

## THE FIRST PART.

### THE PREFACE,

Wherein he in few words goes through the particulars, which are to be laid open in the course of the entire work.

1. IT is often a question with many persons, who should be held for the writer of the Book of the Blessed Job; and some indeed conjecture that Moses was the author of this work, others, some one of the Prophets. For because it is related in the Book of Genesis [Gen. 36, 33] that Jobab sprung from the stock of Esau, and that he succeeded Bale [*Bela* E.V.] the son of Beor upon the throne, they have inferred that this Blessed Job lived long before the times of Moses, evidently from ignorance of the manner of Holy Writ, which in the earlier parts is wont to touch slightly upon events that are not to follow till long afterwards, when the object is to proceed without delay to particularize other events with greater exactness. Whence it happens, that in that case likewise it is mentioned of Jobab, that he was *before there arose kings in Israel*. Therefore we clearly see that He never could have lived before the Law, who is marked out as having lived during the time of the Judges of Israel; which being little attended to by some, they suppose that Moses was the writer of his acts, as placing him long before, [*ut vide licet*] so that in effect the self-same person who was able to deliver the precepts of the Law for our instruction; should be supposed also to have commended to us examples of virtue derived from the life of a man that was a Gentile. But some, as has been said, suppose some one of the Prophets to have been the Author of this work, maintaining that no man could have knowledge of those words of God, which have such deep mystery, save he whose mind was raised to things above by the spirit of Prophecy.

2. But who was the writer, it is very superfluous to enquire; since at any rate the Holy Spirit is confidently believed to have been the Author. He then Himself wrote them, Who dictated the things that should be written. He did Himself write them Who both was present as the Inspirer in that Saint's work, and by the mouth of the writer has consigned to us his acts as patterns for our imitation. If we were reading the words of some great man with his Epistle in our hand, yet were to enquire by what pen they were written, doubtless it would be an absurdity, to know the Author of the Epistle and understand his meaning, and notwithstanding to be curious to know with what sort of pen the words were marked upon the page. When then we understand the matter, and are persuaded that the Holy Spirit was its Author, in stirring a question about the author, what else do we than in reading a letter enquire about the pen?

3. Yet we may with greater probability suppose that the same blessed Job, who bore the strife of the spiritual conflict, did likewise relate the circumstances of his victory when achieved; nor should it influence us that it is said in the same book, 'Job said,' or, 'Job bore this or that;' for it is the manner of Holy Scripture for the persons who are writing so to speak of themselves in it, as though they were speaking of others. Whence it is that Moses says, *Now the man Moses was very meek above all the men which were upon the face of the earth*. [Numb. 12, 3] Hence John says, *that Disciple whom Jesus loved*; [John 19, 26] hence Luke says, *that two of them were walking by the way, Cleophas and another*; [Luke 24, 13] which other indeed, while he was so carefully silent about him, he shewed to have been no other than himself, as some assert. The writers then of Holy Writ because they are moved by the impulse of the Holy Spirit, do therein so bear witness of themselves as though of other persons. Thus the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Moses spake of

Moses, the Holy Spirit speaking by John spoke of John. Paul too intimates that he did not speak from the dictates of his own mind, by saying, *Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.* [2 Cor. 13, 3] It is hence that the Angel who is described to have appeared to Moses, is now mentioned as an Angel, now as the Lord; an Angel in truth, in respect of that which was subservient to the external delivery; and the Lord, because He was the Director within, Who supplied the effectual power of speaking. Therefore as the speaker is inwardly directed, by virtue of his obedience to instructions, he receives the name of Angel, by virtue of his inspiration, that of Lord. Hence David exclaims, *Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth.* [Ps. 78, 1] For it was neither David's law, nor David's people, but he, assuming the character of Him from whom He spoke, speaks with His authority with Whose inspiration he was filled. This we perceive to be daily practised in the Church, if we regard the thing attentively; for the reader standing in the midst of the people exclaims, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* [Exod. 3, 61] Yet that he is himself God, he says not certainly with truth, nor yet by saying what he does is the line of truth deviated from; for by his voice he first proclaims the sovereignty of Him, Whose minister he is in the office of reading. Therefore the writers of Holy Writ, because when full of the Holy Spirit they are lifted above their own nature, are as it were put out of themselves, and in this manner they deliver sentiments about themselves, as though about other persons. In this way Blessed Job also, being under the influence of the Holy Spirit, might have written his own acts, which were, for that matter, gifts of inspiration from above, as though they were not his own; for in so far as it was a human being, who spoke things which were of God, all that he spake belonged to Another, and in so far as the Holy Spirit spake of what is proper to a human being, it was Another that gave utterance to the things that belonged to him.

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4. But we should now leave these points behind us, and hasten forward to consider the particulars of the Sacred History. Every man, even from this, that he is a man, ought to understand the Author of his being, to Whose will he must submit the more completely, in the same proportion that he reflects that of himself he is nothing; yet we, when created I by Him, neglected to take God into our thoughts. Precepts were had recourse to: precepts likewise we have refused to obey, Examples are added; these very examples too we decline to follow, which we see were set forth to us by those under the Law; for because God did openly address Himself to particular persons who were placed under the Law, we regard ourselves as unconcerned with those particular precepts, to whom they were not specially addressed; wherefore to confound our shamelessness, a Gentile is handed down to be our example, that as he that is set under the Law disdains to pay obedience to the Law, he may at least be roused by comparing himself with him, who without the Law lived as by law, The Law then was given to one gone astray; but when even under the Law he still strays, he has the testimony of those brought before him, who are without the pale of the Law, that forasmuch as we would not keep to the order of our creation [*conditionis*], we might be admonished of our duty by precepts, and because we scorned to obey the precepts, we might be shamed by examples, not, as we have said, the examples of those who had the restraint of the Law, but of those who had no law to restrain them from sin.

5. The Divine Providence has compassed us about, and cut off all excuse; all opening to man's equivocating arts is every way closed; a Gentile, one without the Law, is brought forward to confound the iniquity of those that are under the Law; which is well and summarily shewn by the

Prophet, when He says, *Be thou ashamed, O Zidon, saith the sea*; [Isai. 23, 4] for in Sidon we have a figure of the steadfastness of those settled upon the foundation of the Law, and in the sea of the life of the Gentiles; accordingly, *Be thou ashamed, O Zidon, saith the sea*, because the life of those under the Law is convicted by the life of Gentiles, and the conduct of men in a state of religion is put to confusion by the conduct of those living in the world, so long as the first do not, even under vows, observe what they hear enjoined in precepts: the latter by their manner of life keep those ways whereunto they are not in any wise bound by legal enactments. Now for the authority this book has received, we have the weighty testimony of the sacred page itself, where the Prophet Ezekiel says, that those men alone should have deliverance granted to them., viz. Noah, Daniel, and Job; nor is it without propriety, that in the midst of Hebrew, lives, that of a righteous Gentile is placed in that authority which commands the reverence of men; because as our Redeemer came to redeem both Jews and Gentiles, so He was willing to be prophesied of by the lips both of Jews and Gentiles, that He might be named by either people [*utrumque populum*], Who was at a future time to suffer for both.

6. This man then, with all the surpassing powers whereby he was sustained, was known to his own conscience and to God; but had he not been stricken he would never have been the least known to us. For his virtue had its exercise indeed even in peaceful times, but it was by strokes that the report of; his virtue was stirred up to fragrance: and he, who in repose kept within himself all that he was, when disturbed did scatter; abroad the odour of his fortitude, for all to know. For as unguents, unless they be stirred, are never smelt far off, and as aromatic scents spread not their fragrance except they be burned, so the Saints in their tribulations make known all the sweetness that they have of their virtues. Whence it is well said in the Gospel, *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove.* [Matt. 17, 20] For unless a grain of mustard seed be bruised, the extent of its virtue is never acknowledged. For without bruising it is insipid [*lene*], but if it is bruised it becomes hot, and if gives out all those pungent properties that were concealed in it. Thus every good man, so long as he is not smitten, is regarded as insipid [*lenis*], and of slight account. But if ever the grinding of persecution crush him, instantly he gives forth all the warmth of his savour, and all that before appeared to be weak or contemptible, is turned into godly fervour, and that which in peaceful times he had been glad to keep from view within his own bosom, he is driven by the force of tribulations to make known; so that the Prophet says with justice, *Yet the Lord hath commanded His lovingkindness in the day time, and in the night He hath declared it*; [Ps 42, p] for the lovingkindness of the Lord is commanded in the day time, because the season of rest is perceived by the sense of it [*cognoscendo*], but ‘in the night it is declared,’ because the gift which is received in tranquillity is made manifest in tribulation.

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7. But we ought to search out more particularly why so many strokes fell to the lot of him who maintained without blame such strict guard of the several virtues: for he had humility, as he himself even testifies, *If I did despise to be judged in the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me.* [Job 31, 13] He shewed hospitality, as himself describes, when he says; *the stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller.* [Job 31, 32] He maintained a vigorous exercise of discipline, as his own words shew; *The princes refrained talking, and laid their fingers on their mouth.* [Job 29, 9] With that vigour he yet retained mildness,

according to his own confession, where he says, *I sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, yet as one that comforteth the mourners*. In almsdeeds he cherished a bountiful spirit, as he himself intimates by saying, *If I have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof*. [Job 31, 17] Whereas then he performed all the precepts of the several virtues, one thing was wanting to him, viz. that when stricken even he should learn to render thanks: it was known that he knew how to serve God when surrounded by blessings, but it was meet that a most searching severity should put it to the test, whether even under the lash he would yet remain constant to his God, for chastisement is the test, whether when let to rest a man really loves. Him the adversary sought indeed to obtain that he might prove deficient [*deficeret*] in godliness, but obtained that he might prove a proficient [*proficeret*] therein. The Lord in loving-kindness permitted that to be done, which the devil in his wickedness required; for when the enemy had got leave to have him with the purpose of destroying him, by his temptations he effected that his merits were augmented. For it is written, *In all this Job sinned not with his lips*. [Job 1, 22] Yet doubtless there are certain words of his rejoinders, which sound harshly to readers of little experience, for the sayings of the Saints these are unable to understand in the pious sense in which they are spoken, and because they are unskilled to make their own the feelings of the afflicted Saint, therefore it is impossible for them to interpret aright the expressions of grief, for it is a sympathy that lowers itself to his state of suffering, that knows how to estimate aright the meaning of the sufferer.

8. And so they conclude that blessed Job was a defaulter in his speech, without sufficiently considering, that if they convict the blessed Job's replies, they at the same time bear witness that God's sentence concerning him was untrue. For the Lord saith to the devil, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* [Job 1, 8] To Whom the devil presently replies, *Doth Job fear God for nought? Has not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house? But put forth Thine hand now, and touch him, and see if he hath not blessed Thee to Thy face*. [v. 9, 10] The enemy then put forth his strength upon the blessed Job, but in doing this he entered the lists against God, and in this way blessed Job became the intermediate subject of the contest between God and the devil. Whoever then maintains that the holy man, when in the midst of the strokes, committed sin by the words which he uttered, what else doth he than reproach God, Who had pledged Himself [*proposuerat*] for him, with having been the loser? For the same God was pleased to take upon Himself the cause of the Saint under his trial, Who both extolled him before his afflictions, and on thus extolling allowed him to undergo the trial of those scourges. If then Job is said to have gone wrong, his advocate is made out to have been foiled: though the gifts vouchsafed him alone testify, that he did not transgress at all: for who does not know that what is due to faults is not reward but chastisement? He then who merited to receive back double what he had lost, proved by this compensation that there was nought of evil, but only virtue in all that he said, and to this declaration too it is further added, that he is himself the intercessor in behalf of his guilty friends. For one that is involved in great sins, can never, when burthened with his own, discharge another's score; he then is shewn to be clear in his own case, who could obtain for others their clearance from guilt. If however it be displeasing to any, that he is himself the relator of his own goodness, let them know that in the midst of so many losses of his substance, amidst so many wounds of the body, amidst so many deaths of his children, with the friends, who had come to comfort him, breaking out into reproaches, he was urged to despair of his life, and he whom such repeated calamities had sorely smitten, was further stricken by the insulting language of the reproachers; for these, that had come to comfort him, while they upbraided him with his unrighteousness as it

seemed to them, were driving him quite to give up all hope of himself; whereas then he recalls his good deeds to mind, it is not that he lifts himself up in self applause, but sets anew [*reformat*] his mind to hope, when as it were sunk down amid those reproaches and those strokes. For the mind is smitten with a heavy weapon of despair, when it is both hard pressed with the tribulations of wrath from above, and galled by the reproaches of men's tongues without. Blessed Job therefore, thus pierced with the darts of so many woes, when he now feared to be brought down by their reproaches, recalled himself to a state of confidence, by the assurance derived from his past life. He then did not thereby fall into the sin of presumption, because he resisted an inward impulse to despair by the outward expression of his own eulogies, to the end that while he recounted the good things which he had done he might be saved from despairing of the good that he had sought.

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9. But now let us follow out the actual course of his trial. The enemy, full of rage, and striving to conquer the firm breast of that holy man, set up against him the engines of temptation, spoiled his substance, slew his children, smote his body, instigated his wife, and while he brought his friends to console him, urged, them to the harshest upbraiding. One friend too was more cruel in his reproaches, he reserved with the last and bitterest invective, that by the frequency of the stroke, if not otherwise, the heart might be reached by that which was ever being repeated with a fresh wound. For because he saw that he had power in the world, he thought to move him by the loss of his substance, and finding him unshaken, he smote him by the death of his children. But seeing that from that wound which made him childless he even gained strength to the greater magnifying of God's praise, he asked leave to smite the health of his body. Seeing moreover that by the pain of the body he could not compass the affecting [*passionem*] of the mind, he instigated his wife, for he saw that the city which he desired to storm was too strong; therefore by bringing upon him so many external plagues, he led an army as it were on the outside against him, but, when he kindled the feelings of his wife into words of mischievous persuasion, it was as though he corrupted the hearts of the citizens within; For so from external wars we are instructed how to think of those within. For an enraged enemy, that holds a city encircled by his surrounding armies, upon perceiving its fortifications to remain unshaken, betakes himself to other methods [*argumenta*] of attack, with this object, that he may corrupt the hearts of some of the citizens also within; so that, when he has led on the assailants from without, he may also have cooperators within, and that when the heat of the battle increases outside, the city being left without succour by the treachery of those within, of whose faith no doubt is felt, may become his prey.

10. And thus a battering ram having been planted on the outside, as it were, he smote the walls of this city with blows many in number, as the several times that he brought tidings of calamities; while on the inside, he, as it were, corrupted the hearts of the citizens, when he set himself to undermine the strong bulwarks of this city by the persuasions of the wife. In this manner he brought to bear, from without, an hostile assault, from within, baneful counsels, that he might capture the city the sooner, in proportion as he troubled it both from within and from without. But because there are times when words are more poignant than wounds, he armed himself, as we have said, with the tongues of his friends. Those indeed that were of graver years, might perchance give the less pain by their words. The younger is made to take their place, to deal that holy bosom a wound so much the sharper, the meaner was the arm that be impelled to strike blows against it. Behold the enemy mad to strike down his indomitable strength, how many the darts of temptation

that he devised, see, what numberless beleaguering engines he set about him! See how many weapons of assault he let fly, but in all his mind continued undaunted, the city stood unshaken.

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11. It is the aim of enemies, when they come up face to face, to send off some in secret, who may be so much the more free to strike a blow in the flank of the hostile force, in proportion as he that is fighting is more eagerly intent upon the enemy advancing in front. Job, therefore, being caught in the warfare of this conflict, received the losses which befel him like foes in his front; he took the words of his comforters like enemies on his flank, and in all turning round the shield of his steadfastness, he stood defended at all points, and ever on the watch, parried on all sides the swords directed against him. By his silence he marks his unconcern for the loss of his substance; the flesh, dead in his children, he bewails with composure; the flesh in his own person stricken, he endures with fortitude; the flesh in his wife suggesting mischievous persuasions, he instructeth with wisdom. In addition to all this his friends start forth into the bitterness of upbraiding, and coming to appease his grief, increase its force. Thus all the engines of temptation are turned by this holy man to the augmentation of his virtues; for by the wounds his patience is tried, and by the words his wisdom is exercised. Every where he meets the enemy with an undaunted mien, for the scourges he overcame by resolution, and the words by reasoning. But his friends, who came indeed to administer consolation, but who deviate from their purpose even to using terms of reproach, must be thought to have erred more from ignorance than wickedness. For we must never imagine that so great a man had evil minded friends, but, while they fail to discern the cause of his scourges, they slide into a fault.

12. For of scourges there are sundry kinds; for there is the scourge whereby the sinner is stricken that he may suffer punishment without withdrawal [*retractione*], another whereby he is smitten, that he may be corrected; another wherewith sometimes a man is smitten, not for the correction of past misdeeds, but for the prevention of future; another which is very often inflicted, whereby neither a past transgression is corrected, nor a future one prevented, but which has this end, that when unexpected deliverance follows the stroke, the power of the Deliverer being known may be the more ardently beloved, and that while the innocent person is bruised by the blow, his patience may serve to increase the gain of his merits; for sometimes the sinner is stricken that he may be punished, without withdrawal, as it is said to Judaea when doomed to destruction, *I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one*; [Jerem. 30, 14] and again, *Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable*. [v. 15] Sometimes the sinner is stricken that he may be amended, as it is said to one in the Gospel, *Behold, thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*; [John 5, 14] for the words of his deliverer indicate that it was past sins which were exacting all the violence of the pain which he had endured, In some cases the person smitten, not for the obliteration of a past offence, but for the avoidance of a future one, which the Apostle Paul openly testifies of himself, saying, *And lest I shall be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me*. [2Cor. 12, 7] For he who says, not 'that he was exalted,' but, 'lest he should be exalted,' clearly shews that by that stroke it is held in check that it may not take place, and that it is not a fault that has taken place now clearing away. But sometimes the person is stricken neither for past not yet for future transgression, but that the alone mightiness of the Divine power may be set forth in the cutting short of the striking; whence when it was said unto the Lord

concerning the blind man in the Gospel, *Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* the Lord answered, saying, *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him:* [John 9, 2.3.] in which manifestation what else is done, saying that by that scourge the excellence of his merits is increased, and while there is no past transgression wiped away, the patience may engender a mighty fortitude. For which reason the same blessed Job is first extolled by the voice of the Judge, and is then given up into the hand of the Tempter, and whereas God, in recompensing him after the scourge, speaks to him in a more familiar manner, it is plainly shewn how much greater he became by the stroke; so then the friends of blessed Job, while they were unable to distinguish the different kinds of strokes, believed him to be stricken for his guiltiness, and while they endeavoured to vindicate the justice of God in smiting him, they were driven to reprove blessed Job of unrighteousness; not knowing in fact that for this reason he was stricken, viz. that the stroke might redound to the praise of God's glory, and not that by those strokes he might be brought to amend the evil, which he had never done; and hence they are the sooner restored to pardon, because they sinned from ignorance rather than from an evil disposition; and their pride the Divine Justice puts down with so much the stronger hand, as It refuses to renew them in Its favour, saving by means of him whom they had despised. For a high mind is effectually struck down when it is bowed beneath the very person over whom it has exalted itself.

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13. But amongst these marvellous works of Divine Providence it yields us satisfaction to mark, how, for the enlightening the night of this present life, each star in its turn appears in the face of Heaven, until that towards the end of the night the Redeemer of mankind ariseth like the true Morning Star; for the space of night, being enlightened by the stars as they set and rise in their courses, is passed with the heavens in exceeding beauty. Thus in order that the ray of stars, darting forth at its appointed time, and changed in succession, might reach the darkness of our night, Abel comes to shew us innocency; Enoch, to teach purity of practice; Noah, to win admittance for lessons of endurance in hope and in work; Abraham, to manifest obedience; Isaac, to shew an example of chastity in wedded life; Jacob, to introduce patience in labour; Joseph, for the repaying evil with the favour of a good turn; Moses, for the shewing forth of mildness; Joshua, to form us to confidence against difficulties; Job, to shew patience amid afflictions. Lo what lustrous stars see we in the sky, that the foot of practice may never stumble as we walk this our night's journey; since for so many Saints as God's Providence set forth to man's cognizance, He, as it were, sent just so many stars into the sky, over the darkness of erring man, till the true Morning Star should rise, Who, being the herald to us of the eternal morning, should outshine the other stars by the radiance of His Divinity.

14. And all the elect, whilst by their holy living serving as His forerunners, gave promise of Him by prophesying both in deeds and words. For there never was any Saint who did not appear as His herald in figure; for it was meet that all should display that goodness in themselves whereby both all became good, and which they knew to be for the good of all, and therefore that blessing ought also to be promised without pause which was vouchsafed both to be received without price [*sine aestimatione*] and to be kept without end, that all generations might together tell what the end of all should bring to light, in the redemption of which all were partakers. And therefore it behoved that blessed Job also, who uttered those high mysteries of His Incarnation, should by his life be a sign of

Him, Whom by voice he proclaimed, and by all that he underwent should shew forth what were to be His sufferings; and should so much the more truly foretel the mysteries [*sacramenta*] of His Passion, as he prophesied then not merely with his lips but also by suffering. But because our Redeemer has shewn Himself to be one with the Holy Church, which He has taken to Himself; for of Him it is said, *Who is the Head of us all*; [Eph. 4, 15] and of the Church it is written, *the Body of Christ, Which is the Church*, [Col. 1, 24] whosoever in his own person betokens Him, at one time designates Him in respect of the Head, at another of the Body, so as to have not only the voice of the Head, but also of the Body; and hence the Prophet Isaiah, in giving utterance to the words of the same Lord, says, *He hath put upon me a mitre like unto a Bride- groom, and hath decked me with jewels as a Bride*. [Isa. 61. 10 *Vulg.*] Therefore because the same person that in the Head is the Bridegroom, is in the Body the Bride, it follows that when, at times, any thing is spoken from the Head, there must be a turning down by degrees or even at once to the voice of the Body, and again when any thing is said that is of the Body, there must be presently a rising to the voice of the Head. Accordingly the blessed Job conveys a type of the Redeemer, Who is to come together with His own Body: and his wife who bids him curse, marks the life of the carnal, who having place within the Holy Church with unamended morals, as by their faith they are brought near to the godly, press them the more sorely by their lives, since while they cannot be shunned as being of the faithful, they are endured by the faithful as the greater harm by how much nearer home [*deterius quanto et interius*].

15. But his friends, who, while acting as his counsellors, at the same time inveigh against him, are an express image of heretics, who under shew of giving counsel, are busied in leading astray; and hence they address the blessed Job as though in behalf of the Lord, but yet the Lord does not commend them, that is, because all heretics, while they try to defend, only offend God. Whence they are plainly told, and that by the same holy man *I desire to reason with God; first shewing that ye are forgers of lies, ye are followers of corrupt doctrines*. [Job 13, 3.4.] According to which it appears that these by their erroneous notions stood a type of heretics, whom the holy man charges with adhering to a creed [*cultui*] of corrupt doctrines. But every heretic, in this, that he is seen to defend God, is a gainsayer of His troth, according to the testimony of the Psalmist, who says, *That Thou mightest still the enemy and the defender* [Ps. 8, 2. E.V. *avenger*], for he is an *enemy and defender*, who so preaches God as thereby to be fighting against Him.

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16. Now that blessed Job maintains the semblance of the Redeemer to come, his very name is a proof. For Job is, if interpreted, 'grieving;' by which same grief we have set forth, either our Mediator's Passion, or the travails of Holy Church, which is harassed by the manifold toils of this present life. Moreover by the word which stands for their name his friends mark out the quality of their conduct. For Eliphaz is called in the Latin tongue, 'contempt of the Lord,' and what else do heretics, than in entertaining false notions of God condemn Him by their proud conceits. Baldad is by interpretation 'Oldness alone.' And well are all heretics styled, 'Oldness alone,' in the things which they speak concerning God, forasmuch as it is with no right purpose but with a longing for temporal honour that they desire to appear as preachers. For they are moved to speak not by the zeal of the new man, but by the evil principles of the old life. 'Sophar' too is rendered in the Latin language 'dissipation of the prospect,' or, 'one dissipating the prospect.' For the minds of the faithful lift themselves to the contemplation of things above; but as the words of heretics aim to



prevent them in their contemplation of light objects, they do their best to 'dissipate the prospect.' Thus in the three names of Job's friends, we have set forth three cases [*casus*] of the ruin of heretical minds. For unless they held God in contempt, they would never entertain false notions concerning Him; and unless they drew along with them a heart of oldness, they would: never err in the understanding of the new life; and unless they marred the contemplations of good things [or, of good men], the Supreme judgments would never condemn them with so strict a scrutiny for the guiltiness of their words. By holding God in contempt, then, they keep themselves in oldness, and by being kept in oldness, they injure the contemplation of right objects [See] by their erring discourses.

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17. Now because it sometimes happens that heretics being penetrated with the bountiful streams of Divine grace return to the unity of Holy Church, this is well represented in the very reconciliation of his friends. Yet blessed Job is bidden to intercede for them, because the sacrifices of heretics can never be acceptable to God, unless they be offered in their behalf by the hands of the universal Church, that by her merits they may obtain the recovery of salvation, whom they did strike before by assailing her with the darts of their words; and hence seven sacrifices are recorded to have been offered for them, for whereas in confessing they receive the Spirit of sevenfold grace, they do as it were obtain expiation by seven offerings. It is hence that in the Apocalypse of John the whole Church is represented by the number of seven Churches [Rev. 1, 12]. Hence it is said of wisdom by Solomon, *Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn, out her seven pillars.* [Prov. 9, 1] And thus by the very number of the sacrifices those reconciled heretics set forth what they were before, in that these are not united to the perfection of sevenfold grace, except by returning.

18. But they are well described as having offered for themselves bulls and rams. For in the bull is figured the neck of pride, and in the ram, the leading of the flocks that follow. What then is it to slaughter bulls and rams in their behalf, but to put an end to their proud leading, so that they may think humbly of themselves, and not seduce the hearts of the innocent to follow after them. For they had started away from the unity of the Church with a swelling neck, and were drawing after them the weak folk like flocks following behind. Therefore let them come to blessed Job; i.e. return to the Church; and present bulls and rams to be slaughtered for a sevenfold sacrifice, and that they may be united to the universal Church, let them with the interposition of humility kill all the swelling humour wherewith their proud leadership savoured them.

[ix]

19. Now by Heliu, who speaks indeed with a right sense, yet runs down [*derivatur*] into foolish words of pride, is set forth a representation of every proud person. For there are many within the pale of Holy Church, that are too proud to put forward in a right manner the right sentiments, which they profess, and hence he is both rebuked with the words of God's upbraiding, and yet no sacrifices offered in his behalf, in that he is a believer indeed, yet high-minded. By the truth of his belief he is within, but by the obstacle which his pride presents he is not acceptable. Him [read *Hunc ergo*, as old ed. and Mss.] therefore rebuke reproves, but sacrifice does not restore him, because he is indeed in the faith that he ought to be in, yet the Supreme Justice, charging him with things over and above what need to be, keeps him at a distance. Hence Heliu is well rendered in

the Latin tongue, 'That my God,' or, 'God, the Lord.' For proud men within Holy Church, though they keep away from God by living proudly, yet acknowledge Him by believing truly. For what is it for him to say by his name, 'That my God,' but to shew forth Him Whom he believed with a public avowal? Or what is it to say, 'God the Lord,' but to accept Him both as God by virtue of His Divinity, and to hold Him For Man by His Incarnation?

[x]

20. It is well that after the losses of his substance, after the death of his children, after the tortures of his wounds, after the strife and conflict of words, he is raised up again with a double reward, clearly, in that Holy Church, even while yet in this present life, receives a double recompense for the toils she undergoes, since having taken in the Gentiles to the full, at the end of the world she converts to herself the souls of the Jews likewise. For it is on this account written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] And she will afterwards receive a double recompense, in that, when the toils of this present time are over, she rises not alone to the joy of souls, but to a blessed estate of bodies. And hence the Prophet rightly says, *therefore in their land they shall possess the double.* [Isa. 61, 7] For 'in the Land of the Living' the Saints possess the double, because we know they are gladdened with blessedness both of mind and body. Hence John in the Apocalypse, because it was before the resurrection of bodies that he saw the souls of the Saints crying, beheld how that they had given them a stole to each, saying, *And white robes were given, one [singulae] to every one of them, and it was said, that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* [Rev. 6, 11] For before the Resurrection they are said to have received a stole to each, for that as yet they are gifted with blessedness of mind alone; and therefore they will receive each one two, whenever, together with the perfect bliss of souls, they shall be clothed also with incorruptibility of bodies.

21. Now it is very properly that the affliction indeed of blessed Job is told, but the length of time that he was under the affliction is kept back, for we see the tribulation of Holy Church in this life, but know nothing for how long she is here to undergo bruising and delay; and hence it is spoken by the mouth of Truth, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power.* [Acts 1, 7] Herein then, that the suffering of blessed Job is told us, we are taught what we are made acquainted withal by experience; and herein, that the length of time that he continued in his suffering is withheld, we are taught what it is we must remain ignorant of.

We have drawn out these words of preface to some length, that by briefly running over it we might in a manner give a view of the whole. Now then that by long discoursing we have been brought to the commencement of our discourse, we must first settle the root of the historical meaning, that we may afterwards let our minds take their fill of the fruits of the allegorical senses.

## THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS

OF

## ST. GREGORY THE POPE,

OR

### AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

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#### THE EPISTLE,

Wherein he explains the time, occasion, division, plan, and the method of discourse and of interpretation pursued in his work.

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*To the Most Devout and Holy Brother, my fellow Bishop Leander, Gregory, the servant of God's servants.*

1. WHEN I knew you long since at Constantinople, my most blessed brother, at the time that I was kept there by the affairs of the Apostolical See, and that you had been brought thither by an embassy, with which you were charged, on counts touching the faith of the Wisigoths, I then detailed in your ears all that displeased me in myself, since for late and long I declined the grace of conversion, and after that I had been inspired with an heavenly affection I thought it better to be still shrouded in the secular habit. For though I had now disclosed to me what I should seek of the love of things eternal, yet long-established custom had so cast its chains upon me, that I could not change my outward habit: and while my purpose [*animus*] still compelled me to engage in the service of this world as it were in semblance only, many influences began to spring up against me from caring for this same world, so that the tie which kept me to it was now no longer in semblance only, but what is more serious, in my own mind. At length being anxious to avoid all these inconveniences, I sought the haven of the monastery, and having left all that is of the world, as at that time I vainly believed, I came out naked from the shipwreck of human life. For as the vessel that is negligently moored, is very often (when the storm waxes violent) tossed by the water out of its shelter on the safest shore, so under the cloak of the Ecclesiastical office, I found myself plunged on a sudden in a sea of secular matters, and because I had not held fast the tranquillity of the monastery when in possession, I learnt by losing it, how closely it should have been held. For whereas the virtue of obedience was set against my own inclination to make me take the charge of ministering at the holy Altar, I was led to undertake that upon the grounds of the Church requiring it [*sub Ecclesiae colore*], which, if it might be done with impunity, I should get quit of by a second time withdrawing myself; and subsequently notwithstanding my unwillingness and reluctance, at the very time when the ministry of the Altar was a heavy weight, the further burden of the Pastoral charge was fastened on me, which I now find so much the more difficulty in bearing, as I feel myself to be unequal to it, and as I cannot take breath in any comfortable assurance in myself. For because, now that the end of the world is at hand, the times are disturbed by reason of the multiplied evils thereof, and we ourselves, who are supposed to be devoted to the inner mysteries, are thus become involved in outward cares; just as it happened then also when I was brought to the ministry of the Altar, this was brought about for me without my knowledge, viz. that I should receive the mighty charge of the Holy Order, to the end that I might be quartered under less restraint [*licentious excubarem*] in an earthly palace, whither indeed I was followed by many of my brethren from the monastery, who were attached to me by a kindred affection [*germana*]. Which

happened, I perceive, by Divine dispensation, in order that by their example, as by an anchored cable, I might ever be kept fast to the tranquil shore of prayer, whenever I should be tossed by the ceaseless waves of secular affairs. For to their society I fled as to the bosom of the safest port from the rolling swell, and from the waves of earthly occupation; and though that office which withdrew me from the monastery had with the point of its employments stabbed me to death as to my former tranquillity of life, yet in their society, by means of the appeals of diligent reading, I was animated with the yearnings of daily renewed compunction. It was then that it seemed good to those same brethren, you too adding your influence, as you yourself remember, to oblige me by the importunity of their requests to set forth the book of blessed Job; and as far as the Truth should inspire me with powers, to lay open to them those mysteries of such depth; and they made this too an additional burden which their petition laid upon me, that I would not only unravel the words of the history in allegorical senses, but that I would go on to give to the allegorical senses the turn of a moral exercise, with the addition of somewhat yet harder, that I would crown [or 'fortify,' *cingerem*] the several meanings with testimonies i, and that the testimonies, which I brought forward, truly, if ever they should chance to appear involved, should be disentangled by the aid of additional explanation.

II. At first however, when in this obscure work, which hitherto had been thoroughly treated by none before us, I learnt the extent and character of the task to which I was forced, being overcome and wearied with the mere burthen of hearing of it, I confess that I sank under it. Yet immediately, when, in a strait between my alarms and my devout aspirations, I lifted up the eyes of my mind to the Bestower of all gifts [James 1, 17], waiving my scruples, I fixed my thoughts on this, that what an affection flowing from the hearts of my brethren enjoined upon me, could not certainly be impossible, I despaired, indeed, of being a match for these things, but, stronger for my very despair of myself, I forthwith raised my hopes to Him, by Whom the tongue of the dumb is opened, Who *maketh the lips of babes to speak eloquently*, [Wisd. 10, 21], Who has marked the undistinguished and brute brayings of an ass with the intelligible measures of human speech. What wonder, then, that a simple man should receive understanding from Him, Who whenever He willeth, utters His truth by the mouths of the very beasts of burthen? Armed then with the strength which this thought supplied, I roused mine own drought to explore so deep a well; and though the life of those, to whom I was compelled to give my interpretation, was far above me, yet I thought it no harm if the leaden pipe should supply streams of water for the service of men. Whereupon, without further delay, I delivered the former parts of the book, in presence, to the same brethren assembled before me; and because I found my time to be then somewhat more free, in treating of the latter portion I used dictation; and when longer intervals of time were at my disposal, many things being added, a small number omitted, and some few left as they were, all that had been taken down in my presence as I spoke, I arranged in books with amendments. For when I was giving the last part by dictation, I in like manner carefully considered the style in which I had spoken the first part, so that my business was both with regard to those parts, which I had given orally, by going through them with a careful correction, to bring them up to somewhat like dictation, and with regard to what I had dictated, that it should not greatly differ from the style of colloquial delivery; so that the one being drawn out, and the other contracted, that which unlike modes produced might be formed into a not inconsistent whole. Though it must be added that the third portion of this work I have so left for the most part as I gave it by word of mouth, because the brethren, drawing me away to other things, would not have this to be corrected with any great degree of exactness. Pursuing my object of obeying their instructions, which I must confess were sufficiently numerous, now by the work of

exposition, now by the flights of contemplation, and now by moral instruction, I have completed this work extending through thirty-five books [*volumina*], and six tomes [*codicibus*], and hence I shall be often found therein to put rather in the back-ground the order of exposition, and to employ myself at greater length upon the wide field of contemplation and of moral instruction. But yet whosoever is speaking concerning God, must be careful to search out thoroughly whatsoever furnishes moral instruction to his hearers; and should account that to be the right method of ordering his discourse, if, when opportunity for edification requires it, he turn aside for a useful purpose from what he had begun to speak of; for he that treats of sacred writ should follow the way of a river, for if a river, as it flows along its channel, meets with open valleys on its side, into these it immediately turns the course of its current, and when they are copiously supplied, presently it pours itself back into its bed. Thus unquestionably, thus should it be with everyone that treats of the Divine Word, that if, in discussing: any subject, he chance to find at hand any occasion of seasonable edification, he should, as it were, force the streams of discourse towards the adjacent valley, and, when he has poured forth enough upon its level of instruction, fall back into the channel of discourse which he had proposed to himself.

III. But be it known that there are some parts, which we go through in a historical exposition, some we trace out in allegory upon an investigation of the typical meaning, some we open in the lessons of moral teaching alone, allegorically conveyed, while there are some few which, with more particular care, we search out in all these ways together, exploring them in a threefold method. For first, we lay the historical foundations; next, by pursuing the typical sense, we erect a fabric of the mind to be a strong hold of faith; and moreover as the last step, by the grace of moral instruction, we, as it were, clothe the edifice with an overcast of colouring. Or at least how are the declarations of truth to be accounted of, but as food for the refreshment of the mind? These being handled with the alternate application of various methods, we serve up the viands of discourse in such sort as to prevent all disgust in the reader, thus invited as our guest, who, upon consideration of the various things presented to him, is to take that which he determines to be the choicest. Yet it sometimes happens that we neglect to interpret the plain words of the historical account, that we may not be too long in coming to the hidden senses, and sometimes they cannot be understood according to the letter, because when taken superficially, they convey no sort of instruction to the reader, but only engender error; for here, for instance, it is said, *Under Whom they are bent who bear the world.* [Job 9, 13]. Now in the case of one so great, who can be ignorant that he never so follows the vain fictions of the poets, as to fancy the weight of the world to be supported by the labour of the giants. Again, under the pressure of calamities he exclaims, *So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than life.* [Jov 7, 15] Now who that is in his right senses could believe that a man of so high praise, who in a word, we know, received from the Judge of that which is within the reward of the virtue of patience, settled amidst his afflictions to finish his life by strangling? And sometimes even the very literal words forbid its being supposed that perchance they ought to be understood according to the letter. Thus he says, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.* [Job 3, 3] And a little while afterwards he subjoins, *Let darkness seize it, and let it be involved in bitterness.* [ver. 5] And in cursing the same night he adds, *Lo! let that night be solitary.* Assuredly this day of his birth, which rolled itself out in the mere current of time, could never stand fast. In what way then did he wish it might be involved in darkness? For having gone by, it no longer was, neither yet, if it had existence in the nature of things, could it ever feel *bitterness*; it is evident therefore that the words cannot possibly be spoken of a day without feeling, when the wish expressed is that it be struck with a feeling of bitterness;

and if the night of his conception had gone by, blended with the other nights, after what fashion would he have it become solitary, which as it could not be arrested from the flight of time, so neither could it be separated from union with the other nights. Again he says, *How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone, till I swallow down my spittle.* [Job 7, 19] Yet he had said a little above, *The things which my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.* [Job 6, 7] Now who does not know that spittle is more easily swallowed than food? it is wholly inconceivable then in what connection he, who tells of his taking food, declares that he cannot swallow his spittle. Again he says, *I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O Thou preserver of men?* [Job 7, 20] Or more unequivocally, *Wouldest Thou destroy me by the iniquities of my youth.* [Job 13, 26] And yet in another answer he subjoins, *My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.* [Job 27, 6] How then does his heart not condemn him so long as he lives, who by a public avowal testifies that he has been a sinner, for faultiness of practice and acquittal of conscience can never meet together. Yet doubtless whereas the literal words when set against each other cannot be made to agree, they point out some other meaning in themselves which we are to seek for, as if with a kind of utterance they said, Whereas ye see our superficial form to be destructive to us, look for what may be found within us that is in place and consistent with itself.

IV. But sometimes, he who neglects to interpret the historical form of words according to the letter, keeps that light of truth concealed which is presented to him, and in laboriously seeking to find in them a further interior meaning, he loses that which he might easily obtain on the outside. Thus the Saint saith, *if I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; . . . if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;* [Job 31, 16-20] where it is to be observed, that if these words be violently strained to an allegorical signification, we make void all his acts of mercy. For as the word of God, by the mysteries which it contains, exercises the understanding of the wise, so usually by what presents itself on the outside, it nurses the simple-minded. It presenteth in open day that wherewith the little ones may be fed; it keepeth in secret that whereby men of a loftier range may be held in suspense of admiration. It is, as it were, a kind of river, if I may so liken it, which is both shallow [*planus*] and deep, wherein both the lamb may find a footing, and the elephant float at large. Therefore as the fitness of each passage requires, the line of interpretation is studiously varied accordingly, in that the true sense of the word of God is found out with so much the greater fidelity, in proportion as it shifts its course through the different kinds of examples as each case may require.

V. This exposition being such as I have described, I have transmitted to your Blessedness for your inspection, not as being due for its worth's sake, but because I remember that I promised it on your making the request. In which whatsoever your Holiness may discover that is languid or unpolished, let it be most readily excused in proportion as the circumstance is known that it was said in a state of sickness; for when the body is worn down with sickness, the mind being also affected, our exertions to express ourselves likewise become faint. For many a year's circuit has gone by since I have been afflicted with frequent pains in the bowels, and the powers of my stomach being broken down, makes me at all times and seasons weakly; and under the influence of fevers, slow, but in constant succession, I draw my breath with difficulty; and when in the midst of these sufferings I ponder with earnest heed, that according to the testimony of Scripture, *He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth;* [Heb. 12, 6] the more I am weighed down by the severity

of present afflictions, from my anticipations for eternity, I gather strength to breathe with so much the better assurance. And perchance it was this that Divine Providence designed, that I a stricken one, should set forth Job stricken, and that by these scourges I should the more perfectly enter into the feelings of one that was scourged. Yet it will be evident to all that consider the thing aright, that bodily ailment hinders the pursuits wherein I labour, and that with no slight power of opposition in this respect, that, when the powers of the flesh are not strong enough to discharge the office of speech, the mind cannot adequately convey its meaning. For what is the office of the body saving to be the organ of the mind; and though the musician be ever so skilled in playing [*cantandi*], he cannot put his art in practice unless outward aids accord with himself for that purpose, for we know that the melody [*canticum*] which the hand of the proficient bids, is not rightly given back by instruments that are out of order; nor does the wind express his art, if the pipe, gaping with crevices, gives a grating sound. How much more affected in quality then is a thing like this exposition of mine, wherein the grace of delivery is so dissipated by the broken condition of the instrument, that no contrivance of skill can avail to recover it! But I beg that in going through the statements of this work, you would not seek the foliage of eloquence therein: for by the sacred oracles the vanity of a barren wordiness is purposely debarred those that treat thereof, in that it is forbidden to plant a grove in the temple of God. And doubtless we are all of us aware, that as often as the overrank crop shews stalks that abound in leaves, the grains of the ears are least filled and swelling. And hence that art of speaking itself, which is conveyed by rules of worldly training, I have despised to observe; for as the tenor of this Epistle also will tell, I do not escape the collisions of metacism, nor do I avoid the confusion of barbarisms, and I slight the observing of situations and arrangements, and the cases of prepositions; for I account it very far from meet to submit the words of the divine Oracle to the rules of Donatus. For neither are these observed by any of the translators thereof, in the authoritative [*auctoritate*] text of Holy Writ. Now as my exposition takes its origin from thence, it is plainly meet that this production, like a kind of offspring, should wear the likeness of its mother. Now it is the new Translation that I comment on; but when a case to be proved requires it, I take now the new and now the old for testimony, that as the Apostolic See, over which I preside by ordinance of God, uses both, the labours of my undertaking may have the support of both.

## BOOK I.

The first verses of the first chapter of the Book of Job are explained first historically, then in an allegorical, and lastly in a moral sense.

1. *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job.* [Job 1, 1] It is for this reason that we are told where the holy man dwelt, that the meritoriousness of his virtue might be expressed; for who knows not that Uz is a land of the Gentiles? and the Gentile world came under the dominion of wickedness, in the same proportion that its eyes were shut to the knowledge of its Creator. Let us be told then where he dwelt, that this circumstance may be reckoned to his praise, that he was good among bad men; for it is no very great praise to be good in company with the good, but to be

good with the bad; for as it is a greater offence not to be good among good men, so it is immeasurably high testimony for any one to have shewn himself good even among the wicked. Hence it is that the same blessed Job bears witness to himself, saying, *I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls*. [Job 30, 29] Hence it was that Peter extolled Lot with high commendation, because he found him to be good among a reprobate people; saying, *And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for he was righteous in seeing and hearing* [so Vulg.], *dwelling with them who vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds*. [2 Pet. 2, 7.8.] Now he evidently could not have been vexed unless he had both heard and witnessed the wicked deeds of his neighbours, and yet he is called righteous both in seeing and in hearing, because their wicked lives affected the ears and eyes of the Saint not with a pleasant sensation, but with the pain of a blow. Hence it is that Paul says to his disciples, *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine like lights in the world*. [Phil. 2, 15] Hence it is said to the Angel of the Church of Pergamos, *I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith*. [Rev. 2, 13] Hence the Holy Church is commended by the voice of the Spouse, where He says to her in the Song of love, *As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters*. [Cant. 2, 2] Well then is the blessed Job described, (by the mention of a gentile land,) as having dwelt among the wicked, that according to the testimony borne by the Spouse, he might be shewn to have grown up a lily among thorns, for which reason it is well subjoined immediately after, *And that man was simple* [so Vulg.] *and upright*.

[ii]

2. For there are some in such wise simple as not to know what uprightness is, but these walk wide of the innocence of real simplicity, in proportion as they are far from mounting up to the virtue of uprightness; for while they know not how to take heed to their steps by following uprightness, they can never remain innocent by walking in simplicity. Hence it is that Paul warns his disciples, and says, *But yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil*. [Rom. 16, 19] Hence again he says, *Brethren, be not children in understanding, howbeit in malice be ye children*. [1 Cor. 14, 20] Hence Truth enjoins Her disciples by Her own lips, saying, *Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves*. [Mat. 10, 16] For in giving them admonition, He needfully joined the two together, so that both the simplicity of the dove might be instructed by the craftiness of the serpent, and again the craftiness of the serpent might be attempered by the simplicity of the dove. Hence it is that the Holy Spirit has manifested His presence to mankind, not in the form of a dove only, but also in the form of fire. For by the dove simplicity is indicated, and by fire, zeal. Therefore He is manifested in a dove, and in fire, because all they, who are full of Him, yield themselves to the mildness of simplicity, in such sort as yet to kindle with a zeal of uprightness against the offences of sinners. It follows, *And one, that feared God and eschewed evil*.

[iii]

3. To fear God is never to pass over any good thing, that ought to be done. Whence it is said by Solomon, *Whoso fears God, neglects nothing* [Eccl. 7, 18, (Vulg.) 19.]; but because there are some, who practise some good actions, yet in such wise that they are by no means withheld from certain evil practices; after he is said to have been *one that feared God*, it is still rightly reported of him that he also *eschewed evil*; for it is written, *Depart from evil, and do good* [Ps. 37, 27]; for indeed



those good actions are not acceptable to God, which are stained in His sight by the admixture of evil deeds; and hence it is said by Solomon, *He who offendeth in one point, spoileth many good deeds* [Eccl. 9, 18]. Hence James bears witness, saying, *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* [James 2, 10] Hence Paul saith, *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump* [1 Cor. 5, 6]. So then that it might be shewn us how spotless the blessed Job stood forth in his good actions, it is wisely done that we have it pointed out how far he was removed from evil deeds.

4. But it is the custom of narrators, when a wrestling match is woven into the story, first to describe the limbs of the combatants, how broad and strong the chest, how sound, how full their muscles swelled, how the belly below neither clogged by its weight, nor weakened by its shrunken size, that when they have first shewn the limbs to be fit for the combat, they may then at length describe their bold and mighty strokes. Thus because our athlete was about to combat the devil, the writer of the sacred story, recounting as it were before the exhibition in the arena the spiritual merits in this athlete, describes the members of the soul [*mentis*], saying, *And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil*; that when the powerful setting of the limbs is known, from this very strength we may already prognosticate also the victory to follow. Next comes,

[iv]

5. Ver. 2. *And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.* The heart of the parent is often enticed into avarice by a numerous offspring, for he is the more inflamed with ambition for laying up an inheritance, in proportion as he abounds in the number to inherit it. In order then that it might be shewn what holiness of mind blessed Job possessed, he is both called righteous, and is said to have been the father of a numerous offspring. And the same man in the beginning of his book is declared devout in offering sacrifices, and besides he afterwards with his own mouth records himself as ready in giving alms. Let us then consider with what resolution he shewed himself to be endowed, whom no feelings of affection for so many heirs could ever dispose to be greedy of an inheritance for them. It proceeds;

[vi]

5. Ver. 3. *His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household.* We know that the greater the loss, the greater the grief with which it affects the mind; to shew then how great was his virtue, we are told that it was very much, that he lost with patience; for never without pain do we part with aught, saving that which we hold without fondness; therefore while the greatness of his substance is described, yet soon after he is reported as resigned to the loss of it; thus parting with it without regret, it is plain that he had kept it without regard. It is also to be noted that in the first instance the riches of his heart are described, and afterwards the wealth of the body; for an abundant store is wont to make the mind so much the more slack to the fear of God, as it obliges it to be occupied with a diversity of cares; for inasmuch as it is dissipated by a multitude of objects, it is prevented standing fast in that which is within. Which was pointed out by Truth Itself in setting forth the Parable of the sower; *He also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh*

*unfruitful*. [Matt. 13, 22] See how the blessed Job is both said to have great possessions, and a little after is related to be devoutly assiduous in the divine sacrifices.

7. Let us then consider how great was the holiness of that man who though thus busied disengaged himself for such assiduous attendance upon God. Nor had the power of that precept as yet shone out, which bids us leave all things; yet blessed Job already kept the intent of it in his heart, in that he surely had left his substance in intention, which he kept without taking delight in it.

8. *So that this man was the greatest of all the men of the East*. [Job 1, 3] Who does not know that the men of the East are very wealthy, accordingly 'he was the greatest of all the men of the East;' as though it were expressly said that he was even richer than the rich.

9. Ver. 4. *And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them*.

[vii]

Greater wealth usually becomes the cause of greater discord between brethren. O, inestimable praise of a father's training! the father is both declared rich, and the sons at peace together, and while the wealth to be divided among them was there, an undivided affection yet filled the hearts of all.

10. Ver. 5. *And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent, and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all*.

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When it is said, *sent and sanctified them*, it is openly shewn what strictness he practised with those when present, for whom when absent he was not wanting in concern. But this circumstance demands our discreet consideration, that, when the days of feasting were past, he has recourse to the purification of a holocaust for each day severally; for the holy man knew that there can scarcely be feasting without offence; he knew that the revelry of feasts must be cleansed away by much purification of sacrifices, and whatever stains the sons had contracted in their own persons at their feasts, the father wiped out by the offering of a sacrifice; for there are certain evils which it is either scarcely possible, or it may be said wholly impossible, to banish from feasting. Thus almost always voluptuousness is the accompaniment of entertainments; for when the body is relaxed in the delight of refreshment, the heart yields itself to the admission of an empty joy. Whence it is written, *The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play*. [Exod. 32, 6]

11. Almost always talkativeness is an attendant upon feasts, and when the belly is replenished, the tongue is unloosed; whence the rich man in hell is well described as thirsting for water, in these words, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame*. [Luke 16, 24] He is first said to have fared sumptuously every day, and then it is recorded that he craved a drop of water upon his tongue; for as we have said, because at feasts talking is wont to give itself full vent, the fault is

indicated by the punishment, in that he, whom the Truth had said *fared sumptuously every day*, was described as most on fire in his tongue. They that attune the harmony of stringed instruments arrange it with such exceeding skill, that frequently, when one chord is touched, a very different one, placed with many lying between, is made to vibrate, and when this last is sounded, the former, which is attuned to the same tune [*cantu*], rings without the others being struck. According to which Holy Scripture very often so deals with the several virtues, and vices too, that while by express mention it conveys one thing, it does by its silence bring before us another, for nothing is recorded against the rich man relating to talkativeness, but while the punishment is described as in the tongue, we are shewn, which among others was his greatest offence in his feasting.

12. But whereas the seven brethren are described as making feasts, each one in his day, and whereas, when the days of feasting were over, Job is related to have offered seven sacrifices; the account plainly indicates that, in offering a sacrifice on the eighth day, the blessed Job was celebrating the mystery of the Resurrection. For the day, which is now named 'The Lord's day,' is the third from the death of our Redeemer, but in the order of creation it is the eighth, which is also the first in the work of creation, but because, on coming round again, it follows the seventh, it is properly reckoned the eighth; whereas then it is said that he offered sacrifices on the eighth day, it is shewn that he was full of the Spirit of sevenfold grace, and served the Lord for the hope of resurrection. Hence that Psalm is entitled 'for the Octave,' wherein joy for the resurrection is proclaimed, but, that the sons of blessed Job had been forearmed by the discipline of such perfect training, that they neither offended by word nor deed at their feasts, is plainly shewn, in that it is subjoined,

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13. *For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed" God in their hearts.* For he had taught them to be perfect in deed and in word, about whose thought alone the father entertained fears. Now that we should not judge rashly of other men's hearts, we perceive in the words of this Saint, who does not say, 'that they *have* cursed God in their hearts,' but *it may be that they have cursed God in, their hearts.* Whence it is well said by Paul, *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts;* [1 Cor. 4, 5] for whoever deviates from the right line in thought, sins in darkness; we then should be the more backward boldly to condemn the hearts of others, in proportion as we know that we cannot by our own sight throw light into the darkness of another man's thought. But here [al. this] we should consider with discrimination, with what severity that father was likely [*potuit*] to correct the deeds of his children, who set himself with so much solicitude to purify their hearts. What do those rulers of the Faithful say to this, who know nothing even of the very overt acts of their disciples? What are they thinking of in excuse for themselves, who mind not in those committed to them even the wounds of evil actions? But that his perseverance too in this holy work may be demonstrated, it is well added,

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14. *Thus did Job all the days; for it is written, But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* In the sacrifice then, the holiness of his conduct is shewn, and in the entire number of the days of the sacrifice, perseverance in that holy conduct. These particulars we have gone through

cursorily in following out the history. Now the order of interpretation requires that beginning afresh we should at this point open the secrets of its allegories.

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15. Ver, 1. *There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job.* We believe from the history that these things took place, but let us here turn to see in what way they were allegorically fulfilled; for, as we have said, Job is interpreted, 'a mourner,' and Uz 'a counsellor.' Whom else then does the blessed Job express by his name, saving Him, of Whom the Prophet speaks, saying, *Surely He hath borne our griefs?* [Isa. 53, 4] He dwells in the land of Uz, in that He rules the hearts of a people of wise counsels; for Paul saith, that Christ is *the Wisdom of God and the Power of God* [1 Cor. 1, 24]; and this same Wisdom Herself by the lips of Solomon declareth, *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence, and am in the midst of witty inventions.* [Prov. 8, 12] So Job is an inhabitant of the land of Uz, because Wisdom, Which underwent the pain of the Passion in our behalf, has made an habitation for Herself in those hearts, which are instinct with the counsels of life.

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16. *And that man was perfect and upright,* In uprightness, justice is signified, and in simplicity, mercy [or 'meekness,' *mansuetudo*]. We in following out the straight line of justice, generally leave mercy behind; and in aiming to observe mercy, we deviate from the straight line of justice. Yet the Incarnate Lord maintained simplicity with uprightness; for He neither in shewing mercy parted with the strictness of Justice, nor again in the exactitude of justice did He part with the virtue of mercifulness. Hence when certain persons, having brought an adulteress before Him, would have tempted Him, in order that He might step into the fault either of unmercifulness or of injustice, He answered both alternatives by saying, *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.* [John 8, 7] *He that is without sin among you,* gives us the simplicity of mercy, *let him first cast a stone at her,* gives us the jealous sense of justice. Whence too the Prophet saith to him, *And in Thy Majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.* [Ps. 45, 4] For in executing truth, He kept mercy united with justice, so that He neither lost the jealous sense of rectitude in the preponderance of mercy's scale, nor again unsettled the preponderance of mercy by that jealousy of rectitude.

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17. *And one that feared God, and eschewed evil.* It is written of Him, *and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord hath filled Him;* for the Incarnate Lord shewed forth in His own person whatsoever He hath inspired us withal, that what He delivered by precept, He might recommend by example. So then according to our human nature our Redeemer feared God, for to redeem proud man, He took for man's sake an humble mind. And His acting likewise is fitly designated hereby, in that the blessed Job is said to eschew evil. For He Himself eschewed evil, not evil which He came in contact with in the doing, but which upon meeting with it, He rejected; for He forsook the old life after man's method, which He found at His birth, and He stamped upon the character of His followers that new life, which He brought down with Him.

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18. Ver. 2. *And there were born to him seven sons and three daughters.* What is conveyed to us in the number of seven, saving the sum of perfection? for to say nothing of the arguments of human reasoning which maintain that it is therefore perfect, because it consists of the first even number, and of the first uneven; of the first that is capable of division, and of the first which is incapable of it; we know most certainly that holy Scripture is wont to put the number seven for perfection, whence also it tells us that on the seventh day the Lord rested from His works; and it is hence too, that the seventh day was given to man for a rest; i.e. for a 'Sabbath.' Hence it is that the year of jubilee, wherein we have a full rest set forth, is accomplished in seven weeks, being completed by the addition of the unit of our uniting together.

19. *Thus there were born to him seven sons;* namely, the Apostles manfully issuing forth to preach; who in putting in practice the precepts of perfection, as it were maintained in their manner of life the courage of the superior sex. For hence it is that twelve of them were chosen, who should be replenished with the perfection of the sevenfold grace of the Spirit. As from the number seven we rise to twelve; for seven multiplied in its component parts is extended to twelve; for whether four be taken by three or three by four, seven is changed into twelve, and hence, forasmuch as the holy Apostles were sent to proclaim the holy Trinity in the four quarters of the globe, they were chosen twelve in number, that by their very number they might set forth that perfection, which they proclaimed both by their lips and in their lives.

20. *And three daughters.* What do we understand by the daughters but the weaker multitudes of the faithful, who, though they never adhere with a virtuous resolution to perfection of life, yet cleave with constancy to the belief of the Trinity which has been taught them. Thus by 'the seven sons' is represented the order of the Preachers, and by 'the three daughters' the multitude of the hearers. By 'the three daughters' may also be signified the three orders of the faithful, for after mention of the sons the daughters are named, in that succeeding next to the distinguished courage of the Apostles came three divisions of the faithful, in the state of life in the Church; viz. of Pastors, of those following continence, and of the married. And hence the prophet Ezekiel declares that he heard three men named that were set free; viz. Noah, and Daniel, and Job [Ezek. 14, 14f]; for what is signified by Noah who guided the Ark in the waters, but the order or rulers, who, while they govern the people for the fashioning of their lives, are the directors of holy Church amidst the waves of temptation? What is represented by Daniel, whose marvellous abstinence we have described to us, but the life of the continent, who, while they give up every thing that is of the world, rule with elevated mind over Babylon which lies beneath them? What is signified by Job but the life of the good that are married, who, while they do deeds of mercy by the good things of the world which they possess, do as it were advance to their heavenly country by the paths of earth? Therefore because after the holy Apostles there came these three divisions of the faithful, after the sons rightly follows the mention of the three daughters that were born to him. It proceeds:

Ver. 3. *His substance also was three thousand sheep and three thousand camels.*

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21. That believing hearers have been gathered from various manners of life, a truth which is first declared generally by the mention of the daughters, the same is afterwards brought before us in

detail by the specification of the animals. For what does he set forth in the seven thousand sheep, but some men's perfect innocency, which comes from the pastures of the Law to the perfect estate of grace? what again is signified by the three thousand camels, but the crooked defectiveness of the Gentiles coming to the fulness of faith. Now in Holy Scripture, sometimes the Lord Himself is expressed by the title of a camel, and sometimes the Gentile people. For the Lord is signified by the name of a camel, as when it is said by that very Lord to the Jews that set themselves against Him, *who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel*. [Mat. 23, 24] For a gnat wounds while it whispers, but a camel of free will bends to receive its load. Thus the Jews strained at a gnat, in that they sought that a seditious robber should be let go, but they swallowed a camel, in that Him, Who had come down of His own accord to take upon Him the burthens of our mortal nature, they strove to overwhelm by their clamours. Again, the Gentile state is signified by the naming of a camel; and hence Rebecca on going to Isaac is brought on a camel's back, in that the Church, which hastens from the Gentile state to Christ, is found in the crooked and defective behaviour of the old life; and she, when she saw Isaac, descended, in that when the Gentile world knew the Lord, it abandoned its sins, and descending from the height of self-elation sought the lowly walks of humility; and she too in bashfulness covers herself with a veil, in that she is confounded in His presence for her past life. And hence it is said by the Apostle to these same Gentiles, *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* [Rom. 6, 21] Whereas then by the sheep we understand the Hebrews coming to the faith from the pastures of the Law, nothing hinders but that we understand by the camels the Gentile people, crooked in their ways and laden with idolatrous ceremonials. For because they devised them gods of their own selves whom they should worship, there had grown up as it were out of themselves a load upon their back which they should carry.

22. Furthermore in that they are common animals, it is possible that by camels is represented the life of the Samaritans. For camels chew the cud, but do not divide the hoof. So likewise the Samaritans do as it were chew the cud, in that they receive in part the words of the Law, but do not divide the hoof as it were, forasmuch as they despise it in part. And they bear a grievous burthen upon the mind's pack, in that they weary themselves in whatsoever they do without any hope of eternity. For they are strangers to faith in the Resurrection, and what can be more grievous or more burthensome than to endure the tribulation of this passing state of existence, and yet never, for relief of mind, to look forward to the joy of our reward; but forasmuch as the Lord, when He appeared in the flesh, both filled the Hebrew people with the grace of perfection, and brought some of the Samaritans to the knowledge of the faith by shewing marvellous works, it might well be said of the shadow which was to express the reality, that he possessed both seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels. It goes on; *And five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses*.

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23. We have said above that by the number fifty, which is completed by seven weeks and the addition of an unit, rest is signified, and by the number 'ten' the sum of perfection is set forth. Now forasmuch as the perfection of rest is promised to the faithful, by multiplying fifty ten times, we in this way arrive at five hundred. But in sacred Writ, the title of 'oxen' sometimes represents the dulness of the foolish sort, and sometimes the life of well doers. For because the stupidity of the fool is represented by the title of an ox, Solomon says rightly, *he goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter*. [Prov. 7, 22] Again, that the life of every labourer is forth by the title of oxen, the Precepts of the Law are a testimony, which enjoined through Moses; *Thou shalt not*

*muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.* [Deut. 25, 4] And this again is declared in plain words; *the labourer is worthy of his hire.* [Luke 10, 7] By the title of asses, too, we have represented sometimes the inertness of fools, sometimes the unrestrained indulgence of the wanton, sometimes the simplemindedness of the Gentiles; for the inertness of fools is imaged by the designation of asses, as where it is said through Moses, *Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together.* [Deut. 22, 10] As though he said, 'do not associate fools and wise men together in preaching, lest by means of him who has no power to accomplish the work, you hinder him who has abundant power.' The unrestrained indulgence of the wanton is likewise set forth by the appellation of asses, as the prophet testifies, where he says, *whose flesh is as the flesh of asses.* [Ezek. 23, 20] Again, by the title of asses is shewn the simplicity of the Gentiles. Hence when the Lord went up toward Jerusalem, He is related to have sat upon a young ass, for what is it for Him to come to Jerusalem sitting upon an ass, except taking possession of the simple hearts of the Gentiles to conduct them to the vision of peace, by ruling and ordering them? And this is shewn by one passage, and that a very easy one; in that both the workmen of Judaea are represented by oxen, and the Gentile peoples by an ass, when it is said by the Prophet, *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.* [Isa. 1, 3] For who appears as the ox, saving the Jewish people, whose neck was worn by the yoke of the Law? and who was the ass but the Gentile world, which was found like a brute animal of every deceiver, and was overlaid with whatever deceit he pleased, without resisting by any exercise of reason? Thus the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, in that both the Hebrews found out the God Whom they worshipped but as yet knew Him not, and the Gentile world received the food of the Law, which it had none of. That therefore which is spoken above in the designation of the sheep and of the camels, is here repeated below in the oxen and the asses.

24. Now even before the coming of the Redeemer Judaea possessed oxen, in that she sent out labourers to preach, to whom it is said by the voice of Truth, *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.* [Mat. 23, 15] These were weighed down with the heavy yoke of the Law, because they were burthened with the ordinances of the external letter, to whom it is spoken by the voice of Truth, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.* [Mat. 11, 28. 29.] That in the Gospel, therefore, rest is promised to those that labour well, is the same thing as that five hundred yoke of oxen are made mention of in this place; for whereunto does their way lead, who submit their necks to the dominion of our Redeemer, excepting to rest? And hence we are told of five hundred she asses, forasmuch as the Gentile folk that are called, so long as they desire to attain to rest, gladly bear all the burthens of the commandments; and hence, that this rest should be sought of the Gentiles, Jacob in addressing his sons did mean to signify by the voice of prophecy, saying, *Issachar is a strong ass, crouching down between the boundaries* [Vulg. *Terminus*, E.V. burthens]: *And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant, and bowed the shoulder to bear.* [Gen. 49, 14. 15.] For to crouch down between the boundaries is to rest forestalling the end of the world, and to seek nought of those things, which are now going forward amongst men, but to long after the things that shall be at the last; and the strong ass sees the rest and the pleasant land, when the simple Gentile world lifts itself up to the strong effort of good works, and that because it is on its way to the land of life eternal; and it bows the shoulder to bear, in that having beheld the rest above, it submits itself in doing its work even to severe precepts, and whatever littleness of mind represents as hard to bear, the hope of the reward makes this appear

to it light and easy. So because both Judaea and the Gentile world are gathered to eternal rest as a portion of the elect, he is rightly related to have possessed five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses. The account goes on;

*And a very great household.*

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25. What means it that the number of the animals is first described, while the household is not mentioned till the end, but that the foolish things of the world are first gathered in to the knowledge of the faith, that afterwards the crafty things of the world may also be called? as Paul bears witness, who says; *For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many noble, not many mighty are called; But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.* [1 Cor. 1, 26. 27.] For the first beginnings [*principia*] of holy Church are reputed to have been without knowledge of letters, plainly for this reason, that in His preachers the Redeemer might manifest to all, that it was not their discourse, but their cause, which had influence with the numbers [*populos*] that believed unto life. It proceeds;  
*So that this man was the greatest of all the men if the East.*

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26. That our Redeemer is styled *The East* is declared by the testimony of the Prophet, where he says, *And lo! the Man whose name is The East.* [Zech. 6, 12 Vulg. *Orients*, E.V. *the Branch*] And thus all that live in this Orient by faith, are rightly called men of the East. Now because all men are only men, whereas 'The East' Himself is both God and Man, it is rightly said, *He was the greatest of all the men of the East.* As though it were said in plain words, He surpassed all those that are born to God in faith. Because it is not by adoption, as others are, but by the Divine Nature that He is exalted, Who though He appeared like to others in His human Nature, yet in His Divine Nature continued above all men without fellow.  
Ver.4. *And his sons went and feasted in their houses.*

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27. The sons went to feast at their houses, when the Apostles as preachers, in the different regions of the world, served the banquet of virtue to hearers as it were to eaters. And hence it is said to those very sons concerning the hungering multitude, *Give ye them to eat.* [Mat. 14, 16] And again; *And I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way* [Mat. 15, 32]; that is, let them by your preaching receive the word of consolation, that they may not by continuing to fast to the food of truth, sink under the labours of this life. Hence again it is said to the same sons, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.* [John 6, 27] And how these feasts were set forth is added, whereas it is forthwith subjoined,  
*Everyone in his day.*

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28. If without any doubt the darkness of ignorance is the night of the soul, the understanding is not improperly styled the day. And hence Paul says, *One man esteemeth one day above another;*



*another esteemeth every day alike.* [Rom. 14, 5] As, if he had said in plain words; ‘One man understands some things so as that some are left out, and another acquaints himself with all things that are possible to be understood, in such sort as they may be seen. Thus each son sets forth a feast in his day, in that every holy preacher, according to the measure of the enlightening of his understanding, feeds the minds of his hearers with the entertainments of Truth. Paul made a feast in his own day, when he said, *But she is happier if she so abide according to my judgment.* [1 Cor. 7, 40] He bade each to take account of his own day; when he said, *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.* [Rom. 14, 5] It goes on;  
*And sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.*

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29. The sons call their sisters to the feast, in that the holy Apostles proclaim to hearers that are weak the joys of the refreshment above, and inasmuch as they see their souls to be starved of the food of truth, they feed them with the feast of God's Word. And it is well said, to eat and to drink with them. For holy Scripture is sometimes meat to us, and sometimes drink. It is meat in the harder parts, in that it is in a certain sense broken in pieces by being explained, and swallowed after chewing; and it is drink in the plainer parts, in that it is imbibed just as it is found. The Prophet discerned holy Scripture to be meat, which was to be broken in pieces in the explaining, when he said, *The young children ask, and no man breaketh it unto them* [Lam. 4, 4], i.e. the weak ones sought that the stronger declarations of holy Scripture might be crumbled for them by explanation, but he could no where be found who should have explained them. The Prophet saw that holy Writ was drink, when he said, *Ho, everyone that thirsteth come ye to the waters.* [Isa. 55, 1] Had not the plain commandments been drink, Truth would never have cried out with His own lips; *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.* [John 5, 37] The Prophet saw that there was, as it were, a lack of meat and drink in Judaea, when he declared, *And their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.* Isa. 5, 13] For it belongs to the few to attain a knowledge of the mighty and hidden meanings, but to the multitude it is given to understand the plain sense of the history. And therefore he declares that the honourable men of Judaea had perished not by thirst, but hunger, in that those who seemed to stand first, by giving themselves wholly to the outward sense, had not wherewithal to feed themselves from the inward parts by sifting their meaning, but forasmuch as when loftier minds fall away from the inward sense, the understanding of the little ones even in the outward meaning is dried up; it is rightly added in this place, *And the multitude dried up with thirst.* As if he said in plainer words, ‘whereas the common sort give over taking pains in their own lives, they now no longer seek even the streams of history.’ And they bear witness that they understood both the deep and the plain things contained in divine Writ, who in complaining to the Judge that rejects them, say, *We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence* [Luke 13, 26]; and this they subjoin in plain terms by explaining it; *And thou hast taught in our streets.* Therefore because the sacred oracles are broken in the more obscure parts, by the explanation thereof, but in the plainer parts are drunk in just as they are found, it may be truly said, *And they sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them.* As though it were said in plain terms, they drew every weak one to themselves by the mildness of their persuasions, that both by setting forward great truths contemplatively, they might feed their minds, and by delivering little things historically, they might give them nourishment. The account proceeds:

Ver. 5. *And it was so, when the days of their feasting [V. thus] were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all.*

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30. 'The days of feasting are gone,' when the ministrations of preaching are brought to an end; and when the feasts were ended, Job offered an holocaust for his sons, in that our Redeemer besought the Father in behalf of the Apostles, when they returned from preaching. Now it is rightly said, that he 'sent and sanctified,' in that when He bestowed the Holy Spirit Which proceeds from Himself, upon the hearts of His disciples, He cleansed them from whatsoever might be in them of offence, and it is rightly delivered that he rose up early to offer sacrifices; forasmuch as through this His offering up the prayer of His Intercessions in our behalf, he dispelled the night of error, and illumined the darkness of man's mind; that the soul might not be polluted in secret by any defilements of sin contracted from the very grace of preaching; that it might never attribute to itself aught that it does; that it might not, by attributing them to itself, lose all the things it had done. Hence it is well added,

*For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and blessed God in their hearts.*

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31. For this blessing God, which means cursing, is the taking glory to one's self from a gift of His hand. Hence the Lord did well to wash the feet of the holy Apostles after their preaching, doubtless with this view, that He might shew plainly, both that very frequently in doing good the dust of sin is contracted, and that the steps of the speakers are often defiled by the same means whereby the hearts of their hearers are purified. For it often happens that some in giving words of exhortation, however poorly, are inwardly lifted up, because they are the channel, by which the grace of purification comes down; and while by the word they wash away the deeds of other men, they as it were contract the dust of an ill thought from a good course. What then was it to wash the disciples' feet after their preaching, but after the gloriousness of preaching to wipe off the dust of our thoughts, and to cleanse the heart's goings from inward pride? Nor does it hinder the universal knowledge which our Mediator has, that it is said, *It may be*; for knowing all things, but in His mode of speech taking upon Him our ignorance, and, in taking the same, giving us a lesson, He sometimes speaks as it were with our doubts; as where He says, *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?* [Luke 18, 8] When the feasting then was over, Job offered a sacrifice for his sons, saying, *It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their heart*; in that our Saviour, after He had cleansed His preachers from the evils that beset them even in the midst of the good things which they had done, kept them from temptations. It goes on, *Thus did Job continually.*

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32. Job does not cease 'to offer sacrifice continually,' in that our Redeemer offers a holocaust for us without ceasing, Who without intermission exhibits to the Father His Incarnation in our behalf. For His very Incarnation is itself the offering for our purification, and while He shews Himself as

Man, He is the Intercession that washes out man's misdeeds, and in the mystery of His Humanity He offers a perpetual Sacrifice, even because those things too are eternal which He purifies.

33. Now because in the very opening of our exposition we so made the Lord to be set forth in the person of blessed Job, that we said that both the Head and the Body, i.e. both Christ and His Church, were represented by him; therefore since we have shewn how our Head may be taken to be represented, let us now point out, how His Body, which we are, is set forth; that as we have heard from the history somewhat to admire, and learnt from the Head somewhat to believe, we may now deduce from the Body somewhat to maintain in our lives. For we should transform within ourselves that we read, that when the mind is moved by hearing, the life may concur to the execution of that which it has heard.

*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job.*

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34. If 'Job' signifies 'grieving' and 'Uz' 'a Counsellor,' every elect person is not improperly represented by either name; in that he certainly abides in a mind of wise counsel, who hastens grieving from things present to things eternal. For there are some that take no heed to their life, and whilst they are seeking transitory objects, and either do not understand those that are eternal, or understanding despise them, they neither feel grief nor know how to entertain counsel, and when they are taking no account of the things above which they have lost, they think, unhappy wretches, that they are in the midst of good things. For these never raise the eyes of their mind to the light of truth which they were created for, they never bend the keenness of desire to the contemplation of their eternal country, but forsaking themselves amidst those things in which they are cast away, instead of their country they love the exile which is their lot, and rejoice in the darkness which they undergo as if in the brightness of the light. But, on the contrary, when the minds of the elect perceive that all things transitory are nought, they seek out which be the things for which they were created, and whereas nothing suffices to the satisfying them out of God, thought itself, being wearied in them by the effort of the search, finds rest in the hope and contemplation of its Creator, longs to have a place among the citizens above; and each one of them, while yet in the body an inhabitant of the world, in mind already soars beyond the world, bewails the weariness of exile which he endures, and with the ceaseless incitements of love urges himself on to the country on high. When then he sees grieving how that that which he lost is eternal, he finds the salutary counsel, to look down upon this temporal scene which he is passing through, and the more the knowledge of that counsel increases, which bids him forsake perishable things, the more is grief augmented that he cannot yet attain to lasting objects. Hence Solomon well says, *He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow* [Eccles. 1, 18]; for he that already knows the high state which he does not as yet enjoy, is the more grieved for the low condition, in which he is yet held.

35. Job therefore is well said to dwell in the land of Uz, in that the mind of every elect person is kept going grieving in the counsels of knowledge. We must also observe what absence of grief of mind there is in precipitancy of action. For they that live without counsel, who give themselves over precipitately to the issue of events, are meanwhile harassed by no grief of reflection. For he that discreetly settles his mind in the counsels of life, heedfully takes account of himself, exercising circumspection in his every doing, and lest from that which he is doing a sudden and adverse issue should seize him, he first feels at it, gently applying to it the foot of reflection; he takes thought that

fear may not withhold him from those things which ought to be done, nor precipitance hurry him into those which ought to be deferred; that evil things may not get the better of him through his desires by an open assault, nor good things work his downfall insidiously by vain glory. Thus Job dwells in the land of Uz, in that the more the mind of the elect strives to live by following counsel, so much the more is it worn with the grief of so narrow a way. It goes on;  
*And that man sincere [simplex, E.V. perfect] and upright, one that feared God, and eschewed evil.*

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36. Whoso longs for the eternal country, lives without doubt *sincere and upright*; I mean, *perfect* in practice, and *right* in faith, sincere in the good that he does in this lower state, right in the high truths which he minds in his inner self. For there are some who in the good actions that they do are not sincere, whereas they look to them not for a reward within but to win favour without. Hence it is well said by a certain wise man, *Woe to the sinner that goeth two ways* [Ecclus. 2, 12]; for the sinner goes two ways, when at the same time that what he sets forth in deed is of God, what he aims at in thought is of the world.

37. Now it is well said, *one that feared God and eschewed evil*; in that the holy Church of the elect enters indeed upon its paths of simplicity and of uprightness in [al. from] fear, but finishes them in charity, and it is hers then entirely 'to depart from evil,' when she has begun now from the love of God to feel unwillingness to sin. But whilst she still does good deeds from fear, she has not entirely departed from evil; because she sins even herein, that she would sin if she could have done it without punishment. So then when Job is said to fear God, it is rightly related that he also 'departs from evil,' in that whereas charity follows upon fear, that offence which is left behind in the mind is even trodden under foot in the purpose of the heart. And forasmuch as each particular vice is stifled by fear, whilst the several virtues spring from charity, it is rightly added,  
*And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.*

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38. For there are seven sons born to us, when by the conception of good intent the seven virtues of the holy Spirit spring up in us. Thus the Prophet particularizes this inward offspring, when the Spirit renders the mind fruitful, in these words; *And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and piety, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill him.* [Isa. 11, 2] So when by the coming of the Holy Spirit there is engendered in each of us, 'wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord,' something like a lasting posterity is begotten in the mind, which preserves the stock of our nobility that is above unto life, for so much the longer as it allies it with the love of eternity. Yet surely the seven sons have in us three sisters, forasmuch as all that manly work which these virtuous affections [*virtutum sensus*] do, they unite with faith, hope, and charity. For the seven sons never attain the perfection of the number ten, unless all that they do be done in faith, hope, and charity. But because this store of antecedent virtues is followed by a manifold concern for good works, it is rightly added,  
*Ver.3. His substance also was seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels.*

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39. For, saving the historical truth, we are at liberty to follow in a spiritual way that which our ears receive in a carnal shape. Thus we possess seven thousand sheep, when we feed the innocent thoughts within our breast, in a perfect purity of heart, with the food of truth which we have sought after.

40. And we shall have three thousand camels likewise in our possession, if all that is high and crooked in us be subdued to the order [*rationi*] of faith, and when of our own free will, and in our longing after humility, it is made to bow down itself under a knowledge of the Trinity. For we possess camels, whensoever we put down in humility all the high notions that we entertain. Surely we are in possession of camels, when we bend our thoughts to sympathy with a brother's weakness, that bearing our burthens by turns, we may by lowering ourselves thereto know how to compassionate the weakness of another man. By camels, too, which do not cleave the hoof, but chew the cud, may be understood the good stewardships of earthly things, which, in that they have something of the world, and something of God, must needs be represented by a common animal. For though earthly stewardship may be subservient to our eternal welfare, yet we cannot acquit ourselves of it without inward disquietude. Therefore because both at the present time the mind is disturbed thereby, and also a reward laid up for ever, like a common animal, it both has something of the Law, and something it has not. For it does not cleave the hoof, in that the soul does not wholly sever itself from all earthly doings, but yet it ruminates, in that by the right dispensation of temporal things, it gains a hope of heavenly blessings with an assured confidence. Thus earthly stewardships agree with the law in the head, disagree therewith in the foot; forasmuch as while the objects which they desire to obtain by living righteously are of heaven, the concerns with which they are busied by their performances are of this world. When then we submit these earthly stewardships to the knowledge of the Trinity, we have camels in possession, as it were, by faith. The account goes on;

*And five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses.*

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41. There are yokes of oxen for us in our possession, when the virtues in harmony plough up the hardness of our mind. We also possess five hundred she asses, when we restrain wanton inclinations, and when whatever of a carnal nature seeks to rise up in us, we curb in the spiritual mastery of the heart. Or indeed to possess she asses is to govern the simple thoughts within us, which, while they have no power to run in a more refined intelligence, by how much more lowly they walk, bear with so much the more meekness their brother's burthens. For there are some who not understanding deep things constrain themselves the more humbly to the outward works of duty. Well then do we understand the simple thoughts by she asses, which are an animal slow indeed, yet devoted to carrying burthens, in that very often when made acquainted with our own ignorance, we bear the more lightly the burthens of others; and whereas we are not elevated as by any special height of wisdom, our mind bends itself in patience to submit to the dulness of another's soul. Now it is well done, whether it be the yokes of oxen or the she asses, that they are mentioned as five hundred, in that, whether in the case that through prudence we are wise, or in the case that we remain in humble ignorance, so long as we are in search of the rest of eternal peace, we are as it were kept within the number of the Jubilee. It goes on;

*And a very great household,*

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42. We possess a very great household, when we restrain our host of thoughts under the mastery of the mind, that they may not by their very number get the better of the soul, nor in disordered array tread under the authority which belongs to our faculty of discernment. And the multitude of our thoughts is well marked out by the designation of a very great household. For we know that when the mistress is away the tongues of the handmaids wax clamorous, that they cease from silence, neglect the duties of their allotted task, and disarrange the whole ordered method of their life. But if the mistress suddenly appear, in a moment their noisy tongues are still, they renew the duties of their several tasks, and return to their own work as though they had never left it. Thus if reason for a moment leave the house of the mind, as if the mistress were absent, the den of our thoughts redoubles itself, like a bevy of talkative maids. But so soon as reason has returned to the mind, the confused tumult quiets itself at once, and the maids as it were betake themselves in silence to the task enjoined, whilst the thoughts forthwith submit themselves to their appropriate occasions for usefulness. We possess, then, a great household, when with righteous authority we rule our innumerable thoughts by a discerning use of reason; and assuredly when we do this wisely, we are aiming to unite ourselves to the Angels by that very exercise of discernment: and hence it is rightly subjoined;

*So that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

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43. For we are then rendered great amongst all them of the east, when the cloud of carnal corruption being kept down by the rays of our discernment, we are, as far as the possibility of the thing admits, made the associates of those Spirits, which abide in the eastern light: and hence Paul says, *Our conversation is in heaven* [Phil. 3, 20]. For he that follows after temporal things, which are subject to decay, seeks the west [*occasum*], but whoso fixes his desires upon things above, proves that he dwells in the east. He then is great not among them of the west but among them of the east, who aims to excel not amid wicked men's scenes of action, who seek low and fleeting things, but amongst the choirs of the citizens above. It proceeds;

Ver. 4. *And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day.*

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44. 'The sons feast in their houses,' when the several virtues feed the mind after their proper sort; and it is well said, Everyone his day, for each son's day is the shining of each virtue. Briefly to unfold then these same gifts of sevenfold grace, wisdom has one day, understanding another day, counsel another, fortitude another, knowledge another, piety another, fear another, for it is not the same thing to be wise that it is to understand; for many indeed are wise [*sapiunt*] in the things of eternity, but cannot in any sort understand them. Wisdom therefore gives a feast in its day in that it refreshes the mind with the hope and assurance of eternal things. Understanding spreads a feast in its day, forasmuch as, in that it penetrates the truths heard, refreshing the heart, it lights up its darkness. Counsel gives a feast in its day, in that while it stays us from acting precipitately, it makes the mind to be full of reason. Fortitude gives a feast in its day, in that whereas it has no fear of adversity, it sets the viands of confidence before the alarmed soul. Knowledge prepares a feast

in her day, in that in the mind's belly, she overcomes the emptiness of ignorance. Piety sets forth a feast in its day, in that it satisfies the bowels of the heart with deeds of mercy. Fear makes a feast in its day, in that whereas it keeps down the mind, that it may not pride itself in the present things, it strengthens it with the meat of hope for the future.

45. But I see that this point requires searching into in this feasting of the sons, viz. that by turns they feed one another. For each particular virtue is to the last degree destitute, unless one virtue lends its support to another. For wisdom is less worth if it lacks understanding, and understanding is wholly useless if it be not based upon wisdom, in that whilst it penetrates the higher mysteries without the counterpoise of wisdom, its own lightness is only lifting it up to meet with the heavier fall. Counsel is worthless, when the strength of fortitude is lacking thereto, since what it finds out by turning the thing over, from want of strength it never carries on so far as to the perfecting in deed; and fortitude is very much broken down, if it be not supported by counsel, since the greater the power which it perceives itself to have, so much the more miserably does this virtue rush headlong into ruin, without the governance of reason. Knowledge is nought if it hath not its use for piety; for whereas it neglects to put in practice the good that it knows, it binds itself the more closely to the Judgment: and piety is very useless, if it lacks the discernment of knowledge, in that while there is no knowledge to enlighten it, it knows not the way to shew mercy. And assuredly unless it has these virtues with it, fear itself rises up to the doing of no good action, forasmuch as while it is agitated about every thing, its own alarms renders it inactive and void of all good works. Since then by reciprocal ministrations virtue is refreshed by virtue, it is truly said that the sons feast with one another by turns; and as one aids to relieve another, it is as if the numerous offspring to be fed were to prepare a banquet each his day. It follows;

*And sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them.*

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46. When our virtues invite faith, hope, and charity into every thing they do, they do, as sons employed in labour, call their three sisters to a feast; that faith, hope, and charity may rejoice in the good work, which each virtue provides; and they as it were gain strength from that meat, whilst they are rendered more confident by good works, and whereas after meat they long to imbibe the dew of contemplation, they are as it were from the cup inebriated.

47. But what is there that we do, in this life, without some stain of defilement, howsoever slight? For sometimes by the very good things we do we draw near to the worse part, since while they beget much in the mind, they at the same time engender a certain security, and when the mind enjoys security, it unlooses itself in sloth; and sometimes they defile us with some self-elation, and set us so much the lower with God, as they make us bigger in our own eyes. Hence it is well added,

*Ver. 5. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them.*

[xxxiv]

47. For, when the round of the days of feasting is gone about, to send to his sons and to sanctify them, is after the perception [*sensum*] of the virtues to direct the inward intention, and to purify all

that we do with the exact sifting of a reexamination, lest things be counted good which are evil, or at least such as are truly good be thought enough when they are imperfect. For thus it very often happens that the mind is taken in, so that it is deceived either in the quality of what is evil or the quantity of what is good. But these senses of the virtues are much better ascertained by prayers than by examinings. For the things which we endeavour to search out more completely in ourselves, we oftener obtain a true insight into by praying than by investigating. For when the mind is lifted up on high by the kind of machine of compunction, all that may have been presented to it concerning itself, it surveys the more surely by passing judgment upon it beneath its feet. Hence it is well subjoined,

*And rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings, according to the number of them all.*

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48. For we rise up early in the morning, when being penetrated with the light of compunction we leave the night of our human state, and open the eyes of the mind to the beams of the true light, and we offer a burnt offering for each son, when we offer up the sacrifice of prayer for each virtue, lest wisdom may uplift; or understanding, while it runs nimbly, deviate from the right path; or counsel, while it multiplies itself, grow into confusion; that fortitude, while it gives confidence, may not lead to precipitation, lest knowledge, while it knows and yet has no love, may swell the mind; lest piety, while it bends itself out of the right line, may become distorted; and lest fear, while it is unduly alarmed, may plunge one into the pit of despair. When then we pour out our prayers to the Lord in behalf of each several virtue, that it be free from alloy, what else do we but according to the number of our sons offer a burnt offering [*holocaustum*] for each? for an holocaust is rendered 'the whole burnt.' Therefore to pay a 'holocaust' is to light up the whole soul with the fire of compunction, that the heart may burn on the altar of love, and consume the defilements of our thoughts, like the sins of our own offspring,

49. But none know how to do this saving those, who, before their thoughts proceed to deeds, restrain with anxious circumspection the inward motions of their hearts. None know how to do this saving they who have learnt to fortify their soul with a manly guard. Hence Ishbosheth is rightly said to have perished by a sudden death, whom holy Scripture at the same time testifies to have had not a man for his doorkeeper but a woman, in these words; *And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbosheth, who lay on a bed at noon; and they came thither into the midst of the house:, and the portress of the house was fallen asleep, winnowing wheat. And they came privily into the house fetching ears of wheat, and they smote him in the groin.* [2 Sam. 4, 5-7. Vulg.] The portress winnows the wheat, when the wardkeeping of the mind distinguishes and separates the virtues from the vices; but if she falls asleep, she lets in conspirators to her master's destruction, in that when the cautiousness of discernment is at an end, a way is set open for evil spirits to slay the soul. They enter in and carry off the ears, in that they at once bear off the germs of good thoughts; and they smite in the groin, in that they cut off the virtue of the soul by the delights of the flesh. For to smite in the groin is to pierce the life of the mind with the delights of the flesh. But this Ishbosheth would never have perished by such a death, if he had not set a woman at the entrance to his house, i.e. set an easy guard at the way of access to the mind. For a strong and manly activity should be set over the doors of the heart, such as is never surprised by sleep of neglect, and never deceived by the errors of ignorance; and hence he is rightly named Ishbosheth, who is exposed by a female guard to the



swords of his enemies, for Ishbosheth is rendered 'a man of confusion.' And he is 'a man of confusion,' who is not provided with a strong guard over his mind, in that while he reckons himself to be practising virtues, vices stealing in kill him [al. 'kill his soul'] unawares. The entrance to the mind then must be fortified with the whole sum of virtue, lest at any time enemies with insidious intent penetrate into it by the opening of heedless thought. Hence Solomon says, *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life* [Prov. 4, 23]. It is meet then that we form a most careful estimate of the virtues that we practise, beginning with the original intent, lest the acts which they put forth, even though they be right, may proceed from a bad origin: and hence it is rightly subjoined in this place;

*For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts.*

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50. Our sons curse God in their hearts, when our righteous deeds proceed from unrighteous thoughts; when they put forth good things in public, but in secret devise mischief. Thus they curse God, when our minds reckon that they get from themselves that which they are. They curse God when they can understand that it is from Him that they have received their powers, and yet seek their own praise for His gifts. But be it known that our old enemy proceeds against our good actions in three ways, with this view, namely, that the thing which is done aright before the eyes of men, may be spoiled in the sight of the Judge within. For sometimes in a good work he pollutes the intention, that all that follows in the doing may come forth impure and unclean, because it is hereby made to rise troubled from its source. But sometimes he has no power to spoil the intention of a good deed, but he presents himself in the action itself as it were in the pathway; that whereas the person goes forth the more secure in the purpose of his heart, evil being secretly there laid, he may as it were be slain from ambush. And sometimes he neither corrupts the intention, nor overthrows it in the way, but he ensnares the good deed at the end of the action; and in proportion as he feigns himself to have gone further off, whether from the house of the heart or from the path of the deed, with the greater craftiness he watches to catch the end of the good action; and the more he has put a man off his guard by seeming to retire, so much the more incurably does he at times pierce him with an unexpected wound.

51. For he defiles the intention in a good work, in that when he sees men's hearts ready to be deceived, he presents to their ambition the breath of passing applause, that wherein they do aright, they may swerve by crookedness in the intention to make the lowest things their aim; and hence under the image of Judaea, it is well said by the Prophet of every soul that is caught in the snare of mal-intention, *Her adversaries are the chief* [Lament. 1, 5]. As though it were said in plain words, 'when a good work is taken in hand with no good intent, the spirits that are against us have dominion over her from the commencement of the conception, and the more completely possess themselves of her, even that they hold her under their power by the very beginning.'

52. But when they are unable to corrupt the intention, they conceal snares which they set in the way, that the heart, lifting itself up in that which is done well, may be impelled from one side to do evil; so that what at the outset it had set before itself in one way, it may go through in act far otherwise than it had begun. For often whilst human praise falls to the lot of a good deed, it alters the mind of the doer, and though not sought after, yet when offered it pleases; and whereas the mind of the well-doer is melted by the delight thereof, it is set loose from all vigorousness of the

inward intention. Often when our sense of justice has begun to act aright, anger joins it from the side; and whereas it troubles the mind out of measure, by the quickness of our sense of uprightness, it wounds all the healthiness of our inward tranquillity. It often happens that sadness, attaching itself from the side, as it were, becomes the attendant of seriousness of mind, and that every deed which the mind commences with a good intention, this quality overcasts with a veil of sadness, and we are sometimes the slower in driving it away even in that it waits as it were in solemn attendance on the depressed mind. Often immoderate joy attaches itself to a good deed, and while it calls upon the mind for more mirth than is meet, it discards all the weight of gravity from our good action. For because the Psalmist had seen that even those that set out well are met by snares on the way, being filled with the prophetic spirit, he rightly delivered it; *In this way that I walked they hid it snare for me* [Ps. 142, 3]. Which Jeremiah well and subtilly insinuates, who, while busied with telling of outward events, points out what things were done inwardly in ourselves, *There came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring them to the house of the Lord. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went; and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them.* [Jer. 41, 5-7] For those shave their beard, who remove from them confidence in their own powers. They rend their clothes, that spare not themselves in tearing in pieces outward appearance. They come to offer up in the house of the Lord frankincense and gifts, who engage to set forth prayer in union with works in sacrifice to God. But if in the very path of holy devotion they skill not to keep a wary eye on every side, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah goes forth to meet them; in that assuredly every evil spirit, after the example of its chief, even Satan, begotten in the erring principle of pride, presents itself as a snare to deceive, And it is likewise well said concerning him; weeping all along as he went; forasmuch as in order that he may cut off devout souls by smiting them, he hides himself as it were under the guise of virtue, and whereas he feigns to agree with those that really mourn, being thus with greater security admitted to the interior of the heart, he destroys whatsoever of virtue is there hidden within. And most often he engages to guide to higher things; and hence he is related to have said, *Come unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam; and while he promises greater things he robs us even of the very little that we have; and hence it is rightly said, And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them.* So then he slays in the midst of the city the men that are come to offer gifts to God, in that those souls which are devoted to works of God, unless they watch over themselves with great circumspection, lose their life on the very way, through the enemy intercepting them unawares, as they go bearing the sacrifice of devotion; and from the hands of this enemy there is no escape, unless they speedily hasten back to repentance. Hence it is fitly added there, *But ten men were found among them, that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he slew them not.* [Jer. 41, 8] For the treasure in the field is hope in repentance, which, in that it is not discernible, is kept buried closely in the earth of the heart. They then that had treasures in the field were saved, in that they who after the fault of their unwariness return to the lamentation of repentance, do not likewise perish when taken captive

53. But when our old adversary neither deals a blow at the outset of the intention, nor intercepts us in the path of the execution, he sets the more mischievous snares at the end, which he so much the more wickedly besets, as he sees that it is all that is left to him to make a prey of. Now the Prophet

had seen these snares set at the end of his course, when he said, *They will mark my heel*. [Ps. 56, 6] For because the end of the body is in the heel, what is signified thereby but the end of an action? Whether then it be evil spirits, or all wicked men that follow in the steps of their pride, they 'mark the heel' when they aim at spoiling the end of a good action; and hence it is said to that serpent, *it shall mark thy head, and thou shalt mark his heel*. [Gen. 3, 15. Vulg. thus] For to mark the serpent's head is to keep an eye upon the beginnings of his suggestions, and with the hand of needful consideration wholly to eradicate them from the avenues of the heart; yet when he is caught at the commencement, he busies himself to smite the heel, in that though he does not strike the intention with his suggestion at the first, he strives to ensnare at the end. Now if the heart be once corrupted in the intention, the middle and the end of the action that follows is held in secure possession by the cunning adversary, since he sees that that whole tree bears fruit to himself, which he has poisoned at the root with his baleful tooth. Therefore because we have to watch with the greatest care, that the mind even in the service of good works be not polluted by a wicked intention, it is rightly said, *It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts*. As if it were said in plain words, that is no good work which is performed outwardly, unless the sacrifice of innocency be inwardly offered for it upon the altar of the heart in the presence of God. The stream of our work then is to be looked through, all we can, if it flows out pure from the well-spring of thought. With all care must the eye of the heart be guarded from the dust of wickedness, lest that which in action it shews upright to man, be within set awry by the fault of a crooked intention.

54. We must take heed, then, that our good works be not too few, take heed too that they be not unexamined, lest by doing too few works we be found barren, or by leaving them unexamined we be found foolish; for each several virtue is not really such, if it be not blended with other virtues; and hence it is well said to Moses, *Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum, of good scent, with pure frankincense; of each shall there be a like weight. And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, well tempered together, and pure*. [Exod. 30, 34. 35.] For we make a perfume compounded of spices, when we yield a smell upon the altar of good works with the multitude of our virtues; and this is 'tempered together and pure,' in that the more we join virtue to virtue, the purer is the incense of good works we set forth. Hence it is well added, *And thou shalt beat them all very small, and put of it before the Tabernacle of the Testimony*. We 'beat all the spices very small,' when we pound our good deeds as it were in the mortar of the heart, by an inward sifting, and go over them minutely, to see if they be really and truly good: and thus to reduce the spices to a powder, is to rub fine our virtues by consideration, and to call them back to the utmost exactitude of a secret reviewal; and observe that it is said of that powder, *and thou shalt put of it before the Tabernacle of the Testimony*: for this reason, in that our good works are then truly pleasing in the sight of our Judge, when the mind bruises them small by a more particular reexamination, and as it were makes a powder of the spices, that the good that is done be not coarse [*grossum*] and hard, lest if the close hand of reexamination do not bruise it fine, it scatter not from itself the more refined odour. For it is hence that the virtue of the Spouse is commended by the voice of the Bridegroom, where it is said, *Who is this, that cometh out of the wilderness like a rod of smoke of the perfume of myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?* [Cant. 3, 6] For holy Church rises up like a rod of smoke from spices, in that by the virtues of her life she duly advances to the uprightness of inward incense, nor lets herself run out into dissipated thought, but restrains herself in the recesses of the heart in the rod of severity: and while she never ceases to reconsider and go over anew the things that she does, she has in the deed myrrh and frankincense, but in the thought she has powder. Hence it is that it is said again to

Moses of those who offer a victim, *And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces.* [Lev. 1, 6] For we strip the skin of the victim, when we remove from the eyes of the mind the overcast of virtue; and we 'cut it in his pieces,' when we minutely dissect its interior, and contemplate it piecemeal. We must therefore be careful, that when we overcome our evil habits, we are not overthrown by our good ones running riot, lest they chance to run out loosely, lest being unheeded they be taken captive, lest from error they forsake the path, lest broken down by weariness they lose the meed of past labours. For the mind ought in all things to keep a wary eye about it, aye and in this very forethought of circumspection to be persevering; and hence it is rightly added,  
*Thus did Job all the days.*

[xxxvii]

55. For vain is the good that we do, if it be given over before the end of life, in that it is vain too for him to run fast, who fails before he reaches the goal. For it is hence that it is said of the reprobate, *Woe unto you that have lost patience.* [Ecclus. 2, 14] Hence Truth says to His elect, *Ye are they that have continued with life in My temptations* [Luke 22, 28]. Hence Joseph, who is described to have remained righteous among his brethren until the very end, is the only one related to have had 'a coat reaching to the ancles.' [Gen. 37, 23. Vulg.] For what is a coat that reaches to the ancles but action finished? For it is as if the extended coat covered the ancle of the body, when well doing covers us in God's sight even to the end of life. Hence it is that it is enjoined by Moses to offer upon the altar the tail of the sacrifice, namely, that every good action that we begin we may also complete with perseverance to the end. Therefore what is begun well is to be done every day, that whereas evil is driven away by our opposition, the very victory that goodness gains may be held fast in the hand of constancy.

56. These things then we have delivered under a threefold sense, that by setting a variety of viands before the delicate [*fastidienti*] sense of the soul, we may offer it something to choose by preference. But this we most earnestly entreat, that he that lifts up his mind to the spiritual signification, do not desist from his reverence for the history.

## BOOK II.

From the sixth verse of the first chapter to the end, he follows out the exposition according to the threefold interpretation.

1. Holy Writ is set before the eyes of the mind like a kind of mirror, that we may see our inward face in it; for therein we learn the deformities, therein we learn the beauties that we possess; there we are made sensible what progress we are making, there too how far we are from proficiency. It relates the deeds of the Saints [al. 'of the strong'], and stirs the hearts of the weak to follow their example, and while it commemorates their victorious deeds, it strengthens our feebleness against the assaults of our vices; and its words have this effect, that the mind is so much the less dismayed amidst conflicts as it sees the triumphs of so many brave men set before it. Sometimes however it not only informs us of their excellencies, but also makes known their mischances, that both in the

victory of brave men we may see what we ought to seize on by imitation, and again in their falls what we ought to stand in fear of. For, observe how Job is described as rendered greater by temptation, but David by temptation brought to the ground, that both the virtue of our predecessors may cherish our hopes, and the downfall of our predecessors may brace us to the cautiousness of humility, so that whilst we are uplifted by the former to joy, by the latter we may be kept down through fears, and that the hearer's mind, being from the one source imbued with the confidence of hope, and from the other with the humility arising from fear, may neither swell with rash pride, in that it is kept down by alarm, nor be so kept down by fear as to despair, in that it finds support for confident hope in a precedent of virtue.

Ver.6. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.*

[ii]

2. It is interesting to observe the method followed by Holy Writ in delineating, at the commencement of its relations, the qualities and the issues of the particular cases. For one while by the position of the place, now by the posture of the body, now by the temperature of the air, and now by the character of the time, it marks out what it has coming after concerning the action which is to follow; as by the position of the place Divine Scripture sets forth the merits of the circumstances that follow, and the results of the case, as where it relates of Israel that they could not hear the words of God in the mount [Ex. 19, 17], but received the commandments on the plain; doubtless betokening the subsequent weakness of the people who could not mount up to the top, but enfeebled themselves by living carelessly in the lowest things. By the posture of the body it tells of future events, as where in the Acts of the Apostles, Stephen discloses that he saw Jesus, Who sitteth at the right hand of the Power of God [Acts 7, 55, 56], in a standing posture; for standing is the posture of one in the act of rendering aid, and rightly is He discerned standing, Who gives succour in the press of the conflict. By the temperature of the air, the subsequent event is shewn, as when the Evangelist was telling that none out of Judaea were at that time to prove believers in our Lord's preaching, he prefaced it by saying, *and it was winter*, for it is written, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* [John 10, 22. Mat. 24, 12.] Therefore he took care to particularize the winter season, to indicate that the frost of wickedness was in the hearers' hearts. Hence it is that it is beforehand remarked of Peter, when on the point of denying our Lord, that *it was cold, and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.* [John 18, 18] For he was now inwardly unenlivened by the warmth of Divine love, but to the love of this present life he was warming up, as though his weakness were set boiling by the persecutors' coals. By the character of the time moreover the issue of the transaction is set forth, as it is related of Judas, who was never to be restored to pardon, that he went out at night to the treachery of his betrayal, where upon his going out, the Evangelist says, *And it was night.* [John 13, 30] Hence too it is declared to the wicked rich man, *This night shall thy soul be required of thee*; for that soul which is conveyed to darkness, is not recorded as required in the day time, but in the night. Hence it is that Solomon who received the gift of wisdom, but was not to persevere, is said to have received her in dreams and in the night. Hence it is that the Angels visit Abraham at midday, but when proposing to punish Sodom, they are recorded to have come thither at eventide, Therefore, because the trial of blessed Job is carried on to victory, it is related to have begun by day, it being said,

*Now there was a day, when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.*

[iii]

3. Now who are called the sons of God, saving the elect Angels? and as we know of them that they wait on the eyes of His Majesty, it is a worthy subject of inquiry, whence they come to present themselves before God. For it is of these that it is said by the voice of Truth, *Their angels do always behold the face of My Father, Which is in heaven?* [Mat. 18. 10] Of these the Prophet saith, *thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.* [Dan. 7, 10] If then they ever behold and ever stand nigh, we must carefully and attentively consider whence they are come, who never go from Him; but since Paul says of them, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?* [Heb. 1, 14] in this, that we learn that they are sent, we discover whence they are come. But see, we add question to question, and as it were while we strive to unloose the loop, we are only fastening a knot. For how can they either always be in presence, or always behold the face of the Father, if they are sent upon external ministration for our salvation? Which will however be the sooner believed, if we think of how great subtlety is the angelical nature. For they never so go forth apart from the vision of God, as to be deprived of the joys of interior contemplation; for if when they went forth they lost the vision of the Creator, they could neither have raised up the fallen, nor announced the truth to those in ignorance; and that fount of light, which by departing they were themselves deprived of, they could in no wise proffer to the blind. Herein then is the nature of Angels distinguished from the present condition of our own nature, that we are both circumscribed by space, and straitened by the blindness of ignorance; but the spirits of Angels are indeed bounded by space, yet their knowledge extends far above us beyond comparison; for they expand by external and internal knowing, since they contemplate the very source of knowledge itself. For of those things which are capable of being known, what is there that they know not, who know Him, to Whom all things are known? So that their knowledge when compared with ours is vastly extended, yet in comparison with the Divine knowledge it is little. In like manner as their very spirits in comparison indeed with our bodies are spirits, but being compared with the Supreme and Incomprehensible Spirit, they are Body. Therefore they are both sent from Him, and stand by Him too, since both in that they are circumscribed, they go forth, and in this, that they are also entirely present, they never go away. Thus they at the same time always behold the Father's face, and yet come to us; because they both go forth to us in a spiritual presence, and yet keep themselves there, whence they had gone out, by virtue of interior contemplation; it may then be said, *The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord;* inasmuch as they come back thither by a return of the spirit, whence they never depart by any withdrawal of the mind.  
*And Satan came also among them.*

[iv]

4. It is a very necessary enquiry, how Satan could be present among the elect Angels, he who had a long time before been damned and banished from their number, as his pride required. Yet he is well described as having been present among them; for though he lost his blessed estate, yet he did not part with a nature like to theirs, and though his deserts sink him, he is lifted up by the properties of his subtle nature. And so he is said to have come before God among the sons of God, for

Almighty God, with that eye with which He regards all spiritual things, beholds Satan also in the rank of a more subtle nature, as Scripture testifies, when it says, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good*; [Prov. 15, 3] but this, viz. that Satan is said to have come before the presence of God, comes under a grave question with us; for it is written, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. [Matt. 5, 8] But Satan, who can never be of a pure heart, how could he have presented himself to see the Lord?

5. But it is to be observed, that he is said to have come before the Lord, but not that he saw the Lord. For he came to be seen, and not to see. He was in the Lord's sight, but the Lord was not in his sight; as when a blind man stands in the sun, he is himself bathed indeed in the rays of light, yet he sees nothing of the light, by which he is brightened. In like manner then Satan also appeared in the Lord's sight among the Angels. For the Power of God, which by a look penetrates all objects, beheld the impure spirit, who saw not Him. For because even those very things which flee from God's face cannot be hidden, in that all things are naked to the view of the Most High, Satan being absent came to Him, Who was present.

Ver. 7, *And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?*

6. How is it that it is never said to the elect Angels, when they come, 'Whence come ye?' while Satan is questioned whence he comes? For assuredly we never ask, but what we do not know; but God's not knowing is His condemning. Whence at the last He will say to some, *I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, ye that work iniquity*. [Luke 13, 27] In the same way that a man of truth, who disdains to sin by a falsehood, is said not to know how to lie, not in being ignorant if he had the will to lie, but in disdaining to tell a falsehood, from love of truth. What then is it to say to Satan, *Whence comest thou?* but to condemn his ways, as though unknown. The light of truth then knows nought of the darkness, which it reproves; and the paths of Satan, which as a judge it condemns, it is meet that it should inquire after as though in ignorance of them. Hence it is that it is said to Adam in his sin by his Creator's voice, *Adam, where art thou?* [Gen. 3, 9] For Divine Power was not ignorant to what hiding place His servant had fled after his offence, but for that He saw that he, having fallen in his sin, was now as it were hidden under sin from the eyes of Truth, in that He approves not the darkness of his error, He knows not, as it were, where the sinner is, and both calls him, and asks him, saying, *Adam, where art thou?* hereby, that He calls him, He gives a token that He recalls him to repentance; hereby, that He questions him, He plainly intimates that He knows not sinners, that justly deserve to be damned, Accordingly the Lord never calls Satan, but yet He questions him, saying, *Whence comest thou?* without doubt because God never recalls the rebel spirit to repentance, but in not knowing his paths of pride, He condemns him; therefore while Satan is examined [*discutitur*] concerning his way, the elect Angels have not to be questioned whence they come, since their ways are known to God in so much as they are done of His own moving, and whilst they are subservient to His will alone, they can never be unknown to Him, in so far as, by His approving eye, it is Himself from Whom and before Whom they are done. It follows, *Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

[vi]

7. The toilsomeness of labour is wont to be represented by the round of circuitous motion, Accordingly Satan went toiling round about the earth, for he scorned to abide at peace in the height

of heaven; and whereas he intimates that he did not fly, but that he walked, he shews the weight of sin, by which he is kept down below. *Walking then up and down*, he went to and fro in the earth, for tumbling down from that his soaring in spiritual mightiness, and oppressed by the weight of his own wickedness, he came forth to his round of labour. For it is for no other reason that it is said of his members also by the Psalmist, *The wicked walk on every side*; for while they seek not things within, they weary themselves with toiling at things without. It follows ;

Ver. 8. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

[vii]

8. This point, viz, that blessed Job is by the voice of God called *a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil*, having explained above minutely and particularly, we forbear to rehearse what we have said, lest while we go over points that have been already examined, we should be slow in coming to those which have not. This then requires our discreet consideration, how it is either that the Lord is said to speak to Satan, or that Satan is said to answer the Lord, for we must make out what this speaking means. For neither by the Lord Who is the supreme and unbounded Spirit, nor by Satan, who is invested with no fleshly nature, is the breath of air inhaled by the bellows of the lungs, after the manner of human beings, so that by the organ of the throat it should be given back in the articulation of the voice; but when the Incomprehensible Nature speaks to an invisible nature, it behoves that our imagination rising above the properties of our corporeal speech should be lifted to the sublime and unknown methods of interior speech. For we, that we may express outwardly the things which we are inwardly sensible of, deliver these through the organ of the throat, by the sounds of the voice, since to the eyes of others we stand as it were behind the partition of the body, within the secret dwelling place of the mind; but when we desire to make ourselves manifest, we go forth as though through the door of the tongue, that we may shew what kind of persons we are within. But it is not so with a spiritual nature, which is not a twofold compound of mind and body. But again we must understand that even when incorporeal nature itself is said to speak, its speech is by no means characterized by one and the same form. For it is after one method that God speaks to the Angels, and after another that the Angels speak to God; in one manner that God speaks to the souls of Saints, in another that the souls of Saints speak to God; in one way God speaks to the devil, in another the devil speaks to God.

9. For because no corporeal obstacle is in the way of a spiritual being, God speaks to the holy Angels in the very act of His revealing to their hearts His inscrutable secrets, that whatsoever they ought to do they may read it in the simple contemplation of truth, and that the very delights of contemplation should be like a kind of vocal precepts, for that is as it were spoken to them as hearers which is inspired into them as beholders. Whence when God was imparting to their hearts His visitation of vengeance upon the pride of man, He said, *Come, let us go down, and there confound their language*. [Gen. 11, 7] He saith to those who are close about Him, *Come*, doubtless because this very circumstance of never decreasing from the contemplation of God, is to be always increasing in the contemplation of Him, and never to depart from Him in heart, is as it were to be always coming to Him by a kind of steady motion. To them He also says, *Let us go down, and there confound their language*. The Angels ascend in that they behold their Creator; the Angels descend in that by a strict examination they put down that which exalts itself in unlawful measure. So then for God to say, *Let us go down, and confound their speech*, is to exhibit to them in Himself



that which would be rightly done, and by the power of interior vision to inspire into their minds, by secret influences, the judgments which are fit to be set forth.

10. It is after another manner that the Angels speak to God, as in the Revelation of John also they say, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom*; for the voice of the Angels in the praises of God is the very admiration itself of inward contemplation. To be struck dumb at the marvels of Divine goodness is to utter a voice, for the emotion of the heart excited with a feeling of awe is a mighty utterance of voice to the ears of a Spirit that is not circumscribed. This voice unfolds itself as it were in distinct words, while it moulds itself in the innumerable modes of admiration. God then speaks to the Angels when His inner will is revealed to them as the object of their perception; but the Angels speak to the Lord when by means of this, which they contemplate above themselves, they rise to emotions of admiration.

11. In one way God speaks to the souls of Saints, in another the souls of Saints speak to God; whence too it is again said in the Apocalypse of John, *I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* [Rev. 6, 9. 10.] Where in the same place it is added, *And white robes were given unto every one of them, and it was said unto them that they should rest for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled*; [Rev. 6, 11] for what else is it for souls to utter the prayer for vengeance, but to long for the day of final Judgment, and the resurrection of their lifeless bodies? For their great cry is their great longing; for everyone cries the less, the less he desires; and he utters the louder voice in the ears of an uncircumscribed Spirit in proportion as he more entirely pours himself out in desire of Him, and so the words of souls are their very desires. For if the desire were not speech, the Prophet would not say, *Thine ear hath heard the desire of their heart*; [Ps. 10, 17] but as the mind which beseeches is usually affected one way and the mind which is besought another, and yet the souls of the Saints so cleave to God in the bosom of their inmost secresy, that in cleaving they find rest, how are those said to beseech, who it appears are in no degree at variance with His interior will? How are they said to beseech, who, we are assured, are not ignorant, either of God's will or of those things which shall be? Yet whilst fixed on Himself they are said to beseech any thing of Him, not in desiring aught that is at variance with the will of Him, Whom they behold, but in proportion as they cleave to Him with the greater ardour of mind, they also obtain from Him to beseech that of Him, which they know it is His will to do; so that they drink from Him that which they thirst after from Him. And in a manner to us incomprehensible as yet, what they hunger for in begging, they are filled withal in foreknowing; and so they would be at variance with their Creator's will, if they did not pray for that which they see to be His will, and they would cleave less closely to Him, if when He is willing to give, they knocked with less lively longing. These receive the answer spoken from God, *Rest yet for a little season, till your fellowservants and your brethren be fulfilled*. To say to those longing souls, *rest yet for a little season*, is to breathe upon them amid their burning desires, by the very foreknowledge, the soothing of consolation; so that both the voice of the souls is that desire which through love they entertain, and God's address in answer is this, that He reassures them in their desires with the certainty of retribution. For Him then to answer that they should await the gathering of their brethren to their number, is to infuse into their minds the delays of a glad awaiting, that while they long after the resurrection of the flesh, they may be further gladdened by the accession of their brethren who remain to be gathered to them.

12. It is in one way that God speaks to the devil, and in another that the devil speaks to God, For God's speaking to the devil is His rebuking his ways and dealings with the visitation of a secret scrutiny, as it is here said, *Whence comest thou?* But the devil's answering Him, is his being unable to conceal any thing from His Omnipotent Majesty; whence he says, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* For it is as it were for him to say what he had been doing, that he knows that he cannot hide his doings from the eyes of That Being. But we must understand that, as we learn in this place, God has four ways of speaking to the devil, and the devil has three ways of speaking to God, God speaks to the devil in four modes, for He both reprehends his unjust ways, and urges against him the righteousness of His Saints, and lets him by permission try their innocence, and sometimes stops him that he dare not tempt them, Thus he rebukes his unjust ways, as has been just now said, *Whence camnest thou?* He urges against him the righteousness of His own elect, as He saith, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth?* [Job 1, 8] He allows him by permission to put their innocence to the test, as when He says, *All that he hath is in thy power.* [ver. 12] And again He prevents him from tempting, when He says, *But upon himself put not forth thy hand.* But the devil speaks to God in three ways, either when he communicates to Him his dealing, or when he calumniates the innocence of the elect with false charges, or when he demands the same innocence to put it to trial. For he communicates his ways who says, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* [ver. 7] He calumniates the innocence of the elect, when he says, *Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about all his house, and about all that he hath on every side?* [ver. 9, 10] He demands the same innocence to be subjected to trial, when he says, *But put forth Thine hand now and touch all that he hath and he will curse Thee to Thy face.* But God's saying, *Whence comest thou?* is His rebuking by virtue of His own goodness that one's paths of wickedness. His saying, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in all the earth?* is His making the elect, by justifying them, such as a rebel angel might envy. God's saying, *All that he hath is in thy power,* is, for the probation of the Saints, His letting loose upon them that assault of the wicked one, by the secret exercise of His power. God's saying, *Only upon himself put not forth thine hand,* is His restraining him from an excessive assault of temptation, even in giving him permission. But the devil's saying, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it,* signifies His inability to conceal from His unseen eyes the cunning of his wickedness. The devil's saying, *Doth Job fear God for nought?* is his complaining against the just within the hiding places of his own thoughts, his envying their gains, and from envy searching out flaws for their condemnation. The devil's saying, *Put forth Thine hand now and touch all that he hath,* is his panting with the fever of wickedness to afflict the just. For in that through envy he longs to tempt the just, he seeks as it were by entreaty to put them to the test. Now then, as we have briefly described the methods of inward speaking, let us return to the thread of interpretation, which has been slightly interrupted.

Ver. 8. *Have thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

13. The point has been already discussed in the foregoing discourse, that the devil proposed a contest not with Job but with God, blessed Job being set between them as the subject of the contest; and if we say that Job amid the blows erred in his speech, we assert what it is impious to imagine, that God was the loser in His pledge. For, lo, here also it is to be remarked, that the devil did not first beg the blessed Job of the Lord, but the Lord commended him to the contempt of the devil; and

unless He had known that he would continue in his uprightness, He would not assuredly have undertaken for him. Nor would He give him up to perish in the temptation, against whom, before the temptation was sent, those firebrands of envy were kindled in the tempter's mind from God's own commendations.

