature of material reality is contemplated.

95. It is necessary that the mind which has been granted knowledge keep its representations of things without passion, its contemplations secure, and its state of prayer untroubled. But it cannot always keep them from the impulses of the flesh, because it is blackened with smoke from the contrivance of demons.

96. We are not grieved by the same things that anger us, for the things which produce grief are more numerous than those which produce anger. For instance one thing is broken, another is lost, such a person dies. For these things we have only grief, but for the others we experience both grief and anger so long as we are irreligiously disposed.

97. When the mind receives the representations of things, it of course patterns itself after each representation. In contemplating them spiri-

tually it is variously conformed to each object contemplated. But when it comes to be in God, it becomes wholly without form and pattern, for in contemplating the one who is simple it becomes simple and entirely patterned in light.¹⁶⁶

98. The perfect soul is the one whose affective drive is wholly directed to God.

99. The perfect mind is the one that through genuine faith supremely knows in supreme ignorance the supremely unknowable, and in gazing on the universe of his handiwork has received from God comprehensive knowledge of his Providence and judgment in it, as far as allowable to men.¹⁶⁷

100. Time is divided in three, and faith extends to all three divisions, hope to one, love to two. Faith and hope remain to a certain point, but love for infinite ages in a supreme and ever abounding union with the one who is supremely infinite. And because of this, "the greatest of these is love."¹⁶⁸

FOURTH CENTURY

1. The mind is first of all in wonder when it reflects on God's universal infinity and that inaccessible and greatly desired ocean. Next it is amazed at how from nothing he has brought into existence everything that is. But just as, "of his greatness there is no end," so is his wisdom unsearchable.¹⁶⁹

2. How can one help but marvel when considering that immense ocean of goodness which is beyond astonishment? How can one not be struck when reflecting on how and whence rational and intelligent nature came to be, and also the four elements which make up bodies, when there was no matter at all previous to their existence? And what kind of power is it that moved them to reality and brought them into being? But the pagan Greeks do not admit this and remain in ignorance about the all-powerful goodness and its efficacious wisdom and knowledge which is beyond the mind's powers.¹⁷⁰

3. Eternally existing as Creator, God creates when he wishes by his consubstantial Word and Spirit out of infinite goodness. But do not object: For what reason did he create at this time, since he was always good? Because, I say in turn, the inscrutable wisdom of the infinite nature is not subject to human knowledge.

4. When he willed it, the Creator gave substance to and produced