14. But the old adversary, when he fails to discover any evil of which he might accuse us, seeks to turn our very good points into evil, and being beaten upon works, looks through our words for a subject of accusation; and when he finds not in our words either ground of accusation, he strives to blacken the purpose of the heart, as though our good deeds did not come of a good mind, and ought not on that account to be reckoned good in the eyes of the Judge. For because he sees the fruit of the tree to be green even in the heat, he seeks as it were to set a worm at its root. For he says, Ver. 9, 10. *Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast Thou, not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in, the land.*

15. As if he said in plain terms, 'What wonder is it, if he who has received so many blessings upon earth should behave without offence in return for them? He would then be really innocent, if he continued good in adversity; but why is he to be called great, whose every work has its recompense attending upon him, in all this abundance of good things?' For the crafty adversary, when he bethinks himself that the holy man had acted well in prosperity, hastens by means of adversity to prove him guilty before the Judge. Whence it is well said by the voice of the Angel in the Apocalypse, *The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night.* [Rev. 12, 10] Now holy Scripture is often used to set the day for prosperity, and the night for adversity. Accordingly he ceases not to accuse us by day and by night; forasmuch as he strives to shew us to be chargeable one while in prosperity, another while in adversity. In the day he accuses us, when he slanders us that we abuse our good fortune; in the night he accuses us, when he shews that we do not exercise patience in adversity; and therefore because no strokes had as yet touched blessed Job, he was as it were still wholly without that whereof he might be able to accuse him by night, but because in prosperity he had thriven in a great holiness, he pretended that it was in return for his good fortune that he had done well, lying in the crafty assertion, that he did not keep his substance for the profit [*usum*] of the Lord, but that he served the Lord for the profit [*usum*] of his substance. For there are some who, to enjoy God, deal with this life like stewards, and there are some who to enjoy this life would make use of God by the bye. When then he describes the gifts of Divine bounty, he thinks to make light of the acts of the resolute doer, that he might impeach [*addicat*] the heart of him as though on the score of secret thoughts, whose life he was unable to reprove on the score of works; falsely asserting that whatever outward innocence of life there might be, was in compliance not with the love of God, but with his longing after temporal prosperity. And so knowing nothing of the powers of blessed Job, and yet being well aware that everyone is most truly tried by adversity, he demands him for trial, that he who throughout the day of prosperity had walked with unfailling foot, at least in the night of adversity might stumble, and by the offence of impatience might be laid low before the eyes of his commender. Whence he adds, Ver. 11. *But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

[x]

16. When Satan has a desire to tempt the holy man, and yet tells the Lord that He must put forth His hand against him, it is very deserving of notice that even he, who is so especially lifted up against the Maker of all things, never claims to himself the power to strike; for the devil knows well that he is unable to do any thing of himself, for neither in that he is a spirit does he subsist by himself. Hence it is that in the Gospel, the legion, which was to be cast out of the man, exclaimed, *If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine*; [Mat. 8, 31] for what wonder is it if he, who could not by his own power enter into the swine, had no power without the Creator's hand to touch the holy man's house?

17. But we must know that the will of Satan is always evil, but his power is never unjust, for his will he derives from himself, but his power he derives from God. For what he himself unrighteously desires to do, God does not allow to be done except with justice. Whence it is well said in the book of Kings, *the evil spirit of God came upon Saul*. [1 Sam. 18, 10] You see that one and the same spirit is both called the Lord's spirit and an evil Spirit; the Lord's, that is, by the concession of just power, but evil, by the desire of an unjust will, so that he is not to be dreaded, who has no power but by permission; and, therefore, that Power is the only worthy object of fear, which when It has allowed the enemy to vent his rage, makes even his unjust will serve the purpose of a just judgment. But he requires that His hand should be *put forth a little*; they being external things, of which he seeks the hurt. For Satan even does not consider himself to accomplish much, unless he inflicts a wound in the soul, that by so smiting he may bring one back from that country, from which he lies far removed, laid prostrate by the weapon of his own pride.

18. But why is it that he says, *if he have not blessed Thee to Thy face?* [so Vulg.] We look, it means, toward that we love, but that we would be quit of, we turn away our face from it. What then is the face of God, unless the regard of His favour is set before us to be understood? Accordingly he says, *But put forth Thine hand a little* [Vulg. *paullulum*, E.V. *now*], *and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face*. As if he had said in plain words, Withdraw the things which Thou hast given him, for if he lose Thy gifts, he will no longer seek the regard of Thy favour, when his temporal good things are taken away. For if he no longer has the things in which he takes delight, he will despise Thy favour even to cursing Thee. By which crafty address The Truth Whom he challenges is in no wise overcome; but that is permitted the enemy to his own undoing, which may be reckoned to the faithful servant for the increase of his reward; for which cause it is immediately subjoined,

Ver. 12. *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.*

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19. We should mark in the Lord's words the dispensations of heavenly pity, how He lets go our enemy, and keeps him in; how He looses, and yet bridles him. He allows him some things for temptation, but withholds him from others. *All that he hath is in thy hand, only upon himself put not forth thine hand*. His substance He delivers over, but still He protects his person, which notwithstanding after a while He designs to give over to the tempter; yet He does not loose the enemy to every thing at once, lest he should crush His own subject [*civem*] by striking him on every side. For whenever many evils betide the elect, by the wonderful graciousness of the Creator they are dealt out by seasons, that what by coming all together would destroy, may when divided be borne up against. Hence Paul says, God is faithful, *Who will not suffer you to be tempted above*

*that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* [1 Cor. 10, 13] Hence David says, *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me.* [Ps. 26, 2] As if he said in plain words, 'first examine my powers, and then, as I am able to bear, let me undergo temptation.' But this that is said, *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand,* is also capable of another sense, viz. that the Lord knew well, indeed, that His soldier was brave, yet chose to divide for him his contests with the enemy, that, though victory should in every case be sure to that staunch warrior, yet that from one conflict first the enemy might return to the Lord defeated, and that then he might grant him another encounter to be again worsted, so that his faithful follower might come forth the more incomparable conqueror, in proportion as the vanquished foe had repaired his forces again for fresh wars with him. It follows, *So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*

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20. What is this, that Satan is said *to go forth from the presence of the Lord*? For how is it possible to *go forth* from Him, Who is every where present? Whence it is that He says, *Do not I fill heaven and earth?* [Jer. 23, 24] Hence it is written concerning His Spirit, *For the Spirit of the Lord filleth the world.* [Wisd. 1, 7] Hence it is that His Wisdom saith, *I alone compassed the circuit of heaven.* [Ecclus. 24, 5] Hence it is that the Lord says again, *The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.* [Isa. 66, 1] And again it is written of Him, *He meteth out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure,* [Is. 40, 12. Vulg.] for He abides both within and without the seat, whereon He rules. By His 'meting out heaven with a span, and comprehending the earth in a measure,' He is shewn to be Himself on every side beyond the circuit of all things which He has created. For that which is enclosed within is from without held in by that which encloseth it. "By the throne, therefore, whereon He is seated, it is meant that He is within and above; by the 'measure,' wherewith, 'He comprehends,' He is represented to be beyond and beneath; for whereas the same Being abides within all things, without all things, above all things, beneath all things, He is both above by virtue of His Dominion, and beneath by virtue of His Upholding; without, by His Immensity, and within, by His Subtlety; ruling from on high, holding together from below; encompassing without, penetrating within; not abiding by one part above, by another beneath, or by one part without, and by another part within, but One and the Same, and wholly every where, upholding in ruling, ruling in upholding; penetrating in encompassing, encompassing in penetrating; whence He ruleth from above, thence upholding from beneath, and whence He enfoldeth from without, thence filling up within; ruling on high without disquietude, upholding below without effort; within, penetrating without attenuation, without, encompassing without expansion. So that He is both lower and higher, without place; He is wider without breadth; He is more subtle without rarity.

21. Whither then is there any 'going forth' from Him, Who being through the bulk of a body no where present, is through a Substance unlimited no where absent? Still, so long as Satan, kept down by the power of His Majesty, was unable to execute the longing of his wickedness, he, as it were, stood in the presence of the Lord, but he 'went forth' from the presence of the Lord, because, being freed from above from the pressure of an inward withholding, he went to the execution of his desire. He went forth from the presence of the Lord, forasmuch as his evil will, long bound by the fetters of a severe control, did at length proceed to fulfilment. For, as has been said, whilst that which he desired he had no power to fulfil, in a manner, he ;stood in the presence of the Lord,'

because the Supreme Providence restrained him from the execution of his wickedness, but 'he went forth from His presence,' because in receiving the power to tempt, he arrived at the goal, at which his wickedness aimed, It goes on:

Ver. 13, 14, 15, *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

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22. We ought to observe what times are suited for temptations; for the devil chose that as the time for tempting, when he found the sons of the blessed Job engaged in feasting; for the adversary does not only cast about what to do, but also when to do it. Then though he had gotten the power, yet he sought a fitting season to work his overthrow, to this end, that by God's disposal it might be recorded for our benefit, that the delight of full enjoyment is the forerunner of woe. But we should observe the craft with which the losses that were inflicted by him are themselves related; for it is not said, 'the oxen have been carried off by the Sabeans,' but 'the oxen, which have been carried away, were ploughing,' with the view doubtless that by mention of the profit of their labour, his cause for sorrow should be increased; for the same reason also [LXX. *ai yhleai-onoi*] among the Greeks it is not only asses, but asses with young, that are reported to have been taken away, that while such insignificant animals might less hurt the mind of the hearer from their value, they might from their productiveness inflict the sorer wound; and as misfortunes afflict the mind the more in proportion as, being many in number, they are also suddenly announced, the measure of his woes was enlarged even through the junctures at which the tidings arrived. For it follows,

Ver. 16, *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

23. Lest the loss of his property might not stir up sufficient grief at the hearing, he urges his feelings to exceed by the very words of the messengers. For it is to be remarked how craftily it is said, *the fire of God*, as though it were said, thou art suffering the visitation of Him, Whom thou desiredst to appease by so many sacrifices: thou art undergoing the wrath of Him, in Whose service thou didst daily weary thyself! For in signifying that God, Whom he had served, had brought upon him his misfortunes, he mentions a sore point on which he may break forth; to the end that he might recall to mind his past services, and reckoning that he had served in vain, might be lifted up against the injustice of the Author. For the godly mind, when it finds itself to meet with crosses from the hands of man, finds repose in the consolations of Divine favour; and when it sees the storms of trial gather strength without, then seeking the covert of trust in the Lord, it takes refuge within the haven of the conscience. But that the cunning adversary might at one and the same moment crush the bold heart of the holy man, both by strokes from man and by despair in God, he both brought tidings at first that the Sabeans had made an irruption, and announced immediately afterwards that the fire of God had fallen from heaven, that he might as it were shut up every avenue of consolation, whereas he shews even Him to be against him, Who might have solaced his spirit amidst his adversities; so that considering himself in his trials to be on every side forsaken, and on

every side in a strait, he might burst into reviling with so much the more hardihood as he did it in the greater desperation. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

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24. Lo again, lest any thing should be wanting to his grief for the adversity that came of man, he brings tidings that bands of the Chaldeans had broken in, and lest the calamity that came from above should strike him with too little force, he shews that wrath is repeated in the heavens. For it follows;

Ver. 18, 19. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

25. He who is not laid low by one wound is in consequence stricken twice and thrice, that at one time or another he may be struck to the very core. Thus the blow from the Sabeans had been reported, the Divine visitation by fire from heaven had been reported, tidings are brought of the plundering of the camels, by man again, and of the slaughter of his servants, and the fury of God's displeasure is repeated, in that a fierce wind is shewn to have smitten the comers of the house, and to have overwhelmed his children. For because it is certain that without the Sovereign dictate the elements can never be put in motion, it is covertly implied that He, Who let them be stirred, did Himself stir up the elements against him, though, when Satan has once received the power from the Lord, he is able even to put the elements into commotion to serve his wicked designs. Nor should it disturb us, if a spirit cast down from on high should have the power to stir the air into storms, seeing that we know doubtless that to those even who are sentenced to the mines fire and water render service to supply their need. So then he obtained that tidings should be brought of misfortunes; he obtained that they should be many in number; he obtained that they should come suddenly. Now the first time that he brought bad tidings he inflicted a wound upon his yet peaceful breast, as upon sound members; but when he went on smiting the stricken soul, he dealt wound upon wound, that he might urge him to words of impatience.

26. But we should observe with what craftiness the ancient foe busied himself to break down the patience of the holy man, not so much by the loss of his substance as by the very order of the announcements. He, taking pains to announce first the slight disasters, and afterwards the greater ones, last of all brought him intelligence of the death of his sons, lest the father should account the losses of his property of slight importance, if he heard of them when now childless, and lest it should the less disturb him to part with his goods, after he had learnt the death of his children, considering that the inheritance were no more, if he first removed out of the way those who were reserved to inherit it. So beginning from the least, he announced the worst intelligence last; that while worse disasters were made known to him in succession, every wound might find room for pain within his breast. Take notice of the craft with which so many a weight of ill is announced, both separately and at the same time suddenly, that his grief being increased both of a sudden and in point after point, might not contain itself within the hearer's breast, and that it might so much the

more inflame him to utter blasphemy, as the fire, kindled within him by those sudden and multiplied tidings, raged in a narrower space.

27. Nor do I think that this ought to be lightly passed over, that the sons when they perish were feasting in the house of their elder brother. For it has been declared above that feasts can scarcely be gone through without transgression. To speak then of our own concerns and not of theirs, the lesson we ought to learn is, that what the younger ones do for pleasure's sake is checked by the control of the elder, but when the elder are themselves followers of pleasure, then, we may be sure, the reins of license are let loose for the younger; for who would keep himself under the control of authority, when even the very persons, who receive the right of control, freely give themselves to their pleasures? And so while they are feasting in the house of their elder brother, they perish, for then the enemy gets more effective power against us, when he marks that even those very persons, who are advanced for the keeping of discipline, are abandoned to joviality. For he is so much the more free and forward to strike, as he sees that they too, who might intercede for our faults, are taken up with pleasure. But far be it from us to suspect that the sons of so great a man were by devotedness to feasts given up to the gorging of the belly. But still we know for certain that though a man, by the observance of self control, may not pass the bounds of necessity in eating, yet the animated earnestness of the mind is dulled amidst feasting, and that mind is less apt to reflect in what a conflict of temptations it is placed, which throws off restraint in a sense of security. In the eldest brother's day then he overwhelmed the sons, for the old foe in compassing the death of the younger, seeks an inlet for their ruin through the carelessness of the elder ones. But as we have marked with what piercing darts the tidings struck him, let us hear how our man of valour stands fast amid the blows, It proceeds;

Ver. 20. *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.*

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28. There are some who account it a high degree of philosophical fortitude, if, when corrected by severe discipline, they are insensible to the strokes, and to the pains of those stripes. And there are some who feel to such excess the infliction of the blows, that under the influence of immediate grief, they even fall into excesses of the tongue. But whoever strives to maintain true philosophy, must go between either extreme, for the weightiness of true virtue consists not in dulness of heart, as also those limbs are very unhealthy from numbness which cannot feel any pain even when cut. Again, he deserts his guard over virtue, who feels the pain of chastisement beyond what is necessary; for while the heart is affected with excessive sorrow, it is stirred up to the extent of impatient reviling, and he who ought to have amended his misdeeds by means of the stripes, does his part that his wickedness should be increased by the correction. Agreeably to which, against the insensibility in the chastised, the words of the Prophet are, *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction.* [Jer. 5, 3] Against the faintheartedness of the chastened the Psalmist hath it, *They will never stand fast in adversity;* [Ps. 140, 10. Vulg.] for they would 'stand fast in adversity,' if they bore calamities with patience, but so soon as they sink in spirit, when pressed with blows, they as it were lose the firmness of their footing, amidst the miseries inflicted on them.



29. Thus because blessed Job observed the rule of the true philosophy, he kept himself from either extreme with the evenness of a marvellous skill, that he might not by being insensible to the pain condemn the strokes, nor again, by feeling the pain immoderately, be hurried madly against the visitation of the Striker. For when all his substance was lost, all his children gone, *he rose up, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.* In that *he rent his mantle*, in that *he shaved his head and fell down upon the ground*, he shews, we see, that he has felt the pain of the scourge; but in that it is added that *he worshipped*, it is plainly shewn that even in the midst of pain, he did not break forth against the decree of the Smiter. He was not altogether unmoved, lest by his very insensibility he should shew a contempt of God; nor was he completely in commotion, lest by excess of grief he should commit sin. But because there are two commandments of love, i.e. the love of God, and of our neighbour; that he might discharge the love of our neighbour, he paid the debt of mourning to his sons; that he might not forego the love of God, he performed the office of prayer amidst his groans. There are some that use to love God in prosperity, but in adversity to abate their love of Him from whom the stroke comes. But blessed Job, by that sign which he outwardly shewed in his distress, proved that he acknowledged the correction of his Father, but herein, that he continued humbly worshipping, he shewed that even under pain he did not give over the love of that Father. Therefore that he might not shew pride by his insensibility, he fell down at the stroke, but that he might not estrange himself from the Striker, he so fell down as to worship. But it was the practice of ancient times for everyone, who kept up the appearance of his person by encouraging the growth of his hair, to cut it off in seasons of mourning; and, on the other hand that he who in peaceful times kept his hair cut, should in evidencing his distress cherish its growth. Thus blessed Job is shewn to have preserved his hair in the season of rest, when he is related to have shaven his head for the purpose of mourning, that whereas the hand of the Most High was fallen upon him in all the circumstances of his condition, the altered mien of penance might even by his own act overcloud him. But such an one, spoiled of his substance, bereft of his children, that rent his mantle, that shaved his head, that fell down upon the ground, let us hear what he says!

Ver. 21. *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.*

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30. Oh! upon how elevated a seat of the counsels of the heart does he sit enthroned, who now lies prostrate on the earth with his clothes rent! For because by the judgment of the Lord he had lost all that he had, for the preserving his patience he brought to mind that time, when he had not as yet those things which he had lost, that, whilst he considers that at one time he had them not, he may moderate his concern for having lost them; for it is a high consolation in the loss of what we have, to recall to mind those times, when it was not our fortune to possess the things which we have lost. But as the earth has produced all of us, we not unjustly call her our mother. As it is written, *An heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things.* [Ecclus. 40, 1]

Blessed Job then, that he might mourn with patience for what he had lost here, marks attentively in what condition he had come hither. But for the furtherance of preserving patience, with still more discretion he considers, how he will go hence, and exclaims, *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.* As though he said, 'Naked did the earth bear me, when I came upon this scene, naked it will receive me back, when I depart hence. I then who have lost

what I had indeed given me, but what must yet have been abandoned, what have I parted with that was my own?' But because comfort is not only to be derived from the consideration of our creation [*conditionis 'conditoris.*'], but also from the justice of the Creator, he rightly adds, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done.* [so V. and lxx.]

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31. The holy man, under trial from the adversary, had lost every thing, yet knowing that Satan had no power against him to tempt him, saving by the Lord's permission, he does not say, 'the Lord hath given, the devil hath taken away,' but *the Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away.* For perchance it would have been a thing to grieve for, if what his Creator had given him, his enemy had taken from him: but when no other hath taken it away, saving He Who Himself gave it, He hath only recalled what was His own, and hath not taken away what was ours. For if we have from Him all that we make use of in our present life, what cause for grief that by His own decree we are made to surrender, of Whose bounty we have a loan? Nor is he at any time an unfair creditor, who while he is not bound to any set time of restitution, exacts, whenever he will, what he lends out. Whereupon it is well added, *As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done;* for since in this life we undergo things which we would not, it is needful for us to turn the bias of our will to Him, Who can will nought that is unjust. For there is great comfort in what is disagreeable to us, in that it comes to us by His disposal, to Whom nought but justice is pleasing. If then we be assured that what is just is the Lord's pleasure, and if we can suffer nothing but what is the Lord's pleasure, then all is just that we undergo, and it is great injustice, if we murmur at a just suffering.

32. But since we have heard how the intrepid speaker put forward the vindication of his cause against the adversary, now let us hear how in the end of his speech he extols the Judge with benedictions. It follows, *Blessed be the Name of the Lord.* See how he concluded all that he felt alight with a blessing on the Lord, that the adversary might both perceive hence, and for his punishment under defeat take shame to himself, that he himself even though created in bliss had proved a rebel to that Lord, to Whom a mortal even under His scourge utters the hymn of glory.

But be it observed, that our enemy strikes us with as many darts as he afflicts us with temptations; for it is in a field of battle that we stand every day, every day we receive the weapons of his temptations. But we ourselves too send our javelins against him, if, when pierced with woes, we answer humbly. Thus blessed Job, when stricken with the loss of his substance and with the death of his children, forasmuch as he turned the force of his anguish into praise of his Creator, exclaiming, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; blessed be the Name of the Lord:* by his humility, struck down the enemy in his pride, and by his patience, laid low the cruel one. Let us never imagine that our combatant received wounds, and yet inflicted none. For whatever words of patience he gave forth to the praise of God, when he was stricken, he as it were hurled so many darts into the breast of his adversary, and inflicted much sorer wounds than he underwent; for by his affliction he lost the things of earth, but by bearing his affliction with humility, he multiplied his heavenly blessings. It follows, Ver.22. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

33. Since, when we are laid hold of by distressing trials, we may even in the silent working of our thoughts, without word of mouth, be guilty of sin; the testimony both of the lips and of the heart is given to blessed Job. For it is first said, *he sinned not*, and then it is afterwards added, *nor charged God foolishly*: for he, who uttered nothing foolishly, kept offence from his tongue, and whereas the words, he sinned not, come before, it appears that he excluded the sin of murmuring even from his thought, so that he neither sinned nor spake foolishly, since he neither swelled with indignation in his silent consciousness, nor gave a loose to his tongue in reviling. For he does 'charge God foolishly,' who, when the strokes of divine chastisement are fallen upon him, strives to justify himself. For if he venture in pride to assert his innocence, what else does he, but impugn the justice of the chastiser? Let it suffice for us to have run through the words of the history thus far: let us now turn the discourse of our exposition to investigate the mysteries of allegory. And herein, that it is written,

Ver.6. *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.*

#### [xx] ALLEGORY

34. It is first to be made out, wherefore any thing is said to be done on a particular day before the Lord, whereas with Him the progress of time is never marked by the variation of day and night. For neither does that light, which without coming enlighteneth whatsoever it chooseth, and without going forsaketh those things which it rejects, admit any imperfection of mutability; for, while it abideth unchangeable in itself, it orders all things that are subject to change, and has in such sort created all transient beings in itself, that in it they are incapable of transition, nor is there inwardly in His sight any lapse of time, which with us, without Him, has its course. Whence it comes to pass that those revolutions of the world remain fixed in His eternity, which, having no fixedness out of Him issue into existence [*emanant*]. Why then in relation to Him is it said, *one day*, in that His one day is His eternity? Which same the Psalmist perceived to be closed by no ending, and to open with no beginning, where he says, *One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand*. [Ps. 84, 10. Vulg.]

35. But as Holy Scripture speaks to those who are brought forth in time, it is meet that it should use words significant of time, in order that it may lift us up by so condescending, and that while it relates something that belongs to eternity after the manner of time, it may gradually transfer to the eternal world those who are habituated to the things of time, and that that eternity, which is unknown, while it amuses [*blanditur*] us with words that are known, may successfully impart itself to our minds. And what wonder is it, if in Holy Writ God is not overhasty to disclose the unchangeableness of His Nature to the mind of man, since after He had celebrated the triumph [*solemnitate*] of His Resurrection, it was by certain progressive steps that He made known the incorruptibility of the Body which He resumed again. For we have learnt from the testimony of Luke, that He first sent Angels to some, that were seeking for Him in the tomb; and again to the disciples who were talking of Him by the way, He Himself appeared, yet not so as to be known by them, Who indeed after the delay of an exhortation did shew Himself to be known of them in the breaking of bread; but at last, entering suddenly, He not only presented Himself to be known by sight, but to be handled also. For because the disciples still carried about with them faint hearts, in coming to the knowledge of this marvellous mystery they were to be nourished by such a method of its dispensation, that by little and little in seeking they might find some portion, that finding they

might gain growth, and growing they might hold the faster the truths which they had learnt. Inasmuch then as we are not led to the eternal world at once, but by a progression of cases and of words as though by so many steps, this or that is said to be done on a certain day before Him within, Who views even time itself also out of time.

36. Or forasmuch as Satan too was there, was it the aim of Holy Scripture, when it says that this was done on a certain day, to point out that in the light God beheld the darkness? For we are unable to embrace light and darkness in one and the same view, in that when the eye is fixed upon darkness, the light is put to flight, and when the eye is directed to the glittering rays of light, the shades of darkness disappear. But to that Power, Which in unchangeableness beholds all things changeable, Satan was present as in the day, in that It embraces undimmed the darkness of the apostate Angel. We, as we have said, cannot survey at one view both the objects which we choose in approval, and those which we condemn in disapproval; for while the mind is directed to the one subject, it is withdrawn from the other, and when it is brought back to this latter it is taken off from that, to which it had attached itself.

37. But forasmuch as God without changing beholds all things at the same instant, and without extension embraces all, i.e. both the good that He aids, and the evil that He judges; both that which thus aiding He rewards, and that which so judging He condemns; He is not Himself different in the things which He sets in different order. Accordingly Satan is said to have come before Him *on a day*, in that the light of His eternity is proof against the overclouding of any change; and herein, that the darkness is made present to Him, he is said to have presented himself among the sons of God, because in fact the impure spirit is penetrated by the self-same Power of Righteousness, wherewith the hearts of pure spirits are replenished; and that being is pierced through with the same ray of light, which is so shed abroad in them as that they shine.

38. He came among the sons of God, in that, though they serve God in rendering aid to the elect, he does this, in putting them to trial. He presented himself among the sons of God, in that, although they dispense the succours of mercy to all that labour in this present life, this one unwittingly serves the ends of His secret justice, while he strives to accomplish the ministry of their condemnation. Whence it is justly said by the Prophet in the books of Kings, *I saw the Lord sitting upon His throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by Him, on His right hand and on His left. And it was said, Wherewith shall I deceive Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead; And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth one and stood before the Lord, and said, I will deceive him. And it was said, Wherewith? and he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.* [1 Kings 22, 19. &c]

For what is the throne of the Lord, unless we understand the Angelic Powers, in whose minds enthroned on high He disposeth all things below? And what is the host of heaven, unless the multitude of ministering Angels is set forth? Why then is it, that the host of heaven is said to stand on His right hand and on His left? For God, Who is in such sort within all things, that He is also without all, is neither bounded on the right hand nor on the left. However, the right hand of God is the elect portion of the Angels, and the left hand of God signifies the reprobate portion of Angels. For not alone do the good serve God by the aid which they render, but likewise the wicked by the trials which they inflict; not only they who lift upward them that are turning back from transgression, but they who press down those who refuse to turn back. Nor because it is called the

host of heaven, are we hindered from understanding therein the reprobate portion of the Angels, for whatsoever birds we know to be poised in the air, we call them 'the birds of heaven.' And it is of these same spirits that Paul saith, *Against spiritual wickedness in high places*. [Ephes. 6, 12] And describing their head, he says, *According to the prince of the power of the air*. [Ephes. 2, 2] On the right hand and on the left hand of God, then, stands the Angelic Host, forasmuch as both the will of the elect spirits harmonizes with Divine mercy, and the mind of the reprobate, in serving their own evil ends, obeys the judgment of His strict decrees. Hence too it is said, that a spirit of falsehood immediately leaped forth in the midst, to deceive king Ahab, as his deserts called for. For it is not right to imagine that a good spirit would ever have served the ends of deceit, so as to say, *I will go forth, and I will be a, lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets*. But because king Ahab by his previous sins had made himself worthy to be cursed with such deception, in order that he who had many times willingly fallen into sin, might for once unwillingly be caught for his punishment, leave is given by a secret justice to the evil spirits, that those whom with willing minds they strangle in the noose of sin, they may drag to the punishment of that sin even against their will. What then it is there to describe the Host of heaven as having stood on the right hand and on the left hand of God, the same it is here to declare Satan to have presented himself among the sons of God. So on the right hand of God there stood Angels, for that the sons of God are named; so on His left hand angels are standing, because Satan presented himself among them.

39. But as we have determined to search out the hidden senses of the allegory, we not unfitly take it to mean, that the Lord beheld Satan in the day, in that He restrained his ways in the Incarnation of His Wisdom; as though it were not to have seen him, to have for so long borne with his wickedness in the ruin of the human race. Whence it is straightway said to him by the voice of God, Ver. 7. *Whence comest thou?*

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40. In the day Satan is demanded of his ways, for that in the light of revealed Wisdom the snares of the hidden foe are discovered. Because, then, the devil is rebuked by the Incarnate Lord, and restrained from his baneful license, it is well subjoined, *And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou?* For He then by arraigning attainted the ways of Satan, when by the Advent of the Mediator restraining the wickedness of his persuasions, He rebuked the same. And it is not without reason that the sons of God are related to have stood in the presence of the Lord on this day, forasmuch as it is by the light of Wisdom illuminating them that all the elect are gathered to the calling of their eternal country. Who, though Incarnate Wisdom came to assemble them in actual deed, were yet by virtue of His foreknowledge already inwardly present to His Divinity. But since the old enemy, at the coming of the Redeemer, is questioned of his ways, let us hear what he says. Ver. 7. *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it*.

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41. For from the time of Adam till the coming of the Lord, he drew after him all the nations of the Gentiles; he went *to and fro in the earth, and walked up and down in it*, in that he stamped the foot-prints of his wickedness throughout the hearts of the Gentiles. For when he fell from on high he gained lawful possession of the minds of men, because he fastened them as willing captives in the chains of his iniquity; and he wandered the more at large in the world, in proportion as there was no

one found who was in all things free from that his guilt. And his having gone to and fro in the world as with power, is his having found no man who could thoroughly resist him. But now let Satan return back, i.e. let the Divine power withhold him from the execution of his wickedness, since He has now appeared in the flesh, Who had no part in the infection of sin from the infirmity of the flesh. He came in humility for the proud enemy himself to wonder at, that he who had set at nought all the mightiness of His Divinity, might stand in awe even of the very infirmities of His Humanity. Wherefore also this very weakness of His human nature is immediately set forth against him with wonderful significance as an object to confound him; whereas it is said,  
Ver. 8. *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?*

[xxiii]

42. That Job means by interpretation, 'Grieving,' we have already said a little above. And He is truly called 'Grieving' in figure, Who is declared by the testimony of the Prophet 'to bear our griefs.' [Isa. 53, 4] Who has not His like on the earth; for every man is only man, but He is both God and Man. He has not His like on earth, because though every son by adoption attains to the receiving of the Divine nature, yet none ever receives so much, as to be, by nature, God. He was even rightly styled a servant, because He did not disdain to take the form of a servant. Nor did His taking the humility of the flesh injure His sovereignty, for in order that He might both take upon Him that which He was to save, yet not undergo alteration in that which He had, He neither lessened the Divine by the Human, nor swallowed up the Human in the Divine; for although Paul hath it, *Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant;* [Phil. 2, 6. 7.] yet to Him it is 'emptying Himself,' of the greatness of His Invisible Being to manifest Himself as Visible; so that the form of a servant should be the covering of That Which without limitation enters into all things by virtue of Godhead. Again, God's saying to Satan in figure, *Hast Thou considered My servant Job*, is His exhibiting in his despite the Only-Begotten Son as an object of wonder in the form of a servant. For in that He made Him known in the flesh as of so great virtue, He as it were pointed out to the adversary in his pride what it would grieve him to contemplate; but now that He had brought before him a perfect object for him to admire, it remains that in order to strike down his pride he should further go on to enumerate its excellencies. It goes on,  
Ver.8. *A perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.*

[xxiv]

43. For there came among men the Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, for the giving an example of living, *perfect* [*simplex*]; in respect of His rigour towards the evil spirits, *upright*; for the exterminating pride, *fearing God*; and for the wiping off impurity of life in His Elect, *departing from evil*. For it is said of Him by Isaiah in a special manner, *And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.* [Is. 11, 3] And He did in a special manner *depart from evil*, who refused to imitate the actions which He found among men, since, as Peter bears witness, *He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.* [1 Pet. 2, 22] It follows;  
Ver. 9, 10. *Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

The old enemy knew that the Redeemer of mankind was come to be the conqueror of himself; and hence it is said by the man possessed in the Gospel, *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?* [Mat. 8, 29] Yet before, when he perceived Him to be subject to passion, and saw that He might suffer all the mortal accidents of humanity, all that he imagined concerning His Divinity became doubtful to him from his exceeding pride. For savouring of nothing else but pride, whilst he beheld Him in humility, he doubted of His being God; and hence he has recourse to proof by temptation, saying, *If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.* [Matt. 4, 3] In this way, because he saw that He was subject to passion, he did not believe Him to be God by birth, but to be kept by the grace of God. And for the same reason too he is in this place said to allege,

Ver. 10. *Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

[xxv]

44. For he urges that both himself and his house are hedged about by God; because he could not find an entrance to His conscience by tempting him, He declares his substance to be hedged about, in that he dares not to attack His elect servants. He complains that *God had blessed the work of his hands, and that his substance was increased in the land*, for this reason, that he pines at beholding that faith in Him enlarges its bounds, in man's coming to the knowledge of Him by the preaching of the Apostles. For His substance is said to be increasing, all the time that by the labours of the preachers the number of the faithful daily waxes larger. Satan's saying this to God, is his seeing these things with an envious eye. Satan's saying this to God, is his grieving at these things with a pining spirit. It proceeds:

Ver. 11. *But put forth Thine hand a little, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

45. For He, Whom he thought in time of tranquillity to be under the keeping of God's grace, he imagined might be led to sin by means of suffering; as though he had plainly said, 'One, Who for the miracles which He works is accounted God, being put to the test by afflictions, is discovered to be a sinner, and nothing better,' So the Lord said to Satan,

Ver. 12. *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.*

[xxvii]

46. Whereas we are examining Holy Scripture under its figurative import, by the hand of Satan is to be understood not his power, but the extent of his tempting. All, then, that he hath is given into the hand of the Tempter, and he is only forbidden *to put forth his hand upon him*, which nevertheless, when his substance is gone, is permitted him; for that first Judaea, which was His possession, was taken from Him in unbelief, and that afterwards His flesh was nailed to the stock of the Cross, He then Who first underwent the opposition of Judaea, and afterwards came even to the Cross, in a manner first lost that He had, and then in His own Person endured the wickedness of the adversary.

*So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*

[xxviii]

47. Just as it was said above, *Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord*, in that he attained the objects of his desire; for he was in a certain sense in His presence, all the time that on account of Him, he failed to accomplish all that he mischievously thirsted after.

Ver. 13, *And there was a day, when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.*

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48. We have said that the sons and daughters of blessed Job were a representation either of the order of the Apostles, or of the whole multitude of the faithful. Now the Lord Incarnate first chose a few out of Judaea unto faith, and afterwards He gathered to Himself the multitude of the Gentile people. But who was the eldest son of the Lord, unless the Jewish people is to be understood, which had been a long time born to Him by the teaching of the Law which He gave? and who the younger son but the Gentile people, which at the very end of the world was gathered together? And therefore whereas, when Satan was unwittingly contributing to the welfare of the human race, and having corrupted the hearts of those persecutors was demanding warrant for the Passion of the Lord, the Holy Apostles were as yet ignorant that the Gentile world were to be gathered to God, and preached to Judaea alone the mysteries of the Faith. When Satan is said to have gone out from the Lord, the sons and daughters are described to be feasting in the house of their elder brother. For it had been commanded them, *Go not into the way of the Gentiles*. [Mat. 10, 5] Now after the Death and Resurrection of our Lord, they turned to preaching to the Gentiles, for which reason too in their Acts we find them saying, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but since ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*. [Acts 13, 46] And thus these children of the bridegroom, of whom it is declared, and that by the voice of the same Bridegroom, *The children of the bridechamber shall not fast as long as the bridegroom is with them*, [Matt. 9, 15] are feasting in the house of their elder brother, for this reason, that the Apostles still continued to be fed with the sweets of Holy Scripture in the gathering of the single people of the Jews.

Ver. 14, 15. *And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them; And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took all away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

[xxx]

49. What else do we take the oxen to mean in figure, but well-doers; what the asses, but certain men of simple ways? These are properly described to be feeding beside the oxen, because simple souls, even when they are incapable of comprehending deep mysteries, are near to the great, inasmuch as they account the excellencies of their brethren to be their own also by force of charity; and while envy of the knowledges [*sensibus*] of others is a thing unknown, they are never divided at pasture. The asses then take their food in company with the oxen, in that duller minds, when joined with the wise, are fed by their understanding. Now the Sabeans mean by interpretation ‘captivators;’ and who are signified by the name of ‘captivators,’ but the impure spirits who lead all men captive to infidelity, whom they make subject to themselves? These too strike the youths [*pueros*] with the sword, in that they inflict grievous wounds, with the darts of temptation, upon those whom the constancy of manhood does not yet maintain in freedom and hardiness. These



indeed enter fairly upon well-doing, but while still in the delicate state of a first beginning, they are prostrated beneath the unclean spirits that take captive; these are stricken with the sword of the enemy, in that he pierces them with despair of life eternal.

50. But what is this, that the messenger comes with these words, *and I only am escaped alone*? Who is this messenger, who, when the rest are destroyed, 'escapes alone,' but the prophetic word, which, whilst all the evils happen, which it foretold, alone returns as it were unharmed to the Lord? For when it is known to speak the truth concerning the fate of the lost, it is in a certain sense shewn to live among the dead. It is hence that the servant is sent to bring down Rebecca, on the occasion of Isaac's marrying; doubtless because the intervening Prophecy does service in espousing the Church to the Lord. So when the Sabeans made their assault, one servant alone escaped to give the tidings, because by means of malignant spirits leading captive weak minds, that declaration of Prophecy was confirmed, which, in foretelling the same captivity, saith, *Therefore My people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge*. [Is. 5, 13] The prophecy therefore is in a manner preserved safe, when the captivity, which it foretold, is brought to light. It proceeds, Ver. 16. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from Heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee*.

51. All, who held the office of preaching in the Synagogue, were rightly named, 'the heavens,' plainly because they were supposed to be imbued with heavenly wisdom; and for this reason, when Moses was urging the Priests and the people to take heed of his words of admonition, he exclaimed, *Give ear, O ye Heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth*; [Deut. 32, 1] evidently signifying by the Heavens the order of rulers, and by the earth the people under them. There is then in this place no unfitness in interpreting the Heavens to mean either the Priests or the Pharisees, or the Doctors of the Law, who, to the eyes of men, while they attended on heavenly duties, seemed as it were to shed light from on high. Now because they were greatly stirred up in opposition to our Redeemer, it was as though 'fire fell from heaven,' whilst from those very men, who were accounted teachers of the truth, the flames of envy burst out, to the deceiving of the ignorant people. For we know from the testimony of the Gospel, that through envy at the truths which He taught they sought an opportunity for His betrayal, but that from fear of the people they dared not make known what they went about. Hence too it is therein written, that in order to dissuade the people they say, *Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? but this people, who knoweth not the Law, are cursed*. [John 7, 48. 49.] But what do we understand by the sheep and the servants, save all inoffensive, but still as yet fainthearted persons, who, while they feared to undergo the persecution of the Pharisees and the Rulers, were devoured by the fires of infidelity. So let it be said; *The fire of God is fallen from Heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants*; i.e. the flame of envy hath come down from the hearts of the rulers, and burnt up all that there was of good springing up in the people; for while the wicked rulers are claiming honour to themselves in opposition to the Truth, the hearts of their followers are turned from every right way. And here too it is well added, *And I only am escaped alone to tell thee*; for whereas the predicted case of wickedness is fulfilled, that word of prophecy escapes the extinction of falsehood, wherein it is said, *yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them* [Is. 26, 11]; as though it were plainly expressed, 'not only are the wicked afterwards tormented by fire sent in vengeance, but even now they are consumed therewith through envy;' in that they who are hereafter to be visited with the punishment of just retribution, inflict upon themselves here the tortures of envy. And thus

the servant flies and returns alone, and announces that the sheep and the servants have been destroyed by fire, when Prophecy in forsaking the Jewish people shews that she has declared the truth, saying, *Jealousy has taken hold of a people without knowledge*; as though it said in plain words, 'when the people would not make out the words of the Prophets, but gave their belief to the words of the envious, the fire of jealousy consumed them, seeing that they were burnt in the fire of other men's envy.' It goes on,

Ver. 17. *Whilst he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

[xxxii]

52. Knowing that the Chaldeans are to be interpreted 'fierce ones,' who else are represented by the name of Chaldeans but the stirrers of that of the persecution, who burst out even in open cries of malice, saying, *Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* [Luke 23, 21.] These *made themselves into three bands*, when the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees came severally to put questions. [Mk. 15, 13. 15.] Assuredly they were vanquished by the mouth of Wisdom, but forasmuch as we must suppose that they drew some foolish ones after them, having made themselves into bands, they carried away the camels; for each set of them poisoned the hearts of the foolish according to the evil notions, with which it was itself imbued; and while by their persuasions they drag them to destruction, it was as if they led captive the crooked [*tortuosas*] minds of the weaker sort. Thus when the Lord preached in Samaria, there were many of the Samaritans that were joined to the heritage of that our Redeemer. But did not they, who, on the ground of the seven husbands of one woman that were dead, tempted the Lord against the hope of resurrection, do their best to bring back the believing Samaritans from their faith, who plainly knew nothing of the hope of a resurrection? Who, while they receive some things out of the Law, and disregard others, do as it were, after the manner of camels, ruminate indeed like a clean animal, but like an unclean animal do not cleave the hoof. Though camels which ruminate, yet do not cleave the hoof, are likewise a representation of those in Judaea, who had admitted the historical fact after the letter, but could not spiritually discern the proper force thereof. Upon these the Chaldeans seize in three bands, in that the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees, by their evil persuasions, turn them aside from all right understanding. And at the same time they smite the servants with the sword; for though there were those among the people who were now capable of exercising reason, yet these they met not with force of reasoning, but with authoritativeness of power; and while they desire to be imitated as rulers by their subjects, notwithstanding if their followers can understand somewhat, yet they drag them to destruction by the prerogative of assumed authority. And it is fitly that one servant escapes from them to bring the tidings, in that when the Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees do wickedly, that word of Prophecy, whilst forsaking them, is established sure, which saith, *And they that handle the Law knew me not.* [Jer. 2, 8] The account proceeds,

Ver. 18, 19. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon thy children, and they are dead.*

[xxxiii]

53. We have said a little above that by the sons and the daughters we understand the Apostles that preached, and the people under them; who are said to be feasting in their eldest brother's house, for that it was in the lot of the Jewish people still that they were fed with the sweets of the sacred truths preached. *And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness.* The wilderness is the heart of unbelievers, which being forsaken by the Lord is without an inhabitant to tend it. And what is the great wind, but strong temptation? Accordingly there came a great wind from the wilderness; for at the Passion of our Redeemer there came from the hearts of the Jews strong temptation against His faithful followers. The wilderness may likewise not unaptly be taken for the forsaken multitude of impure spirits, from whom came a wind and smote the house, in that they were the source whence the temptations proceeded, and overturned the hearts of the persecutors.

54. But this house wherein the sons were feasting was builded on four corners. Now we know the three orders of Rulers in the Synagogue, viz. the Priests, the Scribes, and the Elders of the people; to whom if we add the Pharisees likewise, we shall have found the four corners in this house. There came then a wind from the wilderness., and smote the four corners of the house; in that temptation burst forth from the unclean spirits and stirred up the minds of the four orders to the wickedness of persecution. That house fell and overwhelmed His children, forasmuch as when Judaea fell into the cruelty of persecuting our Lord, it overwhelmed the faith of the Apostles with fears of despair. For they had only to see their Master laid hold of, and, lo, they fled every way, denying Him. And though the Hand within did by foreknowledge hold their spirits in life, yet meanwhile carnal fear cut them off from the life of faith. They then who forsook their Master, when Judaea raged against Him, were as if killed by the house being overthrown, when its corners were smitten. But what do we think became of the flock of the faithful at that time, when, as we know, the very rams took to flight? Now in the midst of these events one escaped to bring tidings, in that the word of Prophecy, which had given warning of these things, approves itself to have been confirmed in saying of the persecuting people, *My beloved one hath done many crimes in Mine house* [Jer. 11. 15. Vulg.]; of the preachers, who though good yet fled at the Passion, *My neighbours stood afar off*, [Ps. 38, 12] saying again of the whole number, who were greatly afraid, *Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* [Zech. 13, 7] It proceeds; Ver. 20. *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle.*

[xxxiv]

55. When his sons were destroyed in the ruin of the house, Job arose, because when Judaea was lost in unbelief, and when the Preachers were fallen in the death of fear, the Redeemer of mankind raised Himself from the death of His carnal nature; He shewed in what judgment He abandoned His persecutors to themselves. For His rising is the shewing with what severity He forsakes sinners, just as His lying down is the patient endurance of ills inflicted. He rises then, when He executes the decrees of justice against the reprobate. And hence He is rightly described to have rent his mantle. For what stood as the mantle of the Lord, but the Synagogue, which by the preaching of the Prophets clung to the expectation of His Incarnation? For in the same way that He is now clothed with those by whom He is loved, as Paul is witness, who says, *That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle* [Eph. 5, 27]; (for that which is described as having neither spot or wrinkle is surely made appear as a spiritual robe [*vestis rationalis*]); and at

once clean in practice, and stretched in hope;) so when Judaea believed Him as yet to be made Incarnate, it was no less a garment through its clinging to Him.

56. But because He was looked for before He came, and coming, taught new truths, and teaching, wrought wonders, and working wonders, underwent wrongs, *He rent His mantle*, which He had put on Him, seeing that in Judaea some he withdrew from unbelief, whilst some He left therein. What then is the rent mantle but Judaea divided in contrary opinions? For, if His mantle had not been rent, the Evangelist would not have said that, at the preaching of our Lord, there arose strife among the people; *For some said, He is a good man; others said, Nay, but He deceiveth the people.* [John 7, 12] For that mantle of His was rent, in that being divided in opinions it lost the unity of concord. It proceeds; *And shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.*

[xxxv]

57. What is signified by the hair that was shorn but the minuteness [*sublilitas*] of Sacraments? what by the head but the High Priesthood? Hence too it is said to the prophet Ezekiel, *And thou, son of man, take thee a sharp knife, take thee a barber's razor, and cause it to pass upon thine head, and upon thy beard;* [Ezek. 5, 1] clearly that by the Prophet's act the judgment of the Redeemer might be set out, Who when He came in the flesh 'shaved the head,' in that he took clean away from the Jewish Priesthood the Sacraments of His commandments; 'and shaved the beard,' in that in forsaking the kingdom of Israel, He cut off the glory of its excellency. And what is here expressed by the earth, but sinful man? For to the first man that sinned the words were spoken; *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* [Gen. 3, 19] By the name of the earth then is signified the sinful Gentile world; for whilst Judaea thought herself righteous, it appears how damnable she thought the Gentile world, as Paul is witness, who saith, *We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles.* [Gal. 2, 15] Therefore our Mediator, as it were, *shaved His head, and fell down upon the earth*, seeing that in forsaking Judaea, whilst He took away His Sacraments from her Priesthood, He came to the knowledge of the Gentiles. For He 'shaved the hair from His Head,' because He took away from that His first Priesthood the Sacraments of the Law. And He fell upon the earth, because He gave Himself to sinners for their salvation; and while He gave up those who appeared to themselves righteous, He took to Himself those, who both knew and confessed that they were unrighteous. And hence He Himself declares in the Gospel, *For judgment I am come into this world, that they that see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.* [John 9, 39] And hence the pillar of the cloud, which went before the people in the wilderness, shone with a radiant flame of fire not in the day but in the night; for this reason, that our Redeemer, in giving guidance to those that followed Him by the example of life and conduct, yielded no light to such as trusted in their own righteousness, but all those who acknowledged the darkness of their sins, He shone with the fire of His love. Nor, because Job is said to fall on the earth, let us account this to be an unworthy representation of our Redeemer. For it is written, *The Lord sent a Word into Jacob, and it hath fallen* [E.V. *lighted*] *upon Israel.* [Is. 9, 8] For *Jacob* means one that overthrows another, and *Israel*, one that sees God. And what is signified by Jacob but the Jewish people, and by Israel but the Gentile world? For in that very One Whom Jacob aimed to overthrow by the death of the flesh, the Gentile world, by the eyes of faith, beheld God. And thus the Word, that was sent to Jacob, lighted upon Israel; for Him whom the Jewish people rejected when He came to them, the Gentile world at once owned and found. For concerning the Holy Spirit it is written, *The Spirit of God fell upon them.* [Acts 11, 15]

58. And for this reason either the Word of God or the Holy Spirit is said to fall in Holy Scripture, to describe the suddenness of His coming. For whatever rushes down or falls, comes to the bottom directly. And therefore it is as if the Mediator had fallen upon the earth, that without any previous signs He unexpectedly came to the Gentiles. And it is well said, that *He fell down upon the earth and worshipped*, in that whilst He Himself undertook the low estate of the flesh, He poured into the hearts of believers the breathings of humility. For He did this, in that He taught the doing of it, in the same way that it is said of His Holy Spirit, *But the Spirit itself maketh request* [Vulg. *postulat*] *for us with groanings which cannot be uttered*. [Rom. 8, 26] Not that He petitions, Who is of perfect equality, but He is said to make request for no other reason than that He causes those to make request whose hearts He has filled: though our Redeemer, moreover, manifested this in His own Person, Who even besought the Father when He was drawing nigh to His Passion. For what wonder if, in the form of a servant, He submitted Himself to the Father by pouring out His supplications to Him, when in the same He even underwent the violence of sinners, to the very extremity of death. It proceeds:

Ver. 21. *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.*

59. The mother of our Redeemer, after the flesh, was the Synagogue, from whom He came forth to us, made manifest by a Body. But she kept Him to herself veiled under the covering of the letter, seeing that she neglected to open the eyes of the understanding to the spiritual import thereof. Because in Him, thus veiling Himself with the flesh of an human Body, she would not see God, she as it were refused to behold Him naked in His Divinity. But He 'came naked out of His mother's womb,' because when He issued from the flesh of the Synagogue, He came openly manifest to the Gentiles; which is excellently represented by Joseph's leaving His cloak and fleeing. For when the adulterous woman would have used him to no good end, he, leaving his cloak, fled out of the house; because when the Synagogue, believing Him to be simply man, would have bound Him as it were in an adulterous embrace, He too left the covering of the letter to its eyes, and manifested Himself to the Gentiles without disguise for the acknowledgment of the Power of His Divinity. And hence Paul said, *But even to this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts* [2 Cor. 3, 15]; for this reason, that the adulteress kept the cloak in her own hands, but Him, Whom she wickedly laid hold of, she let go naked. He then Who coming from the Synagogue plainly disclosed Himself to the faith of the Gentiles, 'came naked out of His mother's womb,' But does He wholly give her up? Where then is that which the Prophet declares, *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return?* [Is. 10, 22] where that which is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved?* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] The time will be, then, when He will shew Himself clearly to the Synagogue also. Yes, the time will doubtless come in the end of the world, when He will make Himself known, even as He is God, to the remnant of His People. Whence it is likewise justly said in this place, *and naked shall I return thither*. For he 'returns naked to His mother's womb,' when, at the end of the world, He, Who being made Man in time is the object of scorn, is revealed to the eyes of His Synagogue as God before all worlds. It proceeds; -

Ver. 21. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased the Lord, so is it come to pass; blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

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60. Our Redeemer, in that He is God, gives all things with the Father; but in that He is Man, He receives at the hands of the Father, as one among all. Therefore let Him say of Judaea, so long as she believed in the mystery of His Incarnation to come, *the Lord hath given*. Let Him say of her, when she slighted the looked for coming of His Incarnation, *the Lord hath taken away*. For she was ‘given,’ when in the persons of a certain number she believed what was to be; but she was ‘taken away,’ as the just desert of her blindness, when she scorned to hold in veneration the truths believed by those.

61. But let Him instruct all that believe in Him, that when under scourges they may know how to bless God, in the words that are added, *As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done* [not in E.V.]; *blessed be the Name of the Lord*. Whence likewise, as the Gospel is witness, when He is described to be drawing near to His Passion, He is said to have taken bread and given thanks. And so He gives thanks Who is bearing the stripes of the sins of others. And He, Who did nothing worthy of strokes, blesses humbly under the infliction of them, doubtless that He might shew from hence what each man ought to do in the chastisement of his own transgressions, if He thus bears with patience the chastisement of the transgressions of others, that He might shew hence what the servant should do under correction, if He being equal gives thanks to the Father under the rod. It proceeds;

Ver. 22. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*

62. ‘That he neither sinned, nor charged God foolishly,’ Peter, as we have said, above testifies of Him in plain terms, saying, *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*. [1 Pet. 2, 22] For guile in the mouth is so much the more senseless folly with God, the more that in the eyes of men it passes for crafty wisdom, as Paul bears witness, saying, *The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*. [1 Cor. 3, 19] Forasmuch then as there was no guile in His mouth, verily He said nothing foolishly. The Priests and the Rulers believed that He charged God foolishly, when, being questioned at the time of His Passion, He testified that He was the Son of God. And hence they question, saying, *What further need have we of witnesses? Behold now we have heard His blasphemy*. [Mat. 26, 65] But He did not charge God foolishly, in that speaking the words of truth, even in dying He brought before the unbelievers that concerning Himself, which He soon after manifested to all the redeemed by rising again.

#### MORAL SENSE.

63. We have briefly gone through these particulars, regarded under the view of representing our Head. Now, as they tend to the edification of His Body, let us explain them to be considered in a moral aspect; that we may learn how that, which is described to have been done in outward deed, is acted inwardly in our mind. Now when the sons of God present themselves before God, Satan also presents himself among them, in that it very often happens that that old enemy craftily blends and unites himself with those good thoughts, which are sown in our hearts through the instrumentality of the coming of the Holy Spirit, to disorder all that is rightly conceived, and tear in pieces what is once wrongly disordered. But He, Who created us, does not forsake us in our temptation. For our enemy, who hid himself in ambush against us, He makes easy to be discovered by us, through the illumination of His light. Wherefore He saith to him immediately, *Whence comest thou?*

64. For His interrogating the crafty foe is the discovering to us his ambush, that where we see him steal into the heart, we may watch against him with resolution and with caution.

Ver. 7. *Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*

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65. Satan's *going to and fro in the earth* is his exploring the hearts of the carnal, and seeking diligently whence he may find grounds of accusation against them. He 'goeth round about the earth,' for he comes about the hearts of men, that he may carry off all that is good in them, that he may lodge evil in their minds, that he may heap up on that he has lodged, that he may perfect that he has heaped, that he may gain as his fellows in punishment those whom he has perfected in sin. And observe that he does not say that he has been flying through the earth, but that he has been *walking up and down in it*; for, in truth, he is never quick to leave whomsoever he tempts; but there where he finds a soft heart, he plants the foot of his wretched persuasion, so that by resting thereon, he may stamp the prints of evil practice, and by a like wickedness to his own may render reprobate all whom he is able; but in despite of him blessed Job is commended in these words;

Ver. 8. *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

[xli]

66. To him, whom Divine Inspiration makes strong to meet the enemy, God gives praise as it were in the ears of Satan; for His giving him praise is the first vouchsafing virtues, and afterwards preserving them when vouchsafed. But the old enemy is the more enraged against the righteous, the more he perceives that they are hedged around by the favour of God's protection. And hence he rejoins, and says,

Ver. 10. *Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.*

[xl ii]

67. As though he plainly said; 'Wherefore dost Thou extol him whom Thou stablishest with Thy protection? for man would deserve Thy praises, while Thou despisest me, if he withstood me by his own proper strength.' Hence also he immediately demands on man's head with evil intent, what man's Defender concedes though with a merciful design. For it is added,

Ver. 11. *But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath; and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

[xl iii]

68. For when we yield plentifully the fruits of virtue, and when we are flourishing in uninterrupted prosperity, the mind is somewhat inclined to be lifted up, so as to imagine that all the excellency that she hath comes to her from herself. This same excellency, then, our old enemy with evil intent

desires to lay hands on, whilst God no otherwise than in mercy allows it to be tried; that while the mind, under the force of temptation, is shaken in the good wherein it exulted, learning the powerlessness of its own frail condition, it may become the more strongly established in the hope of God's aid; and it is brought to pass by a marvellous dispensation of His Mercy, that from the same source, whence the enemy tempts the soul to destroy it, the merciful Creator gives it instruction that it may live; and hence it is rightly added,

Ver. 12. *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.*

[xliv]

69. As if He said in plain words; 'I give thee so to try the good that is in each one of Mine Elect by temptation from without, that thou mayest acquaint thine own self that I keep him holding on to Me by the inward root of the mind; and hence it is rightly added,  
*So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*

[xlv]

70. For in that he is not suffered to prevail so far as to withdraw the heart, being thus shut out from the interior, he roams without. Who, even if he very often work confusion in the virtues of the soul, herein does it without, in that, through God's withholding him, he never wounds the hearts of the good to their utter ruin. For he is permitted so far to rage against them as may be necessary, in order that they, thus instructed by temptation, may be stablished, that they may never attribute to their own strength the good which they do, nor neglect themselves in the sloth of security, loosing themselves from the bracings of fear, but that in keeping guard over their attainments they may watch with so much the greater prudence, as they see themselves to be ever confronting the enemy in the fight of temptations.

Ver. 13, 14, 15. *And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

[xlvi]

71. In the hearts of the Elect wisdom is first engendered, before all the graces that follow; and she comes forth as it were a first born offspring by the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now this wisdom is our faith, as the Prophet testifies, saying, *If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not understand* [E.V. *be established*]. [Is. 7, 9] For then we are truly wise to understand, when we yield the assent of our belief to all that our Creator says. Thus the sons are feasting in their eldest brother's house, when the other virtues are feasted in faith. But if this latter be not first produced in our hearts, all besides cannot be good, though it may seem to be good. The sons feast in their eldest brother's house, so long as our virtues are replenished with the good of holy writ, in the dwelling place of faith; for it is written, *without faith it is impossible to please God* [Heb. 11, 6]; and so our virtues taste the true feasts of life, when they begin to be sustained with the mysteries [*sacramentis*] of faith. The sons feast in their eldest brother's house, in that except the other virtues, filling themselves with the feast of wisdom; do wisely all that they seek to do, they can never be virtues.



72. But observe, while the good that we do is fed with the rich fare of wisdom and of faith, our enemy carries off the *oxen that are plowing, and the asses feeding beside them, and kills the servants with the sword*. What are the *oxen plowing*, except we understand our serious thoughts, which while they wear [*conticiunt*] the heart with diligent tillage, yield abundant fruits of increase? and what do we take to be *the asses feeding beside them*, but the simple emotions of the heart, which, whilst carefully withheld from straying in double ways, we feed in the free pasture of purity? But oftentimes the crafty enemy, spying out the serious thoughts of our heart, corrupts them under the cloak of that beguiling pleasure which he insinuates; and when he sees the simple emotions of the heart, he displays the subtleties and refinements of discoveries, that while we aim at praise for subtlety, we may part with the simplicity of a pure mind; and though he has not the power to draw us to a deed of sin, nevertheless by secret theft [*subripiens*] he spoils the thoughts of good things through his temptations, that while he is seen to trouble the good that is in their mind, he may seem as though he had completely made spoil of it. By the oxen ploughing may also be understood the intents of charity, whereby we endeavour to render service to others, when we desire to cleave the hardness of a brother's heart by preaching; and by the asses also, for that they never resist with a mad rage those that are loading them, may be signified the meekness of patience, and oftentimes our old enemy, seeing us anxious to benefit others by our words, plunges the mind into a certain sleepy state of inactivity, that we are not disposed to do good to others, even though our own concerns leave us at liberty. Accordingly he carries away the oxen that are ploughing, when, by insinuating sloth that causes negligence, he breaks the force of those inward purposes, which were directed to produce the fruit of a brother's welfare, and although the hearts of the Elect keep watch within the depths of their own thoughts, and, getting the better of it, take thought of the mischief, which they receive at the hands of the tempter; yet by this very circumstance, that he should prevail over the thoughts of good things though but for a moment, the malicious enemy exults in having gotten some booty.

73. Now oftentimes, when he sees the mind in a readiness to endure, he contrives to find out what it loves the best, and there sets his traps of offence; that the more the object is beloved, our patience may be the sooner disquieted by means of it. And indeed the hearts of the Elect ever return heedfully to themselves, and chastise themselves sorely, even for the slightest impulse to go wrong, and whilst by being moved they learn how they should have stood fast, they are sometimes the more firmly established for being shaken. But the ancient enemy, when he puts out our purposes of patience, though but for a moment, exults that he has, as it were, carried off the asses from the field of the heart. Now in the things which we determine to do we carefully consider, with the watchfulness of reason, what is proper, and to what cases. But too often the enemy, by rushing upon us with the sudden impulse of temptation, and coming unawares before the mind's looking out, slays as it were with the sword the very servants that are keeping watch, yet one escapes to tell that the rest [*alia*] is lost; for in whatsoever the mind is affected by the enemy, the discernment of reason ever returns to it, and she doth in a certain sense shew that she hath escaped alone, which doth resolutely consider with herself all that she has undergone. So then all the rest perish, and one alone returns home, when the motions of the heart are in the time of temptation put to rout, and then discernment comes back to the conscience; that whatever the mind, which has been caught by a sudden onset, calculates that she has lost, she may recover, when bowed down with heartfelt contrition.

Ver. 16. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

[xlvi]

74. What is signified by sheep but the innocency of our thoughts? what is signified by sheep, but cleanness of heart in the good? Now we have said a little above that we speak of the aerial 'heaven,' whence too we name the birds of heaven. And we know that the impure spirits, that fell from the ethereal heaven, roam abroad in the mid space between this heaven and earth. These are the more envious that the hearts of men should mount up to the realms of heaven, that they see themselves to have been cast down from thence by the impurity of their pride. Forasmuch then as the glances of jealousy burst forth from the powers of the air against the purity of our thoughts, 'fire fell from heaven upon the sheep;' for oftentimes they inflame the pure thoughts of our minds with the fires of lust, and they do as it were consume the sheep with fire, when they disorder the chaste feelings of the mind with the temptations of sensuality. This is called the fire of God, for it owes its birth, though not to the making, yet to the permission of God. And because by a sudden onset they sometimes overwhelm the very cautions of the mind, they slay with the sword as it were the servants that are their keepers. Yet one escapes in safety, so long as persevering discernment reviews with exactness all that the mind suffers, and this alone escapes the peril of death; for even when the thoughts are put to rout, discretion does not give over to make known its losses to the mind, and as it were to call upon her lord to lament.

Ver. 17. *While he was yet speaking there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

75. By the camels, which have a clean mark, in that they ruminate, and an unclean, in that they do not cleave the hoof, are meant, as we have already said above, the godly stewardships of temporal things, in which in proportion as the charge is more extensive, the more doth the enemy multiply his plots against us. For every man who is set over the management of temporal affairs, is the more largely open to the darts of the hidden foe. For some things he aims to do with an eye to the future, and often whilst, thus cautious, he forecasts future events with exactness, he incautiously neglects to regard present evils. Often while his eye is on the present, he is asleep to the anticipation of coming events. Often in doing some things slothfully, he neglects what should be done with energy. Often in shewing himself overactive in the execution, by the very restlessness of his mode of acting he hurts the more the interests of his charge. Again, sometimes he strives to put restraint upon his lips, but is prevented keeping silence by the requirements of his business. Sometimes, whilst he restrains himself with excessive rigour, he is silent even when he ought to speak.

Sometimes, while he gives himself more liberty to communicate necessary things, he says at the same time what he should never have given utterance to. And for the most part he is embarrassed with such vast complications of thoughts, that he is scarce able to bear the mere things, which with foresight he ponders in his mind, and while he produces nothing in deed, he is grievously overburdened [*insudat*] with the great weight upon his breast. For as that is hard to bear which he is subject to within his own bosom, even while unemployed and at rest from work without, he is yet wearied. For very frequently the mind as it were views coming events, and every energy is strung to meet them; a vehement heat of contention is conceived, sleep is put to flight, night is turned into

day, and while the bed holds our limbs which are outwardly at rest, the cause is inwardly pleaded with vehement clamours in the court of our own heart. And it very often happens that nothing comes to pass of the things foreseen, and that all that thinking of the heart, which had so long been strung up in preparation to the highest degree of intensity, proves vain, and is stilled in a moment. And the mind is so much the longer detained from necessary concerns, as it thinks on trifles to a wider extent. Forasmuch therefore as the evil spirits one while deal a blow against the charges of our stewardship by a slothful or a headlong mode of action, at another time throw them into disorder by a backward or an unchecked use of speech, and are almost always burthening them with excessive loads of care, the Chaldeans in three bands carry off the camels. For it is as it were to make three bands against the camels, to spread confusion amidst the business of earthly stewardship, now by unwarranted deed, now by overmuch speech, now by unregulated thought, so that while the mind is striving to direct itself effectually to outward ministrations, it should be cut off from the consideration of itself, and know nothing of the injuries which it sustains in itself, in the same proportion that it exerts itself in the affairs of others with a zeal above what is befitting. But when a right mind undertakes any charge of stewardship, it considers what is due to self and what to neighbours, and neither by excess of concern for others overlooks its own interests, nor by attention to its own welfare, puts behind the affairs of others. But yet it very often happens that while the mind is discreetly intent upon both, while it keeps itself clear for the utmost precautions, both as regards itself and the things which have been entrusted to it, still being thrown into confusion by some unexpected point in any case that arises, it is so hurried away headlong, that all its precautions are overwhelmed thereby in a moment. And hence the Chaldeans strike with the sword the servants that were the keepers of the camels. Yet one returns; for amidst all this the rational thought of discretion meets the eyes of our mind, and the soul, taking heed to herself, is led to comprehend what she has lost within by the sudden onset of temptation. It follows;  
*Ver. 18, 19. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*

[xlix]

76. As we have before said, 'the wilderness' is the deserted multitude of impure spirits, which when it forsook the felicity of its Creator, as it were lost the hand of the cultivator. And from the same there came a strong wind, and overthrew the house; in that strong temptation seizes us [n] from the unclean spirits, and overturns the conscience from its settled frame of tranquillity. But this house stands by four corners for this reason, that the firm fabric of our mind is upheld by Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice. This house is grounded on four corners, in that the whole structure of good practice is raised in these four virtues. And hence do four rivers of Paradise water the earth. For while the heart is watered with these four virtues, it is cooled from all the heat of carnal desires. Yet sometimes when idleness steals on [o] the mind, prudence waxes cold; for when it is weary and turns slothful, it neglects to forecast coming events. Sometimes while some delight is stealing on [p] the mind, our temperance decays [q]. For in whatever degree we are led to take delight in the things of this life, we are the less temperate to forbear in things forbidden. Sometimes fear works its way into the heart and confounds the powers of our fortitude, and we prove the less able to encounter adversity, the more excessively we love some things that we dread to part with. And sometimes self-love invades the mind, makes it swerve by a secret

declension from the straight line of justice: and in the degree that it refuses to refer itself wholly to its Maker, it goes contrary to the claims of justice. Thus 'a strong wind smites the four corners of the house,' in that strong temptation, by hidden impulses, shakes the four virtues; and the corners being smitten, the house is as it were uprooted; in that when the virtues are beaten, the conscience is brought to trouble.

77. Now it is within these *four corners of the house* that the sons are feasting, because it is within the depths of the mind, which is carried up to the topmost height of perfection in these four virtues especially, that the others like a kind of offspring of the heart take their food together. For the gift of the Spirit, which, in the mind It works on, forms first of all Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, in order that the same mind may be perfectly fashioned to resist every species of assault, doth afterwards give it a temper in the seven virtues, so as against folly to bestow Wisdom, against dulness, Understanding, against rashness, Counsel, against fear, Courage, against ignorance, Knowledge, against hardness of heart, Piety, against pride, Fear.

78. But sometimes, whilst the mind is sustained with the plenitude and richness of a gift so large, if it enjoys uninterrupted security in these things, it forgets from what source it has them, and imagines that it derives that from itself, which it sees to be never wanting to it. Hence it is that this same grace sometimes withdraws itself for our good, and shews the presumptuous mind how weak it is in itself. For then we really learn whence our good qualities proceed, when, by seemingly losing them, we are made sensible that they can never be preserved by our own efforts. And so for the purpose of tutoring us in lessons of humility, it very often happens that, when the crisis of temptation is upon us, such extreme folly comes down upon our wisdom, that the mind being dismayed, knows nothing how to meet the evils that are threatened, or how to make ready against temptation. But by this very folly, the heart is wisely instructed; forasmuch as from whatever cause it turns to folly for a moment, it is afterwards rendered by the same the more really, as it is the more humbly, wise; and by these very means, whereby wisdom seems as if lost, it is held in more secure possession. Sometimes when the mind lifts itself up in pride on the grounds of seeing high things, it is dulled with a remarkable obtuseness in the lowest and meanest subjects; that he, who with rapid flight penetrated into the highest things, should in a moment see the very lowest closed to his understanding. But this very dulness preserves to us, at the very time that it withdraws from us, our power of understanding. For whereas it abases the heart for a moment, it strengthens it in a more genuine way to understand the loftiest subjects. Sometimes while we are congratulating ourselves that we do every thing with grave deliberation, some piece of chance takes us in the nick, and we are carried off with a sudden precipitancy; and we, who believed ourselves always to have lived by method, are in a moment laid waste with an inward confusion. Yet by the discipline of this very confusion we learn not to attribute our counsels to our own powers; and we hold to gravity with the more matured endeavours, that we return to the same as if once lost. Sometimes while the mind resolutely defies adversity, when adverse events rise up, she is struck with violent alarm. But when agitated thereby, she learns to Whom to attribute it, that on any occasion she stood firm; and she afterwards holds fast her fortitude the more resolutely, as she sees it now gone as it were out of her hand the moment that terror came upon her. Sometimes whilst we are congratulating ourselves that we know great things, we are stunned with a blindness of instantaneous ignorance [q]. But in so far as the eye of the mind is for a moment closed by ignorance, it is afterwards the more really opened to admit knowledge, in that in fact being instructed by the stroke of its blindness, it may know also from whom it has its very knowing. Sometimes while ordering all things in a religious spirit, when

we congratulate ourselves that we have in abundant measure the bowels of pious tenderness, we are struck with a sudden fit of hardness of heart. But when thus as it were hardened, we learn to Whom to ascribe the good dispositions of piety which we have; and the piety, which has been in a manner extinguished, is recovered with more reality, seeing that it is loved with fuller affection as having been lost. Sometimes while the mind is overjoyed that it is bowed under the fear of God, it suddenly waxes stiff under the temptations of pride. Yet immediately conceiving great fears that it should have no fear, it speedily turns back again to humility, which it recovers upon a firmer footing, in proportion as it has felt the weight of this virtue by seeming to let it go.

79. When the house, then, is overthrown, the sons perish; because when the conscience is disturbed under temptation, the virtues that are engendered in the heart, for any advantage from ourselves knowing them, are speedily and in the space of a moment overwhelmed. Now these sons live inwardly by the Spirit, though they perish outwardly in the flesh; because, forsooth, although our virtues in the time of temptation be disordered in a moment, and fall from the safety of their seat, yet by perseverance in endeavour they hold on unimpaired in the root of the mind. With these the three sisters likewise are slain, for in the heart, sometimes Charity is ruffled by afflictions, Hope shaken by fear, Faith beaten down by questionings. For oftentimes we grow dull in the love of our Creator, while we are chastened with the rod beyond what we think suitable for us. Often while the mind fears more than need be, it weakens the confidence of its hopes. Often while the intellect is exercised with endless questionings, faith being staggered grows faint, as though it would fail. But yet the daughters live, who die when the house is struck. For notwithstanding that in the seat of the conscience the disorder by itself tells that Faith, Hope, and Charity, are almost slain, yet they are kept alive in the sight of God, by perseverance in a right purpose of mind; and hence a servant escapes alone to tell these things, in that discretion of mind remains unhurt even amid temptations. And the servant is the cause that Job recovers his sons by weeping, whilst the mind, being grieved at what discretion reports, keeps by penitence the powers which it had in a manner begun to part with. By a marvellous dispensation of Providence are we thus dealt with, so that our conscience is at times struck with the smitings of guilt. For a person would count himself possessed of great powers indeed, if he never at any time within the depth of his mind felt the failure of them [see S. Macarius, Hom. xv.]. But when the mind is shaken by the assaults of temptation, and is as it were more than enough disheartened, there is shewn to it the defence of humility against the arts of its enemy, and from the very occasion, whence it fears to sink powerless, it receives strength to stand firm. But the person tempted not only learns from Whom he has his strength, but is made to understand with what great watchfulness he must preserve it. For oftentimes one, whom the conflict of temptation had not force to overcome, has been brought down in a worse way by his own self-security. For when anyone awearied relaxes himself at his ease, he abandons his mind without restraint to the corrupter. But if, by the dispensations of mercy from above, the stroke of temptation falls upon him, not so as to overwhelm him with a sudden violence, but to instruct him by a measured approach, then he is awakened to foresee the snares, so that with a cautious mind he girds himself to face the enemy in fight. And hence it is rightly subjoined, Ver. 20. *Then Job arose.*

[1]

80. For sitting betokens one at ease, but rising, one in a conflict. His rising, then, when he heard the evil tidings, is setting the mind more resolutely for conflicts, after the experience of

temptations, by which very temptations even the power of discernment is the gainer, in that it learns the more perfectly to distinguish good from evil. And therefore it is well added,  
*And rent his mantle.*

[li]

81. We 'rend our mantle,' whenever we review with a discriminating eye our past deeds; for unless with God our deeds were as a cloak that covered us, it would never have been declared by the voice of an Angel, *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame* [Rev. 16, 15]; for 'our shame' is then 'seen,' when our life, appearing worthy of condemnation in the eyes of the righteous in judgment, has not the covering of after good practice. But because, as often as we are tempted with guilt, we are prompted to mourning, and being stirred by our own lamentations, open the eyes of the mind to the more perfect perception of the light of righteousness, we as it were rend our mantle in grief, in that in consequence of our weeping discretion being strengthened, we chastise [r] all that we do with greater strictness, and with wrathful hand. Then all our high-mindedness comes down, then all our overcunningness is dropped from our thoughts; and hence it is added,  
*And shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped.*

[lii]

82. For what do we understand in a moral sense by hair, but the wandering thoughts of the mind? and hence it is elsewhere said to the Church, *Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet; and thy speech is comely*; [Cant. 4, 3] for a thread [*vitta* Vulg.] binds the hairs of the head. So the *lips* of the Spouse are *like a thread*, in that by the exhortations of Holy Church all dissipated thoughts in the minds of her hearers are put in bands, that they may not roam at large, and be spread abroad amongst forbidden objects, and thus spread abroad, lie heavy on the eyes of the mind, but may as it were gather themselves to one direction, in that the thread of holy preaching binds them. Which also is well represented to be *of scarlet*; for the preaching of the Saints glows only with charity. And what is signified by the head, but that very mind, which is principal in every action? Whence it is elsewhere said, *And let thy head lack no ointment* [Eccl. 9, 8]; for *ointment* upon the head is charity in the heart; and there is lack of ointment upon the head, when there is a withdrawal of charity from the heart. The shaving of the head then is the cutting off all superfluous thoughts from the mind. And he shaveth his head and falls upon the earth, who, restraining thoughts of self-presumption, humbly acknowledges how weak he is in himself.

83. For it is hard for a man to do great things, and not to harbour confident thoughts in his own mind on the score of his great doings. For from this very fact, that we are living in strenuous opposition to our vices, presumptuous imaginations are engendered in the heart; and while the mind valorously beats down the evil habits without her, she is very often inwardly swoln within herself; and now she accounts herself to have some special merits, nor ever imagines that she sins in the conceits of self-esteem. But in the eyes of the severe Judge she is so much the worse delinquent, as the sin committed, in proportion as it is the more concealed, is well nigh incorrigible; and the pit is opened the wider to devour, the more proudly the life we lead glories in itself. Hence, as we have often said before, it is brought to pass by the merciful dispensations of our Creator, that the soul that places confidence in itself is struck down by a providential temptation; that being brought low

it may find out what it is, and may lay aside the haughtiness of self-presumption. For as soon as the mind feels the blow of temptation, all the presumption and swelling of our thoughts abates.

84. For when the mind is lifted up in pride, it breaks out as it were into usurpation [s]. And it has for the attendants of its tyrannical power, its own imaginations that flatter it. But if an enemy assaults the tyrant, the favour of those attendants is speedily at an end. For when the adversary finds entrance the attendants fly, and fall away from him in fear, whom in time of peace they extolled with cunning flattery. But, when the attendants are withdrawn, he remains alone in the face of the enemy; for when high thoughts are gone, the troubled mind sees itself only and the temptation, and thus upon healing of evil tidings, the head is shaved, whensoever under the violent assault of temptation the mind is bared of the thoughts of self-assurance. For what does it mean that the Nazarites let their hair grow long, saving that by a life of special continency proud thoughts gain ground? And what does it signify, that, the act of devotion over, the Nazarite is commanded to shave his head, and cast the hair into the sacrificial fire, but that we then reach the height of perfection, when we so overcome our external evil habits, as to discard from the mind even thoughts that are superfluous? To consume these in the sacrificial fire is, plainly, to set them on fire with the flame of divine love; that the whole heart should glow with the love of God, and burning up every superfluous thought, should as it were consume the hair of the Nazarite in completing his devotion. And observe that he fell upon the earth and worshipped; for he sets forth to God the true worship, who in humility sees that he is dust, who attributes no goodness to himself, who owns that the good that he does is from the mercy of the Creator; and hence he says well and fitly,

Ver. 21. *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither.*

[liii]

85. As if the mind when tempted and taken in the powerlessness of its weak condition were to say, 'Naked I was by grace first begotten in the faith, and naked I shall be saved by the same grace in being taken up into heaven [*in assumptione*].' For it is a great consolation to a troubled mind, when, smitten with the assaults of sin, it sees itself as it were stripped of all virtue, to fly to the hope of Mercy alone, and prevent itself being stripped naked in proportion as it humbly thinks itself to be naked and bare of virtue, and though it be perchance bereaved of some virtue in the hour of temptation, yet acknowledging its own weakness, it is the better clad with humility itself, and is stronger as it is laid low than as it was standing, in that it ceases to ascribe to itself without the aid of God whatever it has. And hence it also at once owns with humility the hand of Him Who is both Giver and Judge, saying,

*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.*

[liv]

86. Observe how he grew great by the discipline of temptations, who both in the possession of the virtue acknowledges the bounty of the Giver, and in the disorderment of his fortitude, the power of the Withdrawer; which fortitude nevertheless is not withdrawn, but is confounded and loses heart, that the assaulted mind, while it dreads every instant to lose the quality as it seems, being alway made humble, may never lose it.

*As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done; Blessed be the Name of the Lord.*

[lv]

87. In this circumstance, viz. that we are assaulted with inward trouble, it is meet that we refer the thing to the judgment of our Creator, that our heart may resound the louder the praises of its Maker, from the very cause that makes it, on being smitten, the more thoroughly to consider the impotency of its frail condition. Now it is justly said,

Ver. 22. *In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly:*

[lvi]

88. In that the mind in grief ought to watch with wariness and diligence, lest, when the temptation prompts it within, it break forth inwardly into the utterance of forbidden words, and murmur at the trial; and lest the fire, which burns it like gold, by the excesses of a lawless tongue, may turn it to the ashes of mere chaff.

89. Now nothing hinders that all that we have said concerning virtues, be understood of those gifts of the Holy Spirit which are vouchsafed in [vid. chap. 91.] manifestation of virtue, for to one is given the gift of Prophecy, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the gifts of healing. But forasmuch as these gifts are not always present in the mind in the same degree, it is clearly shewn that it is for our good that they are sometimes withdrawn, lest the mind should be lifted up in pride. For if the Spirit of Prophecy had always been with the Prophets, plainly the Prophet Elisha would never have said, *Let her alone, for her soul is vexed within her, and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.* [2 Kings 4, 27] If the Spirit of Prophecy had been always present to the Prophets, the Prophet Amos when asked would never have said, *I am* [so Vulg.] *no Prophet*; where he also adds, *neither a Prophet's son, but I am an herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit.* [Amos 7, 14.] How then was he no Prophet, who foretold so many true things concerning the future? or in what way was he a Prophet, if he at the time disowned the truth concerning himself? Why, because, at the moment that he was called in question [*requisitus*], he felt that the Spirit of Prophecy was not with him, he bore true testimony concerning himself, in saying; *I am not a Prophet.* Yet he added afterwards, *Now therefore hear thou the word of the Lord. Therefore thus said the Lord, Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land.* [ver. 16, 17.] By these words of the Prophet it is plainly shewn, that while he was bearing that testimony about himself he was filled, and on the instant rewarded with the Spirit of Prophecy, because he humbly acknowledged himself to be no Prophet. And if the Spirit of Prophecy had always continued with the Prophets, the Prophet Nathan would never have allowed King David, when he consulted him about the building of the Temple, what a little while after he was to refuse him.

90. And hence, how justly is it written in the Gospel, *Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He Which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.* For the Spirit descends into all the faithful, but remains in the Mediator alone, in a special manner. For He has never left the Human Nature of Him, from Whose Divine Nature He proceedeth. He remains therefore in Him, Who only can both do all things and at all times. Now the faithful, who receive Him, since they cannot always retain the gifts of miracles, as they desire, testify that they have received Him as it were in a passing manifestation. But whereas on the other hand it is said by the



mouth of Truth concerning the same Spirit to the Disciples, *For He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*, [John 14, 17] how is it, that this same abiding of the Holy Spirit is by the voice of God declared to be the sign of the Mediator, where it is said, *Upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding on Him?* If then according to the words of the Master He abideth in the disciples also, how will it be any longer a special sign, that He abides in the Mediator? Now this we shall learn the sooner, if we discriminate between the gifts of the same Spirit.

91. Now there are some of His gifts, without which life is never attained; and there are others whereby holiness of life is made known for the good of other men. For meekness, humility, faith, hope, charity, are gifts that come from Him, and they are such as man can never reach to life without. And the gift of Prophecy, healing, different kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues [*sermonum*], are His gifts; yet such as shew forth the presence of His power for the improvement of all beholders. In the case of these gifts then, without which we can never attain to life, the Holy Spirit for ever abides, whether in His preachers, or in all the Elect; but in those gifts whereof the object is not the preservation of our own life, but of the lives of others through the manifestation of Him, He by no means always abides in the Preachers. For He is indeed always ruling their hearts to the end of good living, yet does not always exhibit the signs of miraculous powers by them, but sometimes, for all manifestation of miracles, He withdraws Himself from them, in order that those powers, which belong to Him, may be had with greater humility, in the same degree that being in possession they cannot be retained.

92. But the Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, in all things hath Him both always and continually present. For the same Spirit even in Substance proceeds from Him. And thus, though He abides in the holy Preachers, He is justly said to abide in the Mediator in a special manner, for that in them He abides of grace for a particular object, but in Him He abides substantially for all ends. For as our body is cognizant of the sense of touch only, but the head of the body has the use of all the five senses at once, so that it sees, hears, tastes, smells, and touches; so the members of the Supreme Head shine forth in some of the powers, but the Head Itself blazes forth in all of them. The Spirit then abides in Him in another sort, from Whom He never departs by reason of His Nature. Now those of His gifts, by which life is attained, can never without danger be lost, but the gifts, whereby holiness of life is made evident, are very often withdrawn, as we have said, without detriment. So then the first are to be kept for our own edification, the latter to be sought for the improvement of others. In the case of the one let the fear alarm us, lest they perish, but in the other, when they are withdrawn for a season, let humility be our consolation, for that they may chance to lift up the mind to entertain pride. Accordingly when the power of miracles which had been vouchsafed is withdrawn, let us exclaim as is right, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord*. For then, and only then, we really shew that we have held in a right spirit all that we had given us, when we bear with patience the momentary withdrawal thereof.

### BOOK III.

The whole of the second chapter of the Book of Job is explained after the manner of the former Books, historically, allegorically, and morally.

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION

[i]

1. BLESSED Job, though aimed at for death in his temptation, gained growth unto life by the stroke. And our old enemy grieved to find that he had only multiplied his excellences by the very means, by which he had thought to do away with them, but whereas he sees that he has been worsted in the first struggle, he prepares himself for fresh assaults of temptations, and still has the boldness to augur evil of that holy man; for one that is evil can never believe goodness to exist, though proved by his experience. Now those circumstances, which were promised in the first infliction, are again subjoined, when it is said,

Ver. 1, 2, 3. *Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?*

Because we have discussed these particulars very fully above, we the rather pass them over in silence, lest, whilst we often repeat points once gone into, we delay too long in coming to such as are untouched; although what is said to Satan by the Lord's voice, *Whence comest thou?* I cannot consider to be addressed to him just as it was before; for whereas he returns defeated from that contest upon which he had been let loose, and yet is asked 'whence he comes,' when it is known from whence he comes, what else is this but that the impotency of his pride is chidden? As though the voice of God openly said, 'See, thou art overcome by a single man, and him too beset with the infirmities of the flesh; thou, that strivest to set thyself up against Me, the Maker of all things!' Hence when the Lord immediately went on to declare the excellences of Job, as He did before, it is together with the triumphs of his victory that He enumerates this, and adds, *And still he holdeth fast his integrity.*

[ii]

2. As if He said explicitly, 'Thou indeed hast wrought thy malice, but he has not lost his innocence; and thou art forced to serve to his advancement by the very means whence thou thoughtest to lessen his advancement. For that inward innocency, which he honourably maintained when at rest, he has more honourably preserved under the rod. It follows; *Although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause.*

[iii]

3. Whereas God is a just and a true God, it is important to enquire how and in what sense He shews that He had afflicted Job without cause. For because He is just, He could not afflict him without cause, and again, because He is true, He could not have spoken other than what He did. So then that both particulars may concur in Him that is just and true, so that He should both speak truth, and not act unjustly, let us know, that blessed Job was both in one sense smitten *without cause*, and again in another sense, that he was smitten not without cause. For as He that is just and true, says

the thing of Himself, let us prove both that what He said was true, and that what He did was righteous. For it was necessary that the holy man, who was known to God alone and to his own conscience, should make known to all as a pattern for their imitation with what preeminent virtue he was enriched. For he could not visibly give to others examples of virtue, if he remained himself without temptation. Accordingly it was brought to pass, both that the very force of the infliction should exhibit his stores of virtue for the imitation of all men, and that the strokes inflicted upon him should bring to light what in time of tranquillity lay hidden. Now by means of the same blows the virtue of patience gained increase, and the gloriousness of his reward was augmented by the pains of the scourge. Thus, that we may uphold the truth of God in word, and His equity in deed, the blessed Job is at one and the same time not afflicted without cause, seeing that his merits are increased, and yet he *is* afflicted *without cause*, in that he is not punished for any offence committed by him. For that man is stricken without cause, who has no fault to be cut away; and he is not stricken without cause, the merit of whose virtue is made to accumulate.

4. But what is meant when it is said, *Thou movedst Me against him?* Is 'the Truth' then inflamed by the words of Satan, so that at his instigation He falls to torturing His servants? Who could imagine those things of God which he even accounts unworthy of a good man? But because we ourselves never strike unless when moved, the stroke of God itself is called the 'moving' Him. And the voice of God condescends to our speech, that His doings may in one way or another be reached by man's understanding. For that Power which without compulsion created all things, and which without oversight rules all things, and without labour sustains all, and governs without being busied, corrects also without emotion. And by stripes He forms the minds of men to whatsoever He will, in such sort still that He never passeth into the darkness of change from the light of His Unchangeable Being. It follows;

Ver. 4, 5. *And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

[iv]

5. The old enemy derives from outward things the charge which he urges against the blessed man's soul. For he affirms that 'skin is given for skin;' as it often happens that when we see a blow directed against the face, we put our hands before our eyelids to guard the eyes from the stroke, and we present our bodies to be wounded, lest they be wounded in a tenderer part. Satan then, who knew that such things are customarily done, exclaims, *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give in exchange for his life.* As if he said in plain words, 'It is for this reason that Job bears with composure so many strokes falling without, because he fears lest he should be smitten himself, and so it is care of the flesh that makes him unmoved by hurt done to the feelings of the flesh; for while he fears for his own person, he feels the less the hurt of what belongs to him.'

And hence he immediately requires his flesh to be smitten, in these words;  
*But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

He had said above, *Touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.* [Job 1, 11] Now, as if forgetting his former proposal, being beaten upon one point, he demands another. And this is

justly allowed him by God's dispensation, that the audacious disputer, by being over and over again overcome, may be made to keep silence. It proceeds;

Ver.6. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*

[v]

6. Here again, the safeguard of protection goes along with the permission to smite, and the dispensation of God both while guarding, forsakes his elect servant, and while forsaking, guards him. A portion of him He gives over, a portion He protects. For if he had left Job wholly in the hand of so dire a foe, what could have become of a mere man? And so with the very justice of the permission there is mixed a certain measure of pity, that in one and the same contest, both His lowly servant might rise by oppression, and the towering enemy be brought down by the permission. Thus the holy man is given over to the adversary's hand, but yet in his inmost soul he is held fast by the hand of his Helper. For he was of the number of those sheep, concerning whom Truth itself said in the Gospel, *Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.* [John 10, 28] And yet it is said to the enemy, when he demands him, *Behold, he is in thine hand.* The same man then is at the same time in the hand of God, and in the hand of the devil. For by saying, *he is in thine hand*, and straightway adding, *but save his life*, the pitiful Helper openly shewed that His hand was upon him whom He yielded up, and that in giving He did not give him, whom, while He cast him forth, He at the same time hid from the darts of his adversary.

7. But how is that it is said to Satan, *but save his life* [*animam*]? For how does he keep safe, who is ever longing to break in upon things under safe keeping? But Satan's *saving* is spoken of his not daring to break in, just as, conversely, we petition The Father in prayer, saying, *Lead us not into temptation*; [Matt. 6, 13] for neither does the Lord *lead us into temptation*, Who is ever mercifully shielding His servants there from. Yet it is as it were for Him 'to lead us into temptation,' not to protect us from the allurements of temptation. And He then as it were 'leads us not into the snare of temptation,' when He does not let us be tempted beyond what we are able to bear. In like manner then as God is said to 'lead us into temptation,' if He suffers our adversary to lead us thereinto, so our adversary is said to 'save our soul [*animum*, same as above],' when he is stayed from overcoming it by his temptations.

Ver. 7. *So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*

How 'Satan goes forth from the presence of the Lord,' is shewn by the remarks which have been already [some Mss. add 'often'] made above. It goes on;  
*And smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

[vi]

8. Strokes are to be estimated in two ways, viz. to consider either of what kind, or how great. For being many they are often made right by their quality, and being heavy by their quantity, i.e. when, if they be many, they be not heavy, and if they be heavy, they be not many; in order to shew, then, how by the sharpness of the stroke the adversary flamed against the holy man, not only in the badness of the kind, but also in the heaviness of the amount: to prove the quality, it is said, *And smote Job with sore boils*; and to teach the quantity, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

Plainly, that nothing might be void of glory in his soul, in whose body there is no part void of pain. It goes on;

Ver. 8. *And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*

[vii]

9. What is a potsherd made from, excepting mud? and what is the humour of the body, but mud? Accordingly he is said 'to scrape the humour with a potsherd,' as if it were plainly said, 'he wiped away mud with mud.' For the holy man reflected, whence that which he carried about him had been taken, and with the broken piece of a vessel of clay he scraped his broken vessel of clay. By which act we have it openly shewn us, in what manner he subdued under him that body of his when sound, which even when stricken he tended with such slight regard; how softly he dealt with his flesh in its sound state, who applied neither clothing, nor fingers, but only a potsherd to its very wounds. And thus he scraped the humour with a potsherd, that seeing himself in the very broken piece, he might even by the cleansing of the wound be taking a remedy for his soul.

10. But because it often happens that the mind is swelled by the circumstances that surround the body, and by the way men behave toward us the frailty of the body is removed from before the eyes of the mind, (as there are some of those that are of the world, who while they are buoyed up with temporal honours, whilst they rule in elevated stations, whilst they see the obedience of multitudes yielded to them at will, neglect to consider their own frailty, and altogether forget, nor ever take heed, how speedily that vessel of clay which they bear, is liable to be shattered,) so blessed Job, that he might take thought of his own frailty from the things about him, and increase the intensity of his self-contempt in his own eyes, is described to have seated himself not any where on the earth, which at most in every place is found clean, but upon a dunghill. He set his body *on a dunghill*, that the mind might to its great profit consider thoroughly what was that substance of the flesh, which was *taken from the ground*. [Gen. 3, 23] He set his body on a dunghill, that even from the stench of the place he might apprehend how rapidly the body returneth to stench.

11. But see, while blessed Job is undergoing such losses in his substance, and grieving over the death of so many children whereby he is smitten, while he is suffering such numberless wounds, while he scrapes the running humour with a potsherd, whilst, running down in a state of corruption, he sat himself upon a dunghill, it is good to consider how it is that Almighty God, as though in unconcern, afflicts so grievously those, whom He looks upon as so dear to Him for all eternity. But, now, while I view the wounds and the torments of blessed Job, I suddenly call back my mind's eye to John, and I reflect not without the greatest astonishment, that he, being filled with the Spirit of prophecy within his mother's womb, and who, if I may say so, before his birth, was born again, he that was the *friend of the Bridegroom*, [John 3, 29] he than whom *none hath arisen greater among those born of women*, [Matt. 11, 11] he that was so great a Prophet, that he was even *more than a Prophet*, he is cast into prison by wicked men, and beheaded, for the dancing of a damsel, and a man of such severe virtue dies for the merriment of the vile! Do we imagine there was aught in his life which that most contemptible death was to wipe off? When, then, did he sin even in meat, whose food was but locusts and wild honey? How did he offend even by the quality of his clothing, the covering of whose body was of camel's hair? How could he transgress in his behaviour, who never went out from the desert? How did the guilt of a talkative tongue defile him, who was parted far from mankind? When did even a fault of silence attach to him, who so

vehemently charged those that came to him? *O generation, of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* [Matt. 3, 7] How is it then, that Job is distinguished above other men by the testimony of God, and yet by his plagues is brought down even to a dunghill? How is it that John is commended by the voice of God, and yet for the words of a drunkard suffers death as the prize of dancing? How is it, that Almighty God so utterly disregards in this present state of being those whom He chose so exaltedly before the worlds, saving this, which is plain to the religious sense of the faithful, that it is for this reason He thus presses them below, because He sees how to recompense them on high? And He casts them down without to the level of things contemptible, because He leads them on within to the height of things incomprehensible. From hence then let everyone collect what those will have to suffer There, that are condemned by Him, if here He thus torments those whom He loves, or how they shall be smitten, who are destined to be convicted at the Judgment, if their life is sunk so low, who are commended by witness of the Judge Himself. It proceeds;

Ver. 9. *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*

[viii]

12. The old adversary is wont to tempt mankind in two ways; viz. so as either to break the hearts of the stedfast by tribulation, or to melt them by persuasion. Against blessed Job then he strenuously exerted himself in both; for first upon the householder he brought loss of substance; the father he bereaved by the death of his children; the man that was in health he smote with putrid sores. But forasmuch as him, that was outwardly corrupt, he saw still to hold on sound within, and because he grudged him, whom he had stripped naked outwardly, to be inwardly enriched by the setting forth of his Maker's praise, in his cunning he reflects and considers, that the champion of God is only raised up against him by the very means whereby he is pressed down, and being defeated he betakes himself to subtle appliances of temptations. For he has recourse again to his arts of ancient contrivance, and because he knows by what means Adam is prone to be deceived, he has recourse to Eve. For he saw that blessed Job amidst the repeated loss of his goods, the countless wounds of his strokes, stood unconquered, as it were, in a kind of fortress of virtues. For he had set his mind on high, and therefore the machinations of the enemy were unable to force an entrance on it. The adversary then seeks by what steps he may mount up to this well-fenced fortress. Now the woman is close to the man and joined to him. Therefore he fixed his hold on the heart of the woman, and as it were found in it a ladder whereby he might be able to mount up to the heart of the man. He seized the mind of the wife, which was the ladder to the husband. But he could do nothing by this artifice. For the holy man minded that the woman was set under and not over him, and by speaking aright, he instructed her, whom the serpent set on to speak wrongly. For it was meet that manly reproof should hold in that looser mind; since indeed he knew even by the first fall of man, that the woman was unskilled to teach aright. And hence it is well said by Paul, *I permit not a woman to teach.* [1 Tim. 2, 12] Doubtless for that, when she once taught, she cast us off from an eternity of wisdom. And so the old enemy was beaten by [*perdidit ab*] Adam on a dunghill, he that conquered Adam in Paradise; and whereas he inflamed the wife, whom he took to his aid, to utter words of mispersuasion, he sent her to the school of holy instruction; and she that had been set on that she might destroy, was instructed that she should not ruin herself. Yes, the enemy is so stricken by those resolute men of our part, that his very own weapons are seized out of his hand. For by the same means, whereby he reckons to increase the pain of the wound, he is helping them to arms of virtue to use against himself.

13. Now from the words of his wife, thus persuading him amiss, we ought to mark with attention, that the old enemy goes about to bend the upright state of our mind, not only by means of himself, but by means of those that are attached to us. For when he cannot undermine our heart by his own persuading, then indeed he creeps to the thing by the tongues of those that belong to us. For hence it is written; *Beware of thine own children, and take heed to thyself from thy servants.* [Ecclus. 32, 22. Vulg.] Hence it is said by the Prophet; *Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother.* [Jer. 9, 4] Hence it, is again written; *And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.* [Matt. 10, 36] For when the crafty adversary sees himself driven back from the hearts of the good, he seeks out those that they very much love, and he speaks sweetly to them by the words of such as are beloved by them above others, that whilst the force of love penetrates the heart, the sword of his persuading may easily force a way in to the defences of inward uprightness. Thus after the losses of his goods, after the death of his children, after the wounding and rending of his limbs, the old foe put in motion the tongue of his wife.

14. And observe the time when he aimed to corrupt the mind of the man with poisoned talk. For it was after the wounds that the words were brought in by him; doubtless that, as the force of the pain waxed greater, the froward dictates of his persuasions might easily prevail. But if we minutely consider the order itself of his temptation, we see with what craft he worketh his cruelty. For he first directed against him the losses of his goods, which should be at once, as they were, out of the province of nature, and without the body. He withdrew from him his children, a thing now no longer indeed without the province of nature, but still in some degree beyond his own body. Lastly, he smote even his body. But because, by these wounds of the flesh, he could not attain to wound the soul, he sought out the tongue of the woman that was joined to him. For because it sorely grieved him to be overcome in open fight, he flung a javelin from the mouth of the wife, as if from a place of ambush: as she said, *Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Bless God and die.* Mark how in trying him, he took away every thing, and again in trying him, left him his wife, and shewed craftiness in stripping him of every thing, but infinitely greater cunning, in keeping the woman as his abettor, to say, *Dost thou still retain thine integrity?* Eve repeats her own words. For what is it to say, 'give over thine integrity,' but 'disregard obedience by eating the forbidden thing?' And what is it to say, *Bless* [see Book I, 31.] *God and die*, but 'live by mounting above the commandment, above what thou wast created to be?' But our Adam lay low upon a dunghill in strength, who once stood up in Paradise in weakness. For thereupon he replied to the words of his evil counsellor, saying,

Ver. 10. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

[ix]

15. See the enemy is every where broken, every where overcome, in all his appliances of temptation he has been brought to the ground, in that he has even lost that accustomed consolation which he derived from the woman. Amid these circumstances it is good to contemplate the holy man, without, void of goods, within, filled with God. When Paul viewed in himself the riches of internal wisdom, yet saw himself outwardly a corruptible body, he says, *We have this treasure in earthen vessels.* [2 Cor. 4, 7] You see, the earthen vessel in blessed Job felt those gaping sores without, but this treasure remained entire within. For without he cracked in his wounds, but the

treasure of wisdom unfailingly springing up within issued forth in words of holy instruction, saying, *If we have received good at the hand of the Lord, shall we not receive evil?* meaning by the *good*, either the temporal or the eternal gifts of God, and by the *evil*, denoting the strokes of the present time, of which the Lord saith by the Prophet, *I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil.* [Is. 45, 6. 7.] Not that evil, which does not subsist by its own nature, is created by the Lord, but the Lord shews Himself as creating evil, when He turns into a scourge the things that have been created good for us, upon our doing evil, that the very same things should at the same time both by the pain which they inflict be to transgressors evil, and yet good by the nature whereby they have their being. And hence poison is to man indeed death, but life to the serpent. For we by the love of things present have been led away from the love of our Creator; and whereas the froward mind submitted itself to fondness for the creature, it parted from the Creator's communion, and so it was to be smitten by its Maker by means of the things which it had erringly preferred to its Maker, that by the same means whereby man in his pride was not afraid to commit sin, he might find a punishment to his correction, and might the sooner recover himself to all that he had lost, the more he perceived that the things which he aimed at were full of pain. And hence it is rightly said, *I form the light, and create darkness.* For when the darkness of pain is created by strokes without, the light of the mind is kindled by instruction within. *I make peace, and create evil.* For peace with God is restored to us then, when the things which, though rightly created, are not rightly coveted, are turned into such sort of scourges as are evil to us. For we are become at variance with God by sin. Therefore it is meet that we should be brought back to peace with Him by the scourge, that whereas every being created good turns to pain for us, the mind of the chastened man may be renewed in a humbled state to peace with the Creator. These scourges, then, blessed Job names *evil*, because he considers with what violence they smite the good estate of health and tranquillity.

16. But this we ought especially to regard in his words, viz. with what a skilful turn of reflection he gathers himself up to meet the persuading of his wife, saying, *If we have received good at the hand of the Lord, shall we not receive evil?* For it is a mighty solace of our tribulation, if, when we suffer afflictions, we recall to remembrance our Maker's gifts to us, Nor does that break down our force, which falls upon us in the smart, if that quickly comes to mind, which lifts us up in the gift. For it is hence written, *In the day of prosperity be not unmindful of affliction, and in the day of affliction, be not unmindful of prosperity.* [Ecclus. 11, 25] For whosoever receives God's gifts, but in the season of gifts has no fear of strokes, is brought to a fall by joy in his elation of mind. And whoever is bruised with scourges, yet, in the season of the scourges, neglects to take comfort to himself from the gifts, which it has been his lot to receive, is thrown down from the steadfastness of his mind by despair on every hand. Thus then both must be united, that each may always have the other's support, so that both remembrance of the gift may moderate the pain of the stroke, and misgiving and dread of the stroke may bite down the joyousness of the gift. And thus the holy man, to soothe the depression of his mind amidst his wounds, in the pains of the strokes weighs the sweetness of the gifts, saying, *If we have received good at the hand of the Lord, shall we not receive evil?* And he does well in saying first, *Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women.* For because it is the sense of a bad woman, and not her sex, that is in fault, he never says, 'Thou hast spoken like one of the women,' but 'of the foolish women,' clearly that it might be shewn, that whatsoever is of ill sense cometh of superadded folly, and not of nature so formed. The account goes on;

*In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*



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17. We sin with our lips in two ways; either when we say unjust things, or withhold the just. For if it were not sometimes a sin also to be silent, the Prophet would never say, *Woe is me, that I held my peace*. [Is. 6, 5. Vulg.] Blessed Job, then, in all that he did, sinned no wise with his lips; in that he neither spake proudly against the smiter, nor withheld the right answer to the adviser. Neither by speech, therefore, nor by silence did he offend, who both gave thanks to the Father that smote him, and administered wisdom of instruction to the ill-advising wife. For because he knew what he owed to God, what to his neighbour, viz. resignation to his Creator, wisdom to his wife, therefore he both instructed her by his uttering reproof, and magnified Him by giving thanks. But which is there of us, who, if he were to receive any single wound of such severe infliction, would not at once be laid low in the interior? See, that when outwardly prostrated by the wounds of the flesh, he abides inwardly erect in the fences of the mind, and beneath him he sees every dart fly past wherewith the raging enemy transfixes him outwardly with unsparing hand; watchfully he catches the javelins, now cast, in wounds, against him in front, and now, in words, as it were from the side. And our champion encompassed with the rage of the besetting fight, at all points presents his shield of patience, meets the darts coming in on every hand, and on all virtue's sides wheels round the guarded mind to front the assailing blows.

18. But the more valiantly our old enemy is overcome, the more hotly is he provoked to further arts of malice. For whereas the wife when chidden was silent, he forthwith set on others to rise up in insults till they must be chidden. For as he essayed to make his blows felt, by the often repeated tidings of the losses of his substance, so he now busies himself to penetrate that firm heart by dealing reiterated strokes with the insults of the lips. It proceeds;  
Ver. 11. *Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came everyone from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.*

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19. We have it proved to us how great a love they entertained both for each other, and for the smitten man, in that they came by agreement to administer consolation to him when afflicted. Though even by this circumstance, viz. that Scripture bears witness they were the friends of so great a man, it is made appear that they were men of a good spirit and right intention; though this very intention of mind, when they break forth into words, upon indiscretion arising, becomes clouded in the sight of the strict Judge. It goes on;  
Ver. 12. *And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent everyone his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.*

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20. Because the scourge had altered the appearance of the stricken man, his friends 'lift up their voice and weep,' 'rend their garments,' 'sprinkle dust upon their heads;' that seeing him altered to whom they had come, their voluntary grief might likewise alter the very appearance even of the

comforters also. For the order in consolation is, that when we would stay one that is afflicted from his grief, we first essay to accord with his sorrow by grieving. For he can never comfort the mourner who does not suit himself to his grief, since from the very circumstance that his own feelings are at variance with the mourner's distress, he is rendered the less welcome to him, from whom he is parted by the character of his feelings; the mind therefore must first be softened down, that it may accord with the distressed, and by according attach itself, and by attaching itself draw him. For iron is not joined to iron, if both be not melted by the burning effect of fire, and a hard substance does not adhere to a soft, unless its hardness be first made soft by tempering, so as in a manner to become the very thing, to which our object is that it should hold. Thus we neither lift up the fallen, if we do not bend from the straightness of our standing posture. For, whereas the uprightness of him that standeth disagreeeth with the posture of one lying, he never can lift him to whom he cares not to lower himself; and so the friends of blessed Job, that they might stay him under affliction from his grief, were of necessity solicitous to grieve with him, and when they beheld his wounded body, they set themselves to rend their own garments, and when they saw him altered, they betook themselves to defiling their heads with dust, that the afflicted man might the more readily give ear to their words, that he recognised in them somewhat of his own in the way of affliction.

21. But herein be it known, that he who desires to comfort the afflicted, must needs set a measure to the grief, to which he submits, lest he should not only fail of soothing the mourner, but, by the intemperance of his grief, should sink the mind of the afflicted to the heaviness of despair. For our grief ought to be so blended with the grief of the distressed, that by qualifying it may lighten it, and not by increasing weigh it down. And hence perhaps we ought to gather, that the friends of blessed Job in administering consolation gave themselves up to grief more than was needed, in that while they mark the stroke, but are strangers to the mind of him that was smitten, they betake themselves to unmeasured lamentation, as if the smitten man who was of such high fortitude, under the scourge of his body, had fallen in mind too. It proceeds;

Ver. 13. *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.*

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22. Whether they sat with the afflicted Job for seven days and seven nights together, or possibly for seven days and as many nights kept by him in assiduous and frequent visiting, we cannot tell. For we are often said to be doing any thing for so many days, though we may not be continually busied therein all those days. And often holy Scripture is wont to put the whole for a part, in like manner as it does a part for the whole. Thus it speaks of a part for the whole, as where, in describing Jacob's household, it says, *All the souls of the house of Jacob which came into Egypt were threescore and ten.* [Gen. 46, 27] Where indeed, while it makes mention of souls, it clearly takes in the bodies also of the comers. Again it puts in the whole for a part, as where at the tomb Mary complains, saying, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.* [John 20, 2] For it was the Body of the Lord only that she had come to seek, and yet she bewails the Lord as though His whole Person had been altogether taken away [*tultum*]; and so in this place too it is doubtful whether the whole is put for a part.

23. Yet this circumstance, viz. that they were a long while silent, and yet in speaking after all were condemned, must not be passed over carelessly. For there are some men who both begin to speak with precipitation, and follow out that unchecked beginning with still less check. While there are some who are indeed backward to begin to speak, but having once begun know not how to set limits to their words. Accordingly the friends of blessed Job, upon seeing his grief, were for long silent, yet, whilst slow to begin, they spoke with indiscretion, because they would not spare him in his grief. They held their tongue that it might not begin over-hastily, but once begun they never ruled it, that it might not let itself out from imparting consolation so far as to offer insults. And they indeed had come with a good intention to give comfort; yet that which the pious mind offered to God pure, their hasty speech defiled. For it is written, *If thou offerest rightly, but dividest not rightly, thou has sinned.* [Gen. 4, 7. lxx.] For it is rightly offered, when the thing that is done is done with a right intention. But it is not 'rightly divided,' unless that which is done with a pious mind be made out with exact discrimination. For to 'divide the offering aright' is to weigh all our good aims, carefully discriminating them; and whoso puts by doing this, even when we offer aright, is guilty of sin.

24. And so it often happens, that in what we do with a good aim, by not exercising careful discrimination therein, we know nothing what end it will be judged withal [*quo judicetur fine*], and sometimes that becomes ground of accusation, which is accounted an occasion of virtue. But whoever considers the doings of blessed Job's friends, cannot but see with what a pious intention they came to him. For let us consider, what great love it shewed to have come together by agreement to the stricken man; what a preeminent degree of longsuffering it proved to be with the afflicted, without speaking, seven days and nights; what humility, to sit upon the earth so many days and nights; what compassion, to sprinkle their heads with dust! But yet when they began to speak, by the same means, whereby they reckoned to win the price of a reward, it was their lot to meet with the arraignment of rebuke; for to the unwary even that which is begun for the object of recompense alone, oftentimes turns to an issue in sin. Observe! by hasty speech they lost that good which it cost them so much labour to purchase. And unless the grace of God had bidden them to offer sacrifice for their guilt, they might have been justly punished by the Lord, on the very grounds whereon they reckoned themselves exceeding well-pleasing to Him. By the same proceeding they displease the Judge, whereby, as if in that Judge's defence, they please themselves through want of self-control. Now it is for this reason that we speak thus, that we may recall to the recollection of our readers, for each one to consider heedfully with himself, with what dread visitations the Lord punishes the actions which are done with an evil design, if those which are begun with a good aim, but mixed with the heedlessness of indiscretion, are chastised with such severe rebuke. For who would not believe that he had secured himself ground of recompense, either if in God's defence he had said aught against his neighbour, or at all events if in sorrow for a neighbour he had kept silence seven days and nights? And yet the friends of blessed Job by doing this were brought into sin for their pains, because while the good aim of comforting which they were about was known to them, yet they did not know with what a balance of discretion it was to be done. Whence it appears that we must not only regard what it is that we do, but also with what discretion we put it in execution. First indeed, that we may never do evil in any manner, and next, that we may not do our good deeds without caution; and it is in fact to perform these good deeds with carefulness, that the Prophet admonishes us when he says, *Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently.* [Jer. 48, 10. Vulg.] But let these things stand us in stead to this end, that before the exact and incomprehensible scrutiny of the Awful Judge shall be, we may not only fear for all that we have

done amiss, but if there be in us aught of the kind, for the very things that we have done well; for oftentimes that is found out to be sin at His Judgment, which before the Judgment passes for virtue, and from the same source, whence we look for the merciful recompense of our works, there comes upon us the chastisement of righteous vengeance.

#### ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

25. We have run through these particulars thus briefly considered according to the letter of the history, now let us turn our discourse to the mystical sense of the allegory. But as, when, at the beginning of this work, we were treating of the union betwixt the Head and the Body, we premised with earnest emphasis how close the bond of love was between them, forasmuch as both the Lord in fact still suffers many things by His Body, which is all of us, and His Body, i.e. the Church, already glories in its Head, viz. the Lord, in heaven; so now we ought in such sort to set forth the sufferings of that Head, that it may be made appear how much He undergoes in His Body also. For if the torments that we endure did not reach our Head, He would never cry out to His persecutor even from heaven in behalf of His afflicted Members, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* [Acts 9, 4] If our agony were not His pain, Paul, when afflicted after his conversion, would never have said, *I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh.* [Col. 1, 24] And yet being already elevated by the resurrection of his Head, he says, *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places;* [Eph. 2, 6] in this way, namely, that the torments of persecution had enchained him on earth, yet while sunk down with the weight of his pains, lo, he was already seated in heaven, through the glory of his Head. Therefore because we know that in all things the Head and the Body are one, we in such wise begin with the smiting of the Head that we may afterwards come to the strokes of the Body. But this, viz. that it is said, “that on a day Satan came to present himself before the Lord;” that he is interrogated ‘whence he comes?’ that the blessed Job is distinguished by his Creator's high proclaim; forasmuch as we have already made it out more than once, we forbear to explain again. For if the mind is a long time involved in points that have been examined, it is hindered in coming to those which have not been, and so we now put the beginning of the allegory there, where, after often repeated words, we find something new added. So then He says,

Ver. 3. *Though thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause.*

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26. If blessed Job bears the likeness of our Redeemer in His Passion, how is it that the Lord says to Satan, *Thou movedst Me against him?* Truly the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, came to bear the scourges of our mortal nature, that He might put away the sins of our disobedience; but forasmuch as He is of one and the self-same nature with the Father, how does the Father declare that He was moved by Satan against Him, when it is acknowledged that no inequality of power, no diversity of will, interrupts the harmony between the Father and the Son? Yet He, that is equal to the Father by the Divine Nature, came for our sakes to be under stripes in a fleshly nature. Which stripes He would never have undergone, if he had not taken the form of accursed man in the work of their redemption. And unless the first man had transgressed, the second would never have come to the ignominies of the Passion. When then the first man was moved by Satan from the Lord, then the Lord was moved against the second Man. And so Satan then moved the Lord to the affliction of this latter, when the sin of disobedience brought down the

first man from the height of uprightness. For if he had not drawn the first Adam by wilful sin into the death of the soul, the second Adam, being without sin, would never have come into the voluntary death of the flesh, and therefore it is with justice said to him of our Redeemer too, *Thou movedst Me against him to afflict* [E.V. *destroy*] *him without cause*. As though it were said in plainer words; 'Whereas this Man dies not on His own account, but on account of that other, thou didst then move Me to the afflicting of This one, when thou didst withdraw that other from Me by thy cunning persuasions.' And of Him it is rightly added, *without cause*. For 'he was destroyed without cause,' who was at once weighed to the earth by the avenging of sin, and not defiled by the pollution of sin. He 'was destroyed without cause,' Who, being made incarnate, had no sins of His own, and yet being without offence took upon Himself the punishment of the carnal. For it is hence that speaking by the Prophet He says, Then I restored that which I took not away. For that other that was created for Paradise would in his pride have usurped the semblance of the Divine power, yet the Mediator, Who was without guilt, discharged the guilt of that pride. It is hence that a Wise Man saith to the Father; *Forasmuch then as Thou art righteous Thyself, Thou orderest all things righteously; Thou condemnest Him too that deserveth not to be punished*. [Wisd. 12, 15. Vulg.]

27. But we must consider how He is righteous and ordereth all things righteously, if He condemns Him that deserveth not to be punished. For our Mediator deserved not to be punished for Himself, because He never was guilty of any defilement of sin. But if He had not Himself undertaken a death not due to Him, He would never have freed us from one that was justly due to us. And so whereas 'The Father is righteous,' in punishing a righteous man, 'He ordereth all things righteously,' in that by these means He justifies all things, viz. that for the sake of sinners He condemns Him Who is without sin; that all the Elect [*electa omnia*] might rise up to the height of righteousness, in proportion as He Who is above all underwent the penalties of our unrighteousness. What then is in that place called 'being condemned without deserving,' is here spoken of as being 'afflicted without cause.' Yet though in respect of Himself He was 'afflicted without cause,' in respect of our deeds it was not 'without cause.' For the rust of sin could not be cleared away, but by the fire of torment, He then came without sin, Who should submit Himself voluntarily to torment, that the chastisements due to our wickedness might justly loose the parties thereto obnoxious, in that they had unjustly kept Him, Who was free of them. Thus it was both without cause, and not without cause, that He was afflicted, Who had indeed no crimes in Himself, but Who cleansed with His blood the stain of our guilt.

Ver. 4, 5. *And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*

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28. When the evil spirit sees our Redeemer shine forth by miracles, he cries out, *We know Who Thou art, the Holy One of God*. [Luke 4, 34] And in saying this, he dreads, whilst he owns, the Son of God. Yet being a stranger to the power of heavenly pity, there are seasons when, beholding Him subject to suffering, he supposes Him to be mere man. Now he had learnt that there were many in the pastoral station, cloaked under the guise of sanctity, who, being very far removed from the bowels of charity, held for very little other men's ills. And thus as though judging of Him by other men, because after much had been taken from Him, he did not see him subdued, he so flamed against Him even to His very flesh, in applying the touch of suffering, as to say, *Skin for skin; yea,*

*all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.* As though he said in plain terms, 'He does not care to be moved by the things that are without Him, but it will then be really known what He is, if He shall experience in Himself what may make Him grieve.' This Satan expressed in his own person not by words, but by wishes, when he desired to have it brought to pass; in his members he brought it on both by words and wishes at once. For it is himself that speaks, when, according to the words of the Prophet, his followers say, *Let us put the wood in his bread, and let us raze him out from the land of the living.* [Jer. 11, 19. Vulg.] For 'to put the wood into the bread,' is to apply the trunk of the cross to His body in affixing Him thereto; and they think themselves able to 'raze out' His life from the land of the living, Whom while they perceive Him to be mortal mould, they imagine to be put an end to by death.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life.*

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29. What fool even would believe that the Creator of all things was given up into 'the hands of Satan?' Yet who that is instructed by the Truth can be ignorant that of that very Satan all they are members who are Joined unto him by living frowardly? Thus Pilate shewed himself a member of him, who, even to the extremity of putting Him to death, knew not the Lord when He came for our Redemption. The chief priests proved themselves to be his body, who strove to drive the world's Redeemer from the world, by persecuting Him even to the cross. When then the Lord for our salvation gave Himself up to the hands of Satan's members, what else did He, but let loose that Satan's hand to rage against Himself, that by the very act whereby He Himself outwardly fell low, He might set us free both outwardly and inwardly. If therefore the hand of Satan is taken for his power, He after the flesh bore the hand of him, whose power over the body He endured even to the spitting, the buffeting, the stripes, the cross, the lance; and hence when He cometh to His Passion He saith to Pilate, i.e. to the body of Satan, *Thou couldest have no power at all against Me except it were given thee from above;* [John 19, 11] and yet this power, which He had given to him against Himself without, He compelled to serve the end of His own interest within. For Pilate, or Satan who was that Pilate's head, was held under the power of that One over Whom he had received power; in that being far above He had Himself ordained that which now condescending to an inferior condition He was undergoing from the persecutor, that though it arose from the evil mind of unbelievers, yet that very cruelty itself might also serve to the weal of all the Elect, and therefore He pitifully ordained all that within, which He suffered Himself to undergo thus foully without. And it is hence that it is said of Him at the supper, *Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments.* [John 13, 3] Behold how, when He was about to come into the hands of those that persecuted Him, He knew that those very persecutors even had been given into His own hand. For He, Who knew that He had received all things, plainly held those very persons by whom He was held, that He should Himself inflict on Himself, for the purposes of mercy, whatsoever their permitted wickedness should cruelly devise against Him. Let it then be said to him, *Behold, he is in thine hand,* in that when ravening thereafter he received permission to smite His flesh, yet unwittingly he rendered service to the Power of that Being.

30. Now he is ordered to 'save the life of the soul,' not that he is forbidden to tempt it, but that he is convicted of being unable to overcome it. For never, as we that are mere men are oftentimes

shaken by the assault of temptation, was the soul of your Redeemer disordered by its urgency. For though our enemy, being permitted, took Him up into an high mountain, though he promised that he would give Him the kingdoms of the earth, and though he shewed Him stones as to be turned into bread, yet he had no power to shake by temptation the mind of the Mediator betwixt God and man. For He so condescended to take all this upon Himself externally, that His mind, being still inwardly established in His Divine Nature, should remain unshaken. And if He is at any time said to be troubled and to have groaned in the spirit, He did Himself in His Divine nature ordain how much He should in His Human nature be troubled, unchangeably ruling over all things, yet shewing Himself subject to change in the satisfying of human frailty; and thus remaining at rest in Himself, He ordained whatsoever He did even with a troubled spirit for the setting forth of that human nature which He had taken upon Himself.

31. But as, when we love aright, there is nothing among created things that we love better than the life of our soul, and like as we say that we love those as our soul toward whom we strive to express the weight of our love, it may be that by the life of His Soul [*per animam*], is represented the life [*vita*] of the Elect. And while Satan is let loose to smite the Redeemer's flesh, he is debarred the soul, forasmuch as at the same time that he obtains His Body to inflict upon it the Passion, he loses the Elect from the claims of his power, And while That One's flesh suffers death by the Cross, the mind of these is stablished against assaults. Let it then be said, *Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life*. As if he had heard in plain words, 'Take permission against His Body, and lose thy right of wicked dominion over His Elect, whom foreknowing in Himself before the world began He holdeth for His own.'

Ver. 7. *So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*

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32. No one entereth into this life of the Elect, that has not undergone the contradictions of this enemy. And they all have proved themselves the members of our Redeemer, who, from the first beginning of the world, whilst living righteously, have suffered wrongs. Did not Abel prove himself His member, who not only in propitiating God by his sacrifice, but also by dying without a word, was a figure of Him, of whom it is written, *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth*. [Is. 53, 7] Thus from the very beginning of the world he strove to vanquish the Body of our Redeemer; and thus He inflicted wounds 'from the sole of the foot to His crown,' in that beginning with mere men, he came to the very Head of the Church in his raging efforts. And it is well said;

Ver. 8. *And he took him a potsherd to scrape the humour withal.*

33. For what is the potsherd in the hand of the Lord, but the flesh which He took of the clay of our nature? For the potsherd receives firmness by fire. And the Flesh of our Lord was rendered stronger by His Passion, in so far as dying by infirmity, He arose from death void of infirmity. And hence too it is rightly delivered by the Prophet, *My strength is dried up like a potsherd*. [Ps. 22, 15] For His 'strength was dried up like a potsherd,' Who strengthened the infirmity of the flesh which He took upon Him by the fire of His Passion. But what is to be understood by *humour* [*saniem*] saving sin? For it is the custom to denote the sins of the flesh by *flesh* and *blood*. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Deliver me from blood*. [Ps. 51, 16] Humour then is the corruption of the

blood. And so what do we understand by humour but the sins of the flesh, rendered worse by length of time? Thus the wound turns to humour when sin, being neglected, is aggravated by habit. And so the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, in giving up His Body into the hands of those that persecuted Him, scraped the humour with a potsherd, forasmuch as He put away sin by the flesh; for He came, as it is written, *in the likeness of sinful flesh, that He might condemn sin of sin*. [Rom. 8, 3. Vulg.] And whilst He presented the purity of His own Flesh to the enemy, He cleansed away the defilements of ours. And by means of that flesh whereby the enemy held us captive, He made atonement for us whom He set free. For that which was made an instrument of sin by us, was by our Mediator converted for us into the *instrument of righteousness*. And so 'the humour is scraped with a potsherd,' when sin is overcome by the flesh. It is rightly subjoined; *And he sat down upon a dunghill*.

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34. Not in the court in which the law resounds, not in the building which lifts its top on high, but on a dunghill he takes his seat, which is because the Redeemer of man on coming to take the flesh, as Paul testifies, *hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty*. [1 Cor. 1, 27] Does not He, as it were, sit down upon a dunghill, the buildings being ruined, Who, the Jews in their pride being left desolate, rests in that Gentile world, which He had for so long time rejected? He is found outside the dwelling all in His sores, Who herein, that He bore with Judaea, which set itself against Him, suffered the pain of His Passion amid the scorn of His own people; as John bears witness, who says, *He came unto His own, but His own received Him not*. [John 1, 11] And how He rests Himself upon a dunghill, let this same Truth say for Himself; for He declared, *Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance*. [Luke 15, 7. and 10.] See, He sits upon a dunghill in grief, Who, after sins have been committed, is willing to take possession of penitent hearts. Are not the hearts of penitent sinners like a kind of dunghill, in that while they review their misdoings with bewailing, they are, as it were, heaping dung before their eyes in abusing themselves? So when Job was smitten he did not seek a mountain, but sat down upon a dunghill, in that when our Redeemer came to His Passion, He left the high minds of the proud, and rested in the lowliness of the heavy laden. And this, while yet before His Incarnation, He indicated, when He said by the Prophet, *But to this man will I look, even to him, that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word*. [Is. 66, 2]

35. But who can think what numberless outrages He underwent at the hands of men, Who shewed to men such unnumbered mercies? Who can think how great those are which He even yet undergoes, yea now that He reigns from above over the hearts of the faithful? For it is He that endures daily all wherein His Elect are racked and rent by the hands of the reprobate. And though the Head of this Body, which same are we, already lifts itself free above all things, yet He still feels in His Body, which He keeps here below, the wounds dealt it by reprobate sinners. But why do we speak thus of unbelievers, when within the very Church itself we see multitudes of carnal men, who fight against the life of our Redeemer by their wicked ways. For there are some, who set upon Him with evil deeds, because they cannot with swords, forasmuch as when they see that what they go after is lacking to them in the Church, they become enemies to the just, and not only settle themselves into wicked practices, but are also busy to bend the uprightness of good men to a crooked course. For they neglect to lift their eyes to the things of eternity, and in littleness of mind



they yield themselves up to the lust of temporal things, and they fall the deeper from eternal blessings, in proportion as they look upon temporal blessings as the only ones. The simplicity of the righteous is displeasing to these, and when they find opportunity for disturbing them, they press them to lay hold of their own duplicity. Hence also this is in just accordance, which is added, Ver. 9. *Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*

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36. For of what did that mispersuading woman bear the likeness, but of all the carnal that are settled in the bosom of Holy Church, who in proportion as by the words of the Faith they profess they are within the pale, press harder on all the good by their ill-regulated conduct. For they would perchance have done less mischief, if Holy Church had not admitted in and welcomed to the bed of faith those, whom, by receiving in a profession of faith, she doubtless puts it almost out of her power to eschew. It is hence that in the press of the crowd one woman touched our Redeemer, whereupon the same our Redeemer at once saith, *Who touched Me?* And when the disciples answered Him, *The multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?* He therefore subjoined, *Somebody hath touched Me, for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me.*

37. Thus many press the Lord, but one alone touches Him; in that all carnal men in the Church press Him, from Whom they are far removed, while they alone touch Him, who are really united to Him in humility. Therefore the crowd presses Him, in that the multitude of the carnally minded, as it is within the pale, so is it the more hardly borne with. It 'presses,' but it does not 'touch,' in that it is at once troublesome by its presence, and absent by its way of life. For sometimes they pursue us with bad discourse, and sometimes with evil practices alone, for so at one time they persuade to what they practise, and at another, though they use no persuasions, yet they cease not to afford examples of wickedness. They, then, that entice us to do evil either by word or by example, are surely our persecutors, to whom we owe the conflicts of temptation, which we have to conquer at least in the heart.

38. But we should know that carnal men in the Church set themselves to prompt wickedness at one time from a principle of fear, and at another of audacity, and when they themselves go wrong either from littleness of mind or pride of heart, they study to infuse these qualities, as if out of love, into the hearts of the righteous. So Peter, before the Death and Resurrection of our Lord, retained a carnal mind. It was with a carnal mind that the son of Zeruiah held to his leader David, whom he was joined to. Yet the one was led into sin by fear, the other by pride. For the first, when he heard of his Master's Death, said, *Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee.* [Matt. 16, 22] But the latter, not enduring the wrongs offered to his leader, says, *Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?* [2 Sam. 19, 21] But to the first it is immediately replied, *Get thee behind Me, Satan.* [Matt. 16, 23] And the other with his brother immediately heard the words; *What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye are this day turned into a Satan* [So Vulg. E.V. *Adversaries*] *unto me?* [2 Sam. 19, 22] So that evil prompters are taken for apostate angels in express designation, who, as if in love, draw men to unlawful deeds by their enticing words. But they are much the worse, who give into this sin not from fear but from pride, of whom the wife of blessed Job bore the figure in a special manner, in that she sought to prompt high thoughts to her husband, saying, *Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.* She blames the simplicity in her husband, that in contempt of all things transitory, with a pure

heart, he longs after the eternal only, As though she said, 'Why dost thou in thy simplicity seek after the things of eternity, and in resignation groan under the weight of present ills? Transgress [*Excedens*], and condemn eternity, and even by dying escape from present woes.' But when any of the Elect encounter evil within coming from carnal men, what a model [*formam*] of uprightness they exhibit in themselves, let us learn from the words of him, wounded and yet whole, seated yet erect, who says,

Ver. 10. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?*

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39. Holy men, when fastened upon by the war of afflictions, when at one and the same moment they are exposed to this party dealing them blows and to that urging persuasions, present to the one sort the shield of patience, at the other they launch the darts of instruction, and lift themselves up to either mode of warfare with a wonderful skill in virtue, so that they should at the same time both instruct with wisdom the froward counsels within, and condemn with courage the adverse events without; that by their instructions they may amend the one sort, and by their endurance put down the other. For the assailing foes they condemn by bearing them, and the crippled citizens they recover to a state of soundness, by sympathizing with them. Those they resist, that they may not draw off others also; they alarm themselves for these, lest they should wholly lose the life of righteousness.

40, Let us view the soldier of God's camp fighting against either sort, He says, *Without were fightings, within were fears.* [2 Cor. 7, 5] He reckons up the wars, which he underwent externally, in these words, *In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.* [2 Cor. 11, 26] Now in this war, what were those darts which he sent against the foe, let him add, *In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.* [ib. 27] And let him say, when caught amidst such numerous assaults, with what a watchful defence he at the same time guarded the camp too. For he forthwith proceeds, *Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.* [ib. 28] See how bravely he takes upon himself those fights, how mercifully he spends himself in defending his neighbours. He describes the ills which he suffers, he subjoins the good that he imparts. So let us consider how toilsome it must be, at one and the same time to undergo troubles without, and to defend the weak within. Without, fightings are his lot, in that he is torn with stripes and bound with chains; within he suffers alarm, in that he dreads lest his sufferings do a mischief, not to himself but to his disciples. And hence he writes to those same disciples, saying, *That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto.* [1 Thess. 3, 3] For in suffering himself he feared for the fate of others, lest while the disciples perceive him to be afflicted for the faith with stripes, they be backward to confess themselves to be of the faithful. Oh! bowels of boundless love! All that he suffers himself, he disregards, and is concerned lest the disciples should suffer ought of evil prompting within the heart. He slights the wounds of the body in himself, and heals the wounds of the soul in others. For the righteous have this proper to themselves, that in the midst of the pain of their own woe, they never give over the care of others' weal, and when in suffering afflictions they grieve for themselves, still by giving needful instruction they provide for others, and are like some great

physicians, that being smitten are brought into a state of sickness. They themselves suffer from the lacerations of the wound, yet they proffer the salves of saving health to others. But it is very far less toilsome, either to instruct when you are not suffering, or to suffer when you are not giving instruction. Hence holy men skilfully apply their energies to both objects, and when they chance to be stricken with afflictions, they so meet the wars from without, that they take anxious thought that their neighbour's interior be not rent and torn. Thus holy men stand up courageously in the line, and on the one hand smite with the javelin the breasts advanced against them, and on the other cover with the shield their feeble comrades in the rear. And thus with a rapid glance they look out on either side, that they may at the same time pierce their daring foes in front, and shield from wounds their trembling friends behind. Therefore, because holy men then are skilled so to meet adversities without, that they are at the same time able to correct froward counsels within, it may be well said, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh*. For as it is said to the Elect, *Act like men, and He shall comfort your heart*; [Ps. 31, 24. Vulg.] so the minds of carnal men, which serve God with a yielding purpose, are not undeservedly called 'women.'

41. *What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* As though he said, 'If we are bent upon eternal blessings, what wonder if we meet with temporal evils?' Now these blessings Paul had his eye fixed on with earnest interest, when he submitted with a composed mind to the ills that fell upon him, saying, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*. [Rom. 8, 18]

*In all this did not Job sin with his lips.* When holy men undergo persecution both within and without, they not only never transgress in injurious expressions against God, but they never launch words of reviling against their very adversaries themselves; which Peter, the leader of the good, rightly warns us of when he says, *But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an [So Vulg.] evil speaker*. [1 Pet. 4, 15] For the evil speaker's way of suffering is, in the season of his suffering, to break loose in abuse at least of his persecutor. But forasmuch as the Body of our Redeemer, viz. Holy Church, so bears the burthen of her sorrows, that she never transgresses the bounds of humility by words, it is rightly said of this sorrower;

*In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*

Ver. 11. *Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came everyone from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.*

42. In the Preface to this work we said that the friends of blessed Job, though they come together to him with a good purpose, yet do for this reason bear the likeness of heretics, in that they fall away into sin by speaking without discretion; and hence it is said to them by blessed Job, *Surely I would speak to the Almighty, I desire to reason with God; but ye are forgers of lies, and followers of corrupt doctrines*. [Job 13, 3. 4.] Thus Holy Church, which is set in the midst of tribulation all this time of her pilgrimage, whilst she suffers wounds, and mourns over the downfall of her members, has other enemies of Christ besides to bear with, under Christ's name. For to the increasing of her grief, heretics also meet together in dispute and strife, and they pierce her with unreasonable words like as with a kind of dart.

43. And it is well said, *they came every one from his own place*. For 'the place' of heretics is very pride itself. For except they first swelled with pride in their hearts, they would never enter the lists

of false assertion. For the place of the wicked is pride, just as reversely humility is 'the place' of the good. Whereof Solomon saith, *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place.* [Eccles. 10, 4] As though he said in plain words, 'If thou perceivest the spirit of the Tempter to prevail against thee in aught, quit not the lowliness of penitence;' and that it was the abasement of penitence that he called 'our place,' he shews by the words that follow, saying, *for healing* [ib. Vulg.] *pacifieth great offences.* For what else is the humility of mourning, save the remedy of sin. Heretics therefore come each from 'his place,' in that it is from pride that they are urged to attack Holy Church.

44. And their froward conduct, moreover, is collected from an interpretation of their names. For they are named 'Eliphaz,' 'Baldad,' 'Sophar;' and as we have said above Eliphaz is, by interpretation, rendered, 'contempt of God.' For if they did not condemn God, they would never entertain wrong notions concerning Him. And Baldad is rendered 'oldness alone.' For while they shrink from being fairly defeated, and seek to be victorious with froward purpose, they pay no regard to the conversation of the new life, and all that they give heed to is 'of oldness alone.' And Sophar, 'dissipating prospect;' for they that are set in Holy Church humbly contemplate with true faith the mysteries of their Redeemer, but when heretics come to them with false statements, they 'dissipate the prospect,' in that they turn aside from the aim of right contemplation the minds of those, whom they draw over to themselves.

45. Now the places from whence they come are described in fitting accordance with the practices of heretics. For there is a Themanite, and a Suhite, and a Naamathite named. Now *Thema* is by interpretation 'the south;' *Suhi*, 'speaking;' *Naama*, 'comeliness.' But who does not know that the south is a hot wind; so heretics, as they are over ardent to be wise, study to have heated wits beyond what needs. For sloth goes with the torpor of cold, whilst reversely the restlessness of unrestrained curiosity accords with unabated teeming heat, and so because they long to feel the heat of wisdom beyond what they ought, they are said to come from 'the south.' Paul busied himself to cool the minds of the faithful to this heat of unrestrained wiseness, when he said, *Not to be overwise beyond what he ought to be wise, but to be wise unto sobriety.* [Rom. 12, 3. Vulg.] It is hence that David smites at the *valleys of salt*, [2 Sam. 8, 13] viz. in that our Redeemer, by the piercing of His severity, extinguishes the foolishness of unrestrained wit in all that entertain wrong notions regarding Him. And *Suhi* is rendered 'talking,' for they desire to be warm-witted, not that they may live well, but that they may talk high; thus they are said to come from *Thema* and *Suhi*, i.e. from 'heat,' and 'talkativeness,' for herein, viz. that they shew themselves as studious of Scripture, they teem with words of talkativeness, but not with bowels of love. And *Naama* is interpreted 'comeliness,' for because they aim not to be, but to appear learned, by words of deep learning they put on the guise of well living, and by their teeming wit in talk, exhibit in themselves a form of 'comeliness,' that by the comeliness of the lips they may more easily recommend evil counsels, in proportion as they commonly hide from our senses the foulness of their lives. But neither are the very names of the places set down in undistinguished order in the relation. For *Thema* is set first, then *Suhi*, and next *Naama* in that first an excessive warmth of wit sets them on fire, next smartness of speech lifts them up, and then, finally, dissimulation presents them comely to the eyes of men. *For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him and to comfort him.*

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46. Heretics ‘make an appointment together,’ when they hold in common certain false opinions contrary to the Church, and in the points wherein they are at variance with the truth agree together in falsehood. But all they that give us instruction concerning eternity, what else are they doing, save amid the tribulations of our pilgrimage administering consolation to us? And forasmuch as heretics desire to impart to Holy Church their own opinions, they come to her as though to comfort her. Nor is it strange if they who set forth a figure of enemies, are called friends, when it is said to the very traitor, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* [Mat. 26, 50] and the rich man that is consumed in the fire of hell, is called *son* by Abraham. [Luke 16, 25] For though the wicked refuse to be amended by us, yet it is meet that we style them friends, not of their wickedness, but by virtue of our own lovingkindness.

Ver. 12. *And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept.*

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47. All heretics, in contemplating the deeds of Holy Church, lift up their eyes, in that they are themselves down below, and when they look at her works, the objects, which they are gazing at, are set high above them. Yet they do not know her in her sorrow, for she herself covets to ‘receive evil things’ here, that so being purified she may attain to the reward of an eternal recompence, and for the most part she dreads prosperity, and joys in the hard lessons of her training. Therefore heretics, who aim at present things as something great, know her not amidst her wounds. For that, which they see in her, they recognise not in the reading of their own hearts. While she then is gaining ground even by her adversities, they themselves stick fast in their stupefaction, because they know not by experiment the things they see. And they rent everyone his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

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48. Like as we take the garments of the Church for the whole number of the faithful; (and it is hence that the Prophet saith, *Thou shalt clothe thee with them all as with an ornament*; [Is. 49, 18]) so the garments of heretics are all they that attaching themselves with one accord to them are implicated in their errors. But heretics have this point proper to themselves, that they cannot remain stationary for long in that stage wherein they leave the Church, but they are day by day precipitated into further extremes, and by hatching worse opinions they split into manifold divisions, and are in most cases parted the wider from one another by their contention and disorderment. Thus because all those, whom they attach to their ill faith [*perfidiae*], are further torn by them in endless splitting, it may well be said that the friends who come rend their garments [*rumpunt*], but when the garments are rent, the body is shewn through; for it oftentimes happens, that when the followers are rent and torn, the wickedness of their imaginings is disclosed, for discord to lay open the artifices, which their great guilt in agreeing together had heretofore kept close.

49. But now, they ‘sprinkle dust upon their heads to heaven.’ What is represented by *dust*, saving earthly senses; what by the head, saving that which is our leading principle, viz. the mind? What is set forth by ‘heaven,’ but the law of heavenly revelation? So, to ‘sprinkle dust upon the head to heaven,’ is to corrupt the mind with an earthly perception, and to put earthly senses upon heavenly

words. Now they generally canvas the words of God more than they take them in, and for this reason they sprinkle dust upon their heads, forasmuch as they strain themselves in the precepts of God, following an earthly sense, beyond the powers of their mind.

Ver. 13. *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights.*

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50. In the day we make out the objects that we look at, but in the night, either from the blindness we discern nothing, or from the uncertainty we are bewildered. Accordingly by 'day' we have 'understanding' represented, and by 'night,' 'ignorance.' And by the number seven the sum of completeness is expressed; and hence in seven days, and no more, the whole of this transitory period is accomplished. How then is it that the friends of blessed Job are said to sit with him seven days and seven nights, saving that heretics, whether in those things wherein they admit the true light, or in those wherein they are under the darkness of ignorance, as it were feign to let themselves down to Holy Church in her weakness, while under colour of caresses, they are preparing their snares to catch her withal? and though, whether in the things which they do understand, or in those which they are unable to understand, through the swelling of a bloated self-elation, they account themselves great in their own eyes, yet sometimes in semblance they bend to Holy Church, and while they make soft their words, they insinuate their venom, 'To sit upon the earth,' then, is to exhibit somewhat of the figure of humility, that whilst their exterior appears humble, they may recommend the proud doctrines which they teach.

51. But it is possible that by 'the earth' may be also represented the Incarnation of our Mediator. And hence it is said to Israel, *An altar of earth shalt thou then make unto Me.* [Ex. 20, 24] For to make an *altar of earth* for the Lord is to trust in the Incarnation of our Mediator. For then our gift is received by God, when our humility has placed upon His Altar, i.e. upon the belief of our Lord's Incarnation, all the works that it performs. Thus we place our offered gift upon an altar of earth, if our actions be firmly based upon faith in the Lord's Incarnation. But there are some heretics, who do not deny that the Incarnation of the Mediator took place, but either think otherwise concerning His Divinity than is true, or in the character of the Incarnation itself are at variance with us. They then that with us declare the true Incarnation of our Redeemer, as it were sit alike with Job upon the earth, and they are described as sitting upon the ground seven days and seven nights; forasmuch as whether in this very thing that they understand somewhat of the fulness of truth, or in this that they are thoroughly blinded by the darkness of their foolish minds, they cannot yet deny the mystery of the Incarnation. And so to sit upon the earth with blessed Job, is to believe in the true Flesh of our Redeemer in unison with Holy Church.

52. Now sometimes heretics wreak their animosity against us in punishments as well, sometimes they pursue us with words only. Sometimes they provoke us when quiet, but sometimes, seeing us hold our peace, they remain quiet, and they are friendly to the dumb, but hostile to them that open their lips, and hence forasmuch as blessed Job had not as yet said aught to them in converse, it is rightly added, *And none spake a word unto him.* For we find our adversaries hold their peace, so long as we forbear by preaching to beget sons of the true faith. But if we begin to speak aright, we immediately feel the weight of their reviling by their reply; forthwith they start into hostility, and burst out into a voice of bitterness against us, doubtless because they fear lest the hearts, which the weight of folly presses down beneath, should be drawn up on high by the voice of him that

speaketh aright. Therefore, as we have said, because our enemies love us when mute, and hate us when we speak, it is rightly said in the case of Job keeping silence,  
*And none spake a word unto him.*

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53. Yet sometimes when they see the hearts of believers vacant through sloth, they do not cease to scatter the seeds of error by speech. But when they see the minds of the good busied on high, seeking the way back to their country, earnestly sorrowing over the toils of this place of exile, they rein in their tongues with anxious heed; in that they see that whilst they assail those sorrowing hearts with fruitless words, they are speedily made to hold their peace. And hence whereas it is well said, *none spake a word unto him*, the cause of their silence is immediately brought in by implication, when it is said,  
*For they saw that his grief was very great.*

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54. For when our hearts are pierced with violent grief from the love of God, the adversary fears to speak frowardly at random, for he sees that by provoking the fixed mind, he not only has no power to draw it to untoward ways, but that by its being stirred up, he may chance to lose even those whom he held bound.

55. Perhaps it may influence some that we have so made out these particulars, that what was well done by the friends should denote that which was to be ill done by heretics. Yet in this way it very often happens that a circumstance is virtue in the historical fact, evil in its meaning and import, just as an action is sometimes in the doing ground of condemnation, but in the writing, a prophecy of merit, which we shall the sooner shew, if we shall bring forward one testimony of Holy Writ to prove both points. For who, that hears of it, not only among believers but of unbelievers themselves also, does not utterly loathe this, that David walking upon his solar lusteth after Beershebah the wife of Uriah? Yet when he returns back from the battle, he bids him go home to wash his feet. Whereupon he answered at once, *The Ark of the Lord abideth in tents, shall I then take rest in my house?* [2 Sam. 11, 11] David received him to his own board, and delivers to him letters, through which he must die. But of whom does David walking upon his solar bear a figure, saving of Him, concerning Whom it is written, *He hath set his tabernacle in the sun?* [Ps. 19, 4. Vulg.] And what else is it to draw Beersheba to himself, but to join to Himself by a spiritual meaning the Law of the formal letter, which was united to a carnal people? For Beersheba is rendered ‘the seventh well,’ assuredly, in that through the knowledge of the Law, with spiritual grace infused, perfect wisdom is ministered unto us. And whom does Uriah denote, but the Jewish people, whose name is rendered by interpretation, ‘My light from God?’ Now forasmuch as the Jewish people is raised high by receiving the knowledge of the Law, it as it were glories ‘in the light of God.’ But David took from this Uriah his wife, and united her to himself, surely in that the strong-handed One, which is the rendering of ‘David,’ our Redeemer, shewed Himself in the flesh, whilst He made known that the Law spake in a spiritual sense concerning Himself, Hereby, that it was held by them after the letter, He proved it to be alienated from the Jewish people, and joined it to Himself, in that He declared Himself to be proclaimed by it. Yet David bids Uriah ‘go home to wash his feet,’ in that when the Lord came Incarnate, He bade the Jewish people turn back to the

home of the conscience, and wipe off with their tears the defilements of their doings, that it should understand the precepts of the Law in a spiritual sense, and finding the fount of Baptism after the grievous hardness of the commandments, have recourse to water after toil. But Uriah, who recalled to mind that the ark of the Lord was under tents, answered, that he could not enter into his house. As if the Jewish people said, I view the precepts of God in carnal sacrifices, and I need not to go back to the conscience in following a spiritual meaning. For he, as it were, declares 'the ark of the Lord to be under tents,' who views the precepts of God as designed for no other end than to shew forth a service of carnal sacrifice. Yet when he would not return home, David even bids him to his table, in that though the Jewish people disdain to return home into the conscience, yet the Redeemer at His coming avouches the commandments to be spiritual, saying, *For had ye believed Moses, ye would [Vulg. would perchance] have believed Me: for he wrote of Me.* [John 5, 46] And thus the Jewish people holds that Law, which tells of His Divinity, whereunto that people deigns not to give credence. And hence Uriah is sent to Joab with letters, according to which he is to be put to death, in that the Jewish people bears itself the Law, by whose convicting testimony it is to die. For whereas holding fast the commandments of the Law it strives hard to fulfil them, clearly it does itself deliver the judgment whereupon it is condemned. What, then, in respect of the fact, is more foul than David? What can be named purer than Uriah? What again in respect of the mystery can be discovered holier than David, what more faithless than Uriah? Since the one by guiltiness of life prophetically betokens innocence, and the other by innocence of life prophetically represents guilt. Wherefore it is with no inaptitude that by the things that are well done by the friends of Job we have represented to us those to be done amiss by heretics, in that it is the excellency of Holy Writ so to relate the past as to set forth the future; in such wise to vindicate the case in the fact, that it is against it in the mystery; so to condemn the things done, that they are commended to us as fit to be done in the way of mystery.

#### MORAL INTERPRETATION

56. So then as we have completed the allegorical mysteries, unravelling them piece by piece, let us now proceed to follow out the sense of the moral truth, hastily touching thereupon, for the mind hastens forward to make out the parts of greater difficulty, and if it is for long wrapped up in the plain parts, it is hindered from knocking as it were fit at those which are closed. Oftentimes our old enemy, after he has brought down upon our mind the conflict of temptation, retires for a time from his own contest, not to put an end to his wickedness, but that upon those hearts, which he has rendered secure by a respite, returning of a sudden, he may make his inroad the more easily and unexpectedly. It is hence that he returns again to try the blessed man, and demands pains on the head of him, whom nevertheless the Supreme Mercy while keeping fast yields up to him, saying, Ver. 6. *Behold, he is in thine hand: but save his life.*

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57. For He so forsakes us that He guards us, and so guards us that by the permitted case of temptation, He shews us our state of weakness. And he immediately *went forth from before the face of the Lord*, and by smiting him whom He had thus gotten he wounded him *from the sole of his foot even to his crown*. Thus, viz. in that when he receives permission, beginning with the least, and reaching even to the greater points, he as it were rends and pierces all the body of the mind [*corpus mentis*] with the temptations which he brings upon it, yet he does not attain to the smiting



of the soul [*animam*], in that deep at the bottom of all the thoughts of the heart, the interior purpose of our secret resolution holds out, in the midst of the very wounds of gratification which it receives, so that although the enjoyment may eat into the mind, yet it does not so bend the set intent of holy uprightness as to bring it to the very softness of consenting. Yet it is our duty to cleanse the mere wounds of enjoyment themselves by the sharp treatment of penance, and if aught that is dissolute springs up in the heart to refine it with the chastening hand of rigorous severity. And hence it is rightly added immediately,

Ver. 8. *And he took him a potsherd to scrape the humour withal.*

[xxx]

58. For what do we understand by the ‘potsherd,’ saving forcibleness of severity, and what by the ‘humour,’ save laxity of unlawful imaginations? And thus we are smitten, and ‘scrape off the humour with a potsherd,’ when after the defilements of unlawful thoughts, we cleanse ourselves by a sharp judgment. By the potsherd too we may understand the frailness of mortality. And then to ‘scrape the humour with a potsherd,’ is to ponder on the course and frailty of our mortal state, and to wipe off the rottenness of a wretched self-gratification. For when a man bethinks himself how soon the flesh returns to dust, he readily gets the better of that which originating in the flesh foully assails him in the interior. So, when bad thoughts arising from temptation flow into the mind, it is as if humour kept running from a wound. But the humour is soon cleansed away, if the frailty of our nature be taken up in the thought, like a potsherd in the hand.

59. For neither are these suggestions to be lightly esteemed, which though they may not draw us on so far as to the act, yet work in the mind in an unlawful way. It is hence that our Redeemer was come, as it were, ‘to scrape the humour from our wounds,’ when He said, *Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* [Matt. 5, 27. 28.] ‘The humour,’ therefore, ‘is wiped off,’ when sin is not only severed from the deed, but also from the thought. It is hence that Jerubbaal saw the Angel when he was winnowing corn from the chaff, at whose bidding he forthwith dressed a kid and set it upon a rock, and poured over it the broth of the flesh, which the Angel touched with a rod, and thereupon fire coming out of the rock consumed it. [Judg. 6, 11. &c.] For what else is it to beat corn with a rod, but to separate the grains of virtues from the chaff of vices, with an upright judgment? But to those that are thus employed the Angel presents himself, in that the Lord is more ready to communicate interior truths in proportion as men are more earnest in ridding themselves of external things. And he orders a kid to be killed, i.e. every appetite of the flesh to be sacrificed, and the flesh to be set upon a rock, and the broth thereof to be poured upon it. Whom else does the ‘rock’ represent, saving Him, of Whom it is said by Paul, *And that rock was Christ?* [1 Cor. 10, 4] We ‘set flesh then upon the rock,’ when in imitation of Christ we crucify our body. He too pours the juice of the flesh over it, who, in following the conversation of Christ, empties himself even of the mere thoughts of the flesh themselves. For ‘the broth’ of the dissolved flesh is in a manner ‘poured upon the rock,’ when the mind is emptied of the flow of carnal thoughts too. Yet the Angel directly touches it with a rod, in that the might of God’s succour never leaves our striving forsaken. And fire issues from the rock, and consumes the broth and the flesh, in that the Spirit, breathed upon us by the Redeemer, lights up the heart with so fierce a flame of compunction, that it consumes every thing in it that is unlawful either in deed or in thought. And therefore it is the same thing here ‘to scrape the humour

with a potsherd,' that it is there to 'pour the broth upon the rock.' For the perfect mind is ever eagerly on the watch, not only that it may refuse to do bad acts, but that it may even wipe off all that is become foul and soft in it, in the workings of imagination. But it often happens that war springs up from the very victory, so that when the impure thought is vanquished, the mind of the victor is struck by self-elation. Therefore it follows that the mind must be no otherwise elevated in purity, than that it should be heedfully brought under in humility. And hence, whereas it was said of the holy man, *And he took a potsherd, and scraped the humour withal*, it is forthwith fitly added, *And he sat down upon a dunghill*.

[xxxix]

60. For 'to sit down upon a dunghill' is for a man to entertain mean and abject notions of himself. For us to 'sit upon a dunghill,' is to carry back the eye of the mind, in a spirit of repentance, to those things which we have unlawfully committed, that when we see the dung of our sins before our eyes, we may bend low all that rises up in the mind of pride. He sits upon a dunghill, who regards his own weakness with earnest attention, and never lifts himself up for those good qualities, which he has received through grace. Did not Abraham sit by himself upon a dunghill, when he said, *Behold, now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes?* [Gen. 18, 27] For it is plain to see in what place he had set himself, who, at the very moment that he was speaking with God, reckoned himself to be 'dust and ashes.' If he then thus despises himself who is raised to the honour of converse with the Deity even, we should consider with earnest thoughts of heart with what woes they are destined to be stricken, who, while they never advance a step towards the highest things, are yet lifted up on the score of the least and lowest attainments. For there are some, who, when they do but little things, think great things of themselves. They lift their minds on high, and account themselves to excel other men in the deserts of virtue. For surely, these inwardly quit the dunghill of humility within themselves, and scale the heights of pride; herein following the steps of him, the first that elevated himself in his own eyes, and in elevating brought himself to the ground, following the steps of him, who was not content with that dignity of a created being, which he had received, saying, *I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God*. [Is. 14, 13] And it is hence that she, which is united to him by an evil alliance, even Babylon, i.e. 'the confused multitude of sinners,' says, *I am, and none else beside me, I shall not sit as a widow*. [Is. 47, 8] Whosoever then swells within him, has set himself on high by himself. Yet doth he sink himself so much the deeper below, in proportion as he scorns to think the lowest things of himself according to the truth. There are some too that labour not to do aught that is virtuous, yet when they see others commit sin, they fancy themselves righteous by comparison with them. For all hearts are not wounded by the same or a similar offence. For this one is entrapped by pride, while that perchance is overthrown by anger, and avarice is the sting of one, while luxury fires another. And it very often chances that he, who is brought down by pride, sees how another is inflamed with anger; and because anger does not speedily influence himself, he now reckons that he is better than his passionate neighbour, and is as it were lifted up on the score of his righteousness in his own eyes, in that he forgets to take account of the fault, by which he is more grievously enchained. And it very often happens that he who is mangled by avarice, beholds another plunged in the whirlpool of luxury, and because he sees himself to be a stranger to carnal pollution, he never heeds by what defilements of the spiritual life he is himself inwardly polluted; and while he considers well the evil in another, which he is himself without, he forgets to take account in his own case of that which he has; and so it is brought to pass, that when the mind to be

pronounced upon goes off to the cases of other men, it is deprived of the light of its own judgment, and so much the more cruelly vaunts itself against others' failings, in proportion as it is from negligence in ignorance of its own.

61. But, on the other hand, they that really desire to rise to the heights of virtue, whenever they hear of the faults of others, immediately recall the mind to their own; and the more they really bewail these last, so much the more rightly do they pronounce judgment on those others. Therefore, forasmuch as every elect person restrains himself in the consideration of his own frailty, it may be well said that the holy man in his sorrow sits down upon a dunghill. For he that really humbles himself as he goes on his way, marks with the eye of continued observation all the filth of sin wherewith he is beset. But we must know that it is in prosperity that the mind is oftenest touched with urgent temptations, yet that it sometimes happens that we at the same time undergo crosses without, and are wearied with the urgency of temptation within, so that both the scourge tortures the flesh, and yet suggestion of the flesh pours in upon the mind. And hence it is well, that after the many wounds that blessed Job received, we have yet further the words of his illadvising wife subjoined also, who says,

Ver. 9. *Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.*

[xxxii]

62. For the illadvising wife is the carnal thought goading the mind, since it often happens, as has been said above, that we are both harrassed with strokes without, and wearied with carnal promptings within. For it is hence that Jeremiah bewails, saying, *Abroad the sword bereaveth; at home there is as death.* [Lam. 1, 20] Since 'the sword bereaveth,' when vengeance outwardly smites and pierces us, and 'at home there is as death,' in that indeed he both undergoes the lash, and yet the conscience is not clear of the stains of temptation within. Hence David says, *Let them be as chaff before the wind, and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.* [Ps. 35, 5] For he that is caught by the blast of temptation in the heart, is lifted up like dust before the face of the wind; and when in the midst of these strokes the rigour of God smites them, what else is it, but the Angel of the Lord that persecutes them?

63. But these trials are carried on in the case of the reprobate in one way, and of the Elect in another. The hearts of the first sort are so tempted that they yield consent, and those of the last undergo temptations indeed, but offer resistance. The mind of the one is taken captive with a feeling of delight, and if at the moment that which is prompted amiss is displeasing, yet afterwards by deliberation it gives pleasure. But these so receive the darts of temptation, that they weary themselves in unceasing resistance, and if at any time the mind under temptation is hurried away to entertain a feeling of delight, yet they quickly blush at the very circumstance of their delight stealing upon them, and blame with unsparing censure all that they detect springing up in themselves of a carnal nature. Hence it is rightly added immediately,

Ver. 10. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

[xxxiii]

64. For it is meet that the holy mind restrain by spiritual correction whatever of a carnal nature within it utters rebellious muttering, that the flesh whether by speaking severe things may not draw it into impatience, nor yet by speaking smooth ones melt it to the looseness of lust. Therefore let manly censure, reproving the dictates of unlawful imaginations, hold hard the dissolute softness of what is base in us, by saying, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh*. And, on the other hand, let the consideration of the gifts repress the discontent of bitter thought, saying, *Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* And whoever desires to get the mastery of his vices, and goes forward to the eternal heights of inward recompense [*retributionis*] with the steps of a true purpose, the more he sees himself to be on every hand beset with the war of the vices, the more resolutely he arrays himself with the armour of the virtues, and fears the darts the less, in proportion as he defends his breast bravely against their assault.

65. Yet it very often happens, that whilst we are striving to stay ourselves in this fight of temptation by exalted virtues, certain vices cloak themselves to our eyes under the garb of virtues, and come to us as it were with a smooth face, but how adverse to us they are we perceive upon examination. And hence the friends of blessed Job as it were come together for the purpose of giving comfort, but they burst out into reviling, in that vices that plot our ruin assume the look of virtues, but strike us with hostile assault. For often immoderate anger desires to appear justice, and often dissolute remissness, mercy; often fear without precaution would seem humility, often unbridled pride, liberty. Thus the friends come to give consolation, but fall off into words of reproach, in that vices, cloaked under the guise of virtues, set out indeed with a smooth outside, but confound us by a bitter hostility. And it is rightly said,

Ver. 11. *For they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.*

[xxxiv]

66. For vices make an appointment together under the cloak of virtues; in that there are certain ones, which are banded together against us by a kind of agreement, such as pride and anger, remissness and fear. For anger is neighbour to pride, and remissness to cowardice. Those then come together by agreement, which are allied to one another in opposition to us, by a kind of kinship in iniquity; but if we acknowledge the toilsomeness of our captivity, if we grieve in our inmost soul from love of our eternal home, the sins that steal upon the inopportune joyful, will not be able to prevail against the opportunely sad. Hence it is well added,

Ver. 12. *And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept.*

[xxxv]

67. For the vices do not know us in our afflictions, in that so soon as they have knocked at the dejected heart, being reproved they start back, and they, which as it were knew us in our joy, because they made their way in, cannot know us in our sadness, in that they break their edge on our very rigidity itself. But our old enemy, the more he sees that he is himself caught out in them, and that with a good courage, cloaks them with so much the deeper disguise under the image of virtues; and hence it is added, *They lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.*

Ver. 18. *So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights.*

[xxxvi]

68. For by the weeping pity is betokened, discretion by the cutting of the garments, the affecting [al. 'effecting'] of good works by the dust upon the head, humility by the sitting. For sometimes the enemy in plotting against us feigns somewhat that is full of pity, that he may bring us down to an end of cruelty. As is the case, when he prevents a fault being corrected by chastisement, that that, which is not suppressed in this life, may be stricken with the fire of hell. Sometimes he presents the form of discretion to the eyes, and draws us on to snares of indiscretion, which happens, when at his instigation we as it were from prudence allow ourselves too much nourishment on account of our weakness, while we are imprudently raising against ourselves assaults of the flesh. Sometimes he counterfeits the affecting of good works, yet hereby entails upon us restlessness in labours, as it happens, when a man cannot remain quiet, and, as it were, fears to be judged for idleness. Sometimes he exhibits the form of humility, that he may steal away our affecting of the useful, as is the case when he declares to some that they are weaker and more useless than indeed they are, that whereas they look upon themselves as too unworthy, they may fear to administer the things wherein they might be able to benefit their neighbours.

69. But these vices which the old enemy hides under the semblance of virtues, are very minutely examined by the hand of compunction. For he that really grieves within, resolutely foredetermines what things are to be done outwardly, and what are not. For if the virtue of compunction moves us in our inward parts, all the clamouring of evil dictates is made mute; and hence it follows. *And none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.*

[xxxvii]

70. For if the heart feels true sorrow, the vices have no tongue against it. And when the life of uprightness is sought with an entire aim, the fruitless prompting of evil is closed up. But oftentimes if we brace ourselves with strong energy against the incitements of evil habits, we turn even those very evil habits to the account of virtue. For some are possessed by anger, but while they submit this to reason, they convert it into service rendered to holy zeal. Some are lifted up by pride. But whilst they bow down the mind to the fear of God, they change this into the free tone of unrestrained authority in defence of justice. Strength of the flesh is a snare to some; but whilst they bring under the body by practising works of mercy, from the same quarter, whence they were exposed to the goading of wickedness, they purchase the gains of pitifulness. And hence it is well that this blessed Job, after a multitude of conflicts, sacrifices a victim for his friends. For those whom he has for long borne as enemies by their strife, he one day makes fellow-countrymen by his sacrifice, in that whilst we turn all evil thoughts into virtues, bringing them into subjection, by the offering of the intention, we as it were change the hostile aims of temptation into friendly dispositions.

Let it suffice for us to have gone through these things in three volumes in a threefold method. For in the very beginning of this work we set firm the root of the tongue, as a provision against the bulk of the tree that should spring up, that we might afterwards produce the boughs of exposition according as the several places require.

## BOOK IV.

Wherein Gregory, having in the Preface set forth in few words that the letter of Scripture is at times at variance with itself, and that the imprecations of Job, as of Jeremiah and David, cannot be understood without absurdity according to the sound which they convey, explains the words of Job in historical, mystical, and moral sense, from the commencement of the third chapter to the twentieth verse of the same.

### THE PREFACE.

HE who looks to the text and does not acquaint himself with the sense of the holy Word, is not so much furnishing himself with instruction as bewildering himself in uncertainty, in that the literal words sometimes contradict themselves; but whilst by their oppositeness they stand at variance with themselves, they direct the reader to a truth that is to be understood. Thus, how is it that Solomon says, *There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink*; [Ecc. 2. 24] and adds not long after, *It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting*? [Ecc. 7, 2] Wherefore did he prefer mourning to feasting, who had before commended eating and drinking? for if by preference it be good 'to eat and drink,' undoubtedly it should be a much better thing to hasten to the house of mirth than to the house of mourning. Hence it is that he says again, *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth*; [Ecc. 11, 9] yet adds a little after, *for youth and pleasure are vanity*. [ver. 10. Vulg.] What does this mean, that he should either first enjoin practices that are reprehensible, or afterwards reprehend practices that he has enjoined, but that by the literal words themselves he implies that he, who finds difficulty in the outward form, should consider the truth to be understood, which same import of truth, while it is sought with humility of heart, is penetrated by continuance in reading. For as we see the face of strange persons, and know nothing of their hearts, but if we are joined to them in familiar communication, by frequency of conversation we even trace their very thoughts; so when in Holy Writ the historical narration alone is regarded, nothing more than the face is seen. But if we unite ourselves to it with frequent assiduity, then indeed we penetrate its meaning, as if by the effect of a familiar intercourse. For whilst we gather various truths from various parts, we easily see in the words thereof that what they import is one thing, what they sound like is another. But everyone proves a stranger to the knowledge of it, in proportion as he is tied down to its mere outside.

[ii]

See here, for instance, in that blessed Job is described as having cursed his day, and said, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived*; [Job 3, 3] if we look no further than the surface, what can we find more reprehensible than these words? But who does not know that the day, in which he was born, could not at that time be in existence, for it is the condition of time to have no stay of continuance. For whereas by way of the future it is ever tending to be, so in going out by the past, it is ever hastening not to be. Wherefore then should one so great curse that, which he is not ignorant hath no existence? But perchance it may be said, that the magnitude of his virtue is seen from hence, that he, being disturbed by

tribulation, imprecates a curse upon that, which it is evident has no existence at all. But this notion is set aside the moment the reasonableness of the thing is regarded, for if the object existed, which he cursed, it was a mischievous curse; but if it had no being, it was an idle one: but whoso is filled with His Spirit, *Who declareth, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment*; [Matt. 12, 36] fears to be guilty of what is idle, even as of what is mischievous. To this sentence it is further added, *Let that day be turned into darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let it be enfolded in bitterness. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein: let it look for light, and have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day.* How is it that that day, which he knows to have gone by with the flight of time, is said 'to be turned into darkness?' And whereas it is plain that it has no existence, wherefore is it wished for that 'the shadow of death might stain it?' or what cloud dwells upon it, what envelopement of bitterness enfolds it? or what darkness seizes upon that night, which no stay holds in being? Or how is it desired that that may be solitary, which in passing away had already become nought? Or how does that look for the light, which both lacks perception, and doth not continue in any stay of its own self? To these words he yet further adds, *Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck? For now I should have lain still and have been quiet, I should have slept, and been at rest.* [Job 3, 11-13]

[iii]

If he had died at once from the womb, would he have got by this very destruction a title to a reward? Do abortive children enjoy eternal rest? For every man that is not absolved by the water of regeneration, is tied and bound by the guilt of the original bond. But that which the water of Baptism avails for with us, this either faith alone did of old in behalf of infants, or, for those of riper years, the virtue of sacrifice, or, for all that came of the stock of Abraham, the mystery of circumcision. For that every living being is conceived in the guilt of our first parent the Prophet witnesses, saying, *And in sin hath my mother conceived me.* [Ps. 51, 5] And that he who is not washed in the water of salvation, does not lose the punishment of original sin, Truth plainly declares by Itself in these words, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* [John 3, 5] How is it then, that he wishes that he had 'died in the womb,' and that he believes that he might have had rest by the boon of that death, whereas it is clear that the rest of life could in no wise be for him, if the Sacraments of Divine knowledge had in no wise set him free from the guilt of original sin? He yet further adds with whom he might have rested, saying, *With kings and counsellors of the earth which built desolate [Vulg. solitudines] places for themselves.* Who does not know that *the kings and counsellors of the earth* are herein far removed from 'solitude,' that they are close pressed with innumerable throngs of followers? and with what difficulty do they advance to rest, who are bound in with the tightened knots of such multifarious concerns! As Scripture witnesses, where it says, *But mighty men shall be mightily tormented.* [Wisd. 6, 6] Hence Truth utters these words in the Gospel; *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much be required.* [Luke 12, 48] He implies besides, whom he would have had as fellows in that rest, in the words, *Or with princes that had gold, that filled their houses with silver.* [Matt. 19, 23] It is a rare thing for them that have gold to advance to rest, seeing that Truth saith by Itself, *They that have riches shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Mark 10, 23] For what joys in the other life can they look for, who here pant after increase of riches? Yet that our Redeemer

might further shew this event to be most rare, and only possible by the supernatural agency of God, He saith, *With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.* [Matt. 19, 26] Therefore because these words are, on the surface, at variance with reason, the letter itself thereby points out, that in those words the Saint delivers nothing after the letter.

[iv]

But if we shall first examine the nature of other curses in Holy Writ, we may the more perfectly trace out the import of this one, which was uttered by the mouth of blessed Job. For how is it that David, who to those that rewarded him evil, returned it not again, upon Saul and Jonathan falling in war, curses the mountains of Gilboa in the following words, *Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of Saul is vilely cast away, as though he had not been anointed with oil?* [2 Sam. 1, 21] How is it that Jeremiah, seeing that his preaching was hindered by the hardness of his hearers, utters a curse, saying, *Cursed be the man, who brought tidings to my father, saying, A man child is born unto thee?* [Jer. 20. 15] What then did the mountains of Gilboa offend when Saul died, that neither dew nor rain should fall on them, and that the words of his sentence against them should make them barren of all produce of verdure? Why, forasmuch as Gilboa is by interpretation ‘running down,’ while by Saul’s anointing and dying, the death of our Mediator is set forth, by the mountains of Gilboa we have no unfit representation of the uplifted hearts of the Jews, who, while they let themselves run down in the pursuit of the desires of this world, were mingled together in the death of Christ, i.e. of ‘the Anointed.’ And because in them the anointed King dies the death of the body, they too are left dry of all the dew of grace; of whom also it is well said, *that they cannot be fields of first fruits.* Because the high minds of the Hebrews bear no ‘first fruits;’ in that at the coming of our Redeemer, persisting for the most part in unfaithfulness, they would not follow the first beginnings of the faith; for Holy Church, which for her first fruits was enriched with the multitude of the Gentiles, scarcely at the end of the world will receive into her bosom the Jews, whom she may find, and gathering none but the last, will put them as the remnant of her fruits. Of which very remnant Isaiah hath these words, *For though thy people Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return.* [Is. 10, 22] However, the mountains of Gilboa may for this reason be cursed by the Prophet’s mouth, that whilst, the land being dried up, no fruit is produced, the possessors of the land might be stricken with the woe of that barrenness, so that they might themselves receive the sentence of the curse, who had obtained as the just reward of their iniquities to have the death of the King take place among them. But how is it that, from the lips of the Prophet, that man received the sentence of cursing, who brought to his father the tidings of his birth? Doubtless this is so much the more full of deeper mystery within, as it lacks human reason without. For perchance, if it had sounded at all reasonable without, we should never have been kindled to the pursuit of the interior meaning; and thus he the more fully implies something within, that he shews nothing that is reasonable without. For though the Prophet had come into this world from his mother’s womb to be the subject of affliction, in what did the messenger of his birth do wrong? But what does the person of the Prophet represent ‘carried hither and thither [*fluctuantis*],’ except the mutability of man, which came by the dues of punishment, is thereby signified? and what is expressed by his ‘father’ but this world whereof we are born? And who is that man, who ‘bring tidings of our birth to our father,’ saving our old enemy, who, when he views us fluctuating in our thoughts, prompts the evil minded, who by virtue of this world’s authority have the preeminence, to persuading us to our undoing, and who, when he has beheld us doing acts of weakness, commends these with applause



[*favoribus*] as brave, and tells as it were of male children being born, when he gives joy that we have turned out corrupters of the truth by lying? He gives tidings to the father that a man child is born, when he shews the world him, whom he has prevailed with, turned into a corrupter of innocence. For when it is said to any one committing a sin or acting proudly, 'Thou hast acted like a man,' what else is this than that a man child is told of in the world? Justly then is the man cursed, who brings tidings of the birth of a man child; because his tidings betoken the damnable joy of our corrupter. Thus by these imprecations of Holy Scripture we learn what, in the case of blessed Job, we are to look for in his words of imprecation, lest he, whom God rewards after these wounds and these words, should be presumptuously condemned by the mistaken reader for his words. As then we have in some sort cleared the points, which were to be the objects of our enquiry in the preface, let us now proceed to discuss and to follow on the words of the historical form.

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Ver. 1, 2, 3. *After this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day, And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born.*

[i]

1. That which is here said, *He opened his mouth*, must not be gone into negligently. For by the things which Holy Scripture premises but slightly, we are apprised that what comes after is to be expected with reverence. For as we know nothing what vessels that are closed contain inside, but when the mouth of the vessels is opened, we discover what is contained within; so the hearts of the Saints, which so long as their mouth is closed are hidden, when their mouth is opened, are disclosed to view. And when they disclose their thoughts, they are said to open their mouth, that with the full bent of our mind we may hasten to find out, as in vessels that are set open, what it is that they contain, and to refresh ourselves with their inmost fragrance. And hence when the Lord was about to utter His sublime precepts on the Mount, the words precede, *And He opened His mouth, and taught them*; [Matt. 5, 2] though in that place this too should be taken as the meaning, that He then opened His own mouth in delivering precepts, wherein He had long while opened the mouths of the Prophets. But it requires very great nicety in considering the expression, *After this*, namely, in order that the excellence of all that is done may be perceived in its true light by the time. For first we have described the wasting of his substance, the destruction of his children, the pain of his wounds, the persuasions of his wife, the coming of his friends, who are related to have rent their garments, to have shed tears with loud cries, to have sprinkled their heads with dust, and to have sat upon the ground for long in silence, and afterwards it is added, *After this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day*; clearly that from the very order of the account, duly weighed, it might be concluded that he could never have uttered a curse in a spirit of impatience, who broke forth into a voice of cursing whilst his friends were as yet silent. For if he had cursed under the influence of passion, doubtless upon hearing of the loss of his substance, and upon hearing the death of his sons, his grief would have prompted him to curse. But what he then said, we have heard before. For he said, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*. [Job 1, 21] Again, if he had cursed under the impulse of passion, he might well have uttered a curse when he was stricken in his body, or when he was mischievously advised by his wife. But what answer he then gave we have already learnt; for he says, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?* [Job 2, 10] But after this it is set forth that his friends

arrive, shed tears, seat themselves, keep silence, whereupon this is immediately subjoined, that he is said to have *cursed his day*. It is, then, too great an inconsistency to imagine that it was from impatience that he broke out into a voice of cursing, no man setting him on, no man driving him thereto, when we know that amidst the loss of all his goods, and the death of his children, amidst bodily afflictions, the evil counsels of his wife, he only gave great acknowledgments to his Creator with a humble mind. It is plain, then, with what feelings he spoke this when he was at rest, who even when stricken uttered such a strain of praise to God. For afterwards, when no longer stricken, he could not be guilty of pride, whom even his pain under the rod only shewed to be full of humility. But as we know for certain that holy Scripture forbids cursing, how can we say that that is sometimes done aright, which yet we know to be forbidden by the same Holy Writ?

2. But be it known that Holy Writ makes mention of cursing in two ways, namely, of one sort of curse which it commands, another sort which it condemns. For a curse is uttered one way by the decision of justice, in another way by the malice of revenge. Thus a curse was pronounced by the decree of justice upon the first man himself, when he fell into sin, and heard the words, *Cursed is the ground for thy sake*. [Gen. 3, 17] A curse is pronounced by decree of justice, when it is said to Abraham, *I will curse them that curse thee*. Again, forasmuch as a curse may be uttered, not by award of justice, but by the malice of revenge, we have this admonition from the voice of Paul the Apostle in his preaching, where he says, *Bless, and curse not*; [Rom. 12, 14] and again, *nor revilers shall inherit the kingdom of God*. [1 Cor. 6, 10] So then God is said to curse, and yet man is forbidden to curse, because what man does from the malice of revenge, God only does in the exactness and perfection of justice. But when holy men deliver a sentence of cursing, they do not break forth therein from the wish of revenge, but in the strictness of justice, for they behold God's exact judgment within, and they perceive that they are bound to smite evils arising without with a curse; and are guilty of no sin in cursing, in the same degree that they are not at variance with the interior judgment.

It is hence that Peter flung back the sentence of a curse upon Simon when he offered him money, in the words, *May thy money perish with thee*; [Acts 8, 20] for he who said, not *does*, but *may*, shewed that he spoke this, not in the indicative, but in the optative mood. Hence Elias said to the two captains of fifty that came to him, *If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee*. [2 Kings 1, 10] And upon what reasonable grounds of truth the sentences of either of the two were established, the issue of the case demonstrated. For both Simon perished in eternal ruin, and fire descending from above consumed the two captains of fifty. Thus the subsequent miracle [*virtus*] testifies with what mind the sentence of the curse is pronounced. For when both the innocence of him that curseth remains, and he that is cursed is by that curse swallowed up to the extent of utter destruction, from the end of either side we collect, that the sentence is taken up and launched against the offender from the sole Judge of what is within.

3. Therefore if we weigh with exactness the words of blessed Job, his cursing cometh not of the malice of one guilty of sin, but of the integrity of a judge, not of one agitated by passion, but of one sober in instruction; for he, who in cursing pronounced such righteous sentence, did not give way to the evil of perturbation of mind, but dispensed the dictates of wisdom. For, in fact, he saw his friends weeping and wailing, he saw them rending their garments, he saw how they had sprinkled their heads with dust, he saw them struck dumb at the thought of his affliction; and the Saint perceived that those whose hearts were set upon temporal prosperity, took him, by a comparison

with their own feelings, for one brokenhearted with his temporal adversity. He considered that they would never be weeping for him in despair, who was stricken with a transient ill, except they had themselves withdrawn their soul in despair from the hope of inward soundness; and while he outwardly burst forth into the voice of grief, he shewed to persons inwardly wounded the virtue of a healing medicine, saying,

Ver. 3. *Let the day perish wherein was born.*

4. For what is to be understood by 'the day of our birth,' save the whole period of our mortal state? So long as this keeps us fast in the corruptions of this our mutable state of being, the unchangeableness of eternity does not appear to us. He, then, who already beholds the day of eternity, endures with difficulty the day of his mortal being. And observe, he saith not, 'Let the day perish wherein I was created,' but, let the day perish wherein I was born. For man was created in a day of righteousness, but now he is born in a time of guilt; for Adam was created, but Cain was the first man that was born. What then is it to curse the day of his birth, but to say plainly, 'May the day of change perish, and the light of eternity burst forth?'

5. But inasmuch as we are used to bid perish in two ways, (for it is in one way that we bid perish, when we desire to any thing that it should no longer be, and in another way that we bid it perish, when we desire that it should be ill therewith,) the words that are added concerning this day, *Let a cloud dwell upon it: let it be enveloped in bitterness* [Vulg.]; clearly shew, that he wishes not this day to perish in such sort as not to be, but so that it may go ill with it; for that can never be 'enveloped in bitterness,' which is so wholly destroyed as not to be at all. Now this period of our mutable condition is not one day to perish, (i.e. to pass away,) in such a way, as to be in an evil plight, but so as to cease to be altogether, as the Angel bears witness in Holy Writ, saying, *By Him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer.* [Rev. 10, 6] For though the Prophet hath it, *Their time shall endure for ever* [Ps. 81, 15], yet because time comes to an end with every moment, he designated their coming to an end by the name of 'time,' shewing that without every way ending they come to an end, that are severed from the joys of the inward Vision. Therefore because this period of our mortal condition does not so perish as to be in evil plight, but so as not to be at all, we must enquire what it means that he desires it may perish, not so that it may not be, but that it may be in ill condition. Now a human soul, or an Angelic spirit, is in such sort immortal, that it is capable of dying, in such sort mortal, that it can never die. For of living happily, it is deprived whether by sin or by punishment; but its essential living it never loses, either by sin or punishment: it ceases from a mode of living, but it is not even by dying susceptible of an end to every mode of being. So that I might say in a word, that it is both immortally mortal, and mortally immortal. Whereas then he wishes that the day may perish, and soon after it is said that it is 'to be enveloped in bitterness,' whom should we think the holy man would express by the name of 'day,' except the Apostate Spirit, who in dying subsists in the life of essential being? Whom destruction does not withdraw from life, in that in the midst of pains eternal an immortal death kills, while it preserves, him whose perishing, fallen as he is already from the glory of his state of bliss, is still longed for no otherwise than that being held back by the punishments, which he deserves, he may lose even the liberty of tempting.

6. Yea, he presents himself as the day, in that he allures by prosperity; and his end is in the blackness of night, for that he leads to adversity; thus he displayed day when he said, *In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods;* [Gen. 3, 5] but he brought on

night, when he led to the blackness of mortality; the day, therefore, is the proffered promise of better things, but the night is the very manifested experience of evils. The old enemy is the day, as by nature created good, but he is the night, as by his own deserts sunk down into darkness. He is day, when by promising good things he disguises himself as an Angel of light to the eyes of men, as Paul witnesses, saying, *For Satan himself is transformed as an angel of light*; [2 Cor. 11, 14] but he is night, when he obscures the minds of those that consent to him with the darkness of error. Well then may the holy man, who in his own sorrows bewailed the case of the whole human race, and who viewed nothing in any wise special to himself in his own special affliction, well may he recal to mind the original cause of sin, and soften the pain of the infliction by considering its justice. Let him look at man, and see whence and whither he has fallen, and exclaim, *Let the day perish wherein he was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived*. As if he said in plain words, ‘Let the hope perish, which the apostate Angel held forth, who, disguising himself as day, shone forth with the promise of a divine nature, but yet again shewing himself as night, brought a cloud over the light of our immortal nature. Let our old enemy perish, who displayed the light of promises, and bestowed the darkness of sin; who as it were presented himself as day by his flattery, but led us to a night of utter darkness by sealing our hearts with blindness.’ It proceeds;

Ver. 4. *Let that day be turned into darkness*.

[ii]

7. This day shines as it were in the hearts of men, when the persuasions of his wickedness are thought to be for our good, and what they are within is never seen; but when his wickedness is seen as it is, the day of false promises is as it were dimmed by a kind of darkness spread before the eyes of our judgment, in this respect, that such as he is in intrinsic worth, such he is perceived to be in his beguilement, and so ‘the day becomes darkness,’ when we take as adverse even the very things, which he holds out as advantageous whilst persuading them. ‘The day becomes darkness,’ when our old enemy, even when lurking under the cloak of his blandishments, is perceived by us to be such as he is when ravaging after us, that he may never mock us with feigned prosperity, as though by the light of day, dragging us by real misery to the darkness of sin. It proceeds;  
*Let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it*.

[iii]

8. As Almighty God was able to create good things out of nothing, so, when He would, He also restored the good things that were lost, by the mystery of His Incarnation. Now he had made two creations to contemplate Himself, viz. the Angelic and the human, but Pride smote both, and dashed them from the erect station of native uprightness. But one had the clothing of the flesh, the other bore no infirmity derived from the flesh. For an angelical being is spirit alone, but man is both spirit and flesh. Therefore when the Creator took compassion to work redemption, it was meet that He should bring back to Himself that creature, which, in the commission of sin, plainly had something of infirmity; and it was also meet that the apostate Angel should be driven down to a farther depth, in proportion as he, when he fell from resoluteness in standing fast, carried about him no infirmity of the flesh. And hence the Psalmist, when he was telling of the Redeemer's compassionating mankind, at the same time justly set forth the cause itself of His mercy, in these words, *And he remembered that they were but flesh* [Ps. 78, 39]. As if he said, ‘Whereas He beheld

their infirmities, so He would not punish their offences with severity.’ There is yet another respect wherein it was both fitting that man when lost should be recovered, and impossible for the spirit that set himself up to be recovered, namely, in that the Angel fell by his own wickedness, but the wickedness of another brought man down. Forasmuch then as mankind is brought to the light of repentance by the coming of the Redeemer, but the apostate Angel is not recalled by any hope of pardon, or with any amendment of conversion, to the light of a restored estate, it may well be said, *Let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.* As though it were plainly expressed, ‘For that he hath himself brought on the darkness, let him bear without end what himself has made, nor let him ever recover the light of his former condition, since he parted with it even without being persuaded thereto.’ It goes on;  
*Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it.*

[iv]

9. By ‘the shadow of death,’ we must understand ‘oblivion,’ for as death ends life, so oblivion puts an end to memory. As therefore the apostate Angel is delivered over to eternal oblivion, he is overclouded with the shadow of death. Therefore let him say, *Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it*; i.e. ‘So let him be overwhelmed with the blindness of error, that he never more rise up again to the light of repentance by recollection of God’s regard. The words follow;  
*Let a cloud dwell upon it [Vulg.]: and let it be enveloped in bitterness.*

[v]

10. It is one thing that our old enemy suffers now, bound by the chains of his own wickedness, and another that he will have to suffer at the end. For in that he is fallen from the rank of the interior light, he now confounds himself within with the darkness of error; and hereafter he is involved in bitterness, in that by desert of a voluntary blindness, he is tortured with the eternal torments of hell. Let it be said then, ‘What is it that he, who has lost the calm of the light interior, now endures as the foretaste of his final punishment? *Let a cloud dwell upon it.* Moreover let that subsequent doom be added also, which preys upon him without end.’ *Let him be folded up in bitterness*; for every thing folded up, shews, as it were, no end any where, for as it shews not where it begins, so neither does it discover where it leaves off. The old enemy then is said to be folded up in bitterness, in that not only every kind of punishment, but punishment too without end or limit awaits his Pride; which same doom then receives its beginning when the righteous Judge cometh at the last Judgment; and hence it is well added,  
Ver. 6. *As for that night, let a dark whirlwind seize upon it.*

[vi]

11. For it is written, *Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him.* [Ps. 50, 3] Thus [Vulg. *tenebrosusturbo*] *a dark whirlwind seizes upon that night*, in that the apostate Angel is by that fearful tempest carried off from before the strict Judge to suffer eternal woe; thus this night is seized by a whirlwind, in that his blind Pride is smitten with a strict visitation. It goes on;  
*Let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.*

[vii]

12. By year we understand not inapplicably the preaching of supreme grace. For as in a year the period is completed by a connected series of days, so in heavenly grace is a complex life of virtue made complete. By a year too we may understand the multitude of the redeemed. For as the year is produced by a number of days, so by the assemblage of all the righteous there results that countless sum of the Elect. Now Isaiah foretells this year of a completed multitude, in these words; *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because the Lord hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord* [Is. 61, 1]. For 'the acceptable year of the Lord is proclaimed,' in that the future multitude of the faithful is foretold as destined to be illumined with the light of truth. Now what is meant by 'the days,' but the several minds of the Elect? What by the months, but their several Churches, which constitute one Catholic Church? *So then let not that night be joined unto the days of the year, neither let it come into the number of the months.* For our old enemy, hemmed in with the darkness of his pride, sees indeed the coming of the Redeemer, but never returns to pardon with the Elect. And hence it is written, *For verily He took not on Him the nature of Angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham* [Heb. 2, 16]. For it was on this account that our Redeemer was made not Angel, but Man, because He must needs be made of the same nature as that which He redeemed, that He might at once let go the lost angel, by not taking his nature, and restore man, by taking his nature in Himself. These days, which abide in the interior light, may also be taken for the angelic spirits, and the months, for their orders and dignities. For every single spirit, in that he shines, is a 'day,' but as they are distinguished by certain set dignities, so that there are some that are Thrones, some Dominions, some Principalities, and some Powers, according to this distribution of ranks, they are entitled 'months.' But forasmuch as our old enemy is never brought back to merit light, and is never restored to the order of the ranks above, he is neither reckoned in the days of the year, nor in the months. For the blindness of the pride that he has been guilty of is so settled upon him, that he no more returns to those heavenly ranks of interior brightness. He no longer now mixes with the ranks of light that stand firm and erect, for that, in due of his own darkness, he is ever borne downwards to the depth. And for that he remains for ever an alien to the company of that heavenly land, it is yet further justly added,  
Ver. 7. *Lo, let that night be solitary, let it be worthy of no praise.*

[viii]

13. That night is made solitary, in that it is divided by an eternal separation from the company of the land above. Yet this may be also taken in another sense, viz. that he loses man, whom he had made his fellow in ruin, and that the enemy perishes alone together with his body [i.e. the wicked], while many that he had destroyed are restored by the Redeemer's grace. The night then is made solitary, when they that are Elect being raised up, our old enemy is made over alone to the eternal flames of hell. And it is well said, *Let it be worthy of no praise.* For when mankind, encompassed with the darkness of error, took stones for gods, in this, that they worshipped idols, what else did they but praise the deeds of their seducer? Hence Paul rightly remarks, *We know that an idol is nothing. But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils.* [1 Cor. 8, 4; 10, 20] How else then is it with those that have bowed themselves to the worship of idols, but that they have 'praised the darkness of night?' But, lo! we see now that that night is known to be

unworthy 'of any praise,' since now the worship of idols is condemned by the human race redeemed; and that 'night is left solitary,' in that there is none that goeth with the damned apostate spirit to suffer torments. It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *Let them curse it that curse the day, that are ready to rouse up Leviathan.*

[ix]

14. In the old translation it is not so written, but, *Let him curse it that hath cursed the day, even him who shall take the great whale* [so LXX]. By which words it is clearly shewn, that the destruction of Antichrist, to be at the end of the world, is foreseen by the holy man. For the evil spirit, who by rights is night, at the end of the world passes himself for the day, in that he shews himself to men as God, while he takes to himself deceitfully the brightness of the Deity, *and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped*. [2 Thess. 2, 4] The same therefore that curseth the day, curseth the night; in that He at this present time destroys his wickedness, Who will then by the light of His coming also extinguish the power of his strength. And hence it is well subjoined, *Who will take the great whale*. For the strength of this whale is taken as a prey in the water, in that the wiliness of our old enemy is overcome by the Sacrament of Baptism.

15. But that which in the Old Translation is spoken of the Author of all things, in this translation, which we get from the Hebrew and Arabian tongues, is related of His elect Angels. For it is of them that it is said, *Let them curse it that curse the day*. For that spirit in his pride desired to pass himself for day even with the Angelic Powers, at that time when as though in the power of the Deity he exalted himself above the rest, and drew after him such countless legions to destruction. But they, truly, who with humble spirits stood firm in the Author of their being, when they saw there was night in his perverse ways; trod under foot the day of his brightness by thinking humbly of themselves, who do now point out to us the darkness of his disguise, and shew us how we should condemn his false glare. So let it be said of the night of darkness, which blinds the eyes of human frailty; *Let them curse it that curse the day*; i.e. 'Let those elect Spirits by condemning denounce the darkness of his erring ways, who see the grandeur of his shining already from the first a deceit.' And it is well added, *Who are ready to rouse up* [Vulg. thus] *Leviathan*. For 'Leviathan' is interpreted to be 'their addition.' Whose 'addition,' then, but the 'addition' of men? And it is properly styled 'their addition,' for since by his evil suggestion he brought into the world the first sin, he never ceases to add to it day by day by prompting to worse things.

Or indeed it is in reproach that he is called Leviathan, i.e. styled 'the addition of men.' For he found them immortal in Paradise, but by promising the Divine nature to immortal beings, he as it were pledged himself to add somewhat to them beyond what they were. But whilst with flattering lips he declared that he would give what they had not, he robbed them cunningly even of what they had. And hence the [al. The Lord by the P.] Prophet describes this same Leviathan in these words, *Leviathan, the bar-serpent* [Vulg. *serpentem vectem*]: *even Leviathan that crooked serpent*. For this Leviathan in the thing, which he engaged to add to man, crept nigh to him with tortuous windings; for while he falsely promised things impossible, he really stole away even those which were possible, But we must enquire why he that had spoken of 'a serpent,' subjoining in that very place the epithet 'crooked,' inserted the word 'bar,' except perhaps that in the flexibility of the serpent we have a yielding softness, and in 'the bar,' the hardness of an obstinate nature. In order

then to mark him to be both hard and soft, he both calls him 'a bar' and 'a serpent.' For by his malicious nature he is hard, and by his flatteries he is soft; so he is called 'a bar [E.V. *Piercing*],' in that he strikes even to death; and 'a serpent,' in that he insinuates himself softly by deceitful acts.

16. Now this Leviathan at this present time elect Spirits of the Angelic host imprison close in the bottomless pit. Whence it is written, *And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand; and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years; [Rev. 20, 1-3]* and cast him into the bottomless pit. Yet at the end of the world they call him back to more open conflicts, and let him loose against us in all his power. And hence it is written again in the same place; *Till the thousand years should be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed.* For that apostate angel, whereas he was created so that he shone preeminent among all the other legions of the Angels, fell so low by setting himself up, that he is now prostrated beneath the rule of the orders of Angels that stand erect, whether that being put in chains by them, as they minister to our welfare, he should now lie buried from sight, or that they at that time setting him free for our probation, he should be let loose to put forth all his power against us. Therefore, because the proud apostate Spirit is restrained by those elect Spirits, who being humble would not follow him, and, they being the executioners, it is ordered, that he shall one day be recalled for the purpose of an open conflict, that he may be utterly destroyed, let it be well said, who are ready to rouse up Leviathan; but forasmuch as the artful adversary is not yet raised to wage open war, let him shew how that night now by hidden influences overshadows the minds of some men. It follows;  
Ver. 9. *Let the stars be darkened with the shadow thereof.*

[x]

17. In Holy Scripture by the title of stars we have set forth sometimes the righteousness of the Saints which shineth in the darkness of this life, and sometimes the false pretence of hypocrites, who display all the good that they do, that they may win the praise of men; for if well doers were not stars, Paul would never say to his disciples, *In the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation, among whom ye shine like lights in the world.* [Phil. 2, 15] Again, if among those that seem to act aright, there were not some that sought by their conduct to win the reward of man's esteem, John would never have seen stars falling from heaven, where he says, *The dragon put forth his tail, and drew the third part of the stars of heaven.* [Rev. 12, 4] Now a portion of the stars is drawn by the dragon's tail, in that, in the last efforts of Antichrist to win men, some that appear to shine will be carried off. For to draw the stars of heaven to the earth is by the love of earth to involve those in the froward ways of open error, who seem to be devoted to the pursuit of the heavenly life. For there are that as it were shine before the eyes of men by extraordinary deeds; but forasmuch as these very deeds are not the offspring of a pure heart, being struck blind in their secret thoughts, they are clouded with the darkness of this night, and these often lose the more outward deeds, which they do not practise with any purity of heart. And so because the night is permitted to prevail, whenever even amidst good works the purpose of the heart is not cleansed, let it be said with justice, *Let the stars be dark with the shadow thereof;* i.e. 'let the dark malice of our old enemy prevail against those who in the sight of men shew as bright by good works, and that light of praise, which in the eye of man's judgment they had taken, let them lay aside;' for they are 'overshadowed with the darkness of night,' when their life is brought to shame by open error, so



that verily they may also appear outwardly such in practice, as they do not shrink from appearing to the Divine eye in their secret hearts. It proceeds;

Ver. 9. *Let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day.*

[xi]

18. In the Gospel Truth declares, *I am the light of the world*. [John 8, 12] Now as this same Saviour of us men is one Person with the assembly of the good, for He is Himself the Head of the Body, and we all are the Body of this Head, so our old enemy is one person with the whole company of the damned; in that he as a head out-tops them all in iniquity, and they, whilst they minister in the things he prompts, hold fast to him like a body joined below to the head. And so it is meet that all that is said of this night, i.e. of our old enemy, should be applied to his body, i.e. to all wicked persons. Wherefore because our Redeemer is the light of mankind, how is it that it is said of this night, *Let it look for light, and have none*; but that there are some, who exhibit themselves as maintaining by words that faith, which they undo by works? Of whom Paul saith, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him*; [Tit. 1, 16] with these, indeed, either the things which they do are bad, or they follow after good deeds with no good heart. For they do not seek everlasting rewards as the fruit of their actions, but transitory partiality. And yet, because they hear themselves praised as Saints, they believe themselves to be really Saints, and in proportion as they account themselves unblameable according to the esteem they are in with numbers, they await in greater security the Day of strict account. Of whom the Prophet well says, *Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord*. [Amos 5, 18] To these blessed Job utters the sentence due to them, saying in the temper of one foretelling the thing, and not as the wish of one that desired it, *Let it look for light, but have none*. For that night, I mean the adversary of darkness, in his members doth look for the light, but seeth none; in that whether it be they who retain the faith without works, these, trusting that they may be saved at the final Judgment by right of the same faith, will find their hope prove vain, because by their life they have undone the faith, which in the confession of the lips they have maintained; or they, who for the sake of human applause make a display of themselves in doing well, they vainly look for a reward of their good deeds at the hand of the Judge, when He cometh; for that whereas they do them out of regard to the notoriety of praise, they have already had their reward from the lips of men. As the Truth testifies, Which saith, *Verily I say unto you, they have their reward* [Matt. 6, 2. 5.]; and here it is justly added, *Neither let it see the dawning of the day*.

19. For the dawn is the title of the Church, which is changed from the darkness of its sins into the light of righteousness. And hence the Spouse, admiring her in the Song of Solomon, saith, *Who is she that goeth forth as the morning arising?* [Cant. 6, 10] for like the dawn doth the Church of 'the Elect arise, in that she quits the darkness of her former iniquity, and converts herself into the radiance of new light. Therefore in that light, which is manifested at the coming of the strict Judge, the body of our enemy when condemned seeth no dayspring of the rising dawn, in that when the strict Judge shall come, every sinner, being overlaid with the blackness of his own deserts, knows not with what wondrous splendour Holy Church rises into the interior light of the heart. For then the mind of the Elect is transported on high, to be illuminated with the rays of the Divine. Nature, and in the degree that it is penetrated with the light of that Countenance, it is lifted above itself in the refulgence of grace. Then doth Holy Church become a full dawn, when she parts wholly and for ever with the darkness of her state of mortality and ignorance. Thus at the Judgment she is still

the dawn, but in the Kingdom she is become the day. For though together with the renewal of our bodies she already begins to behold the light at the Judgment, yet her vision thereof is more fully consummated in the Kingdom. Thus the *rising of the dawn* is the commencement of the Church in light, which the reprobate can never see, because they are closed in upon and forced down to darkness by the weight of their evil deeds from the sight of the Righteous Judge. And hence it is rightly said by the Prophet, *Let the wicked be taken out of the way, that he see not the glory of God.* [Is. 26, 10. LXX] It is hence that these words are uttered by the Psalmist concerning this dawn, *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy Presence from the pride of men.* [Ps. 31, 20] For every Elect one at the Judgment is hid in the countenance of the Godhead in interior vision, whereas the blindness of the reprobate without is banished and confounded by the strict visitation of justice.

20. And this too we not irrelevantly interpret with reference to the present time likewise, if we minutely search the hearts of dissemblers. For the proud and hypocritical look on the deeds of the good on the outside, and they find that such are commended by men for their doings, and they admire their high repute, and they see that these receive praises for their good deeds, but they do not see how studiously they eschew such praises; they regard the overt acts, but are ignorant that these proceed from the principle of the interior hope alone. For all that shine with the true light of righteousness are first changed from the darkness of the inward purpose of the heart, so that they wholly forsake the interior dimness of earthly coveting, and entirely turn their hearts to the desire of the light above, lest while they seem to be full of light to others, they be in darkness to themselves; thus persons that assume, because they regard the deeds of the righteous, but do not survey their hearts, imitate them in the things from whence they may obtain applause without, but not in the things whereby they may inwardly arise to the light of righteousness; and they as it were are blind to see the dayspring of the rising dawn, because they do not think it worth their while to regard the religious mind's intent.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

21. The holy man, who was filled with the virtue of the prophetic Spirit, may also have his eye fixed upon the faithlessness of Judaea at the coming of the Redeemer, and in these words he may be speaking prophetically of the mischievous effects of her blindness, as though in the character of one expressing a wish, so as to say, *Let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day.* For Judaea 'looked for the light but had none;' since by prophecy she waited indeed for the Redeemer of Man that should come, but never knew Him when He came; and the eyes of the mind, which she opened wide to the expectation, she closed to the presence of the Light; neither did she see the dayspring of the rising dawn, in that she scorned to pay homage to those first beginnings of Holy Church, and while she supposed her to be undone by the deaths of her members, was ignorant to what strength she was attaining. But as, when speaking of the faithless, he signified the members of the wicked head, he again turns his discourse to the head of the wicked itself, saying,

Ver. 10. *Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.*

[xii]

22. What the womb of his mother is to each individual man, that the primary abode in Paradise became to the whole human race. For from it came forth the family of man as it were from the

womb, and tending to the increase of the race, as if to the growth of the body, it issued forth without. There our conception was cemented, where the Man, the origin of mankind, had his abode, but the serpent opened the mouth of this womb, in that by his cunning persuading he broke asunder the decree of heaven in man's heart. The serpent opened the mouth of this womb, in that he burst the barriers of the mind which were fortified with admonitions from above. Let the holy man then in the punishment which he suffers, cast the eyes of his mind far back to the sin. Let him mourn for this, which the neglect of darkness, that is, the dark suggestions of our old enemy lodged in man's mind; for this, that man's mind consented to his cunning suggestions to his own betrayal, and let him say, *Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.* Nor let this disturb us, that he complains that he only did not shut up, whom he abhors for having opened the gate of Paradise. For 'he opened,' he calls *shut not up*; and 'he entailed it,' *nor hid sorrow from me.* For he would as it were have 'hid sorrow,' if he had kept quiet, and have 'shut up,' if he had forborne from bursting in. For he is weighing well who it is he speaks of, and he reckons that it would have been as if the evil spirit had bestowed gains upon us if he had only not entailed losses upon our heads. Thus we say of robbers that they give their prisoners their lives, if they do not take them.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

23. It is well to go over these points again from the beginning, and according to what we remark in practice in the present life, to review it in a moral sense. Blessed Job, observing how presumptuously mankind, after his soul fell from its original state, was lifted up in prosperity, and with what dismay it was dashed by adverse fortune, falls back in imagination to that unalterable state which he might have kept in Paradise, and in what a miserable light he beheld the fallen condition of our mortal state of being, so chequered with adversity and prosperity, he shewed by cursing the same in these words;

Ver. 3. *Let the day perish wherein I was born; and the night wherein it was said, There is a man child conceived.*

24. It seems as it were like day, when the good fortune of this world smiles upon us, but it is a day that ends in night, for temporal prosperity often leads to the darkness of affliction. This day of good fortune the Prophet had condemned, when he said, *Neither have I desired man's day* [*'diem hominis'* Vulg.], *Thou knowest it.* [Jer. 17, 16] And this night our Lord declared He was to suffer at the final close of His Incarnation, when he declared by the Psalmist as if in the past, *My reins also instructed me in the night season.* [Ps. 16, 7] But by 'the day' may be understood the pleasures of sin, and by 'the night' the inward blindness, whereby man suffers himself to be brought down to the ground in the commission of sin. And therefore he wishes the day may perish, that all the flattering arts which are seen in sin, by the strong hand of justice interposing, may be brought to nought. He wishes also that the 'night may perish,' that what the blinded mind executes even in yielding consent, she may put away by the castigation of penance.

25. But we must enquire why man is said to be born in 'the day' and conceived in 'the night?' Holy Scripture uses the title 'man' in three ways, viz, sometimes in respect of nature, sometimes of sin, sometimes of frailness. Now man is so called in respect of nature, as where it is written, *Let Us make man after Our image and likeness.* [Gen. 1, 26] He is called man in respect of sin, as where it is written, *I have said, Ye are all gods, and all of you are children of the Most High: but ye shall*

*die like men.* [Ps. 82, 6. 7.] As though he had expressed it plainly, 'ye shall perish like transgressors.' And hence Paul saith, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] As though he had said, 'Ye that carry about minds at variance, do ye not still sin, in the spirit of faulty human nature?' He is called man, in relation to his weakness, as where it is written, *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.* [Jer. 17, 5] As if he had said in plain words, 'in weakness.' Thus man is born in the day, but he is conceived in the night, in that he is never caught away by the delightfulness of sin, until he is first made weak by the voluntary darkness of his mind. For he first becomes blind in the understanding, and then he enslaves himself to damnable delight. Let it be said then, *Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night wherein it was said, There is a man child conceived:* i.e. 'Let the delight perish, which has hurried man into sin, and the unguarded frailness of his mind, whereby he was blinded even to the very darkness of consenting to evil. For while man does not heedfully mark the allurements of pleasure, he is even carried headlong into the night of the foulest practices. We must watch then with minds alive, that when sin begins to caress, the mind may perceive to what ruin she is being dragged, And hence the words are fitly added, Ver. 4. *Let that day be darkness.*

[xiv]

26. For 'the day becomes darkness,' when in the very commencement of the enjoyment, we see to what an end of ruin sin is hurrying us. We 'turn the day into darkness,' whenever by severely chastising ourselves, we turn to bitter the very sweets of evil enjoyment by the keen laments of penance, and, when we visit it with weeping, whereinsoever we sin in gratification in our secret hearts. For because no believer is ignorant that the thoughts of the heart will be minutely examined at the Judgment, as Paul testifieth, saying, *Their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another;* [Rom. 2, 15] searching himself within, he examines his own conscience without sparing before the Judgment, that the strict Judge may come now the more placably disposed, in that He sees his guilt, which He is minded to examine, already chastised according to the sin. And hence it is well added, *Let not God require it from above.*

[xv]

27. God requires the things, which He searches out in executing judgment upon them. He does not require those, which He so pardons as to let them be unpunished henceforth in His own Judgment. And so 'this day,' i.e. this enjoyment of sin, will not be required by the Lord, if it be visited with self-punishment of our own accord, as Paul testifies, when he says, *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged of the Lord.* [1 Cor. 11, 31] 'God's requiring our day,' then, is His proceeding against our souls at the Judgment by a strict examination of every instance of taking pleasure in sin, in which same 'requiring' He then smites him the harder, whom He finds to have been most soft in sparing himself. And it follows well, *Neither let the light shine upon it.* For the Lord, appearing at the Judgment, illumines with His light all that He then convicts of sin. For what is not then brought to remembrance of the Judge, is as it were veiled under a kind of obscurity. So it is written, *But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light.* [Eph. 5, 13] It is as though a certain darkness hid the sins of penitents, of whom the Prophet saith, Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. [Ps. 32, 1] Therefore, as every thing that is veiled

is as it were hidden in darkness, that which is not searched out in vengeance, is not illumined with light at the Day of final account. For all those actions of ours, which He would not then visit with justice, the mercy of God in wotting of them still hideth in some sort from itself, but all is displayed in light, that is at that time manifest in the sight of all men. *Let, then, this day be darkness*, in this way, viz. that by penance we may smite the evil that we do. *Let not the Lord require this day, neither let the light shine upon it*, in this way, viz. that while we smite our own sin, He may not Himself fall thereupon with the visitations of the Final Judgment.

28. But the Judge will come Himself to pierce all things, and strike all things to the core. And because He is every where present, there is no place to flee to, where He is not found. But forasmuch as He is appeased by the tears of self-correction, he alone obtains a hiding-place from His face, who after the commission of a sin hides himself from Him now in penance. And hence it is with propriety yet further added of this day of enjoyment,  
Ver. 7. *Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it.*

[xvi]

29. Then indeed darkness stains the day, when the delight of our inclinations is smitten through with the inflictions of penance. By darkness moreover may be signified secret decisions. For what we see in the light we know, but in the dark we either discern nothing at all, or our eyes are bewildered with an uncertain sight. Secret decrees then are like a certain kind of darkness before our eyes, being utterly inscrutable to us. And hence it is written of God, *He made darkness His secret place*; [Ps. 18, 11] and we know well that we do not deserve pardon, but, by the grace of God preventing us, we are freed from our sins by His secret counsels. *Darkness*, therefore, *stains the day*, when the joy of gratification, which is a proper subject of tears, is in mercy hidden from that ray of just wrath by His secret determinations. And here the words aptly follow, *and the shadow of death*.

30. For in Holy Scripture, the *shadow of death* is sometimes understood of oblivion of mind, sometimes of imitation of the devil, sometimes of the dissolution of the flesh. For the *shadow of death* is understood of the oblivion of the mind, in that, as has been said above, as death causes that that which it kills should no longer remain in life, so oblivion causes that whatsoever it seizes should no longer abide in the memory. And hence too, because John was coming to proclaim to the Hebrew people That God, Whom they had forgotten, he is justly said by Zacharias, *to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*; for 'to sit in the shadow of death,' is to turn lifeless to the knowledge of the love of God in a state of oblivion. *The shadow of death* is taken to mean the imitating our old enemy. For, since he brought in death, he is himself called death, as John is witness, saying, *and his name is death*. [Rev. 6, 8] And so by *the shadow of death* is signified the imitating of him. For as the shadow is shaped according to the character of the body, so the actions of the wicked are cast in a figure of conformity to him. Hence when Isaiah saw that the Gentiles had fallen away after the likeness of our old enemy, and that they rose up again at the rising of the true Sun, he justly records, as though in the past, what his eyes beheld as certain in the future, saying, *They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a great light hath shined*. Moreover, *the shadow of death* is taken for the dissolution of the flesh, in that, as that is the true death whereby the soul is separated from God, so the shadow of death is that whereby the flesh is separated from the soul. And hence it is rightly said by the Prophet in the words of the Martyrs,

*Though Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death.* [Ps. 44, 19] For those, who, we know, die not in the spirit, but only in the flesh, can in no wise say that they are 'covered with the true death,' but *with the shadow of death.*

31. How is it then that blessed Job demands *the shadow of death*, for putting out the day of evil enjoyment, but that for the obliterating of our sins in God's sight he calls for the Mediator between God and man, who should undertake for us the death of the flesh alone, and Who by the shadow of His own death, should do away the true death of transgressors? For He comes to us, who were held in the bands of death, both of the spirit and of the flesh, and His own single Death He reckoned to our account, and our two deaths, which He found, He dissolved. For if He had Himself undertaken both, He would never have set us free from either. But He took one sort in mercy, and condemned them both with justice. He joined His own single Death to our twofold death, and by dying He vanquished that double death of ours. And hence it was not without reason that He lay in the grave for one day and two nights, namely, in that He added the light of His own single Death to the darkness of our double death. He, then, that took for our sakes the death of the flesh alone, underwent *the shadow of death*, and buried from the eyes of God the sin that we have done. Therefore let it be truly said, *Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it.* As though it were said in plain words; 'Let Him come, Who, that He may snatch from the death of the flesh and of the spirit, us, that are debtors thereto, may, though no debtor, discharge the death of the flesh.' But since the Lord lets no sin go unpunished, for either we visit it ourselves by lamenting it, or God by judging it, it remains that the mind should ever have a watchful eye to the amendment of itself. Therefore, in whatever particular each person sees that he is succoured by mercy, he must needs wipe out the stains thereof in the confession of it. And hence it is fitly added, *Let a shade dwell upon it.*

[xvii]

32. For because the eye is perplexed in the *shade*, therefore the perplexity of our mind in penitence is itself called *shade*, for as the shade obscures the light of day with a mass of clouds, so confusion overclouds the mind with troubled thoughts. Of which it is said by one, *There is a shame which is glory and grace.* [Ecclus. 4, 21] For when in repenting we recall our misdoings to remembrance, we are at once confounded with heaviness and sorrow, the throng of thoughts clamours vociferously in our breast, sorrow wears, anxiety wastes us, the soul is turned to woe, and, as it were, darkened with the shade of a kind of cloud. Now this *shade* of confusion had oppressed the minds of those to their good, to whom Paul said, *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* [Rom. 6, 21] *Let shade*, then, *seize* this day of sin, i.e. 'Let the chastening of penance with befitting sorrow discompose the flattery of sin.' And hence it is added with fitness, *Let it be enfolded in bitterness.*

[xviii]

33. For the day is enfolded in bitterness, when, upon the soul returning to knowledge, the inflictions of penance follow upon the caresses of sin. We 'enfold the day in bitterness,' when we regard the punishments that follow the joys of forbidden gratification, and pour tears of bitter lamenting around them. For whereas what is folded up is covered on every side, we wish 'the day

to be folded in bitterness,' that each man may mark on every side the ills that threaten crooked courses, and may cleanse the wantonness of self-gratification by the tears of bitter sorrow.

34. But if we hear that day, which we have rendered the 'gratification of sin,' assailed with so many imprecations, that, surely, our tears poured around it may expiate whatsoever sin the soul is become guilty of by being touched with gratification through negligence, with what visitings of penitence is the night of that day to be stricken, i.e. the actual consent to sin? For as it is a less fault when the mind is carried away in delight by the influence of the flesh, yet by the resistance of the Spirit offers violence to its sense of delight; so it is a more heinous and complete wickedness not only to be attracted to the fascination of sin by the feeling of delight, but to pander to it by yielding consent. Therefore the mind must be cleansed from defilement by being wrung harder with the hand of penitence, in proportion as it sees itself to be more foully stained by the yielding of the consent. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 6. *As for that night, let a black tempest seize it.*

35. For the awakened spirit of sorrow is like a kind of tempestuous whirlwind. For when a man understands what sin he has committed, when he minutely considers the wickedness of his evil doings, he clouds the mind with sorrow, and the air of quiet joy being agitated, as it were, he sweeps away all the inward tranquillity of his breast, by the whirlwind of penitence. For unless the heart, returning to the knowledge of itself, were broken by such a whirlwind, the Prophet would never have said, *Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with a strong wind.* [Ps. 48, 7] For *Tarshish* is rendered, 'the exploring of joy.' But when the strong blast of penitence seizes the mind, it disturbs therein all the 'explorings' after a censurable joy, that it now takes pleasure in nought but to weep, minds nought but what may fill it with affright. For it sets before the eyes, on the one hand, the strictness of justice, on the other the deserts of sin, it sees what punishment it deserves, if the pitifulness of the sparing Hand be wanting, which is wont by present sorrowing to rescue from eternal woe. Therefore, 'a strong wind breaks the ships of Tarshish,' when a mighty force of compunction confounds, with wholesome terrors, our minds which have abandoned themselves to this world, like as to the sea. Let him say then, *As for that night, let a black tempest seize it*, i.e. let not the softness of secure ease cherish the commission of sin, but the bitterness of repentance burst on it in pious fury.

36. But we are to bear in mind, that when we leave sins unpunished, we are 'taken possession of by the night,' but when we correct those with the visitation of penitence, then we ourselves 'take possession of the night,' that we have made. And the sin of the heart is then brought into our right of possession, if it is repressed in its beginning. And hence it is said by the voice of God to Cain, harbouring evil thoughts, *Thy sin will lie at the door. But under thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.* For 'sin lieth at the door,' when it is knocking in the thoughts, and 'the desire thereof is under,' and man 'ruleth over it,' if the wickedness of the heart, being looked to, be quickly put down, and before it grows to a state of hardness, be subdued by a strenuous opposition of the mind. Therefore that the mind may be quickly made sensible of its offence by repenting, and hold in under its authority the usurping power of sin, let it be rightly said, *As for that night let a black tempest seize it*; as though it were said in plain words, 'Lest the mind be the captive of sin, let it never leave a sin free from penance.' And because we have a sure hope that what we prosecute with weeping, will never be urged against us by the Judge to come, it is rightly added, *Let it not be joined unto the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months.*

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37. The year of our illumination is then accomplished, when at the appearing of the Eternal Judge of Holy Church, the life of her pilgrimage is completed. She then receives the recompense of her labours, when, having finished this season of her warfare, she returns to her native country. Hence it is said by the Prophet, *Thou shalt bless the crown of the year with Thy goodness*. For the Crown of the year is as it were 'blessed,' when, the season of toil at an end, the reward of virtues is bestowed. But the days of this year are the several virtues, and its months the manifold deeds of those virtues. But observe, when the mind is erected in confidence, to have a good hope that, when the Judge comes, she will receive the reward of her virtues, all the evil things that she has done are also brought before the memory, and she greatly fears lest the strict Judge, Who comes to reward virtues, should also examine and weigh exactly those things, which have been unlawfully committed, and lest, when 'the year' is completed, the 'night' also be reckoned in. Let him then say of this night, *Let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months*. As though he implored that strict Judge in such words as these; 'When, the time of Holy Church being completed, Thou shalt manifest Thyself for the final scrutiny, do Thou so recompense the gifts Thou hast vouchsafed, that Thou require not the evil we have committed. For if that 'night be joined unto the days of the year,' all that we have done is brought to nought, by the accounting of our iniquity. And the days of our virtues no longer shine, if they be overclouded in Thine eyes by the dark confusion of our night being added to the reckoning.'

38. But if we would not then have inquest made on our night, we must take especial care now to exercise a watchful eye in examining it, that no sin whatever may remain unpunished by us, that the froward mind be not bold to vindicate what it has done, and by that vindication add iniquity to iniquity. And hence it is rightly added,  
Ver. 7. *Lo, let that night be solitary, and worthy of no praise*.

[xxi]

39. There are some men that not only never bewail what they do, but who do not cease to uphold and applaud it, and verily a sin that is upheld, is doubled. And against this it is rightly said by one, *My son, hast thou sinned? add not again thereto*. [Ecclus. 21, 1] For he 'adds sin to sin,' who over and above maintains what he has done amiss; and he does not 'leave the night alone,' who adds the support of vindication also to the darkness of his fault. It is hence that the first man, when called in question concerning the 'night' of his error, would not have the same 'night' to be 'solitary,' in that while by that questioning he was called to repentance, he added the props of self-exculpation, saying, *The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat*; i.e. covertly turning the fault of his transgression upon his Maker; as if he said, 'Thou gavest me occasion of transgressing, Who gavest me the woman.' It is hence that in the human race the branch of this sin is drawn out from that root so far as to this present time, that what is done amiss should be yet further maintained. Let him say then, *Let that light be solitary, and not worthy of any praise*. As though he besought in plain words, 'Let the fault that we have done remain alone, lest while it is praised and upheld, it bind us a hundredfold more in the sight of our Judge. We ought not indeed to have sinned, but would that, by not adding others, we would even leave those by themselves, which we have committed.'



40. But here it is to be impressed upon our minds, that he in a true sense bears hard upon his sin, whose heart is no longer set to the love of the present state of being by any longing for prosperity, who sees how deceitful are the caresses of this world, and reckons its smiles as a kind of persecution; and hence it is well added,  
Ver. 8. *Let them curse it that curse the day.*

[xxii]

41. As if he said in plain words; 'Let them strike the darkness of this night by truly repenting, who henceforth despise and tread upon the light of worldly prosperity.' For if we take 'the day,' for the gladness of delight, of this 'night' it is rightly said, *Let them curse it that curse the day.* In that, indeed, they do truly chastise the misdeeds committed with the visitations of penance, who are henceforth carried away by no sense of delight after deceitful goods. For of those whom other mischievous practices still delight, it is all false whereinsoever they are seen to bewail one set they have been guilty of. But if, as we have said above, we understand thereby the crafty suggestion of our old enemy, those are to be understood to curse the 'night,' that curse the 'day,' in that surely they all really punish their past sins, who in the mere flattering suggestion itself detect the snares of the malicious deceiver. But it is well added;  
*Who are ready to rouse up Leviathan.*

[xxiii]

42. For all they that with the spirit tread under foot the things which are of the world, and with a perfect bent of the mind desire the things that belong to God, *rouse up Leviathan* against themselves, in that they inflame his malice, by the incitements of their life and conduct. For those that are subject to his will, are as it were held in possession by him with an undisturbed light, and their tyrannizing king, as it were, enjoys a kind of security, while he rules their hearts with a power unshaken, but when the spirit of each man is quickened again to the longing after his Creator; when he gives over the sloth of negligence, and kindles the frost of former insensibility with the fire of holy love; when he calls to mind his innate freedom, and blushes that his enemy should keep him as his slave; because that enemy marks that he is himself contemned, and sees that the ways of God are laid hold of, he is stung that his captive struggles against him, and is at once fired with jealousy, at once pressed to the conflict, at once raises himself to urge countless temptations against the soul that withstands him, and stimulates himself in all the arts of mangling, that launching the darts of temptation he may pierce the heart, which he has long held with an undisputed title. For he slept, as it were, whilst he reposed at rest in the corrupt heart. But he is 'roused,' in challenging the fight, when he loses the right of wicked dominion. Let those then curse this light, that are ready to *rouse up Leviathan*, i.e. 'let all those gather themselves resolutely to encounter sin with the stroke of severe judgment, who are no wise afraid to rouse up Leviathan in his tempting of them.' For so it is written, *My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, stand in righteousness and in fear; and prepare thy soul for temptation.* For whosoever hastes to gird himself in the service of God, what else does he than prepare against the encounter of the old adversary, that the same man set at liberty may take blows in the strife, who, when slaving in captivity under tyrannizing power, was left at rest? But in this very circumstance that the mind is braced to meet the enemy, that some vices it has under its

feet, and is striving against others, it sometimes happens that somewhat of sin is permitted to remain, nevertheless not so as to do any great injury.

43. And often the mind, which overcomes many and forcible oppositions, is unable to master one within itself, and that perchance a very little one, though it be most earnestly on the watch against it. Which doubtless is the effect of God's dispensation, lest being resplendent with virtue on all points, it be lifted up in self-elation, that while it sees in itself some trifling thing to be blamed, and yet has no power to subdue the same, it may never attribute the victory to itself, but to the Creator only, whereinsoever it has power to subdue with resolution; and hence it is well added, *Ver.9. Let the stars thereof be overshadowed with darkness.*

[xxiv]

44. For the stars of this night are overshadowed with darkness, when even they that already shine with great virtues, still bear something of the dimness of sin, while they struggle against it, so that they even shine with great lustre of life, and yet still draw along with unwillingness some remains of the night. Which as we have said is done with this view, that the mind in advancing to the eminence of its righteousness, may through weakness be the better strengthened, and may in a more genuine manner shine in goodness by the same cause, whereby, to the humbling of it, little defects overcloud it even against its will. And hence when the land of promise now won was to be divided to the people of Israel, the Gentile people of Canaan are not said to be slain, but to be made tributary to the tribe of Ephraim; as it is written, *The Canaanites dwelt in the midst of Ephraim under tribute.* [Jos. 16, 10. V.] For what does the *Canaanite*, a Gentile people, denote saving a fault? And oftentimes we enter the land of promise with great virtues, because we are strengthened by the inward hope that regards eternity. But while, amidst lofty deeds, we retain certain small faults, we as it were permit the Canaanite to dwell in our land. Yet he is made tributary, in that this same fault, which we cannot bring under, we force back by humility to answer the end of our wellbeing, that the mind may think meanly of itself even in its highest excellencies, in proportion as it fails to master by its own strength even the small things that it aims at. Hence it is well written again, *Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to prove Israel by them.* [Jud. 3, 1] For it is for this that some of our least faults are retained, that our fixed mind may ever be practising itself heedfully to the conflict, and not presume upon victory, forasmuch as it sees enemies yet alive within it, by whom it still dreads to be overcome. Thus Israel is trained by the Gentile people being reserved, in that the uplifting of our goodness meets with a check in some very little faults, and learns, in the little things that withstand it, that it does not subdue the greater ones by itself.

45. Yet this that is said, *Let the stars thereof be overshadowed with darkness*, may also be understood in another sense; for that *night*, viz. consent to the sin, which was derived to us by the transgression of our first parent, has smitten our mind's eye with such a dimness, that in this life's exile, beset by the darkness of its blinded state, with whatever force it strain after the light of eternity, it is unable to pierce through; for we are born condemned sinners after punishment has begun [*post poenam*], and we come into this life together with the desert of our death, and when we lift up the eye of the mind to that beam of light above, we grow dark with the mere dimness of our natural infirmity. And indeed many in this feeble condition of the flesh have been made strong by so great a force of virtue, that they could shine like stars in the world. Many in the darkness of this present life, while they shew forth in themselves examples above our reach, shine upon us from on

high after the manner of stars; but with whatsoever brilliancy of practice they shine, with whatever fire of compunction they enkindle their hearts, it is plain that while they still bear the load of this corruptible flesh, they are unable to behold the light of eternity such as it is. So then let him say, *Let the stars thereof be overshadowed with darkness*; i.e. 'let even those in their contemplations still feel the darkness of the old night, of whom it appears that they already spread the rays of their virtues over the human race in the darkness of this life, seeing that, though they already spring to the topmost height in thought, they are yet pressed down below by the weight of the first offence. And hence it comes to pass that at the same time that without they give specimens of light, like the stars, yet within, being closely encompassed by the darkness of night, they fail to mount up to the assuredness of an immovable vision. Now the mind is often so kindled and inflamed, that, though it be still set in the flesh, it is transported into God, and every carnal imagination brought under; and yet not so that it beholds God as He is, in that, as we have said, the weight of the original condemnation presses upon it in corruptible flesh. Oftentimes it longs to be swallowed up, just as it is, that if it might be so, it might attain the eternal life without the intervention of the bodily death. Hence Paul, when he ardently sought for the inward light, yet in some sort dreaded the evils [*damna*] of the outward death, said, *For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burthened, for that we would not be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.* [2 Cor. 5, 4. Vulg.] Therefore holy men long to see the true dawn, and, if it were vouchsafed, they would even along with the body attain that deep of inmost light. But with whatever ardour of purpose they may spring forth, the old night still weighs upon them, and those eyes of our corruptible flesh, which the crafty enemy has opened to concupiscence, the just Judge holds back from the view of His inward radiance. And hence it is well added, *Let it look for light and have none, neither let it see the dawning of the day.*

[xxv]

46. For with whatever strength of purpose the mind, while yet in this pilgrimage, labours to see the Light as It is, the power is withheld, in that this is hidden from it by the blindness of its state under the curse. [Now the 'rising of the dawn' is the brightness of inward truth, which ought to be ever new to us. And this the night assuredly seeth not, because our infirmity, blind by reason of sin, and still placed in the corruptible flesh, mounts not up to that light wherewith our fellow citizens above are already irradiated. For the rising of this dawn is in the interior, where the brightness of the Divine Nature is manifested ever new to the spirits of the Angels, and where that bliss of light is as it were ever dawning, which is never brought to an end.] [Note: this bracketed portion is found only in the Edition of Gussanville, and there without any notice to shew where it comes from. (Ben.) It is not in the Oxford Mss.] But the *rising of the dawn*, is that new birth of the Resurrection, whereby Holy Church, with the flesh too raised up, rises to contemplate the sight of Eternity; for if the very Resurrection of our flesh were not as it were a kind of birth, Truth would never have said of it, *In the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of His glory.* [Matt. 19, 28] This then, which He called a *regeneration*, He beheld as a *rising*. But with whatever virtue the Elect now shine forth, they cannot pierce to see what will be that glory of the new birth, wherewith they will then mount up together with the flesh to contemplate the sight of Eternity. Hence Paul says, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.* [1 Cor. 2, 9] Let him say then, *Let it look for light and have none, neither let it see the dawning of the day.* For our frail nature, darkened by its

spontaneous fault, penetrates not the brightness of inward light, unless it first discharge its debt of punishment by death. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor took away sorrow from mine eyes.*

[xxvi]

47. As has been likewise remarked above, the words, *it shut not up*, are 'it opened,' and *it took not away*, 'it brought upon me.' So that this *night*, i.e. sin, opened the door of the womb, in that to man, conceived unto sin, it unsealed the lust of concupiscence [m], whereof the Prophet says, *Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors*. [Isa. 26, 20] For we 'enter our chambers,' when we go into the recesses of our own hearts. And we 'shut the doors,' when we restrain forbidden lusts; and so whereas our consent set open these doors of carnal concupiscence, it forced us to the countless evils of our corrupt state. And so now we henceforth groan under the weight of mortality, though we came [n] thereunto by our own free will, in that the justice of the sentence against us requires thus much, that what we have done willingly, we should bear with against our will. It proceeds; Ver. 11, 12. *Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?*

[xxvii]

48. Be the thought far from us, that blessed Job, who was endued with such high spiritual knowledge, and who had such a witness of praise from the Judge within, should wish that he had perished in abortive birth! But seeing, what we also learn by the reward which he received, that he has within the witness of his fortitude, the weight of his words is to be reckoned within.

49. Now sin is committed in the heart in four ways, and in four ways it is consummated in act. For in the heart it is committed by the suggestion, the pleasure, the consent, and the boldness to defend. For the suggestion comes of the enemy; the pleasure, of the flesh; the consent, of the spirit; and boldness to uphold, of pride. For the sin, which ought to fill the mind with apprehension, only exalts it, and in throwing down uplifts, while by uplifting it causes its more grievous overthrow; and hence that upright frame, wherein the first man was created, was by our old foe dashed down by these four strokes. For the serpent tempted, Eve was pleased, Adam yielded consent, and even when called in question he refused in effrontery to confess his sin. The serpent tempted, in that the secret enemy silently suggests evil to man's heart. Eve was pleased, because the sense of the flesh, at the voice of the serpent, presently gives itself up to pleasure. And Adam, who was set above the woman, yielded consent, in that whilst the flesh is carried away in enjoyment, the spirit also being deprived of its strength gives in from its uprightness. And Adam when called in question would not confess his sin, in that, in proportion as the spirit is by committing sin severed from the Truth, it becomes worse hardened in shamelessness at its downfall. Sin is likewise completed in act by the self-same four methods; for first the fault is done in secret, but afterwards it is done openly before men's eyes without the blush of guilt, and next it is formed into a habit, finally, whether by the cheats of false hope, or the stubbornness of reckless despair, it is brought to full growth.

50. These four modes of sin then, which either go on secretly in the heart, or which are executed in act, blessed Job views, and bewails the many stages of sin wherein the human race was fallen,

saying, *Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?* For 'the womb of conception' at the first was the tongue of the evil suggestion. Now the sinner would 'perish in the womb,' if only man knew in the very suggestion itself that he would bring death upon himself. Yet 'he came forth from the belly,' in that, as soon as the tongue had conceived him in sin by its suggestions, the pleasure likewise, immediately hurried him forth; and after his coming forth, 'the knees prevented him,' in that having issued forth in the carnal gratification, he then completed the sin by the consent of the spirit, all the senses being made subservient like knees underneath. And 'the knees preventing him, the breasts did also give him suck.' For whereas, in the spirit's consenting to the sin, the senses were drawn into the service, the many reasonings of vain confidence followed, which nourished the soul thus born, in sin with poisoned milk, and lulled it with soothing excuses, that it should not fear the bitter punishment of death. And hence the first man waxed bolder after his sin, saying, *The women whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* [Gen. 3, 12] And truly, he had fled to hide himself out of fear, yet when he was called in question, he made it appear how swoln he was with pride while he feared; for when punishment is feared as the present consequence of sin, and the face of God being lost is not loved, the fear is one that proceeds from a high stomach [*timor ex tumore*], and not from a lowly spirit. For he is full of pride who does not give over his sin, if he may go unpunished.

51. But, as we have said, sin is committed in these four ways, as in the heart, so also in the deed; for he saith, *Why died I not in the womb?* For the womb to the sinner is the secret fault in man, which conceives the sinner under cover, and as yet hides its guilt in the dark. *Why did I not give up the ghost, when I came out of the belly?* For there is 'a coming out of the womb from the belly,' when the sinner does not blush to do openly as well the things, which he has been guilty of in secret, Thus they had as it were come out of the womb of their hiding place, of whom the Prophet spake it; *And they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not, Why did the knees prevent me?* [Is. 3, 9] In that the sinner, when he is not confounded at his wickedness, is strengthened in the same by the further stays of most heinous custom. The sinner is as it were nursed on the knees, till he grow bigger, so long as the sin is confirmed by habitual acts, till it acquires strength. *Or why the breasts that I should suck?* For when the sin has once begun to issue into habit, then, alas! the sinner feeds himself either with the fallacious hope of God's mercy, or with the open recklessness of despair, that he never may return back to self-amendment, in so far as he either extravagantly colours to himself the pitifulness of his Maker, or is extravagantly terrified at the sin that he has done. Let the blessed man, then, take a view of man's fall, and mark down what precipice he has plunged himself into the pit of iniquity, saying, *Why died I not in the womb?* i.e. 'Why would I not, in the very secret act of sin in the heart, kill myself to the life of the flesh?' *Why did I not give up the ghost, when I came out of the belly?* i.e. 'Why, when I came forth in the overt act, died I not, was I not then at least instructed that I was undone?' For he would have 'given up the ghost' in his condemnation of himself, if he had known that he was lost. *Why did the knees prevent me?* i.e. 'Even after the open act of sin, why, yet further, did the custom too take me up in it, to make me stronger to commit sin, and to nurse and sustain me with habitual wicked acts?' *Why the breasts, that I should suck?* i.e. 'After I entered into the habit of sin, why did I rear myself to a more tremendous pitch of iniquity, either by reliance on false hope, or by the milk of a miserable despair?' For when the fault has been brought into a habit, the mind, even if it be inclined, by this time resists more feebly: for it becomes bound upon the mind by as many chains, as there are recurrences of the evil practice that clench it fast, Whence it happens that the mind, being sapped of

strength, when it has no power to get free, turns to some resource or other of fallacious consolation, so as to flatter itself that the Judge, Who is to come, is of so great mercy, that even those, whom He shall find deserving of condemnation, He will never wholly destroy. Whereunto there is this worst addition, that the tongue of many like him abets him, since there are many who magnify with their praises these very misdeeds; whence it comes to pass that the fault is continually growing, nourished by applauses. Also then we neglect to heal the wound, which is counted worthy of the meed of praise, Hence Solomon says well, *My son, if sinners give thee suck, consent thou not.* [Prov. 1, 10. V.] For the wicked ‘give suck,’ whenever they either put wicked acts in our way to be done by their enticements, or applaud them with marks of favour when done. Does not he suck of whom the Psalmist says, *For the wicked man is commended in his heart's desire; and he that doeth iniquity receives a blessing,*? [Ps. 10, 3. Vulg. 9, 24]

52. We must also know, that those three modes of being sinners are more easily corrected as they come in their order downwards; but the fourth is not corrected but with difficulty. And hence our Saviour raises the damsel in the house, the young man without the gate, while Lazarus He raises in the grave; for he that sins in secret is as yet lying dead in the house, he is already being carried without the gate, whose iniquity is done openly, even to the shamelessness of commission in public; but he is pressed with the sepulchral mound, who, in the commission of sin, is over and above pressed and overlaid with the use of habit. But all these in mercy He restores to life; in that it is often the case that Divine grace enlighteneth with the light of its regard those that are dead not only in secret sins, but likewise in open evil practices, and that are overlaid with the weight of evil habit. But our Saviour knows indeed of a fourth being dead from the disciple's lips, yet never raises him to life; in that it is hard indeed for one, whom, after continuance in bad habit, the tongues of flatterers too get hold of, to be recovered from the death of the soul; and of such an one it is said with justice, *Let the dead bury their dead.* [Luke 9, 60] For ‘the dead bury the dead,’ as often as sinners load sinners with their approval. For what else is it to ‘sin,’ but to lie down in death? and to ‘bury,’ except it be to hide? But they that pursue the sinner with their applauses, bury the dead body under the mound of their words. Now Lazarus too was dead, yet he was never buried by the dead. For the believing women, who also gave tidings of his death to the Quickener, had laid him under the ground. And hence he forthwith returned back to the light; for when the soul is dead in sin, it is soon brought back, if anxious thoughts live over it. But sometimes, as we have likewise said above, it is not false hope that cuts off the mind, but a more deadly despair pierces it. And whereas this totally cuts off all hope of pardon, it supplies the soul with the milk of error in greater abundance.

53. Let the holy man then consider, what wickedness man has been guilty of, yet for the worse, after the first sin, and, after he had lost paradise, to what broken steeps he descended in this place of exile, and let him say, *Why died I not in the womb?* i.e. ‘When the suggestion of the serpent conceived me a sinner, O that I had then known the death that would come upon me; lest the suggestion should transport me to the length of delight, and should link me more closely to death.’ *Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?* As though he said, ‘O that when I came out to the external gratification, I had known that I was parting with the internal light; so that I had at least died [i.e. died from sinning] at the point of this gratification only, that death might not inflict a sharper sting through the consent.’ *Why did the knees prevent me?* As though he said, ‘O that the consent had never caught me, my senses being made to bear up my frowardness, that my own consenting might not hurry me yet for the worse into shamelessness.’ *Or why the breasts that*

*I should suck?* As though he said, 'O that I had at least refused to flatter myself, after ill acts committed, that I might not attach myself thereby the more wickedly to my fault, the more softly I dealt with myself therein.' So then in these words of reproach, he charged himself with having sinned in our first parent. But had man never been brought down to the wretchedness of this place of banishment, by committing sin, let him say what peace he might have had. It proceeds;  
Ver. 13. *For now should I have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept, then had I been at rest.*

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54. For this was man set in Paradise, that, had he attached himself by the chains of love to an obedient following of his Creator, he might one day be transported to the heavenly country of the Angels, and that, without the death of the flesh. For he was made immortal in such sort, that, if he sinned, he would yet be capable of dying, and in such wise mortal, that, if he sinned not, he should even be capable of never dying, and that, by desert of a free choice, he might attain the blessedness of those realms, wherein there is neither possibility of sinning nor of death. There then, where, since the time of the Redemption, the Elect are conveyed, with the death of the flesh intervening, to the same place our first parents, if they had remained stedfast in the state of their creation, would undoubtedly have passed, and that, without the death of the body. Man then would have lain still and been quiet, he would have 'slept and been at rest,' in that being brought to the rest of his eternal country, he would have found as it were a retreat from these clamours of human frailty. For since sin, he, as it were, is kept awake and crying aloud, who bears with struggling opposition the strife of his own flesh. This stillness of peace man, when he was created, enjoyed, when he received the freedom of his will, to encounter his enemy withal. And because he yielded himself up to him of his own accord, he forthwith found in himself what was to rise in clamours against him, forthwith met in the conflict with the riotings of his frail nature; and though he had been created by his Maker in peaceful stillness, yet, once of his own will laid low under the enemy, he had to endure the clamours of the fight. For the very suggestion of the flesh is a kind of outcry against the mind's repose, which man was not sensible of before the transgression, plainly because there was nought that he could be exposed to undergo from infirmity of his own. But since he has once voluntarily subjected himself to his enemy, now being bound with the chains of his sins, he serves him in some things even against his will, and suffers clamours in the mind, when the flesh strives against the Spirit. Did not clamours within meet his ears, who was pressed with the words of an evil law at variance with himself, saying, *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] Let then the holy man reflect in what a peace of mind he would have reposed, if man had refused to entertain the words of the serpent, and let him say, *For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept, then had I been at rest;* i.e. I should have withdrawn into the retirement of my breast to contemplate my Creator, had not the fault, the first sin of consent, betrayed me out of myself to the riotings of temptation; and let him add to the joys of this state of tranquillity, whom he would have had for his fellows in the enjoyment thereof saying,  
Ver. 4. *With the kings and counsellors of the earth.*

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55. From things without sense we learn what to think of beings endowed with sense and understanding. Now the earth is rendered fruitful by the air, while the air is governed by the quality of the heaven. In like manner man is over the beasts, the Angels over man, and the Archangels are set over the Angels. Now that man has sovereignty over the beasts, we both perceive by the common use, and are instructed by the words of the Psalmist, who says, *Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field.* [Ps. 8, 6. 7.] And that the Angels are placed over man is testified by the Prophet, in these words, *But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me.* [Dan. 10, 13] And that the Angels are under the governance of authority in superior Angels, the Prophet Zechariah declares; *And, behold, the Angel that talked with me went forth, and another angel went out to meet him, and he said unto him, Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls.* [Zech. 2, 3. 4.] For in the actual ministration of the holy spirits, if the superior Powers did not direct the inferior, one Angel would never have learnt from the lips of another what he should say to a man. Therefore, forasmuch as the Creator of the Universe holdeth all things by Himself alone, and yet for the purpose of constituting the defined order characterizing a universe of beauty, He rules one part by the governance of another; we shall not improperly understand *the kings* to be the Angelic spirits, who the more devotedly they serve the Maker of all beings, have things subject to their rule the more. He would then have been 'at rest with kings;' in that, surely, man would have already had peace in company with the Angels, if he had refused to listen to the tongue of the Tempter. These too are rightly called 'counsellors,' for they 'consult' for the spiritual commonwealth, while they unite us to the kingdom as fellow-heirs with themselves. They are justly called 'counsellors;' for, whereas, from their lips we are made acquainted with the will of the Creator, it is in them assuredly that we find counsel to extricate ourselves from the misery that besets us here.

56. But since blessed Job is full of the Holy Spirit of Eternity, and since Eternity knows neither to have been nor to be about to be, whereto, as we know, neither things past depart, nor things future approach, as seeing all things in the present, he may, in the present inspiration of the Spirit, have his eyes fixed on the future preachers of the Church, who, when they leave the body, are separated by no intervals of delay from the inheritance of the heavenly country, as the fathers of old were. For as soon as they are parted asunder from the ties of the flesh, they enter into rest in their heavenly habitation, as Paul bears witness, who saith, *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2 Cor. 5, 1] But before our Redeemer by His own death paid man's penalty, those even that followed the ways of the heavenly country, [see Book xiii. §. 49.] the bars of hell held fast after their departure out of the flesh, not so that punishment should light on them, but that while resting in regions apart, they should find the guilt of the first sin a bar to their entrance into the kingdom, in that the Intercession of the Mediator was not yet come. Whence, according to the testimony of the same Mediator, the rich man, that is tormented in hell, beholds Lazarus at rest in the bosom of Abraham. Now if these had not been in the lower regions, he, in the place of his torment, would not have seen them; and hence this same Redeemer of us men, in dying to pay the debt of our sin, goes down into hell, that He may bring back to the realms of heaven all His followers, who had been held in that debt. But where man in a state of redemption now ascendeth, thither, if he had refused to sin, he might have reached even without the help of the Redemption. Let then the holy man consider that if he had not sinned, he would have ascended to that place, even without redemption, whereunto the holy Preachers, since the Redemption, must fain arrive at the cost of much labour, and let him shew in company with whom he would now be at peace, saying, *With*



*kings and counsellors of the earth.* For the kings are the holy Preachers of the Church, who know both how to order aright those that are committed to them, and to regulate their own bodies; who, while they check the motions of lust in themselves, rule over their thoughts, kept in due subjection according to the law of virtue. These too are rightly entitled, counsellors of the earth. For they are 'kings' in that they rule themselves, but counsellors of the earth, because they yield lifegiving counsel to the lifeless sinner. They are kings in that they know how to govern themselves, and counsellors of the earth, in that they lead earthly minds up to heavenly things by advice of their admonitions. Was not he 'a counsellor of the earth,' that said, *Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment;* and again, *but she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment.* [1 Cor. 7, 25. 40.] It is justly added, *Which build desolate places for themselves.*

[xxx]

57. For all that either seek forbidden things, or that desire to appear somewhat in this world, are inwardly beset with a countless throng of thoughts, and while they stir up in their own bosom a host of desires, their mind, being laid prostrate, is miserably trodden by the foot of crowded resort. Thus one man has subjected himself to the law of lust, and he paints to his mind's eye representations of impure acts, and when the execution of the deed is not in his power, the thing is the more often done in the inward intent; the consummating of pleasure is sought, and the mind being struck powerless, borne hither and thither, disquieted at once and blinded, looks out eagerly for an opportunity of the foulest fulfilment in practice. That mind then, which is disordered by a rabble riot of thoughts, suffers as it were a kind of crowded population. Another man has submitted his neck to the dominion of Anger, and what does he employ himself about in imagination but quarrels which do not even exist? Such a man is often overlooking those that are before him, contradicting the absent, giving and receiving insults in imagination, making his reply severer than the insult received, and when there is none there to encounter him, he makes up a quarrel in his own breast with much uproar. He then that is pressed down by an intolerable weight of angry thoughts, has the misfortune of a rabble in his own bosom. Another has delivered himself over to the law of avarice, and, out of conceit with his own possessions, hankers after what belongs to another: it often happens that being unable to obtain what he longs for, he spends the day indeed in idleness, but the night in thought; he is a sluggard in useful work, because he is harassed with unlawful devices; he multiplies his schemes, and stretches his bosom the wider by all the contrivances and expedients of his invention; he is busy to reach the desired objects, and in order to obtain them he casts about for the most secret windings to serve for his occasions, and the moment that he reckons himself to have hit upon any crafty contrivance on an occasion, he is now in high glee as having obtained possession of his object, and now he is contriving what he may even add further to the thing when gotten, and is considering how it ought to be improved to a better condition; and whereas he is now in possession, and is bringing it to wear a better appearance, he is next considering the snares of those that are envious of him, and pondering what dispute they may fasten upon him, and making out what answer to give, and at the time he has nothing in his hands, the empty handed disputant is wearing himself out in defence of the thing which he desires. Thus although he has not got a particle of the object desired, yet he has already in his breast the fruit of his desire in the troublesomeness of the quarrel; and so he, that is overcome by the tumultuous instigations of avarice, has a vast population besetting him. Another one has subjected himself to the empire of pride, and while he lifts himself up against his fellow-creatures, he submits his heart

to the vice, to his great misery. He covets the wreaths of elevated honours, he aims to exalt himself by his successes, and all that he desires to be, he represents to himself in the secret thoughts of his own breast. He is already as it seems seated on the judgment-seat, already sees the services of his subjects at his command, already shines above others, already brings evil upon one party, or recompenses another for having done this. Already in his own imagination he goes forth into public surrounded by throngs, already marks with what observance he is sustained in his high position; yet while fancying this, he is creeping by himself alone. Now he is treading one set under his feet, now he is elevating another, now he is gratifying his dislikes upon those he treads under foot, now he is receiving applause from the other whom he has elevated. What else is that man doing, who has such a multitude of fanciful imaginations pictured in his heart, save gazing at a dream with waking eyes? and thus, since he undergoes the misery of so many combinations of cases, which he pictures to himself, he plainly carries about within him crowds, that are engendered of his desires. Another has by this time learnt to eschew forbidden objects, yet he dreads lest he should lack the good things of this world, he is anxious to retain the goods vouchsafed him; he is ashamed to appear inferior among men, and he is full of concern lest he should become either a poor man at home, or an object of contempt in public. He anxiously inquires what may suffice for himself, what the needs of his dependants may require; and that he may sufficiently discharge the rights of a patron towards his dependants, he searches for patrons whom he may himself wait upon; but whilst he is joined to them in a relation of dependence, he is undoubtedly implicated in their concerns, wherein he often consents to forbidden acts, and the wickedness, which he has no mind for on his own account, he commits for the sake of other objects which he has not forsaken. For often, while dreading the diminution of his reputation in the world, he gives his approval to those things with his superiors, which in his own secret judgment he has now learnt to condemn. Whilst he anxiously bethinks himself what he owes to his patrons, what to his dependants, what gain he may make for himself, how he may promote his inclinations, he is in a manner overlaid with resort of crowds, as many in number as the demands of the cases whereby he is distracted.

58. But holy men, on the other hand, because their hearts are not set upon any thing of this world, are assuredly never subject to the pressure of any tumults in their breast, for they banish all inordinate stirrings of desire from the heart's bed, with the hand of holy deliberation. And because they condemn all transitory things, they do not experience the licentious familiarities of the thoughts springing therefrom. For their desires are fixed upon their eternal country alone, and loving none of the things of this world, they enjoy a perfect tranquillity of mind; and hence it is said with justice, *Which built desolate places for themselves*. For to 'build desolate places' is to banish from the heart's interior the stirrings of earthly desires, and with a single aim at the eternal inheritance to pant in love of inward peace. Had he not banished from himself all the risings of the imaginations of the heart, who said, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord?* [Ps. 27, 4] For he had betaken himself from the concourse of earthly desires to no less a solitude than his own self, where he would be the more secure in seeing nought without, in proportion as there was no insufficient object that he loved. For from the tumult of earthly things he had sought a singular and perfect retreat in a quiet mind, wherein he would see God the more clearly, in proportion as he saw Him alone with himself also alone.

59. Now they, who 'build for themselves solitary places,' are very properly also called 'consuls,' for they set up the mind's solitude in themselves in such wise, that whereinsoever they have the greater ability, they never cease to consult for the good of others through charity. Accordingly let

us consider a little more particularly the case of him, whom we just now noticed as ‘a consul,’ and see in what manner he casts abroad the counters [b] of the virtues, for the setting forth examples of a sublime life to the lines of people under him. Observe, in order to inculcate the returning good for evil, he makes confession on his own person, saying, *If I have returned on them that requited me evil, then should I deserve to fall empty before mine enemies.* [Ps. 7, 4] To excite the love of our Maker, he introduces himself saying, *But it is good for me to draw near to [to cleave] God.* To work an impression of holy humility, he shews the secrets of his heart, saying, *Lord, mine heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty.* [Ps. 131, 1] He excites us by his own example to imitate his unswerving zeal, saying, *Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, and am not I grieved with them that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.* [Ps. 139, 21. 22.] To light up in us the desire of our eternal home, he laments the length of this present life, and says, *Woe is me that my sojourn is prolonged.* [Ps. 120, 5. V.] Surely he shone forth in the magnificence of the consulship, who, by the example of his own conversation, casts before us so many of virtue's counters.

60. But let this *counsellor* tell whether he too builds a solitary place for himself, For he says, *Lo, I fled far off and remained in the wilderness.* He ‘fleeth far off,’ in that he raises himself from the throng of earthly desires in high contemplation of God; and he ‘remains in the wilderness,’ in that he persists in the retiring purpose of his mind. Of this solitude Jeremiah saith well to the Lord, *I sat alone from the face of Thy hand, because Thou hast filled me with threatening.* [Jer. 15, 17] For the ‘face of God's hand,’ is the stroke of His righteous judgment, whereby He cast man out of Paradise, when he waxed proud, and shut him out into [*caecitatem* A.B.C.D.E.] the darkness of his present place of banishment. But ‘His threatening’ is the farther dread of a subsequent punishment. Accordingly after ‘the face of His hand,’ we are yet further terrified with ‘His threats,’ because both the penalty of our present banishment has already fallen upon us in the actual experience of His judgment, and, if we do not leave off from sinning, He further consigns us to everlasting punishments. Let the holy man then, here cast away, consider whence it was that man fell, and whither the justice of the Judge yet further hurries him, if he goes on to sin afterwards, and let him dismiss from his breast the countless hosts of temporal desires, and bury himself in the deep solitude of the mind, saying, *I sat alone from the face of Thy Hand; for Thou hast filled me with threatening.* As though he said in plain words, ‘when I consider what I already suffer in experience of Thy judgment, I seek with trembling the withdrawal of my mind from the tumult of temporal desires; for I dread even still worse those eternal punishments, which Thou dost threaten.’ Well then is it said of ‘kings and counsellors,’ *which built desolate places for themselves.* In that they, who know both how to govern themselves, and to advise for others, being unable as yet to obtain admission to that interior tranquillity, fashion a resemblance to it within themselves by pursuit of a quiet mind.

Ver. 15. *Or with princes that have gold, who fill their houses with silver.*

[xxxi]

61. Whom does he call *princes*, but the rulers of holy Church, whom the Divine economy substitutes without intermission in the room of their predecessors? Concerning these the Psalmist, speaking to the same Church, says, *Instead of thy fathers thou hast children born to thee, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands.* [Ps. 45, 16] And what does he call gold, saving wisdom; of which Solomon saith, *A treasure to be desired lieth at rest in the mouth of the wise?* [Prov. 21, 20]

That is, he saw wisdom as gold, and therefore called it a treasure: and she is well designated by the name of 'gold,' for that, as temporal goods are purchased with gold, so are eternal blessings with wisdom. If wisdom had not been gold, it would never have been said by the Angel to the Church [p] of Laodicea, I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire. For we 'buy ourselves gold,' when we pay obedience first, to get wisdom in exchange, and it is to this very bargain that a certain wise man rightly stimulates us, in these words, *If thou desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord shall give her unto thee.* [Ecclus. 1, 26] And what is signified by the 'houses,' but our consciences? Hence it is said to one that was healed, *Go unto thine house.* [Matt. 9, 16] As though he had heard in plain words, 'After the outward miracles, turn back into thine own conscience, and weigh well what kind of person within thou shouldest shew thyself before God.' And what too is represented by silver but the divine revelations, of which the Psalmist says, *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the fire?* [Ps 12, 6] The word of the Lord is said to be like silver tried in the fire, because God's word, when it is fixed in the heart, is tried with afflictions.

62. Let the holy man then, full of the Spirit of Eternity, both sum up the things that shall be, and gather together in the open bosom of his mind all those, whom ages long after should give birth to, and consider with wonder and astonishment those Elect souls, with whom he would be enjoying rest in life eternal without the weariness of labour, had none ever been led into sin by the passion of pride, and let him say, *For now should I have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept; then had I been at rest with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves, or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver.* For as, if no decay of sin had ever ruined our first parent, he would not have begotten of himself children of hell, but they all, who must now be saved by the Redemption, would have been born of him Elect souls, and none else, let him look at these, and reflect how he might have been at rest in their company. Let him see the holy Apostles so ruling the Church they had undertaken, that they never ceased to give it counsel by the word of preaching, and so call them kings and counsellors. After these let him behold rulers arise in their room, who by living according to wisdom should have gold, and by preaching right ways to others should shine with the silver of sacred discourse, and let him call them real princes, the houses of whose conscience are full of gold and silver. But as it is not enough sometimes for the Spirit of Prophecy to foresee future events, unless at the same time it presents to the view of the prophet the past and by-gone, the holy man opens his eyes below and above, and not only fixes them on the future, but also recalls to mind the past. For he forthwith adds,

Ver. 16. *Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.*

[xxxii]

63. An abortive child, because it is born before the full period, being dead is forthwith put out of sight. Whom then does the holy man term 'abortives,' with whom he might 'have been at rest,' he reflects, saving all the Elect, who from the beginning of the world lived before the time of the Redemption, and yet studied to mortify themselves to this world. Those who had not the tables of the Law, 'died' as it were 'from the womb,' in that it was by the natural law that they fear their Creator, and believing the Mediator would come, they strove to the best of their power, by mortifying their pleasures, to keep even those very precepts, which they had not received in writing. And so that period, which at the beginning of the world produced our fathers dead to this life, was in a certain sense the 'womb of an abortive birth.' For there we have Abel, of whom we

read not that he resisted his brother when he slew him. There Enoch, who approved himself such that he was carried up to walk with the Lord. There Noah, who hereby, that he was acceptable to the searching judgment of God, was, in the world, the world's survivor. There Abraham, who, while a pilgrim in the world, became the *friend of God*. There Isaac, who, by reason of his fleshly eyes waxing dim, by his age had no sight of things present, but by the efficacy of the prophetic Spirit lighted up future ages even with his extraordinary luminousness of sight. There Jacob, who in humility fled his brother's indignation, and by kindness overcame the same; who was fruitful indeed in his offspring, but yet being more fruitful in richness of the Spirit, bound that offspring with the chains of prophecy. And this *untimely birth* is well described as *hidden*, in that from the beginning of the world, while there are some few, whom we are informed of by Moses' mention of them, by far the largest portion of mankind is hidden from our sight. For we are not to imagine that during all the period up to the receiving of the Law, only just so many righteous men came forth, as Moses has run through in the most summary notice. And thus, forasmuch as the multitude of the righteous born from the beginning of the world is in great measure withdrawn from our knowledge, this *untimely birth* is called *hidden*. And it is also said, *not to have been*, because a few only being enumerated, the generality of them are not preserved among us by any written record for their memorial.

64. Now it is rightly added; *As infants which never saw light*. For they, who came into this world after the Law was received, were conceived to their Creator, by the instruction of the same Law; yet, though *conceived*, they never saw light, in that these never could attain to the coming of the Lord's Incarnation, which yet they stedfastly believed; for the Lord Incarnate saith, *I am the Light of the world* [John 8, 12]; and that very Light declareth, *Many Prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them*. [Matt. 13, 17] Therefore the fruit 'conceived never saw light,' in that, although quickened to entertain the hope of a future Mediator by the plain declarations of the Prophets, they were never able to behold His Incarnation. In all these then the inward conception brought forth a form of faith, but never carried this on so far as to the open vision of God's Presence; for that death intervening hurried them from the world before Truth made manifest had shed light thereon.

65. Thus the holy man then, full of the spirit of Eternity, fixes to his memory by the hand of the heart all that is transient; and because every creature is little in regard to the Creator, by the same Spirit, Which hath nought either in Itself or about Itself saving always to be, he views both what shall be, and what hath been, and directs the eye of his mind both below and above, and regarding things that are coming as past, he burns in the core of his heart toward eternal Being, and says, *For now I should have lain still and been quiet*. For 'now' belongs to the present time, and what else is it for one to seek a rest always placed in the present, but to pant after that bliss of eternity, whereunto there is nought in coming or in going? Which always Being The Truth, by the lips of Moses, shews to be His own attribute, so as to communicate it to us in some degree in the words, *I AM THAT I AM*, and He said, *Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, HE THAT IS hath sent me unto you*; and now, that he is contemplating things transient, and seeking an ever present bliss, and making mention of the light to come, and enumerating and considering the orders of the Elect children thereof, let him now shew us in a little plainer terms the rest itself that appertains to this light, and let him shew in plainer words, what is brought to pass therein every day relating to the life and conduct of the wicked. It proceeds;

Ver. 17. *There the wicked cease from disturbance, and there the weary in strength be at rest.*

[xxxiii]

66. We have already said above, that herein, viz. that the hearts of sinners are possessed with a tumult of desires, they are grievously oppressed by a host of goading thoughts, but in this light, which the 'infants conceived' never saw, the wicked are said to 'cease from their disquietude' for this reason, that the coming of the Mediator, which the fathers under the Law had long waited for, the Gentiles found to the peace of their life, as Paul testifies, who saith, *Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it.* [Rom. 11, 7] In this light then 'the wicked cease from disquietude,' inasmuch as the minds of the untoward, when they have come to the knowledge of the truth, eschew the wearisome desires of the world, and find rest in the quiet haven of interior love. Does not the Light Itself call us to this rest when It says, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take My yoke upon You and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto Your souls; For My yoke is easy, and My burthen is light.* [Matt. 11, 28-30] For what heavy yoke does He put upon our mind's neck, Who bids us shun every desire that causes disquietude? What heavy burthen does He lay upon His followers, Who warns us to decline the wearisome ways of the world? Now, by the testimony of the Apostle Paul, *Christ died for the ungodly;* [Rom. 5, 6] and it was for this reason that the Light Itself condescended to die for the ungodly, that these might not continue in the disorderment of their state of darkness. So let the holy man consider with himself, that by the mystery of the Incarnation 'the Light' rescues the wicked from heavy toil, while It takes clean away all the aims of wickedness from their hearts; let him reflect how every converted person has already here below a taste, by inward tranquillity, of that rest which he desires to have throughout eternity, and let him say, *There the wicked cease from, disturbance, and the weary in strength are at rest.*

67. For all they that are strong in this world are by their might in one way strong, not *wearied out in strength;* but they that are endued with might in the love of their Maker, the more they be strengthened in the love of God, which is their object of desire, become in the same degree powerless in their own strength, and the stronger their longing for the things of eternity, the more they are wearied as to earthly objects by a wholesome failure of their strength. Hence the Psalmist, being wearied with the strength of his love, said, *My soul hath fainted in [al. toward as V.] Thy salvation.* [Ps. 119, 81] For his soul did faint while making way in God's salvation, in that he panted with desire of the light of eternity, broken of all confidence in the flesh. Hence he says again, *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.* [Ps. 84, 2] Now when he said 'longeth,' he added rightly, and 'fainteth,' since that longing for the Divine Being is little indeed, which is not likewise immediately followed by a fainting in one's self. For it is but meet that he who is inflamed to seek the courts of eternity, should be enfeebled in the love of this temporal state. So that he should be cold to the pursuit of this world, in proportion as he rises with soul more inflamed to the love of God. Which love if he completely grasps, he then at the same time completely quits the world, and the more entirely dies to temporal things, the higher he is made to soar after the life to come by the inspirations of Eternity. Had not that soul found itself wearied in its own strength, which exclaimed, *My soul [so V.] was melted when he spake;* [Cant. 5, 6] clearly in that while the soul is touched by the inspirations of the secret communication, weakened in the seat of its own strength, it is 'melted' by the desire wherewith it is swallowed up, and finds itself wearied in itself by the same step whereby it is brought to see that there is a might without itself to which it soars. Hence when the Prophet was telling that he had seen a vision of God, he adds, *And*

*I, Daniel fainted and was sick certain days*; [Dan. 8, 27] for when the soul is held fast to the power of God, the flesh waxes faint in respect of its own strength. Thus Jacob, who held an Angel in his hold, immediately afterwards halted upon one foot; for he that regards things on high with a genuine love, already forswears to walk in this world with a doubleminded affection. For he rests upon one foot, who is strong in the love of God alone; and it must needs be that the other should wither, for when the virtue of the soul gains increase, it behoves assuredly that the strength of the flesh wax dull. Let blessed Job, then, review the deep recesses of the hearts of the faithful, and consider the haven of inward peace that they find, while in advancing unto God they are enfeebled in their own strength, and let him say, *There the weary in strength be at rest*. As if he taught in plain words, 'there the repose of light is the reward of those, whom the advancement of inward restoration wearies here.' Nor ought it to influence us, that after naming light he did not subjoin, *in this*, but *there*, for that which he beholds encompassing the Elect, he discovers to be our place as it were. Whence then the Psalmist, when contemplating the unchangeableness of Eternity, and saying, *But Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail*; [Ps. 102, 28] proclaims that this is the place of the Elect, by adding, *But the children of Thy servants shall dwell there*. For God, Who without position containeth all things, remains a place without locality to us who come to Him. And when we reach this place, our eyes are opened to see, what infinite vexation even our very repose of mind was in this life, for though the righteous by comparison with the bad already enjoy rest, yet in estimating the inmost Rest, they are altogether not at rest. Hence it is well added; Ver. 18. *There the former prisoners are alike without vexation*.

[xxxiv]

68. For though the just are possessed by no riot of carnal desires, yet the clog of corruption binds them down in this life with hard chains; for it is written, *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things*. [Wisd. 9, 15] So herein even, that they are still mortal beings, they are weighed down by the burthen of their state of corruption, and chained and bound by its clogs, in that they are not yet risen in that liberty of an incorruptible life. For they meet with one thing from the mind, and another from the body, and they are spent every day in the inward conflict with themselves. Are they not indeed bound with the hard chain of vexation, whose mind, without labour, is dissolved in ignorance, and is not trained without the strivings of labour? When forced it stands erect, of itself it lies prostrate, and yet as soon as raised up, it forthwith falls, by conquering itself with laborious effort, its eyes are opened to see heavenly things, but recoiling, it flees the light, which had illuminated it. Are they not bound fast with the hard chain of vexation, who when their fired soul draws them with a perfect desire to the bosom of inward peace, suffer perturbation from the flesh in the heat of the conflict? And though this now no longer encounters it face to face, as though drawn up with hostile front, yet it still goes muttering like a captive in the rear of the mind, and, though with fears, it yet defiles with vile clamouring the form of fair tranquillity in the breast. Therefore, though the Elect subdue all enemies with a strong hand, since they long for the security of inward peace, it is yet a grievous vexation to them to have something still to vanquish. And leaving these out of the question, they endure over and above those chains too, which a sore necessity outwardly fastens upon them; for to eat, to drink, and to be tired, are chains of corruption, and chains too, which can never be unloosed, save when our mortal nature is turned into the glory of an immortal nature; for we fill our body with food to sustain it, lest it fail from extenuation; and we thin it down by abstinence, lest it oppress by repletion. We quicken it by motion, lest it be killed by lying

motionless, but by setting it down we soon stop its motions, that by that very activity it may not give under. We clothe it with garments as a succour to it, lest the cold destroy it, and cast off these succours so sought after, lest the heat should parch it. Exposed then to so many vicissitudes and chances, what else do we, but drudge to the corruptibility of our state of being, that howsoever the multiplicity of the services rendered to it may sustain that body, which the fretting care of a frail nature subject to change weighs to the ground. Hence Paul says well, *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.* [Rom. 8, 20. 21.] For ‘the creature is made subject to vanity, not willingly,’ in that man, who willingly left the footing of inborn firmness, being pressed down by the weight of a deserved mortality, is the unwilling slave of the corruption of his changeful condition. But this creature is then rescued from the slavery of corruption, when in rising again it is lifted uncorrupt to the glory of the sons of God. Here then the Elect are bound with vexation, in that they are still pressed down by the curse of their corrupt condition. But when we are stripped of our corruptible flesh, we are as it were loosened from those chains of vexation, whereby we are now held bound. For we already long to come into the presence of God, but we are still hindered by the clog of a mortal body. So that we are justly called ‘prisoners,’ in that we have not as yet the advance of our desire to God free before us. Hence Paul, whose heart was set upon the things of eternity, yet who still carried about him the load of his corruption, being in bonds exclaims, *Having a desire to be unloosed and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] For he would not desire to be ‘unloosed,’ unless, assuredly, he saw himself to be in bonds. Now because he saw that these bonds were most surely to be burst at the Resurrection, the Prophet rejoiced as if they were already burst asunder, when he said, *Thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.* [Ps. 116, 16] Let the holy man then reflect that inward light is the haven that receives converted sinners, and let him say, *There the wicked cease from trouble.* Let him reflect, that holy men, being awearied with the exercising of desire, enjoy the deeper repose in that inmost bosom, and let him say, *And there the weary in strength are at rest.* Let him reflect, that being absolved from all the bonds of corruption at once and together, they attain those uncorrupt joys of liberty. *And the former prisoners are alike without vexation.* And it is well said, *the former prisoners*, for while that ever present bliss is in his view, all that shall be, and is going [B. ‘and shall be gone’], seems as though past. For whilst the end of all things is awaited, all that passes away is accounted already to have been. But let him tell what all they, for whom the interior rest is there in store, shall meanwhile have done here. It goes on;

*They have not heard the voice of the exactor. [non exaudierunt]*

[xxxv]

69. Who else is to be understood by the title of the ‘exactor,’ saving that insatiate prompter, who for once bestowed the coin of deceit upon mankind, and from that time ceases not daily to claim the debt of death? Who lent to man in Paradise the money of sin, but by the multiplying of wickedness is daily exacting it with usury? Concerning this exactor, Truth saith in the Gospel, And the Judge deliver thee to the officer [V. ‘*exactori*’]. [Luke 12, 58] Therefore the voice of this exactor is the tempting of persuasion to our hurt. And we hear the voice of the exactor, when we are smitten with his temptation, but we do not bear it effectually [*exaudimus*] if we resist the hand that smites, for he ‘hears’ that feels the temptation, but he hears effectually who yields to the temptation. So let it be said of the righteous, *They have not heard the voice of the exactor*; for though they hear his



prompting in that they are tempted, they do not hear it effectually, for that they take shame to yield thereto, but because whatsoever the mind loves with great affection, it is often repeating even in utterance of the lips; blessed Job, in that he views the crowds of inward peace with fulness of affection, again employs himself about the description [al. the distinguishing of them] of it, saying, Ver. 19. *The small and great are there; the servant is free from his master.*

70. Forasmuch as there is to us in this life a difference in works, doubtless there will be in the future life a difference in degrees of dignity, that whereas here one surpasses another in desert, there one may excel another in reward. Hence Truth says in the Gospel, *In My Father's house are many mansions.* [John 14, 2] But in those 'many mansions,' the very diversity of rewards will be in some measure in harmony. For an influence so mighty joins us together in that peace, that what any has failed to receive in himself, he rejoices to have received in another. And thus they that did not equally labour in the vineyard, equally obtain all of them a penny. And indeed with the Father are 'many mansions,' and yet the unequal labourers receive the same penny, in that the blessedness of joy will be one and the same to all, yet not one and the same sublimity of life to all. He had seen the small and great in this light, who said in the voice of the Head; *Thine eyes did see My substance, yet being imperfect, and in Thy book were all My members written.* [Ps. 139, 16] He beheld 'the small and the great together,' when he declared, *He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great.* [Ps. 115, 13] And it is well added, *And the servant is free from his master.* For it is written, *Everyone that sinneth is the servant of sin* [John 8, 34]. For whosoever yields himself up to bad desire, submits the neck of his mind, till now free, to the dominion of wickedness. Now we withstand this master, when we struggle against the evil whereby we had been taken captive, when we forcibly resist the bad habit, and treading under all froward desires, maintain against the same the right of inborn liberty, when we strike our sin by penitence, and cleanse the stains of pollution with our tears. But it oftentimes happens, that the mind indeed already bewails what it remembers itself to have done amiss, that already it not only forsakes its misdeeds, but even chastises them with the bitterest lamentations, yet while it recalls to memory the things that it has done, it is affrighted and sorely dismayed against the Judgment. It already turns itself with a perfect intention, but does not yet lift itself up in a perfect state of security, for while it weighs the rigid exactness of the final scrutiny, it trembles with anxiety between hope and fear, for it knows not, when the righteous Judge comes, what He will reckon, what He will remit of the deeds done. For it remembers what evil deeds it has committed, but it cannot tell whether it has worthily bewailed the commission of them, and it dreads lest the vastness of the sin exceed the measure of penance. And it is very often the case that 'Truth' already remits the sin, yet the troubled soul, whilst it is full of anxiety for itself, still trembles for the pardon thereof. So that in this present life the servant already escapes from his master, yet he is not free from him, in that by chastisement and penance man already forsakes his sin, yet he still fears the strict Judge for the recompensing of it. There then 'the servant will be free from his master,' when there will be no longer misgiving about the pardon of sin, when the recollection of its sin no longer condemns the soul, now secured, where the conscience does not tremble under a sense of guilt, but exults in the pardon of the same in a state of freedom.

72. But if man is reached there by no remembrance of his sin, how does he congratulate himself that he has been saved therefrom? Or how does he return thanks to his Benefactor for the pardon, which he has received, if by an intervening forgetfulness of his past wickedness, he knows not that he is a debtor to suffer punishment? For we must not pass over negligently that which the Psalmist

says, *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever.* [Ps. 89, 1] For how does he ‘sing of the mercies of God for ever,’ if he knows not that he has been miserable; and if he has no recollection of past misery, whence does he answer with praises the bestowal of mercy? And again, we must enquire how the mind of the Elect can be in perfect bliss, if amidst its joys the memory of its guilt reaches it? Or how does the glory of indefectible light shine out, when it is overcast by the sin that is recalled to mind? But be it known, that just as oftentimes now in joy we call to mind sad things, so in the future life, we bring back the memory of past sin without any hurt to our bliss. For it very often happens, that in the season of health, we recall to mind past pains without feeling pain, and in proportion as we remember ourselves sick, the more we hug ourselves in health. And so in that blissful estate there will be a remembrance of sin, not such as to pollute the mind, but to attach us the more closely to our joy, that while the mind without pain remembers itself of its pain, it may the more clearly perceive itself to be a debtor to the physician, and so much the more cherish the health it has received, in proportion as it remembers what it has escaped of uneasiness. And so then, placed in that state of bliss, we so regard our evil deeds without loathing, as now being set in light, without any inward blindness of the heart, we see the darkness with our mind; for though that be dim which we perceive with the imagination, this comes from the sentence of light, not from the misfortune of blindness. And thus throughout eternity we render to our Benefactor the praise of His mercy, yet are in no degree oppressed with the consciousness of wretchedness; for whilst we review our evils without any evil betiding the mind, on the one hand there will never be ought to defile, the hearts that render praise on the score of past wickednesses, and again there will always be somewhat to inflame them to the praise of their Deliverer. Therefore, because the repose of inward light does in such sort transport the great ones into itself, that yet it does not leave the little ones, let it be rightly said, *the small and great are there.* Now forasmuch as the mind of the converted sinner is there touched by the recollection of his sin in such sort that he is not overwhelmed by any confusion at that recollection, it is fitly subjoined, *And the servant is free from his master.*

#### BOOK V.

He explains the remainder of chap. iii. from ver. 20. the whole of chap. iv. and the first two verses of chap. v.

[i]

1. **THOUGH** the appointments of God are very much hidden from sight, why it is that in this life it is sometimes ill with the good and well with the wicked, yet they are then still more mysterious when it both goes well with the good here below, and ill with the wicked. For when it goes ill with the good, and well with the bad, this perhaps is found to be for that both the good, if they have done wrong in any thing, receive punishment here that they may be more completely freed from eternal damnation, and the wicked meet here with the good things, which conduce to this life, that they may be dragged to unmitigated torments hereafter. And hence these words are spoken to the rich man, when burning in hell, *Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things.* [Luke 16, 25] But when it is well with the good here and ill with the wicked, it is very doubtful, whether the good for this reason receive good things, that they may be

set forward and advance to something better, or whether by a just and secret appointment they receive here the reward of their deeds, that they may prove void of the rewards of the life to come; and whether afflictions for this reason come upon the wicked, in order that by correcting, they may be the means of preserving them from everlasting punishments, or whether their punishment only begins here, that, one day to receive completion, it should lead to the final torments of hell.

Therefore, because in the midst of the divine appointments the human mind is closed in by the great darkness of its uncertainty, holy men, when they see this world's prosperity to be their lot, are disquieted with fearful misgivings. For they fear lest they should receive here the fruits of their labours. They fear lest Divine Justice should see in them a secret wound, and in loading them with external blessings should withhold them from the interior. But when they exactly consider, that they never do good saving that they may please God only, nor triumph in the very exuberance of their prosperity, then indeed they less fear hidden judgments to their hurt in their good fortune, yet they ill endure that good fortune, in that it impedes the interior purpose of the heart, and they reluctantly submit to the caresses of this present life, forasmuch as they are not ignorant that they are in some degree retarded thereby in their interior longing. For honour in this world is more engrossing than the contempt thereof, and the rise of prosperity weighs upon them more than the pressure of a hard necessity. For sometimes when a man is outwardly straitened by the latter, he is the more entirely set at liberty to fix his desire upon the interior good; but by the other the mind, while forced to yield to the will of many, is kept back from the race of its own desire. And hence it is that holy men are in greater dread of prosperity in this world than of adversity. For they know that while the mind is under soft and beguiling impressions, it is sometimes apt to give itself up to be drawn away after external objects. They know that oftentimes the secret thought of the heart so beguiles it, that it does not see how it is changed. And they consider too, what the eternal blessings are which they desire, and they see what a mere nothing all is that courts and smiles upon us after the manner of things temporal, and their mind bears the worse all the prosperity of this world, in proportion as it is pierced with love of heavenly happiness; and it is planted so much the more erect in contempt of the delightfulness of the present life, the more it perceives that this is beguiling it by stealth in the disregard of eternal glory. Hence when blessed Job, having his eye fixed upon the rest above, had said, *The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master.* He therefore adds,

Ver. 20. *Wherefore is light given to one that is in misery?*

[ii]

2. In holy Scripture prosperity is sometimes represented by the title of light, and this world's adversity by the name of night. Hence it is well said by the Psalmist, *As is its darkness, so also is its light.* [Ps 139, 12. Vulg.] For as holy men thus trample upon the prosperity of this state by contemning it, as also they sustain its adverse fortune by trampling upon it, by an exceeding highmindedness laying under their feet alike the good and the ill of the world, they declare, *As its darkness, so also is its light.* As though they said in plain words, 'as its griefs do not force down the resoluteness of our fixed mind, so neither can its caresses corrupt the same.' But since these last, as we have said above, though they fail to lift up the mind of the righteous, do yet cause them disquietude; holy men, who know themselves to be in misery in this wearisome exile, shrink from shining in its prosperity. Hence it is well said at this time, *Wherefore is light given to one that is in misery?* for 'light is given to those in misery,' when they, who, by contemplating things above, see themselves to be in misery in this our pilgrimage, have the brightness of transitory prosperity

bestowed upon them; and when they are deploring grievously, that they are slow in returning to their country, they are over and above constrained to bear the burthen of honours. The love of eternal things is crushing them, and at the same time the glory of temporal things smiles upon them. When these reflect what the things are, which keep them down below, and what those are that they see not of the things above, what those are that set them up on earth, and what they have lost of heavenly blessings, they are stung with regret of their prosperity. For though they see that they are never wholly overwhelmed thereby, yet they anxiously consider that their thoughts are divided between the love of God, and the gifts of His hand; and hence when he says, *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery?* he subjoins forthwith, *And life unto the bitter in soul?*

[iii]

3. For all the Elect are bitter in soul, in that either they never cease to punish themselves by weeping for the transgressions they have committed, or they afflict themselves with regrets, that banished here far from the face of their Creator, they are not yet admitted to the bliss of the eternal country; and of their hearts it is well said by Solomon, *The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger shall not intermeddle with his joy.* For the hearts of the reprobate are likewise in bitterness, for that they are afflicted even by their very bad passions themselves. Yet they know not of this very bitterness, because having voluntarily blinded their own eyes, they cannot estimate what they are undergoing; but on the contrary the heart of a good man knoweth its own bitterness, for it knows the hard condition of this place of exile, wherein it is cast forth to be torn in pieces; and it sees how tranquil is all that it has lost, how troubled the condition it has fallen into. Yet this embittered heart is one day brought back to its own joy, and *a stranger shall not intermeddle* therewith, in that he, who now casts himself forth without, away from this sorrow of the heart, in his aims, will then remain shut out from its interior festival.

4. They then that are *in bitterness of soul*, long to be wholly dead to the world, that, as they themselves aim at nothing in this present world, so they may not henceforth be fettered by the world with any ties; and it very often happens that a person has already ceased to retain the world in his affections, but the world still ties down that person by its business, and he indeed is already dead to the world, but the world is not yet dead to him. For in a certain sense the world, still alive, regards [D. 'desires him' (as below)] him, so long as it strives to carry him away in its actions, when he is bent another way. Hence, since Paul both himself utterly contemned the world, and saw that he was become such an one as this world could not possibly desire, having burst the bonds of this life, and being henceforth at liberty, he rightly exclaims, *The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.* For 'the world was crucified to him,' because being now dead to his affections it was no longer an object of love to him; and he had likewise 'crucified himself to the world,' in that he studied to shew himself thereto in such a light, that, as though dead, he might never be coveted by it. For if there be a dead person, and one alive in the same place, though the dead sees not the living, yet the living person does see the dead, but if both are dead, neither can possibly see the other. Thus he, who no longer loves the world, but yet even against his will is loved by the world, though he himself being as it were dead sees nothing of the world, yet the world not being dead sees him; but if he neither himself retains the world in his affections, nor again is retained in the affections of the world, then both are mutually dead to one another; in that whereas neither seeks the other, it is as if the dead heeded not the dead. Therefore, because Paul neither sought the glory

of the world, nor was himself sought out by the same, he glories both in being himself crucified to the world, and in the world being crucified to him. Now because there are many that desire this, who yet do not altogether rise up to the very extreme point of such a state of deadness, they may well lament and say; *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul.* For 'life is given to those in bitterness,' when the glory of this world is bestowed upon the sad and sorrowful, in which same life they do not spare themselves the chastening of most urgent fear; for though they do not themselves hold to the world, yet they still dread being such as the world holds to; and except they were living to it in some slight degree, it would never surely love them for their serviceableness to its interests; just as the sea keeps living bodies in her own bosom, but dead ones she forthwith casts out from herself. It proceeds;  
Ver. 21. *Which long for death, but it cometh not.*

[iv]

5. For they desire to mortify themselves wholly, and to be entirely extinct of the life of temporal glory, but by the secret appointments of God they are often forced either to take the lead in command, or to busy themselves with dignities imposed on them, and in these circumstances they unceasingly look for a perfect mortification, but this expected death cometh not; in that the use of them is still alive to temporal glory even against their will, though they submit to that glory from the fear of God, and while they inwardly retain their aim after piety, they outwardly discharge the functions of their station, that they should neither quit their perfection in their inward purpose, nor set themselves against the dispensations of their Creator in a spirit of pride. For by a marvellous pitifulness of the Divine Nature it comes to pass, that, when he, who aims at contemplation with a perfect heart, is busied with human affairs, his perfect mind at once profits many that are weaker, and in whatever degree he sees himself to be imperfect, he rises therefrom more perfect to the crowning point of humility. For sometimes by the very same means, whereby holy men suffer loss in their own longings, they bear off the larger profits by the conversion of others, for, while it is not permitted them to give themselves thereto as they desire, it is their grateful office to carry off along with themselves others, whom they are associated with. And so it is effected by a wonderful dispensation of pity, that by the same means, whereby they seem to themselves to be the more undone [*destructiores*], they rise with richer resources to the building up [*constructionem*] of their heavenly Country.

6. Now sometimes they fail to attain the desires, that they have conceived, for this reason, that by the very interposing of the delay, they may be made to expand to the same objects with an enlarged embrace of the mind, and by a striking dispensation it is effected that that, which if fulfilled might perhaps become thin and poor, being kept back, gains growth. For they desire so to mortify themselves that, if it may be vouchsafed, they may already perfectly behold the face of their Creator, but their desire is delayed that it may gain increase, and it is fostered in the bosom of its slow advancement that it may grow larger. Hence the Bride, panting with desire of her Bridegroom, justly cries out, *By night on my bed I sought him, whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.* [Cant. 3, 1] The Spouse hides himself when He is sought, that not being found He may be sought for with the more ardent affection, and she in seeking is withheld, that she cannot find Him, in order that being rendered of larger capacity by the delay she undergoes, she may one day find a thousandfold what she sought. Hence when blessed Job said, *Which long for*

*death, but it cometh not; that he might the more minutely particularize this very desire of those seekers, he thereupon adds;  
And dig for it as for hid treasures.*

[v]

7. For all men that seek for a treasure by digging, the deeper they have begun to go, kindle to the work with the greater energy; for in the same proportion that they reckon themselves to be now, at this moment, approaching the buried treasure, they strive with increased efforts in digging for it. They, then, that perfectly desire the mortification of themselves, seek it as they that dig for hid treasures, for the nearer they are brought to their object, the more ardent they shew themselves in the work. Therefore they never flag in their labour, but increase the more in the exercise thereof; for that in the degree, that they reckon on their reward as now nearer at hand, they spend themselves the more gladly in the work. Hence Paul says well to some, that were seeking the hid treasure of the eternal inheritance, *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but consoling [V. consolantes] one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.* [Heb. 10, 25] For to give consolation to the labourer, is to continue labouring in like manner to him, the sight of a fellow labourer being the alleviation of our own labour, as, when a companion joins us in a journey, the way itself is not shortened, yet the toilsomeness of the way is alleviated by the society of a companion. Therefore, whereas Paul looked for their consoling one another in their labours, he added these words, *and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.* As though he said, 'let your labour increase the more, that now the reward of your labour itself is nigh at hand.' As if he expressed himself in plain words, 'Do ye seek a treasure? Then ye should dig for it with the greater ardour, that ye have by digging reached by this time close to the gold ye were in quest of.'

8. Though this, that he says, *Which long for death and it cometh not; and dig for it as for hid treasures*, may be taken in another sense also. For in that we cannot perfectly die to the world, unless we bury ourselves within the invisible depths of our own heart from all things visible, they that long for the mortifying of themselves, are well compared to those that dig for a treasure. For we die to the world by means of an unseen wisdom, of which it is said by Solomon, *If thou seekest her as silver, and diggest for her as for hid treasures.* [Prov. 2, 4] Since wisdom lieth not on the surface of things, for it is deep in the unseen. And we then lay hold on the mortification of ourselves, in attaining wisdom, if, relinquishing visible things, we bury ourselves in the invisible; if we so seek for her in the digging of the heart, that every imagination, which the mind conceives, of an earthly nature, she puts from her with the hand of holy discernment, and acquaints herself with the treasure of virtue which was hidden from her. For she soon finds a treasure in herself, if she thrust from her that heap of earthly thoughts, which lay as a wretched load upon her. Now because he describes death coveted as a treasure, he rightly subjoins;  
Ver. 22. *Which rejoice exceedingly and are glad, when they can find the grave.*

[vi]

9. For as the grave is that place wherein the body is buried, so heavenly contemplation is a kind of spiritual grave wherein the soul is buried. For in a certain sense we still live to this world, when in spirit we roam abroad therein. But we are buried in the grave as dead, when being mortified in

things without, we secrete ourselves in the depths of interior contemplation. And therefore holy men never cease to mortify themselves with the sword of the sacred Word to the importunate calls of earthly desires, to the throng of unprofitable cares, and to the din of obstreperous tumults, and they bury themselves within before God's presence in the bosom of the mind. Hence it is well said by the Psalmist, *And Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence from the strife of tongues.* [Ps. 31, 20] Which though it be not until afterwards fully brought to pass, is yet even now in a great measure accomplished, when with the feeling of delight they are caught away into the inward parts from the strife of temporal desires, so that, whilst their mind wholly expands in every part to the love of God, it is not rent and torn by any useless anxiety. Hence it is that Paul had seen those disciples as dead, and as it were buried in the grave by contemplation, to whom he said, *Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* [Col. 3, 3] He, then, that seeks for death rejoices when he finds the grave; for whoso desires to mortify himself, is exceeding joyful on finding the rest of contemplation; that being dead to the world he may lie hid, and bury himself in the bosom of interior love from all the disquietudes of external things.

10. But since in addition to this, that he speaks of a treasure being dug up, the finding of a grave is further introduced, it is needful that our mind's eye should keep this in view, that the ancients buried their dead with their wealth. He, then, that seeks for a treasure, 'rejoices when he has found the grave,' in that when we, in quest of wisdom, turn the pages of Holy Writ, when we trace out the examples of those that have gone before us, we as it were derive joy from the grave, for we find the mind's wealth among the dead, who, because they [several Mss. 'for they who.'] are perfectly dead to this world, rest in secret with their riches beside them. And so he is made rich by the grave, who, following the example of the righteous, is raised up in the excellency of contemplation. But when he asks, saying, *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery?* he intimates the reason for which he ventures to put such a question, by saying,

Ver. 23. *Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath encompassed with darkness?*

[vii]

11. For 'man's way is hid to him,' in that though he already takes cognizance of the kind [*qualitate*] of life that he is leading, he does not yet know to what issue it tends. Though his affections are now fixed on things above, though he seeks them with all his longings, he is yet ignorant whether he shall persevere in the same longings. For forsaking our sins we strive after righteousness, and we know whence we are come, but we know nothing whereunto we may arrive. We know what we were yesterday, but we cannot tell what we may chance to be to-morrow. 'Man's way then is hid to him,' in that he so sets the foot of his labour, that, this notwithstanding, he can never foresee the issue of the accomplishment thereof.

12. Now there is also another 'hiding of our way.' For there are times when we are ignorant, whether the very things which we believe we do aright, are rightly done in the strict Judge's eye. For, as we have also said a long way above, it often happens that an action of ours, which is cause for our condemnation, passes with us for the aggrandizement of virtue. Often by the same act, whereby we think to appease the Judge, He is urged to anger, when favourable. As Solomon bears witness, saying, *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death.* [Prov. 14, 12] Hence, whilst holy men are getting the mastery over their evil habits, their

very good practices even become an object of dread to them, lest, when they desire to do a good action, they be decoyed by a semblance of the thing, lest the baleful canker of corruption lurk under the fair appearance of a goodly colour. For they know that they are still charged with the burthen of corruption, and cannot exactly discern the things that be good. And when they bring before their eyes the standard of the final Judgment, there are times when they fear the very things which they approve in themselves; and indeed they are in mind wholly intent on the concerns of the interior, yet alarmed from uncertainty about their doings, they know not whither they are going. Hence after he had said, *Wherefore is light given to one that is in misery?* it is with propriety added, *to a man whose way is hid?* As though the words were, 'Why has that man this life's success for his portion, who knows not of his course of conduct, in what esteem it is held by his Judge. And it is rightly subjoined, *And whom God hath encompassed with darkness.* For man is 'encompassed with darkness,' since howsoever he may burn with heavenly longings, he is ignorant how it goes with him in the interior. And he is in great fear lest aught concerning himself should meet him in the Judgment, which is now hidden from himself in the aspirations of holy fervour. 'Man is encompassed with darkness,' in that he is closed in by the clouds of his own ignorance. Is not that man 'encompassed with darkness,' who most often neither remembers the past, nor finds out the future, and scarce knows the present? That wise man had seen himself to be encompassed with darkness, when he said, *And with labour do we find the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven who shall search out?* [Wisd. 9, 16]

The Prophet beheld himself 'encompassed with' such 'darkness,' when he was unable to discover the interior springs of His inmost economy, saying, *He made darkness His secret place.* [Ps. 18, 11] For the Author of our being, in that, when we were cast out into this place of exile, He took from us the light of His vision, buried Himself from our eyes as it were 'in the secret place of darkness.'

13. Now as often as we attentively regard this same darkness of our blind estate, we stir up the mind to lamentation. For it weeps for the state of blindness, which it is under without, if it remember in humility that it is bereft of light in the interior, and when it looks to the darkness which surrounds it, it is wrung with ardent longing for the inward brightness, and rent with thought's whole effort, and that light above, which as soon as created it relinquished, now debarred, it makes the object of its search. Whence it very often happens that that radiance of inward joy bursts out amidst those very tears of piety; and that the mind, which had lain torpid in a state of blindness, being fed with sighs, receives strength to gaze at the interior brightness. Whence it rightly proceeds,

Ver. 24. *For my sighing cometh before I eat.*

[viii]

14. For the soul's 'eating' is its being fed with the contemplations of the light above, and thus it sighs before it eats, in that it first travails with the groanings of sorrow, and afterwards is replenished with the cheer of contemplation. For except it sigh, it eats not, in that he that refuses to humble himself, in this exile we are in, by the groanings of heavenly desires, never tastes the delights of the eternal inheritance. For all they are starved of the food of truth, that take joy in the emptiness of this scene of our pilgrimage, but he 'sighs,' that 'eats,' because all who are touched with the love of truth, are at the same time fed with the refreshments of contemplation. The Prophet 'ate sighing,' when he said, *My tears have been my bread.* [Ps. 42, 3] For the soul is fed by



its own grief, when it is lifted up to the joys above by the tears, which it sheds, and indeed it bears within its sorrowful sighings, but it receives food for its refreshing, the more the force of its love gushes out in weeping. And hence blessed Job still goes on with the violence of that weeping, adding,

*And my roarings are poured out like overflowing waters.*

[ix]

15. Waters, that overflow, advance with a rush, and swell with billows evermore increasing. Now whilst the Elect set the judgments of God before the eyes of their mind, whilst they dread the secret sentence concerning them, whilst they trust to attain to God, but yet are in fear lest they should not attain, while they call to mind their past doings, which they weep over, whilst they shrink from the events that still await them, in that they are unknown, there are gathered in them as it were a kind of billows, as of water, which spend themselves in the roarings of grief, as upon a shore beneath them. The holy man then saw how great are the billows of our thoughts in our penitential mourning, and he called the very waves of our grief overflowing waters, saying, *And my roarings are like overflowing waters*. Now there are times when the righteous, as we likewise said a little above, even in the midst of their very good works, are affrighted and give themselves to continual mourning, lest they should offend by some secret misdemeanour therein. And when God's scourges suddenly take hold of them, they imagine that they have done despite to the grace of their Maker, in that being either impeded by infirmities, or weighed down with sadness, they are not ready to perform works of mercy to their neighbours; and their heart turns to mourning, for that the body is become slack to its devout ministration. And whereas they see that they are not adding to their reward, they fear that their past deeds also have been displeasing. Hence when blessed Job described his roaring like overflowing waters, he thereupon added,

Ver. 25. *For the thing that I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I am afraid of is come unto me.*

[x]

16. The righteous therefore lament and fear, and torment themselves with bitter lamentations, because they dread to be given over, and though they rejoice in their own correction [*correctio*], the correction itself disturbs their fearful spirits, lest the evil, which they are undergoing should not be the merciful stroke of discipline, but the righteous visitation of vengeance. And the Psalmist reflecting thereupon says with justice, *Who knoweth the power of Thine anger?* [Ps. 90, 11] For the power of God's anger cannot be conceived by our faculties, in that His dispensation, by its undiscerned provisions concerning us, often takes us up in that very point where it is counted to abandon us, and in the very thing wherein it is supposed to take us up, it forsakes us. So that very often that is rendered grace to us, which we call wrath, and that is sometimes wrath, which we account to be grace. For strokes of affliction are the correction of some men, but others they lead to a frenzy of impatience, and there are some whom prosperity, in that it soothes them, calms from a state of madness, while there are others whom, seeing that it uplifts them, it wholly turns adrift from every hope of conversion. Now vice forces all men down beneath, but some the more easily return from thence, that they take the greater shame to themselves to have fallen thereunto. And attainments in virtue in every case raise men on high, yet sometimes some men, in that swelling thoughts are engendered from their virtues, fall down by the very pathway of their rise. And so

forasmuch as the power of God's wrath is little known, under all circumstances it must needs be unceasingly feared. It proceeds;

Ver. 26. *Did I not dissemble it? Did I not hold my peace? Did I not rest quiet? Yet wrath came upon me.*

[xi]

17. Though in every situation of life, we sin in thought, word, and deed, the mind is then hurried along in all these three ways with the greater freedom from control, when it is lifted up with this world's good fortune. For when it sees that it surpasses other men in power, feeling proudly, it thinks high things of itself, and when no opposition is offered by any to the authority of its word, the tongue has the more uncontrolled range along precipitous paths; and while it is permitted to do all that it likes, it reckons all that it likes to be lawfully permitted it. But good men, when supported by this world's power, bring themselves under severer discipline of the mind, in proportion as they know that, from the intolerance of power, they are persuaded to unlicensed acts, as if they were more licensed to do them [vid. b. xx.c.73.]. Thus they refrain their hearts from surveying their own glory, they check their tongues from unrestrained talk, they guard their actions from restless roaming. For it often happens that they that are in power lose the good things that they do, because they entertain high conceits, and while they reckon themselves to be of use for every purpose, they blast the merit even of the usefulness they have laid out. For in order that a man's deeds may be rendered of greater worth, they must needs always appear worthless in his own esteem, lest the same good action elevate the heart of the doer, and in elevating overthrow its author by selfelation, more effectually than it helps the very persons for whom it may chance to be rendered. For it is hence that the King of Babylon, while he was secretly revolving in his own mind, in the pride of his heart, saying, *Is not this great Babylon which I have builded?* was suddenly turned into an irrational beast. For he lost all that he had been made, because he would not humbly keep back what he had done; and because in the Pride of his heart he lifted himself up above men, he lost that very human faculty, which he had in common with man. And often they that are in power burst out at random into insulting language towards their dependants, and this merit, viz. that they serve their office of authority with vigilance, they lose by reason of their forwardness of speech, plainly considering with overlittle dread the words of the Judge, that he *who shall say to his brother without cause Thou fool*, [Matt. 5, 22] makes himself obnoxious to hell fire. Often they that are in power, whereas they know not how to refrain lawful actions, slide into such as are unlawful, and unquiet. For he alone is never brought down in things unlawful, who is careful to restrain himself at times even from things lawful. It is with the bands of this selfsame restraint that Paul shewed himself to be bound for good, when he says, *All things are lawful to me, but all things are not expedient* [1 Cor. 6, 12]; and in order to shew in what exceeding freedom of mind he was set at large by reason of this very restraint, he thereupon added, *All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any*. For when the mind pursues after the desires that it entertains, it is convicted of being enslaved to the things, by the love of which it is subdued. But Paul, 'to whom all things are lawful,' is 'brought under the power of none;' in that by restraining himself even from things lawful, those very objects, which, if enjoyed, would weigh him down, being contemned, he rises above.

18. Let blessed Job then declare for our better instruction what he was when in power, in these words, *Did I not dissemble?* For when we are in possession of power, it is both to be taken account

of for purposes of utility, and to be kept out of sight because of Pride, in order that he that uses it, on the one hand, that he may render service therewith, may be aware that he has the power, and on the other, that he may not be elated, may not be aware that he has the power. Now what he was in word of mouth, let him add in these words, *Was I not silent?* What in respect of forbidden deeds, let him further subjoin, *Did I not rest quiet?* But the being *silent* and *quiet* admit of being yet more minutely examined into. Thus, to be *silent* is to withhold the mind from the cry of earthly desires, For all tumult of the breast is a strong and mighty clamouring.

19. Moreover they rest, that bear themselves well in power, in that they prefer to lay aside, at intervals, the din of earthly business for the love of God, lest whilst the lowest objects incessantly occupy the mind, it should altogether fall away from the highest. For they know that it can never be lifted up to things above, if it be continually busied in those below with tumultuous care and concern; for what should that mind gain concerning God in the midst of business, which, even when at liberty, strives with difficulty to apprehend aught that concerns Him? And it is well said by the Psalmist, *Keep yourselves aloof, and know that I am God.* [Ps. 46, 10] For he that neglects to keep himself aloof to God, by his own judgment upon himself hides the light of God's vision from his eyes. Hence moreover it is declared by Moses, that those fish that have no fins should not be eaten. [Lev. 11, 10. 12.] For the fish, that have fins, are wont to make leaps above the water. Thus they only pass into the body of the Elect in the manner of food, who, whilst they yield themselves to the lowest charges, can sometimes by the mind's leaps mount up to things on high, that they may not always be buried in the depths of care, and be reached by no breath of the highest love as of the free air. They, then, who are busied in temporal affairs, then only manage external things aright, when they betake them with solicitude to those of the interior, when they take no delight in the clamours of disquietudes without, but repose within themselves in the bosom of tranquil rest.

20. For men of depraved minds never cease to keep on the tumult of earthly business within their own breasts, even when they are unemployed. For they retain pictured in imagination the things, which their love is fixed on, and though they be employed in no outward work, yet within themselves they are toiling and labouring under the weight of an unquiet quiet. And if the management of these same things be accorded to them, they wholly go forth from themselves, and follow after these temporal and transient concerns by the path of their purpose of mind, with the unintermitted steps of the thoughts. But pious minds, on the one hand, seek not such things when lacking, and on the other, they bear them with difficulty, when present, for they fear lest by the care of external things they be made to go out of themselves. Which same is well represented in the life of those two brothers, concerning whom it is written, *And Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents.* [Gen. 25, 27. Vulg.] Or it is said in the other translation [so lxx.], *he dwelt at home.* For what is represented by Esau's hunting but the life of those, who, giving a loose to themselves in external pleasures, follow the flesh? and, moreover, he is described to be *a man of the field*, for the lovers of this world cultivate the external in the same proportion, that they leave uncultivated their internal parts. But Jacob is recorded to be *a plain man, dwelling in tents*, or *dwelling at home*, in that, truly, all, that seek to avoid being dissipated in external cares, abide plain men in the interior, and in the dwelling place of their conscience; for to 'dwell in tents,' or 'in the house,' is to restrain one's self within the secrets of the heart, nor ever to let themselves run loose without in their desires, lest, while men gape after a multitude of objects without, they be led away from themselves by the alienation of their thoughts. So let him, who was

tried and trained in prosperity, say, *Did I not dissemble it? Did I not hold my peace? Did I not rest quiet?* For, as we have said above, when holy men receive the smiles of transitory prosperity, they 'dissemble' the favour of the world, as though they were ignorant of it, and with a resolute step they inwardly trample upon that, whereby they are outwardly lifted up. And they 'hold their peace,' in that they never clamour with the uproar of wicked doings. For all iniquity has its voice belonging to it in the secret judgments of God. Hence it is written, *The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great.* And they 'rest quiet,' when they are not only hurried away by no unruly appetite of temporal desires, but over and above eschew the busying themselves out of due measure with the necessary concerns of this present life.

21. But while they do this, they are still made to feel the strokes of a Father's hand, that they may come to their inheritance the more perfect, in proportion as the rod, striking in pity, is daily purifying them even from the very least sins. Thus they are unceasingly doing righteous acts, yet are perpetually undergoing severe troubles. For often our very righteousness itself, when brought to the test of God's righteous eye, proves unrighteousness, and that which is bright in the estimate of the doer, is foul in the Judge's searching sight. Hence when Paul said, *For I know nothing by myself*; he forthwith added, *Yet am I not hereby justified*; [1 Cor. 4, 4] and immediately implying the reason wherefore he was not justified, he says, *But he that judgeth me is the Lord.* As though he said, 'For this reason I say that I am not justified herein, viz. that I know nothing by myself because I know that I am tested with greater exactness by Him, That judgeth me.' Therefore we must keep out of sight all that favours us outwardly, we must keep under control whatsoever is clamorous within, we must eschew the things that twine themselves about us as necessary, and yet in all of these we must still fear the chastisements of a strict inquisition; since even our very perfection itself does not lack sin, did not the severe Judge weigh the same with mercy in the exact balance of His examination.

22. And it is well added, *Yet indignation came upon me.* For with wonderful skilfulness of instruction, when about to tell of the chastisements, he premised the good deeds, that each man might hence be led to consider what punishments await sinners hereafter, if the righteous even are chastised here with strokes so strong. For it is hence that Peter says, *For the time is come that Judgment must begin at the house of God, And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* [1 Peter 4, 17. 18.] Hence Paul, after he said many things in commendation of the Thessalonians, straightway added, *So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure; Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God.* [2 Thess. 1, 4. 5.] As if he said, 'Whilst you, that act so uprightly, undergo so many hardships, what else is it than that ye are giving examples of the righteous judgment of God, since from your punishment it is to be inferred in what sort He smites those with whom He is wroth, if He suffers you to be thus afflicted, in whom He delights; or how He will strike those towards whom He shews righteous judgment, if He thus torments your own selves, whom with pitifulness He cherishes in reproving.

23. The first words, then, of blessed Job being ended, his friends that had come in pity to comfort him, set themselves by turns to the upbraiding of him; and while they launch out to words of strife, they drop the purpose of pity, which they had come for. And indeed they do this with no bad intent, but, though they manifest feeling for the stricken man, they supposed him to be no otherwise stricken than for his wickedness; and whereas guarded speech does not follow that good intention,

the very purpose of mercy is turned into the sin of an offence. For it was their duty to consider to whom and on what occasion they spake; in that he, to whom they had come, was a righteous man, and besieged with the strokes of God's hand; and so they should from his past life have estimated those words of his mouth, which they were unable to understand, and not have convicted him from present strokes, but have entertained fear for their own lives, and not as it were by reasoning have lifted themselves above, but by lamenting joined themselves to that stricken Saint, so that their knowledge might in no wise display itself in words, but that great teacher, grief, might instruct the tongue of the comforters to speak aright. And though they perchance might in any thing be of a different mind, assuredly it was meet that they should express these feelings with humility, lest by words without restraint they should accumulate wounds upon the smitten soul.

24. For it often happens that, because they cannot be understood, either the doings or the sayings of the better men are displeasing to the worse; but they are not to be rashly censured by them, inasmuch as they cannot be apprehended in their true sense. Often that is done in pursuance of policy [*'dispensatorie,'* in economy] by greater men, which is accounted an error by their inferiors. Often many things are said by the strong, which the weak only decide upon, because they know nothing about them. And this is well represented by that Ark of the Testament being inclined on one side by the kine kicking, which the Levite desiring to set upright, because he thought it would fall, he immediately received sentence of death. [2 Sam. 6, 7] For what is the mind of the just man but the Ark of the Testament? which, as it is being carried, is inclined by the kicking of the kine; in that it sometimes happens that even he, who rules well, being shaken by the disorder of the people subject to him, is moved by nought else than love to a condescension in policy. But in this, which is done in policy, that very bending, that is, of strength is accounted a fall by the inexperienced; and hence there are some of those that are in subjection, who put out the hand of censure against it, yet by that very rashness of theirs they forthwith drop from life. Thus the Levite stretched forth his hand as it were in aid, but he lost his life in being guilty of offence, in that while the weak sort censure the deeds of the strong, they are themselves made outcasts from the lot of the living. Sometimes too holy men say some things condescending to the meanest subjects, while some things they deliver contemplating the highest; and foolish men, because they know nothing of the meaning either of such condescension or elevation, presumptuously censure them. And what is it to desire to set a good man right for his condescension, but to lift up the ark that is inclined with the presuming hand of rebuke? what is it to censure a righteous man for unapprehended words, but to take the move he makes in his strength for the downfall of error? But he loses his life, who lifts up the ark of God with a high mind; in that no man would ever dare to correct the upright acts of the Saints, unless he first thought better things of himself. And hence this Levite is rightly called Oza, which same is by interpretation 'the strong one of the Lord,' in that the presumptuous severally, did they not audaciously conclude themselves 'strong in the Lord,' would never condemn as weak the saying and doings of their betters. Therefore while the friends of blessed Job leap forth against him, as if in God's defence, they transgress the rule of God's ordinance in behaving proudly.

25. But when any of the doings of better men are displeasing to the less good, they are by no means to hold their peace about the considerations which influence their minds, but to give utterance thereto with a great degree of humility, so that the purpose of him, whose feelings are pious, may, in a genuine manner, keep the form of uprightness, in proportion as he goes by the pathway of lowliness. Thus both all that we feel is to be freely expressed, and all that we express is to be uttered with the deepest humility, lest even what we intend aright we make other than right,

by putting it forth in a spirit of pride. Paul had spoken many things to his hearers with humility, but it was with still more humility that he busied himself to appease them about that humble exhortation itself, saying, *And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.* [Heb. 13, 22] And likewise bidding farewell to the Ephesians at Miletus, who were deeply grieved and loudly lamenting, he recalls his humility to their remembrance, in these words, *Therefore watch, and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears.* [Acts 20, 31] Again he says to the same persons by letter, *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called.* [Eph. 4, 1] Therefore let him infer from hence, if he ever thinks rightly at all, with what humility the disciple ought to address the Master, if the Master of the Gentiles himself, in the very things which he proclaims with authority, beseeches the disciples so submissively. Let everyone collect from hence in what a spirit of humility he should communicate to those, from whom he has received examples of good living, all that he perceives aright, if Paul submitted himself in a humble strain to those, whom he himself raised up to life.

26. But Eliphaz, who is the first of the friends to speak, though he came with pity to console, yet in that he departs from meekness of speech, is ignorant of the rules of consoling; and while he neglects the guarding of his lips, he is guilty of excess, even to offering insult to the afflicted man, saying, *The tiger hath perished for lack of prey, the roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lioness* [V. thus], *and the teeth of the young lions are broken* [Job 4, 10. 11.]: i.e. by the teeth of a tiger marking out blessed Job, as it were, with the fault of variedness; by *the roaring of the lion*, denoting that man's terribleness; by *the voice of the lioness*, the loquacity of his wife; and by the *broken teeth of the young lions*, signifying the gluttony of his sons brought to ruin. And hence the sentence of God rightly reproves the feeling of the friends, which had lifted itself up in swelling reproach, saying, *Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath.* [Job 42, 7]

27. But I see that we must enquire, wherefore Paul makes use of their sentiments with so much weight of authority, if these sentiments of theirs be nullified by the Lord's rebuke? For they are the words of Eliphaz which he brought before the Corinthians, saying, *For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.* [1 Cor. 3, 19. Job 5, 13] How then do we reject as evil what Paul establishes by authority? or how shall we account that to be right by the testimony of Paul, which the Lord by His own lips determined not to be right? But we speedily learn how little the two are at variance together, if we more exactly consider the words of that same Divine sentence, which assuredly having declared, *Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right*; thereupon added, *as My servant Job*. It is clear then that some things contained in their sayings were right, but they are overcome by comparison with one who was better; for among other things, which they say without reason, there are many forcible sentences they utter in addressing blessed Job; but when compared with his more forcible sayings they lose the power of their forcibleness. And many things that they say are admirable, were they not spoken against the afflicted condition of the holy man. So that in themselves they are great, but because they aim to pierce that righteous person, that greatness loses its weight, for with whatever degree of strength, it is in vain that the javelin is sent to strike the hard stones, since it glances off the further with blunted point, the more it comes hurled with strength. Therefore, though the sayings of Job's friends be very forcible in some points, yet, since they strike the Saint's well-fenced life, they turn back all the point of their sharpness. And therefore because they are both great in themselves, and yet ought never to have been taken up against blessed Job, on

the one hand let Paul, weighing them by their intrinsic excellence, deliver them as authoritative, and on the other let the Judge, forasmuch as they were delivered without caution, censure them in respect of the quality of the individual.

28. But, as we have said above that these same friends of blessed Job contain a figure of heretics, let us now search out how their words agree with heretics; for some of the opinions which they hold are very right, but in the midst of these they fall away to corrupt notions; for heretics have this especial peculiarity, that they mix good and evil, that so they may easily delude the sense of the hearer. For if they always said wrong, soon discovered in their wrongheadedness, they would be the less able to win a way for that, which they desire. Again, if they always thought right, then, surely, they would never have been heretics. But whilst with artfulness of deceiving they engage themselves with either, both by the evil they vitiate the good, and by the good they conceal the evil, to the end that it may be readily admitted; just as he that presents a cup of poison, touches the brim of the cup with honied sweets, and while this that has a sweet flavour is tasted at the first sip, that too which brings death is unhesitatingly swallowed. Thus heretics mix right with wrong, that by making a shew of good things, they may draw hearers to themselves, and by setting forth evil they may corrupt them with a secret pestilence. Yet it sometimes happens that being collected by the preaching and admonitions of Holy Church, they are healed from such a contradiction in views, and hence the friends of blessed Job offer the sacrifice of their reconciliation by the hands of the same holy man, and even under attainder they are restored to the favour of the Supreme Judge. Of whom we have a fitting representation in that cleansing of the ten lepers. [Luke 14, 15] For in leprosy both a portion of the skin is brought to a bright hue, and a portion remains of a healthy colour. Lepers therefore are a figure of heretics, for in that they blend evil with good, they cover the complexion of health with spots. And hence that they may be healed, they rightly cry out, *Jesus, Master* [Preceptor, Vulg.]. For whereas they notify that they have gone wrong in His words, they humbly call Him *Master* when they are to be healed, and so soon as they return to acknowledge the Master, they are at once brought back to the right state of health. But as on the sayings of his friends we have carried the preface to our interpretation somewhat far, let us now consider minutely the very words themselves which they spake, The account goes on ;

C. iv. 1, 2. *Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said, If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?*

[xii]

29. It has been already declared above, what there is set forth in the interpretation of these names. Therefore, because we are in haste to reach the unexamined parts, we forbear to unfold again what has been already delivered. Accordingly this is to be heedfully observed, that they, that bear the semblance of heretics, begin to speak softly, saying, *If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou, be grieved?* For heretics dread to incense their hearers at the outset of their communing with them, lest they be listened to with ears on the watch, and they carefully shun the paining of them, that they may catch their unguardedness, and what they put forward is almost always mild, while that is harsh which they cunningly introduce in going on. And hence at this time the friends of Job begin with the reverence of a gentle address, but they burst forth even to launching the darts of the bitterest invectives; for the roots of thorns themselves are soft, yet from that very softness of their own they put forth that whereby they pierce, It goes on;  
*But who can hold in [thus V.] the discourse conceived?*

30. There be three kinds of men, which differ from one another by qualities carried forward in gradation. For there are some, who at the same time that they conceive evil sentiments to speak, restrain themselves in their speech by none of the graveness of silence; and there are others, who, whereas they conceive evil things, withhold themselves with a strong control of silence. And there are some, who being made strong by the exercise of virtue, are advanced even to so great a height, that, as to speaking, they do not even conceive any evil thoughts in the heart, which they should have to restrain by keeping silence. It is shewn then to which class Eliphaz belongs, who bears witness that he cannot 'withhold his conceived discourse.' Wherein too he made known this, that he knew that he would give offence by speaking. For he would never be anxious to withhold words that he cannot, unless he were assured beforehand that he would be inflicting wounds by the same; for good men check precipitancy of speech with the reins of counsel, and they take heedful thought, lest, by giving a loose to the wantonness of the tongue, they should by heedlessness of speech pierce their hearer's spirits [*conscientiam*]; hence it is well said by Solomon, *He that letteth out water is a head of strife*. [Prov. 17, 14] For 'the water is let out,' when the flowing of the tongue is let loose. And he that 'letteth out water,' is made the 'beginning of strife,' in that by the incontinency of the lips, the commencement of discord is afforded. Thus, as the wicked are light in mind, so they are precipitate in speech, and neglect to keep silence, thoroughly considering what they should say. And what a light spirit [*conscientia*] conceives, a lighter tongue delivers apace. Hence on this occasion Eliphaz infers from his own experience a thing, which in a feeling of hopelessness he believes concerning all men; saying, *But who can withhold his conceived discourse?* It proceeds;

Ver. 3, 4. *Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.*

[xiv]

31. If the text of the historical account be regarded in itself, it is of great service to the reader, that in blessed Job, instead of the ripping up of vices, proclaim is made of his virtues by his reviling friends; for the testimony to our manner of life is never so strong, as when commendable things are told by him, who aims to fasten guilt upon our head. But let us consider of what a lofty height that man was, who by instructing the ignorant, strengthening the weak, upholding the faltering, amid the cares of his household, amidst the charge of countless concerns, amidst anxious feelings for his children, amidst the pursuit of so many laborious occupations, devoted himself to putting others in the right way. And being busied indeed, he executed these offices, yet being free, he did service in the master's office of instruction. By exercising superintendence, he disposed of temporal things, by preaching, he announced eternal truths; uprightness of life, both by practice he shewed to all beholders, and by speech he conveyed to all that heard him. But all that are either heretics or bad men, in recording the excellencies of the good, turn them into grounds of accusation. Hence Eliphaz deduces occasion of reviling against blessed Job from the same quarter, whence he related commendable things of him; for it goes on,

Ver. 5. *But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest: it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.*

[xv]



32. All men of froward mind assail the life of the righteous in two ways; for either they assert that what they say is wrong, or that what they say aright they never observe; and hence blessed Job is reproved by his friends further on for his mode of speech, whereas now he is torn in pieces for having spoken right things, but not having observed them. And so at one time the speech, and at another time the practice of the good meets with the disapproval of the wicked, in order that either the tongue being rebuked may hold its peace, or the life, being convicted by the testimony of that same tongue of theirs, may give way under the charge. And mark that first they bring forward commendations of the tongue, and afterwards complain of the weakness of the life. For the wicked, that they may not openly shew themselves to be evil, sometimes say such good things of the just, as they know to be already received concerning them by others also. But as we have said above, these very points they forthwith strain to the increase of guilt, and from hence, that they spoke favourable things also, they point out that credit is to be given them in the reverse, and with more seeming truth they intimate evil things, in proportion as they commended the good with seeming zeal. Thus they wrest words of favourable import to the service of accusation, in that they afterwards more deeply wound the life of the righteous from the same source, whence a little before in semblance they vindicated it. But it often happens that their good qualities, which they first condemn when possessed, they afterwards admire, as if departed. And hence Eliphaz, as he declares them to be departed, subjoins the virtues of the holy man, enumerating them, and saying, Ver. 6. *Where is thy fear, thy strength, thy patience, and the perfectness of thy ways?* [thus V.]

[xvi]

33. All which same he makes to succeed that sentence which he set before, saying, *But now a stroke is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.* Thus he declares that they were brought to nought all of them together, in this, that he blames blessed Job's being troubled by the scourge. Yet it is to be well taken notice of, that though he chides unbefittingly, yet the ranks of virtues he fitly describes; for in enumerating the virtues of blessed Job, he marked out his life in four stages, in that he both added strength to fear, and patience to strength, and to patience, perfection. Since one sets out in the way of the Lord with fear, that he may go on to strength; for as in the world boldness begets strength, so in the way of God boldness engenders weakness; and as in the way of the world fear gives rise to weakness, so in the way of God fear produces strength; as Solomon witnesses, who says, *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence.* [Prov. 14, 26] For 'strong confidence' is said 'to be in the fear of the Lord,' in that, in truth, our mind so much the more valorously sets at nought all the tenors of temporal vicissitudes, the more thoroughly that it submits itself in fear to the Author of those same temporal things. And being stablished in the fear of the Lord, it encounters nothing without to fill it with alarm, in that whereas it is united to the Creator of all things by a righteous fear, it is by a certain powerful influence raised high above them all. For strength is never shewn saving in adversity, and hence *patience* is immediately made to succeed to *strength*. For every man proves himself in a much truer sense to have advanced in 'strength,' in proportion as he bears with the bolder heart the wrongs of other men. For he was little strong in himself, who is brought to the ground by the wickedness of another. He, in that he cannot bear to face opposition, lies pierced with the sword of his cowardice. But forasmuch as perfection springs out of patience, immediately after patience we have the perfectness of his ways introduced. For he is really perfect, who feels no impatience towards the imperfection of his neighbour; since he that goes off, not being able to bear the imperfection of another, is his own witness against himself, that he is not yet perfectly advanced.

Hence Truth says in the Gospel, *In your patience possess ye your souls*. [Luke 21, 19] For what is it to possess our souls, but to live by the rule of perfection in all things, to command all the motions of the mind from the citadel of virtue? He then that maintains patience possesses his soul, in that from hence he is endued with strength to encounter all adversities, whence even by overcoming himself he is made master of himself; and as he quells himself in a manner worthy of all praise, he comes forth unquelled with dauntless front, because by conquering himself in his pleasures, he makes himself invincible to reverses. But as Eliphaz rebuked him with reviling, so now he adds a few words, as if in exhortation, saying,

Ver.7. *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*

[xvii]

34. Whether it be heretics, of whom we have said that the friends of blessed Job bore an image, or whether any of the froward ones, they are as blameable in their admonitions, as they are immoderate in their condemnation. For he says, *Who ever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?* Since it often happens that in this life both ‘the innocent perish,’ and ‘the righteous are ‘utterly cut off,’ yet in perishing they are reserved to glory eternal. For if none that is innocent perished, the Prophet would not say, *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart*. [Is. 51, 1] If God in His providential dealings did not carry off the righteous, Wisdom would never have said of the righteous man, *Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding*. [Wisd. 4, 11] If no visitation ever smote the righteous, Peter would never foretell it, saying, *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God*. [1 Pet. 4, 17] They then are really righteous, who are furnished forth by the love of the Country above to meet all the ills of the present life. For all that fear to endure ills here, for the sake of eternal blessings, clearly are not righteous men. But Eliphaz does not take account either that the righteous are cut off, or that the innocent perish here, in that oftentimes they that serve God, not in the hope of heavenly glory, but for an earthly recompense, make a fiction in their own head of that which they are seeking after, and, taking upon themselves to be instructors, in preaching earthly immunity, they shew by all their pains what is the thing they love. It goes on ;

Ver. 8, 9. *Even, as I have seen, they that plough iniquity, and [V. so] sow sorrows, and reap the same, by the blast of God do they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed.*

[xviii]

35. To ‘sow griefs’ is to utter deceits, but to ‘reap griefs’ is to prevail by so speaking. Or, surely, they ‘sow griefs,’ who do froward actions, they ‘reap griefs,’ when they are punished for this forwardness. For the harvest of grief is the recompense of condemnation, and whereas it is immediately introduced that they that ‘sow and reap griefs,’ ‘perish by the blast of God,’ and are ‘consumed by the breath of His nostrils,’ in this passage the ‘reaping of grief’ is shewn to be not punishment as yet, but the still further perfecting of wickedness, for in ‘the breath of His nostrils’ the punishment of that ‘reaping’ is made to follow. Here then they ‘sow and reap griefs,’ in that all that they do is wicked, and they thrive in that very wickedness, as is said of the wicked man by the Psalmist, *His ways are always grievous; Thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them*. [Ps. 10, 5] And it is soon after added concerning him, under his tongue is labour and grief. So then he ‘sows griefs,’ when he does wicked things, he ‘reaps griefs,’ when

from the same wickednesses he grows to temporal greatness. How then is it that they ‘perish by the blast of God,’ who are for the most part permitted to abide long here below, and in greater prosperity than the righteous? For hence it is said of them again by the Psalmist, *They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other folk.* [Ps. 73, 5] Hence Jeremiah saith, *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?* [Jer. 12, 1] For because, as it is written, *For the Lord is [Vulg.] a long-suffering rewarder* [Ecclus. 5, 4], He oftentimes for long bears with those, whom He condemns for all eternity. Yet sometimes He strikes quickly, in that He hastens to the succour of the pusillanimity of the innocent. Therefore Almighty God sometimes permits the wicked to have their own way for long, that the ways of the righteous may be more purely cleansed. Yet sometimes He slays the unrighteous with speedy destruction, and by their ruin He strengthens the hearts of the innocent. For if He were now to smite all that do evil, on whom would He yet have to shew forth the final Judgment? And if He never at any time smote any man, who would ever have believed that God regarded human affairs? Sometimes then He strikes the bad, that He may shew that He does not leave wickedness unpunished. But sometimes He bears with the wicked for long, that He may teach the heedful what judgment they are reserved for.

36. Thus this sentence of the cutting off of the wicked, if it be not spoken of all men in general at the end of this present state of being, is undoubtedly to a great degree made void of the force of truth; but it will then be true, when iniquity shall no longer have reprieve. And perchance it may be more lightly taken in this sense, since neither ‘the innocent perishes’ nor ‘the upright is cut off,’ in that though here he is worn out in the flesh, yet in the sight of the eternal Judge he is renewed with true health. And they that ‘sow and reap griefs,’ ‘perish by the blast of God,’ in that in proportion as they go on here deeper in doing wickedly, they are the more severely stricken with the damnation to follow. But whereas he premises this sentence with the word, *Remember*, it is clearly evident that something past is recalled to mind, and not any thing future proclaimed. Then therefore Eliphaz would have spoken more truly, if he had believed that these things were wrought on the head of the wicked in general by final vengeance.

37. But this point, that God is said to ‘breathe,’ claims to be more particularly made out. For we, when we ‘breathe,’ draw the air from the outside within us, and, thus drawn within, we give it forth without. God then is said to ‘breathe’ in recompensing vengeance, in that from occasions without He conceives the purpose of judgment within Him, and from the internal purpose sends forth the sentence without. When God ‘breathes’ as it were, somewhat is drawn in from things without, when He sees our evil ways without, and ordains judgment within. And again as if by God ‘breathing,’ the breath is sent forth from within, when from the internal conception of the purpose, the outward decree of condemnation is delivered. And so it is rightly said that they, that ‘sow griefs,’ perish ‘by the breath of God,’ for wherein they execute wicked deeds outwardly, they are deservedly stricken from within. Or, surely, when God is said to ‘breathe,’ in that the breath of His wrath is immediately introduced, by the designation of His ‘breathing’ may be denoted that very visitation of His. For when we are wroth, we kindle [d] with the breath of rage. To shew the Lord then meditating vengeance, He is said to ‘breathe’ in His indignation, not that in His own Nature He is capable of turning or change, but that after long endurance, when He executes vengeance upon the sinner, He, Who continueth tranquil in Himself, seems in commotion to them that perish. For whereas the condemned soul sees the Judge arrayed against its doings, He is exhibited to it as troubled, in that it is itself troubled by its own guiltiness before His eyes. But

after he had in appearance exhorted him with clemency, he openly subjoins language of reproach, saying,

Ver. 10. *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the lioness, and the teeth of the young lions are broken.*

[xix]

38. For what does he call *the roaring of the lion* but, as we have said a little above, the severe character of that man? what *the voice of the lioness*, but his wife's loquacity? what the *teeth of the young lions*, but the greediness of his children? For because his sons had perished when feasting, they are denoted by the term of 'teeth;' and while unsparing Eliphaz rejoices that they are all 'broken,' he denounces them as deservedly condemned. And he yet further doubles the cruelty of his reproaches, when he adds;

Ver. 11. *The tiger perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lions' whelps are scattered abroad.*

[Vulg. thus]

[xx]

39. For whom does he denote by the name of 'tiger' but blessed Job, marked with the stamp of changeableness or covered with the spots of dissimulation? For every dissembler, in that he desires to appear righteous, can never shew himself pure in all things; for while he assumes some virtues in hypocrisy, and secretly gives way to vicious habits, some concealed vices speedily break out upon the surface, and exhibit the hide of overlaid hypocrisy, like a coat for sight, varied with their admixture, so that it is very often a marvel how one, who is seen to be master of such great virtues, should be at the same time stained with such damnable deeds. But truly every hypocrite is a tiger, in that while he derives a pure colour from pretence, it is striped with the intermediate blackness of vicious habits. For it often happens that while he is extolled for pureness of chastity, he renders himself foul by the stain of avarice. Often while he makes a fair shew by the good quality of bountifulness, he is stained with spots of lust. Often while he is clad in the bright array of bountifulness and chastity, he is blackened by ferociousness in cruelty, as if from a zealous sense of justice. Often he is arrayed in bounty, chastity, pitifulness, in a fair outside, but is marked with the interspersed darkness of pride. And thus it comes to pass, that whereas by the intermixture of vicious habits, the hypocrite does not present an unstained appearance in himself, the tiger, as it were, cannot be of one colour. And this same 'tiger' seizes the prey, in that he usurps to himself the glory of human applause. For he, that is lifted up by usurped praise, is as it were glutted with the prey. And it is well that the applause that hypocrites have is called 'prey.' For it is nought else than a prey, when the things of another are taken away by violence. Now every hypocrite, in that by counterfeiting the life of righteousness he seizes for himself the praise that belongs to the righteous, does in truth carry off what is another's. Thus Eliphaz, who knew that blessed Job had walked in ways worthy to be praised in the period of his wellbeing, concluded from the stroke that came after that he had maintained these in hypocrisy, saying, *The tiger perisheth for lack of prey.* As if he had said plainly, 'The shifting of thine hypocrisy is at end, because the homage of applause is also taken from thee, and thine hypocrisy is in 'lack of prey,' in that being stricken by the hand of God, it lacks the favourable regards of man.'

40. But in the translation of the Septuagint, it is not said 'the tiger,' but 'the *Myrmicoleon perisheth for lack of prey*.' For the Myrmicoleon is a very little creature, a foe to ants, which hides itself under the dust, and kills the ants laden with grains, and devours them thus destroyed. Now 'Myrmicoleon' is rendered in the Latin tongue either 'the ants' lion,' or indeed more exactly 'an ant and lion at once.' Now it is lightly called 'an ant and lion;' in that with reference to winged creatures, or to any other small-sized animals, it is an ant, but with reference to the ants themselves it is a lion. For it devours these like a lion, yet by the other sort it is devoured like an ant. When then Eliphaz says, the Ant-lion perisheth, what does he censure in blessed Job under the title of 'Ant-lion' but his fearfulness and audacity? As if he said to him in plain words, 'Thou art not unjustly stricken, in that thou hast shewn thyself a coward towards the lofty, a bully towards those beneath thee.' As though he had said in plain terms, 'Fear made thee crouch towards the crafty sort, hardihood swelled thee full towards the simple folk, but 'the Ant-lion' no longer hath prey,' in that thy cowardly self elation, being beaten down with blows, is stayed from doing injury to others.' But forasmuch as we have said that the friends of blessed Job contain a figure of Heretics, there is a pressing necessity to shew how these same words of Eliphaz are to be understood in a typical sense likewise.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Ver. 10. *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the lioness, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.*

[xxi]

41. Forasmuch as the nature of every thing is compounded of different elements, in Holy Writ different things are allowably represented by anyone thing. For the lion has magnanimity, it has also ferocity: by its magnanimity then it represents the Lord, by its ferocity the devil. Hence it is declared of the Lord, *Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David hath prevailed*. [Rev. 5, 5] Hence it is written of the devil, *Your adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour*. [1 Pet. 5, 8] But by the title of a 'lioness' sometimes Holy Church, sometimes Babylon is represented to us. For on this account, that she is bold to encounter all that withstand, the Church is called a 'lioness,' as is proved by the words of blessed Job, who in pointing out Judaea forsaken by the Church, says, *The sons of the traders have not trodden, nor the lioness passed by it*. [Job 28, 8. Vulg.] And sometimes under the title of a lioness is set forth the city of this world, which is Babylon, which ravins against the life of the innocent with terribleness of ferocity, which being wedded to our old enemy like the fiercest lion, conceives the seeds of his froward counsel, and produces from her own body reprobate sons, as cruel whelps, after his likeness. But the 'lion's whelps' are reprobate persons, engendered to a life of sin by the misleading of evil spirits, who both all of them together constitute that great city of the world which we have declared before, even Babylon; and yet these same sons of Babylon severally are called not 'a lioness' but 'a lioness's whelps.' For as the whole Church together is denominated Sion, but the several individual Saints the sons of Sion, so both the several individuals among the reprobate are called the children of Babylon, and all the reprobate together are designated the same Babylon.

42. But so long as good men remain in this life, they keep watch over themselves with anxious heed, lest the lion that goeth about surprise them by guile, i.e. lest our old enemy slay them under

some shew of virtue; lest the voice of the lioness stun their ears, i.e. lest the glory of Babylon catch away their minds from the love of the heavenly country; lest 'the teeth of the young lions' bite them, i.e. lest the promptings of the reprobate gain power in their heart. But, on the other hand, heretics are already as if secured touching holiness, because they fancy that they have surmounted all obstacles by the preeminent merit of their life. And hence it is said here, *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the lioness, and the teeth if the young lions are broken*. As though it were expressed in plain words; 'We for this reason are never beaten and bruised with any strokes, for that we tread under at once the might of the old enemy, and the lust of earthly glory, and the promptings of all the reprobate, overcoming them by the preeminence of our life.' Hence it is further added;

Ver. 11. *The tiger perisheth for lack of prey, and the lions' whelps are scattered abroad.*

[xxii]

43. By the title of a 'tiger' he again represents him, whom he formerly designated by the name of a 'lion.' For Satan both for his cruelty is called 'a lion,' and for the variousness of his manifold cunning he is not unsuitably designated 'a tiger.' For one while he presents himself to man's senses lost as he is, one while he exhibits himself as an Angel of light, Now by caressing he works upon the minds of the foolish sort, now by striking terror he forces them to commit sin. At one time he labours to win men to evil ways without disguise, at another time he cloaks himself in his promptings under the garb of virtue. This beast, then, which is so variously spotted, is rightly called 'a tiger,' being with the LXX called an 'Ant-lion,' as we have said above. Which same creature, as we have before shewn, hiding itself in the dust kills the ants carrying their corn, in that the Apostate Angel, being cast out of heaven upon the earth, in the very pathway of their practice besets the minds of the righteous, providing for themselves the provender of good works, and whilst he overcomes them by his snares, he as it were kills by surprise the ants carrying their grains. And he is rightly called 'Ant-lion,' i.e. 'a lion and ant.' For as we have said, to the ants he is 'a lion,' but to the birds of the air, 'an ant,' in that our old enemy, as he is strong to encounter those that yield to him, is weak against such as resist him. For if consent be yielded to his persuasions, like a lion he can never be sustained, but if resistance be offered, like an ant he is ground in the dust. Therefore to some he is 'a lion,' to others 'an ant,' in that carnal minds sustain his cruel assaults with difficulty, but spiritual minds trample upon his weakness with virtue's foot. Heretics then, because they are full of pride by pretension to sanctity, say as it were in exultation, *The Ant-lion*, or probably, *the tiger perisheth for lack of prey*. As though the words were plainly expressed, 'The old foe has no prey in us, in that, as far as regards our purposes, he already lies defeated.' Now it is for this reason that he is again mentioned under the title of 'an Ant lion,' or of 'a tiger,' who had been already set forth by the 'roaring of the lion broken,' because whatever is said in joy, is repeated over and over. For when the mind is full of exultation, it redoubles the expressions. And hence the Psalmist, from true joy, frequently repeats this, that he was assured that he had been heard, saying, *the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplications. The Lord hath received my prayer.* [Ps. 6, 8, 9.]

44. But when holy men are glad of heart that they have been rescued from some evil habits, they possess [Lit. 'shake'] themselves with great fear even in that very gladness. For though they be now rescued from the commotion of any single storm, yet they call to mind that they are still tossing in the treacherous waves of an uncertain sea, and they so exult in hope that they tremble in

fear, and so tremble in fear that they exult in confidence of hope. Whence it is said by the same Psalmist, *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling*. [Ps. 2, 11] But on the other hand, they, whom a specious shew of sanctity fills with big thoughts, when they get the better of any one evil habit, immediately erect their heart in pride, and as it were glory in the perfection of their lives, and for this, that perchance they have been once snatched from the perils of the storm, they already forget that they are still at sea, they look upon themselves as great in all things, and imagine that they have wholly overcome their old adversary; they regard all men below them, in that they believe that their wisdom places them above all. Whence it is added;  
*Now a secret word was spoken to me.*

[xxiii]

45. 'A secret word,' heretics pretend to hear, that they may bring a certain reverence for their preaching over their hearers' minds. And hence they preach with a secret meaning, that their preaching may seem to be holy, in proportion as it is at the same time hidden. Now they are loath to have a common sort of knowledge, lest they should be placed on a par with the rest of their fellow-creatures, and they are ever making out new things, which whilst others know nothing of, they plume their own selves on the preeminence of their knowledge before inexperienced minds. And this knowledge, as we have said, they teach is occult; for, that they may be able to shew it to be wonderful, they affirm that they obtained it by secret means. Hence with Solomon the woman, bearing the semblance of heretics, says, *Stolen waters are [Vulg.] sweeter, and bread eaten in secret is more pleasant*. [Prov. 9, 17] Whence in this place too it is added;  
*And mine ear as it were by stealth received the veins [Vulg.] of the whispering thereof.*

They 'receive the veins of whispers by stealth,' in that abandoning the grace of knowledge in fellowship, they do not enter therein by the door, as the Lord witnesses, *Who saith, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber; But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep*. [John 10, 1. 2.] Therefore he 'receives the veins of divine whispers by stealth,' who, whilst the door of public preaching for receiving the knowledge of His excellency is forsaken, searches out the gaps and chinks of a froward understanding. But because the thief and robber, who enters by another way, both loves the darkness, and abhors the clearness of the light, it is properly added;  
Ver. 13. *In the horror of a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men.*

[xxiv]

46. It often happens, that while heretics are bent to discourse of things above them, they become their own witnesses against themselves, that what they deliver is not true. For in a vision of the night the sight is uncertain. Therefore they declare that they received 'the inklings [*rimas*] of whispers' in 'the tenor of a vision of the night,' for, that the things, which they teach, may be made to appear sublime to others, they declare that they themselves can scarcely comprehend them. But it may be inferred from hence how far that can be rendered certain to their hearers, which they themselves beheld but dubiously. And so is it marvellously ordered, that while they run on speaking of sublime things, in the exposure of folly, they are entangled in the very words of their sublimity. Now to what height they rear themselves for singularity of wisdom, is shewn, when he adds in the same breath, *when deep sleep falleth upon men*. As if it were openly said by heretics,

‘When men are asleep beneath, we wake to receive heavenly truths, in that to us all that is known, to the knowledge whereof the dull hearts of men cannot arise.’ As if they said in plain words, ‘In things, wherein our understanding rises erect, the faculties of the rest of the world lie asleep.’ But sometimes, when they see that this is disregarded by the hearer, they feign that they are themselves in fear of what they say. Whence it is added;

Ver. 14. *Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*

[xxvi]

47. For because they desire to appear objects of wonder for the loftiness of their instructions, they affect to be awed at the accounts which they make up. And whilst it is a less difficulty to hear than to speak, they are bold enough to put forth that, which, forsooth, they feign that they the very same persons were scarcely able to hear. Whence it is added yet further;

Ver. 15, 16. *And when a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up. There stood one, but I knew not the face of him.*

48. That they may shew that they have been made acquainted with incomprehensible mysteries, they relate, not that ‘a spirit’ stood still, but that it ‘passed by before their face.’ And they pretend that they beheld a countenance they knew not, that they may prove themselves to be known to Him, Whom the human mind is not equal to know. And here it is further added;

*An image was before mine eyes, and I heard the voice as it were of a light breath of air.*

[xxvii]

49. Heretics often picture God to themselves by a sensible form [*imaginaliter*], seeing that they are unable to behold Him spiritually. And they tell that they hear His ‘voice as of a light breath of air,’ in that for the obtaining the knowledge of His secret things, they delight to have as if a particular freedom of intercourse with Him. For they never teach the things, which God reveals openly, but such as are breathed into their ears in a secret manner. All this, then, we have said, to indicate what we are to look for in the words of Eliphaz, as he bears the semblance of heretics. But forasmuch as the friends of blessed Job would never have been the friends of one so great, unless they had evidently learned something of truth, which same, while they go wrong in uttering sentences of rebuke, yet do not altogether totter in the knowledge of the truth, let us return upon these same words a little way back, that we may make out more exactly how the things which are said concerning the perception of truth, may be delivered in a true sense by persons viewing things aright. Now sometimes heretics utter things both true and lofty, not that they themselves receive them from above, but because they have learnt them in the controversy of Holy Church, nor do they apply them to the furtherance of conscientious living, but to the display of scientific skill. Whence it very commonly happens, that by knowing they tell high truths, yet in living they know nothing what they tell. Therefore, whether as they represent heretics, who hold, not the life, but the words of knowledge, or whether in the person of the friends of blessed Job, who, doubtless, with regard to their knowledge of the truth, might in seeing realize what they aimed in teaching to give utterance to, let us more minutely examine these sayings which we have gone through, that, while the words of Eliphaz are carefully gone into, it may be shewn what knowledge he possessed, though in that knowledge he failed to retain humility, who appropriated to himself peculiarly a benefit common to all. For he says,



Ver. 12. *Now a hidden word was spoken to me.*

[xxviii]

50. For the invisible Son is called 'the hidden Word,' concerning Whom John saith, *In the beginning was the Word.* [John 1, 1] Which he the same person teaches to be 'hidden' in that he adds, *and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* But this 'hidden Word' is delivered to the minds of the Elect, when the power of the Only-Begotten Son is made manifest to believers. By 'the hidden word' we may also understand the communication of inward Inspiration, concerning which it is said by John, *His anointing teacheth you of all things.* [1 John 2, 27] Which same inspiration on being communicated to the mind of man lifts it up, and putting down all temporal interests inflames it with eternal desires, that nothing may any longer yield it satisfaction but the things that are above, and that it may look down upon all, that, from human corruption, is in a state of uproar below. And so to hear 'the hidden word' is to receive in the heart the utterance of the Holy Spirit. Which same indeed can never be known save by him, by whom it may be possessed. And hence it is said by the voice of Truth concerning this hidden utterance, *And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with, you for ever; even The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive.* [John 14, 16. 17.] For as that 'Comforter,' after the Ascension of the Mediator, being another Consoler of mankind, is in Himself invisible, so He inflames each one that He has filled to long after the invisible things. And because worldly hearts are set upon the things that are seen alone, the world receiveth Him not, because it doth not rise up to the love of the things that are unseen. For worldly minds, in proportion as they spread themselves out in interests without, contract the bosom of the heart against the admission of Him. And because out of mankind there are few indeed, who, being purified from the pollution of earthly desires, are opened by that purification to the receiving of the Holy Spirit, this word is called 'a hidden word,' since, surely, there are particular persons that receive that in the heart, which the generality of men know nothing of. Or truly this same inspiration of the Holy Spirit is 'a hidden word,' in that it may be felt, but cannot be expressed by the noise of speech. When, then, the inspiration of God lifts up the soul without noise, 'a hidden word' is heard, in that the utterance of the Spirit sounds silently in the ear of the heart. And hence it is added; *And mine ear as it were stealthily received the veins of the whispering thereof.*

[xxix]

51. The ear of the heart 'receives stealthily the veins of heavenly whispering,' in that both in a moment and in secret the inspired soul is made to know the subtle quality of the inward utterance. For except it bury itself from external objects of desire, it fails to enter into the internal things. It is both hidden that it may hear, and it hears that it may be hidden; in that at one and the same time being withdrawn from the visible world its eyes are upon the invisible, and being replenished with the unseen, it entertains a perfect contempt for what is visible. But it is to be observed that he does not say, *Mine ear received as it were by stealth the whispering thereof;* but *the veins of the whispering thereof;* for 'the whispering of the hidden word' is the very utterance of inward Inspiration itself; but 'the veins of the whispering' is the name for the sources of the occasions whereby that inspiration itself is conveyed to the mind. For it is as if It opened 'the veins of its whispering,' when God secretly communicates to us in what ways He enters into the ear of our understandings. Thus at one time He pierces us with love, at another time with terror. Sometimes

He shews us how little the present scene of things is, and lifts up our hearts to desire the eternal world, sometimes He first points to the things of eternity, that these of time may after that grow worthless in our eyes. Sometimes He discloses to us our own evil deeds, and thence draws us on even to the point of feeling sorrow for the evil deeds of others also. Sometimes He presents to our eyes the evil deeds of others, and reforms us from our own wickedness, pierced with a wonderful feeling of compunction. And so to 'hear the veins of Divine whispering by stealth,' is to be made to know the secret methods of divine Inspiration, at once gently and secretly.

52. Though we may interpret whether 'the whispering' or 'the veins of whispering' in another way yet. For he that 'whispers' is speaking in secret, and he does not give out, but imitates a voice. We, therefore, so long as we are beset by the corruptions of the flesh, in no wise behold the brightness of the Divine Power, as it abides unchangeable in itself, in that the eye of our weakness cannot endure that which shines above us with intolerable lustre from the ray of His Eternal Being. And so when the Almighty shews Himself to us by the chinks of contemplation, He does not speak to us, but whispers, in that though He does not fully develope Himself, yet something of Himself He does reveal to the mind of man. But then He no longer whispers at all, but speaks, when His appearance is manifested to us in certainty. It is hence that Truth saith in the Gospel, *I shall shew you plainly of the Father*. [John 16, 25] Hence John saith, *For we shall see Him as He is*. [1 John 3, 2] Hence Paul saith, *Then shall I know even as also I am known*. [1 Cor. 13, 12.] Now in this present time, the Divine whispering has as many veins for our ears as the works of creation, which the Divine Being Himself is Lord of; for while we view all things that are created, we are lifted up in admiration of the Creator. For as water that flows in a slender stream is sought by being bored for through veins, with a view to increase it, and as it pours forth the more copiously, in proportion as it finds the veins more open, so we, whilst we heedfully gather the knowledge of the Divine Being from the contemplation of His creation, as it were open to ourselves the 'veins of His whispering,' in that by the things that we see have been made, we are led to marvel at the excellency of the Maker, and by the objects that are in public view, that issues forth to us, which is hidden in concealment. For He bursts out to us in a kind of sound as it were, whilst He displays His works to be considered by us, wherein He betokens Himself in a measure, in that He shews how Incomprehensible He is. Therefore, because we cannot take thought of Him as He deserves, we hear not His voice, yea, scarcely His whispering. For because we are not equal to form a full and perfect estimate of the very things that are created, it is rightly said, *Mine ear as it were by stealth received the veins of whispering*; in that being cast forth from the delights of paradise, and visited with the punishment of blindness, we scarcely take in 'the veins of whispering;' since His very marvellous works themselves we consider but hastily and slightly. But we must bear in mind, that in proportion as the soul being lifted up contemplates His excellency, so being held back it shrinks from His righteous perfectness [*rectitudinem*]. And hence it is rightly added; Ver.13. *In the horror of a vision of the night*.

[xxx]

53. *The horror of a vision of the night* is the shuddering of secret contemplation. For the higher the elevation, whereat the mind of man contemplates the things that are eternal, so much the more, terror-struck at her temporal deeds, she shrinks with dread, in that she thoroughly discovers herself guilty, in proportion as she sees herself to have been out of harmony with that light, which shines in the midst of darkness [*intermicat*] above her, and then it happens that the mind being enlightened

entertains the greater fear, as it more clearly sees by how much it is at variance with the rule of truth. And she, that before seemed as it were more secure in seeing nothing, trembles with sore affright from her very own proficiency itself. Though, whatever her progress in virtue, she does not as yet compass any clear insight into eternity, but still sees with the indistinctness of a certain shadowy imagining. And hence this same is called *a vision of the night*. For as we have also said above, in the night we see doubtfully, but in the day we see steadily. Therefore because, as regards the contemplating the ray of the interior Sun, the cloud of our corruption interposes itself, nor does the unchangeable Light burst forth such as It is to the weak eyes of our mind, we as it were still behold God 'in a vision of the night,' since most surely we go darkling under a doubtful sight. Yet though the mind may have conceived but a distant idea concerning Him, yet in contemplation of His Greatness, she recoils with dread, and is filled with a greater awe, in that she feels herself unequal even to the very skirts of the view of Him. And falling back upon herself, she is drawn to Him with closer bonds of love, Whose marvellous sweetness, being unable to bear, she has but just tasted of under an indistinct vision. But, because she never attains to such an height of elevation, unless the importunate and clamorous throng of carnal desires be first brought under governance, it is rightly added,

*When deep sleep falleth upon men.*

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54. Whoever is bent to do the things which are of the world, is, as it were, awake, but he, that seeking inward rest eschews the riot of this world, sleeps as it were. But first we must know that, in holy Scripture, sleep, when put figuratively, is understood in three senses. For sometimes we have expressed by sleep the death of the flesh, sometimes the stupefaction of neglect, and sometimes tranquillity of life, upon the earthly desires being trodden underfoot. Thus, by the designation of sleep or slumbering the death of the flesh is implied; as when Paul says, *And I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep*. [1 Thess. 4, 13] And soon after, *Even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him*. [ver. 14] Again, by sleep is designated the stupefaction of neglect; as where it is said by that same Paul, *Now it is high time to awake out of sleep*. [Rom. 13, 11] And again, *Awake, ye righteous* [Vulg.], *and sin not*. [1 Cor. 15, 34] By sleep too is represented tranquillity of life, when the carnal desires are trodden down; as where these words are uttered by the voice of the spouse in the Song of Songs, *I sleep, but my heart waketh*. [Cant. 5, 2] For, in truth, in proportion as the holy mind withholds itself from the turmoil of temporal desire, the more thoroughly it attains to know the things of the interior, and is the more quick and awake to inward concerns, the more it withdraws itself out of sight from external disquietude. And this is well represented by Jacob sleeping on his journey. He put a stone to his head and slept. He beheld a ladder from the earth fixed in heaven, the Lord resting upon the ladder, Angels also ascending and descending. For to 'sleep on a journey' is, in the passage of this present life, to rest from the love of things temporal. To sleep on a journey is, in the course of our passing days, to close those eyes of the mind to the desire of visible objects, which the seducer opened to the first of mankind, saying, *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened*. [Gen. 3, 5] And hence it is soon afterwards added, *She took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened*. [ver. 6, 7.] For sin opened the eyes of concupiscence, which innocence kept shut. But to 'see Angels ascending and descending,' is to mark the citizens of the land above,

either with what love they cleave to their Creator above them, or with what fellow-feeling in charity they condescend to aid our infirmities.

55. And it is very deserving of observation, that he that 'lays his head upon a stone,' is he who sees the Angels in his sleep, surely because that same person by resting from external works penetrates internal truths, who with mind intent, which is the governing Principle of man, looks to the imitating of his Redeemer. For to 'lay the head upon a stone' is to cleave to Christ in mind. Since they that are withdrawn from this life's sphere of action, yet whom no love transports above, may have sleep, but can never see the Angels, because they despise to keep their head upon a stone. For there are some, who fly indeed the business of the world, but exercise themselves in no virtues. These, indeed, sleep from stupefaction, not from serious design, and therefore they never behold the things of the interior, because they have laid their head, not upon a stone, but upon the earth. Whose lot it most frequently is, that in proportion as they rest more secure from outward actions, the more amply they are gathering in themselves from idleness an uproar of unclean thoughts. And thus under the likeness of Judaea the Prophet bewails the soul stupefied by indolence, where he says, *The adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths*. [Lam. 1, 7] For by the precept of the Law there is a cessation from outward work upon the Sabbath Day. Thus her 'enemies looking on mock at her sabbaths,' when evil spirits pervert the very waste hours of vacancy to unlawful thoughts. So that every soul, in proportion as it is supposed to be devoted to the service of God, by being removed from external action, the more it drudges to their tyranny, by entertaining unlawful thoughts. But good men, who sleep to the works of the world, not from inertness, but from virtue, are more laborious in their sleep than they would be awake. For herein, that by abandoning they are made superior to this world's doings, they daily fight against themselves, maintaining a brave conflict, that the mind be not rendered dull by neglect, nor, subdued by indolence, cool down to the harbouring of impure desires, nor in good desires themselves be more full of fervour than is right, nor by sparing itself under the pretext of discretion, may slacken its endeavour after perfection. These are the things she is employed withal: she both wholly withdraws herself from the restless appetite of this world, and gives over the turmoil of earthly actions, and in pursuit of tranquillity, bent on virtuous attainments, she sleeps waking. For she is never led on to contemplate internal things, unless she be heedfully withdrawn from those, which entwine themselves about her without. And it is hence that Truth declares by His own mouth, *No man can serve two Masters*. [Matt. 6, 20] Hence Paul saith, *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him that hath chosen him to be a soldier*. [2 Tim. 2, 4] Hence the Lord charges us by the Prophet, saying, *Be still* [*Vacate*, be at leisure], *and know that I am the Lord*. [Ps. 46, 10] Therefore, because inward knowledge is not cognisable by us, except there be a rest from outward embarrassments, the season of the hidden word, and of the whisperings of God, is in this place rightly set forth, when it is said, *In the horror of a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men*, in that truly our mind is never caught away after the force and power of inward contemplation, unless it be first carefully lulled to rest from all agitation of earthly desires. But the human mind, lifted on high by the engine as it were of its contemplation, in proportion as it sees things higher above itself, the more terribly it trembles in itself. And hence it is fitly added, Ver. 14. *Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake*.

[xxxii]

56. What is denoted by ‘bones’ but strong deeds? Of which also it is said by the Prophet, *He keepeth all their bones*. [Ps. 34, 20] And it often happens that the things which men do, they reckon to be of some account, because they know not, how keen is the discernment of His inward sifting; but when, transported on the wings of contemplation, they behold things above, in some sort they melt away from the security they felt in their presumption, and quake in sight of God the more, in proportion as they do not even reckon their excellences fit for the searching eye of Him, Whom they behold. For it is hence that he, who had gained ground in doing strong deeds, being lifted up by the Spirit, exclaimed, *All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee?* [Ps. 35, 10] As though he said, ‘My flesh is without words, in that my infirmities are wholly silent before Thee, but my bones sing the praises of Thy greatness. In that the very things, which I thought to be strong in me, tremble at the view of Thee.’ It is hence that Manoah shrinking at the vision of the Angel, says, *We shall surely die, for we have seen The Lord*. [Judg. 13, 22. 23.] Whom his wife immediately comforts, with these words, *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, He would not have received a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering at our hand*. But how is it that the man becomes fearful at the vision of the Angel, and the woman bold; but that as often as heavenly things are shewn us, the spirit indeed is shaken with affright, yet hope has confidence? For hope lifts itself to dare greater feats from the same cause, whereby the spirit is troubled, in that it sees the first the things that are above. Therefore because, when the mind, being lifted on high, beholds the higher depths of the secrets of heaven, all that is most solid of human strength trembles, it is well said here, *Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake*. As though it were expressed in plain words; ‘When I perceived the secrets of inmost subtlety, in that quarter where I thought myself in my own eyes strong, I faltered in the sight of the Judge.’ For contemplating the strictness of Divine Justice, we justly fear even for the very works themselves, which we flattered ourselves we had so done that they were strong. For our uprightness, when drawn parallel to the inward rule, if it meets with strict judgment, comes cross, with many sinuosities of its windings, to the inward uprightness. And hence, when Paul both perceived that he had the bones of the several virtues, and yet that these same bones trembled under the searching scrutiny, he saith, *But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self; for I know nothing against myself*: [1 Cor. 4, 3. 4.] Yet because, when the ‘veins’ of the divine ‘whispering’ were heard, these same bones quaked, he thereupon added, *For I am not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord*. As though he were to say, ‘I remember that I have done light things, yet I presume not on my merits; for our life is brought to the scrutiny of Him, under Whom even the bones of our strength are dismayed.

57. But when the mind is suspended in contemplation, when, exceeding the narrow limits of the flesh, with all the power of her ken, she strains to find something of the freedom of interior security, she cannot for long rest standing above herself, because though the spirit carries her on high, yet the flesh sinks her down below by the yet remaining weight of her corruption. And hence it is added,

Ver. 15. *And as a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up*.

[xxxiii]

58. ‘A spirit passes before our face,’ when we are brought to the knowledge of invisible things, and yet see these same not stedfastly, but with a hasty glance. For not even in the sweetness of inward contemplation does the mind remain fixed for long, in that being made to recoil by the very

immensity of the light it is called back to itself. And when it tastes that inward sweetness, it is on fire with love, it longs to mount above itself, yet it falls back in broken state to the darkness of its frailty. And advancing in high perfection, it sees that it cannot yet see that which it ardently loves, which yet it would not love ardently did it not in some sort see the same. Thus the spirit is not stationary, but 'passes by,' because our contemplation both discloses to us, that pant thereafter, the heavenly light, and forthwith conceals the same from us failing from weakness. And because in this life, whatever degree of virtue a man may have advanced to, he still feels the sting of corruption, *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things* [Wisd. 9, 15]; therefore it is rightly added, *The hair of my flesh stood up.*

59. For 'the hairs of the flesh' are all the superfluities of human corruption. 'The hairs of the flesh' are the imaginations of the former life, which we so cut away from the mind, that we let no grief for the loss of them disturb our peace. And it is well said by Moses, *Let the Levites shave* [Vulg. thus] *all the hairs of their flesh.* [Numb. 8, 7] For a 'Levite' is rendered 'taken.' And thus it behoves the 'Levites' to shave all 'the hairs of the flesh,' in that he who is 'taken' into the divine ministrations, ought to shew himself clear of all imaginations of the flesh before the eyes of God, that the mind never put forth unlawful thoughts, and so deform the fair appearance of the soul as it were by sprouting hairs. But whatever perfection of holy living may have raised the condition of any man, yet there still springs up to him from his old state of life somewhat to bear. And hence the same hairs of the Levites are commanded to be shaven, not to be plucked out, for the roots still remain in the flesh to the shaven hairs, and grow again to be again cut off, in that while we are to use great diligence in cutting off all rank thoughts, yet they never can be wholly and entirely cut off. For the flesh is ever engendering a rank produce, which the spirit should ever be cutting away with the knife of heedfulness. Yet it is then that we see these things with more exactness, when we penetrate into the heights of contemplation; and hence it is rightly said, *Whilst a Spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up.*

60. For when the human mind is lifted up on the tower of contemplation, it the more cruelly torments itself for its superfluities, in proportion as it perceives that which it loves to be infinitely refined; and when it beholds that beautiful Being, which it longs for, above its own height, it severely judges every thing infirm in itself, which it bore with tranquillity before. Therefore when 'the Spirit passeth by,' 'the hairs quake,' in that before the power of compunction, all rank thoughts flee away, that nought that is loose, nought that is dissipated, any longer gives pleasure, for severity of inward visitings kindles the inspired soul even against its own self; and when that which riseth up in the heart of an unlawful kind, is cut away with unintermitted strictness, it very often happens that the invigorated soul enters into its ray of contemplation with a somewhat larger range, and almost arrests the spirit which was 'passing by.' Yet does not this same lingering of contemplation fully discover the force of the Divine nature, for its vastness transcends all human powers thus enlarged and elevated. And hence it is well added;

Ver. 16. *There stood a certain one, but I could not discern the form thereof.* [V. thus]

[xxxiv]

61. For we do not speak of a certain one, saving surely in the case of him, whom we are either unwilling or unable to express. Now with what feeling it is here said a certain one, is clearly set

forth, in that it immediately comes in, *but I could not discern the form thereof*. For the human soul, being by the sin of the first of mankind banished from the joys of paradise, lost the light of the invisible, and poured itself out entire in the love of the visible, and was darkened in the interior sight, in proportion as it was dissipated without, to the deformment of itself. Whence it comes to pass that it knows nothing, saving the things that it acquaints itself with by the palpable touch, so to say, of the bodily eyes. For man, who, had he been willing to have kept the commandment, would even in his flesh have been a spiritual being, by sinning was rendered even in soul carnal, so as to imagine such things only as he derives to the soul through the images of bodily substances. For body is the property of heaven, earth, water, animals, and all the visible things; which he unceasingly beholds; and while the delighted mind wholly precipitates itself into these, it waxes gross, loses the fineness of the inward sense; and whereas it is now no longer able to erect itself to things on high, it willingly lies prostrate in its weakness in things below. But when with marvellous efforts it strives to rise up from the same, it is great indeed, if the soul, thrusting aside the bodily form, be brought to the knowledge of itself, so as to think of itself without a bodily figure, and by thus thinking of itself to prepare itself a pathway to contemplate the substance of Eternity.

62. Now in this way it shews itself to its own eyes as a kind of ladder, whereby in ascending from outward things to pass into itself, and from itself to tend unto its Maker. For when the mind quits bodily images, entering into itself, it mounts up to no mean height; for though the soul be incorporeal, yet because she is incorporate with the body, she is known by that property of hers, which is confined within the local bounds of the flesh. And whereas she forgets things known, acquaints herself with such as are unknown, remembers what has been consigned to oblivion, entertains mirth after sadness, is adjudged to punishment [*addicitur*] after joy; she herself shews by her own diversity in herself, how widely she is removed from the Substance of eternal Unchangeableness. Which is always the same, even as It Is; Which every where present, every where invisible, every where whole and entire, every where incomprehensible, is by the longing mind discerned without seeing, heard without uncertainty, taken in without motion, touched without bodily substance, held without locality. Now when the mind that is used to corporeal objects represents to itself this same Substance, it is loaded with the phantasms of divers images. And whilst it banishes these from the eyes of its attention with the hand of discernment, making every thing give place thereto, it at last beholds It in some degree. And if it does not as yet apprehend what It is, it has surely learnt what It is not. And so because the mind is carried away into unaccustomed ground, when it pries into the Essence of the Deity, it is rightly said here, *A certain one stood, but I could not discern the form thereof*.

63. And it is well said, it stood still; for every created thing, in that it is made out of nothing, and of itself tends to nothing, has not the property to stand, but to run to an end. But a creature endowed with reason, by this very circumstance, that it is created after the image of its Maker, is fixed that it should not pass into nothing. Now no irrational creature is ever fixed, but only, so long as, by the service of its appearing, it is completing the form and fashion of the universe, it is delayed in passing away. For though heaven and earth abide henceforth and for ever, still they are at this present time of themselves hastening on to nought; yet for the use of those, whom they serve, they remain to be changed for the better. To 'stand' then is the attribute of the Creator alone, through Whom all things pass away, Himself never passing away, and in Whom some things are held fast, that they should not pass away. Hence our Redeemer, because the fixed state of His Divine Nature

could not be comprehended by the human mind, shewed this to us as it were in passing, by coming to us, by being created, born, dead, buried, by rising again, and returning to the heavenly realms. Which He well shadowed out in the Gospel by the enlightening the blind man, to whom when passing on He vouchsafed a hearing, but it was standing still that He healed his eyes. For by the economy of His Human Nature He had His passing on, but the standing by the power of His Divine Nature, in that He is every where present. Thus the Lord is said to hear the complaints of our blind condition in passing, in that being made Man He has compassion on human misery; but He restores light to the eyes standing still, in that He enlightens the darkness of our frail state by the efficacy of His Divine Nature. It is well then that, after it has been said, *Then a spirit passed before my face*, it should be added, *but I could not discern the form thereof*. As if it were in plain words, 'Him, Whom I perceived in passing, I discovered never to pass.' He then that 'passes' is the same as He that 'stands still.' He 'passes,' in that when known He cannot be detained, He 'stands still,' in that, so far as He is known, He is seen to be unchangeable. Therefore, because He, That is ever the Same, is seen by a hasty glance, God at the same time appears both passing and standing still. Or surely His 'standing' is His never varying with any change; as it is said to Moses, *I AM THAT I AM*. And as James represents Him, saying, *With Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*. [Jam. 1, 17] Now whereas every man, that apprehends something of the Eternal Being by contemplation, beholds the Same through His coeternal Image, it is rightly subjoined; *An image was before mine eyes*.

[xxxv]

64. For the Image of the Father is the Son, as Moses teaches in the case of man at his creation; *So God created man in His own Image; in the Image of God created He him*. [Gen. 1, 27] And as the Wise Man, in the setting forth of Wisdom, saith concerning the same Son, *For She is the brightness of the everlasting light*. [Wisd. 7, 26] And as Paul hath it, *Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express Image of His Person*. [Heb. 1, 3] When then His Eternity is perceived as far as the capability of our frail nature admits, His Image is set before the eyes of the mind, in that when we really strain towards the Father, as far as we receive Him we see Him by His Image, i.e. by His Son, And by That Image, Which was born of Himself without beginning, we strive in some sort to obtain a glimpse of Him, Who hath neither beginning nor ending. And hence this same Truth saith in the Gospel, *No man cometh to the Father but by Me*. [John 14, 6] And it is well added, *And I heard the voice as it were of a light breath*.

[xxxvi]

65. For what is signified by 'the voice of a light breath,' but the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, Which proceeding from the Father, and receiving of that which belongeth to the Son, is gently imparted to the knowledge of our frail nature? Yet when It came upon the Apostles, It is demonstrated by an outward sound, like a vehement blast, where it is said, *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind*. [Acts 2, 2] For when the Holy Spirit imparts Itself to the knowledge of frail humanity, It is both represented by 'the sound of a rushing mighty wind,' and also by the 'voice of a gentle breath,' clearly, in that when It comes, It is both 'vehement' and 'gentle;' 'gentle,' in that It tempers the knowledge of Itself to our perceptions, so as to be in some sort brought under our cognizance; 'vehement,' in that however It may temper that



same, yet by Its coming, It confounds while It illumines the darkness of our frail condition. For It touches us but lightly by Its enlightening influence, yet it shakes our emptiness with fearful might.

66. So God's voice is heard as if of 'a light breath,' in that the Divine Being never imparts Himself as He is to those that contemplate Him while still in this life, but to the purblind eyes of our mind He discovers His brightness but scantily. Which is well represented by the very receiving of the Law itself, when it is said that Moses ascended, and God descended upon the Mount. For 'the Mount' is our very contemplation itself, whereinto we ascend, that we may be elevated to see those things which are beyond our frail nature; but the Lord descends thereupon, in that, when we advance much, He discloses some little concerning Himself to our perceptions, if either 'little' or 'somewhat' can be said to be in Him, Who, being always One and abiding the Same, cannot be understood by parts, and yet is said to be *participated* by His faithful servants, whereas 'part' is nowise admissible in His Substance. But because we are unable to express Him with perfect speech, being hindered by the scanty measure of our human nature, as by the impotency of the infant state, we give back an echo of Him in some sort with stammering utterance. But that when we are lifted up in high contemplation, it is somewhat refined that we attain unto in the knowledge of the Eternal One, is shewn by the words of Sacred Story, when the illustrious Prophet Elijah is instructed in the knowledge of God. For when the Lord promised him that He would pass by before him, saying, *And, behold, the Lord passeth by, a great and strong wind rending the mountains, and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord; He thereupon added, But the Lord is not in the wind: and after the wind a quaking, but the Lord is not in the quaking: and after the quaking a fire, but the Lord is not in the fire: and after the fire, a still small voice.* [1 Kings 19, 11. 12.] [V. *the whisper of a gentle air*] For the wind before the Lord overturns the mountains, and shatters the rocks, in that the affright, which rushes in upon us from His coming, both casts down the exaltation of our hearts, and melts their hardness. But the Lord is said not to be in the 'wind of quaking' and in the fire, but it is not denied that He is 'in the still small voice,' in that verily when the mind is hung aloft in the height of contemplation, whatever it has power to see perfectly and completely is not God, but when it sees something of great fineness, this is the same as that he hears belonging to the incomprehensible substance of the Deity. For we as it were perceive a still small voice, when by a moment's contemplation we taste with finest sense the savour of incomprehensible truth. Accordingly then only is there truth in what we know concerning God, when we are made sensible that we cannot know any thing fully concerning Him. Hence it is well added in that place, *And it was so when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out and stood at the entering in of the cave.* After the still small voice, the Prophet covers his face with his mantle, because in that very refined contemplation he learns in what a cloak of ignorance man is shrouded; for to draw the mantle over the face is to veil the mind by the consideration of its own infirmity, that it may never presume to seek things above it, that it never rashly open the eyes of the understanding beyond itself, but close them with a feeling of awe to that which it cannot apprehend. And he, in doing such things, is described to have *stood at the entering in of the cave.* For what is our cave but this dwelling-place of our corrupt nature, wherein we are still held fast from remaining oldness? But when we begin to take in something of the knowledge of the Divine Being, we as it were already stand 'in the entering in of our cave;' for whereas we cannot make perfect progress, yet panting after the knowledge of the truth, we already catch something of the breath of liberty. So to 'stand at the entering in of the cave,' is, forcing aside the obstruction of our corrupt nature, to begin to issue forth to the knowledge of the truth. And hence upon the cloud descending on the Tabernacle, the Israelites seeing it afar off are related to have

stood at the entering in of their tents, [Ex. 33, 9] in that they, who in some sort behold the coming of the Deity, as it were already issue forth from the habitation of the flesh. Therefore because with whatever amplitude of virtue the human mind may have enlarged its compass, yet it scarcely knows the very outermost extremes that belong to the interior things, it is rightly said here, *And I heard the voice as of a light breath*; but as at the time that the knowledge of the Deity shews us after all but little concerning Itself, It is perfectly instructing the ignorance of our infirmness; let him that ‘heard the voice of a light breath,’ declare all that he learnt by that same hearing. It goes on;  
Ver. 17. *Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?*

[xxxvii]

67. Human righteousness compared with the righteousness of God is unrighteousness, for even a candle is seen to shine bright in the dark, but being set in the ray of the sun its light is darkened. What then did Eliphaz learn when he was transported in contemplation, saving that man cannot be justified in comparison with God? For we believe that what we do outwardly is righteous, but when we never at all acquaint ourselves with the things of the interior, we are as it were blind whilst set in the ray of the sun. But when we, little as we can, discern the one, it is not a little [*non utcunque*] that we judge the others, in that a man judges the darkness more exactly, in proportion as the brightness [A.B.C.D. ‘reality’] of light is more truly manifested to him. For he, that seeth light, knoweth what to account of the darkness, as he, that is ignorant of the whiteness of light, lets pass even dark objects for light ones. And it is rightly added, *Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?* For whoso murmurs at the stroke, what does he, but charge the justice of the striker? Thus a man accounts himself more pure than his Maker, if he stirs complaint against the scourge, and without doubt he makes Him give place to himself, Whose judgment he blames in the case of his own affliction. Thus, that man may never dare charge his Judge with offence, let him humbly bethink himself that He is the Author of Nature; for He, That with marvellous skill made man out of nothing, does not pitilessly afflict him that He has made; which Eliphaz then learnt when he ‘heard the voice as it were of a light breath.’ For by the contemplation of the greatness of God we learn, how humbly we should abase ourselves with fear under His visitation. And he, that hath a taste of things above, bears with resignation all events below, in that he perfectly sees within, whereat he should reckon that which he does without. For he miscounts himself righteous, who knows not the rule of the Supreme Righteousness. And it often happens that a piece of wood is counted straight, if it be not applied to the rule; but so soon as it is put thereto, we discover the degree of distortion wherewith it swells out, in that, truly, the straight line cuts off and condemns that, which the cheated eye approved as good. Thus Eliphaz, in that he beheld things above, delivered a strict judgment on all below, and though it was not rightly he reproved blessed Job, yet by comparison with the Creator of all things he rightly describes the measure of the creature, saying,  
Ver. 18, 19. *Behold, His servants are not stedfast, and in His Angels He found folly: How much more in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which shall be consumed as by the moth?*

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68. Though the Angelical nature, by being fixed in contemplation of the Creator, remains unchangeable in its own state, yet hereby, that it is a created being, it admits in itself the variableness of change. Now to be changed is to go from one thing into another, and to be without

stability in one's self. For every single being tends to some other thing by steps, as many in number as it is subject to motions of change. And it is only the Incomprehensible Nature, which knows not to be moved from its fixed state, in that It knows not to be changed from this, that It is always the Same. For if the essence of the Angels had been strange to the motion of change, being created well by its Maker, it would never have fallen in the case of reprobate spirits from the tower of its blessed estate. But Almighty God in a marvellous manner framed the nature of the highest spiritual existences good, yet at the same time capable of change; that both they, that refused to remain, might meet with ruin, and they, that continued in their own state of creation, might henceforth be stablished therein more worthily in proportion as it was owing to their own choice, and become so much the more meritorious in God's sight, as they had staid the motion of their mutability by the stablishing of the will. Whereas then this very Angelical nature too is in itself mutable, which same mutability it has hereby overcome, in that it is bound by the chains of love to Him, Who is ever the Same, it is now rightly said, *Behold, His servants are not stedfast*. And there is forthwith added a proof of this same mutability, in that it is brought in from the case of the apostate spirits, *And in His Angels He found folly*. And from the fall of these He rightly draws the consideration of human frailty, when he appends thereto; *How much more in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation, is earthly, which shall be consumed as by the moth*. For we inhabit houses of clay, in that we subsist in earthly bodies. Which Paul considering saith well; *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels*. [2 Cor. 4, 7] And again, *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands*. [5, 1] 'The earthly foundation' too is the substance of the flesh; which the Psalmist had earnestly contemplated in himself, when he said, *My bones are not hid from Thee, which Thou madest in secret, and my substance in the lower parts of the earth*. [Ps. 139, 15] Now the moth springs from the garment, and in its production destroys that very garment, whereupon it is produced. And the flesh is as a kind of garment to the soul, but this same garment has withal its moth, in that from itself there arises carnal temptation, whereby it is rent and torn. For our garment is as it were consumed by a kind of moth of its own, in that the corruptible flesh engendereth temptation, and by this is brought to destruction. Man is consumed as if by a moth, in that he has arising from himself that, whereby he is to be broken in pieces. As though it were in plain words, 'If those spirits cannot be of themselves unchangeable, which are kept down by no infirmity of the flesh, by what inconceivable temerity do men account themselves to hold on stedfastly in good, who, wherein they have their understanding elevating them on high, have the clog of carnal frailty acting as an impediment to them, so that through the evil, of a corrupting tendency they contain a cause in themselves, whence they turn old from the interior newness?

69. The holy Doctors may likewise be understood by 'the Angels,' according as it is said by the Prophet, *For the Priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the Angel [Angelus] of the Lord of hosts*. With whatever degree of virtue these may shine, they can never be altogether without sin, so long as they are engaged in the journey of this life, in that their step is doubtless brought into contact either with the mire of unlawful practice, or with the dust of the thought of the heart. Now they 'dwell in houses of clay,' who rejoice in this ensnaring life of the flesh. Paul had been brought to condemn the inhabiting this house of clay, when he said, *But our conversation is in heaven*. [Phil. 3, 20] Let him say then, *Behold, His servants are not stedfast, and in His Angels He hath found folly: how much more in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are consumed as by the moth?* As if he had said in plain words, 'If the pathway of the present life cannot be passed through without defilement by

those, who proclaiming the things of eternity, gird themselves up to encounter those of time, what evils do they undergo, who rejoice to be plunged in the delights of the fleshly habitation? 'For His servants are not steadfast,' for when the mind strains toward things on high, it is dissipated by the conceits of its own flesh, so that oftentimes whilst the mind pants after the things of the interior, while it looks at heavenly objects alone, smitten by a momentary carnal delight, it lies low severed from itself, and he that felt joy that he had surmounted the hindrances of his frailty, prostrated by an unexpected wound, is only filled with woe. Perverseness then is found even in His Angels, so long as those very men, who proclaim His truth, the surprisals of a deceitful life do at times lie heavy on. So then if even those are smitten by the wickedness of this world, whom a holy purpose presents erect against the same, with what strokes are not they pierced, whom nothing less than [*ipsa*] delight in their frailty brings to the ground before its darts? And these are well described to be 'consumed,' as it were, 'with a moth.' For a moth does mischief, and makes no sound. So the minds of the wicked, in that they neglect to take account of their own losses, lose their soundness, as it were, without knowing it. For they are losing innocence from the heart, truth from the lips, continency from the flesh, and in the course of time, life from the sum of their age. But they see not one whit that they are unceasingly letting go these same, in that they are busied with all their heart in temporal concerns. Thus they are 'consumed as it were with a moth,' in that they suffer the canker of sin without sound, whilst they remain ignorant what losses in life and innocence of heart they are undergoing. Hence it is well added,  
Ver. 20. *They shall be cut off from morning to evening.*

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70. For the sinner is 'cut off from morning to evening,' in that from the beginning of his life to the end thereof he is ever getting wounded by the commission of sin. For the reprobate by increase in wickedness are at all times redoubling blows upon themselves, cut off by which, they may fall headlong into the pit. And it is well said of them by the Psalmist, *Bloody and deceitful men shall not halve their days.* [Ps. 55, 23] For to 'halve our days' is to part off the time of our life misspent in pleasure, for the purpose of penitential mourning, and in parting off to recover the same to a good use. But the wicked never 'halve their days,' in that not even in the end of their time do they change their frowardness of heart. Contrary whereunto Paul rightly exhorts, saying, *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.* [Eph. 5, 16] For we 'redeem the time,' when by tears we recover our past life, which by rioting we had lost. It goes on,  
*And because none understandeth, they perish for ever.*

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71. That is to say, 'none' of those, who 'shall be cut off from morning unto evening.' 'None understandeth,' whether of those that perish, or of those who follow the lost ways of the perishing. Whence it is elsewhere written, *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering.* [Is. 57, 1] Thus, whereas the wicked are set upon temporal things alone, and are unconcerned to learn what blessings are in store for the Elect for everlasting, while they look to the affliction of the just, but never learn what is the recompense of that affliction, they put forth the foot of their conversation into the pit, for they willingly shut their eyes to the light of understanding. For being decoyed by foolish pleasures, whilst for objects, which they see, they entertain an affection, which belongs to time, being meanwhile strangers to

themselves, they never see whereunto they are hurrying for all eternity. It is possible too that by the morning may be denoted the prosperous fortune of this world, and by the evening the adverse fortune thereof. So then 'the wicked are cut off from morning to evening,' in that by running riot through prosperity they are brought to ruin, and being made impatient by adversity they are lifted up to madness. These would never be cut off from morning to evening, by sin, if they either took prosperity for the salve or adversity for the knife to their sore.

72. But forasmuch as the assemblage of the human race is never so forsaken, that the whole is let to go to destruction, there be some, that look down upon the enjoyments [c] of the present life, even when they are present, consider that they are transient, and in the love of the eternal world tread them underfoot. And while they set the step of judgment on this first stage, they mount with invigorated soul to a loftier height, so that they not only condemn all temporal things, for that they must be quickly parted with, but have no desire to attach themselves thereto, even if they might last for ever. And they withdraw their love from the things created in beauty, because they stretch forth by the steps of the heart toward the Father of all Beauty Himself. And there are some that love the good things of the present life, yet never in any wise attain unto them, who pant after temporal blessings with all their hearts' desire, who covet the glory of the world, yet never can make themselves master thereof. For these, so to speak, the heart draws them on to seek the world, the world drives them back to search out the heart. For it often chanceth that, being bruised by those very adversities which they suffer, they are brought back to reason, and returning back into themselves, they consider how little there is in that, which they were seeking after, and forthwith betake themselves to weeping for the foolishness of their desire, and conceive the stronger yearnings for eternal things, in proportion to the folly in which they grieve that they once spent themselves for those of time. Hence, the wicked having been described, it is well added, Ver. 21. *But they that have been left shall be taken away from among them.*

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73. Whom else do we understand by 'the left,' but all the despised of this world? whom whilst the present life chooses not for any use of honour, it 'leaves' as being the least and most worthless. But the Lord is said to 'take away those that are left' of the world, in that He condescends to make choice of the despised of this life, as Paul bears witness, saying, *Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath, chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.* [1 Cor. 1, 26. 27.] Which is well represented in the Book of Kings by the Egyptian servant fainting in the way, whom the Amalekite abandons taken sick upon the journey, but David finds, refreshes with food, and makes the guide of his route; he pursues the Amalekite, finds him feasting, and utterly destroys him [1 Sam. 30, 13]. For what does it mean that the Egyptian servant of the Amalekite turns faint upon the journey, but that the lover of this present world, covered with the blackness of his sins, is often abandoned in weakness and contempt by the same world, so that he is no longer able to run therewith, but being broken down by adversity, grows helpless. But David finds him, in that our Redeemer, Who is in a true sense 'strong of hand,' sometimes turns to the love of Himself those, whom He finds despised as to the glory of the world, in that He refreshes them with the knowledge of the Word. He chose him the guide of his way, in that He makes him even the preacher of Himself. And he, that had no power to follow the Amalekite, becomes the guide of David, in that he, whom the world forsook as worthless, not only when converted

entertains the Lord in his affections [*suas mentes*, al. *su mente*], but by preaching Him brings Him home even to the hearts of others also. And with this same guide David discovers and annihilates the Amalekite as he feasted, in that Christ breaks up the joy of the world by those very men as preachers, whom that world scorned to have for its companions. Therefore because it very often happens that those, whom the world abandons, are chosen of the Lord, it is rightly said in this place, *Those, that may have been left, shall be taken from amongst them.* It proceeds; *They shall die, even without wisdom.*

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74. How is it that he set forth above the death of the wicked, saying, *Because none understandeth they shall perish for ever*; and concerning the Elect of God thereupon subjoined, *And they that have been left shall be taken away from among them*; yet forthwith adds that which cannot accord with those Elect ones, saying, *They shall die even without wisdom*? For if they be taken away from among the wicked by the hand of God, how are they said ‘to die without wisdom?’ Why, doubtless it is the fashion of Holy Writ, in relating any thing, after inserting a sentence that concerns another case, to return straightway to its former subject. Thus after he had said, *And because there is none that understandeth, they shall perish for ever*; he immediately brought in the lot of the Elect, saying, *But they that have been left shall be taken away from among them.* And again directing the eye of his meaning to that destruction of the wicked, which he had foretold, he suddenly subjoined, *they shall die, even without wisdom.* As if he said, Those of whom I said that ‘not understanding, they should perish for ever,’ will assuredly ‘die without wisdom.’ But we shall the better shew that this is at times the way with Holy Writ, if we produce therefrom a similar instance to this. For when Paul the Apostle was counselling his beloved disciple for the settling the offices of the Church, that he might not by chance without due order promote any to Holy Orders, he said, *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins. Keep thyself pure.* [1 Tim. 5, 22] And forthwith directing his words to his bodily infirmities, he says, *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities.* [ver. 23] And he immediately subjoins; *Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after.* [ver. 24] What connection then has that, which he added concerning the sins of different men being hidden and manifest, with this, that he forbade him in his weak health to drink water? but that after the insertion of a clause concerning his weakness of health he came back again at the end to that, which he had said above, *Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins.* For in order to shew with what anxious heed these same sins are to be inquired into, after introducing a charge to prudence directed against the annoyance of bad health, he straightway put in, that in some men they lay exposed to view, in some hidden from sight, saying, *Some men's sins are open beforehand going before to judgment, and some men they follow after.* As then in this sentence Paul does not chime in with these same words, to which, speaking of the weakness of Timothy's health, he subjoined it, but he has returned to that which he made mention of before after an interruption; so when in this place Eliphaz said concerning the Elect, *They that have been left shall be taken from among them*, by subjoining thereupon, *they die even without wisdom*; he forthwith recurs to that, which he delivered concerning the wicked, saying, *And because none understandeth, they shall perish for ever.*

75. Now it is for this reason that the wicked look down upon the Elect, because they are going toward a life that is invisible through a death that is visible; of whom it is well said in this place,

*They die even without wisdom.* As though it were said in plain words, “They equally indeed eschew death and wisdom; and wisdom they wholly get quit of, but they do not escape the snares of death. And whereas doomed, as they are, to die one day, they might in dying have received life, while they dread the death, which will most surely come, they part both with life and wisdom together.” But, on the other hand, the righteous die in wisdom, for that death, which they cannot wholly avoid, when it threatens them for the sake of the truth, they refuse to put off to a later day, and whilst they undergo the same with resignation, they turn the punishment of their race into an instrument of virtue; that life may be received back from the same quarter, whence, for the deserts of the first sin, it is forced to its end. But because Eliphaz delivered these things with a true meaning against the wicked; in accounting blessed Job to be worthy of blame, he puffed himself up in pride of wisdom. And hence, after declarations so good and righteous, he subjoins words of mocking, and says,

Chap. V. 1. *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee.*

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76. For Almighty God often passes by the prayer of that man in his trouble, who slights His precepts in the season of rest. Hence it is written, He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. Now for us ‘to call,’ is to beseech God with humble prayer; but for God to ‘answer,’ is to vouchsafe an accomplishment to our prayers; and so he says, *Call now, if any will answer thee.* As though he said in plain words, ‘However thou mayest cry out in thy distress, thou hast not God answering thee, in that the voice in tribulation findeth not Him, Whom the mind in tranquillity disregarded. Where he adds in yet further derision, *And turn thee to some one of the Saints?*

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77. As though he said in scorn, ‘The Saints too thou canst never obtain for abettors in thy distress, whom thou wouldest not have for companions in thy mirth. And after this mocking he forthwith adds the sentence, saying,

Ver. 2. *For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly man.*

[xlv] [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

78. Which same sentence would have been true, had it not been delivered against the patience of so great a man. But let us weigh well the thing that is said, though it be made to recoil by the virtue of his hearer, that we may shew how right the matter is, which is put forth, if it were not unjustly put forth against blessed Job; since it is written, *But Thou, Lord, Judgest with tranquillity.* [Wisd. 12, 18] We must above all things know, that as often as we restrain the turbulent motions of the mind under the virtue of mildness, we are essaying to return to the likeness of our Creator. For when the peace of the mind is lashed with Anger, torn and rent, as it were, it is thrown into confusion, so that it is not in harmony with itself, and loses the force of the inward likeness. Let us consider then how great the sin of Anger is, by which, while we part with mildness, the likeness of the image of the Most High is spoilt. By Anger wisdom is parted with, so that we are left wholly in ignorance what to do, and in what order to do it; as it is written, *Anger resteth in the bosom of a fool* [Ecc. 7, 9]; in this way, that it withdraws the light of understanding, while by agitating it troubles the mind. By

Anger life is lost, even though wisdom seem to be retained; as it is written, *Anger destroyeth even the wise*. [Prov. 15, 1. LXX] For in truth the mind being in a state of confusion never puts it in execution, even if it has power to discern any thing with good judgment. By Anger righteousness is abandoned, as it is written, *The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*. [Jam. 1, 20] For whereas the agitated mind works up to harshness the decision of its reasoning faculty, all that rage suggests, it accounts to be right. By Anger all the kindness of social life is lost, as it is written, *Be not the companion of an angry man; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul*. [Prov. 22, 24. 25. not V.] And the same writer, *Who can dwell with [not V.] a man whose spirit is ready to wrath [thus V.]?* [Prov. 18, 14] For he that does not regulate his feelings by the reason that is proper to man, must needs live alone like a beast. By Anger, harmony is interrupted; as it is written, *A wrathful man stirreth up strife, and an angry man diggeth up sins*. [Prov. 15, 18. not as V. or LXX] For 'an angry man diggeth up sins,' since even bad men, whom he rashly provokes to strife, he makes worse than they were. By Anger the light of truth is lost; as it is written, *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath*. [Eph. 4, 26] For when wrath brings into the mind the darkness of perturbation, God hides therefrom the ray of the knowledge of Himself. By Anger the brightness of the Holy Spirit is shut out. Contrary whereunto, it is written according to the old translation, *Upon whom shall My Spirit rest, saving upon him that is humble and peaceful, and that trembleth at My words?* [Is. 66, 2] For when He mentioned the humble man, He forthwith subjoined the word 'peaceful;' if then Anger steals away peace of mind, it shuts its dwelling place against the Holy Spirit, and the soul being left void by Its departure, is immediately carried into open frenzy, and is scattered away to the very surface from the inmost foundation of the thoughts.

79. For the heart that is inflamed with the stings of its own Anger beats quick, the body trembles, the tongue stammers, the countenance takes fire, the eyes grow fierce, and they that are well known are not recognised. With the mouth, indeed, he shapes a sound, but the understanding knows nothing what it says. Wherein, then, is he far removed from brain-struck [*arreptitiis*] persons, who is not conscious of his own doings? Whence it very often comes to pass that anger springs forth even to the hands, and as reason is gone the further, it lifts itself the bolder. And the mind has no strength to keep itself in, for that it is made over into the power of another. And frenzy employs the limbs without in dealing blows, in proportion as it holds captive within the very mind, that is the mistress of the limbs. But sometimes it does not put out the hands, but it turns the tongue into a dart of cursing. For it implores with entreaty for a brother's destruction, and demands of God to do that, which the wicked man himself is either afraid or ashamed to do. And it comes to pass that both by wish and words he commits a murder, even when he forbears the hurting of his neighbour with the hands. Sometimes when the mind is disturbed, anger as if in judgment commands silence, and in proportion as it does not vent itself outwardly by the lips, inwardly it burns the worse, so the angry man withholds from converse with his neighbour, and in saying nothing, says how he abhors him. And sometimes this rigorousness of silence is used in the economy of discipline, yet only if the rule of discretion be diligently retained in the interior. But sometimes whilst the incensed mind foregoes the wonted converse, in the progress of time it is wholly severed from the love of our neighbour, and sharper stings arise to the mind, and occasions too spring up which aggravate her irritation, and the mote in the eye of the angry man is turned into a beam, whilst anger is changed into hatred. It often happens that the anger, which is pent up within the heart from silence, burns the more fiercely, and silently frames clamorous speeches, presents to itself words, by which to have its wrath exasperated, and as if set in judgment on the case, answers in exasperation exceeding cruelly: as Solomon implies in few words, saying, *But the*



*expectation of the wicked is wrath.* [Prov. 11, 23] And thus it is brought to pass that the troubled Spirit finds louder riot in its silence, and the flame of pent-up anger preys upon it the more grievously. Hence a certain wise man said well before us, *The thoughts of the angry man are a generation of vipers, they devour the mind which is their mother.* [d]

80. But we are to know that there be some, whom anger is somewhat prompt in inflaming, but quickly leaves them; while there are others whom it is slow in exciting, but the longer in retaining possession of. For some, like kindled reeds, while they clamour with their voices, give out something like a crackle at their kindling: those indeed speedily rise into a flame, but then they forth with cool down into their ashes; while others, like the heavier and harder kinds of wood, are slow in taking fire, but being once kindled, are with difficulty put out; and as they slowly stir themselves into heat of passion, retain the longer the fire of their rage. Others again, and their conduct is the worst, are both quick in catching the flames of anger, and slow in letting them go; and others both catch them slowly, and part with them quickly. In which same four sorts, the reader sees clearly that the last rather than the first approaches to the excellence of peace of mind, and in evil the third is worse than the second. But what good does it do to declare how anger usurps possession of the mind, if we neglect to set forth at the same time, how it should be checked?

81. For there are two ways whereby anger being broken comes to relax its hold upon the mind. The first method is that the heedful mind, before it begins to do any thing, set before itself all the insults which it is liable to undergo, so that by thinking on the opprobrious treatment of its Redeemer, it may brace itself to meet with contradiction. Which same, on coming, it receives with the greater courage, in proportion as by foresight it armed itself the more heedfully. For he, that is caught by adversity unprovided for it, is as if he were found by his enemy sleeping, and his foe dispatches him the sooner, that he stabs one who offers no resistance. For he, that forecasts impending ills in a spirit of earnest heedfulness, as it were watching in ambush awaits the assault of his enemy. And he arrays himself in strength for the victory in the very point wherein he was expected to be caught in entire ignorance. Therefore, before the outset of any action, the mind ought to forecast all contrarieties, and that with anxious heed, that by taking account of these at all times, and being at all times armed against them with the breastplate of patience, it may both in foresight obtain the mastery, whatever may take place, and whatever may not take place, it may account gain. But the second method of preserving mildness is that, when we regard the transgression of others, we have an eye to our own offences, by which we have done wrong in the case of others. For our own frailty, being considered makes excuse for the ills done us by others. Since that man bears with patience an injury that is offered him, who with right feeling remembers that perchance there may still be somewhat, in which he himself has need to be borne with. And it is as if fire were extinguished by water, when upon rage rising up in the mind each person recalls his own misdoings to his recollection; for he is ashamed not to spare offences, who recollects that he has himself often committed offences, whether against God or against his neighbour, which need to be spared.

82. But herein we must bear in mind with nice discernment that the anger, which hastiness of temper stirs is one thing, and that which zeal gives its character to is another. The first is engendered of evil, the second of good. For if there was no anger originating in virtue, Phinees would never have allayed the fierceness of God's visitation by his sword. Because Eli lacked such

anger, he quickened against himself the stirrings of the vengeance of the Most High to an implacable force. For in proportion as he was lukewarm towards the evil practices of those under his charge, the severity of the Eternal Ruler waxed hot against himself. Of this it is said by the Psalmist, *Be ye angry, and sin not*. [Ps. 4, 5 Vulg.] Which doubtless they fail to interpret aright, who would only have us angry with ourselves, and not with others likewise, when they sin. For if we are bidden to love our neighbours as ourselves, it follows that we should be as angry with their erring ways as with our own evil practices. Of this it is said by Solomon, *Anger [so Vulg.] is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better*. [Ecc. 7, 3] Of this the Psalmist saith again, *Mine eye is [V. thus] disturbed because of anger [prae ira. Vulg. a furore]*. [Ps. 6, 8] For anger that comes of evil blinds the eye of the mind, but anger that comes of zeal disturbs it. Since necessarily in whatever degree he is moved by a jealousy for virtue, the world of contemplation, which cannot be known saving by a heart in tranquillity, is broken up. For zeal for the cause of virtue in itself, in that it fills the mind with disquietude and agitation, presently bedims the eye thereof, so that in its troubled state it can no longer see those objects far up above, which it aforetime clearly beheld in a state of tranquillity. But it is brought back on high with a more penetrating ken by the same means, whereby it is thrown back for a while so as to be incapable of seeing. For the same jealousy in behalf of what is right after a short space opens wider the scenes of eternity in a state of tranquillity, which in the mean season it closes from the effects of perturbation. And from the same quarter whence the mind is confounded so as to prevent its seeing, it gains ground, so as to be made clear for seeing in a more genuine way; just as when ointment is applied to the diseased eye, light is wholly withheld, but after a little space it recovers this in truth and reality by the same means, by which it lost the same for its healing. But to perturbation contemplation is never joined, nor is the mind when disturbed enabled to behold that, which even when in a tranquil state it scarcely has power to gaze on; for neither is the sun's ray discerned, when driving clouds cover the face of the heavens; nor does a troubled fountain give back the image of the beholder, which when calm it shews with a proper likeness; for in proportion as the water thereof quivers, it bedims the appearance of a likeness within it.

83. But when the spirit is stirred by zeal, it is needful to take good heed, that that same anger, which we adopt as an instrument of virtue, never gain dominion over the mind, nor take the lead as mistress, but like a handmaid, prompt to render service, never depart from following in the rear of reason. For it is then lifted up more vigorously against evil, when it does service in subjection to reason; since how much soever our anger may originate in zeal for the right, if from being in excess it has mastered our minds, it thereupon scorns to pay obedience to reason, and spreads itself the more shamelessly, in proportion as it takes the evil of a hot temper for a good quality; whence it is necessary that he who is influenced by zeal for right should above all things look to this, that his anger should never overleap the mind's control, but, in avenging sin, looking to the time and the manner, should check the rising agitation of his mind by regulating it with nicety of skill, should restrain heat of temper, and control his passionate emotions in subjection to the rule of equity, that the punisher of another man may be made more just, in proportion as he has first proved the conqueror of himself; so that he should correct the faults of transgressors in such away, that he that corrects should himself first make advancement by self-restraint, and pass judgment on his own vehemency, in getting above it, lest by being immoderately stirred by his very zeal for right, he go far astray from the right. But as we have said, forasmuch as even a commendable jealousy for virtue troubles the eye of the mind, it is rightly said in this place, *For wrath killeth the foolish man*; as if it were in plain terms, 'Anger from zeal disturbs the wise, but anger from sin destroys the

fool;’ for the first is kept in under the control of reason, but the other lords it over the prostrate mind in opposition to reason. And it is well added,  
*And envy slayeth the little I one.*

[xlvi]

84. For it is impossible for us to envy any but those, whom we think to be better than ourselves in some respect. And so he is ‘a little one,’ who is slain by jealousy. For he bears witness against his very own self, that he is less than him, by envy of whom he is tormented. It is hence that our crafty foe, in envying of the first man, despoiled him, in that having lost his estate of bliss, he knew himself to be inferior to his immortality. It is hence that Cain was brought down to commit the murder of his brother; in that when his sacrifice was disregarded, he was maddened that he, whose offering God accepted, was preferred to himself; and him, whose being better than himself was his aversion, he cut off, that he might not be at all. Hence, Esau was fired to the persecution of his brother; for, the blessing of the firstborn being lost, which, for that matter, he had himself parted with for a mess of pottage, he bewailed his inferiority to him, whom he surpassed by his birth. Hence his own brethren sold Joseph to Ishmaelites, that were passing by, in that upon the mystery of the revelation being disclosed, they set themselves to resist his advancement, that he might never become superior to themselves. Hence Saul persecutes his servant David by throwing a lance at him, for he dreaded that man growing beyond his own measure, whom he perceived to be daily waxing bigger by his great achievements in the virtues. Thus he is a ‘little one,’ who is slain by envy; in that except he himself proved less, he would not grieve for the goodness of another.

85. But herein we must bear in mind, that though in every evil thing that is done, the venom of our old enemy is infused into the heart of man, yet in this wickedness, the serpent stirs his whole bowels, and discharges the bane of spite fitted to enter deep into the mind. Of whom also it is written, Nevertheless, through envy of the devil came death into the world. For when the foul sore of envy corrupts the vanquished heart, the very exterior itself shews, how forcibly the mind is urged by madness. For paleness seizes the complexion, the eyes are weighed down, the spirit is inflamed, while the limbs are chilled, there is frenzy in the heart, there is gnashing with the teeth, and while the growing hate is buried in the depths of the heart, the pent wound works into the conscience with a blind grief. Nought of its own that is prosperous gives satisfaction, in that a self-inflicted pain wounds the pining spirit, which is racked by the prosperity of another: and in proportion as the structure of another's works is reared on high, the foundations of the jealous mind are deeper undermined, that in proportion as others hasten onward to better things, his own ruin should be the worse; by which same downfall even that is brought to the ground, which was believed to have been raised in other doings with perfect workmanship. For when envy has made the mind corrupt, it consumes all that it may have found done aright. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.* [Prov. 14, 30] For what is denoted by ‘the flesh,’ saving weak and tender things? and what by the ‘bones,’ saving strong deeds? And it is most common that some with real innocency of heart should appear to be weak in some points of their practice, whilst some now perform deeds of strength before the eyes of men, but yet towards the excellences of others they are inwardly consumed with the plague of envy; and so it is well said, *A sound heart is the life of the flesh.* In that where inward innocency is preserved, even if there be some points weak without, yet they are sometime made strong and fast. And it is rightly added, *But envy the rottenness of the bones.* For by the bad quality of envy even strong deeds of

virtue go for nought before the eyes of God. Since the rotting of the bones from envy is the spoiling of the strong things even.

86. But why do we say such things concerning envy, unless we likewise point out in what manner it may be rooted out? For it is a hard thing for one man not to envy another that, which he earnestly desires to obtain; since whatever we receive that is of time becomes less to each in proportion as there are many to divide it amongst. And for this reason envy wrings the longing mind, because that, which it desires, another man getting either takes away altogether, or curtails in quantity. Let him, then, who longs to be wholly and entirely void of the bane of envy, set his affections on that inheritance, which no number of fellowheirs serves to stint or shorten, which is both one to all and whole to each, which is shewn so much the larger, as the number of those that are vouchsafed it is enlarged for its reception. And so the lessening of envy is the feeling of inward sweetness arising, and the utter death of it is the perfect love of Eternity. For when the mind is withdrawn from the desire of that object, which is divided among a multitude of participators, the love of our neighbour is increased, in proportion as the fear of injury to self from his advancement is lessened. And if the soul be wholly ravished in love of the heavenly land, it is also thoroughly rooted in the love of our neighbour, and that without any mixture of envy. For whereas it desires no earthly objects, there is nothing to withstand the love it has for its fellow. And what else is this same charity but the eye of the mind, which if it be reached by the dust of earthly love, is forthwith beaten back with injury from its gaze at the inward light? But whereas he is 'a little one,' who loves earthly things, and a great one that longs after the things of eternity, it may be suitably enough rendered in this sense likewise, *And envy slayeth the foolish one*; in that no man perishes by the sickness of this plague, except him that is still unhealthy in his desires.

## THE SECOND PART.

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### BOOK VI.

The whole of the fifth chapter, beginning at the third verse, is explained first in a spiritual sense, a few parts in an allegorical, and a great many in a moral sense.

#### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

[i]

SAVING the historical verity, I proposed to myself to make out the sayings of blessed Job and of his friends by the mystical mode of interpretation: for it is plain to all that are acquainted with the truth, that Holy Writ takes care to hold out in promise the Redeemer of the world in all its statements, and that it has aimed to represent Him by all the Elect as by His members. And hence blessed Job is in the Latin tongue rendered 'grieving,' that both by his name and by his wounds the

Passion of our Redeemer might be signified, of Whom the Prophet saith, *Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*. [Is. 53, 4] And the Tempter, having robbed him of every thing, slew both his servants and his children; in that at the time of His Passion he smote with the weapon of faithlessness not only the Jewish people, that served Him out of fear, but the very Apostles also themselves, that were regenerated in His love. The body of blessed Job is mangled with wounding, for our Redeemer does not disdain to be pierced with nails upon the stock of the Cross. And he received wounds, from the sole of the foot to the very crown of his head, in that not only in her last and lowest members, but even up to the very highest, Holy Church, which is His Body, is harassed with persecution by the raging Tempter. Hence also Paul said, *And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ*. [Col. 1, 24] And his wife strives to persuade him to curse, in that all the carnal minds within the pale of Holy Church prove abettors of the cunning Tempter. For she, who prompts him to cursing, represents the life of the carnal sort; since, as we have already said above, all persons of unchastened habits within the pale of Holy Church, in proportion as they are brought nigh to the good by their faith, pinch them harder by their life. For because they cannot be avoided, as being of the number of the faithful, they are borne by the faithful as the greater harm, in proportion [see Preface, § 14] as it is nearer home. But his friends, who come as if to administer consolation, but run out into words of bitter upbraiding, bear the likeness of heretics, who, in striving to defend God against the righteous, only offend Him.

2. These things then, which have been more fully delivered above, I have endeavoured to gather into a small compass after their mystical representation, that by this very repetition it might be recalled to the recollection of my reader, that I minister to the spiritual understanding. And yet, when occasion of usefulness demands, I also busy myself to make out with minute exactness the letter of the history, but when it is needed I embrace both at the same time, that the allegory may put forth spiritual fruit, which same nevertheless is produced by the historical verity as from the root. Now the friends of blessed Job, who, we have said, bear the likeness of heretics, we by no means condemn for their words throughout; for whereas it is delivered against them by the sentence from above, *For ye have not spoken before Me the thing that is right*; [Job 42, 7] and it is thereupon added, *Like My servant Job*; it is plainly manifest that that is not altogether set at nought, which is only disapproved by comparison with what is better. For they incautiously slip into censure of him, but yet, as they are the friends of so great a man, from familiar intercourse with him they learnt many mystical truths. Whence, as we have also said above, Paul uses their very words, and by taking these in aid of his statement, he testifies that they were delivered from a source of truth. Which same nevertheless Truth does rightly censure, in that no sentence, however full of force, should be delivered against a holy man. Accordingly the words of Eliphaz may be considered in a mystical sense, whereby he addresses blessed Job, saying,  
Ver. 3. *I have seen the foolish taking root; but suddenly I cursed his beauty*. [so V.]

[ii]

3. For the Jewish people shewed itself to be 'foolish,' in that it slightly regarded the very Presence of Eternal Wisdom in the flesh. And it waxed strong, as it were, by taking root, in that it had power

over the life of the Elect to the extinction thereof in time. And Eliphaz despises such an one, cursing him, in that all heretics, whom we have said the friends of blessed Job bear a figure of, while they boast themselves in the name of Christ, censure in a way of authority the unbelief of the Jews. Concerning which same foolish one it is forthwith added,

Ver. 4. *His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither shall there be any to deliver them.*

4. They all are 'the children' of this foolish man, who are generated by the preaching of that unbelief, and these 'are far from safety,' for though they enjoy the temporal life without trouble, they are stricken the worse with eternal vengeance, as the Lord says concerning these same sons of such an one, *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him twofold more the child of hell than, yourselves.* [Matt. 23, 15] It follows, *And they are crushed in the gate, neither shall there be any to deliver them.* Who else is to be understood by the name of *gate*, but the Mediator between God and Man, *Who saith, I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.* [John 10, 9] The sons, then, of this foolish man advance without the gate, and they are 'crushed in the gate,' for the evil offspring of the Jews, before the Mediator's coming, prospered in the observance of the Law, but in the presence of our Redeemer itself they fell away from the service of the Divine Being, proving outcasts by the deserts of their faithlessness. And verily there is none 'to rescue them,' for while they strive by their persecution to kill the Redeemer Himself, they cut themselves off from the proffered means of their rescue. And it is well added concerning him,  
Ver. 5. *Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and the armed one shall seize him.*

[iv]

5. Now 'the harvest' of this foolish man was the crop of Sacred Writ. For the words of the Prophets are like so many grains of the ears, which the foolish man had, but did not eat. For the Jewish people indeed held the Law as far as the letter, but, from an infatuated pride, as to the sense thereof, they went hungering. But 'the hungry eateth the harvest' of this foolish one, in that the Gentile folk eats by taking in the words of the Law, in which the Jewish people toiled and laboured without taking them in. These hungry ones of faith the Lord foresaw, when He had said by the Evangelist, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* [Matt. 5, 6] Of these hungry ones Hannah saith prophesying, *They that were full, have hired out themselves for bread, and they that were hungry were satisfied.* [1 Sam. 2, 5] And as he lost the harvest, it is rightly added how the foolish man himself too perishes, where it is said, *And himself shall the armed one seize.* The old enemy, being 'armed,' seized the Jewish people, for he extinguished in them the life of faith by the darts of deceitful counsel, that in the very point, wherein they imagined themselves to be rooted in God, they might resist His dispensation. And Truth forewarns the Disciples of this, saying, *Yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.* [John 16, 2] It follows.  
*And the thirsty shall drink his riches.*

[v]

6. The riches of this 'foolish' one 'the thirsty drink,' in that by the streams of Sacred Writ, which the Jewish people possessed in the display of pride, the converted minds of the Gentiles are watered. And hence it is said to those same persons by the Prophet, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no silver, come ye.* [Is. 55, 1] For that the divine oracles are denoted by the word 'silver,' is testified by the Psalmist in these words, *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in the fire.* [Ps. 12, 6] They then that 'have no silver,' are bidden to the 'waters,' in that the Gentile world which had never received the precepts of Holy Writ, is satisfied with the outpouring of Divine Revelation, which they now drink of the more eagerly, in proportion as they thirsted for it long time in a state of drought. Thus the very same Divine oracles are called at once 'harvests' and 'riches;' 'harvests,' because they refresh the hungering soul; 'riches,' because they array us in a rare richness of moral excellences. The same things are said both to be 'eaten,' and to be 'drunk,' for this reason, that whereas there are certain things therein that are obscure, which we understand not without they be interpreted, these same we in a manner swallow eating; and whereas certain other things indeed, that are easy to be understood, we so take as we find them, these we drink as if unchewed, in that we swallow them unbroken. These things we have run through in brief mode under their mystical signification, lest perchance we might seem to have passed over any thing; but because they could not be the friends of blessed Job, except in some points they also shone conspicuous for high moral worth, it remains that in their words we examine the force of their import in a moral sense, that, whilst the weight and substance of their speech is made out, it may be shewn what sort of teaching they were masters of.

Ver.3. *I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his beauty.*

[vi] [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

7. 'The foolish' is as it were made fast in the earth by 'taking root,' in that he is fixed in the love of earth with all his heart's desire. And hence Cain is recorded to have been the first that builded a city in the earth, that it might be plainly shewn, that that same man laid a foundation in the earth, who was turned adrift from the firm hold of our heavenly country. The foolish man as it were lifts himself up by 'taking root,' when he is buoyed up in this world with temporal good fortune, so that he obtains whatsoever he desires, is subject to no crosses, prevails against the weak without meeting with resistance, gainsays those that do well with authority, is ever attaining to better circumstances by means of worse practices, so that from the very cause that he is forsaking the path of life, he lives for the time the happier. But when the weak see that the wicked flourish, they are alarmed, and being troubled in their own breasts by the prosperity of sinners, they inwardly falter in the mind's footsteps. It was the likeness of these same that the Psalmist took when he declared, *But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my step, had well nigh slipped; for I was envious at the sinner, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.* [Ps. 73, 2. 3.]

8. But when the strong see their glory, they forthwith fix their minds upon the punishment which is to follow after that glory, and with deep thought of heart within they condemn that, which swells the

proud without with the bigness of empty inflation. It is then well said, *I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his beauty*. For to 'curse the beauty' of the fool is to condemn his glory by an advised sentence, for he is the more frightfully drowned in torments, the higher he is lifted up in sins; for the being lifted up is transient, but the being punished is perpetual; for he, that meets with honour on his road, will meet with condemnation on his arrival; and he is as it were coming to a prison through pleasant meadows, who is going on to ruin through this world's prosperity. But it is to be observed, that, when he says that he 'cursed the beauty of the fool,' he directly adds, *suddenly*; for it is the way with man's weak mind to vary according to the modification of the objects which it beholds. Thus it often happens that his judgment is led by the mere appearance of the object presented, and his bias and feeling are framed according to the thing which is before his eyes. For often persons, while they see the glory of certain individuals, are charmed with the appearances thereof, and account it something great, and heartily wish they might themselves obtain the like; but when they see the children of glory severally either overthrown of a sudden, or perchance even brought to death, they acknowledge with a sigh that human glory is altogether nought, so as to exclaim at once, 'See what a nothing is man!' Which indeed they would say with more propriety, if when they saw man in possession of glory, then thinking of his destruction, they had felt that transitory power is nought. For it is then that we are to reflect what a nothing human exaltation is, when by its successes it mounts above others; then we ought to reflect with what speed happiness will flee away, when it flourishes, as if for ever, before the eyes of men. For that the glory of a perishable being is nothing in the actual hour of death, any of the weak sort can presently consider. For then even they hold it cheap, who even until death follow after it with affection. So that it is well said, *I have seen the foolish taking root, but suddenly I cursed his beauty*. As if he said plainly; 'Against the beauty of the foolish I admitted no delay in my cursing, for as soon as I discerned it, I saw along with it the punishment that comes after; for I should not have cursed suddenly, if any delight in that glory had kept hold of me, but I cursed without tardiness, for beholding his punishments which are destined to endure, I condemned his power without hesitating.' But because in every case the more the wicked make way in this world, the greater numbers they drag to destruction, it is rightly subjoined, *Let his children be* [al. *his children shall be*] *far from safety*. For the children of the foolish one are they, that after his copy are brought forth in this world's ambition; who truly are so much the further from safety, in proportion as in the practice of iniquity they are stricken by no infirmity. Of these it is well added, Ver. 4. *And they shall be crushed in the gate; neither shall there be any to deliver them*.

[vii]

9. For as the entrance of a city is called the 'gate,' so is the day of Judgment the gate of the Kingdom, since all the Elect go in thereby to the glory of their heavenly country. And hence when Solomon saw this day approaching for the recompensing of Holy Church, he said, *Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land*. [Prov. 31, 23] For the Redeemer of mankind is the 'husband' of Holy Church, Who shews Himself 'renowned' in the gates. Who [A.B.C.D. 'because he'] first came to sight in degradation and in mockings, but shall appear on high at the entering in of His kingdom: and 'He sitteth among the elders of the land,' for that He



shall decree sentence of condemnation together with the holy preachers of that same Church, as Himself declares in the Gospel, *Verily I say unto you, Ye which have followed Me, in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* [Matt. 19, 28] Which same Isaiah also foretelling long before uses these words, *The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of His people.* [Is. 3, 14] Of these gates Solomon says again, *Give her of the fruit of her hands, and her own works shall praise her in the gates.* [Prov. 31, 31] For Holy Church then receives of 'the fruit of her hands,' when the recompensing of her labours lifts her up to the entertainment of heavenly blessings, for her 'works then praise her in the gates,' when the words are spoken to her members in the very entrance to His kingdom; *For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me.* [Matt. 25, 35] The children then of this foolish man are lifted up *before* 'the gate,' but '*in* the gate they shall be crushed;' in that the followers of this world carry themselves proudly in the present life, but in the very entrance of the kingdom they are struck with an everlasting visitation. And it is well added, Neither is there any to deliver them. For 'Truth' delivers from eternal woe those whom in temporal weal She straitens by discipline. He, then, that now refuses to be straightened, is left then without the means to be 'delivered,' For Him, Whom they care not to have as a Father in training, the wicked in the season of their calamity never find a deliverer in succouring. It proceeds; *Whose harvest the hungry one shall eat up.*

[viii]

10. Even the foolish man has a 'harvest,' when any wicked man is vouchsafed the gift of a right understanding, is instructed in the sentences of Holy Writ, speaks good words, yet never in any wise does the thing that he says; gives forth the words of God, yet does not love them; by his praise magnifies them, by his practice tramples on them. Thus because this foolish man both understands and speaks that, which is right, yet does not love this in his doings, while he has a harvest, he goes starving. Which same 'the hungry eateth up,' in that he, who pants after God with holy desires, learns what he hears, and practises what he has learnt. And, whilst he is invigorated by the right preaching of a wrong teacher, what else is this than that he is filled with the produce of the foolish? Did not 'Truth' charge His 'hungry ones' to eat up the 'harvest' of the foolish, when, they being inflamed by holy desires, He charged them concerning the Pharisees, saying, *All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, observe and do; but do not ye after their works.* [Matt. 23, 3] As though He said plainly; 'By speaking they rear the harvest of the word, but by evil living they touch it not. Let this harvest then be the refreshment for your hunger, for it is for you that they reserve it in their own infatuated loathing.' And it is well added, *Ver. 5. And the armed man shall seize him.*

[ix]

11. For our old enemy is conquered as an unarmed man, when, by openly prompting evil things to the mind of man, he aims to destroy all the good together. But he comes 'armed,' when, leaving

some good things untouched, he covertly works the ruin of others. For often he does not tempt some people in the understanding, nor oppose them in their meditation on Holy Writ, yet he undoes the life of those in practice, who, while they are praised for the excellence of knowledge, neglect to have regard to the shortcomings of their works, and while the mind is decoyed in the delightfulness of good esteem, no remedy is applied to the wounds of the life; and thus the 'armed' enemy has swallowed up this man, whom under the cloak of deceit, whilst leaving on one side, he has got the better of on another. It goes on,  
*And the thirsty shall drink [so. V.] his riches.*

[x]

12. Often the foolish man has a fountain of inward liquid, but he does not drink thereof; in that he is vouchsafed parts to understand, yet he disdains to acquaint himself with the sentences of Holy Writ by the reading of them; he knows that he has ability to understand by studying, yet he gives over in disdain all study of the lessons of truth. 'The riches' of the mind too are the words of Divine utterance, yet the foolish man regards these riches with his eyes, while he never applies them to the purpose of his own adornment. For on hearing the words of the law he sees indeed that they are great, yet he does not put himself to pains to understand them with any earnestness of love. But, reversely, another man has a thirst, but has not ability; love draws him to meditation, but the dulness of his sense withstands him, and often in the science of the Divine law, he from time to time finds out that by application, which the man of parts remains ignorant of from carelessness. Thus 'the thirsty drink up the riches of this foolish man,' as often as those precepts of God, which the quickwitted know nothing of from disdaining them, the duller sort follow after with warm affection. In these verily the eye of love lights up the shades of dulness; for thirst uncloses that to the slower sort, which disdain shuts up to the quicker. And they for this reason get to the depths of understanding, because they do not scorn to practise even the very least things that they have learnt, and while they aid the understanding with the hands, they lift themselves above the level of the clever. Hence it is well said by Solomon, *The lizard climbeth with his hands, and is in kings' palaces.* [Prov. 30, 28] For commonly 'birds,' which have a wing that lifts them up to fly, dwell in the bushes, and the 'lizard,' which has no wings for flying, 'climbing with hands,' occupies the abode of royalty, in that often any that are quickwitted, while they grow slack from carelessness, continue in bad practices, and the simple folk, which have no wing of ability to stand them in stead, the excellency of their practice bears up to attain to the walls of the eternal kingdom. Whereas then 'the lizard climbeth with his hands,' he 'is in kings' palaces;' in that the plain man, by earnestness of right practice, reaches that point, whereunto the man of ability never mounts. But having heard this, a question occurs to our mind, wherefore either the gift of understanding is bestowed on a heedless man, or any earnest mind is hindered by its slowness? To which an answer is speedily given, in that it is forthwith added,

Ver. 6. *There is nothing in the earth without cause.* [so Vulg.]

[xi]

13. For on this account it often happens that even a slothful man receives ability, that he may be the more deservedly punished for his carelessness, because he scorns to acquaint himself with that which he might attain to without labour. And on this account the earnest person is straitened with slowness of understanding, that he may obtain so much the larger rewards of compensation, the more he toils in anxiety to find out. Therefore 'there is nothing in the earth without cause,' since slowness stands the earnest mind in stead for a reward, and to the slothful quickness only thrives for punishment. But for the understanding of those things that be right, we are at one time instructed therein by earnestness of labour, at another time by pains of affliction. Hence after it has been said, *There is nothing in the earth without cause*, it is fitly added thereupon, *Neither doth trouble spring out of the ground*.

[xii]

14. For 'trouble springeth out of the ground,' as it were, when man, being created after the image of God, is scourged by things without sense. But because it is by reason of the hidden deserts of men's souls that the open scourges of chastisements are sent forth, it happens at the same time that 'trouble springeth not out of the ground,' since it is the perversity of our sense, which requires that it should be stricken by things that have no sense. For thus we see that for our correction the looked for rain is withheld from the parched earth, and the vaporous air is scorched by the fiery heat of the sun; the sea rages with bursting tempests, and some embarked to cross its bosom it cuts off, and others are debarred the longed-for passage by the rampant water; the earth not only yields sparingly the produce of her fertility, but also destroys the seeds she has received. In all which circumstances we clearly discern that which a wise man testifies concerning God, *And the world shall fight with Him against the unwise*. [Wisd. 5, 20] For 'the world fights with the Lord against the unwise,' when even the very contrariety of the elements does service in the chastisement of offenders. Yet neither doth 'trouble Spring out of the ground,' for each insensate thing is put in motion to our annoyance, only by the impulse of our own doings. 'Trouble does not spring out of the ground,' for chastisement never a whit springs from that creature that strikes the blow, but from that one, without doubt, which, by committing sin, drew forth the severity of the stroke. But we must take great and diligent heed, that, when in outward circumstances we are afflicted with a weight of grief, we reach forward in hope to things above; that the mind may attain the heights above, in proportion as we are chastened by the external punishment. And hence it is justly subjoined,

Ver. 7. *Man is born to labour, and the bird to flying*.

[xiii]

15. For 'man is born to labour,' in that he, who is furnished with the gift of reason, bethinks himself that it is wholly impossible for him to pass through this season of his pilgrimage without sorrowing. Hence when Paul was recounting his woes to his disciples, he justly added, *For yourselves know that we are appointed thereto*. [1Thess. 3, 3] But even in that the flesh is afflicted with scourges, the mind is lifted up to seek higher things, as Paul again bears witness, saying, *But*

*though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* [2 Cor. 4, 16] So then, 'man is born to labour, and a bird to flying,' for the mind flies free on high for the very same reason that the flesh toils the sorer below.

16. By the designation of 'man' too, may be represented the life of the carnal sort. And hence Paul says, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] Soon after which he subjoins and says, *Are ye not men?* [ver. 4, Vulg.] In this life, then, 'man is born to labour,' for every carnal person, in seeking to obtain transitory things, is overcharging himself with the burthen of his desires. For it is sore labour to be seeking this same glory of the present life, at times to win it so sought, and to guard it with diligence when won. It is sore labour, with infinite pains to lay hold of that, which he, that shall lay hold, knows can never remain for long. But holy men, forasmuch as they have no fondness for transitory objects, are not only laid under no burthen of temporal desires, but even, if crosses on any occasion arise, in these very straits and faintings are free from trouble. For what is there more severe than scourges? and yet it is written concerning the Apostles when scourged, *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name.* [Acts 5, 41] What then can be labour to the minds of those, to whom even the chastisement of stripes is not labour? Man then is 'born to labour,' for he really feels the ills of the present state, who is agape after the good things thereof. For that mind which hangs on the attraction of things above, has beneath it whatsoever is set in motion against it from without. Therefore it is well added, *and a bird to flying.* For the soul withdraws itself from the painfulness of labour, in proportion as it raises itself through hope toward things on high. Was not Paul like a 'bird born to flying,' who in undergoing such countless crosses, said, *Our conversation is in heaven?* [Phil. 3, 20] And again, *We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2 Cor. 5, 1] Like a bird, then, he had mounted above the scenes below, whom, while yet lingering on earth in the body, the wing of hope was already bearing up in the heights. But forasmuch as none by his own strength can transport himself on high, so as to be raised to the invisible world, while he is borne down by visible things, it is immediately added with propriety,

Ver. 8. *Wherefore I will entreat the Lord, and unto God would I make my address.*

[xiv]

17. As though he said in plain words, 'Him I petition, by Whom I know that these things are bestowed.' For if he imagined that he had them by himself, he would not need to make his prayer to God. It goes on;

*Which doeth great things and unsearchable, marvellous things without number.*

[xv]

18. Who may see to the bottom of the marvellous works of Almighty God, how He made all things of nothing, how the very framework of the world is arranged with a marvellous mightiness of

power, and the heaven hung above the atmosphere, and the earth balanced above the abyss, how this whole universe consists of things visible and invisible, how He created man, so to say, gathering together in a small compass another world, yet a world of reason; how constituting this world of soul and flesh, He mixed the breath and the clay by an unsearchable disposal of His Might? A part, then, of these things we know, and a part we even are. Yet we omit to admire them, because those things which are full of marvels for an investigation deeper than we can reach, have become cheap from custom in the eyes of men. Hence it comes to pass that, if a dead man is raised to life, all men spring up in astonishment. Yet every day one that had no being is born, and no man wonders, though it is plain to all, without doubt, that it is a greater thing for that to be created, which was without being, than for that, which had being, to be restored. Because the dry rod of Aaron budded, all men were in astonishment; every day a tree is produced from the dry earth, and the virtue residing in dust is turned into wood, and no man wonders. Because five thousand men were filled with five loaves, all men were in astonishment that the food should have multiplied in their teeth; every day the grains of seed that are sown are multiplied in a fulness of ears, and no man wonders. All men wondered to see water once turned into wine. Every day the earth's moisture being drawn into the root of the vine, is turned by the grape into wine, and no man wonders. Full of wonder then are all the things, which men never think to wonder at, because, as we have before said, they are by habit become dull to the consideration of them; but when he said, *which doeth great things*, he did well in immediately adding, *and unsearchable*. For it was but little to do great things, if the things that were done could have been searched to the bottom. And it is lightly added, marvellous things without number. As it would have been but an inferior greatness, if the things, which He created 'unsearchable,' He had made [a] but few in number.

19. But herein it ought to be impressed upon us, that the Divine miracles should both ever be under our consideration in earnestness of mind, and never sifted in intellectual curiosity. For it often happens that the thought of man, when, seeking the reason of certain things, it fails to find it out, plunges into a whirlpool of doubt. Hence it comes to pass that some men reflect that the bodies of the dead are reduced to dust, and while they are unable to infer the power of the Resurrection from reasoning, they despair of their being able to be brought back to their former condition. Things that are marvellous then are to be believed on a principle of faith, but not to be pried into by reason. For, if reason set them open before our eyes, they would no longer be marvellous, But when the mind may chance to falter in these, it is needful that such things as it knows by custom, yet does not infer by reason, should be recalled to mind, that by the weight of a similar circumstance one may supply strength to the faith, which one finds to be undermined by one's own shrewdness. For, when the dust of the human flesh is thought on, the mind of some is shaken, and despairs of the time, when dust shall return to flesh, and through the lineaments of the limbs form a body restored to life, when that dryness of earth shall flush into freshness through the living limbs, and fashion itself in distinct parts by the forms and shapes of them. This indeed can never be comprehended by reason, yet it may be easily believed from example. For who would imagine that from a single grain of seed a huge tree would rise up, unless he had it as a certain fact by experience? In that extreme minuteness of a single grain, and with next to no dissimilarity within itself, where is the hardness of the wood buried, and a pith either tender or hard compared with the wood, the roughness of the

bark, the greenness of the root, the savour of the fruits, the sweetness of the scents, the variety of the colours, the softness of the leaves? Yet because we know this by experience, we do not doubt that all these spring from a single grain of seed. Where then is the difficulty that dust shall return into limbs, when we have every day before our eyes the power of the Creator, Who in a marvellous manner, even from a grain creates wood, and in a still more marvellous manner from the wood creates fruit? *Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.* For the greatness of the Divine works can neither be made out in respect of kind and quality, nor reckoned in respect of quantity. Hence it is still further added,

Ver. 10, 11. *Who giveth rain upon the face of the earth, and sendeth waters upon all things. Who setteth up on high those that be low; and those which mourn He exalteth with safety.*

[xvi] [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

20. Forasmuch as we believe that the friends of blessed Job were enlightened by their intercourse with him, we must needs handle these words of Eliphaz in a mystical manner. Thus Almighty God ‘gives rain upon the earth,’ when He waters the withered hearts of the Gentiles with the grace of heavenly preaching, and He ‘sendeth waters upon all things,’ in that by the fulness of the Spirit He fashions the barrenness of lost man to fruitfulness; as ‘Truth’ says by His own lips, *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst.* But by the title of the universe man is denoted, in that in him there is set forth a true likeness and a large participation in common with the universe. For every thing that is either is, yet does not live; or is and lives, yet does not feel; or is and lives and feels, yet neither understands nor discriminates; or is and lives and feels and understands and discriminates. For stones are, yet do not live. Trees both are and live, yet do not feel. For their verdure is called the life of herbs and of trees, as is declared by Paul concerning seeds, *Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.* [1 Cor. 15, 36] Brute creatures both are and live and feel, yet do not understand. Angels both are and live and feel, and by understanding they exercise discernment. Man, then, in that he has it in common with stones to be, with trees to live, with animals to feel, with angels to discern, is rightly represented by the title of the ‘universe,’ in whom after some sort the ‘universe’ itself is contained. And hence ‘the Truth’ saith to His disciples, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* That is, He would have every creature to be taken for man only, in whom He created something common with all things.

21. Though in this place, ‘all things’ may be understood in another sense also. For the grace of the Holy Spirit in bringing the rich under its influence, does not keep back the poor; while it abases the strong, it does not forbid the weak to come to it; while it gathers together the noble, at the same time it lays hold of the base-born; while it takes up the wise, it disdains not the foolishness of the unskilful. God, then, ‘sendeth waters upon all things,’ Who by the gift of the Holy Spirit calleth to the knowledge of Himself from every class of men.

22. Again it may be that by the designation of ‘all things,’ the mere diversities of characters are set before us. For one is lifted up by pride, another is bent down by the weight of fear, one burns with

lust, another pants with avarice, one lets himself sink from listlessness, another is fired with rage. But while, by the teaching of Holy Writ, humility is given to the proud man, confidence bestowed upon the fearful, the lustful cleansed from impurity by devotedness to chastity, the avaricious by moderation cooled from the heat of his covetous desires, the careless liver made erect by the uprightness of an earnest mind, the passionate man restrained from the hastiness of his headlong disposition, God 'sendeth water upon all things,' for He adapts the power of His Word in each severally according to the diversity of their characters, that each may find in His revelation that, whereby he may yield the produce of the virtue that he needs. Hence it is said by a wise man of the sweetness of manna, *Thou didst send them from heaven bread prepared without their labour, having in itself all delight, and the sweetness of every taste.* [Wisd. 16, 20] For the manna contained in itself all manner of delight and the sweetness of every taste, for this reason, that in the mouth of the spiritual sort it yielded a taste, according to the eater's will, in that the Divine Word, being at the same time suited to all minds, yet never at variance with itself, condescends to the kind and character of its hearers; and whereas every elect person understands it with profit according to his own fashion, he as it were turns the manna he received into a taste at will. And forasmuch as after the toils of good practice comes the glory of compensation, it is rightly subjoined after the sending of water, *Who setteth up on high those that be low, and those which mourn He exalteth with safety.*

23. 'Those that be low are set on high,' in that they, who are now despised for the love of God, shall then come as judges along with God, as 'Truth' pledges this which we have just named to the same humble ones, saying, *Ye which have followed Me, in the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* [Matt. 19, 28] Then 'those that mourn the Lord exalts with safety,' in that they who, being inflamed with desire of Him, flee prosperity, endure crosses, undergo tortures at the hands of persecutors, chasten their own selves with grieving, are then vouchsafed a safety so much the more exalted, as they now from devout affection kill themselves to all the joys of the world. Hence it is that it is said by Solomon, *The heart knoweth his own soul's bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.* [Prov. 14, 10] For the human mind 'knoweth its own soul's bitterness,' when inflamed with aspirations after the eternal land, it learns by weeping the sorrowfulness of its pilgrimage. But the 'stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy,' in that he, that is now a stranger to the grief of compunction, is not then a partaker in the joy of consolation. Hence it is that 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *Verily, verily I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.* [John 16, 20] And again, *And ye therefore now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.* [ver. 21. 22] The Lord, then, is said 'to exalt with safety those which mourn,' in that to all, who for His sake are stricken with grief in time, He vouchsafes true salvation for their comfort. But at the same time nothing hinders but that this may be understood of God's Elect even in this life.

24. For those that be 'low are set on high,' in that when they abase themselves in humility, they mount above all sublunary things in the discernment of a lofty mind. And, while they reckon

themselves to be worthless in all things, by the discriminating view of a right mind, they surmount and trample upon the glory of this world. Let us look at lowly Paul. Mark how he says to his disciples, *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Christ's sake.* [2 Cor. 4, 5] Let us see this 'humble man set up on high.' He says, *Know ye not that we shall judge Angels?* [1 Cor. 6, 3] and again, *And hath raised us together, and made us sit together in heavenly places.* [Eph. 2, 6] Perchance at that moment the chain was holding him outwardly fast bound. Yet he had been 'set on high' within, who, by the certainty of his hope, was already sitting in heavenly places. Holy men then are objects of scorn without, and as unworthy persons have every indignity put upon them, yet in sure confidence that they are meet for the heavenly realms, they look with certainty for the glory of the Eternal world. And when they are hard pressed without in the assaults of persecution, they fall back within into the fortified stronghold of their mind; and thence they look down upon all things passing far below them, and amongst them they see passing even themselves as in the body. They dread no threats, for even tortures they so endure as to set them at nought. For it is hence that it is said by Solomon, *But the righteous shall be bold as a lion.* [Prov. 28, 1] Hence it is written again by the same, *The righteous man shall not be grieved by any thing that shall happen to him.* [Prov. 12, 21] For because all the righteous are seated on the lofty height of their purposed mind, whereas in dying they are not sensible of death, it is so in a marvellous manner, that the missiles of the reprobate at the same time both strike them, and do not reach them. Those then that are 'low are set up on high,' in that from the very circumstance that they despise themselves in all things, they are rendered the more secure against them all.

25. Contrary to which it is rightly delivered by the Prophet to the lost soul under the likeness of Babylon, *Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground; there is no throne for the daughter of the Chaldeans.* [Is. 47, 1] For here I think the human mind is called a virgin, not as undefiled, but as unproductive. And forasmuch as Babylon is rendered 'confusion,' the barren soul is rightly named the *daughter of Babylon*, who, in that she never puts forth good works, whilst she is framed on no method of a right life, is as it were engendered of the parentage of confusion. But if she is called a virgin not as being barren but undefiled, after that she is fallen from the state of saving health, it is only to the increase of her 'confusion' that she is called that which she once was. And it is fitly that the Divine voice, in rebuking her, saith to her, *Come down;* for the human mind is stationed on high, when it covets the rewards above; but it 'comes down' from this station, when being overcome it yields itself cowardly to decaying worldly desires. And it is immediately subjoined to her with justice, *And sit in the dust.* For 'coming down she sits in the dust,' in that quitting heavenly scenes, she grovels in the very lowest [b], being stained with earthly imaginations. And here it is yet further added by way of repetition, *Sit on the ground.* As if in uttering reproaches he said in plain words, 'Because thou refusedst to lift thyself by a heavenly conversation, laid prostrate beneath thyself, be degraded in earthly courses.' And hence it is forthwith added by a necessary consequence, *There is no throne for the daughter of the Chaldeans.* For the Chaldeans are translated 'fierce.' And they are very fierce, who, pursuing their own wills, refuse to spare even their own lives. Earthly desires are 'fierce,' which render the mind hard and insensible not only to the precepts of the Creator, but also to the blows of stripes. But the 'daughter



of the fierce ones has no throne,' in that the mind that is born to the love of the world by bad desires, and is by those same desires rendered obdurate, herein that she yields herself to earthly concupiscence, parts with the seat of judgment, and she sits as mistress upon no throne within her, in that she lacks the balance of discernment, and is withheld from the sitting of her judgment, because she ranges abroad among external lusts. For it is clear that that mind, which has lost the seat of counsel within, in a thousand ways dissipates itself without in desires. And because it shut the eyes to doing what it understands, it is deservedly blinded, so as not even to know what it does; and oftentimes by a deserved visitation it is left in its own will, and is set loose under those very toilsome services of the world, which it pants after with solicitude. Hence it is fitly added in that place, *For thou shall no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal.* [Is. 27, 2] It is well known that parents spare their tender daughter, nor charge her with hard and servile employments. So Almighty God as it were calls a daughter tender when He recalls the well-beloved soul of each person from the wearisome services of this world, that, whilst it is charged with external works, it be not hardened to internal desires. But the 'daughter of the Chaldeans' is not called 'soft and tender,' in that the mind, which is abandoned to evil inclinations, is left in this world's travail, the thing which it most anxiously desires. So that like a handmaid she drudges in the service of the world without, who refuses as a daughter to love God within. Hence she is bidden to 'take the millstone, and grind meal.' A millstone is whirled round in a circle, and the meal is thrown out. Now each separate course of this world's action is a mill, which, while it heaps up a multitude of cares, as it were whirls the minds of men in a circle, and she as it were throws forth the meal from herself, in that, when the heart is turned wrong, she is ever producing infinitely little thoughts. But it sometimes happens that he, who while at rest is accounted of some worth, on being placed in any scene of action is stripped bare. Hence we have it forthwith subjoined in that place, *Uncover thy baseness, make bare the shoulder, uncover the thighs, pass over the rivers.* For in the execution of a work 'baseness is uncovered,' in that the base and abject soul is made known in the manifestation of working, whereas before while at rest, it was accounted great. The mind 'makes bare the shoulder,' when it brings to light its practice, which was kept from view. It 'uncovers the thighs,' in that it plainly discovers, by what strides of desire it reaches after the advantages of the world. Furthermore 'it passes over the rivers,' in that it unceasingly pursues the courses of this present life, which are daily running out to their end. And, whilst it gives over one set, and follows after another, it is as it were ever going on from river to river. These things we have delivered by way of discussion in few words, in order to shew where that mind lies grovelling, which has been unseated from the throne of a holy purpose. For if it ever cease to pant after the things which are above it, it plunges even unceasingly below itself. But it is fixed on high, if, abandoning the love of temporal things, it is bound fast to the hope of a changeless eternity.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

26. It is well said then, *Who setteth up on high those that be low.* And it is fitly added, *And those which mourn He exalteth with safety.* Oftentimes in this world even any that be glad of heart are 'exalted,' whilst they are swoln by the mere gloriousness of their fortune, but 'those that mourn, the Lord exalts to safety,' in that he raises His sorrowing children to glory by the solid substance of

true joy; for they are exalted by safety, and not by madness, who, set fast in good works, rejoice with a sure hope in God. For there are some, as we have said, who both do misdeeds, and yet do not cease to rejoice. Of whom Solomon saith, *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the things that be froward*. [Prov. 2, 14] And again, *There be wicked men, who are as secure, as though they had the deeds of the righteous*. [Ecc. 8, 14. Vulg.] These, truly, are not ‘exalted by safety,’ but by foolishness, which same are full of pride when they ought to be loaded with sorrow, and for the very reason that these wretched persons let themselves out in exultation, they are wept over by all good men. Verily not unlike to the senses of madmen, they account that insanity, in which they surpass others, to be strength. They know not that it comes from disease, that they are able to do more than the sane, and they as it were esteem themselves to have increased in powers, whilst they are drawing near to the end of life by accessions of sickness. These because they have no perception of reason, are wept for, and they laugh, and they expand in an extraordinary exultation of heart, in the very same proportion that from insensibility they are ignorant of the evil they are undergoing. Those then that ‘mourn’ the Lord ‘exalts with safety,’ in that the mind of the Elect is full of joy, derived, not from the madness of the present life, but from the certain prospect of eternal salvation. Hence it is fitly added immediately afterwards, with respect to this very destruction of the wicked,

Ver. 12. *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise.*

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27. The minds of the lost are ever awake to evil imaginations, but very often the Providence above counteracts them, and though not even when they are crushed with adversities do they amend the wickedness of their counsel, yet that they may never prevail against the good, He puts a check upon their power. And against these it is brought to pass by marvellous retribution, that whilst the effect of their evil doing is lacking to them, still conscience gives them over convicted to the just sentence of the Judge. Whereas then they devise evil things, they shew what they themselves are about; but, whereas they cannot ‘perform their enterprize,’ they, against whom it was imagined, are protected; and hence is yet further added aright,

Ver. 13. *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.*

[xviii]

28. For oftentimes, some that are puffed up with human wisdom, when they see that the decrees of God are contrary to their inclinations, set themselves to oppose them with crafty manoeuvres, and that they may bend the power of the dispensation of the Most High to meet their own wishes, they busy themselves in cunning contrivances, they devise schemes of excessive refinement. But they are only executing the will of God by the very way they are labouring to alter it, and whilst they strive to withstand the purpose of the Almighty, they are obeying His behests; for it often happens that that renders good service to His provident ordering, which on the part of human efforts makes

a silly opposition to Him. Therefore the Lord taketh the wise in their own craftiness, when the acts of man even then conveniently serve His purposes, when they are opposed to them. Which we shall the better shew, if we bring forward a few instances of actual facts.

[Joseph's Brethren]

29. Joseph had been visited by a dream, how that his brother's sheaves fell down before his sheaf; he had been visited by a dream, how that the sun and moon together with the other stars worshipped him. And because he related these things guilelessly to his brethren, envy and fear of his future dominion over them forthwith smote their breasts; and when they saw him coming to them, they said with malice burning against him, *Behold this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and we shall see what good his dreams will do him.* [Gen. 37, 19. 20.] And fearing to become subject to his dominion, they let down the dreamer into a well, and sell him to Ishmaelites that were passing by. He, then, having been brought into Egypt, subjected to slavery, condemned on the charge of lust, being vouchsafed aid for the merits of his chastity, and set up for his judgment in prophecy, was advanced over the whole of Egypt; and by the wisdom from on high with prudent foresight he collected stores of corn, and thus met the impending peril of a scarcity. And when the famine poured itself over the earth, Jacob, being distressed for the providing of food, sent his sons into Egypt. They find Joseph, whom they did not know, master of the distribution of corn, and that they might win the favour to have food given them, they were forced to worship the distributor thereof with their necks bent down to the earth. Now then let us consider the course of the transaction; let us consider how the power of God 'took the wise in their own very craftiness.' Joseph had for this reason been sold, that he might not be worshipped, yet he was for this reason worshipped, because he was sold; for they dared to try a thing in craft, that the counsel of God might be changed; but by resisting they helped on the decree of God, which they strove to get quit of. For they were constrained to execute the will of God by the very act by which they laboured craftily to alter the same. Thus whilst the Divine purpose is shunned, it is fulfilling; thus while human wisdom resists, it is 'caught.' Those brethren feared lest Joseph should grow to an height above themselves. But that which was arranged by the Divine disposal, their precautions were the cause and occasion of bringing about. Human wisdom then was 'caught' in itself, when in the very way that its purpose was to oppose the will of God, it did service toward the completion thereof.

[Saul]

30. Thus, whereas Saul saw David, his subject, grow up in a daily advance in valorous achievements, he betrothed his daughter to him in marriage, and demanded that an hundred foreskins of the Philistines should be given by him for her dowry, that when the soldier thus challenged sought to exceed his own measure, being delivered over to the swords of his enemies, he might bring his life to an end; according as it is written, *The king requireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hands of the Philistines.* [1 Sam. 18, 25] But David, strengthened by the

favourable aid of the interior Disposal, engaged himself to give the hundred, and he brought back two hundred foreskins. By the convincing force of which deed Saul being overcome, was 'caught' in the purpose of his wisdom by Providence above; for by the very means that he looked to destroy the life of the rising soldier, he raised to the highest pitch the fame of his merits.

[Jonah]

31. But because the very Elect sometimes strive to be sharp-witted in a degree, it is well to bring forward another wise man, and to shew how the craft of mortal men is comprehended in the Inner Counsels. For Jonah desired to be sharp-witted in prudence, when being sent to preach the repentance required of the Ninevites, because he feared that, if the Gentiles were chosen, Judaea would be forsaken, he refused to discharge the office of that preaching. He sought a ship and settled to fly to Tharsis, but straightway a storm arises, the lot is cast, that it may be found out to whose fault it is owing that the sea is in commotion. Jonah is found in the offence, he is plunged into the deep, devoured by the whale swallowing him, and there he is brought by the beast carrying him, where he despised to go of his own accord. See, the tempest of God finds out the runagate, the lot binds him, the sea receives him, the beast encloses him, and because he sets himself against paying obedience to his Maker, he is carried a culprit by his own prison to that place, whither he was sent. When God commanded, man would not administer the prophecy; when God breathed on it, the beast vomits the Prophet. God then 'taketh the wise in their own craftiness,' when He brings back even that to serve the purpose of His will, by which the will of man sets itself in contradiction to Him.

[The Jews]

32. Let us, yet further, look well into the wisdom of the Hebrews, that we may see what in its foresight it resisted, what by so resisting it brought about. Surely, when a multitude of believers was gathering together at the miracles of our Redeemer, when the priests of the people, kindled by the torches of envy, declared that all the world were going after Him, saying, *Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him* [John 12, 19]; that they might cut away from Him the strength of so great a concourse, they endeavoured to put an end to His power by death, saying, *It is expedient that one man die, and not that the whole nation perish.* [John 11, 50] Yet the death of our Redeemer availed to the uniting of His Body, i.e. of the Church, and not to the severing away of it. And hence it is commanded by the Law, that in representation of our Sacrifice, the throat of the turtledove or the pigeon should be cut, and not entirely severed, so that even after death the head should cleave to the body, in that verily *the Mediator between God and man* [1 Tim. 2, 5], i.e. the Head of all of us, and the Sacrifice of the true cleansing, from the very cause that He underwent death; was more truly joined to us. After the cutting, then, the head of the turtledove adheres to its body, for neither does the death that intervenes sever Christ from His Church. His persecutors then did that which they laboured after with pernicious intent, they brought death upon Him; that so they might cut off from Him the devotedness of the faithful; but faith only gained growth from thence, whence the cruelty of the faithless looked to extinguish it. And while they

reckon that they are cutting off His miracles by persecuting Him, in truth they were forced to extend them without knowing it. Therefore the Lord took the wise in their own craftiness, when He reduced even that to the service of His pitifulness, in which the fierceness of man raged against Him.

33. For the Just and Merciful One, as He disposes the deeds of mortals, vouchsafes some things in mercy, and permits other things in anger; and the things which He permits He so bears with, that He turns them to the account of His purpose. And hence it is brought to pass in a marvellous way, that even that, which is done without the Will of God, is not contrary to the Will of God. For while evil deeds are converted to a good use, the very things that oppose His design, render service to His design. For hence it is said by the Psalmist, *The works of the Lord are great, sought out unto all His wills.* [Ps. 111, 2. Vulg.] For His works are so great, that by every thing that is done by man, His Will is sought out; for it often happens that it is done by the very act, whereby it was thought to be thrown aside. Hence again it is said, *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in Heaven and in earth.* [Ps. 135, 6] Hence Solomon saith, *There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord.* [Prov. 21, 30] It remains that, in all that we do, we search out the potency of the Supreme Will, to which same, when we know it, all our conduct ought devoutly to render service, and to follow it as the guide of its course, lest it serve the same even against its will, if it declines it from pride. For the potency of the Divine purpose cannot be evaded, but he that bridles himself in under His nod, tempers it to himself with great efficacy; and he lightens the weight thereof to himself, who willingly bears it on the bowed shoulder of the heart. But as we have above made mention of His persecutors, let us proceed to shew how the words that are subjoined likewise fit their blindness. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *They shall meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noonday as in the night.*

[xix]

34. They ‘meet with darkness in the day-time,’ for in the very presence of Truth, they were blinded by the deceitfulness of unbelief. For we see clearly in the day-time, but in the night the pupil of our eye is dimmed. Therefore whilst the persecutors beheld the miracles of Divine Power, and yet doubted of His Divine Nature, they were subjected to ‘darkness in the day-time,’ for they lost their eyesight in the light. Hence it is that ‘Light’ Itself admonishes them, saying, *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.* [John 12, 35] It is hence that it is said of Judaea, *Her sun is gone down, while it was yet day.* [Jer. 15, 9] It is hence that the Prophet again took up in himself the strain of persons in a state of penitence, in these words, *We stumble at noonday as in the night, we are in dismal places as dead men.* [Is. 59, 10] Hence again He says, *Watchman, what of the night [b]? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night.* [Is. 21, 11. 12] For ‘the watchman came by night,’ in that the Guardian of the human race even shewed Himself manifest in the flesh, and yet Judaea, being close pressed by the darkness of her faithlessness, never knew Him. Where it is well added in the voice of the watchman, *The morning cometh, and also the night.* For by His presence hath a new light shone out upon the world, and yet the former darkness remained in the hearts of unbelievers. And it is well said, *They*

*shall grope in the noonday as in the night*; for we search out by groping that which we do not see with our eyes. Now the Jews had seen His undisguised miracles, and yet they still went on seeking Him, as it were groping for Him, when they said, *How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* [John 10, 24] See, the light of miracles was before their eyes, yet stumbling in the darkness of their own hearts, they continued to grope in seeking for Him. And this same blindness of theirs burst out into cruelty, and their cruelty even to the extent of overt acts of persecution. But the Redeemer of mankind could not for long be held by the hands of His persecutors. Hence it is forthwith added;

Ver. 15. *But He shall save the poor from the sword of their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.*

[xx]

35. For it is this very Poor Man of whom it is said by Paul, *Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor.* [2 Cor. 8, 9] And because the Jews in accusing betrayed the Lord, Whom, when so betrayed, the Gentiles put to death, by ‘the sword of the mouth’ may be signified the tongue of the Hebrews, that were His accusers, of whom the Psalmist saith, *Whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.* [Ps. 57, 4] For, as the Gospel also witnesses, they cried out, *Crucify Him, Crucify Him.* Luke 23, 21; John 19, 6] But by ‘the hand of the violent’ may be set forth the very Gentile world itself, which crucified Him, which in our Redeemer's death fulfilled in act the words of the Hebrews; God then ‘saved this Poor One both from the hand of the violent,’ and from ‘the sword of the mouth,’ in that our Redeemer, in His human Nature, was subjected both to the powers of the Gentiles, and to the tongues of the Jews by dying, but in the power of His Divine Nature He overcame them by rising again. By which same resurrection what else is brought to pass than that our weakness is strengthened to conceive the hope of the life hereafter? And hence it is well added immediately afterwards,

Ver. 16. *And so the needy shall have hope.*

[xxi]

36. For when the poor man is rescued, ‘the needy’ is restored to hope, for the lowly people of the faithful is shaken with dismay at our Redeemer dying, but is established firm by His rising again, for the very first poor ones of His people, viz. the chosen Preachers, were smitten by the sight of His death, but restored by the manifesting of His resurrection. When, then, the poor man is saved, ‘the needy’ recovers hope, for by the Lord rising again in the flesh, every faithful soul is strengthened to have a confident expectation of eternal life. But, now, the Truth has already come in an open manifestation, He has already undergone the death of the flesh, and destroyed the same by rising again, already the glory of the Ascension has ennobled His Resurrection, and yet the tongue of the Hebrews does not yet cease to urge Him with insults; and He indeed suffers them with patience, that by such sufferance He may turn some, and others that refuse to be turned He may one day visit with severer punishment. For the tongue of unbelievers will then be struck dumb

from their habit of unbridled speech, when it shall see Him coming as a just Judge, Whom now it has judged unjustly. And hence it is well added,  
*And iniquity shall stop her mouth.*

[xxii]

37. For now iniquity still opens wide her mouth, in that the tongue of unbelievers never ceases to urge with insults the Redeemer of the human race. But she shall then 'stop her mouth,' when this same, which she will not shut in good will, she shall shut in punishment. Yet this may also be well understood of the conversion of the persecutors. For when 'the poor is saved,' whilst 'the needy' returns to hope, iniquity is struck dumb, her mouth being stopped, in that by the miracle of His Resurrection shining out, whilst a full number of unbelievers is brought to the faith, it has ceased from the mocking and abuse of its Redeemer. For its mouth, which it opened in mocking God, it has now shut in the dread of Him.

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

38. It is good to run through these points in a moral sense, putting aside the signification of the Jewish people, and to trace out in what manner they are transacted by wicked men in general. For the minds of the wicked, when they see some things done well by their neighbours, are strained upon the stretched rack of their jealousy, and they undergo the grievous chastisement of their own malice, when with a consuming heart they see good in others. Therefore it is well said, *They meet with darkness in the day time*. For when their mind is grieved for the superiority of another, there is an overshadowing from the ray of the light; for oftentimes while they view the unconcealed good qualities in their neighbours, they look closely if there be any evil points lying concealed from sight, and they busy themselves in eager scrutinies, if they may chance to find somewhat with which they may be able to charge them. Sound limbs indeed are all they see, but, with the eyes of the heart closed, they seek by feeling to find a sore. And hence it is rightly subjoined, *And grope in the noonday as in the night*. The day of good deeds shines outwardly in a neighbour, but they 'grope as it were in the night,' because inwardly they are under the darkness of their jealous feeling. They busy themselves to get to some points which they may censure, they seek out an opening for detraction, but forasmuch as they are unable to find this, they search about in blindness without. Which is well set forth in that occasion, when from the Angels protecting Lot, the inhabitants of Sodom could not find the doorway in his house, as it is written, *And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves to find the door*. [Gen. 19, 9-11] What does it mean that, when the wicked are up in arms against him, Lot is brought back into the house, and defended, but that every righteous man, while he encounters the assaults of evil ones, is brought back into his interior, and abides undismayed. But the men of Sodom cannot find the door in Lot's house, because the corrupters of souls detect no opening of accusation against the life of the righteous man. For, stricken with blindness, they as it were go

round and round the house, who, under the influence of envy scrutinize words and deeds; but because in the life of the just, strong and praiseworthy conduct fronts them every way, groping at random they feel nothing else than the wall. Therefore it is well said, *And grope in the noonday as in the night*. For while the good, which they see, it is out of their power to impeach, being blinded by wickedness, they search out for impeachment evil which they see nothing of.

39. And here it is properly subjoined, *But he shall save the poor from the sword of their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty*. For the 'poor' is everyone that is not set up in his own eyes. And hence 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. [Matt. 5, 3] Now a person is drawn into sin in two ways. For either he is led on by pleasure, or overcome by fear. For 'the sword of the mouth' is the mischievousness of persuasion, but 'the hand of the mighty' is the opposition of power. But because he that is truly humble, who is here called 'the poor,' as he covets none of the good things of this world, so also undauntedly sets at nought even its adverse fortune, it is well said, *But He saveth the poor from the sword of their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty*. As if it were put plainly; 'God doth so firmly establish the souls of the humble in Himself, that neither the alluring arts of persuasion can draw them, nor the pains of punishment break them in to the practice of sin. For hope rears the spirit into the eternal world, and therefore it is not sensible of any of the ills without, that it falls under. And hence it is subjoined, *So the needy shall have hope*. Unto the fruits of which same hope, verily, when the poor man attaineth, everyone that is exalted is struck dumb; and hence it is yet further added, *And iniquity shall stop her mouth*. For the wicked man detracts from the good, and the righteous ways, which he cares not to practise, he never ceases to pull in pieces by slander, but iniquity at that time stoppeth her mouth, when her eyes are opened to see how great is the glory of the recompense provided for righteous souls. For then he is not at liberty to speak against the good, in that torments hold his tongue tied by the deserved retribution of his misdeeds. Hence it is well delivered by Hannah, speaking in prophecy, *He will keep the feet of his Saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness*. [1 Sam. 2, 9] But that every elect soul may escape eternal woe, and the poor mount up to everlasting glory, he must be bruised here below with continual stripes, that he may be found purified in the Judgment. For we are every day borne downwards by the mere weight of our infirmity, but that by the wonderful interposition of our Maker we are relieved by succouring stripes. Hence it is added,

Ver. 17. *Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth*.

[xxiii]

40. The highest virtue is to avoid sins, that they should never be done, and second to that, at least to amend them when they have been committed. But for the most part we not only never at all avoid sins that threaten, but we do not even open our eyes to them, when committed. And the mind of sinners is enveloped in the deeper darkness, in proportion as it does not see the deficiency of its own blindness. Hence it is very often brought to pass, by the bountifulness of God's gift, that punishment follows upon transgression, and stripes unclothe the eyes of the transgressor, which self-security was blinding in the midst of evil ways. For the inactive soul is touched with the rod, so as



to be stimulated, in order that he, that has lost, by being self-secure, the firm seat of uprightness, may mark, upon being afflicted; where he is laid prostrate; and thus to him [A.B.C.D. 'huic'] the very sharpness of the correction becomes the source of light; and hence it is said by Paul, *But all things that are proved [c], are made manifest by the light* [Eph. 5, 13]; for proof of saving health lies in the force of the pain. Hence it is that Solomon saith, *For healing will cause great offences to cease.* [Ecc. 10, 4. Vulg.] Hence again he saith, *For whom the Lord loveth He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.* [Prov. 3, 12] Hence the Lord addresses John by the voice of the Angel [d], saying, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* [Rev. 3, 19] Hence Paul saith, *Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them that are exercised thereby.* [Heb. 12, 11] Although therefore grief and happiness can never meet together, yet it is rightly said here, *Happy is the man whom the Lord correcteth.* For by this means, that the sinner is straitly visited with the pain of correction, he is sometimes trained to happiness, which knows no intervention of pain. It proceeds, *Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.*

[xxiv]

41. Whosoever is smitten for a fault and lifted up in murmuring against the stroke, 'reproves the chastening of the Lord.' For he lays to His charge, that he has this put upon him unjustly. But they that are stricken, not for the cleansing of guilt, but for the testing of their fortitude, when they inquire into the causes of the stroke, must by no means be said to 'reprove the correction of the Lord;' for their aim is to discover in themselves what they are ignorant of. And hence blessed Job, breaking out into a voice of liberty, amidst the visitings of the scourge, the more rightly questions the judgments of the smiter concerning him, the more he is really ignorant of causes for his suffering in himself. Eliphaz, then, forasmuch as he reckoned that he was visited, not with the trial of probation, but of purification, when he spoke with freedom amidst the stripes, supposed that he 'reproved the correction of the Lord.' And we have said that he at the same time bears the likeness of heretics with great fitness, in that whatsoever is done aright by Holy Church, is ever, in their judgment, turned and twisted awry, to some fault of crookedness. But forasmuch as it is with a good intention that he is led to speak, yet he takes no heed to discriminate who he is speaking to, he yet further subjoins, and proclaims the dispensations of the supreme governance, saying, Ver. 18. *For He maketh sore, and bindeth up; He woundeth, and His hands shall make whole.*

[xxv]

42. In two ways Almighty God wounds those, whom He is minded to bring back to saving health; for sometimes He smites the flesh, and consumes the hardness of the heart by the fear of Him. Thus He recalls to saving health, by dealing wounds, when He afflicts His own Elect outwardly, that they be quickened with inward life. Whence He also says by Moses, *I will kill and I will make alive, I will wound and I will heal* [Deut. 32, 39]; for He 'kills,' that He may 'make alive,' He 'wounds,' that He may 'heal;' in that He for this reason applies stripes without, in order that He may heal the wounds of sin within. But sometimes, even if strokes without should seem to have

ceased, He inflicts wounds within, in that He strikes the hardness of the heart with the desire of Himself; yet in wounding He heals, in that when we are pierced with the dart of His dread, He recalls us to a right sense. For our hearts are not well sound, when they are wounded by no love of God, when they feel not the wofulness of their pilgrimage, when they do not go sorrowing with the least degree of feeling for the infirmity of their neighbour. But they are 'wounded,' that they may be 'healed,' in that God strikes unfeeling souls with the darts of His love, and straightway makes them full of feeling, through the burning heat of charity, and hence the spouse saith in the Song of Songs, *For I am wounded with love*. [Cant. 2, 5. LXX] For the diseased soul, laid prone upon the litter of this place of banishment in blind self-security, neither beheld the Lord, nor sought to see Him. But on being struck with the darts of His love, it is wounded in its innermost parts with a feeling of pious affection, burns with the desire of contemplation; and in a marvellous manner she is made alive by wounding, who aforetime lay dead in a state of health: she glows, she pants, and yearns to see Him already, from Whom she turned. By being smitten, then, she is brought back to a state of soundness, who is recalled to a secure state of inward repose by the disturbing of her self-love. But when the wounded soul begins to pant after God, when, setting at nought all the alluring arts of the world, it stretches forth in desire to the land above, all is forthwith turned to its trial, whatsoever aforetime was accounted pleasing and alluring in this world. For they that had a fond affection for him living in sin, cruelly assault him when he lives aright. The soul that is raised up toward God, is subject to rude assaults from the flesh, wherein it formerly lay grovelling in enjoyment, the slave of evil habits; former pleasures recur to the mind, and push hard the resisting soul with a grievous conflict. But because that, while we are afflicted with transitory labour, we are rescued from everlasting pain, it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 19. *He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*

[xxvi]

43. For what is denoted by the number 'six,' which is followed by 'the seventh,' saving the labour and course of the present life? For God, finishing all things on the sixth day, created man, and God rested on the seventh day; and this same seventh day is without an evening, for there is no longer any end to close the rest that followeth. When all things, then, are completed, the rest followeth, in that after the good works of the present life, the recompense of eternal rest follows. Therefore 'in six troubles the Lord delivers us,' that 'no evil may touch us in the seventh,' in that by the training of His fatherly pity, He exercises us with the labours of the present life, but at the coming of the Judge, He hides us from the scourge, that He may then bring us out the more sure for His salvation, in proportion as we are now scored the more cruelly with scourges. And immediately reckoning up with fitness both the ills of the present life, and the aids of Protection from above, adds,

Ver. 20. *In famine He shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword.*

[xxvii]

44. As the 'famine' of the flesh is the withdrawal of the support of the body, so the hunger of the soul is the silence of divine revelation. Hence it is rightly delivered by the Prophet, *I will send a*

*famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst of water, but a famine of hearing the word of the Lord.* [Amos 8, 11] And forasmuch as when the divine communication leaves the human soul, the temptation of the flesh gains force against it, it is fitly brought in, *And in war from the power of the sword.* For we suffer a war, when we are assailed by the temptations of our flesh. Concerning which same war the Psalmist saith, *Cover my head in the day of battle.* [Ps. 140, 7] Therefore, whereas the reprobate, whilst their strength fails from a 'famine' of the word of God, are furthermore pierced with 'the sword of war,' the Lord both 'in famine redeems' His Elect 'from death,' and 'in war' He hides them 'from the sword.' For while He refreshes their souls with the food of His word, He makes them strong to resist the temptations of the body. Yet there be some, who, though they recruit themselves, out of the store of the word of God, from the famine of the interior, though they be already stayed up against the temptations of the body by the virtue of continency, yet still fear to be stricken with the slanders of their fellow-creatures, and oftentimes, whilst they dread the arrows of the tongue, they strangle themselves with the noose of sin. And hence it is fitly added,  
Ver. 21, *Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue.*

[xxviii]

45. 'The scourge of the tongue' is the taunting of insults offered. They strike the righteous 'with the scourge of the tongue,' who pursue their deeds with mockery. For oftentimes the tongue, while it utters jibes, recalls from a good deed, and puts itself out like a scourge, in that it cuts the back of the cowardly soul. Which 'scourge of the tongue,' the Prophet had seen plotting against the elect soul, when He said, promising the aid that is above, *Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter, and from the rough word.* [Ps. 91, 3. Vulg.] For 'hunters' seek nothing else than flesh, but we are 'delivered from the snare of the hunters and from the rough word,' when we overcome both the snare of carnal persons, and the reproaches of sneers, by setting them at nought. For their words are 'rough,' which are arrayed against our righteous ways. And to 'escape the roughness of words,' is to trample down the mockings of calumniators by shutting our eyes to them, the holy soul then is hidden from 'the scourge of tongues,' in that whilst in this world it never seeks the honour of applause, neither does it feel the insults of calumny. But there be some that already set at nought the words of the scornful, already care nothing for their jeers, yet they still stand in dread of the pains and tortures of the body. For our old adversary, in order to withdraw us from a right bent of mind, assaults us in diverse modes, and prosecutes the tempting of us one while by a famine of the word, another while by the conflict of the flesh, now by the scourge of talk, now by the distress of persecution. But because every perfect person, when once he has overcome the evil habits in himself, straightway goes on to brace his mind to meet the inflictions of suffering, it is properly subjoined,  
*Neither shalt thou be afraid of calamity when it cometh.*

[xix]

46. For holy men, for that they see that they are engaged with an adversary of manifold form, equip themselves variously in their conflict. For against a famine, they have the sustenance of God's word; against the sword of war, they have the shield of continency; against the scourge of the tongue, the defence of patience; against the hurt of outward misfortune, they have the aid of inward love. Hence in a marvellous method it is brought to pass, that the more manifold the temptations which the craft of the enemy brings upon them, so much the richer in virtues are the wary soldiers of God rendered. And forasmuch as all the Elect severally, whilst they bear with courageous hearts the conflicts of the present life, are providing for themselves security under the terrors of the future Judgment, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 22. *In destruction and famine thou shalt laugh.*

[xxx]

47. For the lost shall then suffer 'destruction and famine,' when, being condemned in the last Judgment, they are parted asunder from the sight of 'the Bread' eternal. For it is written, *Let the wicked be taken away, that he see not the glory of God.* [Is. 26, 10. lxx.] And the Lord declares by His own lips, *I am the living Bread, Which came down from heaven.* [John 6, 51] Thus at one and the same time both 'destruction and famine' combine to torture those, who not only feel torments without, but farther suffer death within by the plague of starvation. Hell 'destroys,' in that it burns, famine kills, in that the Redeemer hides His face from them. For well and justly they have their recompense both within and without, in that the wretched people both by thought and by deed did commit offence. Whence it is well said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger: the Lord shall confound them in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them.* [Ps. 21, 9] For that, which is 'devoured' by fire, is kindled from the outside. But an oven is set on fire within. And so in the time of God's anger all the unrighteous are both 'made as a fiery oven,' and also 'devoured by the fire,' in that at the appearing of the Judge, when all the multitude of them is banished from the sight of Him, both within the conscience is set on fire from the misery of want ['*Desiderium*'], and without hell torments the flesh.

48. 'The scourge of the tongue' too may be understood to mean the sentence of the final doom, whereby the Just Judge saith to the lost, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* [Matt. 25, 41] The righteous man then is 'hidden from the scourge of the tongue,' and from the coming woe, because in that exceeding strictness of doom, he is then comforted with the, mild voice of the Judge, when it is said, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.* [ver. 35, 36.] Before which it is premised; *Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* [ver. 34.] Therefore 'in destruction and famine' the righteous man 'shall laugh;' for, when the final vengeance smites all the wicked, he himself joys in the glory of a meet reward. Nor does he at that time any longer compassionate the damned by virtue of his human nature. For, incorporated into the Divine Justice by resemblance [*per speciem*], he is, by the unshaken force of interior strictness, made thoroughly firm. For the souls of the Elect, being reared

up in the clear light of the Righteousness above, are touched by no sense of compassion, in that the height of their bliss makes them strangers to misery. Hence also it is well said by the Psalmist; *The righteous also shall see this, and shall fear, and shall laugh at him, and shall say, Lo, this is the man that made not God his helper.* [Ps. 52, 6. 7.] For now the righteous see the wicked and fear, then they shall see and laugh. For because they may now fall in imitation of them, here they are holden of fear, but because they cannot then advantage the damned, there they entertain no sympathy. Therefore, that they should not commiserate those that are doomed to eternal woe, they read in that very justice of the Judge wherein they exist in bliss. For, a thing which it is not right to imagine of them, they lower the character of the happiness vouchsafed them, if, when placed in the kingdom, they wish for something which they never can accomplish. But whosoever orders himself after the precepts of life, already tastes here below the first-fruits of that secure estate which shall last for ever, so that he has no fear of our old enemy; nor at the coming on of the crisis of death in any degree dreads his violent assault. For to the righteous the beginning of their recompense is most commonly nothing else than the very security of their minds in dying. Hence it is rightly added,

*Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beast of the earth.*

[xxxix]

49. For our crafty foe is called ‘a beast of the earth,’ in that he ravins with the violence of his savage nature, to seize upon the souls of sinners at the hour of their death. For those whom he deludes by flattery during their lifetime, he seizes with cruelty when they are dying. Contrary whereunto the Lord gives a promise concerning the Church of the Elect through the Prophet, The evil beast shall not go up thereon. They then in dying fear the ‘beast of the earth,’ who when living fear not the power of their Maker. For good men, because they submit themselves from the core of their heart to the dread of God, put away every weight of fear arising from the adversary's coming. For it is hence that the Psalmist beseeches the Lord, in these words, *Lest he tear my soul as a lion.* [Ps. 7, 2] Hence again he says, *Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer, preserve my soul from fear of the enemy.* [Ps. 64, 1. 2.] For while they live they perfectly fear the Judge, that when they die they may not dread the accuser. Well then is it said, *Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beast of the earth.* As if it were in plain words, ‘Forasmuch as thou art not now overcome by the enemy in his alluring address, thou shalt not hereafter fear him in his rage. But when we live well, it is very needful to be on our guard, that the mind, looking down upon others, be not lifted up by the pride of standing alone. Hence it is that the blessing of fellowship is fitly called to mind, where the words are immediately introduced thereupon,

*But with the stones of the countries shall be thy covenant.*

[xxxix]

50. The Churches of the nations are like separate countries in the world, which, while they be planted in one faith, are separated by a diversity of customs and of tongues. What then do we take the stones of the countries to mean but the Elect ones of the Church, to whom it is declared by the

voice of him who was the first among the teachers, *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house?* [1 Pet. 2, 5] Concerning whom the Lord by His Prophet promises Holy Church, saying, *Behold, I will lay thy stones in order.* [Is. 54, 11] Whoso then lives aright, joins himself in covenant 'with the stones of the countries.' For herein, that he conquers the desires of the world, without doubt he ties his life to an imitation of the Saints that have gone before. But when he is departing from the practice of the world, the assaults of malicious spirits increase, which nevertheless, the more they afflict a man in sorrow of heart, bow him the more humbly to his Creator. And hence it is added,  
*And the beasts of the earth shall be peacemakers to thee.*

[xxxiii]

51. First it is to be observed, that he does not say, 'made peaceful,' but, 'peacemakers,' that is to say, not that they are at peace, but that they make peace; for the crafty foes in making plots distress, but the distressed soul delights the more in her return to the heavenly home, the more she lives toiling in this woful place of exile, and most truly abases herself to the gracious regard of her Helper, when she considers the most violent plots of the enemy against her. The beasts of the earth then are rendered 'peacemakers' to the Elect, in that the malignant spirits, when they bear down the hearts of the good by their hostility, drive them to the love of God against their will. Thus there arises a firmer peace with God, from the same source, whence a tougher fight is occasioned us by our adversaries.

52. By the 'beasts of the earth' too may be understood the motions of the flesh, which, while they gall the mind by prompting conduct which is contrary to reason, rise up against us like beasts. But when the heart is bowed down under the Divine Law, even the incitements of the flesh are reduced, so that, though in tempting us they give a low muttering, yet they never mount so high as to the execution of the deeds, as to the madness of open biting. For who that still subsists in this corruptible flesh, completely tames these beasts of the earth, when that preeminent Preacher that was caught up to the third heaven, says, *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is my members.* [Rom. 7, 21] But it is one thing to see these beasts raging in the field of practice, and another to hold them ravening within the door of the heart. For when they be forced back within the bars of continence, though they still roar by tempting, yet, as we have said, they go not such lengths as the bite of unlawful practice. The beasts of the field then are peacemakers, in that though the motions of the flesh beat high in the desire, yet they never assail us with the open resistance of deeds, (though by this same circumstance, that they are called 'peacemakers,' even this same that we have said of malicious spirits is not unsuitably understood.) For the motions of the flesh 'make peace' for us with God, when they offer opposition by tempting us. For the mind of the righteous man, in that his way is directed to the realms above, is sore bestead by a grievous war arising from the corruptible body. And if at any time it be hindered in heavenly aspirations by any enjoyment of this world however slight, by that very war of temptation, which it undergoes, it is urged on to set all its affections in that, which is disturbed by no opposition. Whence it comes to pass that it

recalls to mind the interior repose, and fleeing from the enticements of the flesh, sighs after it with a full affection. For temptation constrains every man to mark from whence and whereunto he is fallen, who after he has forsaken the peace of God, feels a strife rise up against him from out of himself, and then he more truly sees what he has lost of the assured love of God, who having fallen down to himself, finds his own self insulted within himself. The beasts of the earth then make peace for us, in that the motions of the flesh, whilst by offering temptation they irritate us, urge us forwards to the love of the interior repose. Now it is rightly added,  
Ver. 24. *And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace.*

[xxxiv]

53. In holy Scripture full peace is described in one way, and peace in its beginning in another. For 'Truth' gave to His Disciples peace in its beginning, when He said, *Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you.* [John 14, 27] And Simeon desired to have perfect peace, when he besought saying, *Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word.* [Luke 2, 29] For our peace begins in longing for the Creator, but it is perfected by a clear vision. For it will then be perfect, when our mind is neither blinded by ignorance, nor moved by the assaults of its fleshly part. But forasmuch as we touch upon its first beginnings, when we either subject the soul to God or the flesh to the soul, the 'tabernacle' of the righteous man is said to 'have peace,' in that his body, which he inhabits by his mind, is held in from the froward motions of its desires under the controlling hand of righteousness. But what advantage is it to restrain the flesh by continence, if the mind is uninstructed to expand itself by compassion in the love of our neighbour? For that chasteness of the flesh is as nothing, which is not recommended by sweetness of spirit. Whence after the 'peace of the tabernacle' it is fitly subjoined,  
*And thou shalt visit thy likeness, and shalt not sin.*

[xxxv]

54. For the *likeness* of man is another man. For a fellow-creature is rightly called our 'likeness,' in that in him we discern what we ourselves are. Now in the visiting of the body we go to our neighbour by the accession of steps, but in the spiritual visiting, we are led not by the footstep but by affection. He then 'visits his likeness,' whoever direct his way to one, whom he sees to be like to himself in nature, by the footsteps of love, so that by seeing his own case in another, he may collect from himself how to condescend to another's weakness. He 'visits his likeness,' who, that he may remodel another in himself, takes account of himself in another. For hence 'Truth,' in telling by the mouth of Moses what had been done, denoted what was to be done, saying, *And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, each one bearing seed after his kind.* [gen. 1, 12] For 'the tree produces seed after its kind' when our mind gathers from itself thought for another, and produces the fructification of well doing. Hence the wise man saith, *Do not that to any, which thou wouldest not have done to thyself.* [Tob. 4, 15] Hence the Lord saith in the Gospel, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even to them.* [Matt. 7, 12] As if He said in plain words, 'Visit your likeness in another

man, and from your own selves learn what conduct it behoves you to exhibit to others.’ Hence Paul says, *And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.)* [1 Cor. 9, 20. 21.] And soon after, *I am made all things to all men, that I might save all.* [ib. 22] Not indeed that the great Preacher, to become like a Jew, broke away into faithlessness; nor, that he might become ‘as one under the law,’ did he turn back to the fleshly sacrifice; nor, that he might become ‘all things to all men,’ did he change his singleness of mind into variety of deceit; but by lowering himself, not by falling, he drew near to the unbelievers, to this end, that by taking each one into himself and transforming himself into each one, by sympathizing with them, he might gather what it was, that, if he himself were like them, he would justly have desired should be bestowed upon him by others; and might go along with every erring person so much the more to the purpose, in proportion as he had learnt the method of his salvation by the consideration of his own case. Well then is it said, *And thou shalt visit thy likeness, and shalt not sin.* For sin is then perfectly conquered, when everyone sees from the likeness of himself, how to expand in the love of his neighbour. But when the flesh is kept in check from evil practices, when the mind is exercised in virtuous habits, it remains that every one should by word of mouth reach the life, which in his own ways he observes. For he gathers abundant fruits of his preaching, who sows before the seeds of welldoing. Whence after the ‘peace of the tabernacle’ and the ‘visiting of our likeness,’ it is rightly subjoined, Ver. 25. *Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be manifold, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*

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55. For after the ‘peace of his tabernacle,’ after ‘the visiting of our likeness,’ the manifold seed of the righteous man ariseth, in that after the macerating of the members and the fulness of the moral virtues, the word of preaching is bestowed upon him so much the more productive, in proportion as it is anticipated in his breast by the tillage of perfect practice. For he receives eloquence to speak well, who expands the bosom of his heart by the exercises of right living. Nor does the conscience hinder the speaker, when the life goes before the tongue. It is hence that the Egyptians, who, by Joseph's management, were subjected to a state of public servitude, when they humble themselves by submitting their persons to the king's power, carry away corn even for seed. For we receive, even when free, fruit to eat, when we are at the same time fed by the sacred word, and yet in the gratification of our pleasures roam after different objects, which we seek after in this world. But when we become slaves, we receive corn for seed too, in that while we are made wholly subject to God, we are replenished further with the word of preaching. And since a vast progeny of faithful souls succeeds, when holy preaching is first bestowed, after the multiplying of the seed, it is rightly subjoined, *And thine offspring as the grass of the earth.* The progeny of the righteous is compared to the grass of the earth, in that he who is born in a copy of him, while he quits the decaying glory of the present life, comes out green with hope in the things of eternity. Or truly, the progeny of the righteous springeth up like ‘the grass,’ in that while he shews forth by his living what he declares by his preaching, an innumerable multitude of followers arises. But whosoever already looks down



upon all earthly objects of desire, whoever spreads himself out in the labours of an active life, finds it by no means suffice him to do great things without, unless by contemplation he also have power to penetrate into interior mysteries. Hence too the words are thereupon fitly introduced,

Ver.26. *Thou shalt come to thy grave in fulness, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.*

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56. For what is denoted by the name of the grave, saving a life of contemplation? which as it were buries us, dead to this world, in that it hides us in the interior world away from all earthly desires. For they being dead to the exterior life, were also buried by contemplation, to whom Paul said, *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* An active life also is a grave, in that it covers us, as dead, from evil works; but the contemplative life more perfectly buries us, in that it wholly severs us from all worldly courses. Whoever then has already subdued the insolencies of the flesh in himself, has this task left him, to discipline his mind by the exercises of holy practice. And whosoever opens his mind in holy works, has over and above to extend it to the secret pursuits of inward contemplation. For he is no perfect preacher, who either, from devotion to contemplation, neglects works that ought to be done, or, from urgency in business, puts aside the duties of contemplation. For it is hence that Abraham buries his wife after death in a double [*in spelunca agri duplici* Vulg.] sepulchre, in that every perfect preacher buries his soul, dead to the desires of the present life, under the covering of good practice and of contemplation, that the soul which aforetime, sensible of the desires of the world, was living in death, may as it were, without being obnoxious to sense, lie buried from carnal concupiscence under an active and contemplative life. It is hence that the Redeemer of mankind in the day time exhibits His miracles in cities, and spends the night in devotion to prayer upon the mountain, namely, that He may teach all perfect preachers, that they should neither entirely leave the active life, from love of the speculative, nor wholly slight the joys of contemplation from excess in working, but in quiet imbibe by contemplation, what in employment they may pour back to their neighbours by word of mouth. For by contemplation they rise into the love of God, but by preaching they return back to the service of their neighbour. Hence with Moses, whilst a heifer is slaughtered in sacrifice, scarlet wool twice dyed is enjoined to be offered together with hyssop and cedar wood. For we slay a heifer, when we kill our flesh to its lust of gratification; and this we offer with hyssop and cedar and scarlet wool, in that together with the mortifying of the flesh, we burn the incense of faith, hope, and charity. The hyssop is of use to purify our inward parts; and Peter says, *purifying their hearts by faith.* [1 Pet. 1, 3] Cedar wood never decays by rotting, in that no end finishes the hope of heavenly things. Whence too Peter saith, *He hath begotten us again by a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* Scarlet wool flames with the redness of its hue, in that charity sets on fire the heart she fills. Whence also 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *I am come to send fire on the earth.* But scarlet wool twice dyed is ordered to be offered, that in the sight of the internal Judge our charity may be coloured with the love both of God and of our neighbour, that the converted soul may neither so delight in repose for the sake of the love of God, as to put aside the care and service of our neighbour, nor busying itself for the love of our neighbour, be so wedded, thereto, that entirely forsaking quiet, it extinguish in itself the fire of love

of the Most High. Whosoever then has already offered himself as a sacrifice to God, if he desires perfection, must needs take care that he not only stretch himself out to breadth of practice, but likewise up to the heights of contemplation.

57. But herein it is above all things necessary to know, that the compositions [ '*conspersio*, ' dough, paste.] of souls are infinitely varied one with another, for there are some of such inactivity of mind, that, if the labours of business fall upon them, they give way at the very beginning of their work, and there be some so restless, that if they have cessation from labour, they have only the worse labour, in that they are subject to worse tumults of mind, in proportion as they have more time and liberty for their thoughts. Whence it behoves that neither the tranquil mind should open itself wide in the immoderate exercising of works, nor the restless mind stint itself in devotion to contemplation. For often they, who might have contemplated God in quiet, have fallen, being overcharged with business; and often they, who might live advantageously occupied with the service of their fellow-creatures, are killed by the sword of their quiescence. It is hence that some restless spirits, whilst by contemplation they hunt out more than their wits compass, launch out even to the length of wrong doctrines, and, whilst they have no mind to be the disciples of Truth in a spirit of humility, they become the masters of falsities. It is hence that 'Truth' saith by His own lips, *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes be cast into hell fire.* For the two lives, the active and the contemplative, when they be preserved in the soul, are accounted as two eyes in the face. Thus the right eye is the contemplative life, and the left the active life. But, as we have said, there be some, who are quite unable to behold the world above, and spiritual things, with the eye of discernment, yet enter upon the, heights of contemplation, and therefore, by the mistake of a perverted understanding, they fall away into the pit of misbelieve. These then the contemplative life, adopted to an extent beyond their powers, obliges to fall from the truth, which same persons the active life by itself might have kept safe in lowliness of mind in the firm seat of their uprightness. To these 'Truth' rightly addresses the warning which we said before, *And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.* As if He said in plain words; 'When thou art not qualified for the contemplative life by a fitting degree of discretion, keep more safely the active life alone, and when thou failest in that which thou chooseth as great, be content with that which thou heedest as very little, that if by the contemplative life thou art forced to fall from the knowledge of the truth, thou mayest by the active life alone be able to enter into the kingdom of heaven at least with one eye.' Hence He says again, *But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.* [Matt. 18, 6] What is denoted by 'the sea,' but this present state of being? what by 'the millstone,' but earthly practice, which while it binds down the neck of the soul by foolish desires, sends it out into the round of labour. Thus there are some, who, while they quit earthly courses and rise beyond the powers of their understanding in pursuance of the exercises of contemplation, having laid aside humility, not only cast themselves into error, but separate any that be weak from the bosom of unity; and thus 'it would be better for him, that offends one of the least, with a millstone fastened to his neck, to be cast into the sea,' in that indeed

it would have been more expedient for the froward mind, if, busied with the world, it were employed in earthly matters, than, in the exercises of contemplation, to be free to work the destruction of numbers. On the other hand, if it were not that the contemplative life suited some minds more than the active life, the Lord would never say by the voice of the Psalmist, *Be still, and know that I am God*. [Ps. 46, 10]

58. But herein it is necessary to know, that often at one and the same time love stimulates inactive souls to work, and fear keeps back restless souls in the exercise of contemplation. For a weight of fear is an anchor of the heart, and very often it is tossed by the stormy sea of thoughts, but is held fast by the moorings of its self-control; nor does the tempest of its disquietude make shipwreck of it, in that perfect charity holds it fast on the shore of the love of God [d]. Whence it is necessary that whoever eagerly prosecutes the exercises of contemplation, first question himself with particularity, how much he loves. For the force of love is an engine of the soul, which, while it draws it out of the world, lifts it on high. Let him then first examine whether in searching after the highest things he loves, whether in loving he fears, whether he knows either how to apprehend unknown truths, while he loves them, or not being apprehended to reverence them in cherishing fear. For in contemplation, if love does not stimulate the mind, the dulness of its tepidity stupefies it. If fear does not weigh on it, sense lifts it by vain objects to the mist of error, and when the door of secret things, being closed against it, is slow in being opened, merely by its own presumption alone it is forced the farther off there-from, for it strives to force a way to that which it seeks after without finding, and when the proud mind takes falsehood for truth, in proportion as it is advancing the step as if inwards, it is directing it without. Thus it is for this reason that the Lord, when about to give the Law, came down in fire and in smoke; in that He both enlightens the lowly by the clearness of His manifestation of Himself, and darkens the eyes of the highminded by the dimness of error. First then the soul must be cleansed from all affection for earthly glory, and from the gratification of carnal concupiscence, and next it is to be lifted up in the ken of contemplation. Hence too, when the Law is given to them, the people are forbidden the Mount, namely, that they who, by the frailty of their minds, still have their affections set upon earthly objects, may not venture to take cognizance of things above. And hence it is rightly said, And if a beast touch the mountain, it shall he stoned. For ‘a beast touches the mountain,’ when the mind, which is bowed down to irrational desires, lifts itself to the heights of contemplation. But it is ‘smitten with stones,’ in that being unable to bear the highest things, it is killed by the mere blows of the weight on high.

59. Let all then that strive to lay hold of the summit of perfection, when they desire to occupy the citadel of contemplation, first try themselves, by exercising, in the field of practice, that they may heedfully acquaint themselves, if they now no longer bring mischiefs upon their neighbours, if when brought upon them by their neighbours, they bear them with composure of mind, if when temporal advantages are put in their way, the mind is never dissipated by joy, if, when they are withdrawn, it is not stung by overmuch regret, and then let them reflect, if, when they return inwardly to themselves, in this work of theirs of exploring spiritual things, they never draw along with them the shadows of corporeal objects, or when drawn along, as they may be, if they drive them off with the hand of discretion [al. *distinctionis*, severity]; if, when they long to behold the

unencompassed light, they put down all images of their own compass, or in that which they seek to reach unto above themselves, conquer that which they are. Hence it is rightly said here, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in abundance*. For the perfect man does 'come to the grave in abundance,' in that he first gathers together the works of an active life, and then by contemplation wholly hides from this world his fleshly sense, which is now dead. Hence too it is fitly subjoined, *Like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season*.

60. For the season for action comes first, for contemplation last. Whence it is needful that every perfect man first discipline his mind in virtuous habits, and afterwards lay it up in the granary of rest. For it is hence that he, who was left of the legion of devils at the bidding of our Lord, seats himself at His Saviour's feet, receives the words of instruction, and eagerly desires to leave his country in company with the Author of his recovery, but That very 'Truth' Himself, Who vouchsafed to him recovery, tells him, *Return first unto thine own house, and shew what great things God hath done unto thee*. [Luke 8, 39. &c.] For when we have the least particle imparted to us of the knowledge of God, we are no longer inclined to return to our human affairs, and we shrink from burthening ourselves with the wants of our neighbours. We seek the rest of contemplation, and love only that which refreshes without toil. But after we are cured, the Lord sends us home. He bids us relate the things that have been done with us, so as that in fact the soul should first spend itself in labour, and that afterwards it may be refreshed by contemplation.

61. It is hence that Jacob serves for Rachel, and gets Leah, and that it is said to him, *It is not the custom in our country to give the youngest before the first-born*. For Rachel is rendered 'the beginning seen [c],' but 'Leah,' 'laborious.' And what is denoted by Rachel but the contemplative life? What by Leah, but the active life? For in contemplation 'the Beginning,' which is God, is the object we seek, but in action we labour under a weighty bundle of wants. Whence on the one hand Rachel is beautiful but barren, Leah weak eyed, but fruitful, truly in that when the mind seeks the ease of contemplation, it sees more, but it is less productive in children to God. But when it betakes itself to the laborious work of preaching, it sees less, but it bears more largely. Accordingly after the embrace of Leah, Jacob attains to Rachel, in that every one that is perfect is first joined to an active life in productiveness, and afterwards united to a contemplative life in rest. For that the life of contemplation is less indeed in time [i.e. age], but greater in value [merito] than the active, we are shewn by the words of the Holy Gospel, wherein two women are described to have acted in different ways. For Mary sat at our Redeemer's feet, hearing His words, but Martha eagerly prosecuted bodily services; and when Martha made complaint against Mary's inactivity, she heard the words, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her*. [Luke 10, 41. 42.] For what is set forth by Mary, who sitting down gave ear to the words of our Lord, saving the life of contemplation? and what by Martha, so busied with outward services, saving the life of action? Now Martha's concern is not reproved, but that of Mary is even commended. For the merits of the active life are great, but of the contemplative, far better. Whence Mary's part is said to be 'never taken away from her,' in that the works of the active life pass away together with the body, while the joys of the contemplative life are made more lively at the end. Which is well and

briefly set forth by the Prophet Ezekiel, when, beholding the flying creatures, he says, *And the likeness of the hands of a man were under their wings.* [Ezek. 10, 21] For what can we suppose meant by the wings of the creatures, saving the contemplations of the Saints, by which they soar aloft, and quitting earthly scenes, poise themselves in the regions of heaven? What do we understand by the 'hands,' saving deeds? For whereas they open themselves in the love of their neighbour, the good things, which abound to them, they administer even by bodily ministration; but 'the hands are under the wings,' in that they surpass the deeds of their action, by the excellence of contemplation.

62. Moreover by 'the grave' it may be that not only our contemplation in this life is understood, but the rest of our eternal and interior reward, wherein we more thoroughly rest, the more perfectly is killed in us the life of corrupt existence. He then 'goes down to the grave in abundance,' who, after he has stored up the works of the present life, being perfectly dead to his mutable condition of existence, is buried in the depth of the true light. Whence also it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence, from the provoking of men.* [Ps. 31, 20] And the comparison that is added brings this home to us with effect, where it is subjoined, *Like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.* For corn in the field is touched by the sun, in that in this life the soul of man is illumined by the regard of the light above. It receives the showers, in that it is enriched by the word of Truth; it is shaken by the winds, in that it is tried with temptations; and it bears the chaff 'growing' along with it, in that it bears the life of daily increasing wickedness in sinners, directed against itself; and after it has been carried away to the barn, it is squeezed by the threshing weight, that it may be parted from the bold of the chaff, in that our mind, being subjected to heavenly discipline, whilst it receives the stripes of correction, is parted from the society of the carnal sort in a cleaner state; and it is carried to the granary with the chaff left behind, in that while the lost remain without, the Elect soul is transported to the eternal joys of the mansion above. Well then is it said, *Thou shalt come to thy grave in abundance, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season;* in that, whereas the righteous after sufferings meet with the rewards of the heavenly land, it is like as if the grains after pressing and squeezing were carried away to the granary. And it is in another's season indeed that they feel the strokes, but in their own that they rest from being struck. For to the Elect the present life is another's season, whence to some that were yet unbelievers 'Truth' saith, *My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.* [John 7, 6.] And again, *But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* [Luke 22, 53.] Thus 'he cometh to his grave in abundance, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season,' in that he receives the rest eternal, who, that he may be set free of the chaff, which is destined to be burnt, first feels here below the pressure of discipline. But whereas Eliphaz in the course of his address mentioned 'the tabernacle,' 'the stones,' 'the beasts,' 'the seed,' 'the herbs,' and 'the grave,' he himself intimates that he did not speak of these according to the letter, in that after all of them he thereupon subjoins; Ver.21. *Lo this, as we have searched it, so it is.*

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63. Assuredly it is clear, that in these words he says nothing upon a view of the surface, in that a thing, that is 'searched,' is not set before the face. He then, who shews that he had 'searched' these things, proves that in outward words inward things were what he had in view. And after the whole he is brought to the foolishness of boasting, in that he thereupon adds;

*And now thou hast heard it, turn it in thy mind.*

[xxxix]

64. With whatever lessons of instruction the mind may be furnished, it argues great want of skill to wish to instruct one that is superior, whence the very things which are rightly delivered by the friends, are not pronounced right by the interior Judge. For they lose the efficacy of their rightness herein, that they are not suited to the hearer. For even medicines lose their efficacious properties when they be administered to sound limbs. In all, then, that is said, it is necessary that the occasion, the time, and the individual, be taken into account, whether the truth of the sentiment confirms the words delivered, whether the fitting time calls for it, whether the character of the person does not impugn both the truth of the sentiment, and the suitableness of the time. For he launches his darts in a manner to deserve praise, who first looks at the enemy that he is to strike. For he masters the horns of the strong bow amiss, who in sending the arrow with force, strikes a fellowcountryman.

## BOOK VII.

He explains the whole of the sixth chapter, except the three last verses, part allegorically and in part morally.

### [i] [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

1. Some men's minds are more tormented by scourges than reproaches, but some are more wounded by reproaches than by scourges. For oftentimes the tortures of speech assail us worse than any pains, and while they make us rise up in our vindication, they lay us low in impatience. Whence, that no temptation whatever might be lacking to blessed Job, not only scourges strike him from above, but the sayings of his friends in talk gall him, being sorer than scourges, that the soul of the holy man, being driven hither and thither, might, burst forth in the emotion of wrath and haughtiness, and that all the purity he had lived in might be defiled by head-strong pride of speech. But when touched by the scourges, he gave thanks, when galled with words, he answered aright, and being smitten he makes it appear how little he esteemed the well-being of the body. In speaking too he shews how, wisely he held his peace. But there were a few things mixed with his words, which, in the judgment of men, might seem to transgress the limits of patience; of which we shall take a true view, if in the examination of them we weigh well the sentence of the Most High Judge. For it was He, Who both in the first instance gave blessed Job the first place in opposition to the adversary, saying, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?* [Job 1, 8] It was He, Who after the trial rebuked his friends, saying, *For ye have not spoken before Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath.* It remains then, that when the mind wavers with uncertainty in the

discoursings of blessed Job, it estimate their weight from the beginning, and ending of that same account. For one who was to fall could never have been commended by the Eternal Judge, nor could one who had fallen be awarded the first place. If then, when we be caught in the tempest of embarrassment, we have regard to the first and last points in this history, the vessel of the soul is as it were held fast at prow and stern by the rope of its reflections, that it be not forced on the rocks of error, and so we are not overwhelmed by any storms arising from our ignorance, if we hold to the tranquil shore of the sentence of the Most High. For, mark, he says a thing which might urge the reader's mind with no slight questioning. Yet who could dare to pronounce that not right, which sounds right in God's ears?

Chap. vi. 2, 3. *Oh that my sins [so Vulg.] were thoroughly weighed, whereby I have deserted wrath, and the calamity that I suffer laid in the balances. It should be found heavier even as the sand of the sea.*

#### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

2. Who else is set forth by the title of 'the balances,' but the Mediator between God and man, Who came to weigh the merit of our life, and brought down with Him both justice and loving-kindness together? But putting the greater weight in the scale of mercy, He lightened our transgressions in pardoning them. For in the hand of the Father having been made like scales of a marvellous balancing, in the one scale He hung our woe in His own Person, and in the other our sins. Now by dying He proved the woe to be of heavy weight, and by releasing it shewed the sin to be light in mercy's scale [a], Who vouchsafed this instance of grace first, that He made our punishment to be known to us. For man, being created for the contemplation of his Maker, but banished from the interior joys in justice to his deserts, gone headlong into the wofulness of a corrupt condition, undergoing the darkness of his exile, was at once subject to the punishment of his sin, and knew it not; so that he imagined his place of exile to be his home, and so rejoiced under the weight of his corrupt condition as in the liberty of a state of salvation. But He Whom man had forsaken within, having assumed a fleshly nature, came forth God without; and when He presented Himself outwardly, He restored man, who was cast forth without, to the interior life, that He might henceforth perceive his losses, that he might henceforth lament the sorrows of his blind state. Man's woe then was found to be heavy in the balance, in that the ill, which he was laid under, he only knew in his Redeemer's appearing presence. For not knowing the right, he bore with delight the darkness of his state of condemnation. But after he saw a thing for him to delight in, he likewise perceived a thing to grieve over, and what he underwent he felt was grievous, in that what he had lost was made known as sweet. Let then the holy man, thrown out of the barriers of silence by the sayings of his friend in discourse, and filled with the overflowing of the prophetic spirit, exclaim with his own voice, yea, with the voice of mankind, *Oh that my sins were thoroughly weighed, whereby I have deserved wrath, and the calamity that I suffer laid in the balances together! It should be found heavier even as the sand of the sea.* As if it were in plain words, 'The evil of our condition under the curse is thought light, in that it is weighed without the Redeemer's equity [aequitate] being as yet known, but oh that He would come, and hang in the scale of His Mercy the wofulness of this dismal exile, and instruct us what to seek back for after that exile. For if He makes known what we have lost, He shews that to be grievous which we endure.' But this same misery of our pilgrimage is fitly compared to the sand of the sea, (for the sand of the sea is forced without by the chafing of the waters,) in that man too in transgressing, because he bore the billows of temptation unsteadily, was carried out of himself from within. Now of great weight is

the sand of the sea, but the calamity of man is said to be ‘heavier than the sand of the sea,’ for his punishment is shewn to have been hard, at the time when the sin is lightened by the merciful Judge. And because every man that owns the grace of the Redeemer, everyone that longs for a return to his Country, now that he is instructed, groans beneath the burthen of his pilgrimage; after the longing for the balances, the words are rightly subjoined;  
*Therefore my words are full of grief.*

[iii]

3. He that loves sojourn abroad instead of his own country, knows not how to grieve even in the midst of griefs. But the words of the righteous man are full of grief, for so long as he is subject to present ills, he sighs after something else in his speech; all that he brought upon himself by sinning is set before his eyes, and that he may return to the state of blessedness, he weighs carefully the judgments whereby he is afflicted. Whence it is added,  
*Ver.4. For the arrows of the Almighty are in me.*

[iv]

4. For by the epithet of ‘arrows’ sometimes the utterances of preaching, sometimes the arrows of visitation are denoted. Now the utterances of preaching are represented by ‘arrows;’ for in this, that they smite men's vices, they pierce the hearts of evil doers. Concerning which arrows it is said to the Redeemer at His coming, *Thine arrows are sharp, O Thou Most Mighty; the people shall fall under Thee in the heart.* [Ps. 45, 5. lxx.] Of Him Isaiah saith, *I will send those that escape of them to the nations, into the sea, into Africa, and into Lydia, holding the arrow, into Italy, and into Greece.* [Is. 66, 19] Again by ‘arrows’ is represented the stroke of visitation, as where Elisha bids king Joash, ‘shoot an arrow,’ and when he shoots, says, *For thou shalt smite the Syrians, till thou hast consumed them.* [2 Kings 13, 17] Whereas then the holy man surveys the sorrows of his pilgrimage, because he groans under the strokes of the visitation of the Lord, let him say, *Therefore my words are filled with grief. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me.* As though he said in plain words, ‘I being under curse of exile have no joy, but as laid under the Judgment, I am full of pain, for I see and know the force of the stroke.’ But there are a great number that are chastised with tortures, but not amended. Contrary to which it is fitly subjoined,  
*The indignation whereof drinketh up my spirit.*

[v]

5. For what else is the ‘spirit of man,’ but the spirit of pride? Now ‘the arrows of the Lord drink up the spirit of man,’ when the awards of heavenly visitation keep back the chastened soul from self-elation. ‘The arrows of the Lord drink up the spirit of man,’ in that, when he is intent upon outward things, they draw him within. For the spirit of David was drunk up when he said, *When my spirit failed within me, Thou knewest my ways.* [Ps. 142, 3] And again, *My soul refused to be comforted, I remembered God and was troubled, I complained and my spirit failed.* Therefore ‘the indignation of the arrows drinketh up the spirit’ of the righteous, for the decrees from above, in wounding, work a change in the Elect, whom they find in any sins; so that the soul being pierced, quits its hardness or heart, and the blood of confession runs down from the wound that brings health. For they consider whence and whereunto they have been cast down, they consider from



how high bliss they have fallen, and to what miseries of their corrupt condition, and they not only groan in the midst of the things which they are suffering, but furthermore dread that which the strict Judge threatens sinners with concerning the fires of hell. Whence the words are rightly subjoined; *And the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.*

[vi]

6. The mind of the righteous not only considers well what it is now undergoing, but also dreads what is in store. It sees all that it suffers in this life, and fears lest hereafter it suffer still worse things. It mourns that it has fallen into the exile of this blind state away from the joys of Paradise; it fears, lest, when this exile is quitted, eternal death succeed. And thus it already undergoes sentence in suffering chastisement, yet still dreads the threats of the Judge to come as the consequence of sin. Hence the Psalmist says, *Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; Thy terrors cut me off.* [Ps. 88, 16] For after that 'the fierce wrath of the Internal Judge goeth over, His terrors still do cut us off,' in that we already suffer one evil by condemnation, and still dread another from everlasting vengeance. Let the holy man then, weighing well the ills that he is subject to, exclaim, *The arrows of the Lord are within me, the indignation whereof drinketh up my spirit.* But being in dread of worse things to last for ever, let him add, *The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* As if he said in plain words, 'Being stricken indeed I feel grief for my present circumstances, but this is the worst feature in my grief, that even in the midst of punishment I still fear eternal woes.' But forasmuch as he already longs for the bringing in of the balances, he already weighs the evils into which the human race has fallen, though he was placed among a Gentile people, yet because he was full of the gift of prophetic inspiration, in the following words he shews with what ardent desire the coming of the Redeemer is thirsted for, whether by the Gentile world or by Judaea, saying,  
Ver. 5. *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox at his full manger?*

[vii] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

7. For what is denoted by 'the onager,' that is, the wild ass, saving the Gentile people, which, as nature has produced it without the stalls of training, so has continued roaming abroad in the field of its pleasures? What is represented by 'the ox,' saving the Jewish people, which being bowed down to the yoke of the dominion above, in gathering together proselytes unto hope, drew the ploughshare of the Law through all the hearts that it was able? But we learn from the witness of blessed Job's life to believe, that many even of the Gentiles looked for the coming of the Redeemer. And at the birth of the Lord, we have learnt by Simeon's coming in the spirit into the Temple, with what longing desire holy men of the Israelitish people coveted to behold the mystery of His Incarnation. Whence too the same Redeemer saith to His Disciples, *For I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them.* [Luke 10, 24] The 'grass' of the wild ass then, and the ox's 'fodder,' is this very Incarnation of the Mediator, by which both the Gentile world and Judaea are together filled to the full. For because it is said by the Prophet, *All flesh is grass* [Is. 40, 6]; the Creator of the universe taking flesh of our substance, willed to be made 'grass,' that our flesh might not remain grass for ever; and so 'the wild ass' then found 'grass,' when the Gentile people received the grace of the Divine Incarnation. Then 'the ox' had not an empty manger, when to the Jewish people, looking for His Flesh, the Law shewed Him forth, Whom it prophesied to them whilst long kept in expectation of Him. Whence

too the Lord, when He was born, is placed in a manger, that it might be signified, that the holy animals, which under the Law had long been found an hungred, are filled with 'the fodder' of His Incarnation. For at His birth He filled a manger, Who gave Himself for food to the souls of mortal beings, saying, *He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him.* [John 5, 56] But because both the longings of the Elect from among the Gentiles were for long deferred, and the holy men severally of the Hebrew people groaned long while in expectation of their redemption, blessed Job, in giving forth the mysteries of prophecy, rightly implies the causes of distress in the case of either people, by saying, *Will the wild ass bray while he hath grass? Or will the ox low over his full manger?* As though it were in plain speech, 'The Gentile world for this reason groans, because the grace of the Redeemer does not yet yield it refreshment, and Judaea on this account draws out her lowings, for that in holding the Law, but not seeing the author of the Law, standing before the manger she goes hungering. And because this same Law, before the coming of our Mediator, was held not in a spiritual but in a carnal manner, it is rightly added, Ver. 6. *Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?*

[viii]

8. In the Law, the virtue of the hidden meaning is the salt of the letter. Whosoever, then, being intent upon carnal observances, refused to understand it in a spiritual sense, what else did he but eat 'unsavoury food?' But this 'salt,' 'Truth,' on being known, put into the food, when He taught that the savour of a hidden sense lay at the bottom of the Law, saying, *For had ye believed Moses, ye might [Vulg. forsitan] have believed Me, for he wrote of Me.* [John 5, 46] And again, *Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.* [Mark 9, 50] But because before our Redeemer's coming, Judaea held the Law in a carnal way, the Gentile world refused to bend themselves to its precepts, which enjoined hard things. Thus it would not eat unsavoury meat. For before that it got the relish of the Spirit, it shrunk from keeping the force of the letter. For which of the Gentiles would bear this, which is therein enjoined, to cut their children's flesh for a religious service? to cut off the sins of speech by death? And hence it is well added yet further; *Or can anyone taste, what by being tasted brings death?* [Vulg.]

[ix]

9. For the Law, if tasted in a carnal way, 'brought death,' in that it seized the misdeeds of transgressors with a severe visitation; it 'brought death,' in that both by the injunction it made known the sin, and did not by grace put it away, as Paul testifies, saying, The Law made nothing perfect. And again, *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.* And soon after, *But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good.* But the Gentile world, when turned to Christ, in that it understands Him to be sounding in the words of the Law, being straitened by its desires looks for Him, Whom it ardently loves, in a spiritual way amongst carnal precepts. And hence in the voice of the Church it is immediately added by the Prophetic Spirit, Ver. 7. *The things which my soul refused to touch are for straitness become my meat.*

[x]

10. For he goes very far wrong, who imagines that the words of blessed Job were delivered with an eye to the historical fact alone. For what would the holy man, and one too borne up by the proclaim of His Maker, have said, that was great, or rather what that was true, if he had said that ‘unsavoury meat could not be eaten?’ or who had offered deadly food for him to eat, that he should subjoin, *Or who can taste, what by being tasted brings death?* And if we imagine that was said of his friends’ discourse, we are withheld from this view by the sentence that is subjoined, in which he says, *The things that my soul refused to touch are for straitness become my meat.* For never let it be thought that the holy man, when established in soundness of state, at any time looked down upon the words of his friends; who, as we learn afterwards by himself attesting it, was humble even to his servants, His words then are not void of mystical senses, which, as we gather from the end of the history, the internal Arbiter Himself commends. And these would never have gone on commanding such deep veneration even to the very ends of the world, if they had not been pregnant with mystical meaning.

11. Let blessed Job then, in that he is a member of holy Church, speak in her voice also, saying, *The things which my soul refused to touch are for my straitness become my meat.* For the Gentile world, after conversion, made eager by the fever of her love, hungers for the food of Holy Scripture, which being filled with pride it disdained for long. And yet these words agree with the voice of Judaea also, if they be a little more attentively made out. For from the training of the Law, and from the knowledge of the One God, she herself had salt, and looked down upon all the Gentiles as brute creatures. But because, when instructed by the precepts of the Law, she disdained to admit to herself the communion of the Gentiles, what did she but loath to take ‘unsavoury food?’ For the Divine decree had forbidden, on the menace of death, that the Israelitish people should join in a league with strangers, and pollute the way of life in holy religion. Whence too it is added, *Or can anyone taste, what, by being tasted, brings death?* But because this same Judaea, in the portion of the Elect, was converted to the faith of the Redeemer, the light which she had become acquainted with she laboured by the Holy Apostles to deliver to the faithless of her offspring. But the pride of the Hebrew people rejected the ministry of her preaching, whence she immediately turned aside her words of exhortation for the gathering together of the Gentiles, as it is said also by the same Apostles, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing that ye have put it from you, and have judged yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* [Acts 13, 46] Whence too in this place it is fitly subjoined, *The things which my soul refused to touch are now for my straitness become my meat.* For Judaea, having disdained the life of the Gentiles, refused as it were for long to touch her, whose society she scorned to admit; but on coming to the grace of the Redeemer, being rejected by the unbelieving Israelites, while by the Holy Apostles she stretches out herself for the gathering together of the Gentiles, she as it were takes that for food with a hungry appetite, which before with loathing she disdained as unworthy. For she underwent ‘straitness’ in her preaching, who saw that what she spoke was despised among the Hebrew people. But for her ‘straitness’ she ate the food which she had for long despised, in that being rejected by the obduracy of the Jews, she yearns to take to her the Gentile folk, whom she had contemned. Seeing then that we have delivered these points in a figurative sense, it remains that we go into them in their moral import.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

12. The holy Man, longing for the coming of the Redeemer under the name of a 'balance,' whilst he opens his mind in discourse, instructs us to earnestness of life; whilst he tells his own tale, marks some things that belong to us; whilst he brings forward what we are to acknowledge concerning himself, strengthens unto life us that be trembling and weak. For now indeed we live by the faith of our Mediator, and yet still, for the cleansing out of our faults, endure heavy scourges of inward visitation; whence also, after longing for the balance, he adds,

Ver. 4. *For the arrows of the Lord are within me, the indignation whereof drinketh up my spirit.*

[xi]

13. Now see, as has been remarked above, we are at the same time pierced by the stroke of Divine correction, and yet that is still worse, which we apprehend of the terribleness of the Judge to come, and of His everlasting visitation. Whence the words are thereupon introduced, *And the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.* But the mind ought to be dispossessed of fear and sadness, and be drawn out in aspirations after the eternal land alone. For we then shew forth the noble birth of our Regeneration, if we love Him as a Father, Whom with slavish soul we now dread as a Master. And hence it is spoken by Paul, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of the adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

[Rom. 8, 15] Therefore let the soul of the Elect lay aside the weight of fear, exercise itself in the virtue of love, long for the worthiness of its renewal, pant after the likeness or its Maker; whom so long as it is unable to behold, it must needs await hungering after His eternal Being, i.e. after its own internal meat. Whence it is also justly added,

Ver. 5. *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? Or loweth the ox over his full manger?*

[xii]

14. Who else are denoted by the term of 'the wild ass,' saving they who being set in the field of faith, are not bound by the reins of any ministration? Or whom does the designation of 'the ox' set forth, saving those, whom within the bounds of Holy Church, the yoke of Orders taken upon them constrains to the ministry of preaching? Now the 'grass' of the wild ass, and the ox's 'fodder,' is the inward refreshing of the faithful folk. For some within the pale of Holy Church are held after the manner of an ox by the bands of the employment taken upon them, others after the manner of a 'wild ass' know nothing of the stalls of Holy Orders, and pass their time in the field of their own will. But when any one in the secular life glows with aspirations after the interior vision, when he yearns for the food of the inward refreshing, when seeing himself starved in the darkness of this pilgrim state, he refreshes himself with what tears he may, it is as if 'the wild ass brayed,' not finding 'grass.' Another one too is subject to the obligation of the Order he has taken upon him, he spends himself in the labour of preaching, and longs to be henceforth refreshed by eternal contemplation; but forasmuch as he does not see the likeness of His Redeemer, it is as if the chained ox lowed at the empty manger. For because being set at the widest distance from the interior wisdom, we see nothing of the verdure of the eternal inheritance, like brute animals we go hungering after the longed for grass. Of which same grass it is said by the voice of our Redeemer, *By Me if any man enter in, he shall be sated, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* [John 10, 9] But most often, which is wont to be a grievous woe to those that love, the life of the wicked is arrayed against the holy aims of the good, and when the soul is transported in heavenly aspirations, the purpose of mind, which we have begun with well, is dashed to the ground, being crossed by the

words and practices of the foolish; so that the soul, which had already soared up to things above in the efforts of contemplation, for the defeating of the foolishness of the froward, girds itself for the encounter down below. Whence also it is added,

Ver. 6. *Or can that which is unsavoury be eaten, not seasoned with salt? Or can anyone taste, what by being tasted brings death?*

[xiii]

15. For the words and the practices of the carnal introduce themselves like food into our minds, so as to be swallowed up in the belly of complacency. But any of the Elect eateth not that which is 'unsavory,' for setting apart in judgment the words and the deeds of the froward, he puts them away from the mouth of his heart. Paul forbade unsavoury meat to be offered for the food of souls, when he said to his disciples, *Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt.* [Col. 4, 6] And to the Psalmist also the words of the children of perdition tasted unsavoury in the mouth of the heart, when he said, *The wicked have related tales to [so V.] me which are not after Thy Law.* [Ps. 119, 85] But often, when the words of the wicked press themselves with importunity into our ears, they beget in the heart a war of temptation. And though both reason reject and the tongue censure them, yet that is with difficulty mastered within, which without is sentenced with authority.

Whence it is necessary that that should never even reach the ears, which the mind must keep off from the avenue of the imagination by exercising watchfulness. Holy men, then, whereas their hearts pant with aspirations after Eternity, lift themselves to such an exalted elevation of life, that to hear any longer the things that are of the world they account to be a grievous burthen bearing them down. For they reckon that to be impertinent and insufferable, which does not tell of what their hearts are full of.

16. Now it often happens that the mind is already transported to the realms on high in desire, is already entirely parted asunder from the foolish converse of earthly men, but is not yet braced to prefer the crosses of the present life for the love of God; already it seeks the things on high, already it contemns the grovelling follies below, but it does not yet turn itself to the endurance of the adversity which it has to bear. And hence it is added,

*Or can anyone taste that, which by being tasted brings death?*

17. For it is hard to seek after that which torments, to follow that which makes life depart. But very often the life of the righteous stretches itself up to such a height of virtue, that both within it rules in the citadel of interior reason, and without, by bearing with it, brings the folly of some to conversion; for we must needs bear with the weaknesses of those, whom we are striving to draw on to strong things. For neither does any man lift up one that is fallen, save he, who in compassion bends the uprightness of his position. But when we compassionate the weakness of another, we are the more strongly nerved as to our own; so that, from love of the things of futurity, the soul prepares itself to meet the ills of the present time, and looks out for the hurts of the body, which it used to fear. For its heavenly aspirations being enlarged, it is more and more straitened, and when it sees how great is the sweetness of the eternal land, it fervently loves for the sake of that the bitter tastes of the present life. Whence after the disdain of 'unsavoury meat,' after the impossibility of the tasting of death, it is with propriety subjoined,

Ver.7. *The things which my soul refused to touch are for my straitness become my meat.*

[xv]

18. For the soul of the righteous, going on in its progress, whereas before, when it cared for its own interests alone, it loathed to bear the burthens of another, and, too little sympathizing with others, could not stand against adversities, now that it constrains itself to bear with the weakness of its neighbour, acquires strength to overcome adversity, so that for the love of truth it seeks the hurts of the present life with so much the more courage afterwards, that before it fled from them in its weakness. For by its bending it is made erect, by its drawing towards another it is stretched out, by its fellow-feeling it is strengthened, and when it opens itself out in the love of our neighbour, it as it were gathers from reflection, with what resoluteness to lift itself up to its Maker. For charity, which lowers us according to the force of our sympathy, lifts us the higher upon the height of contemplation, and enlarged manifold it already burns with bigger desires, already beats high to attain to the life of the Spirit, even though through the torments of the body. What then aforetime he refused to touch, this same for straitness he afterwards eateth, who scarce containing his desires, now for love of his heavenly Country loves even the very pains, which for long he had feared. For if the mind is bent towards God with a strong purpose, whatever bitter betides it in this present life it accounts sweet, all that annoys it reckons rest, and it longs to pass even through death, that it may more completely possess itself of life. It desires to be utterly annihilated below, that it may more truly mount on high. But all this I may be falsely representing to be the case with the mind of a righteous man in general, and with the mind of blessed Job, if he do not himself subjoin the words, Ver. 8-10. *Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that He That hath begun would destroy me. Let him let loose His hand, and cut me off! Let this be my comfort; that He should afflict me with sorrow, and not spare.*

[xvi]

19. But perchance he entreats such things through stubbornness, perchance, in that he wishes to be entirely annihilated, he charges the injustice of the smiter. Far be the thought! For with what feeling he begs it, he shews in the following words, saying, *Nor will I gainsay the speech of the Holy One.* So then he never murmurs against the injustice of Him that dealeth the blow, who even amidst the strokes calls his smiter 'the Holy One.' But we ought to know that it is sometimes the adversary, and sometimes God that bruises us with affliction. Now by the bruising of the adversary, we are made defaulters in virtue; but when we are broken by the bruising of the Lord, from vicious habits we are made strong in virtue. This bruising the Prophet had foreseen when he said, *Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.* [Ps. 2, 9] The Lord 'rules and breaks us with a rod of iron,' in that by the strong rule of righteousness in His dispensation, while He reanimates us within, He distresses us without. For as He abases the power of the flesh, He exalts the purpose of the spirit; and hence this bruising is compared to a potter's vessel, as is also delivered by Paul, *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.* [2 Cor. 4, 7] And describing at the same time the dashing in pieces and the ruling [Vulg. has, *Thou shalt rule them, for, Thou shalt break them*], he saith, *Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.* Let the holy man who is eager to draw near to God even through strokes, exclaim in the spirit of humility, Ver. 9. *That He That hath begun would bruise me!*

[xvii]

20. For very often the Lord begins to work in us the bruising of our vicious habits, but when the mind is lifted up at the very first step of its progress, and when it already exalts itself as on the ground of its virtuous attainments, it opens an entrance to the adversary, that rages against it, who penetrating into the depths of the heart, dashes in pieces all that he may find therein springing from the earnestness of a good beginning, and shews himself the more violent in the breaking of it in proportion as he is the sorer grieved that it had made progress, though but a little way. Whence too, as the Gospel is witness, by the voice of ‘Truth,’ the unclean spirit, which went out alone, returns with seven other spirits to the neglected dwelling-place of the conscience. Lest then, after the beginnings of divine correction, the old adversary snatch him unawares, and drag him along for the breaking in pieces of his virtues, the holy man fitly beseeches, saying, *That He That hath begun would bruise me*. As if he said in plain words, ‘That which He has begun in me may He not cease to perfect by smiting me, lest He deliver me over forsaken to the adversary to bruise me.’ Hence it is fitly subjoined,  
*That He would let loose His hand, and cut me off.*

[xviii]

21. For oftentimes being swoln with the confidence of lengthened prosperity, we are lifted up in a certain kind of frame of self-elation, and when our Creator sees that we are lifted up, but does not exercise His love towards us by stripes, He as it were keeps His hand hid, as to the smiting of our evil ways. Did He not tie the hand of His affection, when He said to the people, when guilty of transgression, *I will not any more be wroth with thee*; and, *My jealousy is departed from thee*. [Ezek. 16, 42] Therefore, ‘That He would let loose His hand,’ means, ‘that He would exercise His affection.’ And it is rightly added, ‘and cut me off.’ For whenever either the sudden pain of the scourge, or the trial of our weakness, falls upon us in a state of security, and elated with the abundance of our virtuous attainments, the pride of our hearts, being cut down, is precipitated from the height of its seat, so that it dares do nothing of itself, but levelled by the blow of its frailty, seeks the hand of one to lift it. Hence it is that, when holy men are looked upon with admiration on the grounds of the secret dispensation of God's providence towards them, they the more dread their very prosperity itself: they long to be subjected to trial, they covet to be stricken, that fear and pain may discipline the unwary mind, lest when an enemy breaketh out of ambush on this road of our pilgrimage, its self-security cause its greater downfall. Hence the Psalmist says, *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me*. [Ps. 26, 2] Hence he says again, *For I am ready for the scourges*. [Ps. 38, 17] For because holy men see that the wound of their inward corruption [b] cannot be without putridity, they gladly set them under the hand of the physician for lancing, that the wound being opened, the venom of sin may run out, which, with a whole skin, was inwardly working their destruction. Hence it is yet further added;  
Ver. 10. *And let this be my consolation, that afflicting me with pain He spare not.*

22. The Elect, when they know that they have done unlawful things, but find upon careful examination that they have met with no afflictions in return for those unlawful deeds, with the immense force of their fear, are in a ferment with alarm, and labour and travail with dark misgivings, lest grace should have forsaken them for ever, seeing that no recompensing of their ill-doing keeps them safe in the present life; they fear lest the vengeance which is suspended be stored to be dealt in heavier measure at the end; they are eager to be stricken with the correction of a

Father's hand, and they reckon the pain of the wound to be the medicine of saving health. Therefore it is rightly said in this place, *Let this be my consolation, that afflicting me with grief He spare not.* As if it were in plain words, 'May He, Who spares people here for this cause, that He may strike them for ever and ever, therefore strike me here, that, by not sparing me, He may spare me for ever. For I console myself in being afflicted, in that conscious of the rottenness of human corruption, by being wounded I gain assurance for the hope of saving health.' And that he uttered it not with a swollen but with a humble mind, he makes plain, as we have before said, by the addition, in the words,  
*Neither will I gainsay the words of the Holy One.*

[xx]

23. Most often the words of God to us are not the sounds of speech, but the enforcement of deed. For He speaks to us in that which He works upon us in silence. Blessed Job then would be gainsaying the words of God, if he murmured at His blows; but what feelings he entertains for his smiter is shewn by him, who, as we have already said, calls Him 'Holy One' from whom he is submitting to blows. It goes on;  
Ver. 11. *What is my strength, that I should hold up? And what is mine end that I should deal patiently?*

[xxi]

24. It is necessary to bear in mind, that the 'strength' of the righteous is of one sort, and the strength of the reprobate of another. For the strength of the righteous is to subdue the flesh, to thwart our own wills, to annihilate the gratification of the present life, to be in love with the roughnesses of this world for the sake of eternal rewards, to set at nought the allurements of prosperity, to overcome the dread of adversity in our hearts. But the strength of the reprobate is to have the affection unceasingly set on transitory things, to hold out with insensibility against the strokes of our Creator, not even by adversity to be brought to cease from the love of temporal things, to go on to the attainment of vain glory even with waste of life, to search out larger measures of wickedness, to attack the life of the good, not only with words and by behaviour, but even with weapons, to put their trust in themselves, to perpetrate iniquity daily without any diminution of desire, Hence it is that it is said by the Psalmist to the Elect, *Be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened, all ye that hope in the Lord.* [Ps 31, 24] Hence it is declared by the Prophet to the reprobate, *Woe unto you that are mighty to drink urine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.* [Is. 5, 22] Hence it is declared by Solomon, that all the holy without any weakening of desire contemplate the interior rest. *Behold his bed, which is Solomon's, threescore valiant men are about it, of the most valiant of Israel.* [Cant. 3, 7] Hence the Psalmist directing his meaning against the children of perdition in the voice of the Redeemer in His Passion, saith, *Lo, they have surprised my soul: the mighty have rushed forth against me.* [Ps. 59, 3] How well did Isaiah comprehend both sorts of strength in the words, *But they that wait upon the Lord shall change* [mutabunt E.V. marg.] *their strength.* [Is. 40, 31] For in that he said not they will 'take,' but they will 'change,' he clearly made known that that which is laid aside is of one sort, and that which is entered upon of another sort.



25. Are not the reprobate also ‘strong,’ who take such pains in running after the concupiscence of this world, boldly expose themselves to perils, welcome insults for the sake of gain, never give back from the lust of their appetites conquered by any opposition, grow obdurate with scourges, and for the sake of the world undergo the ills of the world, and so to say in seeking the pleasures thereof are parting with them, nor yet in parting with them ever weary. Whence it is well said by Jeremiah in the voice of mankind, *He hath made me drunken with wormwood*. [Lam. 3, 15] For one that is drunk knows nothing what he is undergoing. He then is ‘drunken with wormwood,’ who alienated from the faculty of reason through the love of the present life, whilst whatsoever he undergoes for the sake of the world he accounts but light, is blind to the bitterness of the toil which he is enduring, in that in enjoyment he is led on to the several things in which in chastisement he is wearied out. But on the other hand the righteous man makes it his aim to be weak for undergoing the perils of the world for the world's sake, looks to his own end, marks how transitory the present life is, and refuses to undergo toils without for the sake of that, the enjoyment of which he has overcome within. Let blessed Job then, pressed by the adversities of the present life, say in his own voice, yea, in the voice of all the righteous, *What is my strength that I should hold up? And what is mine end that I should deal patiently?* As if he made it known in plain words, saying, ‘I cannot submit to the ills of the world for the sake of the world, for now I am no longer strong in the desire thereof. For while I look to the end of the present life, why do I bear the burthen of that, the longing for which I tread under my feet?’ And because the unrighteous severally, as we have said, bear the toils thereof with stronger resolution in proportion as they feed with greater avidity on its enjoyment, therefore he rightly subjoins without delay that same strength of the reprobate, in the words,

Ver. 12. *Neither is my strength the strength of stones, nor is my flesh of brass?*

[xxii]

26. For what have we here denoted by ‘brass’ and ‘stones’ save the hearts of the insensate, who oftentimes even receive the strokes of the Most High, and yet they are not softened by any strokes of discipline? Contrary whereunto, it is said to the Elect through the Prophet, by promise from the Lord, *I will take the stony heart out of you, and will give you a heart of flesh*. [Ezek. 11, 19] Paul also says, *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal*. [1 Cor. 13, 1] For we know that stones when struck cannot give a clear sound, but when brass is struck a very sonorous sound is made by the striking of it; which, because like stones it is without life, has no sense contained in the sound. And there be some, who, like to stones, have become so hardened as to the precepts of religion, that, when the stroke of the visitation of the Most High is proving them, they never return the sound of humble confession. But some differing in no respect from the metallic nature of brass, when they receive the strokes of the smiting of the Most High, give forth the sound of devout confession; but because they do not send out the tones of humility from the heart, when they have been brought back to a state of sound health, they know nothing what they have vowed. The one then, being

struck like stones, have no tones at all, while the other in nothing omit the resemblance of brass, who when under the stroke utter good things which they do not feel. The one sort refuse even words to the worship of the smiter. The other sort, in promising what they never fulfil, cry out without any life. Let the holy man then, who amidst the scourges eschewed the hardness of the reprobate, exclaim, *Neither is my strength the strength of stones, nor is my flesh of brass*. As though he made open confession in plain words, saying, ‘Under the lash of discipline I keep clear of similarity to the reprobate. For neither have I become like stones so hardened that under the impulse of the stroke I turned dumb in the duty of confession; nor again, like brass do I give back the voice of confession, while I know not the meaning of the voice.’ But because under the scourge the reprobate are strong unto weakness, and the Elect weak unto strength, blessed Job, while he declares that he is not strong of a diseased sense, makes it plain that he is strong of a state of saving health. So let him instruct us whence he received this same strength, lest if he ascribes to himself the powers that he has, he be running vigorously to death. For very often virtue possessed kills worse than if it were wanting, for while it lifts up the mind to self-confidence, it pierces it with the sword of self-elation, and while as it were it quickens by imparting strength, slays by filling with exaltation, i.e. it forces on to destruction the soul, which, through self trust, it uproots from trust in the interior strength. But forasmuch as blessed Job is both rich in virtue, and yet has no confidence in himself, and, that I may say so, in powerlessness is possessed of powers, he fitly subjoins these words, saying,

Ver. 13. *Lo, there is no help to me in myself.*

[xxiii]

27. It is now made clear to whom the mind of the stricken man had recourse for hope, seeing that he declares that there was no hope to him in himself; but because he intimates that in himself he was weak, for the earning [or ‘to (shew) the merit of.’] of yet greater strength, let him add how he was even forsaken by his neighbours, *My friends also departed from me* [V. thus]. But mark, he that was despised without, is seated within upon the throne of judgment. For at the moment that he declares himself forsaken, he forthwith breaks out into pronouncing sentence, in the words, Ver.14. *Whoso taketh away pity from his friend, forsaketh the fear of the Lord.*

[xxiv]

28. Who else is here denoted by the name of a friend, saving every neighbour, who is united to us in a faithful attachment in proportion as, having received from us good service in this present time, he effectually aids us toward attaining hereafter the eternal country? For because there are two precepts of charity viz. the love of God and the love of our neighbour, by the love of God the love of our neighbour is brought into being, and by the love of our neighbour the love of God is fostered. For he that cares not to love God, verily knows nothing how to love his neighbour, and we then advance more perfectly in the love of God, if in the bosom of this love we first be suckled with the milk of charity towards our neighbour. For because the love of God begets the love of our neighbour, the Lord, when going on to say in the voice of the Law the words, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour*, prefaced it by saying, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*; [Matt. 22, 37. 39. Deut. 6, 5; 10, 12] for this reason, that in the soil of our breast He might first fix the root of His love, so that afterwards in the branches the love of our brethren should shoot forth. Again, that the love of God grows to strength by the love of our neighbour, is testified by John, where he says, *For he that*

*loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, Whom he hath not seen?*[1 John 4, 20] Which love of God, though it has its birth in fear, yet it is changed by growing into affection.

29. But oftentimes Almighty God, to make known how far anyone is from the love of Him and of his neighbour, or what proficiency he has made therein, regulating all things in a marvellous order, puts down some by strokes, and sets up others by successes; and as often as He forsakes certain persons in their temporal estate and condition, He shews the evil that lurks in the hearts of certain others. For very often the persons that courted us in the season of prosperity without an equal, are the very ones to persecute us in distress. For when a man in a prosperous condition is beloved, it is very doubtful whether his good fortune or the individual be the object of love. But the loss of prosperity puts to the test the force of the affection. Whence a certain wise man saith rightly, *A friend cannot be known in prosperity; and an enemy cannot be hidden in adversity.* [Ecclus. 12, 8] For neither does prosperity shew a friend, nor adversity hide an enemy, in that both the first is often hidden by awe for our high fortune, and the latter is disclosed to view from presuming on our adverse condition. Let the holy man then, set in the midst of scourges, exclaim, *He that taketh away pity from his friend, forsaketh the fear of the Lord;* in that doubtless he that contemns his neighbour in consequence of his adversity, is clearly convicted never to have loved him in his prosperity. And since Almighty God smites some for this reason, that He may both discipline the individuals stricken, and afford to those that are not stricken opportunity for doing good; whosoever disregards one that is smitten, puts away from him an occasion of virtue, and lifts himself up the more wickedly against his Maker, in proportion as he views Him as neither merciful in the saving of himself, nor just in the wounding of another. But we must observe that blessed Job in such sort describes his own case, that the life of all the Elect People is at the same time set forth by him. For seeing that he is a member of that People, when he describes what he himself undergoes, he is also relating what that People is subject to, saying, Ver. 15. *My brethren have passed by me like a brook which passeth by rapidly in the hollows.*

[xxv]

30. Because the mind of the reprobate is set on present things alone, for the most part it proves a stranger to the scourge now, in proportion as hereafter it remains an exile from the inheritance. But oftentimes the lost hold the same faith by which we live, receive the same Sacraments of faith, are bound in the unity of the same religion, yet they are unacquainted with the bowels of compassion; of the force of that love, with which we are inflamed, both towards God and our neighbour, they know nothing. Therefore they are rightly called both ‘brethren,’ and those that ‘pass by,’ in that by faith they come forth from the same mother's womb with ourselves, but are not rooted in one and the same earnestness of charity towards God and our neighbour. Whence they are also fitly likened to a ‘brook which passes by rapidly in the valleys.’ For a brook flows from the highlands down below, and while it gathers its waters from the winter rains, is dried up by the summer heats; for they that from love of earthly objects quit the hope of the land above, seek the valley as it were from the uplands, and these are replenished with the winter season of the present life; but the summer of the Judgment to come dries them up, in that so soon as the sun of the rigour of the Most High waxes hot, it turns the joy of the reprobate into drought. Therefore it is rightly said, *Rapidly passeth by in the valleys.* Since for a torrent to pass by rapidly [c] to the valleys, is for the mind of the froward, without any pains or hindrance to descend to the lowest aims. For all ascending is in

painstaking, but all descending is in pleasure, in that in effect the step is strained to reach a higher level, but in relaxation, it is let down to a lower one. For it is a matter of much toil to get a stone up to the top of a mountain, but it is no labour to let the same down from the top to the bottom. Surely, that same is propelled down without let, which did not reach the top without mighty pains. The crop is sown by long application, it is nourished by a long course of shower and sunshine, yet it is consumed by a single instantaneous spark. By little and little buildings mount to a height, but by instantaneous falls they come to the ground. A vigorous tree lifts itself in the air by slow accessions of growth, but all that it has in a long course reared on high, is brought down at once and together. Therefore forasmuch as ascending is with pains and descending with pleasure, it is rightly expressed in this place, *My brethren have passed by me like a brook which passeth by rapidly in the valleys*; which too may be taken in another sense likewise.

31. For if we understand the valleys to be the regions of punishment below, then all the unrighteous 'pass away rapidly like a brook to the valleys,' in that in this life, which; they go after with all the desire of their heart, they can never stay for long, since for all the days that they add to their age, they are as it were daily tending by so many steps to their end. They wish for the periods to be lengthened to them, but forasmuch as when granted they cannot hold; for as many additions as they are allowed to their life, they are losing just so many from their period of living; therefore the moments of time, in so far as they pursue, they are fleeing from; in so far as they get them, they are parting with them. Thus they 'pass away rapidly to the valleys,' who indeed draw out to a great length their desires for the pleasures, but on a sudden are brought down to the dungeons of hell. For because even that period which is protracted by any length of life whatever, if it be closed by an ending; is not long, those wretched persons learn from the end that: that was but short, which they held only in letting go. Whence also it is well said by Solomon, *But if a man live many years and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness; for they shall be many: and when they have come, the past shall be convicted of vanity.* [Eccles. 11, 8] For when the foolish mind meets on a sudden with evil which never passes away, it is made to understand by undergoing the eternal durations thereof, that the thing which could pass away was vain. But we should know that the greater number desire to do right, but there are some things calculated to cross and thwart their weak minds arising from the present life; and whereas they fear to undergo crosses in the lowest things, they offend against the rule of right set by the decree above. Whence it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 16. *Over those that fear the frost, the snow rushes down.*

[xxvi]

32. For the frost congeals below, but the snow falls down from above. And often there are persons, who, while they fear temporal adversities, expose themselves to the severity of everlasting visitation. Concerning whom it is rightly declared by the Psalmist, *There were they in great fear where no fear was.* [Ps. 14, 5] For this man already longs to defend the truth with freedom, yet being affrighted in that very longing that he feels, he shrinks from the indignation of a human power, and while on earth he fears man in opposition to the truth, he undergoes from heaven the wrath of Truth. That man, conscious of his sins, is already desirous to bestow upon the needy the things which he is possessed of, yet dreads lest he himself come to need them so bestowed. When, being alarmed, he provides with reservation for his own use succours of the flesh for the future, he starves the soul from the sustenance of mercy, and when he fears want on earth, he cuts off from

himself the eternal plenitude of the heavenly cheer. Therefore it is well said, *Over those that fear the frost, the snow rushes down.* In that all who apprehend from below what ought to be trodden under the feet, undergo from above what is deserving of apprehension, and when they will not pass by what they might have trodden beneath them, they meet with a judgment from heaven which they can in no sort sustain. Now by acting thus they attain the glory of the world in time, but what will they do in the hour of their call, when terror-stricken they quit at once all the things which they kept here with grievous apprehensions? And hence it is rightly subjoined, Ver. 17. *What time they be dissipated they shall perish.*

[xxvii]

33. For all persons that are ruled by concern for the present life, are brought to nought by the loss of it, and then they are undone without, who have for long been undone within by disregarding the things of eternity. Concerning whom it is rightly added, *When they have become hot, they shall be dissolved from their place.* For every wicked man when he 'has become hot is dissolved from his place,' in that, in drawing near to the Judgment of the Interior Severity, when he has now begun to be heated in the knowledge of his punishment, he is severed from that gratification of his flesh whereunto he had long time clung. Hence it is that it is delivered by the Prophet against the reprobate, *And vexation alone shall only give understanding to the hearing* [Is. 28, 19]; in that verily they never understand the things of eternity, saving when they are already made to undergo punishment for those of time without remedy. Thus the mind is heated, and inflames itself with the fires of a fruitless repentance, it shrinks from being led to punishment, and holds fast to the present life in desire, but it is dissolved from its place, in that panting from the gratification of the flesh, its hardness is melted by suffering chastisement. But seeing that we have heard what all the wicked will undergo in the hour of their removal, let us hear further some of the ways in which their course is perplexed in the career of their freedom. It goes on, Ver. 18. *The paths of their steps are involved.* [V. *involutae*]

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34. All that is involved is folded back into itself. And there are some who as it were resolve, with all the purpose of their heart, to resist the vicious habits that mislead them, but when the crisis of the temptation comes full upon them, they do not hold out in their purposed resolution. For one sworn with the bad daring of pride, when he sees that the rewards promised to humility are great, lifts himself up against himself, and as it were puts away the swelling and turgid bigness of pride, and vows to prove himself humble under whatever insults; but when he has been suddenly assailed with the injuriousness of a single word, he straight-way returns to his accustomed haughtiness, and is brought into such a swelling temper of mind, that he does not at all remember that he had made it his object to win the blessed attainment of humility. Another, fired with avarice, is out of breath with eagerness in adding to his means. When he sees that all things speedily pass away, he arrests his mind, which is roaming abroad through covetous desires, he determines henceforth not to set his heart on any thing, and to hold what he has already gotten only under the reins of great control; but when objects that delight him are suddenly presented to his eyes, thereupon the heart beats high in the ambition to obtain them, the mind cannot contain itself, it looks about for an opportunity of getting them, and unmindful of the moderation which it had covenanted with itself, in longings for the attainment of them, disquiets itself with goading thoughts. Another is polluted by the

corruption of lust, and is now bound and chained with long usage, but he sees how excellent is the pureness of chastity, and finds it a foul disgrace to be mastered by the flesh. Therefore he resolves to restrain the dissoluteness of his pleasures, and seems to set himself with all his powers to make a stand against habit; but upon the image being either presented to his eyes, or recalled to his recollection, when he is moved by a sudden temptation, at once he becomes all adrift from his former state of preparation; and the same man, that had set up against it the shield of resolution, lies pierced with the javelin of self-indulgence, and he being unstrung is overcome by lust, like as if he had never made ready any weapons of resolve against it. Another is set on fire with the flames of anger, and is uncontrolled even to the extent of offering insults to his neighbours, but when no occasion of rage comes across his spirit, he considers how excellent the virtue of mildness is, how high the loftiness of patience, and sets himself in order to be patient even against insult: but when any slight matter arises to ruffle him, he is in a moment kindled from his heart's core to words and insults. So that not only the patience he had promised never returns to his remembrance, but that the mind neither knows its own self, nor those revilings which it utters. And when he has fully satisfied his rage, it is as if he returned after exercise to a state of tranquillity, and then he calls himself in again into the chambers of silence, when not patience, but the gratification of its hastiness has given a check to the tongue. Therefore even late, and after the insults have been offered, he scarcely restrains himself, seeing that fiery horses too are often checked from their career, not by the hands of the controller, but by the limits of the ground. Therefore it is well said of the reprobate, *The paths of their way are involved*. For in resolve they aim at right courses indeed, but are ever doubling back into their accustomed evil ones, and being, as it were, drawn out without themselves, they return back to themselves in a round, who indeed desire good ways, but never depart from evil ways. For they wish to be humble, yet without being despised; to be content with their own, yet without suffering need; to be chaste, yet without mortification of the body; to be patient, yet without undergoing insults; and when they seek to make virtuous attainments, yet eschew the toils thereof, what else is this than that at one and the same time they know nothing of the conflicts of war in the field, and desire to have the triumphs for war in the city.

35. Not but that this, that their ways are described as ‘involved,’ may be further understood in another sense also; for it often happens with some people that they stoutly gird themselves up to encounter some vices, but neglect to overcome others, and while they never lift themselves up against these, they are reestablishing against themselves even those which they had subdued. For one has now subdued the flesh from the dominion of lust, but he has not yet reined in the mind from avarice; and while he keeps himself in the world for the practising of avarice, and does not quit earthly courses, when the juncture of the occasion breaks out, he falls into lust also, which sin he seemed to have already subdued. Another has overcome the violence of avarice, but he has never subdued the power of lust, and when he is providing the costs of fulfilling his lustful passion, he submits the neck of the heart to the yoke of avarice too, which he had for long got the mastery of. Another has now laid low rebellious impatience, but has not yet subdued vainglory; and when for this he winds himself into the honours of the world, being pierced with the irritation of cases that chance, he is brought back a captive to his impatience, and whilst vainglory lifts up the soul to the vindication of itself, being overcome it submits to that which it had got the upper hand over. Another has subdued vainglory, but has not yet brought down impatience. And when in impatience he utters a thousand threats to those that offer opposition, being ashamed not to execute what he says, he is brought back under the dominion of vainglory, and being subdued, by means of something else, he becomes liable to that, which he was rejoicing that he had fully conquered.

Thus then the vices retain a hold over their runaway by mutual aid in turn, and they as it were receive him back, when already gone, under the rule of their dominion, and hand him over to each other by turns for vengeance. Thus 'the paths of the ways of the wicked are involved,' in that although by mastering one evil habit, they free the foot, yet, while another sways them, they entangle it in the very one, which they had conquered.

36. But sometimes while the paths of their ways are involved, at once not a single sin is overcome, and one sin is done by occasion of another. For oftentimes to theft there is joined the deceit of denial, and often the sin of deceit is increased by the guilt of perjury. Often a misdeed is committed with shameless assurance, and often (which becomes worse than any fault) there is even a glorying in the commission of the misdeed. For though self-exaltation is apt to arise on the score of virtue, yet sometimes the foolish mind exalts itself on the grounds of the wickedness it has done. And when transgression is joined to transgression, what else is this than that the steps of the froward are bound in involved ways and entangled chains? Hence it is rightly delivered by Isaiah against the froward soul, under the likeness of Judaea, *And it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a pasture for ostriches, and the demons shall meet with the onocentaurs, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow.* For what is denoted by the 'dragons,' saving malice, and what by the name of 'ostriches,' saving hypocrisy; as an ostrich has the appearance of flight, but has not the use of flying, for that hypocrisy too impresses upon all beholders an image of sanctity in connection with itself, but knows not to maintain the life of sanctity. Therefore in the perverse mind the dragon lies down and the ostrich feeds, in that both lurking malice is cunningly covered, and the guise of goodness is set before the beholder's eyes. But what is represented by the title of 'onocentaurs,' saving those that be both lecherous [d] and high-minded? for in the Greek tongue, 'onos' signifies 'an ass,' and by the designation of an 'ass' lust is denoted, according to the testimony of the Prophet, who says, *Whose flesh is as the flesh of asses* [Ezek. 23, 20]; but by the name of a 'bull' [e] the neck of pride is set forth, as it is spoken by the Psalmist in the voice of the Lord concerning the Jews in their pride, *Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.* [Ps. 22, 19] Thus they are 'onocentaurs,' who, being subject to vicious habits of lust, lift up their neck on account of the very same cause for which they ought to have been abased, who, in serving their fleshly gratifications, all sense of shame being put far from them, not only do not grieve that they have lost the way of uprightness, but further even exult in the working of confusion. Now 'the demons' meet with the 'onocentaurs,' in that the evil spirits readily serve to their wish all those whom they see rejoicing in the things which they ought to have bewailed; and it is fitly subjoined there, *And the hairy satyr* [Lat. *pilosus*] *shall cry to his fellow.* Now what others are represented by the title of 'the hairy one,' saving they which the Greeks call 'Pans,' and the Latins 'Incubi,' [f] whose figure begins in the human form, but terminates in the extremity of a beast? Therefore by the designation of 'the hairy one' is denoted the ruggedness of every sin, which even if in any case it begins as if in a pretext of reason, yet always goes on to irrational motions; and it is like a man ending in a beast, whilst the sin, beginning in a copy of reason, draws him out even to a result devoid of reason. Thus often the pleasure of eating is subservient to gluttony, and it pretends to be subservient to the requirement of nature, and while it draws out the belly into gluttony, sets up the limbs in lasciviousness. Now 'the satyr crieth to his fellow,' when one wickedness perpetrated leads to the perpetration of another, and as if by a kind of voice of thought, a sin already committed invites another sin which yet remains to be committed. For oftentimes, as we have said, gluttony says, 'If you do not sustain the body with plentiful support, you can hold on in no useful labours;' and when it has kindled the mind by the desires of the flesh,

immediately lust too in her turn forms words of her own prompting, saying, 'if God would not have human creatures united together in a bodily sort, He would never have made members in themselves suited to the purposes of so uniting;' and when it suggests these things as if in reason, it draws on the mind to unrestrained indulgence of the passions, and often when found out, immediately it looks out for the support of deceit and denial, and does not reckon itself guilty, if, by telling lies, its life may be protected. Thus 'the satyr crieth to his fellow,' when, under some semblance of reasoning, a sin following out of the occasion of a preceding sin ensnares the froward soul; and when harsh and rugged sins sink it low, it is as if 'the satyrs' ruled it, gathered together in it in concord; and thus it comes to pass that the ways of their paths are always involving themselves worse and worse, when sin taking occasion of sin enchains the lost soul.

37. But here it is necessary to know that sometimes the eye of the understanding is first dulled, and then afterwards the mind being taken captive roams at random amidst outward objects of desire, so that the blinded soul knows nothing where it is being led, and willingly surrenders itself to the allurements of the fleshly part; while at other times the desires of the flesh first burst forth, and after long custom in forbidden courses, they close the eye of the heart. For often the mind discerns light ways, but does not lift itself up fearlessly against bad practices, and it is overcome while offering resistance, when the very thing that it does in exercising discernment is outdone by the pleasurable emotion of its partner [*carnis suae*] the flesh. For that it very often happens that first the eye of contemplation is parted with, and afterwards the mind is subjected to the toils of the world through the desires of this our flesh, Samson is witness on being taken captive by the Philistines [*Allophylis*, as usual in V. and LXX.], who after he had lost his eyes was put to the mill, because the evil spirits, after that by the piercings of temptation they force out the eye of contemplation within, send it without into a round of labour. Again, that it often happens that both right practice is parted with externally, and yet the light of reason still retained in the heart, the Prophet Jeremiah instructs us, who, while he relates the captivity of Zedekiah, tells us the course of the captivity of the interior, in these words, *Then the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Reblatha before his eyes; also the king of Babylon slew all the nobles of Judah. Moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes.* [Jer. 39, 6. 7.] The king of Babylon is our old enemy, the master of the confusion of the interior, who first slaughters the sons before the eyes of the parent beholding it, in that he oftentimes so destroys good works, that the very man who is taken captive perceives with terror that he is parting with them. For the soul very often groans, but yet being subdued by the enjoyments of its fellow the flesh, the good things which it begot it loses while it loves them; it sees the ills, which it undergoes, and yet never lifts the arm of virtue against that king of Babylon. But whilst having its eyes open it is struck with the doing of iniquity, by being used to sin it is one day brought to this, that it is bereft of the very light of reason itself also. Whence the king of Babylon, after his sons had been first put to death, plucked out Zedekiah's eyes, in that the evil spirit, after that good deeds have been first put away, afterwards takes away the light of understanding likewise. Which rightly befalls Zedekiah in Reblatha, for 'Reblatha' is rendered 'these many.' For he at last has even the light of reason too closed, who is weighed down by bad habit in the multitude of his iniquities. But in whatever way sin may come forth, or from whatever occasion it may spring, yet the ways of the reprobate are always 'involved,' so that, being abandoned to depraved lusts, they either do not pursue good things at all, or pursuing them with a weak aim, they never stretch out the unimpeded steps of the mind in pursuit of them. For either they do not set out with right aims, or, breaking down in the very way, they never attain to them. Whence it generally happens that tiring of them they return to their own ways, prostrate themselves from their settled



purpose of mind in the enjoyments of the flesh, mind only the things that are transitory, and take no heed of those which are calculated to abide with them. Whence it is fitly subjoined, *They shall walk unto emptiness, and perish.*

38. For they all 'walk unto emptiness,' who bring with them nothing of the fruit of their labour. Thus one man spends himself in the attainment of honours, another is in a fever with multiplying his means, another pants after the obtaining of applause; but because everyone at his death leaves all such things here, he has lost his labour on emptiness, who has brought nothing with him before the presence of the Judge. Contrary whereto it is well delivered in the Law, *Thou shalt not appear before the face of the Lord empty.* [Ex. 23, 15] For he that has not provided for himself the wages of life earned by well doing, 'appears before the Lord empty.' [Deut. 16, 16] Hence it is said of the just by the Psalmist, *But they shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them.* [Ps. 126, 6] For they come to the inquisition of Judgment, 'bringing their sheaves with them,' who exhibit in themselves those good works, whereby they may obtain life. Hence the Psalmist says again concerning every Elect person, *Who hath not taken his soul in vain.* [Ps. 24, 4] For everyone 'takes his soul in vain,' who, taking account of present things only, pays no heed to those that shall follow him to last for ever. He 'takes his soul in vain,' who, being unconcerned for the life thereof, prefers to it the care of the flesh; but the righteous do not 'take their soul in vain,' in that whatsoever they do through the instrumentality of the body, with stedfast purpose they make all tell to its weal, that even though the deed pass away, still the cause of the deed may never pass, in that after life it procures the rewards of life. But the reprobate are indifferent to take account of these; for verily 'going walking into emptiness,' in pursuing life they flee from it, and in finding it they lose it. But we are more effectually withheld from imitating the wicked, if we calculate their losses by the end. Whence it is well added even with a charge, Ver. 19. *Consider the paths of Tema, the ways of Sheba, and wait a little while.* [V. thus]

39. For Tema is rendered 'the south wind,' and Sheba 'a net.' What is here set forth by 'the south wind,' which dissolves the limbs it blows on with its warm breath, saving dissolute laxity of life? and what by 'the net,' save the fettering of practice? For they that aim at the things that are eternal with a dissolute mind, of their own free will fetter themselves by the irregularity of their efforts, that they should never advance towards God with a free step, and while they entangle themselves with the loose practices of their behaviour, they as it were set their feet to be held in the meshes [*maculis*] of a net. For as we said a little way above, that there are persons who are drawn back into bad habits, already got the better of, by means of other open evil habits not yet overcome, so there are some that fall back into those which they had abandoned by means of others, which are cloked with the title of respectability, or the honourableness of praise. Thus there are very many, who now no longer aim at the things of another, and who with the love of tranquillity begun are parted from the jarrings of this world, thirst to be instructed in Holy Writ, long to give themselves to heavenly contemplations, yet they do not abandon with a perfect freedom of soul all concern about their domestic affairs, and often while they are employed in the service of the same in a lawful way, they are involved in the unlawful jarrings of this world at the same time; and while they are eager to protect their earthly interests with anxious care, they quit that repose of the heart, which they sought for; and whilst their substance, that is escaping from them, is guarded with continual caution, the word of divine knowledge which has been conceived in the heart is let loose; in that, according to the declaration of 'Truth,' the thorns choke the seed that has sprung up, when the importunate cares of earthly things put out the word of God from the recollection [Matt. 13, 22].

Therefore they are walking in a net with their steps all abroad, who, while they do not perfectly forsake the world, fetter themselves in their steppings, that they cannot step.

40. And there are very many, who not only do not covet what belongs to another, but even abandon all that they possessed in the world, who despise themselves, do not aim at any glory of the present life, sever themselves from this world's courses of action, and whatever prosperity may smile upon them, they well nigh tread it under their feet; yet being tied with the chain of earthly relationship, while they imprudently obey the dictates of the love of kindred, it often happens that by the instrumentality of relations they turn back to those habits which they had even together with self-contempt already subdued; and whereas they love their fleshly kin beyond what needs, being drawn back without, they are separated from the Parent of the heart. For we often see men, who, as far as concerns their own interest, henceforth no longer entertain any desires of the present life, who have quitted the world both in practice and in profession, yet for their inordinate affection for relations, burst into the courts of justice, busy themselves with the discord of earthly things, part with the freedom of interior repose, and restore in their hearts the interests of the world that were long undone. Whither then are those walking but into a net, whom perfection of life commenced had already set free from the present world, but whom the excessive love of earthly kin still binds?

41. For they that follow after the reward of the eternal espousals with close pursuits, and not with loose steps, as they disregard themselves for the love of God, so they lay aside every thing whereby they see they are hindered; and since it is necessary for God's sake that they should render service to all that they are able, for God's sake they refuse their private services even to their relations. Hence it is that when one said, *Suffer me first to go and bury my father*, he thereupon heard from the lips of 'Truth,' *Follow Me, and let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God*. [Luke 9, 59. 60.] Wherein it is to be observed, that whereas the chosen disciple is withheld from the burial of his father, for the sake of God it is not permitted a devout person to do for a dead father, from carnal affection, that which, for God's sake, he ought to do for strangers likewise. Hence again 'Truth' saith, *If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple*. [Luke 14, 26] In which same place, forasmuch, as after the hatred of our kindred we have the hatred of our own life brought in, it is plainly shewn that we are bidden to hold our relations in hatred in such sort as ourselves, that urging them [A.B.E. ourselves] away to the interests of eternity, and putting aside carnal favour towards them, when it is a hindrance in the way, we might learn by a proportioned skill of discrimination, at once to love them suitably, and to hate them savingly, so that in love hatred might be so taught to arise, that we might be able to love more really in hatred. Hence again it is said by Moses, *Who said unto his father and to his mother, I know you not, and to his brethren, I recognize you not, nor knew they their own children; these have observed Thy word and Thy covenant, and kept Thy judgments*. [Deut. 33, 9] For he longs to know God more familiarly who, from love of religion, desires to know no longer those whom he has known after the flesh. For the knowledge of God is lessened by a grievous curtailment, if it be shared with acquaintance with the flesh. Everyone then must be put without the pale of kindred and acquaintance, if he would be more genuinely united to the Parent of all, that those same ones, whom for the sake of God he makes light of for a good end, he may the more substantially love, in proportion as he renounces in them the destructible affection of carnal attachment.

42. We ought indeed, even in a temporal way, to benefit more than the rest those to whom we are more nearly united; for a flame too extends its burning to things put by it, but that particular thing, wherein it originates, it first sets burning. We ought to acknowledge the tie of earthly relationship, and yet to disown it, when it obstructs the progress of the mind, that the faithful soul, being inflamed in devotion to divine things, may at once not look with contempt on the things which are joined to it below, and that by regulating these aright in itself, it may mount above them in the love of things on high. Therefore with wise caution we must be on our guard, that no favouring of the flesh steal upon us, and divert the step of the heart from the right path, lest it hinder the efficacy of heavenly love, and sink the soaring mind; downwards under a superincumbent weight. For everyone ought so to sympathize in the wants of his kindred, that yet by such sympathy he never let the force of his purpose be impeded, so that affection indeed should fill the bowels of the heart, yet not divert it from its spiritual resolve. For it is not that holy men do not love their fleshly kin, to give them all things necessary, but they subdue this very fondness within themselves from love of spiritual things, in order so to temper it by the control of discretion, that they may be never led by it, yea in a small measure, and in the very least degree, to deviate from the straight path. And these are well conveyed to us by the representation of the kine, which going along towards the hilly lands under the Ark of the Lord, proceed at one and the same time with fondness and with hardened feeling; as it is written, *And the men did so: and took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home: and they laid the Ark of the Lord upon the cart.* [1 Sam. 6, 10] And soon after; *And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and they went along by one way, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.* [ver. 12] For observe, when the calves were shut up at home, the kine which are fastened to the waggon bearing the Ark of the Lord, moan and go their way, they give forth lowings from deep within, and yet never alter their steps from following the path. They feel love indeed shewn by compassion, but never bend their necks behind. Thus, thus must they needs go on their way, who being placed under the yoke of the sacred Law, henceforth carry the Lord's Ark in inward knowledge, so as never for this, that they take compassion on the necessities of relations, to deviate from the course of righteousness which they have entered upon. For 'Beth-shemesh' is rendered 'the house of the sun.' Thus to go to Beth-shemesh with the Ark of the Lord placed on them, is in company with heavenly knowledge to draw near to the seat of light eternal. But we are then really going on towards Beth-shemesh, when in going the path of righteousness, we never turn aside into the adjoining side-paths of error, not even for the sake of the affection we bear to our offspring; kindness to whom ought indeed to have a place in our mind, but never to turn it back, lest that mind, if it be not touched by a feeling of affection, be hard, or being too much touched, if it is turned aside, be slack.

43. It is well to look at blessed Job, in whom the yoke of God's fear had worn the neck of the heart, and see under what controlling influence of discretion he bears the Ark of the Lord's sentence. For when the calves are gone he lows, in that, when tidings of his children's death were brought 'him, 'he fell upon the ground with his head shaven,' yet he goes by the right way whilst lowing, in that his lips in groaning are opened to utter the praises of God, whereas, he exclaims without delay, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* [Job 1, 21] But minds that are not gifted with discretion know nothing of this rule of life, and in the degree that they seek the ways of the Lord negligently, they are turned back foolishly to the paths of the world.

44. Rightly then does the holy man after 'the paths of Theman' make mention of 'the ways of Saba.' For they whom the south wind of a mischievous warmth has relaxed, are verily held bound in the net of entanglement. But in describing the deeds of the wicked, he rightly admonishes them to 'consider' these things; for we delight in froward practices in doing them, but when seen in others we pass sentence upon them, and the actions, which in our own case we think to be little deserving of sentence, we learn to be as base as they really are by the conduct of others; and so it comes to pass that the mind is brought back to itself, and takes shame to do the thing that it censures. For it is as though an ugly face in a mirror caused disgust, as often as the mind sees in a similar life, what to feel abhorrence for in itself. Therefore he says, *Consider the paths of Teman, the ways of Sheba, and wait a little*. As if it were in plain words; 'Look to the harms of another's luke-warmness, and then you will the more surely take hope in relation to eternal things, if with the eye of the heart rightly directed you look at that which may disgust you in others.'

45. And it is well said, wait a little; for it often happens, that whereas the short period of the present life is loved as if it were to last for long, the soul is dashed from its eternal hope, and being beguiled with present objects, is thrown back by the blackness of self-despair. And when it imagines that the period is long which remains for it to live, at once upon quitting life it meets that eternity, which it may not avoid. Hence it is that it was spoken by one that was wise, *Woe unto you that have lost patience*. For truly they 'lose patience,' who, whilst they reckon to tarry long amongst visible things, part with the hope of the invisible. And while the mind is rivetted to present objects, life is ended, and they are suddenly brought to unlooked-for punishments, which, being deceived by their presumptuous expectations, they flattered themselves they would either never meet with, or not till late. Hence 'Truth' says, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour*. [Matt. 25, 13] Hence again it is written, *The Day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night* [1 Thess. 5, 2]; for because it is never seen drawing near to seize upon the soul, it is likened to a thief in the night. Therefore it ought to be the more apprehended as always coming, in proportion as it cannot be foreknown by us when it is about to come. Whence holy men too, in that they have their eyes incessantly fixed on the shortness of life, do as it were pass through life daily undergoing death; and prepare themselves on a more solid basis for the things that shall last, in proportion as they are ever reflecting by the end that transitory things are nought. For hence the Psalmist, seeing that the life of the sinner fleeth at a quick pace, exclaims, *For yet a little while and the sinner shall not be*. [Ps. 37, 10] Hence again he saith, *As for man, his days are as grass*. [Ps. 103, 15] Hence Isaiah saith, *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field*. [Is. 40, 6] Hence James rebukes the spirit of the presumptuous, saying, *For what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time*. [James 4, 14] Therefore it is rightly said, *wait a little*, in that both that is unmeasurable which follows after without limit, and all but little that is closed by an end. For that ought not to seem long to us, which by the course of its allotted period is tending not to be; which while it is carried on by moments, its very own moments, whilst they delay, are themselves urging forwards; and from the very same cause, from which it is seen to be in our possession, it results that it ceases to be in our possession. But blessed Job, after he had brought in the shortness of the present life in terms of contempt, therefore in the voice of all the Elect rises up justly against the wicked, subjoining,  
Ver. 20. *They are confounded, because I have hoped*.

46. When the wicked inflict evils upon the good, if they see them to be shaken from the interior hope, they are overjoyed at their deceiving taking effect, for they account the spread of their error

to be the greatest gain, in that they rejoice have fellows in perdition, but whilst the good man's hope is rooted within, and never bent to the ground by outward evils, confusion seizes the soul of the wicked, in that whilst they are unable to get at the innermost parts of the distressed, they are ashamed to prove themselves cruel for no end. Therefore let the holy man say in his own voice, let him say in the endurance of the Church universal in affliction and groaning, Who, amidst the contrarieties of the wicked, without any default of mind, longs for the joy of the heavenly recompense, and by dying holds on to life; *They are confounded, because I have hoped.* As though it were in plain words, 'because the wicked by hard persecutions fail to soften the force of my rigid mind, surely being covered with shame they lose the labours of their cruel ways.' And hence at once he looks on the blessings of the Retribution to come as henceforth here, and marks what an arraignment awaits the wicked at the Judgment, adding, *They came even unto me, and were ashamed.*

[xxxii] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. For lost sinners 'come even to Holy Church' on the Day of Judgment, in that they are then brought even to the beholding of her glory, that for the greater punishment of their guilt they may see in their rejection what they have lost. Then shame covers the wicked, when conscience bearing witness convicts them in the sight of the Judge. Then the Judge is beheld without, and the accuser is felt within. Then every sin is called up before the eyes, and the soul, over and above the burnings of hell, is worse tortured by its own fire. Concerning these it is rightly said by the Prophet, *Lord, let Thy hand be exalted, that they see not [g], let them see and be confounded.* [Is. 26, 11] For now their merits darken the understanding of lost sinners, but then the knowledge of their guilt enlightens it, so that both now they in no wise see what is to be followed, and then they perceive it, after they have lost it. For now they do not care to understand the things of eternity, or they refuse to make them their object, when understood; but then assuredly, both understanding and longing after them, they have them disclosed to their sight, when they can no longer obtain them thus longed for.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

48. Which same words of blessed Job, moreover, are in an especial manner suited to his friends, who set themselves to shake the mind of the holy man by bitter upbraidings. For he says, *They were confounded because I have hoped.* As if it were in plain words, 'Whilst they fail by foolish revilings to turn me to despair, they are themselves confounded by the madness of their foolhardiness.' *They came even up unto me, and were ashamed.* As though he expressed it, 'Seeing the sores of my body, but ignorant of the constancy of my mind, whilst they took upon them to reproach me for unrighteousness, they did not yet 'come up unto me,' but striking with cruel reproaches, whereas they find that my soul stands firm amidst adversity, 'coming to me,' as it were, 'they are ashamed.' For herein they 'come to me,' in that they know me in the interior of my heart, and there they are 'covered with shame,' where outward loss moves me not, standing with firm mien.' Now there are some, who do not know how to fear God, saving when they are either affrighted by adversity experienced in their own person, or known in others; whom prosperity uplifts from presumptuousness, and crosses dismay from weakness. Of the number of which same, blessed Job charged his friends with being, in that he immediately adds; saying, Ver.21. *For now ye are come, to see my stroke, and are afraid.*

[xxxiii]

49. As though he said in plain words, 'I feared God then, when, buoyed up with prosperity, I felt no hurts of the scourge. But ye, who fear not God from love, dread Him from the stroke of the rod alone. It goes on;

Ver. 22, 23. *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give me of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?*

[xxxiv] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

50. If these words are referred to the person of Holy Church, as we have said that blessed Job's friends bear the likeness of heretics, he rightly declares that he does not 'want their substance.' For the 'substance' of heretics is not unsuitably taken for carnal wisdom, by which whilst they are wickedly sustained, they as it were shew themselves rich in words, which Holy Church does not go after, in proportion as she goes beyond it by spiritual understanding. But oftentimes, while heretics maintain wrong things concerning the Faith, they utter various refined sayings against our old Enemy concerning the temptations of the flesh. For sometimes they as it were shew in themselves healthy limbs of practice, in the same degree that as wounded in faith they are held in the head by the fangs of the envenomed serpent. But Holy Church is not minded to hear refined sayings concerning temptation from those, who, whilst they deliver some truths that relate to practice, are leading men onward into the falsities of misbelief. Whence it is rightly said in this place, *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give me aught of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?* For he calls the strength of Satan, 'the enemy's hand,' and the powers of evil spirits, 'the hand of the mighty.' Whom he in this respect calls mighty, in that whereas they were created void of fleshly infirmity, no impotency being mixed therewith obstructs their wicked efforts. But with regard to this which is subjoined,

Ver. 24. *Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.*

[xxxv]

51. It seems doubtful under the scale of what pointing this should hang, whether it be joined to what he had brought in, *Did I say*, or whether the sentence is spoken disjoined from the preceding, so that it is said thereby in reproach, *Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.* Which same however agrees with either pointing, for by neither does he depart from the path of sound meaning. But since we have delivered these things in course allegorically, it remains for us to examine the words of the history in a moral sense.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

52. Blessed Job had undergone the loss of his property; being given over to the strokes of evil spirits, he was suffering the smarts of their wounds; yet in loving the wise foolishness of God, he had trodden under foot the foolish wisdom of the world with inward scorn. Therefore in opposition to the rich of this world he is called poor, in opposition to the powerful he is called oppressed, in opposition to the wise he is called a fool. He answers the three, that as poor he seeks not their substance, nor as oppressed their aid against the strong, nor as a fool does he seek the lore of

earthly wisdom. For in that the holy man is carried off above himself in spirit, both being poor he is not straitened by want, and being oppressed he suffers nothing, and being of free will foolish, he does not gaze with admiration at carnal wisdom. Hence it is that another poor and oppressed man saith, *We are perplexed, yet not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken we are cast down, yet perish not.* [2 Cor. 4, 8. 9.] Hence it is that teaching the wisdom of a holy foolishness, he says, *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.* [1 Cor. 1, 27] And, *if any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* [3, 18] Hence making manifest both the gloriousness of oppression, and the riches of chosen poverty, he says, *As dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.* [2 Cor. 6, 9]

53. It is well on this point to lift up the eyes of the mind, and to see in the Elect of God, who are suffering oppression without, what a fortress of strength they are masters of within. For all that is high and exalted without, in their secret view is grovelling, from the contempt they feel. For transported above themselves in the interior, they fix their mind on high, and all that they meet with in this life, they look upon as passing away far below unconnected with themselves, and so to speak, while they strive by the Spirit to become quit of the flesh, almost the very things they are undergoing, they are blind to. For in their eyes whatsoever is exalted in time, is not high. For as though set upon the summit of a high mountain, they look down upon the flats and levels of the present life, and rising above themselves in spiritual loftiness, they see made subject to themselves, within, all that swells highest without in carnal glorying; and hence they spare no Powers that are contrary to truth, but those whom they see to be uplifted by pride, they abase by the authority of the Spirit. For it is hence that Moses, coming from the wilderness, encounters the king of Egypt with authority, saying, *Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before Me? let My people go, that they may serve Me:* [Ex. 10, 3] and when Pharaoh, being driven hard by the plagues, said, *Go ye, sacrifice to your God in this land* [Ex. 8, 25]; he thereupon answered with increased authority, *It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians to the Lord our God.* It is hence that Nathan encounters the king when guilty; to whom first offering a similar instance of the transgression committed, and holding him convicted by the voice of his own sentence, he thereupon added, saying, *Thou art the man, who hast done this thing.* [2 Sam. 12, 7] It is hence that the Man of God, being sent to Samaria to destroy idolatry, when king Jeroboam threw frankincense upon the altar, not fearing the king, not held back by the dread of death, with undaunted spirit, put forth the authority of a free voice against the Altar, saying, *O Altar, Altar, thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places.* [1 Kings 13, 2] It is hence that when proud Ahab, being bowed down to the service of idols, ventured to upbraid Elijah, saying, *Art thou the man that troubleth Israel?* [1 Kings 18, 17] Elijah forthwith struck the foolishness of the king in his pride with the authoritativeness of a free rebuke, saying, *I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy fathers house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and have followed Baalim.* [ver. 18] It is hence that Elisha, following his master's true loftiness, confounded for the guilt of unbelief Joram the son of Ahab, when he came to him with the king Jehoshaphat, saying, *What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father and to the prophets of thy mother.* [2 Kings 3, 13] And, *As the Lord of hosts liveth, before Whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.* [ver. 14] Hence it is that the same man held Naaman fixed before

the door of his house, when he came to him with horses and chariots, and did not meet him, set up as he was with abundance of talents and raiment; that he did not open the door of his house to him, but charged him by a messenger that he should wash seven times in the Jordan. Hence too this same Naaman was going away enraged, saying, *Behold, I thought he will surely come out to me.* It is hence that Peter, when the priests and elders, raging furiously even in scourging, forbade him to speak in the Name of Jesus, straightway made answer with great authority, saying, *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* [Acts 4, 19. 20.] It is hence that when Paul saw the chief Priest sitting in judgment [al. making resistance] against the Truth, and when his officer had struck him a blow on the cheek, he uttered not a curse, as being moved to wrath, but filled with the Spirit, prophesied with a free voice, saying, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?* [Acts 23, 3] It is hence that Stephen not even when doomed to die dreaded to put forth authoritativeness of voice in utterance against the power of his persecutors, saying, *Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do alway resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.* [Acts 7, 51]

54. But that holy men burst into such high words from passionate affection for Truth, and not from the sin of pride, they themselves plainly point out, in that by other doings and other sayings they make it appear with what great humility they are adorned, and with what great charity they are inflamed toward those whom they rebuke. For pride begets hatred, humility only love. Thus the words which love makes bitter, flow, surely, from the fountain head of humility. Accordingly, how could Stephen utter reproach in pride, who with bended knee prayed for those whom he reproached, when they went on to worse and stoned him, saying, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* [ver. 60] How did Paul in pride utter words of bitterness against the Priest and Chief of his nation, who in humility lowers himself to the service of his disciples, saying, *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus our Lord, and ourselves your servants for Christ's sake?* [2 Cor. 4, 5] How did Peter resist the rulers from Pride? when in compassion to their erring course, he as it were makes excuse for their guilt, saying, *I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.* [Acts 3, 17. 18.] And he draws them in pity to life, saying, *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* [ver. 19] How was it from pride that Elisha refused to come to the sight of Naaman, who not only let himself be seen, but even be taken hold of by a woman? concerning whom it is written, *And when she came to the Man of God to the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the Man if God said, Let her alone, for her soul is in bitterness.* [2 Kings 4, 27] How was it in pride that Elijah uttered words of reproach against the proud king, seeing that he ran humbly before his chariot, as it is written, *And he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab?* How was it of Pride that the man of God disregarded the presence of Jeroboam, who out of pity straightway restored his withered right hand to its former soundness? As it is written, *And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand dried up.* [1 Kings 13, 4] And shortly after, *And the man of God besought the face of the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.* [ver. 6] For as pride cannot give birth to miraculous powers, we are shewn, in what a Spirit of humility the voice of upbraiding issues, in that signs go along with it. How did Nathan swell high in words of rebuke against king David, who when there was sin lacking that deserved rebuke, fell on his face upon the ground in his sight? as it is written, *And they told the*



king, saying, *Behold, Nathan the Prophet. And when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground.* [1 Kings 1, 23] How could Moses, when he freely withstood the Egyptian king, indulge contempt for him, who while he held familiar communing with God worshipped with self-abasement Jethro his relation who was following him? to whose advice he paid such ready obedience, that after the secret communications of God, he accounted that great gain, which came to him without from the lips of man.

55. From one set of deeds of the Saints, then, we learn what account we are to take of another. For holy men are neither free spoken out of pride, nor submissive out of fear. But whenever uprightness uplifts them to freedom of speech, thought of their own weakness preserves them in self-abasement. For though, in chiding them, they smite as from above the misdoings of offenders, yet judging themselves the more exactly in their own eyes, they in a manner take their place amongst the refuse, and as they pursue after wickedness in others, so much the fiercer do they return to keep themselves in check; and, on the other hand, as they never spare themselves in doing better, they are the more watchful in rebuking the deeds of other men. For what, that is derived from the powers of man without, shall strike them with wonder, who alike look down upon themselves, even at the moment that now they have well nigh gotten hold of the summit of interior height. And so for this reason it is right for them to sit in judgment on the loftiness of earthly exaltation without, for that no load of swelling humour weighs down the eye within. Hence when blessed Job disregards earthly wisdom, and powers, and substance, in those friends that were full of harsh words, saying, *Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give me of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? Teach me, and I will hold my tongue, and cause me to understand wherein I have erred;* what opinion he entertains about himself, he makes appear a little below, saying, *Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless.* Thus it is clearer than the light what a weak nature he sees himself to be possessed of, in that he calls himself *fatherless*. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *Wherefore have ye detracted from the words of truth; when there is none of you that is able to convict them?*

56. He must himself be pure from evil, who makes it his concern to correct the evil practices of other men, so as not to be taken up with earthly imaginations, not to give way to grovelling desires, in order that he may the more clearly see what things others ought to avoid, in proportion as he himself the more thoroughly eschews them by knowledge and by practice. For the eye which dust weighs upon, never clearly sees the spot upon the limb, and the hands that hold mud can never cleanse away the overcast dirt. And this according to the older of the old Translation [h], the voice of God rightly conveyed in sense to David, busied about external wars, when It says, *Thou shalt not build a temple, for thou art a man of blood.* [1 Chron. 22, 8; 28, 3.] Now he builds God's Temple, who is devoted to correcting and forming the minds of his neighbours. For we are God's Temple, who are framed to life by His indwelling, as Paul bears witness, saying, *For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.* [1 Cor. 3, 17] But a man of blood is forbidden to build a temple to God, in that he who is still devoted to carnal practices, must needs blush to instruct the minds of his neighbours spiritually. Therefore it is well said, *Wherefore have ye detracted from the words of truth, when there is none of you that is able to convict them?* As if it were in plain words; 'With what rashness do ye blame all ye hear, who knowing nothing of the causes of my stroke, still utter words that deserve blame.' It goes on,

Ver. 26. *Ye only set in order speeches to upbraid, and ye speak words against the wind.*

57. There are two sorts of speech, which are very troublesome and mischievous to mankind, the one which aims to commend even froward things, the other which studies to be always carping even at right ones. The one is carried downward with the stream, the other sets itself to close the very channels and streams of truth. Fear keeps down the one, pride sets up the other. The one aims to catch favour by applause; anger, in order that it may be manifested in contention, drives forward the other. The one lies grovelling at command; the other is always swelling high in opposition. Accordingly, blessed Job convicts his friends of being of this kind, when he says, *Ye do but set in order speeches to upbraid*. But he proceeded to make known whence it is that men come even to the effrontery of unjust upbraiding, when he added, *And ye speak words to the wind*. For to 'speak, words to the wind' is to talk idly. For often when the tongue is not withheld from idle words, a loose is even given to the rashness of foolish reviling. For it is by certain steps of its descent, that the slothful soul is driven into the pitfall. Thus while we neglect to guard against idle words, we are brought to mischievous ones, so that it first gives satisfaction to speak of the concerns of others, and afterwards the tongue by detraction carps at the life of those of whom it speaks, and sometimes even breaks out into open revilings. Hence the incitements are sown of angry passions, jars arise, the fire-brands of animosity are kindled, peace is altogether extinguished in men's hearts. Hence it is well said by Solomon, *He that letteth out water is a beginning of brawls*. [Prov. 17, 14] For to let out water is to let the tongue loose in a flood of words, contrary to which he at the same time declares in a favourable sense, saying, *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters*. [Prov. 18, 4] He then that letteth out water is a beginning of brawls, for he who neglects to refrain his tongue, dissipates concord. Hence it is written contrariwise, *He that silenceth a fool, softeneth wrath*. [Prov. 26, 10. Vulg.]

58. But that everyone that is given to much talking cannot maintain the straight path of righteousness, the Prophet testifies, in that he saith, *For an evil speaker shall not be led right upon the earth*. [Ps. 140, 11] Hence again Solomon saith, *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin*. [Prov. 10, 19] Hence Isaiah saith, *And the cultivation of righteousness, silence*; so pointing out that the righteousness of the interior is desolated, when we do not withhold from immoderate talking. Hence James saith, *If any man among you think himself to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain*. [James 1, 26] Hence he says again, *Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak*. [1, 19] Hence he adds again, *The tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison*. [3, 8] Hence 'Truth' warns us by his own lips, saying, *Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment*. [Matt. 12, 36] For an idle word is such as lacks either cause of just occasion, or purpose of kind serviceableness. If then an account is demanded for idle speech, it is very deeply to be considered what punishment followeth after that much talking, wherein we sin even by words of pride.

59. Furthermore, be it known that they are lost to the whole estate of righteousness altogether, who let themselves go in mischievous words. For the mind of man, like water, both when closed round is collected on high, in that it seeks anew the source whence it descended, and when let loose it comes to nought, in that it dissipates itself to no purpose down below. For the mind is as it were drawn out of itself in so many streams, as it lets itself out in superfluous words from the strict control of silence. And hence it has no power to turn back within to the knowledge of itself, in that being dissipated without in much talking, it loses the strength of interior reflection. Therefore it lays itself bare in every part to the inflictions of the plotting enemy, in that it does not hedge itself

about with any defence for its safe-keeping. Whence it is written, *He that hath no rule over his own spirit in his talk is like a city that is broken down and without walls*. For because it is without the wall of silence, the city of the mind lies open to the darts of the enemy, and when it casts itself forth of itself in words, it exhibits itself exposed to the adversary, and he gets the mastery of it without trouble, in proportion as the soul that he has to overcome combats against its own self by much talking.

60. But herein be it known, that when we are withheld from speaking by excess of fear, we are sometimes confined within the strait bounds of silence beyond what need be. And whilst we avoid the mischiefs of the tongue without caution, we are secretly involved in worse. For oftentimes while we are overmuch restrained in speech, we are subject to a mischievous degree of much talking in the heart, that the thoughts should be hot within, the more that the violent keeping of indiscreet silence confines them, and most often they let themselves take a wider range in proportion as they reckon themselves to be more secure, in that they are not seen by censors without. Whence the mind is sometimes lifted up in pride, and, as it were, regards as weak those persons whom it hears engaged in talk. And when it keeps the mouth of the body shut, it never knows to what degree it is laying itself open to evil by entertaining pride. For it keeps the tongue down, but it sets the heart up. And whereas it never takes heed to itself from inattention, it censures all the world more freely to itself, in proportion as it does it at the same time the more secretly. And most frequently oversilent people, when they meet with any wrongs, are driven into bitterer grief, the more they do not give utterance to all that they are undergoing. For if the tongue declared with calmness the annoyance inflicted, grief would flow away from our consciousness. For closed wounds give more acute pain, in that when the corruption that ferments within is discharged, the pain is laid open favourably for our recovery. And generally whilst over-silent men fix their eyes on the faults of any, and yet hold in the tongue in silence, they are, as it were, withdrawing the use of the salve, after the wounds have been seen. For they the more effectually become the cause of death, that they refused by speaking to cast out the poison which they might. And hence if immoderate silence were not a thing to blame, the Prophet would never say, *Woe is me, for I have held my peace*.

61. What then have we here to do, saving that the tongue must be heedfully kept in under the poise of a mighty control, but not that it must be indissolubly chained, lest either being let loose it run out into mischief, or being bound up, it be also slack to render service. For hence it is said by one, *A wise man will hold his tongue till he sees opportunity*, that when he accounts it convenient, strictness of silence being laid aside, by speaking such things as are meet, he may devote himself to answer the end of usefulness. Hence Solomon saith, *A time to keep silence, and a time to speak*. For the seasons for changes are to be weighed with discretion, lest either when the tongue ought to be restrained, it let itself out to no purpose in words, or when it might speak to good purpose, it keep itself in from sloth. Which the Psalmist considering comprehended in a brief petition, saying, *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; and a door of guard on my lips*. [Ps. 141, 3] For a door is opened and shut. He then who prayed not that a bar should be set to his lips, but a door, openly shewed that the tongue ought both to be held in by self-control, and let loose on grounds of necessity, that both the voice should open the discreet mouth at the fitting time, and on the other hand silence close it at the fitting time. And because neither the friends of Job, nor all heretics, whose likeness they bear, know how to observe this, they are said to ‘utter words to the wind.’ In

that the sayings which the weightiness of discretion does not establish firmly, the breath of levity carries along.

## BOOK VIII.

He explains part of the sixth Chapter, from verse 27, and the whole of the seventh and eighth Chapters. In the course of this exposition, from verse 11, to the end of the eighth Chapter, he speaks at length on the sin of hypocrisy.

### [LITERAL AND ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. WE have already in the preceding book considered the point, that blessed Job is making known to us the force of his humility, when he says,

Ver. 27. *Yea ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye strive to overthrow your friend.*

For he shews what great weakness he considers himself to be of, who calls himself ‘fatherless.’ But because charity even when wounded cannot quit love, he at once complains that they would have him overthrown, and yet witnesses that he is their friend. Whose words, as we have often said already, in such wise specially apply to himself, that yet by them, in the Spirit of Prophecy, we have at the same time set forth the sentiment [‘sententia.’ see l. xxiii. § 31] of the faithful People, in the voice of the Church Universal. Which same People, while encountering the opposition of heretics, both regards itself as weak in humility, and yet never abandons the greatness of keeping love entire, For the People of Holy Church, as it is the child of a dead Father, is not unfitly called ‘fatherless,’ in that henceforth indeed through faith it follows His life of Resurrection, but does not as yet see Him by His appearing. Now heretics ‘overwhelm the fatherless,’ when they bear hard upon the lowliness of the faithful People, by clamorous and false charges, and yet he is a ‘friend,’ whom they set themselves to ‘overthrow,’ in that God's faithful People never cease with loving affection to call to the Truth, the very persons whom they suffer as persecutors. But herein it is necessary to be known, that holy men neither dread from weakness to be exposed to falsehoods, nor in being harmed ever hold their peace as to the Truth. Whence it is added;

Ver. 28. *But fulfil what ye have begun; give ear, and see if I lie.*

[ii]

2. For because he does not fear to endure adversities, let him say, *But fulfil what ye have begun;* and because he does not withhold the announcements of the Truth from his very persecutors themselves, let him add, *Give ear, and see if I lie.* As if he said in plain words, ‘Neither do I tremble at the mischiefs done me before, nor do I withhold the succours of correction from ungrateful hearers, in that I both have exercise through being driven to straits by misfortune, and gain increase by being kindly devoted to my very persecutors themselves.’ For the mind of the Saints, in this war of temptations, being at once defended by the shield of patience, and begirt with the swords of love, obtains resolution for the enduring of bad treatment, and puts forth kindness in the recompensing good, so as both to receive stoutly the weapons of enmities, and return forcibly the darts of love. For he does not in any way go armed to the wars, who either taking a shield, uses no swords, or using swords, is not protected by a shield. And hence the soldier of God,

encountered by a war of adversity, ought both to hold before him the shield of patience, lest he perish, and being prompt to preach he should launch the darts of love, that he may win the victory. The sum of which armour Paul briefly informs us of, saying, *Charity suffereth long, and is kind.* [1 Cor. 13, 4] But when one of either is wanting, charity is not, i.e. if bearing with the wicked without kindness, he has no love; or again if shewing himself without patience, he neglect to bear with the wicked whom he loves. Therefore that true charity may be retained by us, it must needs be that both patience support kindness, and again kindness support patience, that building up a large edifice as it were in our breast, both patience may give strength to the tower of kindness, and kindness give grace to the firmly founded edifices of patience. Therefore let blessed Job, as being prompt to patience, say, *But fulfil what ye have begun*; and as endued with kindness let him add, *Give ear, and see I lie*,

[iii]

3. But because Holy Church, being well trained in the school of humility, does not enjoin as by authority the right instructions which she delivers to those that be gone astray, but wins acceptance for them by reason, it is well said in this place, *See if I lie*. As though it were in plain words, 'In all that I declare, give no credence to me upon grounds of authority, but consider on grounds of reason whether they be true. And if at any time she says what cannot be comprehended by reason, she reasonably advises that human reasoning should not be looked for in hidden truths.' But it often happens that heretics, when they meet with opportunity for reasoning, give themselves a loose in the brawlings of strife. Hence it is immediately subjoined with propriety, Ver. 29. *Answer, I pray you, without strife*.

4. For neither do heretics try to attain truth by their investigations, but to appear to be the winners; and whereas they desire to shew for wise without, they are bound within in their foolishness with the chains of their own pride; hence it comes to pass that they look out for contests of rivalry, and concerning God, Who is our Peace, they know not how to speak with peaceableness, and by the article of peace they become contrivers of strife. To whom it is well spoken by Paul, *But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.* [1 Cor. 11, 16] Now it is rightly added, *And speaking that which is just, judge ye*.

[iv]

5. For everyone that speaks, whilst he waits for his hearer's sentence upon his words, is as it were subjected to the judgment of him, by whom he is heard. Accordingly he that fears to be condemned in respect of his words, ought first to put to the test that which he delivers; that there may be a kind of impartial and sober umpire sitting between the heart and the tongue, weighing with exactness whether the heart presents right words, which the tongue taking up with advantage may bring forward for the hearer's judgment. Therefore let blessed Job, while managing his own case against his friends, yet telling our proceedings against heretics, blame precipitancy in speakers, and gather words to suit their mind, saying, *And speaking that which is just, judge ye*. As if it were in plain words, 'If in this, that ye come out to us in the issuing forth of the tongue, ye would not be found fault with, retain within the balances of justice, that what is delivered without, may find acceptance by the weightiness of truth, the more in proportion as the scales of discretion weigh it well within,

and because those put forth a right judgment about the sayings of others, who are used first to sit in judgment on their own; after that he had said, speaking that which is just, judge ye, he immediately adds with propriety,

Ver. 30. *And ye shall not find iniquity in my tongue, nor shall foolishness sound through my jaws.*

[v]

6. As if it were expressed in plain words, 'The more exactly ye weigh your own words, the more truly ye estimate those of others, and when what ye say begins to be right, ye will recognise what ye hear to be just. For my tongue never sounds of folly to you, unless it be what comes from your own inward thoughts.' Thus Holy Church makes it her aim first to prove the allegations of her enemies to be false, and then to make known the announcements of the truth, for so long as they reckon themselves to hold right notions, they obstinately assail the right things that they hear. Therefore it is necessary beforehand that heretics should feel their error, lest they gainsay the truth when it is heard. For neither if the tiller of the soil neglect to root up the briars of the field by the cutting of the share, will the earth bring to a crop the seed received into her bosom; and 'when the physician does not get rid of the corruption, by opening the wound, healthy flesh never forms in the corrupt spot. First then in destroying what is bad, let him say, *And speaking that which is just, judge ye*; but afterwards in teaching what is right, let him add, *And ye shalt not find iniquity in my tongue, nor shall foolishness sound through my jaws*. Now it is the way with heretics to deliver some things openly, to hold others in secret, for by the 'tongue,' plain speaking is denoted, but by the 'jaws [*fauces*],' the secret harbouring.

7. Neither in the tongue then of Holy Church does 'iniquity resound,' nor 'foolishness in her jaws,' for the things that she proclaims in open utterance, at the same time she preserves in inward faith; nor does she teach one thing in public and keep another to herself in secret; but she both delivers what she thinks by giving utterance to it, and keeps what she delivers by living accordingly; and whatever is let out belonging to the feast of heavenly wisdom by the tongue of preaching, she tastes this same by the jaws of silent expectation. And let blessed Job, both as an individual member of the whole Church, in telling his own case, and as shewing what is the heart of all of the Elect, make known all that he feels, that the testimony of his speech may manifest the uprightness of his mind. It proceeds,

Chap. vii. 1. *The life of man upon earth is a warfare.*

[vi] [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

8. In this passage in the old Translation the life of man is not called 'a warfare' at all, but 'a trial [a],' yet if the meaning of either word be regarded, the sound that meets the ear outwardly is different, yet they make one and the same concordant meaning. For what is represented by the title of 'a trial,' saving our contest with evil spirits? and what by the designation of 'a warfare,' but an exercising against our enemies? So that trial is itself 'a warfare,' in that whilst a man is watching against the plots of evil spirits, surely he is spending himself under arms for the fight. But we are to observe that this life of man is not said to *have* 'trial,' but it is described as itself *being* 'trial.' For having of free will declined from the upright form wherein it was created, and being made subject to the rottenness of its state of corruption, whilst out of self it begets mischiefs against self, it henceforth becomes the very thing it undergoes. For whereas by letting itself down, it

relinquished the erect seat of the interior, what did it find in itself save the shifting of change? And though it now erect itself thence to seek things on high, it directly drops down to its own level from the impulse of a slippery changeableness. It desires to stand up in contemplation, but has not the strength. It strives to fix firmly the step of thought, but is enfeebled by the slippings of its frailty. Which same burthens of a changeful lot, forasmuch as it sought them out of free will, so it bears them against the will. Man might have possessed his fleshly part in quiet, if created aright as he was by his Maker, he had been willing to be possessed by Him; but, whereas he aimed to lift himself up against his Maker, he straightway experienced in himself insolency from the flesh. Now forasmuch as together with guilt [b] punishment is also inherited along with it by birth, we are born with the engrafted evil of a frail nature; and we as it were carry an enemy along with us, whom we get the better of with toilsome endeavours. And so the life of man is itself 'a trial,' in that it has that springing up to it from itself, whereby it is liable to be destroyed. And though it is ever cutting down by the principle of virtue all that it begets in the principle of frailty, yet it is ever begetting in frailty somewhat to cut down by virtue.

9. And so the life of man is in such a way 'a trial,' that though we are henceforth restrained from the commission of sin, yet in our very good works themselves we are clouded now by the recollection of evil deeds, now by the mists of self-deception [*seductionis*], now by the suspension of our own purpose of mind. Thus one man henceforth restrains the flesh from excess, and yet he is still subject to images thereof, in that the things, which he has done willingly, come to mind against his will, and what he accounted pleasure he bears as punishment. But because he fears to be drawn again into the conquered evil habit, he restrains his greedy appetite by the forcible means of a singular abstinence, and by his abstinence his face is rendered pale; then when paleness is observed in his countenance, his life is commended as deserving of the reverential regard of his fellow-creatures, and presently with the words of commendation vainglory enters into the mind of this man of abstinence, which while the mind having received a shock cannot get the better of, it seeks to blot from the face the paleness whereby that entered in, and so it comes to pass that being tied fast with the knots of infirmity, either in avoiding the paleness of abstinence, it again dreads to be brought under the dominion of excess, by food, or subduing by abstinence the impulse to excess, it apprehends its paleness serving to vainglory. Another man getting the better of the downfall of pride, henceforth lays hold of the state of humility with all the desire of his heart, and when he sees people that are full of pride breaking out so far as to the oppressing of the innocent, being inflamed by the incitement of zeal, he is forced to lay aside in some degree the thing he determined on, he displays the force of the side of right, and withstands the evil-minded not with mildness, but with authority. Whence it is very commonly the case, that either by pursuit of humility he is led to abandon zeal for the right, or again by zeal for right he interrupts the pursuit of humility, which he maintained. And when the authoritativeness of zeal and lowliness of purpose scarcely admit of being preserved together, the man is made a stranger to himself in his embarrassment. So that he is in a great dilemma lest in a deluded mind either pride pass itself off for the high tone of zeal, or timid inactivity feign itself humility. Another man, considering how great is the sin of deceit, determines to fortify himself in the citadel of truth, so that henceforth no false word should proceed out of his lips, and that he should wholly cut himself off from the sin of lying. But it very frequently happens that, when the truth is spoken, the life of a neighbour is borne hard upon; and whilst the person fears to bring injury upon another, he is brought back, as in an aim of pity, to that evil habit of deceit which he had for long kept under; and so it comes to pass, that though wickedness has no place in his mind, yet the shadow of falsehood dims therein the rays of truth.

And hence oftentimes, because when a man is urged with questions he cannot keep silence, either by telling a falsehood he slays his own soul, or by speaking the truth bears hard upon the life of a neighbour. Another man, incited by the love of his Maker, aims by unintermitted prayer to withhold his mind from all earthly thoughts, and to place it in safety in the secret deeps of inward repose; but in the very mounting of his prayer, whilst he is striving to ascend from things below, he is struck back by the vision of them, and the eye of the mind is stretched to gaze on the light, but from bodily habit it is dimmed by the images of earthly things arising. Whence it very often comes to pass, that the mind of the person so striving, being exhausted by its own weakness, either giving over prayer, is lulled asleep in sloth, or if it continue long in prayer, the mist of rising images gathers thick before its eyes.

10. And so it is well said, *The life of man is a trial upon earth*, since there also he met with the guiltiness of a downward course, where he thought to lay hold on the advancement of an upward one, and the mind is only thrown into disorder by the same act whereby it strove to arise out of its disorder, so that it is thrown back upon itself shivered by the very means, by which it was already getting above itself collected and compacted. This man being a stranger to instruction in the Divine Law, is kept down by his ignorance, that he should do nothing for the attaining of salvation. That man being endued with the knowledge of the Divine Law, while he is delighted that understanding is vouchsafed to him beyond other men, in that he exults with a selfish delight, wastes in himself the gift of understanding which he has received. And in the Judgment he is shewn to light worse than others by the same thing, whereby he is exhibited brighter than others for a season. The first, because he is lifted high by no gifts of extraordinary powers, eschews the more plain path of uprightness too, and as if accounting himself an alien to the heavenly benefit, does evil things as though with more security, in proportion as he has never been vouchsafed the high endowments of the heavenly gift. The other the spirit of Prophecy replenishes, uplifts to the foreknowledge of events, and shews him things to come as now present. But whilst oftentimes and in many cases he is lifted above himself, so that he does really contemplate future events, his mind being drawn off into self-confidence, fancies that that spirit of Prophecy, which cannot always be had, is always with him, and when he takes every notion that he may have for prophecy, because that he ascribes this to himself even when he has nothing of it, he even loses it in the degree that he might possess it. And so it comes to pass, that he is brought back in sorrow behind the standard of other men's merits by the very means, whereby he was advanced before it in gladness of heart in the esteem of all. And so, *The life of man is a trial upon earth*, in that either being a stranger to extraordinary powers, it is unable to mount to the heavenly prize, or enriched with spiritual gifts, it is one day ruined the worse by occasion of its extraordinary powers.

11. But whereas we have said a little above that 'a trial' is the same as 'a warfare,' it is above every thing to be borne in mind, that something more is signified to us by the title of 'warfare,' than by the name of 'trial.' For to our apprehension there is this addition made by the expression of 'a warfare,' namely, that by warfare there is made daily progress towards an end. And whilst the space of warfare goes on increasing in a regular course, the whole warfare of men [B. & C. 'of a man'] is at the same time diminishing. And so, *the life of man is a warfare upon earth*, in that, as we have said above, each one of us, while by the accessions of time he is daily advancing to the end of life, in adding to his life, is making an end to live. For he looks for the days to come round, but as soon as they are come for the lengthening of life, they are already taken away from the amount of life; for while the step of the traveller too is advancing over the ground in front, what remains of



the way is lessening. Thus our life is 'a warfare,' in that in the same degree that it is drawn out to its enlargement, it is brought to an end, so as not to be. Therefore it is well said, *The life of man is a warfare upon earth*; for whilst by the several periods of time it seeks to gain ground, by that very period which it adds but in losing, it is made to pass away as it grows. And hence the very course of a warfare itself is described in the words that are immediately added,  
*Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?*

[vii]

12. The hireling longs for his days to pass the quicker, that he may attain without delay to the reward of his toil; and so the days of man imbued with a knowledge of the Truth and of the things of eternity, are justly compared to 'the days of an hireling,' because he reckons the present life to be his road, not his country, a warfare, not the palm of victory, and he sees that he is the further from his reward, the more slowly he is drawing near to his end. Moreover we must bear in mind, that the hireling spends his strength in labours that belong to others, yet procures for himself a reward that is his own. Now it is uttered by the Redeemer's voice, *My Kingdom is not of this world*. [John 18, 36] All we, then, who being endued with the hope of heaven, wear ourselves out with the toiling of the present life, are busied in the concern of another. For it often happens that we are even compelled to serve the sons of perdition, that we are constrained to give back to the world what belongs to the world, and we are spent indeed with another man's work, yet we receive a reward of our own, and by this, that we manage uncorruptly the interests of others, we are made to arrive at our own. In reverse of which, 'Truth' saith to certain persons, *And if ye have not been faithful to that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own*. [Luke 16, 12] Moreover it is to be remembered, that an hireling anxiously and heedfully looks to it, that never a day pass clear of work, and that the expected end of the time should not come empty for his rewarding. For in his earnestness of labour he sees what he may get in the season of recompense. Thus when his work advances, his assurance in the reward is increased, but when the work is at a stand-still, his hope sickens in respect of the recompense. And hence each of the Elect reckoning his life as the days of an 'hireling,' stretches forward to the reward the more confident in hope, in proportion as he holds on the more stoutly for the advancement of labour. He considers what the transitory course of the present life is, he reckons up the days with their works. He dreads lest the moments of life should pass void of labour. He rejoices in adversity, he is recruited with suffering, he is comforted by mourning, in that he sees himself to be more abundantly recompensed with the rewards of the life to come, the more thoroughly he devotes himself for the love thereof by daily deaths. For it is hence that the citizens of the Land above say to the Creator of it in the words of the Psalmist, *Yea, for Thy sake are we killed all the day long*. [Ps 44, 22] Hence Paul says, *I die daily, brethren, for your glory*. [1 Cor. 15, 31] Hence he says again, *For the which cause I also suffer these things; but I am not confounded, for I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day*. [2 tim. 1, 12] Therefore holy men for all the labours which they now exercise, while committing them to 'Truth,' already hold so many pledges of their recompense shut up in the chamber of hope. Yet oppressive heat is now felt under toil, that one day refreshment may be had in rest. Whence it is rightly added immediately afterwards,  
Ver. 2, 3. *As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the end of his work, so am I made to possess months of vanity, and I have numbered me wearisome nights*.

[viii]

13. Since for 'a servant to desire the shadow,' is after the heat of trial and the sweat of labour to seek the cool of eternal repose. Which shadow that servant desired, who said, *My soul thirsteth for God, the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?* [Ps. 42, 2] And again, *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech.* [Ps. 120, 5] Who as if after hard toil retreating from the heat, and seeking a covering that he might attain the rest of coolness, says again, *For I will enter into the place of the wonderful Tabernacle, even to the house of God.* [Ps. 42, 4] Paul panted to lay hold of this 'shadow,' having *a desire to depart and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] This shadow they had already attained unto in the fulness of the desire of their hearts, who said, *We which have borne the burthen and heat of the day.* [Mat. 20, 12] Now he that is said to 'desire' the shadow, is rightly styled 'a servant,' in that each one of the Elect, so long as he is bound fast by the condition of frailty, is held in under the yoke of corruption, in its exercising dominion over him, as though under the harrassing effect of heat; which same person, when he is stripped of corruption, is then made known to himself as free and at rest. And hence it is well said by Paul also, *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* [Rom. 8, 21] For the Elect are now, pressed down by the penalty of a corrupt state, but then they are exalted high by the glory of an incorrupt. And in the same degree that, relatively to the burthens of our present constraint, there is nought of liberty now manifested in the sons of God, relatively to the glory of the liberty to ensue, nought of servitude will then appear in the servants of God. And so the servile garb of corruption being cast off, and the nobility of liberty bestowed, the creature is turned into the gloriousness of the sons of God, in that in being united to God by the Spirit, it is proved as it were to have surmounted and overcome this very thing, that it is a created being. Now he that still 'desires the shadow' is 'a servant,' in that so long as he is subject to the heat of temptation, he is bearing on his shoulders the yoke of a wretched condition, and it is rightly added there, *and as an hireling looks for the reward of his work.*

14. For an hireling, when he looks at the work to be done, at once resigns his spirit in consequence of the length and burthensomeness of the labour; but when he recalls his sinking spirit to take thought of the reward of his work, he immediately sets afresh his vigour of mind for the exercising of his labour, and what he reckoned a grievous burthen in respect of the work, he esteems light and easy on the grounds of the recompense. Thus, thus, do each of the Elect, when they meet with the crosses of this life, when insults upon their good name, losses in their substance, pains of the body are brought upon them, reckon the things grievous, which they are tried with; but when they stretch the eyes of the mind to the view of the heavenly country, by comparison with their reward they see how light is all they undergo. For that which is shewn to be altogether insupportable for the pain, is by forecasting reflection rendered light for the recompense. It is hence that Paul is always being lifted up bolder than himself against adversities, in that 'as an hireling he looketh for the end of his work.' For he accounts what he undergoes to be a heavy burthen, but he reckons it light in consideration of the reward. For he does himself declare how great the burthen is of what he suffers, in that he bears record that he was 'in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft,' &c. who 'of the Jews five times received folly stripes save one.' [2 Cor. 11. 23. &c.] Who was 'thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, a night and a day was in the deep of the sea; who endured perils of waters, of robbers, of his own countrymen, of the heathen, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren; 'who in weariness and painfulness, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness,' had labour and toil, who sustained 'fights

without, within fears,' who declares himself pressed down above strength, saying, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we were weary even of life. But in what sort he wiped off him the streams of this hard toil with the towel of his reward, he himself tells, when he says, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared, with the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us.* Thus, 'as an hireling, he looketh for the end of his work,' who while he considers the increase of the reward, reckons it of no account that he labours well nigh spent. But it is well added, *So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights have I numbered me.*

15. For the Elect serve the Creator of things, and yet are often driven to straits by the want of things; they hold fast in God by love, and yet they lack the supports of the present life. So they who do not aim at present objects by their actions, as to the profits of the world, spend 'months of vanity.' Moreover they are subject to 'wearisome nights,' in that they bear the darkness of adversity not only to the extent of want, but oftentimes to the anguish of the body. For to undergo contempt and want is not hard to virtuous minds; but when adversity is turned to the paining of the flesh, then surely wearisomeness is felt from pain. It may also be not unsuitably interpreted, that each one of the Saints as a hireling spends 'months of vanity,' in that he now already bears the toil, but does not yet hold the reward; the one he undergoes, the other he looks for; but 'he numbers him wearisome nights,' in that by exercising himself in virtuous habits, he is accumulating upon his own head the ills of the present life: for if he does not aim to advance in spirit, he finds the things of the world perchance less galling to him.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

16. Yet, if this sentence be referred to the voice of Holy Church, the meaning thereof is traced out with a little more particularity. For she herself has 'months of vanity,' who in her weak members has to bear earthly actions running on to nought without the meed of life. She 'numbers to herself wearisome nights,' in that in her strong members she bears manifold afflictions. For in this life there be some things that are hard, and some that are empty, and some that are both hard and empty at one and the same time. For from love of the Creator to be tried with the afflictions of the present life, is hard indeed, but not empty. For love of the present world to be dissolved in pleasures, is empty indeed, but not hard. But for the love of that world, to be exposed to any adversities, is at one and the same time both empty and laborious, in that the soul is at once 'afflicted by adversity, and not replenished with the compensation of the reward. And so in those who being now placed within the pale of Holy Church, still let themselves out in the pursuit of their pleasures, and are thenceforth not enriched with the fruit of good works, she passes 'months of vanity,' in that she spends the periods of life without the gift of the reward. But in those who, being devoted to everlasting aims, meet with the crosses of this world, 'she numbers herself wearisome nights,' in that she as it were in the obscurity of the present life undergoes the darkness of woe. But in those who at one and the same time love this transitory world, and yet are wearied with its contradiction, she sustains at once 'days of vanity,' and 'wearisome nights,' in that neither does any recompense coming after reward their lives, and, yet present affliction straitens them. But it is rightly that she never says that she has 'days,' but 'months of vanity' in these. For by the name of 'months,' the sum and total amount of days is represented, and so by the 'day,' we have each individual action set forth: but by 'months,' the conclusion of those actions is implied. But it often happens that when we do anything in this world, being buoyed up by the eager intentness of our hope, this particular

thing that we are about, we never think empty; but when we are come to the end of our doings, failing to obtain the object of our aims, we are grieved that we have been labouring for emptiness, and so we spend not only days, but likewise ‘months of vanity,’ in that not in the beginning of our actions, but only at the end, we bethink ourselves that we have been toiling in earthly practices without fruit. For when trouble follows upon our actions, it is as if the months of vanity of our life were brought home to us: in that it is only in the consummation of our actions that we learn, how vain was all our toil therein.

17. But because in the sacred word sometimes ‘night’ is put for ignorance, according to the testimony of Paul, who saith to his disciples instructed in the life to come; *Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.* [1 Thess. 5, 5] To which words he prefixed, *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.* [ib. 4] In this place the voice of Holy Church may be understood in the person of those of her members, who after the darkness of their state of ignorance are brought back to the love of righteousness, and being enlightened by the rays of truth, wash out with their tears all that they have done amiss. For every one that has been enlightened looks back to see how polluted all that was that he laboured at, in love with the present life. And therefore Holy Church in the case of these, in whom there is a return to life, compares her toils to ‘a servant’ in a state of heat, and to ‘an hireling longing for the end of his work,’ in the words, *As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the end of his work; so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights have I numbered me.* For in drawing the comparison there are two things which he premised, as also in the describing of weariness there are two which he thereupon added. For to the one oppressed with heat he gave ‘months of vanity,’ in that in proportion as the refreshing of eternity is more the object of our desire, it is more clearly seen how vainly we spend our labour for this life. But to the one in expectance he brought in ‘wearisome nights,’ in that the more that at the end of our works we look at the reward we are to have given us, the more we lament that we so long knew nothing of the thing that we now aim at. And hence the very solicitude of the penitent is carefully set forth, so that it is said, ‘that he numbered to himself wearisome nights,’ in that the more truly we return to God, the more exactly we consider, while we grieve over them, those toils which we underwent in this world from ignorance. For as everyone finds that to become more and more sweet which he desires of the things of eternity, so that which he was undergoing for the love of the present world, is made appear to him proportionably burthensome. Now if the following words be considered with reference to the historical import alone, doubtless we have the mind of one in sorrow described by them, viz. how in the different impulses of desire he is variously urged by the force of grief. For it goes on,  
Ver. 4. *When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise? and again I look for the evening.*

[ix]

18. For in the night, day is desired, in the day, evening is longed for; in that grief will not let the things that are before us give satisfaction, and while it saddens the heart in the experience of the present, it is ever stretching it to something beyond in expectation, as it were by a consolatory longing. But because at one and the same time the afflicted mind is drawn out in desire, and yet its grief, even though beguiled by longings, is not ended; it is rightly added, *And I shall be filled with pains even until the darkness.* But the cause of this grief is set forth, when the words are immediately introduced,

Ver. 5. *My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust: my skin is dried up and shrunk.*

[x]

19. But we shall make out these words more exactly and more applicably, if we go back to the order of the foregoing interpretation. For by sleep the torpor of inaction, and by rising the exercising of action, is represented. By the name of the evening moreover, because it accords with sleep, we have set forth again the desire of inaction. But Holy Church, as long as she is leading a life of corruption, never ceases to bewail the inconveniences of her condition of mutability. For man was created for this end, that, with mind erect, he might mount to the citadel of contemplation, and that no touch of corruption should cause him to swerve from the love of his Maker; but herein, that he moved the foot of his will to transgression, turning it away from the innate stedfastness of his standing, he immediately fell away from the love of his Creator into himself. Yet in forsaking the love of God, that true stronghold of his standing, he could not stand fast in himself either; in that by the impulse of a slippery condition of mutability, being precipitated beneath himself through corruption, he also came to be at strife with himself. And now, in that he is not secured by the stedfastness of his creation, he is ever being made to vary by the fit of alternating desire, so that both at rest he longs for action, and when busied pants for rest. For because the stedfast mind, when it might have stood, would not, it is now no longer able to stand even when it will, in that in leaving the contemplation of its Creator, it lost the strength of its health, and wherever placed is ever seeking some other place through uneasiness. And so in setting forth the fickleness of the human mind, let him say, *When I go to sleep, I say, When shall I arise? and again I shall look for the evening.* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Nothing it receives sufficeth the mind, in that it has lost Him, Who might have truly sufficed to it. Thus in sleep I long for rising, and at rising I look for evening, for both when at rest I aim at the employment of action, and when employed I look for the inaction of repose.'

20. Which nevertheless may be understood in another sense also, For to sleep is to lie prostrate in sin. For if the designation of 'sleep' did not denote sin, Paul would never say to his disciples, *Awake, ye righteous, and sin not.* [1 Cor. 15, 34] And hence too he charges his hearer, saying, *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* [Eph. 5, 14] And again; *That now it is high time for us to arise out of sleep.* [Rom. 13, 11] Hence too Solomon upbraids the sinner, saying, *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?* [Prov. 6, 9] Therefore each one of the Elect, when he is oppressed with the sleep of sin, strives to rise to keep the watch of righteousness. But often when he has risen he feels himself lifted up by the greatness of his virtuous attainments. And hence after attainments in virtue he desires to be tried with the adversities of the present life, lest he fall the worse from presumption in his virtuous achievements. For if he had not known that he was preserved more effectually by trial, the Psalmist would never have said, *Examine me, O Lord, and prove me.* [Ps. 26, 2] And so it is well said here, *When I go to sleep, I say, When shall I arise? and again I shall look for the evening;* in that both in the sleep of sin, we look for the light of righteousness, and when successes in virtuous attainments elevate the mind, adversity is wanted for our aid, so that when the soul is exalted above what it ought to be in rejoicing at its own excellencies, it may be established by sorrow coming forth, through the encounters of the present life. Hence it is not said, *I shall dread the evening,* but, *I shall look for.* For we 'look for' favourable things, we dread those that are adverse to us. And so the good man

‘looks for evening,’ in that when he needs to be tried with affliction, adversity itself is made success to him.

21. By the designation of ‘evening’ there may also be understood the tempting of sin, which oftentimes assaults the mind the sharper, in proportion as the spirit transports it higher to the regions above. For never in this life is sin so entirely abandoned in the practising of righteousness, that we continue without flinching in the self-same righteousness; in that although right principle does already drive out sin from the dwelling of the heart, yet the very sin, that is so banished, taking her seat at the doors of our thought, knocks for it to be opened to her. And this Moses too conveyed in spiritual signification, when he described the parts of time being made in a bodily way, saying, *And there was light*, and adding soon after, *And the evening was made* [Vulg. *factum est*]. [Gen. 1, 3. 5.] For the Maker of all things foreseeing man's guilt, then exhibited in Time what now passes in the human mind. For the light draws on to eventide, in that the shades of temptation follow the light of righteousness. But because the light of the Elect is not put out by temptation, not night; but evening, is recorded as made. Since it often happens, that in the heart of the righteous temptation shades the light of righteousness, but it does not put an end thereto; it forces it to the paleness of a flickering state, but does not utterly quench it. And so the Elect both after sleep long for the rising, and after rising look for evening, in that they use both to awake from sin to the light of righteousness, and when placed in that same light of righteousness, they are ever making themselves ready to encounter the snares of temptation; which same they do not dread, but look for, as they are not ignorant that even trials promote the interest of their righteousness.

22. But with whatever degree of virtue they may have striven against their corruption, they cannot have entire health, until the time that the day of their present life is ended. And hence it is added, *And I shall be full of pains even until the darkness*. For one while adversities burst upon them, at another time successes themselves beguile them by insidious joviality; at one time evil propensities making head stir up a war of the flesh, at another time being brought under, they invite the mind to pride. Therefore the life of good man is *full of pains even until the darkness*, in that so long as the period of their state of corruption is going on, it is shaken by tribulation both internal and external; nor does it experience assurance of health, saving when it leaves behind it for good the day of temptation. And hence this same cause of these pains is brought in immediately afterwards, when it is said, *My flesh is clothed with corruption and foulness of dust*. For, as we have said a little above, man wilfully forsook his innate stability, and plunged himself into the abyss of corruption: and hence now he either goes slipping in impure works, or defiled by forbidden thoughts. For, so to speak, being judicially bowed down beneath its own sin, our nature its very self is put out of the pale of nature, and, when let loose, it is carried even to the length of bad works, while, being held in, it is dimmed by the pressing imagination of bad works. Thus in the fulfilment of a forbidden deed, ‘corruption’ [*putredo*] taints the flesh, while in the lightness of evil thought, dust as it were rises up before the eyes. By consenting to evil practices we are wasted with corruption, but by suffering in the heart the images of evil deeds, we are defiled with the stains of dust; and so he says, *My flesh is clothed with foulness of dust*. As if it were in plain words; ‘The carnal life that I am subjected to, either the corruption of wanton practice defiles, or the cloud of wretched thought compasses about in the recollection of evil ways.’

23. And yet if we take this in the voice of the Holy Church Universal, doubtless we find her at one time sunk to the earth by the ‘corruption’ of the flesh, at another time by ‘the defilement of dust.’

For she has many in her, who whilst they are devoted to the love of the flesh, turn corrupt with the putrefaction of excess. And there are some that keep indeed from the gratification of the flesh, yet grovel with all their heart in earthly practices. So let Holy Church say in the words of one of her members, let her say what she undergoes from either sort of men, *My flesh is clothed with corruption, and the defilements of dust*. As if she told in plain words, saying, ‘There are very many that are members of me in faith, yet these are not sound or pure members in practice: in that either being mastered by foul desires, they run out in the rottenness of corruption; or, being devoted to earthly practices, they are besmeared with dust. For in those, whom I have to endure, that are full of wantonness, I do plainly lament for the flesh turned corrupt; and in those, whom I suffer from, that are seeking the earth, what else is this but that I carry it defiled with dust?’

24. And hence it is properly added at the same time concerning both sorts; *My skin is dried up and shrivelled*. For in the body of the Church, those that are devoted to outward concerns alone are suitably called ‘the skin,’ which same by becoming dry is contracted, in that the soul of carnal men, while their hearts are set on present objects, and covet what is close at hand, have no mind, as it were, to be made to stretch out after the things of the future world in longsuffering. These, while they disregard the richness of the interior hope, are dried up that they become shrivelled; in that if hopelessness did not parch their hearts, the fever of a little mind would never contract them. Thus it was this contraction that the Psalmist dreaded, when in fear of the drought of the same he said, *May my soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness*. [Ps. 63, 5] For the soul is ‘satisfied with marrow and fatness,’ when it is refreshed by the infusion of heavenly hope against the heat of present longings. And so the ‘skin’ being dried up shrivels, when the heart being given to outward objects, and dried up in hopelessness, is not stretched out in love of its Creator, but is folded up into itself, so to say, by wrinkled thought.

25. But it is to be considered that carnal minds only delight in present things, because they never weigh well how transitory the life of the flesh is. For if they regarded the speed of its flight, they would never love it even when it smiled upon them. But Holy Church, in her elect members, daily minds how quick a flight belongs to outward things, and therefore she sets firm the foot of serious purpose in the interior. And hence it is well added;

Ver. 6. *My days are past more swiftly than a web is cut off by the weaver*.

[xi]

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

26. By a very suitable image the time of the flesh is compared to a web. For as the web advances by threads, so this mortal life by the several days; but in proportion as it grows to its bigness, it is advancing to its cutting off. For as we have also said above, whilst the time in our hands passes, the time before us is shortened. And of the whole space of our lives those portions are rendered fewer that are to come, in proportion as those are many in number that have gone by. For a web, being fastened above and below, is bound to two pieces of wood that it may be woven; but in proportion as below the part woven is rolled up, so above the part that remains to be woven is being unwound, and by the same act, by which it augments itself in growth, that is rendered less which remains. Just so with the periods of our life, we as it were roll up below those that are past, and unwind at top those that are to come, in that in the same proportion that the past become more, the future have begun to diminish. But because not even does a web suffice for the setting forth of our span of time, for the rapid course of our life surpasses the speed and quickness even of that too, it is

well said in this place, *My days are past away more swiftly than a web is cut off by the weaver.* For to the web there is a delay of growth, but to the present life there is no delay of coming to an end. For in the one when the hand of the workman is stopped, the end of the arrival is deferred, but in this latter, because we consume without end time ending every instant, even while resting we are brought to the end of our way, and along the course of our passage, we go on even in sleeping. Therefore the Elect, seeing that the moments of the present life run past at speed, never in this journey of most rapid motion fix the purpose of their hearts. And hence it is well added upon that, *And are spent without any hope.*

[xii]

27. The minds of lost sinners are bound fast with such love for the days of their present life, that they long to live for ever here in the same way. So that, if it were possible, they desire never to have the course of their life brought to an end. For they are too indifferent to take account of the future, they place all their hope in transitory things, they aim to have nothing but such objects as pass away. And while they think too much of transitory things, and never look forward to those that shall remain, the eye of their heart is so closed in insensible blindness, that it is never fixed on the interior light. Whence it often happens, that distress already shakes the frame, and approaching death cuts off the power of the breath of life, yet they never cease to mind the things that are of the world. And already the avenger is dragging them to judgment, and yet they themselves, occupied with the concerns of time, in the busy management of them, are only thinking how they may still live on in this world. In the act of leaving every thing, they dispose of all as if they were entering upon the possession of them, in that the hope of living is not broken, at the very moment when life is at an end. They are already being forced to judgment in feeling [*per sententiam*], yet they still cleave to the hold of their goods in solicitude. For by the hardened soul death is still believed to be far off, even when his touch is felt. And the soul is so separated from the flesh, that by keeping itself in excessive love for things present, when it is led to everlasting punishment, it does not know this mere thing, whither it is being led; and in leaving all that it would not love with bounds, it suddenly finds without bounds things that it never anticipated. But, on the other hand, the mind of the righteous is stretched in intentness after the eternal world, even when the present life goes smoothly along with it. It enjoys the high health of the flesh, yet the spirit is never hindered by dependence on it. No atom [*articulum*] of death as yet breaks forth, still he daily regards it as present to him. For because life is unceasingly slipping by, the expectation of living is wholly cut short for him. Therefore it is well said of the passing days, *And are spent without hope.* As if it were declared in plain terms; ‘I have not placed confidence of heart in the present life, in that all that is passing I have dismissed from my hopes, treading it under foot.’ And hence it is rightly added immediately after,

Ver. 7. *O remember that my life is wind.*

[xiii]

28. For those men love the life of the flesh as enduring, who do not consider how infinite is the eternity of the life to come; and whereas they take no thought of the sure steadfastness of the everlasting state, they take their exile for their home, darkness for light, going for standing. Since they that know nothing of greater things can never judge rightly of the least. For the order of judging requires that we should be above that which we are striving to try. Since if the mind is not



able to rise above all things, it has no certain sight at all in relation to those, by which it is surpassed. And so it is for this reason that the lost soul is inadequate to estimate the course of the present life, because from love of the same it is bowed down to the admiration thereof. But holy men, in proportion as they lift their hearts towards the eternal world, bethink themselves how short-lived that is which is closed by an ending. And all that is passing is rendered worthless to their senses, forasmuch as that pours in its light through the rays of intelligence, which once received never departs. And as soon as they contemplate the infinite extent of eternity, they cease any longer to desire as great whatsoever has an end to limit it. But the mind when lifted up is carried beyond the limits of time, even when by the flesh it is held fast in time, and it looks down from a greater height on all that is to have an end, the more truly it knows the things without end. Now this very consideration of the short span of man's estate is itself an offering of singular efficacy [*virtutis*] to our Maker. Whence a sacrifice of this merit is here rightly offered together with prayer, when it is said, *O remember that my life is wind*. As if it were said in plain words, 'Regard with loving-kindness one that is quickly gone, in that I claim to be looked upon by Thee with greater pity, even in proportion as I myself do not turn away mine eyes from the contemplation of my short span.' But seeing that when the season of our present life is cut short, there is no more return to the work of earning our forgiveness, it is rightly added, *Mine eye shall no more return to see good*.

[xiv]

29. The eye of the dead 'no more returneth to see good,' in that for the setting forth of good works, the soul once snipped of the flesh knows no return. It is hence that the rich man, whom the fire of hell was devouring, knew that he could never restore himself by doing works; for he never turned himself to do good to himself, but to his brethren that were left; *I pray thee, father Abraham, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment*. [Luke 16, 27. 28.] For hope even though unfounded is used to cheer the stricken soul; but the lost, that they may feel their woe the keener, lose even hope as to pardon. And hence when he was given over to avenging flames, he was not anxious to help himself, as we said, but his brethren, in that he knew that he would never be without the torments of those fires, the punishment of despair being superadded. Hence Solomon saith, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest*. [Eccles. 9, 10] So 'the eye shall no more return to see good,' in that the soul, on meeting with its recompense, is never again recalled to tell to the account of practice. Therefore forasmuch as all that is seen is fleeting, and the things that follow are to endure, blessed Job rightly combined the two in one verse, saying, *O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good*. For looking at the transitoriness of things present, he says, *O remember that my life is wind*. But contemplating the eternity of those that come after, he added, *Mine eye shall no more return to see good*. And here, furthermore, he justly proceeds to take upon him the voice of the whole race of man destitute of the benefit of redemption, saying, Ver. 8. *The eye of man shall not see me*.

[xv]

30. For 'the eye of Man' is the pity of the Redeemer, which softens the hardness of our insensibility, when it looks upon us. Hence, as the Gospel witnesses, it is said, *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord. And he went out, and wept bitterly.* [Luke 22, 61. 62.] But the soul when divested of the flesh 'the eye of Man' doth not henceforth at all regard, in that it never delivers him after death, whom grace doth not restore to pardon before death. For hence Paul saith, *Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.* [2 Cor. 6, 2] Hence the Psalmist saith, *For His mercy is for the present state of being [d];* [Ps. 118, 1] for this reason, that the man whom mercy doth not rescue now, after the present state of being, justice alone consigns to punishment. Hence Solomon saith, *And if the tree fall toward the south or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth there it shall be.* [Eccles. 11, 3] For when, at the moment of the falling of the human being, either the Holy Spirit or the Evil Spirit receives the soul departed from the chambers of the flesh, he will keep it with him for ever without change, so that neither once exalted, shall it be precipitated into woe, nor once plunged into eternal woes, any further arise to take the means of escape. Therefore let the holy man, contemplating the ills of mankind, viz. how he is removed from the present world without the knowledge of his Redeemer, and buried in everlasting flames without remedy, and taking up their voice in his own person, give utterance to the words, *And the eye of man shall not see me.* Forasmuch as the man whom the grace of the Redeemer doth not now look upon to correct, it doth not then visit to keep from destruction. For the Lord, when He cometh to judgment, looketh on the sinner to smite, but He doth not look on him to acknowledge him in bestowing the grace of salvation. He taketh account of sins, and knoweth not the life of those that perish. Hence after that the holy man had averred that he could no more be 'seen by the eye of Man' after the present life, he rightly added at once;  
*Thine eyes are upon me, and I shall not stand.*

[xvi]

31. As though he said in plain words; 'Thou, when thou comest in severity to Judgment, both seest not, to save, and yet seest, to smite, in that him, whom Thou lookest not on in the present life with the pitifulness of Thy saving care, hereafter looking on Thou dost extinguish by Thy law of justice. For now the sinner casts away the fear of God, and yet lives, blasphemes and yet prospers, because the pitiful Creator would not in seeing punish him, whom He would rather by waiting for bring to amendment; as it is written, *And winkest at the sins of men for their repentance.* [Wisd. 11, 23] But when the sinner is then looked upon, he 'does not stand,' in that when the strict Judge minutely examines his deserts, the convicted sinner cannot bear up against his torments.

32. Not but that this likewise accords with the voice of the righteous, whose mind is ever anxiously fixed on the coming Judgment. For they have fears for every thing that they do, whilst they heedfully consider who are the persons, and before what a Judge they will have to stand. They behold the power of His Mightiness, and they consider what an amount of guilt they are tied and bound with from their own imperfection. They reckon up the evil deeds of their own doing, and multiply over against them the benefits of their Creator. They reflect how rigidly He judges wicked deeds, how minutely He examines good ones; and they foresee without a shadow of doubt that they will be lost, if they be judged apart from pity: for even this very life that we seem to live righteously is sin, if, when He takes account of our lives, the mercy of God does not make allowance for it in His own eyes. For it is hence written in this very book, *Yea, the stars are not*

*pure in His sight.* [Job 25, 5] For strictly judged in His sight those very persons do also bear spots of defilement, that shine bright in the purity of holiness. Therefore it is well said, *Thine eyes are upon me, and I shall not stand.* As if it were said in plain terms by the voice of the righteous man, 'If I be sifted with an exact scrutiny, I cannot stand up in undergoing judgment, for life cannot bear up against punishment, if the mercilessness of just retribution bears hard upon it.' Now both the sin and the punishment of that same human race is well added in few words, where it is said immediately afterwards,

Ver. 9. *As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away; so he that goeth down to hell shall come up no more.*

[xvii]

33. For a cloud is suspended in the higher regions, but it is condensed and driven by the wind that it flies, and it is scattered by the heat of the sun that it vanishes. Thus, thus verily is it with the hearts of men, which by the faculty of reason bestowed upon them dart on high, but driven by the blasts of the evil spirit, they are forced hither and thither by the bad impulses of their desires, but by the searching eye of the Judge above they are melted as if by the heat of the sun, and being once consigned to the regions of woe, never return for the benefit of working. Let the holy man then, in setting forth the elevation, the career, and the eclipse of the human race, exclaim, *As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.* As if he spake in plain words, saying, 'In flying on high he is brought to nought, who by exalting himself is advancing to destruction, whom, if sin once force to punishment, mercy never more restores to pardon.' Hence it is yet further added, *He shall return no more to his own house.*

[xviii]

34. As the house of the body is a bodily habitation, so that becomes to each separate mind 'its own house,' whatsoever thing it is used to inhabit in desire. And so 'there is no more returning to his own house,' because, when once a man is given over to eternal punishments, he is henceforth no more recalled thither, where he had attached himself in love. Moreover by the designation of hell the despair of the sinner may also be set forth, of which it is said by the Psalmist, *In hell, who shall confess to Thee?* [Ps. 6, 5] Whence again it is written, *When the ungodly man cometh into the pit of sinners, he contemneth.* [Prov. 18, 3] Now whosoever yields himself to ungodliness, doth assuredly quit the life of righteousness by a proper death. But when a man after sin is furthermore overwhelmed by a mountain of despair, what else is this but that after death he is buried in the torments of hell? Therefore it is rightly said, *As the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to hell shall come up no more;* in that it very often happens, that with the commission of wickedness despair also is united, and the way of returning is henceforth cut off. But the hearts of the despairing are rightly compared to clouds, in that they are at once darkened with the mists of error, and thick with the number of sins; but being consumed, they vanish away, in that being lighted up by the blaze of the final Judgment, they are scattered to the winds. 'The house' too is often understood for the dwelling-place of the heart. Hence it is said to one that was healed, *Go to thine house* [Mark 5, 19]; in that it is most meet that the sinner after pardon should turn back into his own mind, so as not to do aught a second time which may justly subject him to the scourge. But he that has 'gone down to hell,' shall no more 'ascend into his own house,' in that

him, that despair overwhelms, it puts forth without from the habitation of the heart. And he cannot return back within, because when he has been ejected without, day by day he falls urged on into worse extremes. For man was made to contemplate his Creator, that he might ever be seeking after His likeness, and dwell in the festival [*solemnitate*] of His love. But being cast without himself by disobedience, he lost the seat of his mind, in that being left all abroad in dark ways, he wandered far from the habitation of the true light. Whence it is further added with propriety, *Neither shall his place know him any more.*

[xix]

35. For 'the place' of man, but not a local place, the Creator Himself became, Who created him to have his being in Himself, which same place man did then forsake, when on hearing the words of the deceiver, he forsook the love of the Creator. But when Almighty God in the work of redemption shewed Himself even by a bodily appearing, He Himself, so to say, following the footsteps of His runagate, came as a place where to keep man whom He had lost. For if the Creator could not in any sense be styled 'a place,' the Psalmist, in praising God, would never have said, *The children of thy servants shall dwell there* ['there' is not in V. or LXX.]. [Ps. 102, 29] For we never say *there*, except when we mark out a place in a particular manner. But there are very many, who even after they have received the succour of the Redeemer, are precipitated into the darkness of despair, and they perish the more desperately, in proportion as they despise the very offered remedies of mercy. And so it is rightly said concerning him that is damned, *Neither shall his place know him any more.* For he is not known by his Creator in His sorer severity at the Judgment, in the same degree that he is not recalled even by His gifts to the grace of restoration. And hence it is particularly to be observed, that he does not say, 'Nor shall he know his own place any more;' but, *Neither shall his place know him any more.* For whereas that 'knowing' is ascribed not to the person, but to the place, the Creator Himself is manifestly set forth, by the name of 'a place,' Who, when He cometh in strictness for the final account, shall say to all that abide in iniquity, *I know you not whence ye are.* [Luke 13, 25] But the Elect severally, in proportion as they consider that lost sinners are unsparingly cut off, day by day purify themselves with greater diligence from the stains of the iniquity they have done; and when they see others on the brink of ruin grow cold in the love of life, they earnestly inflame themselves to tears of penitence. Hence it is well added, Ver. 11. *Therefore also I will not refrain my mouth.*

[xx]

36. For that man 'refrains his mouth,' that is ashamed to confess the evil he has done. For to put the mouth to labour is to employ it in the confession of sin done, but the righteous man doth 'not refrain his mouth,' in that forestalling the wrath of the searching Judge, he falls wroth upon himself in words of self-confession. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Let us come before His Presence with confession* [e]. [Ps. 95, 2] Hence it is delivered by Solomon, *He that coveteth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth, and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* [Prov. 28, 13] Hence it is written again, *The just man is first the accuser of himself.* [Ib. 18, 17] But the mouth is never opened in confession, unless at the thought of the searching Judgment the spirit is in straits from fear; and hence it is fitly said afterwards, *I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.*

[xxi]

37. For 'anguish of the spirit' sets the tongue in motion, so that the voice of confession is levelled against the guilt of evil practice. Moreover it is to be borne in mind, that oftentimes even the reprobate make confession of sins, but are too proud to weep for them. But the Elect prosecute with tears of severe self-condemnation those sins of theirs which they disclose in words of confession. Hence it was well that after blessed Job had pledged himself not to spare his lips, he added directly the anguish of the spirit. As if he avowed plainly, saying, 'The tongue doth in such sort tell of guilt, that the spirit is not ever let go loose amidst other things, free of the sting of sorrow; but in telling my sins, I disclose my wound, and in thinking over my sins for their amendment, I seek the cure of the wound in the medicine of sorrow.' For he that tells indeed the evil deeds he has done, but holds back from lamenting what he has told, he as it were by taking off the covering discovers the wound, but in deadness of mind he applies no remedy to the wound. Therefore it is needful that sorrow alone should wring out the voice of confession, lest the wound, being exposed, but neglected, in proportion as it is henceforth more freely touched through the knowledge of our fellowcreatures, fester so much the worse. Contrariwise the Psalmist had not only disclosed the sore of his heart, but was furthermore applying to it thus laid bare the remedy of sorrow, when he said, *I acknowledge my sin unto Thee, and my iniquity will I think on.* [Ps. 32, 5] For by so 'acknowledging' he discovered the hidden sore, and by thus 'thinking on' it, what else did he, than apply a remedy to the wound? But to the mind that is distressed, and anxiously thinking on its own ills, there arises a strife in behalf of self against self. For when it urges itself to the sorrows of penitence, it rends itself with secret upbraiding. And hence it is justly added afterwards,

*I will converse with the bitterness of my spirit.*

[xxii]

38. For when we are in trouble from dread of God's judgment, whilst we bewail some things done wrong, seeing that by the mere force of our bitterness alone we are stirred up to enter into ourselves more observantly, we find in ourselves other things also to bewail more largely. For it often happens that what escaped us in our insensibility, is made known to us more exactly in tears. And the troubled mind finds out more surely the ill that it has done and knew not of, and its conflict discovers to it in a true point of view how far it had deviated from the peace which is of truth, in that its guilt, which while secure it thought not of, it finds out in itself when disturbed. For the bitterness of penance gaining ground urgently brings home to the confounded heart the unlawful things it has committed, exhibits the Judge arrayed against them in severity, strikes deep the threats of punishment, smites the soul with consternation, overwhelms it with shame, chides the unlawful motions of the heart, and disturbs the repose of its mischievous self-security, all the good gifts that the Creator has vouchsafed to bestow upon him, all the evil that he himself has done in return for the good things of His hand, are reckoned up, how that he was created by Him in a wonderful way, that he was sustained freely and for nought, that he was endowed with the substance of reason at his creation, that he was called by the grace of his Creator, that he himself even when called refused to follow, that the pitifulness of Him that calleth did not disregard him, not even when deaf and resisting, that he was enlightened with gifts, that of his own free will, even after these gifts received, he blinded himself by wicked deeds, that he was cleared from the wrong doings of his state of blindness by the strokes of fatherly solicitude, that by means of the pains of these strokes he

was restored to the joys of saving health by the remedy that mercy applied, that being subject to certain bad practices, though not of the worst sort, he does not cease to sin even in the midst of these strokes; that the grace of God even when slighted did not abandon its sinner. And thus whereas it upbraids with so much keenness the agitated mind at one time by a display of the gifts of God, another time by the reproaches of its own behaviour, the bitterness of spirit has a tongue of its own in the heart of the righteous, which speaks to it the more searchingly, in proportion as it is heard within. And hence it is not at all said, 'I will talk *in* the bitterness of my spirit,' but *I will converse with the bitterness*; in that the force of grief, which taking each sin separately, stimulates the deadened mind to lamentations, as it were shapes words of converse to it, wherein it being chidden might find itself out, and henceforth rise up with better heed to the safe keeping of itself. And so let the righteous man say in his own voice; as bearing a figure of Holy Church, let him say in ours too; *I will converse with the bitterness of my spirit*. As if he spake it in plainer words, saying, 'Within I hold converse with the anguish of my heart against mine own self, and without I hide myself from the lash of the Judge.' Now the mind that is borne hard upon by the pangs of penitence is gathered up close into itself, and severed by strong resolution from all the gratifications of the flesh, it longs to advance to things above, yet it still feels opposition from the corruption of the flesh. And hence it is rightly added immediately,

Ver. 12. *Am I a sea or a whale, that thou hast compassed me about with a prison?*

[xxiii]

39. Man is 'compassed about with a prison,' in that he very often both strives to mount on high by the strides of virtuous attainments, and yet is impeded by the corruption of his fleshly part. Of which same the Psalmist rightly prays that he might be divested, saying, *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name*. [Ps. 142, 7] But what have we set forth by the designation of 'the sea,' saving the hearts of carnal men tossed with swelling thoughts? and what by the name of 'a whale,' except our old enemy? who when in taking possession of the hearts of the children of this world he makes his way into them, does in a certain sort swim about in their slippery thoughts. But the whale is made fast in prison, in that the evil Spirit, being cast down below, is kept under by the weight of his own punishment, that he should have no power to fly up to the heavenly realms, as Peter testifies, who saith, *God spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment*. [2 Pet. 2, 4] 'The whale' is fast bound in prison, in that he is prevented from tempting the good as much as he desires. The sea too is 'compassed about with a prison,' in that the swelling and raging desires of carnal minds, for the doing of the evil that they long for, are clogged by the straitness of their inability. For they often long to have power over their betters, yet by the Divine ordering, that regulates all things marvellously, they are made to bow beneath them. They desire, being exalted high, to injure the good, yet being brought under their power, they look for consolation from them. For the sake of fulfilling the gratification of the flesh, they covet length of years in the present life, yet they are carried off from it with haste. Concerning such it is well said by the Psalmist, *And He put the waters as it were in a skin*. [Ps. 78, 13. V. thus] For 'the waters are in a skin' when their loose desires, in that they find not the execution in deed, are kept down under a carnal heart. Therefore the whale and the sea are hemmed in by the close pressure of a prison, in that whether as regards the evil spirit or his followers, in whose minds he gathers himself and sets rolling therein the waves of tumultuous thoughts, the rigour of the Most High confines them, that they should have no power to accomplish the evil things that they are set upon.

40. But holy men, in proportion as they contemplate the Mysteries of heavenly truths with more perfect purity of heart, pant after them with daily increased ardour of affection. They long to be henceforth filled to the full at that fountain head, whence they as yet taste but a little drop with the mouth of contemplation. They long entirely to subdue the promptings of the flesh, no longer to be subject to any thing unlawful in the imaginations of the heart springing from the corruption thereof. But because it is written, *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things*, [Wisd. 9, 15] therefore they henceforth rise above themselves in purpose of mind, but being still subject to the capricious motions of their imperfect nature, they lament that they are confined in the prison-house of corruption. *Am I a sea or a whale, that Thou dost compass me about with a prison?* As if it were in plain words; ‘The sea or the whale, i.e. the wicked and their prime mover, the Evil Spirit, because they desire to have a loose given them for the mere liberty of committing iniquity alone, are justly held bound in the prison of the punishment inflicted on them. But I, that already long for the liberty of Thine eternal state, why am I still enclosed in the prison of mine own corruption?’ Not that this is either demanded in pride by the righteous, in that being inflamed with the love of the Truth they desire completely to surmount the narrow compass of their imperfect condition; nor yet that it is unjustly ordered by the Author of the just, in that in delaying the wishes of His Elect, He puts them to pain, and in paining purifies, that they may one day be the better enabled by that delay, for the receiving that they desire. But the Elect, so long as they are kept away from the interior rest, turn back into their own hearts, and being there buried from the tumults of the flesh, as it were seek a retreat of infinite delight. But therein they often feel the stings of temptation, and are subject to the goadings of the flesh, and there they meet with the hardest toils, where they had looked for perfect rest from toil. Hence the holy man after the prison of his state of corruption that he told of, hastening to return to the tranquil regions of the heart, seeing that he experienced in the interior also all that same strife, to escape which he fled from things without, adds immediately, saying,

Ver. 13, 14. *When I say my bed shall comfort me, I shall be eased in speaking with myself on my couch, then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.*

[xxiv]

41. For in Holy Writ a ‘bed,’ a ‘couch,’ or ‘litter,’ is usually taken for the secret depth of the heart. For it is hence that under the likeness of each separate soul, the Spouse, urged by the piercing darts of holy love, says in the Song of Songs, *By night on my bed I sought him, whom my soul loveth*. [Cant. 3, 1] For ‘by night and on the bed is the beloved sought,’ in that the appearance of the Invisible Creator, apart from every image of a bodily appearing, is found in the chamber of the heart. And hence ‘Truth’ saith to those same lovers of Him, *The kingdom of God is within you*. [Luke 17, 21] And again, *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come*. [John 16, 7] As if it were in plain words; ‘If I do not withdraw My Body from the eyes of your fixed regard, I lead you not by the Comforter, the Spirit, to the perception of the unseen.’ Hence it is said by the Psalmist of the just, *The Saints shall be joyful in glory, they shall rejoice upon their beds* [Ps. 149, 5]; in that when they flee the mischiefs from things without, they exult in safety within the recesses of their hearts. But the joy of the heart will then be complete, when the fight of the flesh shall have ceased without. For so long as the flesh allures, because as it were the wall of our house is shaken, even the very bed is disturbed. And hence it is rightly said by that Psalmist, *Thou hast made all his bed in his*

*sickness.* [Ps. 41, 3] For when temptation of the flesh moves us, our infirmity being made to tremble disturbs even the bed of the soul. But what do we understand in this place by 'dreams' and 'visions' saving the representations of the last searching Judgment? What we already have some slight glimpse of through fear, but do not see it as it really is. Thus holy men, as we have said, ever turn back to the secret recesses of the heart, when from the world without, they either meet with successes beyond their wishes, or with adversities beyond their strength, and, wearied with their toils without, they seek as a bed, or litter, the resting-places of the heart. But whilst by certain pictures of their imagination they see how searching the judgments of God are, they are as it were disturbed in their very repose on their beds by the vision of a dream. For they behold after what sort the strict Judge cometh, Who while with the power of infinite Majesty He lights up the secret recesses of the heart, will bring back every sin before our eyes. They bethink themselves what the shame of that is, to be confounded in the sight of the whole human race, of all the Angels and the Archangels. They reflect what agony is in store after that confounding, when at one and the same time guilt shall prey upon the soul imperishably perishing, and hell fire upon the flesh unfailingly failing. When, then, the mind is shaken by so terrific a conception, what else is this but that a sad dream is presented upon the bed? Therefore let him say, *When I say, My bed shall comfort me, and I shall be eased talking with myself on my couch; then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.* As if he confessed openly, saying, 'If fleeing from external things, I turn back into the interior, and am anxious in some sort to rest upon the bed of my heart, there, whilst Thou dost set me to [A.B.D. 'teach me'] the contemplation of Thy severity, Thou makest me to fear horribly by the mere images my foresight raises up.' Now it is well said, *And I shall be eased, talking with myself in my bed,* in that when we return wearied to the silence of our hearts, as it were holding converse on our beds, we handle the secret words of thought within ourselves. But this very converse of ours is turned into dread, in that thereby there is more forcibly presented to us in imagination the view, which holds out the terrors of the Judge.

#### [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

42. But lest anyone should be at pains to make out these words after the literal sense, it is of great importance to find out in how many ways the mind is affected by images from dreams. For sometimes dreams are engendered of fulness or emptiness of the belly, sometimes of illusion, sometimes of illusion and thought combined, sometimes of revelation, while sometimes they are engendered of imagination, thought, and revelation together. Now the two which we have named first, we all know by experience, while the four subjoined we find in the pages of Holy Writ. For except dreams were very frequently caused to come in illusion by our secret enemy, the Wise Man would never have pointed this out by saying, *For dreams and vain illusions have deceived many,* [Ecclus. 34, 7] or indeed, *Nor shall ye use enchantments, nor observe dreams.* [Lev. 19, 26. Vulg.] By which words it is shewn us how great an abomination they are, in that they are joined with 'auguries.' Again, excepting they sometimes came of thought and illusion together, Solomon would never have said, *For a dream cometh through the multitude of business.* [Eccl. 5, 3] And unless dreams sometimes had their origin in a mystery of a revelation, Joseph would never have seen himself in a dream appointed to be advanced above his brethren, nor would the espoused of Mary have been warned by the Angel in a dream to take the Child and to fly into Egypt. Again, unless dreams sometimes proceeded from thought and revelation together, the Prophet Daniel, in making out the vision of Nebuchadnezzar, would never have set out with thought as the root; *As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter,*



*and He That revealeth secrets maketh known to thee what shall come to pass.* [Dan. 2, 29] And soon afterwards, *Thou, O king, sawest and beheld a great image. This great image, that was great, and its stature lofty, stood before thee, &c.* [ver. 31] Thus while Daniel declares in awful terms the dream about to be fulfilled, and shews in what thoughts it had its rise, it is made plain and manifest that the thing very frequently proceeds from thought and revelation combined.

43. Now it is clear, that since dreams shift about in such a variety of cases they ought to be the less easily believed, in proportion as it less easily appears from what influencing cause they spring. For it often happens that to those, whom the Evil Spirit cuts off when awake through the love of the present life, he promises the successes of fortune even whilst they sleep, and those, whom he sees to be in dread of misfortunes, he threatens with them the more cruelly by the representations of dreams, that he may work upon the incautious soul by a different kind of influence, and either by elevating it with hope or sinking it with dread, may disturb its balance. Often too he sets himself to work upon the souls of the Saints themselves by dreams, that at least for a passing moment they may be thrown off the line of steady thought, though by their own act they straightway shake the mind clear of the delusive phantasy. And our designing foe, in proportion as he is utterly unable to get the better of them when awake, makes the deadlier assault upon them asleep. Whom yet the dispensation of the Highest in loving-kindness alone allows to do so in his malevolence, lest in the souls of the Elect their mere sleep, though nothing else, should go without the meed of suffering. Therefore it is well spoken to Him that ruleth over all, *When I say, my bed shall comfort me, I shall be eased talking with myself on my couch; then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.* Surely in that God ordereth all things wonderfully, even He Himself doth that thing, which the Evil Spirit seeks to do unjustly, whilst He letteth it not be done saving justly. Now forasmuch as the life of the righteous is at once assaulted on watch by temptation, and harassed in dreaming by illusion; undergoes without the mischiefs of its corruption, and within painfully carries in itself unlawful thoughts; what may it do in order to pluck the foot of the heart out of the mazes of such numberless entanglements? Yea, thou blessed man, with what dismay and trouble thou art every way compassed about we have learnt; now let us be informed, what plan thou dost devise to encounter the same. It goes on,

Ver. 15. *So that my soul chooseth hanging and my bones death.*

[xxv]

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

44. What is then represented by the soul but the bent of the soul, and by the bones, the strength of the flesh? Now every thing that is hung is assuredly lifted up from things beneath; therefore 'the soul chooseth hanging that the bones may die,' in that whilst the mind's intent lifts itself on high, it extinguishes all the strength of the exterior life in itself. For the Saints know it for a most certain truth, that they can never enjoy rest in the present life, and so they 'choose hanging,' in that quitting earthly objects of desire, they raise the mind on high. But whilst hung on high they inflict death on their bones, in that for love of the land above, having their loins girt in press and pursuit after virtuous attainments, all wherein they were afore time strong in the world, they load with the chain of self-abasement. It is well to mark how Paul had his soul suspended aloft, who said, *Nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* [Gal. 2, 20] And again; *Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] And, *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* [ver. 21] Who

recalling to mind the achievements of earthly strength, reckoned up as it were so many bones in himself, saying, *An Hebrew, of the Hebrews, as touching the Law a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church of God.* [Phil. 3, 5. 6.] But by that 'hanging' of his soul, how that he does to death these bones in himself, he immediately declares, in that he adds, *But what things were gain to me, these I counted loss for Christ.* [ver. 7] Which same bones he implies were still more mercilessly dealt with to destruction in himself, when he adds, *For whom I have made all things loss, and do count them but dung.* [ver. 8] But in what manner he hung without life and his bones all dead, he shews, in that he adds in that place, saying, *That I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ.* [ver. 9] But whereas by bringing together his declarations we have avouched Paul to have been suspended aloft dead to the world, let us now shew whether blessed Job, being filled with the same Spirit, eschews the concupiscence of the exterior life. It goes on, Ver. 16. *I have given over hope, I will not live any longer.*

[xxvi]

45. There be some of the righteous, who so entertain the desire of heavenly things, that, notwithstanding this, they are not broken off from the hope of things earthly. The inheritance bestowed on them by God they keep for the supply of necessities, the honours awarded them on a temporal footing they retain; they do not covet the things of others, they make a lawful use of their own. Yet these are strangers to those same things that they have, in that they are not bound in affection to those very goods which they keep in their possession. And there are some of the righteous, who bracing themselves up to lay hold of the very height of perfection, whilst they aim at higher objects within, abandon all things without, who bare themselves of the goods possessed by them, strip themselves of the pride of honours, who by continuance in a grateful sorrow affect their hearts with longing for the things of the interior, refuse to receive consolation from those that are exterior, who whilst in spirit they drink of the inward joys, wholly extinguish in themselves the life of corporeal enjoyment. For it is said by Paul to such as these, *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* [Col. 3, 3] The Psalmist spoke in their voice, when he said, *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.* [Ps. 84, 2] For they 'long' but do not 'faint,' who are already imbued indeed with heavenly desires, but notwithstanding are still not tired of the enjoyments of earthly objects. But he 'longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord,' who whilst he desires the eternal world, doth not hold on in the love of the temporal. Hence the Psalmist saith again, *My soul fainteth for Thy salvation.* [Ps. 119, 81] Hence 'Truth' bids us by His own lips, saying, *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.* [Luke 9, 23] And again; *Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.* [Luke 14, 33] Thus the holy man, his soul parted from earthly objects of desire, sets himself in the number of such as those, when he saith, *I have given over hope, I will not live any longer.* Since for a righteous man 'to give over hope' is to quit the good things of the present life, in making choice of eternity, and to put no trust in temporal possessions. And whilst doing this, he declares that he 'will not live any longer,' in that by a quickening death he is daily killing himself to the life of passion [f]. For be it far from us to think that the holy man should despair of the bountifulness of God's mercy, that he should withdraw the step of the heart from advancing in the interior way, that forsaking the love of the Creator he should as it were stop on the road lacking a guide, and pierced with the sword of rifling despair, be brought to ruin. But lest we seem violently to wrest his sayings according to the caprice of our own view, we ought to form our estimate of what is

promised by that which follows after. For in what sense he said this, he does himself immediately point out, in that he adds,  
*Spare me, O Lord, [g] for my days are nothing.*

[xxvii]

46. For neither do the two words agree together, *I have given over hope*, and, *spare me*. For he that 'gives over hope,' no longer begs to be spared; and he who is still anxious to be spared, is surely far from 'giving over hope.' It is on one sort of grounds then that he 'gives over hope,' and on another that the holy man prays to be spared; in that whilst he abandons the good things of this transitory life in 'giving over the hope' thereof, he rises more vigorous in hope for the securing of those that shall endure. So that in 'giving over hope,' he is the more effectually brought to the hope of pardon, who seeks the things to come so much the more determinately, in proportion as he more thoroughly forsakes those of the present time in giving up hope. And we are to take notice, that when teaching us the strength of his heart, he delivered indeed but one sentiment about himself, but in teaching it to us he has repeated it a third time. For what he had said above, *My soul chooseth hanging*, it was in repeating this, that he added the words, *I have given over hope*, and in aiming at the blessings of eternity, and putting behind those of time, he last of all brought in this, *Spare me*. And what he said above, *And my bones death*, this same it was that he added, *I will not live longer*, and this he delivered to end with, *for my days are nothing*. But he lightly considers that his 'days are nothing,' because as we have often remarked already a little above, holy men, the more thoroughly they are acquainted with things above, in the same proportion they look down upon the things of earth from a loftier height. And therefore they see that the days of the present life are 'nothing,' because they have the eyes of their illumined soul fixed in the contemplation of eternity. And when they return thence to themselves, what do they find themselves to be but dust? And being conscious of their frailty, they are in dread of being judged with severity; and when they regard the force of that vast Energy, they tremble to have it put to the test what they are. And hence it is further added with propriety,  
V er. 17. *What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?*

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[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

47. God magnifieth man, in that He enriches him with the bountiful gift of reason, visits him with the inspiration of grace, exalts him with the greatness of imparted virtue; and whereas he is nothing in himself, yet through the bounty of His lovingkindness He vouchsafes to him to be a partaker of the knowledge of Himself. And the Lord 'setteth His heart upon man' so magnified, in that after His gifts He brings forth judgment, weighs merits with exactness, rigidly tries the weights of life, and exacts punishment from him afterwards the more strictly, in proportion as He prevents him here more bounteously by the benefit bestowed. So then let the holy man view the immensity of the Supreme Majesty, and recall the eye of reflection to his own frailty. Let him see that flesh cannot comprehend that which Truth through the Spirit teaches concerning Himself. Let him see that man's spirit, even when it is lifted up, is not able to bear the Judgment, which God holds over it, on a trial of strict recompensing, and let him say, *What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him? and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?* As though he cried out in plain words, saying, 'Man is magnified with a spiritual gift, but yet he is flesh, and after Thy gifts, Thou takest strict

account of his ways; yet if he be judged with pity set aside, the weight that rests over him from Thine exactness, not even the spirit that is raised to righteousness has strength to sustain, seeing that though Thy gifts draw him out beyond his own compass, yet at the inquest of Thy strict scrutiny his own frailty contracts him.' And hence it is fitly added still further;  
Ver. 18. *And that Thou shouldest visit him in the dawn, and try him suddenly?*

[xxix]

48. Which is there of us that does not know that it is called the 'dawn,' when the night season is now changing into the brightness of light? so we too are closed in by the darkness of night, when we are dimmed by the practice of wickedness; but the night is turned into light, when the darkness of our erring state is illuminated by knowledge of the Truth. The night is turned into light, when the splendour of righteousness lights up our hearts, which the blindness of sin lay heavy upon. This dawn Paul saw rise in the minds of the disciples, when he said, *The night is far spent, the day is at hand.* [Rom. 13, 12] And so the Lord 'visits us at the dawn,' in that He illumines the darkness of our state of error with the light of the knowledge of Himself, uplifts us with the gift of contemplation, exalts us to the stronghold of virtue. But it is to be observed, that after God 'visits him at the dawn,' He 'tries man suddenly,' in that both in drawing near He advances our souls to virtuous heights, and in withdrawing Himself He suffers them to be assaulted with temptation. For if after the bestowal of the gifts of virtue, she is never moved by any assault of temptation, the soul boasts that she has these of herself. Therefore that she may at one and the same time enjoy the gifts of a firm state, and humbly acknowledge her own state of infirmity, by the visitation of grace she is lifted up on high, and by the withdrawal of the same, it is proved what she is in herself. Which is well intimated to us in the history of the book of sacred reading, wherein Solomon is recorded both to have received wisdom from on high, and yet directly after that very wisdom was received, to have been assailed by the disputing of the harlots. [1 Kings 3, 16, &c.] For immediately after he had received the grace of that great enlightenment, he was exposed to the strife of base women; for that oftentimes when the visiting of the interior bounty illuminates our mind with virtues vouchsafed it, even filthy imaginations forthwith disorder it, that the soul, which being lifted up exults in the immensity of the gift, being at the same time struck by temptation, may discover what she is. So Elijah both being visited at the dawn, opened the doors of heaven by a word, and yet being 'tried suddenly,' fleeing helpless through the desert, was in dread of a single woman. [1 Kings 19, 3] Thus Paul is carried to the third heaven, and penetrating into the secrets of Paradise, he is held in contemplation; and yet when he returns to himself, travails against the assaults of the flesh, and is subject to another law in his members, by whose rebellion within him he grieves to see the law of the Spirit hard bestead. [2 Cor. 12, 2] Therefore God 'visits at the dawn,' but, after this visiting, He 'tries suddenly,' in that He both lifts up by the gift vouchsafed, and by the same being for a while withdrawn, shews unaided [*ipsum*] man to himself. Which doubtless we are so long subject to, until the time, when the pollution of sin being clean taken away, we be renewed to the substance of promised incorruption. Hence it is fitly added yet further,  
Ver. 19. *How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone until I swallow down my spittle.*

[xxx]

49. The spittle runs into the mouth from the head, but from the mouth it is carried into the belly by being swallowed. And what is our head saving the Deity, through Whom we derive the original of our being, so as to be 'creature,' as Paul bears witness, who declares, *The head of every man is*

*Christ, and the head of Christ is God*; and what is our belly, saving the mind, which, whilst it takes its food, i.e. heavenly perception, being invigorated, doth surely rule the members of the several actions. For except Holy Writ did sometimes describe the mind by the name of 'the belly,' Solomon surely would never have said, *The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly*; [Prov. 20, 27] forasmuch as whilst the grace of heavenly visitation illumines us, it discloses even all the depths of the mind that are hidden from our sight. What then is meant by the term 'spittle,' but the savour of interior contemplation, which runs down from the head to the mouth, in that issuing from the brightness of the Creator, whilst we are still set in this life, it but just touches us with a taste of revelation. And hence the Redeemer at His coming mixed the spittle with clay, and restored the eyes of him that was born blind, [John 9, 6] in that heavenly grace enlightens the carnal bent of our hearts, by a mixture of the contemplation of Itself, and from his original blindness restores man anew to perception. For whereas nature henceforth brought him forth in this place of exile, since he was banished from all the joys of Paradise, man was produced from his birth, as it were, without eyes. But, as the holy man teaches, this spittle runs into the mouth indeed, but that it should not reach into the belly, it is not swallowed down, in that the contemplation of the Divine Being grazes the sense, but does not perfectly refresh the mind, because the soul is unable perfectly to behold what as yet, the mist of corruption impeding the view, it sees by a hasty glimpse.

50. For see how the soul of the Elect already bears down all earthly desires beneath itself, already mounts above all the objects that it sees are of a nature to pass away, is already lifted up from the enjoyment of external delights, and closely searches what are the invisible good things, and in doing the same is carried away into the sweetness of heavenly contemplation; already very often it sees something of the interior world as it were through the mist, and with burning desire strives to the utmost to be admitted to the spiritual ministries of the Angels, feeds on the taste of the Light Incomprehensible, and being carried out of self disdains to sink back again into self; for forasmuch as the body, which is in the way to corruption, still weighs down the soul, it has not power to attach itself to the Light for long, which it sees in a momentary glimpse. For the mere infirmity of the flesh by itself drags down the soul, as it mounts above itself, and brings it down, as it aspires, to provide for low cares and wants. And so spittle flowing from the head touches the mouth, but never reaches to the belly; in that our understanding indeed is henceforth watered with the dews of heavenly contemplation, but the soul is not at all fully satisfied. For in the mouth is the taste, but fulness in the belly; and so we cannot 'swallow down our spittle,' in that we are not suffered to fill ourselves with the excellency of heavenly brightness, which we taste as yet but in a sip. But whereas this very same that we are already in some slight degree made acquainted with above us, comes from the pitifulness of One that spareth, while that we cannot as yet obtain a perfect perception of it is of the punishment of the old curse still, it is rightly said now, *How long dost Thou not spare me, nor let me alone, till I swallow down my spittle?* As if it were in plain words; 'Then Thou dost perfectly spare man, when Thou admittest Him to the perfect measure of the contemplation of Thee; that being transported he may behold Thy brightness in the interior, and no corruption of his flesh without should hold him back. Then 'thou lettest me alone till I swallow down my spittle, when Thou replenishest me with the savour of Thy brightness even to the very overflow of fulness, that I should never henceforth go a hungered, with but a taste of the mouth, through lack of food, but be stedfastly stayed in Thee, the belly of my interior being watered.' But whoso would obtain the good that he desires must acknowledge the evil that he has done. The account goes on.

Ver.20. *I have sinned; what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men?*

[xxxix]

51. Observe how he confesses the ill that he has done, but the good that he should present to God in compensation, he no where can find, in that all virtue whatever of human practice is without power to wash out the guilt of sin, except His mercifulness in sparing foster it, and not His justice in judging press hard upon it. Whence it is well said by the Psalmist, *Because Thy mercy is better than the life*; [Ps. 63, 3] in that howsoever innocent it may seem to be, yet with the strict Judge our life doth not set us free, if the lovingkindness of His mercy loose not to it the debt of its guilt. Or indeed when it is said, *What shall I do unto Thee?* it is plainly, shewn us that those very good things, which we are commanded to practise, are not a gain to Him that imposes the command, but to ourselves. Whence it is said again by the Psalmist, *My goodness extendeth not unto Thee*. [Ps. 16, 2] Now the abjectness of our destitution is set forth, when God is called the 'Preserver of men,' in that if His preserving hand defend us not in the face of the snares of the secret adversary, the eye of our heedfulness sleeps on watch, as the Psalmist again bears record, who saith, *Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain*. [Ps. 127, 1] For it is through ourselves, that we have been brought to the ground, but to rise again by our own strength is beyond our ability. The fault of our own will laid us low once, but the punishment of our fault sinks us worse day by day. We strive by the efforts of our earnest endeavours, to lift ourselves to the uprightness we have lost, but we are kept down by the weight of our just dues. And hence it is fitly added, *Why hast Thou set me opposite to Thee, so that I am a burthen to myself?*

[xxxix]

52. Then did God 'set man opposite to Him,' when man forsook God by sinning. For being taken captive by the persuasions of the Serpent, he became the enemy of Him, Whose precepts he despised. But the righteous Creator 'set man opposite to Himself,' in that He accounted him an enemy by pride. And this very oppositeness of sin is itself made a weight of punishment to man, that he being wrongly free, might serve his own corruption, who while serving rightly exulted in the freedom of incorruption. For quitting the healthful stronghold of humility, he was brought by growing proud to the yoke of infirmity, and in erecting only bowed down the neck of the heart, in that he who refused to submit to the behests of God, prostrated himself beneath his own necessities; which we shall shew the better, if we set forth those burthens, first of the flesh and afterwards of the spirit, which he is made subject to after being cast down to the ground.

53. For to say nothing of this, that he is liable to pains, that he gasps with fever; the very state of our body, which is called health, is straitened by its own sickness. For it wastes with idleness, it faints with work; failing with not eating, it is refreshed by food so as to hold up; going heavily with sustenance, it is relieved by abstinence, so as to be vigorous; it is bathed in water, not to be dry; it is wiped with towels, not by that very bathing to be too wet; it is enlivened by labour, that it may not be dulled by repose; it is refreshed by repose, that it faint not under the exertion of labour; worn with watching, it is recruited by sleep; oppressed with sleep, it is roused to activity by watching, lest it be worse wearied by its own rest; it is covered with clothing, lest it be pierced by the hardship of cold; fainting under the heat it sought, it is invigorated by the blowing of the air. And whereas it meets with annoyances from the very quarter whence it sought to shelter itself from

annoyances, being badly wounded, so to say, it sickens by its own cure. Therefore fevers set aside and pains not in action, our very breath itself is sickness, whereunto there is never wanting the necessity of administering a cure. Since whatever the comforts we seek out for occasion of life, we as it were meet with so many medicines of our sickness; but the very medicine itself too is turned into a sore, in that attaching ourselves a little too long to the remedy we sought, we are more brought down in that which we prudently provide for our refreshment. Thus was presumption to be amended, thus was pride to be laid low. For whereas we once took to us a high spirit, so every day we carry the mud that runneth down.

54. Our very mind too itself being banished from the secure delight of interior secresy, is now beguiled by hope, now tormented by fear; one while cast down by grief, at another time made light by a false mirth; it obstinately attaches itself to transitory objects, and is continually afflicted by the loss of them, in that it is also continually undergoing change by a course that carries it away; and being made subject to things changeable, it is also made to be at odds with its own self. For seeking what it has not got, it anxiously obtains it, and so soon as it has begun to possess the same, is sick of having obtained what it sought after. Oftentimes it loves what it once despised, and despises what, it used to love. It learns by dint of pains what are the things of eternity, but it forgets them in a moment, if it cease to take pains. It takes a long time to seek, that it may find, but a little concerning the things above, but speedily falling, back into its wonted ways, not even for a little space does it hold on in the things it has found. Desiring to be instructed, with difficulty it gets the better of its ignorance, and being so instructed it has a harder contest against the pride of knowledge; with difficulty it subjects to itself the usurping power of its fleshly part, yet it is still subject to the images of sin within, the works whereof it has already in vanquishing bound down without. It raises itself in quest of its Creator, but being thrown back, it is bewildered by the beguiling mist of corporeal attachments [h]. It desires to survey itself, and to see how being incorporeal it bears rule over the body, and it cannot. It asks in a wonderful way what it is unable to answer itself, and remaining ignorant is at a loss under that, which it inquires with a wise purpose. Viewing itself as large and scanty at once, it knows nothing how to form a true estimate of itself, in that if it were not large it would not be seeking matters of so deep enquiry, and again if it were not little, it would at least find that which it asks of itself.

55. Well therefore is it said, *Thou hast set me opposite to Thee, so that I am a burthen to myself*, in that whilst man being banished is both subject to annoyances in the flesh, and to perplexities in the mind, surely he carries about his own self as a grievous burthen. On every side he is beset with sicknesses, on every side he is hard bestead with infirmities, that he who, having abandoned God, thought to suffice to himself for his repose, might find nought in himself but a turmoil of disquietude, and might try to fly from himself so found, but having set his Creator at nought, might not have where to fly. The burthens of which state of infirmity that wise man rightly regarding, exclaims, *An heavy yoke is upon the Sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb, till the day that they return to the mother of all things*. [Ecclus. 40, 1] But blessed Job regarding these things, and seeking with groans wherefore they were so ordered, does not reproach justice, but interrogates mercy; that in asking he may himself in self-abasement deal a blow to that, which the Divine pity might in sparing alter. As if he said in plain words; 'Wherefore dost Thou despise man set as in opposition to Thee, Who, I am assured, wouldest not that even he should perish whom Thou art thought to despise?' Whence he proceeds in a right way both to express humility in confession, and to subjoin the voice of free inquiry in the words,

Ver. 21. *And why dost Thou not take away my transgression, and remove mine iniquity?*

[xxxiii]

56. By which same words, what else is intimated but the desire of the expected Mediator, concerning Whom John saith, *Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world.* [John 1, 29] Or rather sin is then completely taken away from mankind, when our corruption is changed in the glory of incorruption. For we can never be free from sin so long as we are held fast in a body of mortality, and therefore he longs for the grace of the Redeemer, i.e. for the wholeness [*soliditatem*] of the Resurrection, who is looking to have his iniquity entirely 'taken away.' Hence immediately after adding both the punishment which was his due by birth, and the Judgment which he dreads in consequence of his own doings, he proceeds,  
*For now shall I sleep in the dust, and if Thou shalt seek me in the morning, I shall not abide.*

[xxxiv]

57. It was said to the first man on his sinning, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* [Gen. 3, 19] Now by the 'morning,' is meant that manifestation of souls, which, when the thoughts are laid bare at the coming of the Judge, is as it were brought to light after the darkness of night. Of which same morning, it is said by the Psalmist, *In the morning I shall stand before Thee and shall see* [i]. [Ps. 5, 3. Vulg.] Now God's 'seeking' is His searching man with a minute inquest, and, in searching, judging him with rigorous strictness. Therefore let blessed Job, surveying the miseries of man's fallen condition, see how that he is both already closely pressed by a present punishment, and in yet worse plight as concerns the future, and let him say, *For now shall I sleep in the dust, and if Thou shalt seek me in the morning, I shall not abide.* As if he openly lamented, saying, 'In the present life indeed I already undergo the death of the flesh, and yet still further from the Judgment to come I dread a worse death, even the doom of Thy severity. I suffer destruction for sin, yet further on coming to Judgment I dread my sins being brought up again even after my dissolution. Therefore looking at the external death, let him say, *For now shall I sleep in the dust,* and dreading the interior let him add, *And if Thou shalt seek me in the morning, I shall not abide.* For however strong in righteousness, even the very Elect by no means suffice to themselves for innocency, if they be strictly examined in Judgment. But they find it now for an alleviation of their withdrawal hence, that they know in their humility that they never can suffice. Therefore they shelter themselves under the covering of humility from the sword of such a grievous visitation, and in proportion as awaiting the terribleness of the Judge to come, they tremble with continual alarm, so there is an unceasing progress in their becoming better prepared. It goes on,  
C. viii. 1, 2. *Then answered Bildad, the Shuhite, and said, How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the breath* [V. so.] *of thy mouth be multiplied?*

[xxxv]

58. To the unrighteous the words of the righteous are ever grievous, and such as they hear spoken for edification, they bear as a burthen put upon them. As Bildad, the Shuhite, plainly indicates in his own case, when he says, *How long wilt thou speak these things?* For he that says *how long*, shews that he cannot any longer bear words of edification. But whereas unfair men are too proud to be set right, they find fault with the things that are spoken well; and hence he immediately adds,



*And how long shall the breath of the words of thy mouth be multiplied?* When multiplicity is blamed in the speech, surely it is thereby denied that there is weight of meaning in the sense. For the power of speakers on the highest matters is distinguished by a fourfold quality. For there be some whom fulness in speaking and thinking combined give width and compass, and there be some whom meagreness both of thought and utterance reduces to small dimensions; and there are some who are furnished with ability in speaking, but not with penetration in thinking; and there are some, who have penetration of thought to support them, but from barrenness of expression are made silent. For we discover the same in man that we often see in things without sense. Thus it very often happens that both an abundant supply of water is obtained from the deep of the earth, and that it is conveyed by ample channels upon the surface; and very often a scanty quantity lies concealed in the heart of the earth, and hardly finding a crevice to issue by, strains itself out in scanty dimensions without. Very often too the smallest quantity springs up out of reach of the eye, and when it finds an outlet gaping wide whereby it may issue forth from an ample opening, it swells out in a thin stream, and the big channels open themselves wide, but there is not aught for them to pour forth; and very often an ample store springs up out of sight, but being confined by narrow channels, it dribbles out in the smallest quantities. Just so in one sort the ample mouth delivers what the copious fountain of the wit supplies; in another, neither does thought furnish sense, nor the tongue pour it forth. In others, the mouth indeed is wide to speak, but for the giving out that which thought has provided for it, the tongue gets nothing at all; whilst in others, a full fountain of thought abounds in the heart, but a disproportionate tongue, like a scanty channel, confines it. In which same four sorts of speaking, the third only is obnoxious to blame, which appropriates to itself by words that, to the level whereof it doth not rise in wit. For the first is worthy of praise, in that it is powerful and strong in both particulars. The second deserves commiseration, which in its littleness lacks both. The fourth calls for aid, in that it has not power to embody what it thinks. But the third is worthy to be despised and ought to be restrained, in that while it lifts itself high in speech it is grovelling in sense; and like limbs swoln with inflation, it goes forth to the ears of the hearers big but void. And it is this which Bildad hurls as an accusation against blessed Job, saying, *And how long shall the words of the breath of thy mouth be multiplied?* For he that attributes multiplicity of words to the mouth, doubtless finds fault with the barrenness of the heart. As if he said in plain words, 'Thou art raised by abundance of breath in word of mouth, but thou art stinted by scantiness of sense.' But when bad men blame right things, lest they should themselves appear not to know what is righteous, the good things that are known of all men, and which they have learnt by hearsay, they deliver as unknown. And hence Bildad adds directly,  
Ver. 3. *Doth God pervert judgment? Or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*

[xxxvi]

59. These things blessed Job had neither in speaking denied, nor yet was ignorant of them in holding his tongue. But all bold persons, as we have said, speak with big words even well known truths, that in telling of them they may appear to be learned. They scorn to hold their peace in a spirit of modesty, lest they should be thought to be silent from ignorance. But it is to be known that they then extol the rectitude of God's justice, when security from ill uplifts themselves in joy, while blows are dealt to other men; when they see themselves enjoying prosperity in their affairs, and others harassed with adversity. For whilst they do wickedly, and yet believe themselves righteous, the benefit of prosperity attending them, they imagine to be due to their own merits; and they infer that God does not visit unjustly, in proportion as upon themselves, as being righteous, no cloud of

misfortune falls. But if the power of correction from above touch their life but in the least degree, being struck they directly break loose against the policy of the Divine inquest, which a little while before, unharmed, they made much of in expressing admiration of it, and they deny that judgment to be just, which is at odds with their own ways; they canvass the equity of God's dealings, they fly out in words of contradiction, and being chastened because they have done wrong, they do worse. Hence it is well spoken by the Psalmist against the confession of the sinner, *He will confess to Thee, when Thou doest well to him.* [Ps. 49, 18] For the voice of confession is disregarded, when it is shaped by the joyfulness of prosperity. But that confession alone possesses merit of much weight, which the force of pain has no power to part from the truth of the rule of right, and which adversity, the test of the heart, sharpens out even to the sentence of the lips. Therefore it is no wonder that Bildad commends the justice of God, in that he experiences no hurt therefrom.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

60. Now whereas we have said that the friends of blessed Job bear the likeness of heretics, it is well for us to point out briefly, how the words of Bildad accord with the wheedling ways of heretics. For whilst in their own idea they see Holy Church corrected with temporal visitations, they swell the bolder in the bigness of their perverted preaching, and putting forward the righteousness of the Divine probation, they maintain that they prosper by virtue of their merits; but they avouch that she is rewarded with deserved chastisements, and thereupon without delay they seek by beguiling words a way to steal upon her, in the midst of her sorrows, and they strike a blow at the lives of some, by making the deaths of others a reproach, as if those were now visited with deserved death, who refused to hold worthy opinions concerning God. Hence Bildad the Shuhite, after he pleaded the justice of God, thereupon adds,

*Ver.4-6. Even if thy children have sinned against Him, and He have left them in the hand of their transgression; yet if thou wilt seek to God at dawn, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wilt walk pure and upright; surely now He will awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness at peace.*

[xxxvii]

61. As if the preachers of falsities were to say to afflicted Catholics, 'Provide for your lives, and learn what wrong things ye maintain from the condemnation of those that are dead from among you. For except your misbelief were displeasing to the Creator of all things, He would never take from you such numbers [k] by destruction let loose to rage against them.' For he says, *If thy children have sinned against Him, and He have left them in the hand of their transgression.* As though he said in plain speech, 'They are left in the hand of their own wickedness, that refused to follow the life of our right rule.' Yet if thou wilt arise to God at dawn, and make thy supplication to the Almighty. For inasmuch as heretics think that the light of truth rests with themselves, they bid and summon Holy Church, as being in the night of error, to come to the dawning of the truth, that in the knowledge of God it may be led to rise, as in the dawning light, and by the prayer of penitence wash off past misdeeds. *If thou wilt walk pure and upright;* that is to say, pure in thought, upright in practice. Surely now He will awake for thee. As if it were in plain words, 'that He, Who now forbears to put forth the power of His protecting hand to thy tribulations, is as if asleep to the succouring of one going wrong.' And make the habitation of thy righteousness at peace, i.e. 'does away with the crosses of the present life, and vouchsafes without delay security in

repose.’ For because men that are bad reckon temporal enjoyment as a special blessing of Divine recompensing, what they themselves go after with solicitous concern, they promise to others as something great. Hence it very often happens that they either pledge themselves to regain them when lost, or draw on the minds of their hearers after still greater rewards of this world. Which Bildad openly expresses, when he adds upon that,

Ver. 7. *Insomuch that though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase.*

[xxxviii]

62. But if it is counsel within the soul that he calls ‘the habitation of righteousness,’ the leaders of false opinions promise afflicted Catholics ‘the habitation of their righteousness at peace,’ in that if they draw them to their own views, then indeed they hold their peace from opposition. For those who have let themselves be drawn into that which is wrong, are the more lulled to rest in temporal peace, in proportion as they are parted the wider from eternal peace. Moreover they promise that the riches of understanding shall be increased to all that follow them. And hence it is added, *Insomuch that though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end shalt greatly increase.* Then because they do not easily obtain credit to their words, in that their life is often shewn to be worthy of contempt, they put forward the opinions of the Fathers of old, and turn the right line they take into a proof of their own erring way, Hence it is added, .

Ver. 8. *For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and diligently search into the memory of the fathers.*

[xxxix]

63. They give us notice that ‘the former generation’ and ‘the memory of the fathers’ are not seen but ‘searched,’ because they will not have that to be seen therein, which lies open before the eyes of all men. But sometimes, like good men, they give some instruction of a moral kind, and shew how the present may be gathered from the past; and from the things which are even now withdrawn from our eyes by passing away, they shew how little there is in the things that are seen before our eyes. Whence it is yet further added,

Ver. 9. *For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are but a shadow.*

[xl]

64. And so the generation of old is set before us to be inquired of, that the period of the present life may be shewn to pass away like a shadow; in this way, that if we recall to mind the things that have been and are now over, we clearly see how swiftly that also will be gone which we have in our hands. But it often happens that heretics go along with us in extolling the same fathers whom we venerate; but their sense being perverted, they strike at us by those very commendations of them. Hence it is yet further added,

Ver. 10. *Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*

[xli]

65. We must mark what he had said before, *And the inspiration* [‘spiritus,’ as before] *of the words of thy mouth is multiplied*. But now when the fathers are brought to mind, he says, *They shall utter words out of their heart*. As though heretics abhorring the life of Holy Church said, ‘Thou hast abundance of inspiration in thy mouth, in thy heart thou hast none of it. But they are to be heard in opposition, who, in uttering words from the heart, have taught the right thing by living like it.’ But oftentimes the wicked, whereas the evil of their own crookedness is unknown to them, boldly pull in pieces the uprightness of others, and while they usurp to themselves authority of pronouncing rebukes against good men, they either deliver those good sentiments, which they have imbibed not by seeing but by hearing them, or else with lying lips lay that evil to the charge of others, which they are themselves guilty of committing. But when they give utterance to good thoughts, which they scorn to observe, it is to be remarked that very frequently Truth so speaks by the lips of her adversaries, that in putting their tongue in motion it smites their life. So that in telling of the highest perfection of righteousness while they know nothing of it, they themselves are rendered at once both judges by their words and accusers by their deeds.

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Hence Bildad subjoins words of wondrous truth against hypocrites, but he is running himself through with the point of his discourse. For unless he were himself in some slight degree a pretender of righteousness, he would never venture to teach a good man with so much temerity. And indeed they are words of singular force that he speaks, but they ought to have been addressed to fools, not to a wise man; to the wicked, not to a good person; in that he proclaims himself no less than insane, who, when the gardens are parched, pours water into the river. But in the mean time, laying aside the question to whom the thing is said, let us weigh well and minutely what it is that is said, that the sentiments delivered may edify ourselves, even though they assail the character of their Author. It goes on,

Ver. 11. *Can the rush grow up without moisture? can the flag grow without water?*

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

To whom Bildad compares ‘the rush’ and ‘the flag,’ he himself immediately discloses, when he adds;

Ver. 12, 13. *Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb. So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.*

66. So that by the name of ‘a rush’ or ‘a flag,’ he denotes the life of the hypocrite, which has an appearance of greenness, but has no fruit of usefulness for the services of man, which continuing dry in barrenness of practice, is green with only the colour of sanctity alone. But neither does a rush grow without moisture, nor a flag without water, in that the life of hypocrites receives indeed the infused grace of the heavenly gift for the doing of good works, but in whatsoever it does seeking praises without, it proves void of fruit of the infused grace vouchsafed it. For they often perform wonderful deeds of miraculous power, they expel demons from bodies possessed, and by the gift of prophecy, by knowing anticipate things to come, yet they are separated from the Giver of so many blessings in the bent of the thought of their heart. For through His gifts they seek not His glory, but their own applause. And whereas by the benefits vouchsafed them they raise themselves in their own praise, they are assailing their Benefactor with the very gifts of His bounty. For they

behave themselves proudly against Him that gave them, from the very circumstance whereby they should have been rendered the more thoroughly humble towards Him. But a judgment the more unsparing smites them hereafter, in proportion as heavenly Goodness now pours upon them even in their ingratitude the dew of His blessing in larger measure. And the fulness of the gift turns to the increase of condemnation to them, because when they are watered they bear no fruit, but under a hue of green rear themselves on high in barrenness. These 'Truth' well describes in the Gospel, saying, *Many shall say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.* [Matt. 7, 22. 23.] Thus neither the rush nor the flag lives without water, because hypocrites do not take the greenness of good works, save by gift from above; but because they appropriate it to the use of their own applause, they grow green indeed in the water, but barren.

67. Now it is well added, *Whilst it is yet in his flower, nor plucked with the hand, it withereth before any other herb.* 'The rush in his flower' is the hypocrite in esteem. Now the rush springing up with sharp edges is not plucked with the hand, in that the hypocrite, having his feelings sharpened by presumption, disdains to be rebuked for his wickedness. In his flower he gashes the hand that plucketh him, in that the hypocrite in the midst of applause, that no one may dare to rebuke him, by his cutting tongue wounds the life of the rebuker without delay. For he desires not to be holy, but to be called holy; and when he may chance to be rebuked, it is as if he were lopped off in the full bloom of his reputation. He is enraged to be found out in his wickedness, he forbids the man that brings his guilt home to him to address him, in that he is as it were pained by being touched in a secret wound. Such as he was known to the ignorant, he would wish to be accounted of all men, and readier to lay down his life than to be reprimanded, he is made worse by censure, because he accounts the word of disinterested goodness as the dart of deadly smiting. Hence in exasperated passion he directly rises in abuse, and looks about for all the evil he can rake together against the life of his rebuker. He longs to prove him beyond all comparison guilty, that he may make himself out innocent, not by his own doings, but by the guilt of others; so that often the person repents that he has uttered a word of censure, and that just as from the hand of one plucking any thing, so from the mind of the person chiding, there runs out as it were the blood of sorrow, if I may say so. Hence it is well said by Solomon, *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee.* For it is not proper for the good man to fear, lest the scorner should utter abuse at him when he is chidden; but lest being drawn into hatred, he should be made worse.

68. And here it is necessary to be known, that the excellencies of good men, as they begin from the heart, go on increasing to the very end of the present life; but the practices of hypocrites, seeing that they are not rooted in secret, often come to nought before the present life is ended. For very frequently they devote themselves to the study of sacred scholarship, and because they prosecute it not for providing a store of merits, but for procuring commendations, the moment that they get hold of the sentence of human applause, and thereby secure the boon of transitory success, they give themselves with all their heart to worldly concerns, and are completely emptied of sacred scholarship, and by their way of acting afterwards, they shew how much they love the things of time, who before only had those of eternity alone on their lips. But it is very often the case that they exhibit an appearance of maturity put on, they shew fair by the composure of silence, by the forbearance of long suffering, by the virtue of continence; but when by means of these they have reached the height of the honour that they aimed at, and when respect is henceforth bestowed on

them by all men, they immediately begin to let themselves out in wantonness of self-gratification, and they are their own witnesses against themselves that they held none of their good derived from the heart, in that they parted with it so soon.

But sometimes there are persons found who give all they possess, and lavish all their goods upon the needy, yet before the end of their life, inflamed with the itch of avarice, they covet the goods of others, who seemed to be giving their own with a lavish hand; and afterwards with determined cruelty they go after that, which they had given up before with pretended piety. And hence it is rightly said in this place, *Whilst it is yet in his flower, and not yet plucked with the hand, it withereth before any other herb*. For as to their fleshly part even the righteous are herbs, as the Prophet bears witness, who saith, *All flesh is grass*. But 'the rush' is said to 'wither before all other herbs;' in that while the righteous continue in their goodness, the life of hypocrites is dried up from the greenness of assumed uprightness. Even the rest of the herbs wither, because the deeds of the righteous come to an end together with the life of the flesh. But the 'rush' precedes the withering of the herbs, for before the hypocrite passes out of the flesh, he gives over the deeds of virtuous habits which he had manifested in himself. Concerning which same it is also well said by the Psalmist, *Let them be as the grass upon the housetop, which withereth afore it be plucked up*. [Ps. 129, 6] For 'the grass upon the housetop' springeth up aloft, but it is never set firm with a rich soil, forasmuch as the hypocrite is seen practising the highest acts, but he is not stablished therein in purity of intention. Which same grass even when not plucked up soon withereth, for this reason, that the hypocrite at one and the same time still exists in the present life, and yet already parts with the practices of holiness as with the appearance of greenness. For because he went about to do good works without the purpose of a right heart, by losing these he shews that he flourished without a root.

69. But as we have before said, who he is to whom Bildad likens 'a rush' or 'a flag,' he makes plain at the moment, where he adds, *So are the paths of all that forget God, and the hypocrite's hope shall perish*. For what does the hypocrite hope for from all his deeds, saving the observance of honour, the reputation of applause, to be feared by his betters, to be called a Saint by all men? But the hope of the hypocrite can never endure, for, from not making eternity his aim, he hastes away from all that he holds in his hand. For the bent of his mind is not fixed in that glory which is possessed without end; but while he gapes after transient applause, he loses in the getting the thing that he toils for, as 'Truth' testifieth, Who saith, *Verily I say unto you, they have had their reward*. [Matt. 6, 2] Now this hope of being vouchsafed a reward cannot be maintained for long, seeing that honour is bestowed for the works exhibited, but life is pressing on to its close; praises are reechoed, but then along with them the periods of time are speeding to an end. And because the soul is in no wise rooted in the love of the eternal world, it slips away together with the very objects that it is centered in. For no one can attach himself to the moveable, and remain himself unmoved. For he that embraces transitory things is drawn into transition by the mere circumstance, that he is entangled with things running out their course. Therefore let him say, *And the hypocrite's hope shall perish*. For the applause of man, which he seeks with mighty pains, being driven on by the items of time, does run to nought. And it is well added, Ver. 14. *His own folly shall not satisfy him*.

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70. For it is infinite folly to labour painfully, and pant after the breath of applause, to apply one's self to the heavenly precepts with hard toil, but to aim at the reward of an earthly kind of recompense. For that I may so express myself, he that in return for the good that he practises looks for the applause of his fellowcreatures, is carrying an article of great worth to be sold at a mean price. From that whereby he might have earned the kingdom of heaven, he seeks the coin of passing talk. His practice goes for little, in that he spends a great deal, and gets back but very little. Whereunto then are hypocrites like but to luxuriant and untended vines, which put forth fruit from their fertility, but are never lifted from the earth by tending? All that the rich branches bud forth, stray beasts tread under foot, and the more fruitful they see it is, the more greedily they devour it, thus cast away and laid low, in that the works of hypocrites while they shew fair, come forth as if rich, but whilst they aim at human praises, it is as if they were left forsaken upon the ground. And the beasts of this world, i.e. the evil spirits, devour them, because they turn them to account to the end of perdition, and they seize upon them with greater avidity, in proportion as great things are more clearly known. Hence it is well said by the Prophet, *The standing stalk, there is no bud in them, and they shall yield no meal; if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.* [Hos. 8, 7. Vulg.] For the stalk is without a bud, when the life lacks the merit of virtuous habits. The stalk yieldeth no meal, when he that thrives in this world understands nothing refined, and yields no fruit of good practice.

71. But very often even when it has yielded meal, strangers eat it up, in that even when hypocrites do shew forth good works, the wishes of evil spirits are satisfied therewith. For those who do not aim to please God by them, do not feed the Owner of the land, but strangers. Thus the hypocrite, like a fruitful and neglected vine, cannot keep his fruit, because the cluster of good works lies prone upon the ground. Yet he is fed by his very own insanity itself, in that on the score of good practice he is esteemed of all men, he is set before others, he holds the minds of men in subjection, he is raised to the higher posts; he is fed high with applause. Now this folly of his satisfies him in the mean season, but it shall not satisfy him, in that when the season of retribution comes, it displeases him under punishment that he was foolish. Then he will perceive that he did foolishly, when, for the gratification of applause, he receives the sentence of God's rebuke. Then he sees that he has been senseless, when for the transitory glory that he obtained, everlasting torments are his bitter portion. Then punishments disclose the true knowledge to light, in that by them it must at once be concluded that all was nought that could pass away; and hence it is rightly added, *And whose trust shall be a spider's web.*

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72. The assurance of the hypocrite is rightly called like the webs of spiders, in that all the pains and labour they spend to acquire glory, the wind of the life of mortality blows to shreds. For as they never seek the things of eternity, they lose together with time all temporal good things. Moreover it is to be considered that spiders draw their threads in a regular order, for that hypocrites as it were regulate their works by the rule of discernment. The spider's web is woven with pains, but it is scattered by a sudden blast, in that whatsoever the hypocrite does with laborious effort, the breath of man's regard carries off; and whilst in the ambition of applause his work comes to nought, it is as if his labour went to the wind. For it often happens that the works of hypocrites last even to the very end of the present life, but, forasmuch as they do not thereby seek the praise of their Creator, they were never good works in the sight of God. Thus it is very often the case, as we have said

above, that they are upheld by scholarship in the sacred Law, that they deliver lessons of instruction, that they fortify by testimonies every notion that they entertain; but they do not hereby seek the life of their hearers, but applause for themselves. For neither do they know how to put forth any thing else but what may stir the hearts of their hearers to the quick, to pay the recompense of praise, not what may kindle them to shed tears. For the heart being preoccupied with external desires, is not hot with the fire of divine love, and so words that issue from a cold heart, can never warm their hearers to heavenly affection. For neither can anyone thing that is not itself alight in itself kindle any other thing. Hence it is very often brought to pass, that at one and the same time the sayings of hypocrites fail to instruct the hearers, and make the very persons themselves that utter them worse by being exalted with praises. For as Paul bears witness, *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*. [1 Cor. 8, 1] Thus, whereas charity setteth not up in 'edifying,' knowledge in puffing up overthrows. Very often hypocrites chasten themselves with extraordinary mortification, wear down all the strength of their body, and as it were while living in the flesh utterly kill the life of the flesh, and so by abstinence verge upon death, that they live well nigh dying every day; but they seek the eyes of men for all this, they look for the renown of admiration, as 'Truth' testifieth, Which saith, *For they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast*. [Matt. 6, 16] For their faces become pallid, the body is made to shake with weakness, the breast labours with hard and broken breathings. But amidst all this, talk of admiration is looked for from the lips of neighbours, and nothing else is aimed at by such great pains, saving human esteem. Which same are well represented by that Simon, who in the season of our Lord's Passion bore the Cross in compulsion, of whom it is written, *And as they came out they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name, him they compelled to bear His cross*. [Matt. 27, 32] For what we do by compulsion, we do not practise from a heartfelt devotedness of love. And so for him to bear the Cross of Jesus in compulsion, is to submit to the mortification of abstinence for some other aim than needs to be. Does he not bear the Cross of Jesus under compulsion, who as after the commandment of the Lord subdues the flesh, yet does not love the spiritual Country? And hence the same Simon bears the Cross, but doth not die; in that every hypocrite chastens his body in abstinence, but yet, in the love of glory, lives on to the world.

73. Contrariwise it is well said by Paul of the Elect; *For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the vices and lusts*. For we 'crucify the flesh with the vices and lusts,' if we so restrain our appetite, that henceforth we look for nothing of the glory of the world. Since he that macerates the flesh, but pants after honours, has inflicted the Cross on his flesh, but from concupiscence lives the worse to the world, in that it often happens that in the semblance of holiness, he unworthily obtains the post of rule, which except he displayed something of merit in himself, he would never attain to receive by any pains whatever. But that which he gains for enjoyment is passing, and what ensues in punishment is enduring. Now his assurance of sanctity is placed in the lips of man, but when the inward Judge tries the secrets of the interior, no witnesses of the life are sought from without. Therefore it is well said, *Whose trust shall be a spider's web*; since on the witness of the heart appearing, all passes by wherein his confidence consists, founded without in human applause. And hence it is yet further added with justice,  
Ver. 15. *He leaneth upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall prop it, but it shall not rise up*.



74. As the house of our exterior life is the building which the body lives in, so the house of our thought is any thing whatever that the mind is centered in by affection. For every thing that we love, we as it were make our dwelling-place by reposing in it. Whence Paul, because he had fixed his heart in things above, being still upon earth indeed, yet a stranger to earth, said, *Our conversation is in heaven*. [Phil. 3, 20] So the mind of the hypocrite in whatever it does minds nothing else but the fame of its own reputation, nor cares where it is carried [‘*ducitur*’] after by its deserts, but what it is called [‘*dicatur*’] in the mean season. Therefore his house is delight of popularity, which he as it were dwells in at rest, in that in all his works he throws himself back thereupon within his mind. But this house can never stand, because praise fleeth away with life, and the applause of man does not hold in the Judgment. Hence the foolish virgins too, who took no oil in their vessels, because their glory was in the voices of others and not in their own consciences, confounded by the presence of the Bridegroom, say, *Give us of your oil, for our lamps are going out*. [Matt. 25, 8] For to seek oil from our neighbours is to beseech the fame of good works from the testimony of another man's mouth. For the empty soul, when it finds that it has retained nothing within by all its labours, looks about for testimony from without. As if the foolish Virgins said plainly, ‘When ye behold us cast away without reward, say ye what ye have seen in our practice.’

75. But the hypocrite leans in vain then upon this house of applause, since no human testimony stands him in stead in the Judgment; for the same praise, which he afterwards claims in testimony, he before received in reward. Or surely the hypocrite leans upon his house, when beguiled by vain caresses, he is as it were lifted up in assurance of his holiness; for hypocrites do many things evil in secret, but a few things good in public. And when they receive praises from the good that appears, they turn away the eyes of observation from the concealed ill, and they esteem themselves such as they hear without, not such as they know themselves within. Whence it very often happens that they also come to the Judgment of the Most High with confidence, because they imagine themselves such in the sight of the Interior Judge, as they were held to be by men without. Yet ‘the house of the hypocrite cannot stand,’ for in the terror of a sifting search, all the foregoing assurance of holiness falls to the ground. And when he knows that the testimony of another man's lips is wanting to him, he betakes himself to reckoning up his own works. Hence it is still further added, *He shall prop it, but it shall not rise up*. For that which cannot stand by itself, is propped to make it stand; for when the hypocrite sees his life tottering in the Judgment, he sets himself to make it stand in propping it, by the enumeration of his deeds. Do not they prop the dwelling-place of their own praise on every hand, who in reckoning up their own deeds in the Judgment, as we said before, say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many marvellous works?* [Matt. 7, 22. 23.] But the house of praise, stayed up by all these statements, cannot rise, because the Judge saith directly, *I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity*. And it is to be had in mind that any thing, that rises, lifts itself from below to a higher elevation, and so ‘the house of the hypocrite cannot rise,’ in that in all that he may have done after the heavenly precepts, he never lifted his soul from off the earth, so that with justice he is not then lifted up to the meed of recompense, who in that which he sets forth now, lies prostrate in the desire of temporal glory. But whereas we have heard how the life of the hypocrite, represented by the name of ‘a rush,’ is rejected in the Judgment, let us hear what sort of person he is held by men before the strict Judge appeareth. It proceeds, Ver. 16. *It is seen moist before the sun cometh*.

76. Oftentimes in Holy Writ the Lord is represented by the title of the Sun, as it is said by the Prophet, *But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise*. [Mal. 4, 2] And as the ungodly that are cast away in the Judgment, are described in the book of Wisdom, as saying, *We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the Sun rose not upon us*; [Wisd. 5, 6] therefore, 'before the sun the rush is seen moist,' in that before God's severity burns hot in the Judgment, every hypocrite shews himself bedewed with the grace of holiness. He is seen as it were flourishing, because he is accounted righteous, he wins the post of honour, he is strong in his high repute for sanctity, reverence is awarded to him by all men, his credit for praise is magnified. Thus this rush is full of moisture in the night, but on the coming of the sun it is dried up, in that the hypocrite is accounted holy by all men in the darkness of the present life, but when the searching Judge cometh, he will appear as wicked as he is. So then let him say, He appears moist before the sun, because now he shews himself flourishing to the eyes of men, but then he shall wither up in the scorching heat of the Divine Judgment. The account goes on;

*And his produce I issueth forth in his springing up.*

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77. For every herb in general is first raised out of the ground by springing up, it is subject to the influences of the air and heat, it is fed by the sun and showers, and then at length it is made to open itself to put forth the produce of its seed. But the rush is produced along with its flower, and so soon as it springs out of the earth, it puts forth its produce of seed with itself. Therefore by the rest of the herbs the Saints in general are well denoted, but the hypocrite by 'the rush,' because the righteous, before they spring up [1] in the practice of holy conversation, undergo the winter season of this life, and the heats of bitter persecutions press them hard; and then, when they do what is right, they never look here for the reward of their, righteousness, but when they depart forth from the labours of the present world, on coming to their eternal Country, they enter upon the enjoyment of their looked-for reward. But contrariwise the hypocrite, in that he springs up in good practice at once, goes about to win the glory of the present world. As it were like a rush he springs up with his produce, who in return for this, that he is beginning to live well, aims at the outset to be held in honour by all men. So that the 'produce in the springing up,' is a reward at the outset. For often there are those that abandon the paths of overt wickedness, and put on the garb of holiness, and the moment they have touched the bare threshold of good living, forgetting what they were, they will not be henceforth chastened by penance for the iniquities they have committed, but they long to be commended for goodness begun; they are eager to get above the rest, even though better men than themselves. And for the most part whilst present prosperity follows them to their wish, they become infinitely worse than they were by the wearing of sanctity; but being busied with countless concerns, and distracted by that same busying, they not only never bewail the things that they have done, but still fill up more that should be bewailed.

78. For they that quit the world, ought not to be promoted to external [i.e. public] offices, unless in humility they be for some long time established in the contempt of that world. For the good soon comes to an end, which is made known to the world before the time. Thus with shrubs too that have been planted, if, before they are fastened with a firm root, the hand touch and shake them, it causes them to wither away, but, if the root be fixed deep, and, being sprinkled with the dews of the

earth, be set fast, such as these the hand may even push, and not hurt: these even blasts of wind may buffet and wave, yet not overthrow. Thus, that the life of practice we have entered upon may not be uprooted, the root of the heart must be fixed long and vigorously in the deep of humility, that when from the mouths of men the breath of calumny or of applause blows strong, though it bend it a little either way, it may not root up the mind from its seat, but that after such bending it may return to its own upright standing, if it but hold strong in the root in its own self. What among things in course of growth is stronger than a rising wall? yet if, while it is in the act of erecting, it is pushed, it is at once destroyed without an effort; but if for a space of time it be allowed to dry from its wetness, often it is never a jot moved even by the strokes of the battering rams. In this way, in this self-same way, our goodness on the one hand being unseasonably displayed comes to nought, and on the other hand being longer kept hidden, is fairly secured; in that when the hand of human employment touches the recent life of our conversation, as it were it pushes the fresh brick wall, and easily destroys it, because it has not as yet got rid of the moisture of its own weakness. But when in its long lying at rest, the soul holds itself in, as it were like a dry wall, it grows hard against blows, and every thing that strikes it, now it is solid, bounds off it at once shattered. It is hence that Moses forbade the life of aught that made the beginning to be employed in services for men, saying, *Thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock, nor shear the firstling of thy sheep.* [Deut. 15, 19] For to 'do work with the firstling of the bullock' is to display the beginning of a good conversation in the employment of public business. Moreover 'to shear the firstlings of sheep,' is to lay bare of the covering of its concealment the good we have begun before the eyes of men. And so we are forbidden to 'work with the firstling of the bullock,' and we are hindered from 'shearing the firstlings of our sheep,' in that even if we begin any thing strong, we ought not to be too ready to execute it in public. And when our life commences something simple and harmless, it is meet that it quit not the coverings of its secrecy, that it may not bare that thing naked to the eyes of the world, the fleece being as it were withdrawn.

79. So let the firstlings of the bullocks and the sheep avail for the Divine sacrifices alone, that whatsoever we begin strong and harmless, we may sacrifice in honour of the Judge of the interior upon the altar of our hearts. Which same we may be sure is accepted the more gladly by Him, in proportion as being kept concealed from men it is stained by no desire of applause. But it often happens that the beginnings of a new method of life have still a mixture of the carnal life, and therefore they ought not to be too ready to make themselves known, lest while the good that pleases is applauded, the soul being beguiled by the praises of itself have no power to discover in itself the evil that lies concealed. Hence it is rightly said by Moses again, *And when ye shall have come into the land that I shall give you, and shall have planted all manner of trees bearing fruit, then ye shall take off their foreskins. The fruits that are put forth shall be unclean, unto you, ye shall not eat of them.* [Lev. 19, 23] For 'the trees bearing fruit' are works fruitful in virtue, and so we 'take off the foreskins of the trees,' when suspecting ourselves of the mere weakness of a beginning in itself, we do not give our approval to the beginnings of our good practices, but the fruits that are put forth, we count unclean, and do not make them answer for good for us, in that when the beginnings of good practice are applauded, it is meet that the mind of the doer should not be fed thereby; lest whilst the praise bestowed is plucked with delight, the fruit of good works be eaten prematurely. He, then, that receives the praise of virtue in its beginning from the mouths of men, as it were eats the fruit of the tree that he has planted before the time,

80. Hence 'Truth' saith by the Psalmist, *It is vain for you to rise up before the light: rise up after ye have sat.* [Ps. 127, 2. Vulg.] For 'to: rise up before the light' is to take one's pleasure in the night-time of the present life, before the shining of Eternal Retribution is revealed. So we are to sit first, that we may rise afterwards in a right way. For whoever doth not now humble himself by his own act and deed, the glory to ensue does not exalt such an one. Therefore what it is there to rise before the light, it is here for the hypocrite to put forth the produce in his springing up, for in setting his heart on human applauses, in the self-same place, where he springs up to good works, there he desires directly to obtain the glorying of his recompense. Had not they 'put forth their produce in their springing up,' of whom 'Truth' said, *They love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men Rabbi?* [Matt. 23, 6, 7] Therefore seeing that for this reason, viz. because they are beginning to do well, they endeavour to obtain honour of men, as it were, like a rush, 'in their springing up they rise with their produce.' These same, whilst they aim to practise right things, first anxiously look about for witnesses of those same works, and canvass with secret calculation, if there be persons to see the things they are about to do, or if those who see them can report them in a proper way. But if it chance to happen that no one witnesses their doings, then, surely, they reckon them to be lost to them, and they account the eyes of the interior Umpire as off them, because they have no mind to receive at His hands the reward of their works hereafter. And whereas when the hypocrite does any thing, he aims to be seen by many eyes, it is yet further added with truth concerning this same 'rush,' Ver. 17. *His roots will be wrapped about the heap of rocks, and he will dwell among the stones.*

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81. For what do we understand by the name of 'roots' save the hidden thoughts, which issue forth out of sight, but rise up in the display of works in open day? as it is also said by the Prophet concerning the seed of the Word, *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward and bear fruit upward.* [Is. 37, 31] For to 'take root downward,' is to multiply good thoughts in the secret depths, but 'to bear fruit upward,' is to shew forth by the doing of practice what one has thought that is right. Now by the title of 'stones' in Holy Writ men are denoted, as it is said to Holy Church by Isaiah, *And I will make thy battlements jasper, and thy gates of carved stones.* [Is. 54, 12] And he made it plain what it was that he called those stones, where he added, *All thy children taught of the Lord.* As it is also expressed by Peter in giving admonition, *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house.* [1 Pet. 2, 5] Here therefore, whereas they are called 'stones,' but are not in any wise called 'living stones,' by the bare appellation of stones may be set forth the lost and the Elect mixed together. Therefore this rush, 'which abideth in the place of stones, wrappeth his roots about the heap of rocks,' in that every hypocrite multiplies the thoughts of his heart, in seeking out the admiration of men; for in all that hypocrites do, seeing that in their secret thoughts they look out for the applauses of their fellow-creatures, like rushes as it were they 'send out roots into the heap of the rocks.' For on the point of acting they imagine their praises, and when applauded, they dwell upon them secretly with themselves in the thoughts of their heart. They rejoice that they have distinguished themselves first and foremost in the esteem of men; and while they are puffed up and swoln in themselves by their applause, they often themselves secretly wonder at what they are. They long to appear day by day higher than themselves, and grow to a height by extraordinary arts in practice. For as habits of virtue enfeeble every thing bad, so presumption strengthens the same. For it forces the mind to grow quick, and to be in high condition at the expense of strength, in that what the prime quality of

health withholds, the love of applause enjoins. Whence too, as we said, they look out for witnesses of their deeds; but if, it chance that witnesses of the thing are wanting, they themselves relate what they have done, and when they begin to be elated with applause, they add a little, by lying, to these works of theirs, which they describe themselves to have done. But even when they do give true accounts, by the act of telling them they are making them alien to them, in that when they are rewarded with the desired acknowledgments of esteem, they are dispossessed of their inward recompensing of them.

82. For in this, that they publish their good, they point out to the evil spirits, like enemies plotting against them, what to make spoil of. Whose life, truly, is represented by that sin of Hezekiah, which is well known to everyone, who after that by a single prayer, and in the space of a single night, he had laid low an hundred fourscore and five thousand of his enemies, by an Angel smiting them, after that he had brought back the sun close to its setting into the higher regions of the heavens, after that he had spun out the web of life to longer dimensions, now already narrowed by the end approaching, shewed to the welcomed messengers of the king of Babylon all the good treasures that he possessed, but directly heard from the voice of the Prophet, *Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house shall be carried away into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.* [2 Kings 20, 17] In this way, in this self-same way, do hypocrites, after they are grown to a height by great attainments in virtue, because they are indifferent to guard against the plots of evil spirits, and will not remain hidden in those attainments, by displaying their good things, make them over to the enemy; and by betraying it to view, they lose in a moment whatsoever they perform by taking pains in a long course of time. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *And He delivered their strength into captivity, and their glory into the enemy's hand.* [Ps. 78, 61] For the 'strength' and 'glory' of presumptuous men is 'given over into the enemy's hand,' in that every good thing, that is exhibited in the desire of praise, is made over to our secret adversary's right of possession; for he calls his enemies to the spoil, who reveals his treasures to their knowledge; since so long as we are severed from the safety of the Eternal Land, we are walking along a way until robbers lying in wait. He then that dreads to be robbed on the road, must of necessity bide the treasures that he carries. O wretched beings, who by going after the praises of men, waste to themselves all the fruits of their labours, and whilst they aim to shew themselves to the eyes of others, blast all that they do. Which same when the evil spirits prompt to boastfulness, taking them for a prey they strip bare their works, as we have said. Whence 'Truth' in setting forth by the Prophet the rancour of our old enemies, under the form of a particular people, saith, *He hath laid my vineyard waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and despoiled [V. so.] it; the branches thereof are made white.* [Joel 1, 7] For by spirits lying in wait the vineyard of God is made a desert, when the soul that is replenished with fruits is wasted with the longing after the praise of men. That people barks the fig-tree of God, in that carrying away the misguided soul in the appetite for applause, in the degree that it draws her on to ostentation, it strips her of the covering of humility, and 'making it clean bare despoils it,' in that so long as it is withdrawn from sight in its goodness, it is as it were clothed with the bark of its own covering. But when the mind longs for that it has done to be seen by others, it is as though 'the fig-tree despoiled' had lost the bark that covered it. And it is properly added there, *The branches thereof are made white;* in that his works being displayed to the eyes of men, turn white; a name for sanctity is gotten, when right practice is made appear, but whereas upon the bark being removed, the branches of this fig-tree wither, it is to be observed with due discrimination that the deeds of presumptuous men, when they are paraded before human eyes, by the same act whereby they aim to win favour, are rendered dry and sapless. Therefore the mind

that is shewn to view in boasting is rightly called a fig-tree barked, in that it is at once white, in so far as it is seen, and within a little of withering, in so far as it is denuded of the covering of the bark. The things we do, therefore, are to be kept within, if we expect to receive from the Umpire within the recompense of our work. It is hence that 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* [Matt. 6, 3. 4.] It is hence that it is said of the Church of the Elect by the Psalmist, *The king's daughter is all glorious within.* [Ps. 45, 13] Hence Paul saith, *For our glory* [V. so.] *is this, the testimony of our conscience.* [2 Cor. 1, 12] For the king's daughter is the Church, which is begotten in good practice by the preaching of spiritual Princes. But 'her glory is within,' in that what she does she holds not for the boasting of outward display. Paul describes his 'glory' as 'the testimony of his conscience,' in that not aiming at the applause of another's man's lips, he knows no such thing as placing the satisfactions of his life out of himself.

83. Therefore the things that we do must be kept concealed, lest by carrying them negligently on the journey of the present life, we lose them, through the invasion of the spirits that hunt for spoil. And yet 'Truth' saith, *Let them see your good works, that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven.* [Matt. 5, 16] But assuredly it is one thing when in the display of our works the glory of the Giver is our aim, and quite another when our own praise is the thing sought for in the gift of His bounty. And hence again in the Gospel the same 'Truth' saith, *Take heed that ye do not your works before men, to be seen of them.* Therefore when our works are displayed to men, we must first weigh well, in entering into the heart, what is aimed at by the prosecution of such display. For if we make the glory of the Giver our end, even our works that are made public we keep hidden in His sight. But if we desire to win our own applause by them, they are thenceforth cast out of His sight without, even though they be known nothing of by numbers.

84. Now it belongs to those that are exceeding perfect, so to seek the glory of their Maker by the works shewn, as not to know what it is to exult in self-congratulation upon the praise bestowed upon them. For then only is a praiseworthy work displayed to men without harm, when the praise awarded is genuinely trodden under in the mind's contempt. Which same as the weak sort do not perfectly get above in contemning it, it remains of necessity that they keep out of sight the good that they do. For often from the very first beginning of the display, they seek their own praise. And often in the displaying of their works, they desire to publish the gloriousness of the Creator, but being received with applause, they are carried off into desire of their own praise. And whilst they neglect to call themselves to account within, being dissipated without, they do not know what they do, and their work ministers to their pride, and they fancy that they are rendering it in the service of the Giver. Thus 'a rush abideth among the stones,' in that the hypocrite stands there, where he sets fast the purpose of his mind. For whilst he goes about to get the testimony of numbers, he takes his stand, as it were, in the heap of stones. But the same hypocrite that is represented by the designation of 'a rush,' whilst he brings his body under by abstinence, whilst by bestowing in alms all that he possesses, he spends himself in efforts of pity, whilst he gets instruction in the knowledge of the sacred Law, whilst he employs the word of preaching; who that beheld him so filled with bounty, would account him a stranger to the grace of the Giver? And yet the Hand of heavenly Dispensation vouchsafes to him the gifts of works, and withholds the lot of the inheritance. It lavishes endowments for working, yet disowns the life of the worker. For when

the gift vouchsafed is applied toward his own praise, in the eye of the interior Light, he is darkened by the shadow of pride. Hence it is well added,

Ver. 18. *If He destroy him from his place, then He shall deny him, saying, I have not known thee.*

[xlix]

85. The hypocrite is ‘destroyed from his place,’ when he is parted from the applause of the present life, by death intervening. But the interior Witness ‘denieth’ him, thus destroyed, and asserts that He knows him not, in that in justly condemning the life of the pretender, ‘Truth’ knows him not, nor recognises the good works he has done, in that he never put them forth in a right purpose of mind. And hence when He cometh to Judgment, He will say to the foolish virgins, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* [Matt. 25, 12] In which same whilst He sees corruptness of mind, He condemns even incorruptness in the flesh. But would that their own ruin alone were enough for hypocrites, and that their wicked pains did not vehemently urge others to a life [al. ‘a way’] of duplicity. For it is the way with everyone, to wish that, such as he is himself, others of a like sort should be joined with him, and to avoid difference in life, and to inculcate as a pattern for imitation the thing that he loves. Whence also according to the view of hypocrites every degree of simplicity of character is criminal. For they sit in judgment on open characters, and purity of heart they term stupidity; and all whom they desire to be attached to themselves, they turn out of the path of simplicity, and then, as though their folly were cast out, they reckon that they have enlightened those persons, in whom they force to a surrender that fortress of wisdom, purity of heart. But forasmuch as the hypocrite is condemned not for his own frowardness alone, but for the added ruin of his followers also, after that he is said not to be known by the Judge, the words are rightly brought in upon that;

Ver. 19. *Behold, this is the joy of his way* [al. ‘of his life’], *that out of the earth others also should grow.*

[l]

86. As though it were in plain words, ‘When the Judge cometh, he is not acknowledged, but receives punishment a thousand fold, because he rejoiced in his wickedness more amply in proportion as he spread evil among others also.’ For he that is not satisfied with being wicked himself here, must be tormented There with the due of the guilt of others also. Now then let the hypocrites rejoice, and triumph to have gotten the suffrages of their fellow-creatures. Let the simplicity of good men be looked down upon, and be called foolishness by the craft of the double-dealing. Speedily doth the contempt of the single-minded pass, speedily the glorying of the double-dealing run to an end. And hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 20. *Behold, God will not cast out a perfect man, neither will He stretch out His hand to the evil.*

[li]

87. In that assuredly when the Strict One appeareth in the Judgment, He will at once lift up the despisedness of the simple by glorifying them, and break in pieces the greatness of the evil-minded [malignorum] by condemning them. For hypocrites are called evil-minded, who do good acts but not well, and practise every thing right only in eagerness after praise. Now anyone, to whom we

stretch out our hand, we plainly lift up from below. Thus God does not stretch out His hand to the evil-minded, in that all that seek earthly glory He leaves below, and how right soever the things that they do may seem to be, He doth not advance them to the joys above. Or, as may well be, hypocrites are for this reason called evil-minded, because they make a shew of being wellminded toward their neighbours, and cover over the arts of their wicked designs. For in all that they either do or say, they shew simplicity externally, but they are inwardly conceiving in the subtleties of double-mindedness; they counterfeit purity on the outside, but they conceal an evil heart at all times under the semblance of purity. In respect of whom it is well spoken by Moses, *Thou shalt not wear a garment woven of woollen and linen together*. [Deut. 22, 11] For by 'woollen' is denoted simplicity, by 'linen' subtlety. And it is the fact that a garment made of 'wool and linen' hides the linen within and shews the wool on the outside. And so he 'puts on a garment of woollen and linen together,' who in the mode of speech or behaviour that he adopts conceals within the artfulness of an evil purpose, and exhibits without the simplicity of an innocent mind. For whereas it is impossible to detect craftiness under the semblance of purity, it is as if linen were hidden under the thickness of wool. But after the condemnation of the double-minded, the recompensing of the righteous is duly exhibited, when it is added thereupon,

Ver. 21. *Till He fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with shouting.*

[lii]

88. For the 'mouth' of the righteous will then be 'filled with laughing' when the tears of their pilgrimage being done, their hearts shall be filled to the full with exulting in eternal joy. Concerning this laughing 'Truth' saith to His disciples, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy*. [John 16, 20] And again, *But I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you*. [ver. 23] Concerning this laughing of Holy Church, Solomon saith, *And she shall laugh in the last day*. [Prov. 31, 25] Of this it is said again, *Whoso feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last*. [Ecclus. 1, 3] Not that there shall be laughter of the body, but laughter of the heart. For now from rioting in dissipation there springs a laughter of the body, but then from joy in security there will arise a laughter of the heart. Therefore when all the Elect are replenished with the delight of open vision, they spring forth into the joyousness of laughter in the mouth of the interior. But we call it shouting [*jubilum*], when we conceive such joy in the heart, as we cannot give vent to by the force of words, and yet the triumph of the heart vents with the voice what it cannot give forth by speech. Now the mouth is rightly said to be filled with laughter, the lips with shouting, since in that eternal land, when the mind of the righteous is borne away in transport, the tongue is lifted up in the song of praise. And they, because they see so much as they are unable to express, shout in laughter, because without compassing it they resound all the love that they feel.

89. Now it is said 'till,' not that Almighty God so long forbears to raise up the evil until he take to Him His Elect to the joys of their jubilee, as if afterwards He saved from the punishment those whom first leaving in sin He sentences to damnation, but that He never does it even before the Judgment, when it may seem doubtful to men, whether it is to be done. For that after the jubilee of His Eject people He does not stretch out His hand to the evil-minded, is already plain from the mere severity of the final reckoning by itself. As the Psalmist also spake in this manner, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool*. [Ps. 110,



1] Not that the Lord never sat on the Lord's right hand, after that by smiting His enemies He made them subject to His power, but that He is set over all things in eternal blessedness, even before He treads under His feet the hearts of those that rebel against Him. Wherein it is made plain that His enemies being brought under, He still rules without end even afterwards. Thus it is said in the Gospel of the espoused of Mary, *And knew her not, till she had brought forth her first-born Son.* [Matt. 1, 25] Not that he did know her after the birth of the Lord, but that he never touched her even when he did not know her to be the Mother of his Creator. For because it was impossible that he could have touched her after he knew that the Mystery of our Redemption was transacted from her womb, plainly it was necessary that the Evangelist should bear witness of that time, of which there might be misgivings entertained by reason of Joseph's ignorance. And so it is expressed here in like manner, *Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will He stretch out His hand to the evil-minded; till He fill thy mouth with laughter, and thy lips with shouting.* As if it were expressed in plain speech; 'Not even before the Judgment does He abandon the life of the faithful, nor even before He appears does He forbear from smiting the minds of the evil-disposed by abandoning them.' For that the sons of perdition He torments without end, and that after that He shall have appeared His Elect reign for evermore, assuredly there is no doubt. It goes on; Ver. 22. *They that hate thee shall be clothed with confusion.*

[liii]

90. 'Confusion clothes' the enemies of the good in the final Judgment; for when they see before the eyes of their mind their past misdeeds running over in excess to them, their own guilt clothes them on every side, weighing them down. For they then bear the memory of their doings in punishment, who now, as though strangers to the faculty of reason, sin with hearts full of joy. There they see how greatly they should have eschewed all that they loved. There they see how woful that was, which they now hug themselves for in their sin. Then guilt spreads a cloud over the mind, and conscience pierces itself with the darts of its remembrances. Who then can adequately estimate how exceeding great will be the confusion of the wicked Then, when both the Judge Eternal is discerned without, and sin is set in review before the eyes within? who are on this account brought to such a pass, because they loved transient things alone. And hence it is rightly added upon that; *And the tents of the wicked shall not abide.*

[liv]

91. For a tent is put together that the body may be preserved from heat and cold. What then is here set forth by the name of a dwelling-place, save the building of earthly prosperity, whereby the wicked are multiplying above their heads things to fall, that they may shelter themselves from the exigencies of the present life as from heat and rain. Thus they go about to rise in honours, lest they should appear contemptible. They pile up the good things of earth, and heap them high, lest they ever come to pine with the cold of want. They scorn to take thought of what is to come, and busy themselves with all their heart, that nought may be lacking in the present scene of things. They aim to spread their name, that they may not live unknown, and if every thing is forthcoming to their hearts' content, they regard themselves as proof in all things, and blessed in their condition. Thus in the place where they rear a dwelling-place of the interior, there surely they have their tents fixed. They bear crosses with impatience, they rejoice in prosperity without restraint. They mind alone the things that are before them, nor do they draw their breath by the yearning after their heavenly

home in the remembrance thereof. They are glad that the good things are theirs, which their heart is bent on having; and there, where they rest in the body, they bury the soul too, making it a thing extinct, in that being slain with the instrument of worldly solicitude, that pile of earthly things, which they heap together hunting for them without, they are always carrying on them within in thought.

92. But contrariwise the good neither take the blessings offered them here below as any thing great, nor very much dread the ills brought upon them. But both whilst they use present advantages, they forecast inconveniences to come, and when they lament for present evils, they are comforted in the love of the good things to follow. And they are cheered by temporal support, just as a wayfarer enjoys a bed in a stable; he stops and hurries to be off; he rests still in the body, but is going forward to something else in imagination. But sometimes they even long to meet with afflictions, they shrink from finding all go well in transient things, lest by the delightfulness of the journey, they be hindered in arriving at their home; lest they arrest the step of the heart on the pathway of their pilgrimage, and one day come in view of the heavenly land without a recompense. They delight to be little accounted of, nor do they grieve to be in affliction and necessity. Thus they that never fortify themselves against the adversities of the present time, as it were will not have a tent against the heat and rain. And hence Peter is justly rebuked, because when he was not yet confirmed in perfectness of heart, upon the brightness of 'Truth' being made known, he goes about to set up a tent upon earth. [Matt. 17, 4] And thus the righteous are indifferent to build themselves up here below, where they know themselves to be but pilgrims and strangers. For because they desire to have joy in their own, they refuse to be happy in what belongs to another. But the unrighteous, the further they are removed from the inheritance of the eternal Country, fix the foundations of the heart so much the deeper in the earth. It is hence that in the very beginning of man's creation Enoch is born seventh in the elect family. It is hence that Cain calls his firstborn son Enoch, and names the city that he built after him. [Gen. 4, 17] For 'Enoch' is rendered 'Dedication.' And so the wicked dedicate themselves in the beginning. For in this life, which is first, they plant the root of the heart, that they may flourish here to their content, and wither root and branch to the Country that follows after. But to the righteous, Enoch is born the seventh, in that the festal dedication of their lives is kept for the end. It is hence, as Paul testifies, Abraham dwells *in tents* [so Vulg.], *for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.* [Heb. 11, 9] It is hence that Jacob goes humbly [Vulg. like E.V. *paullatim*] following the flocks of sheep, and Esau coming to meet him lords it with a throng of numerous attendants, in that here both the Elect are without pride, and the lost swell with satisfaction in the good things of the flesh. Hence the Lord saith to Israel, *If thou shalt choose one from the people of the land and set him for a king over thee, he shall not multiply horses and horsemen to himself.* [Deut. 17, 15. 16.] And yet the first king 'chosen from among his brethren,' so soon as he had attained the height of power, chose for himself three thousand horsemen; he immediately launched into pride, burst forth in the building up of the height he had attained, in that without he could not keep under on a level of equality all that made his spirit within rise high above the level of others. That rich man had as it were erected for himself a fenced dwelling place, who said, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* [Luke 12, 19] But because that dwelling is not bottomed upon the foundation of Truth, he heard at the same moment, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou hast prepared?* [ver. 20] Therefore it is well said, *And the dwelling-place of the wicked shall come to nought.* In that

the lovers of this fleeting life, whilst they diligently build themselves up in present things, are suddenly hurried into eternity.

## BOOK IX.

He explains the ninth Chapter, together with the whole of the tenth.

[i]

### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. BAD minds, if they have once broken out into the eagerness of opposition, whether what they hear from those that withstand them be right or wrong, assail it with contradictory replies; for whereas the speaker is unwelcome from being in opposition, not even what is right is welcome when he utters it. But, on the other hand, the hearts of the good, whose dislike rises not at the speaker but at the offence, in such sort pass sentence on what is amiss, as to adopt still any right things that are said. For they sit the most even umpires in deciding the sense of their opponents' words, and they so reject what is put forth amiss, that notwithstanding they set the seal upon what they recognise to be delivered in truth. For among a wilderness of thorns the ear [*spica*] is generally to be found growing up from seed good for fruit. Therefore it must be managed with care by the hand of the tiller, that, whilst the thorn [*spina*] is removed, the ear be cherished, so that he, who is eager to root up what pricks, may have sense to preserve what gives nourishment. Hence in that Bildad the Shuhite had said well in enquiry, *Doth God pervert judgment, or doth the Almighty pervert justice?* in that he had delivered true and forcible sentiments against hypocrites, blessed Job, seeing that they were delivered against the wicked in general, admirably treads under foot the prosecution of his own defence, and at once sanctions the truths he had heard, saying, Ver. 2. *I know it is so of a truth, and that man put with God is not justified.*

[ii]

2. For man being put under God receives righteousness; being put with God he loses it: for everyone that compares himself with the Author of all good things, bereaves himself of the good which he had received. For he that ascribes to himself blessings vouchsafed to him, is fighting against God with His own gifts. Therefore by whatsoever means he being in contempt is lifted up, it is meet that being so set up he be brought to the ground by the same. Now because he sees that all the worth of our goodness is evil if it be strictly accounted of by the Judge of the interior, the holy man lightly subjoins;

Ver. 8. *If thou wilt contend with Him, thou shalt not be able to answer Him one of a thousand.*

[iii]

3. In Holy Scripture, the number a thousand is wont to be taken for totality. Hence the Psalmist saith, *The word which He commanded to a thousand generations*; when it is sufficiently plain that from the very beginning of the world up to the coming of our Lord no more than seventy-seven generations are reckoned up by the Evangelist. What then is represented in the number a thousand,

save, until the bringing forth of the new offspring, the complete whole of the race foreseen. Hence it is said by John, *And shall reign with Him a thousand years* [Rev. 20, 6]; for that the reign of Holy Church is made complete by being perfected in entirety. Now forasmuch as a unit being multiplied is brought to ten, and ten being taken into itself is expanded to one hundred, which again being multiplied by ten is extended to a thousand, since we set out with one to get to one thousand, what is here denoted by the designation of 'one' but the commencement of good living? what by the fulness of the number 'a thousand,' but the perfection of that good life? Now to contend with God is not to ascribe to Him but to take to one's self the glory of one's goodness. But let the holy man consider that the man who has already received even the chiefest gifts, if he is lifted up for what has been vouchsafed him, parts with all that he had received, and let him say, *If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand*. For he, that 'contends' with his Maker, is unable to 'answer Him one of a thousand,' in that the man that sets himself up on the score of perfection, proves that he lacks the very beginning of good living. For we cannot 'answer Him one of a thousand,' since when we are lifted up for perfection of good life, we shew that we have not so much as begun this. Now we are then more really moved by our weakness, when by reflection, we are led to form an estimate how infinite is the power of the Judge.

Ver. 4. *He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength*.

[iv]

4. What wonder is it, if we call the Maker of the wise, 'wise,' Whom we know to be Wisdom itself? and what wonder is it that he describes Him to be 'mighty,' Whom there is none that doth not know to be this very Mightiness itself? But the holy man, by the two words set forth in praise of the Creator, conveys a meaning to us, whereby to recall us in trembling to the knowledge of ourselves. For God is called 'wise,' in that He exactly knows our secret hearts, and it is added that He is 'mighty,' in that He smites them forcibly, so known. And so He can neither be deceived by us, because He is wise, nor be escaped, because He is strong. Now, as wise, He beholds all things, Himself unseen, then, as strong, without let or hindrance, He punishes those whom He condemns. Who ordains this likewise here with mightiness of wisdom, that when the human mind exalts itself against the Creator, it should confound itself by that very self-exaltation. And hence it is added, *Who hath resisted Him, and had peace?*

[v]

5. For He that creates all things marvellously, Himself regulates them, that after having been created, they should agree with themselves; and thus whereinsoever there is resistance made to the Creator, that agreement in peace is broken up, in that those things can never be well regulated, which lose the management of regulation above. For whatsoever things if subjected to God might have continued at peace, being left to themselves by their own act work their own confusion, in that they do not find in themselves that peace, which coming from above they contend against in the Creator. Thus that highest Angelical Spirit, who being in subjection to God might have stood at the height, being banished, has to bear the burthen of himself, in that he roams abroad in disquietude in his own nature. Thus the first parent of the human race, in that he went against the precept of his Creator, was thereupon exposed to the insolence of the flesh, and because he would not be subject to His Maker in obedience, being laid low beneath himself, even the peace of the body was forthwith lost to him. Thus it is well said, *Who hath resisted Him, and had peace?* In that by the

same act, whereby the froward mind lifts itself against its Maker, it works its own confusion in itself. Now we are said to resist God, when we try to oppose His dispensations. Not that our frailty does resist His unchangeable decree, but what it has not the power to accomplish, it yet attempts. For often human weakness knows in secret the power of His dispensation, and yet aims, if it might be able, to reverse it. It sets to work to resist, but shivers itself to pieces by the very sword of its opposition. It struggles against the interior disposition of things, but, being overcome by its own efforts, is bound fast. Therefore to have peace whilst resisting can never be; for whereas confusion follows after pride, that which is foolishly done in sin is marvellously disposed to the punishment of the doer; but the holy Man, being filled with the influence of the Spirit of prophecy, while he regards in general the confounding of human pride, thereupon directs the eye of the mind to the special fate of the Jewish people, and shews by the ruin of a single people the punishment that awaits all that are lifted up. For he immediately adds in these words,  
Ver. 5. *Which removed the mountains, and they knew not whom He overturned in His anger.*

[vi]

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

6. Oftentimes in Holy Writ by the title of ‘mountains,’ the loftiness of Preachers is set forth. Of whom it is said by the Psalmist, *The mountains shall receive peace for Thy people.* [Ps. 72, 3] For the Elect Preachers of the eternal Land are not unjustly called ‘mountains,’ in that by the loftiness of their lives they leave the low bottoms of earthly regions, and are brought near to heaven. Now ‘Truth’ ‘removed the mountains’ when He withdrew the holy Preachers from the stubbornness of Judaea. Whence too it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *The mountains shall be carried into the heart of the sea.* [Ps. 46, 2] For ‘the mountains were removed into the heart of the sea,’ when the Apostles in their preaching, thrust off by the faithlessness of Judaea, came to the understanding of the Gentiles. Hence they themselves say in their Acts, *It was necessary that the word should first have been spoken to you but seeing ye put it from you and Judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* [Acts 13, 46] Now this same ‘removing of the mountains’ they themselves ‘knew nothing of, who were overthrown in the wrath of the Lord;’ for when the Hebrew people drove the Apostles from their coasts, they supposed that they had made gain, in that they had parted with the light of preaching, since as their deserts demanded, being struck with a just visitation, they were blinded by so great a delusion of the understanding, that their losing the light they accounted to be joy; but upon the rejection of the Apostles, Judaea is at once brought to destruction by the hands of the Roman Emperor Titus, and she is dispersed and scattered abroad among all nations. And hence it is rightly added to the removing of the mountains,

Ver. 6. *Which shaketh the earth out of her place and the pillars thereof shall tremble.*

[vii]

7. For ‘the earth was shaken out of her place,’ when the Israelitish people, rooted out of the borders of Judaea, submitted the neck to the Gentiles, because she would not be subjected to the Creator. Which same earth had pillars, in that the erection of her stubbornness, which was to be destroyed, rose upon the Priests and Rulers, the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees. For in these she held in her the edifice of the letter, and in her season of peace, carried the burthen of carnal sacrifices

like a fabric overlaid. But when 'the mountains were removed,' the 'pillars were shaken,' in that when the Apostles were withdrawn from Judaea, they were no more themselves allowed to live therein, who drove out from thence the proclaimers of life. For it was meet that they being brought into subjection should lose that earthly country, for the love of which they had not been afraid to assail the soldiers of the heavenly country. But upon the holy Teachers being drawn out, Judaea waxed altogether gross, and by the righteous inquest of Him That judgeth, she shut the eyes of the mind in the darkness of her delusion. Hence it is yet further continued;

Ver. 7. *Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and shutteth up the stars as under a seal.*

[viii]

8. Now sometimes in Holy Writ by the title of 'sun,' we have the brightness of the Preachers represented, as it is said by John, *And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair.* [Rev. 6, 12] For at the end of time the sun is exhibited 'like sackcloth of hair,' in that the shining life of them that preach is set forth before the eyes of the lost as hard and contemptible. And they are represented by the brightness of stars also, in that whilst they preach right doctrines to sinners, they enlighten the darkness of our night. And hence upon the removal of the Preachers it is said by the Prophet, *The stars [a] of the rain are withholden.* Now whereas the sun shines in the day time, the stars illumine the shades of night. And very often in Holy Writ by the designation of *day* is denoted the eternal Country, and by the name of *night*, the present life. Holy preachers become like the sun to our eyes, inasmuch as they open to us the view of the true light; and they shine like stars in the dark, when for the purpose of helping our necessities they manage earthly things in an active life. They, as it were, shine as the sun in the day, whilst they raise the eye of our mind to contemplate the land of interior brightness, and they glitter like stars in the night, in that even whilst they are engaged in earthly action, they guide the foot of our practice, every moment on the point of stumbling, by the example of their own uprightness. But because when the Preachers were driven out, there was none who might either shew the brightness of contemplation, or disclose the light of an active life to the Jewish people continuing in the night of their unbelief, (for the Truth, which being cast off abandoned them, when the light of preaching was removed, blinded them in reward of their wickedness,) it is rightly said, *Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and shutteth up the stars as under a seal.* For He would not let the sun rise to that people, from whom He turned away the heart of the Preachers, and He 'shut up the stars as under a seal,' in that while He kept His Preachers to themselves in silence, He hid the heavenly light from the darkened perceptions of the wicked.

9. But it is to be considered, that we shut up any thing under seal with this view, that when the time suits, we may bring it out to the light. And we have learnt by the testimony of Holy Writ, that Judaea, which is now left desolate, shall be gathered into the bosom of the Faith at the end. Hence it is declared by Isaiah, *For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall be saved.* [Is. 10, 22] Hence Paul saith, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved.* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] Therefore He That removes His Preachers now from the eyes of Judaea, and afterwards exhibits them, has as it were 'shut up the stars under a seal,' that the rays of the spiritual stars being first hidden and afterwards beaming forth, she both being now cast off may not see the night of her misbelief, and then by being enlightened may find it out. It is hence that those two illustrious Preachers were removed, but their death delayed, that they might be brought back in the end for the purpose of preaching; of whom it is said by John, *These*

*are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth.* [Rev. 11, 4] One of whom 'Truth' by His own lips gives promise of in the Gospel, saying, *Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.* [b] [Matt. 17, 11] They then are as if the 'stars' were 'shut up under a seal,' who both at this present are concealed that they appear not, and hereafter shall appear that they may stand Him in good stead. Yet the Israelitish people, which shall be gathered in full measure in the end, in the immediate infancy of Holy Church is pitilessly hardened. For it rejected the Preachers of the Truth, it spurned the message of succour. Yet this is effected by the marvellous contrivance of the Creator with this view, that the glory of the persons preaching, which if received might have lain hid in one people, being rejected might be spread abroad among all the nations. Hence too it is fitly added immediately afterwards ;  
Ver. 8. *Which alone spreadeth out the heavens.*

[ix]

10. For what is denoted by the name of 'the heavens,' but this very heavenly life of the persons preaching, of whom it is said by the Psalmist, The heavens declare the glory of God. Thus the same persons are recorded to be the heavens, and the same to be the sun; the heavens indeed, in that by interposing [*intercedendo*] they shield; the sun, in that by preaching they display the power of light. And so, upon the 'earth being shaken' 'the heavens were spread out,' in that when Judaea ravened in the violence of persecution, the Lord spread wide the life of the Apostles, for all the Gentiles to acquaint themselves withal. And whilst she in judgment being made captive is scattered over the world, they by grace are every where amplified in honour. For 'the heavens' were of small compass, so long as one people contained so many mighty preachers. For to which of the Gentiles would Peter have been known, if he had continued in the preaching to the Jewish people alone? Who would have known of Paul's virtues, unless Judaea by persecuting him had transmitted him to our knowledge? See how already they, that were thrust off with scourges and with insults by the Israelitish people, are held in honour throughout the length and breadth of the world. The Lord alone then 'has spread out the heavens,' Who, by the wondrous ordering of His secret counsel, from the very cause, that He let His Preachers be persecuted in one people, caused them to spread out even to the comers of the world. But yet neither did this Gentile folk itself, which was devoted to the present world, when the tongues of the Apostles rebuked its iniquities, gladly welcome the words of life. For it forthwith swelled up in the pride of opposition, and roused itself to the cruelty of persecution. But she that sets herself to gainsay the words of preaching, is speedily subdued in wonderment at miraculous signs. Hence too the words are fitly added in praise of the Creator,  
*And treadeth upon the wave of the sea.*

[x]

11. For what is denoted by the title of 'the sea,' but this world's bitterness raging in the destruction of the righteous? Concerning which it is said by the Psalmist too, *He gathereth the waters of the sea together as in a skin.* [Ps. 33, 7. Vulg.] For the Lord 'gathereth the waters of the sea together as in a skin,' when, disposing all things with a wonderful governance, He restrains the threats of the carnal pent up in their hearts. Thus 'the Lord treadeth upon the waves of the sea.' For when the storms of persecution lift up themselves, they are dashed in pieces in astonishment at His miracles. Since He that brings down the swellings of man's madness, as it were treads the waters standing up in a heap. Thus when the Gentile world saw that her form and fashion was undone through the

preaching of the Apostles, when the rich sons of this world beheld poor men's deeds arrayed against their arrogance, when the wise men of this generation marked that the words of unlettered men were set in opposition to them, they swelled thereupon in a storm of persecution. Yet they who, being moved by the opposition of words, burst out in storms of persecution, are calmed, as we have said, by wonder at the miraculous signs. So the Lord set as many steps upon these waves, as He exhibited miracles to the persecutors in their pride. Whence it is well said again by the Psalmist, *Marvellously the floods lift up their waves; marvellous is the Lord on high*. [Ps. 93, 3. 4.] For against the life of the Elect the world has lifted itself wonderfully in waves of persecution, but the Creator of things above has still more marvellously put these down in the exaltation of the Preachers' power; for He shewed that His ministers prevailed more in miracles above all that the powers of the earth had swelled unto in anger. Which the Lord moreover well delivered by the lips of Jeremiah, while relating outward things, telling of inward ones; *I have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail: though they roar, yet can they not pass over it*. [Jer. 5, 22] For 'the Lord has placed the sand for the bound of the sea;' in that He has made choice of the despised and poor to dash in pieces the glory of the world. 'The waves of which same sea toss themselves,' when the powers of the world leap forth in the uproar of persecution. Yet they cannot pass over the sand, in that they are broken in pieces by the miracles and the humility of the despised and scorned. But whilst the sea rages, while it is lifted up in the waves of its madness, yet whereas it is trodden upon by the manifestation of interior Power, Holy Church makes way, and by the accessions of time she rises to the station of her own rank [or 'the establishing of her own order'] Hence it is rightly added immediately afterwards,

Ver.9. *Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Hyades, and the chambers of the south.*

[xi]

12. The word of Truth never follows the vain fables of Hesiod, Aratus, or Callimachus, that in naming Arcturus it should take the last of the seven stars for the tail of the bear, or as if Orion were holding a sword as a mad lover; for these names of the stars were invented by the votaries of carnal wisdom, but Holy Scripture for this reason makes use of these words, that the things which it aims to convey instruction about, may be represented by the customariness of their usual designation. For if he had spoken of any stars he might wish by names unknown to us, man, for whom this very Scripture was made, would assuredly have known nothing what he heard. Thus in Holy Writ the wise ones of God derive their speech from the wise ones of the world, in like sort as therein God the very Creator of man, for man's benefit, takes in Himself the tones of human passion, i.e. so as to say, *It repenteth Me that I have made man upon the earth* [Gen. 6, 6. 7.]; whereas it is plain and undoubted that He, Who beholds all things before they come, after He has done any thing, never repents by feeling regret. What wonder is it, then, if spiritual men use the words of carnal men, when the Ineffable Spirit Himself, Which is the Creator of all things, in order to draw the flesh to the understanding of Him, in His own case frames His speech of the flesh? Thus in Holy Writ, when we hear the familiar names of the stars, we learn what stars the discourse runs on. And after we have well weighed what stars are described, it remains that from their motions we be led to raise ourselves to the mysteries of the spiritual meaning. For not even after the letter is there any thing strange, in that it is said that God created Arcturus, and the Orions, and the Hyades, concerning Whom it is an acknowledged truth, that there is nothing of any sort in the world but He Himself



made it. But the holy man declares that the Lord made these, by which he means properly to denote things that are done in a spiritual way.

13. For what is represented by the name of Arcturus, which being set in the polar region of the heavens shines bright with the rays of seven stars, except the Church universal, which is represented in the Apocalypse of John by the seven Churches and the seven candlesticks? Which same, while She contains in Herself the gifts of seven-fold grace, beaming with the brightness of highest virtue, as it were gives light from the polar region of Truth. And it is furthermore to be considered, that Arcturus is ever turned about, and never sunk from sight, in that Holy Church ever undergoes the persecutions of the wicked without ceasing, and yet endures without failing 'even unto the end of the world.' For oftentimes because the sons of perdition have persecuted her even to the death, they have been persuaded that they had as it were utterly extinguished her, but she returned with manifold increase to the rearing of her full growth, in proportion as she travailed in dying amidst the hands of Her persecutors. Thus while Arcturus is turned about, he is set on high, for Holy Church is then more strongly reinvigorated in the Truth, when she spends herself more fervently for the Truth.

14. Hence too after Arcturus he immediately subjoins the 'Oriones' with propriety. For they arise in the very heaviest of the winter season, and they stir up storms by their rising, and put sea and land in commotion. What then is denoted by 'the Oriones,' after 'Arcturus,' saving the Martyrs? who, while Holy Church is set on high to take her stand of preaching, destined to undergo the weight of the persecutors and harassing treatment, came into the face of heaven, as it were, in the winter season. For when they were born, the sea and the land were troubled, in that when the Gentile world grieved that its method of life was undone, on their courage appearing, it set up for their destruction not only the fiery and turbulent, but the mild among men also. And thus the winter lowered in 'the Oriones,' in that when the constancy of the Saints shone out, the frozen soul of the unbelievers lashed itself into a tempest of persecution. And so 'the heavens' gave forth the Oriones, when Holy Church sent out her Martyrs, who whilst they had boldness to speak what is right to the uninstructed, brought upon themselves every thing most heavy from the adverse bitterness of cold.

15. Now he justly subjoins the Hyades directly, which, when the springtide is waxing, go forth into the face of heaven, and, when the sun is now putting out the power of his heat, are given to sight. For they are attached to the beginnings of that sign, which the wise of this world call 'the Bull,' at which the sun begins to increase, and arises with more fervent heat, to lengthen out the periods of the day. Who, then, after 'the Oriones,' are denoted by the title of 'the Hyades,' saving the Doctors of Holy Church, who; when the Martyrs were taken away, came at that period to the world's knowledge, when faith now shines forth the brighter, and the winter of infidelity being forced back, the sun of truth flows deeper through the hearts of the faithful. These, when the storm of persecution was overpast, and the nights of long infidelity consummated, then arose to Holy Church, when the year now opens brighter in the vernal season of belief. Nor are the holy Doctors improperly denoted by the designation of 'Hyades,' for in the Greek tongue rain is called 'Hyetus,' and the 'Hyades' have received their name from the rains, surely because at their rising they bring showers. Thus they are well represented by the title of 'the Hyades,' who, brought out in the settled frame of Holy Church, as it were into the face of heaven, upon the parched earth of the human heart poured down the showers of holy preaching. For if the word of preaching were not

rain, Moses would never have said, *Let my doctrine be waited for as the rain.* [Deut. 32, 2] ‘Truth’ would never have said by the lips of Isaiah, *I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it;* [Is. 5, 6] and that which we brought forward a little above, *Therefore the stars [d] of the showers are withholden.* [Jer. 3, 3] Thus while the Hyades come bringing showers, the sun is led on to the higher regions of heaven; in that, when the knowledge of the Doctors appears, while our minds drink in the showers of preaching, the heat of faith increases. And the earth being irrigated is rendered productive in fruit, when the light of the sky is fired; in that we yield the fruit of good works the more plentifully, the brighter we burn within our breasts through the flame of sacred instruction. And while heavenly lore is displayed to view by them more and more day by day, it is as if the springtide of interior light were opened upon us, that the new Sun may glow brightly in our souls, and being by their words made known to us, may daily surpass itself in brilliancy. For the end of the world being close at hand, the knowledge from above advances, and waxes bigger with the progress of time. For hence it is said by Daniel, *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* [Dan. 12, 4] Hence the Angel saith to John in the former part of the Revelation, *Seal up those things, which the seven thunders uttered;* [Rev. 10, 4] and yet at the end of that Revelation he bids him, saying, *Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book.* [Ib. 22, 10] For the first part of the Revelation is commanded to be sealed, but the end not to be sealed; for whatever was hidden in the beginnings of Holy Church, the end clears up day by day. But some imagine that ‘the Hyades’ are named from the Greek letter which is rendered by ‘Υ;’ which, if it be so, is not opposed to the sense which we have given: the Doctors are not unsuitably represented by those stars which have their name from letters; but, though ‘the Hyades’ are not unlike the look of that letter, yet it is a fact that a shower is called ‘Hyetus,’ and that those at their rising bring with them rain.

16. Therefore let the holy man, viewing the order of our redemption, feel wonder, and wondering let him cry out, in the words, *Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea. Which maketh Arcturus, the Oriones, and Hyades.* For, when the heavens were spread out, the Lord made ‘Arcturus,’ in that, when the Apostles were brought to honour, He stablished the Church in heavenly conversation, and when Arcturus was made, He framed ‘the Oriones,’ in that the faith of the Church Universal being established, He launched forth the Martyrs against the storms of the world. And when ‘the Oriones’ were launched in heaven, He set forth ‘the Hyades,’ in that when the Martyrs proved strong against adversities, He vouchsafed the teaching of Masters, to water the drought of human hearts. These then are the ranks of the spiritual stars, which while they stand out conspicuous by the highest virtues, are ever shining from above.

17. But what remains after these things, saving that Holy Church, receiving the fruit of her toils, should attain to behold the inner depths of the Country above? And hence, whereas he had said, *Which maketh Arcturus, the Oriones, and the Hyades;* he rightly added directly, *and the chambers of the South.* For what is here denoted by the name of ‘the South,’ saving the fervour of the Holy Spirit? with which he that is replenished, kindles to the love of the spiritual Country. And hence it is said by the voice of the Spouse in the Song of Solomon, *Arise, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.* For upon the ‘south wind’ coming, the ‘north wind’ arising departs, when our old enemy, who had bound up our soul in inactivity, being expelled by the coming of the Holy Spirit, takes himself away. And ‘the south wind blows upon the garden’ of the Spouse, that ‘the spices thereof may flow down;’ in that, whensoever the Spirit of Truth has filled Holy Church with the excellences of His gifts, He scatters far and wide from her the odours of good works. And thus ‘the chambers of the South’ are those

unseen orders of the Angels, and those unfathomed depths of the heavenly Country, which are filled with the heat of the Holy Spirit. For thither are brought the souls of the Saints, both at this present time divested of the body, and hereafter restored to the same anew, and like stars they are concealed in hidden depths. There all the day, as at midday, the fire of the sun burns with a brighter lustre, in that the brightness of our Creator, which is now overlaid with the mists of our mortal state, is rendered more clearly visible; and the beam of the orb seems to raise itself to higher regions, in that 'Truth' from Its own Self enlightens us more completely through and through. There the light of interior contemplation is seen without the intervening shadow of mutability; there is the heat of supreme Light without any dimness from the body; there the unseen bands of Angels glitter like stars in hidden realms, which cannot now be seen by men, in proportion as they are deeper bathed in the flame of the true Light. Thus it is altogether marvellous that, in the sending of the Apostles, the Lord stretched out the Heavens; that, in moderating the swellings of persecution He trode the waves of the sea, and kept them down; that in the stablishing of the Church, He set 'Arcturus' in his place; that in making the Martyrs proof against afflictions, He sent forth 'the Oriones;' that in the Doctors being replenished in peace, He gave forth 'the Hyades;' but after these it is beyond all comparison marvellous, that He should have provided for us the haven of the heavenly Land, as 'the chambers of the South.'

18. All this is beautiful, that is seen as it were in the face of heaven of God's ordering; but infinitely and incomparably more beautiful is that, to which we are brought without its being able to be seen. Hence the Spouse justly repeats a second time in the commendation of His Bride; *Behold thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair: thou hast doves' eyes, besides that which lieth hidden within.* [Cant. 4, 1] He describes her 'fair,' and says again 'fair,' in that there is one sort of beauty of life and conduct, wherein she is now seen, and another beauty of rewards, wherein she will then be lifted up in the likeness of her Creator; and because her members, which are all the Elect, go about all things with simplicity, her eyes are called 'doves' eyes;' which shine with extraordinary light, for that they glitter even with the signs of miraculous power. But how great is all this marvel, which is able to be seen! That marvel relating to things of the interior is more wonderful, which is not now able to be seen, concerning which it is fitly added in that place, *Besides that which lieth hidden within.* For the glory of the visible world is great, but the glory of the secret recompensing far beyond comparison. That, then, which is denoted by the name of 'stars' by blessed Job, is in the words of Solomon represented by the title of 'eyes;' and what is described by Solomon, *Besides that which lieth within*, blessed Job conveys to us, when he extols 'the chambers of the South.' But see; the holy man in admiring things without, and contemplating those of the interior, telling of things manifest, and diving into things secret, aims to describe all that is done both within and without; but when shall the tongue of flesh unfold the works of the Supreme Greatness? And hence with just propriety directly afterwards, by giving up the attempt, he measures the compass of these same works the more effectually, saying, Ver.10. *Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.*

[xii]

19. For then we more thoroughly compass the deeds of Divine Might, when we acknowledge that we can never compass them; we then speak with greater eloquence, when we are silent on these, being struck dumb with astonishment. Since for the describing of God's works our insufficiency finds in itself how it may put forth its tongue sufficiently, that what it cannot suitably understand, it

may suitably extol by being dumb. Whence it is well said by the Psalmist, *Praise Him in His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness.* [Ps. 150, 2] For He 'praises God according to His excellent greatness,' who sees that he breaks down in the fulfilling of His praise. Therefore let him say, *Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number:* viz. 'great,' in power, 'past finding out,' in reason, 'without number,' in multitude. Therefore the works of God which he could not compass by speaking, he more eloquently defined by proving deficient. But in the review of things, why are we carried so far without ourselves, considering that we know nothing of the very thing that is done to our own selves? Hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 11. *Lo, if He come to me, I see Him not: if He passeth on, I perceive him not.*

[xiii]

20. For the human race being shut out from the interior joys, in due of sin, lost the eyes of the mind; and whither it is going with the steps of its deserts, it cannot tell. Thus, often that is the gift of grace which it takes to be wrath, and often that is the wrath of God's severity, which it supposes to be grace. For very commonly it reckons gifts of virtue as grace, and yet being uplifted by those gifts is brought to the ground; and very often it dreads the opposition of temptations as wrath, and yet being bowed down by those temptations, arises the more solicitous to the safe keeping of its virtuous attainments. For who would not reckon himself to be nigh to God, when he sees that he is magnified with gifts from on high, when either the gift of prophecy or the mastership of teaching is vouchsafed him, or when he is empowered to exercise the grace of healing? Yet it often happens that whilst the mind is made to sit loose by self-security in its virtues, from the adversary plotting against it, it is pierced 'with the weapon of unexpected sin, and is for ever put far away from God by the very means whereby for a time it was brought near to Him without the caution of heedfulness. And who would not look upon himself as now abandoned by Divine grace, when after experiencing purity, he sees that he is sorely pressed by the temptations of the flesh, that things unbefitting crowd on the mind, and before the eyes of fancy there pass things disgraceful and impure? Yet, when such things as these harass but not subdue, they do not slaughter by the effect of corrupting, but preserve by their effect of humbling, that the mind, finding itself weak under temptation, may wholly betake itself to the assistance of the Divine Being, and completely give over all confidence in itself; and thus it is brought to pass, that it attaches itself to God the deeper by the same thing, by which it was made to lament its having fallen away the lower from God. Therefore the coming and going of God are not at all discoverable by our faculties, so long as the issue of alternating states is hidden from our eyes; in that there is no certainty concerning the trial, whether it be a test of virtue or an instrument of our destruction; and concerning gifts we never find out whether they are the reward here of such as are given up, or whether they are a support on the road to bring men to their native Country. Thus let man, once banished from the interior joys, view the doors of the secret place of the Spirit shut against him, and cast forth to himself without, let him groan in the flesh, and seeing the losses which his blindness entails upon him, exclaim, *Lo, if He come to me, I see Him not; if He passeth on, I perceive Him not.* As if he lamented openly, saying, 'Since I have once lost my eyes by my own act and deed, as I am bearing the darkness of a self-sought night, now I neither know the rising nor the setting of the sun.' Yet man, who is pressed down by the infliction of infirmity, and heavy laden with the darkness of his blind estate, is going forward to the Judgment of the Light above, that he may render an account of his actions. And hence it is added immediately afterwards,

Ver. 12. *If He question on a sudden, who will answer Him?*

[xiv]

21. God 'questions suddenly' when He calls us unexpectedly to the strict searching of His scrutiny. But man cannot answer to His questioning, for that, if he be then sifted, all pity laid aside, even the life of the righteous sinks under the scrutiny. Or, surely, He questions, when He deals us hard blows, that, when the mind entertains great thoughts of itself in peace and quiet, it may find itself out in trouble, what sort it really is of. And very commonly because it is smitten, it utters groans; but it is unable to make answer, because the very distastefulness of his stroke is displeasing to him, yet looking to himself man holds his peace, and dreads to scrutinize the Divine decrees, because he knows himself to be but dust. Hence it is said by Paul, *Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?* [Rom. 9, 20] He that is called by the name of 'man' (homo) is proved to be unable to 'reply against God.' For by this circumstance, that he was taken from the dust of the earth [e], he is not worthy to scrutinize the judgments of the Most High. Hence too it is fitly subjoined here, *Or, who will say unto Him, What doest Thou?*

[xv]

22. The acts of our Maker ought always to be revered without examining, for they can never be unjust. For to seek a reason for His secret counsel is nothing else than to erect one's self in pride against His counsel. So when the motive of His acts cannot be discovered, it remains that we be silent under those acts in humility, for the fleshly sense is not equal that it should penetrate the secrets of His Majesty. He then who sees no reason in the acts of God, on considering his own weakness does see reason wherefore he sees none. Hence also it is added by Paul afterwards, *Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me so?* For in proportion as it sees itself to be 'a thing formed' by God's workmanship, it rebukes itself so as not to kick back against the hand of Him that wrought it; for He, Who in loving-kindness exalted what was not, never in injustice abandons that which is. So let the mind be brought to itself under the stroke, and what it cannot comprehend, let it cease to require, lest if the cause of God's wrath be searched out, It be called forth in larger measure for being searched out, and lest wrath, which humility might have pacified, pride kindle to an unextinguishable height. Hence it is moreover fitly added concerning this same Wrath,

Ver. 13. *God, Whose wrath none can resist, and under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down.*

[xvi]

23. It is very strange that it is declared that none can resist God's wrath, seeing that the divine Oracles witness that many have withstood the wrathfulness of the visitation of Heaven. Did not Moses resist God's wrath, when standing up for the fallen people, He restrained the very impulse of the stroke from above, by the oblation of his own death, saying, *Yet now if Thou wilt forgive their sin:—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book, which Thou hast written?* [Exod. 32, 32] Did not Aaron resist God's wrath, when between the living and the dead he took a censer, and assuaged the fire of visitation with the fumes of incense? [Numb. 16, 47. &c.] Did not Phinees resist God's wrath, when slaughtering them that went a whoring with strange women in the very act, he offered

his zeal to the Divine wrath, and pacified fury with the sword? [Ib. 25, 11] Did not David resist God's wrath, who by presenting himself to the Angel, as he dealt destruction, won the grace of propitiation, even before the appointed time? [2 Sam. 24, 25] Did not Elijah resist God's wrath, who when the earth was now for long dried up, brought back by a word the showers withdrawn from the heavens? [1 Kings 18, 44] In what sense then was it said that none can resist the wrath of God, when it is proved by existing examples that numbers have resisted it? However, if we minutely consider both these words of blessed Job, and the deeds of those persons, we both find it to be true that there is no resisting the Divine Wrath, and also true that many have often resisted it. For all Saints that encounter the wrath of God, obtain it from Himself, that they should be thus set in the way to meet the force of His stroke; and so to say having Him with them, they lift up themselves against Him, and the Divine Power arms them in alliance with Itself against Itself. Since in that which they achieve against the wrath of Him dealing cruelly without, the grace of Him so angered encourages them within, and He bears up those serving Him inwardly, whom He submits to resisting Him outwardly. Thus He bears the supplicant's contradiction which He inspires, and that is forced upon Him as though He were unwilling, which is by Himself commanded to be done. For He saith to Moses, *Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation.* [Ex. 32, 10] What is it to say to His servant, *Let Me alone*; but to give him boldness to supplicate? As if He said in plain words, 'Consider how thou prevailest with Me, and know that thou mayest obtain whatsoever thou beseechest for the People.' And that the thing is done with this mind, is witnessed by the pardon which is immediately subjoined. But when the Wrath above moveth Itself, so to say, from the heart's core, human opposition cannot stay It; and no man's entreaty presents itself to any purpose, when once God ordains any thing whilst angered from His inward Deep. For it is hence that Moses, who blotted out by his entreaties the guilt of the whole People in God's sight, and whilst he offered himself in the way, appeased the force of the Divine indignation, when he came to the rock Horeb, and for the bringing forth the water gave way to distrust, could never enter the Land of Promise from the Lord being wroth. And oftentimes he is distressed on this score, often he is troubled by his regret making itself felt, and yet he could never remove from himself the anger of an ordained retribution, who by God's good pleasure removed it even from the very people. Hence David, who afterwards by prayer held back the sword of the Angel from the fallen People, first fled from his son with bare feet howling and lamenting, and until he received to the full the cup of vengeance for the transgression he had done, he could never abate the wrath of the Lord for himself. [2 Sam. 24, 10] Hence Elijah, that as a mortal man he might as it were feel some little of God's visitation, he, who opened the heavens with a word, fled in terror through the wilderness from a woman's indignation; and he proves weak for himself in his dismay, who appeases God's fury for others through his intercession. Thus there is both a possibility of resisting the wrath of God, when He, That is wroth Himself, vouchsafes aid; and there is no possibility at all of resisting it, when He both rouses Himself to deal vengeance, and doth not Himself inspire the prayer that is poured forth to Him. Hence it is said to Jeremiah, *Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither take to thee praise and prayer for them; for I will not hear in the time of their crying to Me;* [Jer. 7, 16] and again, *Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people.* [Jer. 15, 1]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

24. Wherein it may be usefully enquired wherefore, so many more ancient fathers being set aside, Moses and Samuel alone are preferably and preeminently singled out for the utterance of prayer? Which however we easily learn, if we weigh well the claims of that charity which is bidden to love even enemies. For that prayer comes with a special recommendation to the ears of our Creator, which exerts itself to make intercession for our enemies too; and hence 'Truth' saith by His own lips, *Pray for them that despitifully use you and persecute you.* [Matt. 5, 44] And again, *When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any.* [Mark 11, 25] Now when we revolve the deeds of the fathers of old time as Holy Writ describes them, we find that it was Moses and Samuel, who prayed for their adversaries. For one of them had to fly from the persecution of that infuriated People, and yet he interceded for the persecutor's life: the other being deposed from the rule of the People, saith to his own adversaries themselves, *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you.* [1 Sam. 12, 23] Therefore in the difficult work of deprecating wrath, what is it to bring forward Moses and Samuel, but to shew the more plainly that not even they if they stood forward would stay His wrath, who might for this reason have interceded the sooner for their friends, that they were used to intercede with Him even for their enemies. Hence it is said to that same Judaea, *I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one.* And again, *Why criest thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable.* [Jer. 30, 14. 15.] Let the holy man then regard how the wrath of God is restrained by no man's intercession, when once it is inexorably called forth, and let him say, *God, Whose wrath none can resist.* And this we rightly reduce to a particular sense, if we reflect on the woes of that same Israelitish People, which the Saviour, Who was made manifest in the mystery of His economy; abandoned in their pride, and called the Gentiles to the grace of the knowledge of Him. And hence it is rightly subjoined directly, *Under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down.*

25. For they do bear the world, who sustain the cares and concerns of the present world. Since every one is necessitated to bear the burthens of as great things as he is a leader of in this world; and hence a ruler of the earth is not unsuitably designated in the Greek tongue 'basileus.' For 'laus' means 'people.' Basileus therefore is the title 'basis laou' which in the Latin tongue is rendered 'basis populi,' or, 'the base of the people;' since it is he that bears up the people upon himself, in that he controls its motions, himself steadied by the weight of power. For in proportion as he bears the burthens of his subjects, like a base he supports a column raised upon it. Let blessed Job, then, full of the power of the prophetic Spirit, see how Judaea is forsaken, and the rulers of the Gentiles are bowed to the worship of the Divine Being, and let him say, *God, Whose wrath none can resist, under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down.* As though he plainly owned, saying, 'Both the People, that was once subject to Thee, Thou forsakest in Thy severity, and the powers of the Gentiles, that set up their heads, Thou bendest low in Thy mercy.'

26. Though hereby, that it is said, *Under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down;* we may also understand the Angelical powers; for these bear the world, in that they execute the charges of the governing of the universe, as Paul bears witness, when he says, *Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation.* [Heb. 1, 14] Thus he says, *God, Whose wrath none can resist, under Whom they that bear the world are bowed down.* As if he beheld the humiliation of every created being, and said in fear and trembling, 'Which of frail mortals resists Thy nod, before Whose might the Angelic Powers themselves bow down themselves?' Or, surely, since, when we are bowed down, we see nothing of things above us, those subtlest spirits must needs have been erect, if they completely reached the power of His Majesty;

but ‘they that bear the world, are bowed down under God,’ for though when they are lifted up they behold the loftiness of the Divine Nature, yet not even the Angelic Powers attain to comprehend It. Which Same the righteous man failing from infirmity to fathom, and yet in some degree estimating It from the ministrations of the most exalted spirits being subject to Him, falls back to the consideration of himself with heedful humility, and makes himself little in his own eyes compared with the omnipotence of the Supreme Majesty; saying,

Ver. 14. *How great am I that I should answer Him, and talk with Him in my words?*

[xvii]

27. As though he said in plain words, ‘If that created being is unable to take thought of Him, which is not burthened by the flesh, in what spirit do I dispute about His judgments, who am straitened by the burthen of corruption?’ But as God's words to us are oftentimes His judgments, declaring the sentence of our actions, so our words to God are the deeds which we set forth; but man ‘cannot reason with God in his words,’ in that, in the eye of His exact judgment, he maintains no assurance in his actions. Hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 15. *Who, though I possessed any thing righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge.*

[xviii]

28. For, as we have often said, all human righteousness is proved unrighteousness, if it be judged by strict rules. And so there is need of prayer following after righteousness, that this, which if sifted to the bottom might be brought down, may be firmly established in the mere pitifulness of the Judge. And when this is possessed fully by the more perfect sort, it is said that they possess a something of it. In that the human mind both with difficulty puts in practice the truths apprehended by it, and the things which it apprehends are the merest outskirts. Therefore let him say, *Who, though I possessed any thing righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge.* As if he owned in plainer words; ‘And if I should grow to the practising of virtue, I am made vigorous to life, not by merit, but of pardoning grace.’ Therefore we must be strenuous in prayer, when we do right, so that all the righteous ways we live in we may season by humility; but very often it happens that our very supplication is tost to and fro by such a multitude of temptations, that it seems almost cast off from the presence of the Judge. And often our pitiful Creator receives it, but because it cannot put forth itself undefiled, as it is minded, it dreads the sentence of condemnation upon its head. Hence it goes on,

Ver. 16. *And when I have called and He hath answered me, yet do I not believe that He hath hearkened unto my voice.*

[xix]

29. For very often the mind is set on fire with the flame of Divine love, and is uplifted to behold heavenly things and secret mysteries. It is now transported on high, and pierced with full affection, is made strange to things below; but being struck with sudden temptation, the soul which with set purpose had been established erect in God, pierced with arising temptations is bowed low; so that it cannot discern itself, and being held fast between good and evil practices, cannot tell on which side it is strongest. For very often it is brought to this pass, to wonder how it so lays hold of the highest



truths, when unlawful thoughts defile it; and again how it admits unlawful thoughts, when the fervour of the Holy Spirit with power transports it above itself. Which alternate motions of thought in the mind being viewed aright by the Psalmist, he exclaims, *They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths*. [Ps. 107, 26] For we mount up to the heaven, when we enter into the things above, but we go down to the depths, when we are suddenly cast down from the height of contemplation by grovelling temptations. Thus whilst the motions of the mind alternate between vows and vices, too truly they cloud for themselves the certainty of their being heard. Therefore it is rightly said, *When I have called and He hath answered me, yet do I not believe that He hath hearkened unto my voice*. In that the mind is rendered fearful from its mere changeableness, and by that which it is unwillingly subject to, imagines itself cast off and rejected.

30. It is interesting to observe with what exactness the holy man passes judgment on himself, that the judgments of God may find nought in him to take hold of. For having an eye to his own frailty, he says, *How much less shall I answer, and talk in my words with Him?* Not relying upon the claims of his own righteousness, but betaking himself to the hope alone of entreating, he adds, *Who, though I had any thing righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge*. But apprehensive for the very entreaty itself, he adds, *And when I have called, and He hath answered me, yet do I not believe that He hath hearkened unto my voice*. Why does he shrink with so great apprehension, why does he tremble with such sore misgiving? but that his eye is fixed on the dreadfulness of the Judge, in the last strict reckoning, and not supporting the power of His searching eye, all that he does seems little worth in his account? Whence he adds thereupon, Ver. 17. *For He shall break me with a tempest*.

[xx]

31. In every case that sinner is 'broken with a tempest,' who seemed to be stablished in tranquillity, in that the man whom the long-suffering Above bears with for long, the last strict Judgment destroys. And this is rightly called 'a tempest,' because it is manifested in a commotion of the elements, as the Psalmist witnesses, when he says, *God shall come manifest, and He shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and a mighty tempest round about Him*. [Ps. 50, 3] And hence another Prophet also says, *The Lord, His way is in the whirlwind and in the storm*. [Nahum 1, 3] In which same whirlwind the righteous man is never broken, for this reason, because here he is ever in fear and anxiety, lest he should be broken. For whilst still set in the journey of the present life, he bethinks himself how severe towards the actions of men the Requirer of works will appear, Who then condemns even without works some that are only bound with the guilt of original sin. Whence the holy man rightly adds thereupon in the voice of mankind, *And multiplieth my wounds even without cause*.

[xxi]

32. For there be some that are withdrawn from the present light, before they attain to shew forth the good or evil deserts of an active life. And whereas the Sacraments of salvation do not free them from the sin of their birth, at the same time that here they never did aright by their own act; There they are brought to torment. And these have one wound, viz. to be born in corruption, and another, to die in the flesh. But forasmuch as after death there also follows, death eternal, by a secret and righteous judgment 'wounds are multiplied to them without cause.' For they even receive

everlasting torments [f], who never sinned by their own will. And hence it is written, *Even the infant of a single day is not pure in His sight upon earth* [g]. Hence 'Truth' says by His own lips, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. [John 3, 5] Hence Paul says, *We were by nature the children of wrath even as others*. [Eph. 2, 3] He then that adding nothing of his own is mined by the guilt of birth alone, how stands it with such an one at the last account, as far as the calculation of human sense goes, but that he is 'wounded without cause?' And yet in the strict account of God it is but just that the stock of mortality, like an unfruitful tree, should preserve in the branches that bitterness which it drew from the root. Therefore he says, *For He shall break me with a tempest, and multiply my wounds without cause*. As if reviewing the woes of mankind he said in plain words; 'With what sort of visitation does the strict Judge mercilessly slay those, whom the guilt of their own deeds condemns, if He smites for all eternity even those, whom the guilt of deliberate choice does not impeach?'

33. Now that these same sayings are not inconsistent with the case of blessed Job in a special sense, we shall acquaint ourselves, if we pursue the enquiry, how truly they were delivered. For considering himself with exactness, and judging himself in every action, he tells us with what great dread and apprehension he views the force of the severity of the Most High, adding, *For He will break me with a tempest*. As if it were in plain words, 'For this reason I ever fear Him even in time of quiet, because I cannot but know how He may come in the whirlwind, by His scourges;' which same scourges he both in fearing forecast, and in forecasting underwent. Whence he adds, *And will multiply my wounds even without cause*. For as we have often said already, blessed Job was never stricken that the stroke might blot out sin in him, but that it might add to his merit. Therefore in asserting himself wounded without cause, he declares that concerning himself openly, which 'Truth' witnesses of him in secret, saying, *Although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause*. The holy man then does not say from pride that which he says only in truth. Nor is he out of proportion with the rule of righteousness by those words, by which he is not at variance with the Judge. Who goes on to set forth the continuance of those wounds, when he adds, *He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness*.

[xxii]

34. It is often an exercise of virtue to the just, to be subject to ills from without by themselves; but that the conflict of a complete trial may discipline their powers, sometimes at one and the same time they are rent with torments without, and chastened with temptations within. Hence the holy man declares himself to be full of bitterness, in that whilst he is bearing scourges outwardly, there is a heavier weight, which from the adversary's tempting he carries in his interior; but withal the force of his sorrow is abated by considering the equity and the power of the Smiter. Whence he adds,

Ver. 19. *If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong; if of equity in judgment, none dareth bear witness for me*.

[xxiii]

35. For He tries the counts of our lives, Who does not make them out by the testimony of another; in that He, Who is one day revealed as a strict inflicter of punishment, Himself was for long the silent witness of the sin. For it is on this account that the Prophet says, *I am judge and witness*.

[Jer. 29, 23. Vulg.] Hence he saith again, *I have long time holden My peace; I have been still, and refrained Myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman.* [Is. 42, 12] For a woman in travail casts forth with pain, what she has long borne in her womb with burthensomeness. And so after a long silence, like a travailing woman, the Lord utters His voice, in that what He now bears silently in Himself, He one day as it were reveals with pain in the avenging of the Judgment. But it deserves our enquiry; this righteous man, if any had ventured to give testimony in his behalf, would he have cleared him of guilt? And if no other gave testimony to him, then, at least, is he himself at all events of strength to offer testimony in his own behalf? It follows,  
Ver. 20. *If I desire to justify myself; mine own, mouth shall condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.*

[xxiv]

36. As if it were in plain words; ‘Why should I speak about others, when I cannot bear testimony concerning myself?’ But whereas thou art not competent to witness to thine own innocence, dost thou know the fact that thou art innocent? He proceeds,  
Ver. 21. *Though I were perfect, even this my soul shall not know.*

[xxv]

37. Most commonly if we know the good things that we do, we are led to entertain pride; if we are ignorant of them, we cannot keep them. For who would not, in however slight degree, be rendered proud by the consciousness of his virtue? or who, again, would keep safe within him that good, which he does not know of? what then remains as a provision against either of these evils, saving that all the good things that we do, in knowing we should not know; so that we both look upon them as right things, and as a mere nothing, that thus the knowledge of their rightness may quicken the soul to a good guard, and the estimation of their littleness may never exalt it in pride? But there are some things which are not easy to be ascertained by us, even when they are doing. For often we are inflamed with a right earnestness against the sins of transgressors, and when we are transported by passion beyond the bounds of justice, we account this the warmth of just severity. We often take upon ourselves the office of preaching, that we may in this way minister to the service of our brethren; but unless we be acceptable to the person, whom we address, nothing that we preach is received with welcome; and while the mind aims to please on useful grounds, it lets itself out after the love of its own praise in a shameful way, and the soul which was busied in rescuing others from captivity to bad habits, being itself made captive, begins to drudge to its own popularity. For the appetite for the applause of our fellow-creatures is like a kind of footpad, who as people are going along the straight road joins them from the side, that the wayfarer's life may be barbarously taken by the dagger drawn out of sight. And when the intention of purposed usefulness is drawn off to our own interests, in a way to make one shudder, sin accomplishes that identical work, which goodness began. Oftentimes even from the very beginning the thought of the heart seeks one thing, the deed exhibits another.

38. Often not even the thought itself proves faithful to itself, in that it sets one object before the mind's eye, and is hurrying far from it after another in real purpose. For very often we find persons who covet earthly rewards, and stand up in defence of justice, and these account themselves innocent, and exult in being the vindicators of right; who if the prospect of money be withdrawn,

instantly cease from their defence of justice; and yet they look upon themselves as defenders of justice, and maintain themselves right to themselves, who the while aim not at rightness but money. In opposition to whom it is well said by Moses, *That which is just, thou shalt follow justly*. [Deut. 16, 20] For he followeth unjustly that which is just, who is moved to the defence of just dealing not by his feeling for virtue, but by his love of temporal rewards. He 'followeth unjustly that which is just,' who is not afraid to drive a trade with that justice, which he makes his plea. And so 'justly to follow what is just' is in the vindication of justness to make that same justness our end and aim. We often do right things, and are far from looking for rewards, far from seeking applause from our fellowcreatures, yet the mind being set up in self-confidence, scorns to please those from whom it seeks nothing, sets at nought their opinions, and drives itself miserably free along the precipices of pride, and is the worse overwhelmed beneath sin from the same source, whence it boasts, its sins as if subdued, that it is subject to no covetous desires.

39. Often while we sift ourselves more than is meet, by our very aim at discernment we are the more undiscerningly led wrong, and the eye of our mind is dimmed, in proportion as it strives to perceive more; for he too, who determinately looks at the sun's rays, turns darksighted, and is necessitated to see nothing from the very thing in which he strives to see too much. Therefore whereas, if we are backward in our examination, we know nothing at all of ourselves, or, if we search ourselves with an exact scrutiny, we are very often dimsighted to distinguish between virtue and vice, it is rightly said here; *Though I were perfect, my soul shall not know it*. As if it were expressed plainly, 'With what foolhardiness do I find fault with God's judgments upon me, who do not know mine own self by reason of the darkness of my weak condition?' Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *The deep uttered his voice from the height of his imagining*. [Hab. 3, 10. LXX.] For the deep sustains a height of imagining, when the human mind, dim with the immensity of thought, even in its very searching does not penetrate itself, but to 'utter his voice from the height' is that whilst it is unable to fathom itself, it is constrained to rise up in admiration, so that it never should venture to dive into that which is above it, in proportion as, in taking thought itself of its own incomprehensible being, it cannot make out what it is. But the hearts of the righteous, because they cannot examine themselves to perfection, with difficulty bear this exile of dimsightedness; and hence it is added, *and I shall be weary of my life*. The righteous man is weary to live, in that both by doing works he does not cease to seek after life, and yet cannot discover the merits of that same life; since he draws the balances of trial out from the bosom of interior Justice, and in himself is disabled for the effecting of discovery from the very cause that, being transported above himself, he is enlarged in the power of inquiring. But the alleviation of our darkness lies in the just and incomprehensible power of the Creator being recalled to mind, which both never leaves the wicked without taking vengeance, and surpasses the righteousness of the just by the boundlessness of its incomprehensibility; and hence it is fitly subjoined,  
Ver. 22. *This is one thing, that I have spoken, He destroyeth both the perfect and the wicked*.

[xxvi]

40. The 'perfect man is destroyed' by the Creator, in that whatever his pureness may have been, it is swallowed up by the pureness of the divine immensity. For though we take heed to preserve pureness, yet by consideration of the interior Perfection it is shewn, that this which we practise is not purity; 'the wicked' likewise is 'destroyed' by the Creator, in that whilst God ordereth all things marvellously, his wickedness is caught in the noose of his own artifices. For he is even unwittingly

involving himself in punishment on the same grounds whereon he wittingly exults in doing any thing. Whereas therefore Almighty God at once surpasses the perfection of the righteous by pureness, and penetrating the craft of the wicked condemns it, it is rightly said, *This is one thing, therefore I said it; He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'I have spoken this word of reflection to myself, that neither being perfect, shall I appear perfect, if I be strictly examined; nor being wicked, if I would lie hid in myself, am I withdrawn from the piercings of heavenly probing, in that the strict Judge in comprehending all things, penetrates the subterfuges of wickedness in a marvellous way; and in ordering for the best, condemns the same by its 'own devices.' Or, indeed, He is Himself said to destroy both the perfect and the wicked, in that though they be separated in the life of the soul, yet in due of the first sin, they are alike dragged to the death of the flesh. And hence it is said by Solomon; *The learned dieth equally as the unlearned.* [Eccl. 2, 16] And again, *All things are subject to vanity, and all go to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.* [Eccl. 3, 20] It proceeds:  
Ver. 23. *If He scourge, let Him slay once for all, and not laugh at the trial of the innocent.*

[xxvii]

#### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

41. Who would not suppose that this was uttered in pride, unless he heard the sentence of the Judge, Who pronounces, *For ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath.* [Job 42, 7] Therefore it follows, that no one dare to find fault with the author's words, which it appears the Judge commends. But they must be sifted in their inner sense with the greater wariness and nicety, in proportion as they sound the harder on the outside. Thus the holy man surveying the woes of mankind, and considering whence they came, how that man, in consequence of the promise of his enemy, desiring to obtain the knowledge of good and evil, lost his very self too, so that he may say with truth, *Though I were perfect, yet my soul shall not know it;* how that after the punishment of exile he is further subject to the scourges of corruption, and even after being tormented is still tending to the death of the body, or indeed to the death of the soul, so that he may well say, *He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked;* in opposition to this he begs the grace of the Mediator, saying, *If he scourge, let him slay once for all.* For in that we have both in spirit departed from God; and that in flesh we return to dust, we are obnoxious to the punishment of a double death. But there came unto us One, Who in our stead should die the death of the flesh only, and join His single Death to our twofold death, and set us free from either kind. Concerning which it is said by Paul, *For in that He died, He died unto sin once.* [Rom. 6, 10] Thus let the holy man survey the ills of our state of corruption, and let him seek the one Death of the Mediator, which should cancel our two deaths, and in longing for this, let him say, *If He scourge, let Him slay once for all.*

42. But mark how that seems as though it were at war with humility, which is immediately introduced, *And not laugh at the trial of the innocent.* And yet we shall easily perceive this to be a very great piece of humility, if we consider it in a humble spirit. For it is plain to all persons that desire, when deferred, is in every case a pain; as Solomon bears witness, who says, *Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.* [Prov. 13, 12] Now for God to 'laugh,' is His refusing to take pity upon the suffering of man. Hence the Lord saith again, by Solomon, to the children of perdition continuing in sin, *I also will laugh at your calamity* [Prov. 1, 26]; i.e. 'I will not compassionate you in your

distress with any pity.’ Thus before the coming of our Redeemer, the Elect had all of them their pain, in that with ardent longing, they desired to behold the mystery of His Incarnation, as He Himself bears record, when He says, *For I tell you that many Prophets and Kings have desired to see these things which ye see, and have not seen them*; [Luke 10, 24] and so the ‘pains of the innocent’ are the desires of the righteous. For so long then as the Lord, taking no pity, deferred the wishes of His Elect, what did He else, but ‘laugh at the pains of the innocent?’ Therefore let the holy man, considering the gifts of the Redeemer that should come, and enduring with pain the delay of his wishes, express himself in the words, *If He scourge, let Him slay once for all, and not laugh at the pains of the innocent*. As if he besought in plain words, saying, ‘Whereas our life is every day bruised with the scourge of vengeance on account of sin, let Him now appear, Who for our sake may undergo death once for all, without sin, that God may no more ‘laugh at the pains of the innocent,’ if He Himself come subject to suffering in the flesh, in desire of Whom our soul chastens itself.’

43. Or indeed if He uses the expression of God's ‘laughing’ for His joy, the Lord is said ‘to laugh at the pains of the innocent,’ in that the more ardently He is sought of us, the more graciously He rejoices over us. For we as it were cause a kind of joy to Him by our pain, when by holy desires, we chasten ourselves for the love of Him. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Appoint a solemn day in frequency, even unto the horns of the altar*. [Ps. 118, 27. Vulg.] For he ‘appointeth a solemn day to the Lord in frequency,’ whosoever is continually chastening himself in the desire of Him; and it is enjoined that this same day of solemnity be carried even to the horns of the altar, in that it is necessary that every man chasten himself for so long time, until he attains to the height of the heavenly sacrifice, i.e. unto eternal bliss. Thus the holy man, for that he longs to have his desire fulfilled and no longer deferred, says with humility, *Nor laugh at the pains of the innocent*. As if he said, ‘Let Him, gladly welcoming our petitions, no longer defer, but by manifesting bring to light Him, who chastens us in the expecting of Himself.’ Now that blessed Job prayed that He in particular might be slain once for all, Who at ‘the end’ of the world underwent for our sake the death of the flesh alone, he immediately makes appear, in that he at the same time subjoins the very course of His Passion; saying,

Ver. 24. *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covereth the faces of the judges thereof*.

[xxviii]

44. For what is denoted by the designation of ‘the earth,’ saving the flesh? who by the title of ‘the wicked,’ save the devil? The ‘hands’ of this wicked one were they, who were the aggressors in the death of our Redeemer. Thus ‘the earth is given into the hands of the wicked,’ in that our Redeemer's Soul our old enemy could never corrupt, by himself tempting Him. But His Flesh he being permitted did by means of his ministers deprive of life for three days; and unknown to himself, by that very permission, he ministered to the dispensation of God's pitifulness. For assailing our Redeemer with three temptations, he had no power to defile the heart of God. But when he set on the mind of Judas to bring about the death of His fleshly part, and when he gave him a band of soldiers and officers from the Chief Priests and Pharisees, then that wicked one stretched forth his hands upon ‘the earth.’ The judges of this earth were the Priests and Rulers, Pilate and the scoffing soldiers; and so this wicked one ‘covered the faces of the judges thereof,’ in that he veiled the mind of the persecutors, that they should not know their Maker, with a cloud of

wickedness. Whence it is said by Paul, *But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart* [2 Cor. 3, 15]; and he says again, *For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* [1 Cor. 2, 8] And so the face of the judges proved to be covered, in that the mind of the persecutors not even by His miracles ever knew Him to be God, Whom it had power to hold fast in the flesh. But forasmuch as our old enemy is one person with all the wicked, Holy Scripture very often so speaks of the head of the wicked, i.e. the devil, that it suddenly goes off to his body, i.e. to his followers. Therefore it may be that by the name of 'the wicked one,' the faithless and persecuting People is denoted, with which this also which is added accords;  
*If it is not he, who then is it?*

[xxix]

45. Who then shall any where be accounted wicked, if that People, which persecuted Pity Itself, be not wicked? But the holy man, after regarding the faithlessness of the Jewish People, calls back the eye of his mind to himself, grieves that he cannot behold Him Whom he loves, is sad and sorrowful that he is withdrawn from the present world, before the Saving Health of the world is manifested; and hence he adds,

Ver.25. *Now my days are swifter than a post: they are fled away, they have seen no good.*

[xxx]

46. For the business of a post is to tell what is coming after; and so all of the Elect that were born before the coming of the Redeemer, in that either by mode of life only, or by word of mouth likewise, they bore tidings of Him, were like a kind of post in the world. But whereas they foresee themselves withdrawn before the wished for season of Redemption, they mourn that they pass away 'swifter than a post,' and they lament that their days are short, because they are never extended so far as to see the light of the Redeemer; whence it is justly said, *They flee away, they see no good.* All things that have been created are good, as Moses bears record, who says, *And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good.* [Gen. 1, 31] But that good alone is primarily good, whereby all those are good, which are not primarily good, and of this good, 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *None is good save one, that is, God.* [Luke 18, 19] Therefore because the days of the former fathers were ended before ever God was manifested to the world in the flesh, it is rightly said of those days, that they fled away, and saw no good. As if it were in plain words, 'They have passed away before the looked-for season, because they might not attain to the present appearing of the Redeemer.' Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 26. *They are passed away as the ships carrying fruits.*

[xxxi]

47. They that traverse seas transporting fruits, do themselves indeed enjoy the smell of the same, but the food thereof they convey to others. What else then did the ancient Fathers shew themselves, saving ships carrying fruits? They indeed in foretelling the mystery of God's Incarnation, themselves enjoyed the sweet odour of hope, but to ourselves they brought down the fruit by the completion of that hope. For what they but smelled at in expecting, we are replenished with in seeing and receiving. And hence That same Redeemer saith to His disciples, *Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.* [John 4, 38] And their days are likened to ships,

because they pass by on their way, and very properly to those bearing fruits, for all the Elect severally, whom they carried before the Redeemer's coming, through the Spirit of prophecy, they were enabled to refresh with the expectation, but not to feed with the manifest appearing. Or, surely, whereas when ships carry fruits, they mix chaff with them, in order that they may transport them to land without injury, the days of the Fathers of yore are rightly described as like to ships bearing fruits, for in that the sayings of the Ancients tell of the mysteries of the spiritual life, they preserve these by means of the intermingled chaff of the history, and they bring down to us the fruit of the Spirit under a covering, when they speak to us carnal things. For often whilst they relate circumstances proper to themselves, they are exalted to the secrets of the Divine Nature. And often while they gaze at the loftiness of the Divine Nature, 'they are suddenly plunged into the mystery of the Incarnation. Hence it is still further added with fitness,

*As the eagle that hasteth to the prey.*

[xxxii]

48. For it is of the habits of the eagle to gaze at the sun's rays with unrecoiling eye; but when it is pressed by need of sustenance, it turns the same pupil of the eye, which it had fixed on the rays of the sun, to the ken of the carcase, and though it flies high in air, it seeks the earth for the purpose of getting flesh. Thus, surely, thus was it with the old fathers, who as far as the frailty of human nature permitted it, contemplated the sight of the Creator with uplifted soul, but foreseeing Him destined to become incarnate at the end of the world, they as it were turned away their eyes to the ground from gazing at the rays of the sun; and they as it were descend from highest to lowest, whilst they see Him to be God above all things, and Man among all things; and whilst they behold Him, Who was to suffer and to die for mankind, by which same Death they know that they are themselves restored and fashioned anew to life, as it were like the eagle, after gazing at the rays of the sun, they seek their food upon the dead Body. It is good to view the Eagle gazing at the rays of the Sun, which saith, *The mighty God, The Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace*. [Is. 9, 6] But let him come down from the high flight of his lofty range to earth, and seek below the food of the carcase. For he adds a little while after, saying, *The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed*. [Is. 53, 5] And again, *And He is man, and who shall know Him?* [Jer. 17, 9. LXX] Thus the mind of the righteous man being lifted up to the Divine Nature, when it sees the grace of the Economy in His Flesh, as it were 'hasteth' suddenly from on high like an 'eagle to the prey.' 'But mark; that Israelitish People, which was for long watered with the Spirit of prophecy above measure, lost those same gifts of prophecy, and never continued in that faith, which in foreseeing it had proclaimed, and, by disowning, put away from itself that Presence of the Redeemer, which, by foretelling, it clearly delivered to all its followers. Hence, immediately, his speech is suitably made to turn, in sympathy, to their obduracy, and it is shewn how the Spirit of prophecy is taken away from them. For it is subjoined,

Ver. 27. *If I say, I will never speak thus; I change my countenance, and am tormented with grief.*

[xxxiii]

49. For the Jewish People would not speak as before, in that it denied Him, Whom it had foretold; but with changed countenance it is tormented with grief, in that while it defiled with the foulness of unbelief the aspect of its inward man, by which it might have been known by the Creator, setting out with present evils, it brought itself under the sentence of everlasting vengeance. For its face



being as it were changed, it is not known by the Creator, in that upon faith in a good conscience being gone, it is condemned. But doubtless it remains for her, that the pain of punishment torment her, whom her Creator knowing not disowns. Seeing, then, that we have gone through these points under the signification of our Redeemer, now let us go over them again, to make them out in a moral sense.

Ver.25. *Now my days have been swifter than a post, they are fled away, they have seen no good.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

50. For as we have already said, the first man was so created that by the accessions of time his life could only be extended, but not spun to an end; but because by his own act and deed he fell into sin, in that he touched that which was forbidden, he was made subject to a transitory career, which man now, oppressed by fondness for the present life, both undergoes and longs for without ceasing. For, that he may not come to an end, he longs to live on, yet by the accessions to life, he is daily advancing to his end, nor does he well discover the added portions of time, what nothings they are, when those things are done and over in a moment which seemed to be long in coming. Let the holy man then view the grounds of his position, and in the voice of mankind bewail the woes of a transitory career, saying, *Now my days have been swifter than a post; they are fled away, they have seen no good.* As if it were in plain words, 'Man was created for this end, that he might see good,' which is God; but because he would not stand in the light, in flying therefrom he lost his eyes; for in the same degree that by sin he began to let himself run out to things below, he subjected himself to blindness, that he should not see the interior light.' And of those days it is further added with fitness, *They are passed away as the ships carrying fruits.* For ships, when they 'carry fruits,' convey the produce of the land through the waves. Now the land of man was Paradise, which might have kept him unshaken, if by force of innocency he could have stood fast, but, because by sin he fell into the waves of a changeful state, after the land he came into the seas of the present life. Furthermore the fruits of the land were the word of commandment, the power of good works vouchsafed him, the perception of his Creator implanted in his nature. But these fruits, which we refused to eat on the land, we carry through the seas, in that we would not keep unmoved in Paradise the blessings of so many benefits vouchsafed to us, and now we endeavour to preserve them in the midst of temptations. Hasting to our bourn, we are driven forward by the breath of the present life, we are worn out with the tossing of our mutable condition. But whereas by the mystery of the Cross we are made fast to the good gifts implanted in our nature, it is as if we carried fruits by means of wood. And yet this may also be understood in another sense. For ships that carry fruits have sweetness of smell, but have no gravity of weight; and man, when he became an outcast from the joys of Paradise, lost the power of contemplation, and parted with the vigour of his native strength; and when he lifts up himself to seek anew the things above, he is sweetened indeed by the perfume of the memory, but yields no weight of life in meet proportion. Thus he is filled with the odours of fruits, and yet the vessel of our soul is lightly driven hither and thither without steadiness, in that we both call to mind the high state of Paradise with a remembrance of a sweet smell, and are subject to the troublesome waves of temptation arising from the flesh. Hence it is fitly subjoined, *As the eagle that hasteth to the prey.* For the eagle is suspended in an exceeding lofty flight, and poised in swift speeding skywards, but from the hunger of the belly, he seeks the ground, and suddenly plunges himself downward from on high. Thus, thus the race of man in our first parent fell from on high deep down below, whereas the dignity of its state by creation had hung it aloft in the high region of reason as in the freedom of the skies: but because,

contrary to the commandment, he touched the forbidden fruit, he descended to the earth, through the lust of the belly; and it is as if he fed upon flesh after flying, for that he lost those free inhalings of contemplation, and now solaces himself with corporeal delights below. Thus 'as the eagle that hasteth to the prey,' our days pass swiftly by; for in proportion as we seek things below, we are hindered from maintaining ourselves in life.

51. But when we revolve such things in our mind by continual reflection, we are silently pressed with the hard questions, why did Almighty God create one, who He foresaw would perish? Why was He, Who is chief in power and chief in goodness, not so minded as to make man such that he could not perish? But when the mind silently asks these questions, it fears lest, by its very audacity in questioning thus, it should break out into pride, and holds itself in with humility, and restrains the thoughts of the heart. But it is the more distressed, that amid the ills that it suffers it is over and above tormented concerning the secret meaning of its condition. Hence here too it is fitly added; If I shall say, *I will never speak thus; I change my countenance, and am tormented with grief*. For we say, that 'we never ought to speak thus,' when transgressing the limit of our frail nature in pushing our enquiries, we reproach ourselves in dread, and are withheld by bethinking ourselves of heavenly awe, in which same withholding, the face of our mind is altered, in that the mind, which in the first instance, failing to comprehend them, boldly investigated things above, afterwards, finding out its own infirmity, begins to entertain awe for what it is ignorant of. But in this very change there is pain, for the mind is very greatly afflicted that, in recompense of the first sin, she is blinded to the understanding of things touching her own self. All that she undergoes she sees to be just. She dreads lest in her pain she be guilty of excess from liberty of speech, she imposes silence on the lips, but the awakened grief is increased by the very act by which it is restrained. Let him say then; *If I shall say, I will never speak thus; I change my countenance, and am tormented with grief*. For we are then for the most part most grievously afflicted, when, as it were by a studied endeavour after consolation, we try to lighten to ourselves the ills of our afflicted condition; but whoever once considers with minute attention the ills of man propagated by the condemnation of our first parent, it follows that he must be afraid to add his own deeds thereto. Hence after the holy man had brought in matters of common concern, he at once subjoins those of special interest, saying,

Ver. 28. *I was afraid of all my works, knowing that Thou wouldest not spare me, when guilty of transgression.*

[xxxiv]

52. What were the works that blessed Job practised, the text of this sacred history makes plain. For he studied to propitiate his Maker by numberless burnt offerings; in that according to the number of his sons, as it is written, rising up early in the morning, he offered burnt offerings for each, and purified them not only from impure actions, but likewise from bad thoughts. Of whom it is recorded, by the witness of Scripture, *For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed [Lat. blessed] God in their hearts.* [Job 1, 5] He exercised the feeling of sympathy, in that he declares of himself, when he was importuned by the interrogations of his friends, *Did not I weep for him that was in trouble?* [Job 30, 25] He discharged the office of pity, as he says, *I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame.* [Job 29, 15] He kept pureness of chastity in heart, in that he discovers himself openly with adjuration, saying, *If mine heart have been deceived by a woman.* [Job 31, 9] He held the very topmost point of humility, from the grounds of his heart, who saith, *If*

*I did despise to be judged with my manservant or my maidservant, when they contended with me.* [ver. 13] He bestowed the bounties of liberality, who saith, *Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof?* [ver. 17] And again; *If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.* [ver. 20] He displayed the kindness of hospitality, who says, *The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller.* [ver. 32] And in the midst of these things, for the consummation of his virtues, by that more excellent way of charity, he even loved his very enemies, in that he says, *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me.* [ver. 29] And again, *Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin, by wishing a curse to his soul.* [ver. 30] Why then was the holy man 'afraid for his works,' in that he ever practised these, by which God is wont to be softened towards transgressions? How then is it, that while doing works to be admired, he even fears for these same, being in alarm, when he says, *I was afraid of all my works*, save that we gather from the deeds and the words of the holy man, that if we really desire to please God, after we overcome our bad habits, we must fear the very things themselves that are done well in us?

58. For there are two particulars which must of necessity be seriously apprehended in our good works, viz. sloth and deceit. And hence it is said by the Prophet, as the old translation has it, *Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully and negligently.* [Jer. 48, 10] Now it is to be carefully noted, that sloth comes of insensibility, deceit of self-love, for over little love of God gives magnitude to the first, while self-love, miserably possessing the mind, engenders the other. For he is guilty of deceit in the work of God, whosoever loving himself to excess, by that which he may have done well, is only making the best of his way to transitory good things in compensation. We must bear in mind too that there are three ways in which deceit itself is practised, in that, surely, the object aimed at in it is either the secret interest of our fellow creatures' feelings, or the breath of applause, or some outward advantage; contrary to which it is rightly said of the righteous man by the prophet, *Blessed is he that shaketh his hands clear of every favour.* [Is. 33, 15] For as deceit does not consist only in the receiving of money; so, no doubt, a favour is not confined to one thing, but there are three ways of receiving favours after which deceit goeth in haste. For a favour from the heart, is interest solicited in the opinion, a favour from the mouth is glory from applause, a favour from the head a reward by gift. Now every righteous man 'shaketh his hands clear of every favour,' in that in whatever he does aright, he neither aims to win vainglory from the affections of his fellow creatures, nor applause from their lips, nor a gift from their hands. And so he alone is not guilty of deceit in doing God's work, who while he is energetic in studying right conduct, neither pants after the rewards of earthly substance [*corporalis rei*], nor after words of applause, nor after favour in man's judgment. Therefore because our very good actions themselves cannot escape the sword of ambushed sin, unless they be guarded every day by anxious fear, it is rightly said in this place by the holy man, *I was afraid of all my works.* As if he said with humble confession, 'What I have done publicly, I know, but what I may have been secretly subject to therein, I cannot tell.' For often our good points are spoilt by deceit robbing us, in that earthly desires unite themselves to our right actions; oftentimes they come to nought from sloth intervening, in that, love waxing cold, they are starved of the fervour in which they began. And so because the stealth of sin is scarcely got the better of even in the very act of virtue, what safeguard remains for our security, but that even in our virtue, we ever tread with fear and caution?

54. But what he adds after this presents itself as a very great difficulty to the mind; *I know that Thou wouldest not spare one that offendeth.* For if there be no 'sparing of one that offendeth,' who

can be rescued from death eternal, seeing that there is no one to be found clear of sin? Or does He spare a penitent, but not one that offendeth, in that whilst we bewail our offences we are no longer offending? Yet how is it that Peter is looked at, while he is denying, and that by the look of his denied Redeemer he is brought to tears? How is it that Paul, when he was bent to do out the name of our Redeemer upon earth, was vouchsafed to hear His words from heaven? Yet was sin punished both in the one and in the other. In that of Peter on the one hand it is written, as the Gospel is witness, *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, and went out, and wept bitterly.* [Luke 22, 61. 62.] And of Paul, that very same 'Truth' Which called him, saith, *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name's sake.* [Acts 9, 16] Therefore God never doth 'spare him that offendeth,' in that He never leaves his sin without taking vengeance on it. For either man himself in doing penance punishes it in himself, or God in dealing [h] with man in vengeance for it, visits it with His rod, and thus there is never any sparing of sin, in that it is never loosed without vengeance. Thus David after his confession obtained to hear, *The Lord also hath put away thy sin.* [2 Sam. 12, 13] And yet being afterwards scourged 'with numberless afflictions, and a fugitive, he discharged the obligation of the sin which he had been guilty of. So we by the water of salvation are absolved from the sin of our first parent; and yet in clearing off the obligations of that same sin, although absolved, we still undergo the death of the flesh. Therefore it is well said, *I know that thou wouldest not spare one that offendeth.* In that either by ourselves or by His own self He cuts off even when He lets off our sins. For from His Elect He is studious to wipe off by temporal affliction those spots of wickedness, which He would not behold in them for ever. But it oftentimes happens that when the mind is fearful more than behoves, when it is shaken with alarm, when it is pressed with ill-omened misgivings, it feels weary that it should live, in that it questions the attaining to life even through pains and labour. And hence it is thereupon added, Ver.29. *But if even so I be wicked, why, then, have I laboured in vain?*

[xxxv]

5. For if we be examined pity set aside, our work which we look to have recompensed with a reward is deserving of punishment. 'Therefore the holy man shrinking under secret judgment, says, *But if even so I be wicked, why, then, have I laboured in vain?* Not that he repents of having laboured, but that it grieves him even amidst labours to be in uncertainty about the reward. But we must bear in mind that the Saints so doubt that they trust, and so trust that notwithstanding they do not slumber in security. Therefore because it is very often the case that the mind, even when bent upon right courses, is full of fears, it follows that after the good deed is done, deprecating tears be had recourse to, in order that the humility of entreaty may bear up the deserts of right practice to eternal rewards. But yet we must bear in mind that neither our life nor our tears have power to make us perfectly clean, so long as the mortal condition of our state of corruption holds us fast bound. And hence it is rightly added,

Ver. 30, 31. *If I wash myself with snow water, and if my hands shine as if never so clean; yet shalt Thou stain me with filthiness, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.*

[xxxvi]

56. For 'snow water' is the weeping of humility; which same, in that it excels all other virtues in the eyes of the strict Judge, is as it were white by the colour of preeminent merit. For there are some to whom there is lamenting but not humility, in that when they are afflicted they weep, yet in

those very tears, they either set themselves in disdain against the life of their neighbours, or they are lifted up against the dispensation of their Maker. Such have water, but not 'snow water,' and they can never be clean, because they are not washed in the tears of humility. But he had washed himself clean from sin with snow water, who said with confidence, *A broken and a humbled heart, O God, Thou shalt not despise.* [Ps. 51, 17] For they that afflict themselves with tears but turn rebels by murmuring, 'break' their heart indeed, but disdain to be 'humbled.' Though 'snow water' may also be understood in another sense. For water of the spring and stream issues out of the earth, but snow water is let fall from the sky. And there are very many, who torment themselves in the wailings of supplication, yet with all their pains in bewailing they spend themselves upon earthly objects of desire alone. They are pierced with anguish in their prayers, but it is the joys of transitory happiness that they are in search of. And so these are not washed with 'snow water,' because their tears come from below. For it is as if they were bathed in water of earth, who are pierced with grief in their prayers, on account of earthly good things. But they who lament for this reason, because they long for the rewards on high [or 'from on high'], are washed clean in snow water, in that heavenly compunction overflows them. For when they seek after the everlasting land by tears, and inflamed with longing for it lament, they receive from on high that whereby they may be made clean. Now by 'the hands' what else is denoted saving 'works?' Whence it is said to certain persons by the Prophet; *Your hands are full of blood,* [Is. 1, 15] i.e. 'your works are full of cruelty.'

57. But it is to be observed, that the holy man does not say, And make my hands shine ever so clean, but as if never so clean. For so long as we are tied and bound by the penalty of a corrupt state, we never by whatsoever right works appropriate real cleanness to ourselves, but only imitate it, And hence it is fitly added, *Yet Thou shalt stain me with filth.* For God 'to stain us with filth' means His shewing us to be stained with filth; in that in proportion as we more truly rise up to Him by good works, the more exactly we are made to know the filthiness of our life, by which we are rendered at variance with His pureness. Thus he saith, *If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands shine as if never so clean; yet shalt Thou stain me with filthinesses.* As if it were expressed in plain words, 'Though I be steeped in tears of heavenly compunction, though I be exercised in the courses of good works, yet in Thy pureness I perceive that I am not pure.' For the flesh itself, which is still subject to corruption, beats off the spirit when it is intent on God, and stains the beauty of the love of Him by foul and unhallowed movements of thought.

58. Hence too it is added, *And mine own clothes shall abhor me.* For what is denoted by the name of 'clothes' saving this earthly body, with which the soul is endued and covered, that it may not be seen naked in the subtleness of its substance? For hence Solomon saith, *Let thy garments be always white,* [Eccl. 9, 8] i.e. the members of the body clean from filthy acts. Hence Isaiah saith, *A garment mixed in blood shall be for burning.* [Is. 9, 5. Vulg.] For to 'mix garments in blood' is to defile the body with fleshly desires; which same the Psalmist dreaded to be defiled with, when he said, *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou That art the God of my health.* [Ps. 51, 16] Hence it is delivered to John by the voice of the Angel, *Thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments.* [Rev. 3, 4] But according to the way of Holy Writ, our clothes are said 'to abhor us,' in that they make us to be abhorred; in like manner as it is also said of Judas by Peter, *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity.* [Acts 1, 18] For Judas never could have purchased the potter's field, which was bought with the price of blood, in that restoring the thirty pieces of silver, he straightway punished the guilt of the betrayal by a death with greater

guilt inflicted on himself, but ‘he purchased’ is rendered, he ‘was the cause of purchasing.’ So in this place, Mine own garments shall abhor me, means, ‘shall make me to be abhorred.’ For whilst the members set themselves up against the spirit, whilst they break in upon the engagements of holy desire, ‘by the tumult of temptations that are caused by them, the soul being set in its own conflict learns how meanly it is still regarded by the Divine Being, in that while it fully desires to go through with the chastising of self and is not able, it is defiled by the dust of filthy thoughts. He felt this ‘abhorrence of the clothes,’ who said, *But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] These very garments, in which he could not be entirely pleasing, he anxiously desired to lay aside, one day to be resumed much better, saying, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* [Rom. 7, 24] Therefore let the righteous man say, *If I wash myself as with snow water, and make my hands shine as if never so clean, yet shalt Thou still stain me with filthiness, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.* In that howsoever he might have been transported on high in the compunctious visitings of contemplation, however he might have braced himself in practice by the exercise of pains, yet he is still sensible of somewhat unmeet derived from a body of death, and sees himself to be abominable in many things, which he bears about him from his load of corruption. And this too becomes a worse affliction to him, that he often cannot make out by what means he is an offender. He undergoes scourges, but knows nothing what in him is greater, or what less, that displeases the severe Judge. And hence it is added,

32. *For He is not a man, such as I am, that I should answer Him, or that He can be heard with me in Judgment on an equal footing.*

[xxxvii]

59. When we ‘contend with another in judgment on an equal footing,’ we both learn what is urged against us, and in all we allege we are heard, and in proportion as we apprehend the points openly objected, we reply with boldness to the points propounded. In this way forasmuch as the invisible Judge sees all that we do, it is as if He hears things that we say. But because we never know fully the thing that displeases Him, it is as if what He Himself says, we know not. Thus the holy man, considering the ‘abhorrence of his own clothes,’ is the more filled with fears, that he cannot ‘be heard with Him in judgment on an equal footing.’ In that so long as he is burthened with the load of his corruption, he meets with this worst evil in his punishment, that he does not even know the view that his Reprover takes. As though he said in plain words; ‘Herein I am not heard on an equal footing, in that while all that I do is open to view, yet I myself cannot tell under what liabilities I am arrested.’ It goes on,

Ver.32. *Neither is there any that is able to convict both of us, and to lay his hand upon us both.*

[xxxviii]

60. It sounds hard that any should be sought who might convict God, but it will not be hard, if we recall to mind what He Himself says by another Prophet; for He charges us by Isaiah, *Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come, and convict [argue] Me, saith the Lord.* [Is. 1, 16—18.] For one whom we convict, we encounter with the authority of reason. And what is this, that when the Lord bids us do holy actions, He adds, *Come, and convict Me*, but that He plainly intimates the great assurance He

vouchsafes to good works? As if it were said in plain words, ‘Do right, and then no longer meet the motions of My displeasure by the groan of entreaty, but by the confident voice of authority.’ For it is hence that John saith, *If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.* [I John 3, 21] It is hence that Moses, in that he is acceptable in rendering service, is heard while keeping silence, where it is said to him when he was silent, *Wherefore criest thou unto Me?* [Ex. 14, 15] It is hence that he withholds Him waxing wrath, when he hears the words, *Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against this people.* [Ex. 32, 10] It is hence that the Lord complains that He had no one to convict Him, where it is said by the Prophet, *And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the way against Me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none.* [Ez. 22, 30] It is hence that Isaiah laments bitterly, saying, *And we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon Thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee.* [Is. 64, 6. 7.]

61. Now any of the righteous may sometimes be able to resist the visitations of a present judgment, by the merits of a derived innocency, but they have no power by their own goodness to rid mankind of the woes of the death to come. Therefore let the holy man bethink himself whereunto the human race has run out, let him cast his eye on the woes of eternal death, which it is plain that human righteousness can never withstand, let him see how frowardly man has offended, let him see how severely the wrath of the Creator is directed against man, and let him call for the Mediator between God and man, God and Man in one, forasmuch as he beholds Him destined to come long after; let him lament and say, *Neither is there any that is able to convict both of us, and to lay his hand upon us both.* For the Redeemer of Mankind, who was made the Mediator between God and Man through the flesh, because that He alone appeared righteous among men, and yet, even though without sin, was notwithstanding brought to the punishment of sin, did both convict man, that he might not sin, and withstand God, that He might not smite; He gave examples of innocency that He took upon Him the punishment due to wickedness. Thus by suffering He convinced both the One and the other, in that He both rebuked the sin of man by infusing righteousness, and moderated the wrath of the Judge by undergoing death; and He ‘laid His hand upon both,’ in that He at once gave examples to men which they might imitate, and exhibited in Himself those works to God, by which He might be reconciled to men. For before Him there never was forthcoming One, Who interceded for the guiltinesses of others in such wise, as not to have any of His own. Therefore none could encounter eternal death in the case of others, in the degree that he was bound by the guilt of his own. Therefore there came to men a new Man, as to sin a rebuker, as to punishment a befriender. He manifested miracles, He underwent cruel treatment. Thus He laid His hand upon both, for by the same steps by which He taught the guilty good things, He appeased the indignant Judge. And He did this too the more marvellously by His very miracles themselves, in that He reformed the hearts of offenders by mildness rather than by terror. Hence it is added, Ver.34. *Let Him take away His rod from Me, and let not His fear terrify me.*

[xxxix]

#### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

62. For in the Law God held the rod, in that He said, ‘If any man do this or that, let him die the death.’ But in His Incarnation He removed the rod, in that He shewed the paths of life by mild means. Whence it is said to Him by the Psalmist, *Set forward, go forth prosperously and rejoice,*

*because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness.* [Ps. 45, 3] For He had no mind to be feared as God, but put it into our hearts that as a Father He should be loved; as Paul clearly delivers; *For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* [Rom. 8, 15] Hence too it is fitly added here, Ver.35. *Then would I speak, and not fear Him.*

[xl]

63. For the holy man, because he beholds the Redeemer of the world coming in meekness, does not assume fear towards a Master, but affection towards a Father. And he looks down on fear, in that through the grace of adoption he rises up to love. Hence John says; *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.* [1 John 4, 18] Hence Zachariah says, *That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear.* [Luke 1, 74] Therefore fear had no power to raise us from the death of sin, but the infused grace of meekness erected us to the seat of life. Which is well denoted by Elisha when he raised the child of the Shunamite. [2 Kings 4] He, when he sent his servant with a staff, never a whit restored life to the dead child; but upon coming in his own person, and spreading himself upon the dead body, and contracting himself to its limbs, and walking to and fro, and breathing several times into the mouth of the dead body, he forthwith quickened it to the light of new life through the ministering of compassion. For God, the Creator of mankind, as it were grieved for His dead son, when He beheld us with compassion killed by the sting of iniquity. And whereas He put forth the terror of the Law by Moses, He as it were sent the rod by the servant. But the servant could not raise the dead body with the staff; because, as Paul bears witness, *The Law made nothing perfect.* [Heb. 7, 19] But when He came in His own Person, and spread Himself in humility upon the dead body, He contracted Himself to match the limbs of the dead body to Himself. *Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and found in fashion as a man.* [Phil. 2, 6—8.] He ‘walks to and fro’ also, in that He calls Judaea nigh at hand, and the Gentiles afar off. He breathes upon the dead body several times, in that by the publishing of the Divine gift, He bestows the Spirit of sevenfold grace upon those that lie prostrate in the death of sin. And afterwards it is raised up alive, in that the child, whom the rod of terror could not raise up, has been brought back to life by the Spirit of love. Therefore let him say in himself, and in the voice of mankind, *Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me.* Then would I speak, and not fear Him. Where it is fitly added, *For I cannot respond whilst I fear.*

[xli]

#### [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

64. We are said to respond to any one, when we pay back deeds worthy of his doings. Therefore to ‘respond’ to God, is to render back our services in return for His previous gifts. And hence it is that certain of the Psalms, in which holy practice is set forth for imitation are prenoted as written ‘to respond.’ Thus God created man upright, and bore with him in long-suffering, when he let himself out to do froward deeds. Every day He beholds sin, and yet does not quickly cut off the periods of life. He lavishes His gifts in loving-kindness, and exercises patience towards evildoers. Man ought to respond to so many benefits, yet ‘he is not able to respond whilst he fears,’ in that everyone that



continues to dread with a slavish fear the Creator of mankind, assuredly does not love Him. For we then only render real services to God, when we have no fear of Him through the confidence of our love, when affection, not fear, directs us to good works, when sin is now no longer pleasing to our mind, even if it were allowed us. For everyone that is restrained by fear alone from the practice of evil, would gladly do evil things if liberty were given him. He then is in no whit really righteous, who is still not free from the hankering after evil; and so it is well said, *For I cannot respond while I fear*. In that we do not render real service to God, so long as we obey His commandments from fear, and not much rather from love. But when the love of His sweetness is kindled in our mind, all desire of the present life goes for little, fondness is turned into weariness, and the mind endures with sorrow this same, which she formerly served, under the dominion of an accursed love. Hence it is added with propriety,

Chap. x. 1. *My soul is weary of my life.*

[xlii]

65. Now whensoever the present life has once begun to grow tasteless, and the love of the Creator to become sweet, the soul inflames itself against self, that it may accuse self for the sins, wherein it formerly vindicated itself, being ignorant of the things above. Whence he yet further adds with propriety,

*I will let my speech go against myself.*

[xliii]

66. He as it were employs his speech in behalf of himself, who tries to defend by excuses the evil things he has done. But he 'lets his speech go against himself,' who begins to accuse himself of that which he has done amiss. Now very frequently even when we commit sin, we go on to try the things we have done. The mind of itself brings what it does to trial; but forasmuch as it does not at all forsake this in the desire, it is ashamed to acknowledge what it has done; but when it now comes down upon the indulgence of the flesh with the whole weight of its judgment, it lifts itself with a bold voice in the acknowledgment of that self-accusing. Whence it is rightly said here, *I will let my speech go against myself*; in that the resolute mind begins to let loose against itself words of abhorrence, which aforetime from a feeling of shame it kept to itself through weakness. But there be some that confess their sins in explicit words, but yet know nothing how to bewail in confessing them. And they utter things with pleasure, that they ought to bewail. Hence it is further added with propriety;

*I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.*

[xliv]

67. He that tells his sins abhorring them, must needs likewise 'speak of them in the bitterness of his soul,' that that very bitterness may punish whatsoever the tongue accuses of in the warrant of conscience. But we must bear in mind, that from the pains of penitence, which the mind inflicts upon itself, it derives a certain degree of security; and rises with the greater confidence to meet the inquest of the heavenly Judge, that it may make itself out more thoroughly, and ascertain how each particular is appointed towards, it. Hence it is forthwith added;

Ver. 12. *I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore Thou so judgest me.*

[xliv]

68. Whereas he declares himself a sinner 'in the bitterness of his soul,' what else does he say to God, but that he may not be condemned, in that the bitterness of his present penance does away with the pains of ensuing wrath? Now God judgeth man in this life in two ways, seeing that either by present ills He is already beginning to bring upon him the torments to come, or else by present scourges He does away with the torments to come. For except there were some whom the just Judge, as the due of their sins, did both now and hereafter visit, Jude would never have said, *The Lord afterwards destroyed them that believed not.* [Jude 5] And the Psalmist would not say of the wicked, *Let them cover themselves with their own confusion as with a lined cloak [diploide].* [Ps. 109, 29] For we mean by 'a lined cloak' a double garment. And so they are 'clothed with confusion as with a double garment,' who according to the due reward of their sin are at once visited with both a temporal and an everlasting judgment. For chastisement delivers those alone from woe, whom it alters. For those whom present evils do not amend, they conduct to those which are to ensue. But if there were not some whom present punishment preserves from eternal woe, Paul would never have said, *But when we are Judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* [1 Cor. 11, 32] Hence it is spoken to John by the voice of the Angel, *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.* [Rev. 3, 19] Hence also it is written, *For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.* [Heb. 12, 6]

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

69. Therefore it often happens that the mind of the righteous man, in order to be made more secure, is the more penetrated with fear, and when he is beset with scourges, he is troubled with misgivings about the Judgment of the Most High. He fears lest all that he suffers should be the forerunner of the doom to ensue, and in his heart he questions the Judge, in that under His visitation he is full of doubts about the merit of his life. But when the goodness of his life is brought before the eyes of the mind, it is as if comfort were given in answer by the Judge, in that He never strikes to destroy him, whom by so striking He keeps in innocency of life and conduct. Therefore it is justly said here, *Shew me wherefore Thou so judgest me.* As if it were expressed in plain words, 'Whereas Thou exercisest judgment upon me by scourging me, shew me that by these scourges Thou art making me secure against the Judgment.' Which same however may also be understood in another sense. For very often the righteous man receives scourges for trial, and examining his life with the keenest eye of enquiry, though he both feel and own himself to be a sinner, yet for what particular sin he is smitten he cannot at all make out, and he trembles the more under the rod, in proportion as he knows nothing the reasons of his being smitten. He prays that the Judge would shew him to himself, that what He in striking aims at, he may himself also chastise in himself by weeping. For he is well assured that That most just Avenger never afflicts anyone of us unjustly, and he is moved with excessive alarm, in that he is both put to pain under the lash, and cannot entirely discover in himself what there is for him to lament. Hence it is further added;  
Ver. 3. *Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldest calumniate and oppress the poor [Vulg. me], and the work of Thine hands, and help the counsel of the wicked?*

[xlvi]

70. This same is so said by way of interrogation, that it is denied. As though it were in plain terms; 'Thou That art supremely good, I know dost not hold it good to oppress the poor man by calumny. And therefore I know that that is not unjust that I am suffering, and I am the more grieved, that cannot tell the causes of its justness.' But observe that he does not say, *That Thou shouldest oppress the innocent*, but, *the poor man*. For he who doth not represent his innocency, but his poorness to the severity of the Judge, does not now put on a bold front on the ground of his own life, but shews of how little strength he sees himself to be. Where also he fitly subjoins, *The work of Thine hands*. As if he said plainly, 'Thou canst not ever unfeelingly oppress him, whom Thou rememberest Thyself to have made of Thy mere grace.'

71. Now the words are excellently put in, *And help the counsel of the wicked*. For whom does he here call wicked, save the malignant spirits, who as they cannot themselves return back to life, mercilessly look out for fellows in destruction. Whose counsel it was that God's stroke should visit blessed Job, that he who shewed himself righteous while at peace, might at all events commit sin under the scourge. Now the Lord did not 'help the counsel of the wicked,' in that whilst He gave up the flesh of the righteous man to their arts of temptation, He withheld his soul. It is this counsel that the evil spirits incessantly persevere in against the good, that those, whom they see serving God in innocency while at rest, on being stricken by misfortune may go headlong into a whirlpool of sin. But the sharpness of their counsel is brought to nought, in that our pitiful Creator qualifies the strokes in accordance with our powers, that the infliction may not exceed our virtue, and by the craftiness of the strong ones man's weakness be thrown out of course. Hence it is well said by Paul, *But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*. For except the merciful God tempered His trials to correspond with our powers, there is surely no man who could sustain the cunning plots of evil spirits without being brought to the ground, in that excepting the Judge assign a measure to our temptations, by this alone He at once throws down one standing, in that He puts upon him a burthen too much for his strength. Now blessed Job, in the way of denying, so put in a question the things which he uttered, even as in asking he denies the things which he thereupon subjoins, saying,

Ver.4-7. *Hast Thou eyes of flesh? or shalt Thou see as man seeth? Are Thy days as the days of man? Are Thy years as the time of man, that Thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin? To know that I have done nothing ungodly.*

[xlvii]

72. Eyes of flesh see not the deeds of the periods of time, save in time, in that both they themselves came out with time to see, and are closed with time, and man's sight follows any deed and does not prevent it, seeing that it but just glimpses at things existing, and sees nothing at all of things to come. Moreover the days and years of men differ from the days and years of Eternity, in that our life, which is begun in time and ended in time, Eternity, whilst it frames it within the boundlessness of its bosom, doth swallow up. And whereas the immensity of the same extends beyond us on this side and on that side, His 'TO BE eternally' spreads without beginning and without end: whereunto neither things gone by are past, nor things still to come, as though they did not appear, are absent; in that He, Who hath it always TO BE, seeth all things present to His eyes, and whereas He doth not stretch Himself by looking behind and before, He changes with no varieties of sight. And so let him say; *Hast thou eyes of flesh? or shalt Thou see as man seeth? Are Thy days as the days of*

*man? Are Thy days as the days of man, that Thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin? To know that I have done nothing ungodly.* As if, humbly inquiring, he said, 'Wherefore dost Thou search me by scourges in time, when even before time was Thou didst know me perfectly in Thine own self? Wherefore dost Thou make inquest concerning my sins by smiting, whom by the mightiness of Thine eternity Thou didst never but know before Thou fashionedst me?' The weight of Whose power he immediately goes on to describe, where he adds; *And there is none that can deliver out of Thine hand.*

[xlviii]

73. As if he expressed it in plain words; 'What is left to Thee, saving to spare, Whose power no man can resist? For in proportion as there is none who might stay Thy visitation by the merits of his own excellence, let Thy pitifulness the more easily obtain from Thee [lit. 'from Itself.'] to spare.' But because being conceived in sin, and born in wickedness, we either do evil things of malice, or even in doing good things go wrong out of heedlessness, we have not wherewith the strict Judge may be rendered propitious towards us; but while we are unable to present our work as worthy of His regard, it remains that for the propitiation of His favour we offer to Him His own work. Hence it is added;

Ver. 8. *Thine hands have made me and fashioned me,altogether round about: and dost Thou thus suddenly cast me down?*

[xlix]

74. As if He said to Him in humility; 'Whereas that which I have done being submitted to a just examination is not meet for the propitiating of Thee, consider in Thy mercy lest that should perish which is Thy doing [*quod fecisti*].' By which same words too the wicked doctrine of Manichaeus [some Mss. 'of Manes.'] is destroyed, who feigning that there are two Principles, strives to maintain that the spirit was made by God, but the flesh by Satan. For the holy man, being full of the grace of the prophetic Spirit, views events to come long afterwards, and foreseeing the shoots of divers errors, treads them underfoot, saying, *Thine hands have made me and fashioned me altogether round about.* For he, who declares himself both 'made and fashioned altogether round about' by God, leaves to the race of darkness no part either in his spirit or in his flesh. For he described himself as 'moulded' [*plasmatum*] in virtue of the interior image, but he spoke of being 'fashioned together round about' in so far as he consists of a covering of flesh.

75. But it is to be observed, that herein that he declares himself made by the hands of God, he is setting before the Divine Mercy the dignity of his creation; for though all things were created by the Word, Which is coeternal with the Father, yet in the very account of the Creation, it is shewn how greatly man is preferred above all animals, how much even above things celestial, yet without sense. For, *He commanded, and they all were created.* [Ps. 148, 5] But when He determines to make Man, this which is to be thought of with awe is premised; *Let Us make man in Our Image, after Our Likeness.* [Gen. 1, 26] Nor yet is it written concerning him as it is of the rest of things created; *Let there be, and it was so.* [ver. 6. 7.] Nor as the waters the fowl, so did the earth produce Man; but before he was made it was said, *Let Us make;* [ver. 20] that whereas it was a creature endowed with reason that was being made, it might seem as if it were made with counsel. As if by design he is formed out of earth, and by the inspiration of his Creator set erect in the power of a

vital spirit in this way, that he who was made after the image of his Creator, might have his being not by word of command, but by the greater eminence of action. That, then, which Man in the work of his creating received preeminently upon earth above all other creatures, this, being laid under the scourge, he represents to the pitifulness of his Artificer, saying, *Thine hands have made me and fashioned me altogether round about: and dost Thou thus suddenly cast me down?* As if it were in plain words; ‘Why dost Thou despise me with such light esteem, when Thou createdst me with such circumstances of dignity? and him whom by reason Thou settest above all other things, why dost Thou by sorrow set below them?’ Yet this preeminence, that we possess, shines bright by reason of the ‘Likeness,’ but is very far removed from the perfection of blessedness by reason of the flesh, in that whilst the spirit mixes with dust, it is in a certain measure united with weakness. Which weakness blessed Job presents to the pitifulness of the Judge, when he subjoins;

Ver. 9. *Remember, I pray Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay.*

[I]

76. The spirits of the Angels did for this reason sin without forgiveness, because they might have stood the stronger in proportion as no mixture with flesh held them in bonds. But man for this reason obtained pardon after sin, that in a body of flesh he got that wherein he should be beneath himself. And hence in the eye of the Judge this frailty of the flesh alone is a ground for shewing pity; as where it is said by the Psalmist, *But He is full of compassion, and will forgive their iniquity, and not destroy them; yea, many a time turned He His anger away from them, and did not stir up all His wrath, and remembered that they were but flesh.* [Ps. 78, 38. 39.] And so man was ‘made as the clay’ in that he was taken out of clay, for the making of him. For clay is made, when water is sprinkled [*se conspergit*] in with earth. Therefore man is made as clay, in that it is as if water moistened dust, while the soul waters the flesh. Which name the holy man excellently represents to the pitifulness of the Judge, when he beseeches saying, Remember, I pray Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay. As if he said in plain words; ‘Consider the frailty of the flesh, and remit the guilt of my sin.’ Where moreover the death of that flesh is openly added, in that the words are immediately brought in;

*And wilt Thou bring me unto dust again?*

[li]

77. As if he begged openly, saving, ‘Remember, I pray Thee, that by the flesh I came from earth, and by the death thereof, I tend to earth, Thus regard the substance of my origin, and the penalty of my end, and be the readier to spare the sin of a transient being;’ but as he has given out the sort and kind of man as created, he now subjoins the order of man as propagated, saying,

Ver. 10, 11. *Hast Thou not poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin, and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.*

[lii]

78. For man when fashioned was moulded like clay, but being propagated he is ‘poured out like milk’ in the seed, and is ‘curdled like cheese’ in the flesh, and he is ‘clothed with skin and flesh,’ and is rendered firm by bones and sinews. Therefore by clay we have set forth to us the character of the first creating, but by milk the order of the subsequent conception, in that by the stages of

curdling, it goes on little by little to be wrought strong into bones. But the account of the body as it was created is but slender praise of God, unless at the same time there be afterwards set forth the marvellous inspiration of its quickening. Hence it is added,  
*Thou hast granted me life and mercy.*

[liii]

79. But the Creator vouchsafes to us blessings in vain, except He Himself keep safe all whatsoever He giveth. It follows, *And Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.* Now all this that we have spoken of the exterior man, in what sense it may accord with the interior man, it is well to unfold and exhibit in few words,

*Remember, I beseech Thee, that Thou hast made me as the clay.*

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

80. For our interior man proves like clay, in that the grace of the Holy Spirit is, infused into the earthly mind, that it may be lifted up to the understanding of its Creator. For the thinking faculty in man, which is dried up by the barrenness of its sin, through the power of the Holy Spirit grows green, like land when it is watered. Now it very often happens that whilst we use without let or hindrance the endowments of virtue by gift from above, by being used to such uninterrupted prosperity we are lifted up to self-confidence. Whence it very often happens that the same Holy Spirit, Which had exalted us, leaves us for a time, in order to shew mere man to himself. And this is what the holy man immediately sets forth, when he adds, *And wilt Thou, bring me into dust again?* For as by the withdrawal of the Spirit the soul is left for a space under temptation, it is as if the ground were dried of its former moisture; that by being so forsaken it may be made sensible of its weakness, and learn how man was dried up without the infusion of heavenly grace. And he is fitly described as being ‘brought into dust again,’ in that when he is left to himself he is caught up by the breath of every temptation. But whereas on being left we are exposed to shocks, those gifts which we knew when we were inspired, we now think of more nicely. Whence he adds, *Hast Thou not poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese?* For when by the grace of the Holy Spirit our mind is withdrawn from the way of its former conversation, it is as if ‘milk poured out,’ in that it is formed in the sort of tenderness and delicacy of a new beginning. And it is ‘curdled like cheese,’ in that it is bound up in the consistency of consolidating thought, never from henceforth to let itself go loose in desires, but concentrating itself in a single affection, to rise up into a substantial remoulding. But it very often happens that the flesh, from old habit, murmurs against this spiritual embryo, and the soul meets with war from the man which it bears about without it. And hence he adds, *Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh.* For the interior man is ‘clothed with skin and flesh,’ since wherein it is raised up to things above, it is straitly blockaded with the besieging of fleshly motions. Now one that is going on to righteousness our Creator never forsakes under temptation, Who by the inspiration of His Grace preventeth even him that is sinning; but the soul that is lifted up He both lets loose to wars without, and endues with strength within. And hence it is yet further fitly subjoined, *And hast fenced me with bones and sinews.* With ‘flesh and skin we are clothed,’ but we are ‘fenced with bones and sinews,’ in that though we receive a shock by temptation assailing us from without, yet the hand of the Creator strengthens us within, that we should not be shattered. And so by the promptings of the flesh, He abases us in respect of His gifts, but by the bones of virtue He strengthens us against temptations. Therefore he says, *Thou, hast*

*clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.* As if it were in plain words, 'Without Thou dost abandon me to undergo trial, yet within, that I may not perish, Thou keepest me by bracing me with virtue.' And for this reason He gives us righteousness to live as we ought, because in His loving-kindness He spares the past misdeeds whereby we have done amiss. And hence it is further added with propriety,  
*Thou hast granted me life and mercy.*

81. For 'life' is granted, when goodness is inspired into evil minds, but 'life' cannot be had without 'mercy,' in that the Lord does not aid us to obtain the endowments of righteousness, unless He first in mercy remit our past iniquities. Or surely, He 'grants us life and mercy,' in that by the same mercy, with which He prevents us that we may lead a good life, continuing on afterwards He keeps us safe. For except He add mercy, the life which He vouchsafes cannot be preserved; since we are daily growing old by the mere customariness of our human life, and by the impulse of the outward man we are carried out of interior life by loose thought; so that unless heavenly visiting either by piercing our hearts quicken us in love, or by scourging us renew us in fear, the soul is wholly and entirely ruined by a sudden downfall, when it seemed to be made new by a long course of devotion to virtue. Hence he subjoins, *And Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.* For the visitation of the Most High preserves man's spirit, when, it being richly endowed with graces, He does not cease either to scourge it with the rod, or to pierce it with love. For if He bestows gifts, but does not raise it up by continually restoring it, the blessing is speedily lost, which is not preserved by the Giver. But mark how the holy man, whilst he views himself in a humble light, discovers the secrets of Divine mercy destined to be universally bestowed, and whilst he truly confesses his own weakness, he is suddenly transported on high to learn the calling of the Gentiles. For he forthwith adds, Ver. 13. *Though Thou hide these things in Thine heart; yet I know that Thou rememberest all.*

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#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

82. As if it were in plain words; 'Why do I tremble for myself, who know that Thou dost gather in one even all nations? Which nevertheless Thou 'hidest in Thine heart,' in that Thou dost not yet make it known by open revelation, but Thou That 'rememberest all,' givest me, doubtless, assurance of pardon.' But it is to be borne in mind, that in certain deeds we are both made certain of pardon, and after the commission of the sins are strengthened to have confidence of our absolution by subsequent chastisement and penance, yet we are still touched with the remembrance of the wickedness we have committed, and, unwilling and abhorring it, are preyed upon by unlawful thoughts. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 14. *If I have sinned, and Thou sparedst me at the hour, wherefore dost Thou not let me be clean from mine iniquity?*

[lv]

83. The Lord 'spareth sin at the hour,' when the moment that we yield tears, He does away with the guilt of sin. But He doth not 'let us be clean from our iniquity,' in that of free will indeed we committed the sin, but sometimes against our will we undergo the remembrance of it with a sense of pleasure; for often that, which has been put away from the sight of the just Judge by tears

intervening, recurs to mind, and the conquered habit strives to insinuate itself again for the entertaining of delight, and is renewed again in the former contest with revived assault, that what it once did in the body, it may afterwards go through in the mind by intruding thought; which same that spiritual wrestler knew how to regard with heedful eye, who said, *My scars* [V. *cicatrices*] *stink, and are corrupt through my foolishness*. For what are ‘scars’ but the healings of wounds? And so he who lamented his scars, beheld his pardoned wickednesses return to his remembrance for the entertaining of delight. Since for scars to grow corrupt is for wounds of sins, already healed, again to insinuate themselves in the tempting of us, and at their suggestions, after the skin of penitence has grown over; to be sensible of the stench and pain of sin again. Wherein there is at once both nothing done outwardly in deed, and sin is committed within in the thought alone, and the soul is laid under a close bond of guilt except it do away with it by heedful lamentation.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

84. Whence it is well said by Moses, *If there be among you any man that is not clean by reason of a dream that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad without the camp, he shall not come within the camp: but it shall be when evening cometh on he shall wash himself with water: and when the sun is down he shall come into the camp again*. [Deut. 23, 10. 11.] For ‘the dream that chanceth by night’ is the secret tempting, whereby there is something foul conceived in the heart in dark thought, which nevertheless is not fulfilled in the deed of the body. Now, if there be any that is ‘not clean by reason of a dream that chanceth him by night,’ he is bidden to go abroad without the camp, in that it is meet that he that is defiled with impure thought, should look upon himself as unworthy the society of the faithful, that he should set before his eyes the deserts of his sin, and look down upon himself in the scale of good men. And so for ‘one unclean to go abroad out of the camp’ is for one hard bested by the assaults of impurity, to look down upon himself by comparison with men of continency. And ‘when evening cometh on he washes himself with water,’ in that seeing his offence he has recourse to tears of penitence, that by weeping he may wash out every thing that hidden defilement brings home to the soul’s charge. ‘And when the sun is down he shall come into the camp again,’ in that when the heat of temptation has subsided, it follows that he should again take confidence to join the company of the good. For after washing with water, when the sun is set, he returns to the camp, who after tears of penance, when the flame of unlawful thought is quenched, is restored to assume the claims of the faithful, that he should not any longer account himself far removed from others, who rejoices that he is clean by the departure of the inward burning.

But herein be it known that it is for this reason that we are sometimes driven to straits by the impulse of unlawful thought, because we are ready to employ ourselves in certain courses of earthly conduct, though not unlawful. And when even in the very least things we come in contact with earthly conduct in desire, the might of our old enemy gaining strength against us, our mind is defiled by no little urgency of temptation. And hence the Priest of the Law is enjoined to consume with fire the limbs of the victim cut into pieces, the head, and the parts about the liver; but the inwards and the legs he is to wash with water first. [Lev. 1, 5. 12.] For we offer our own selves a sacrifice to God, when we dedicate our lives to the service of God, and we set the members of the sacrifice cut into pieces upon the fire, when we offer up the deeds of our lives dividing them in the virtues. The head and the parts contained about the liver we burn, when in our faculty of sense, whereby all the body is governed, and in our hidden desire we are kindled with the flame of divine



love. And yet it is bidden, that the feet and the inwards of the victim be washed with water. For with the feet the earth is touched, and in the inwards dung is carried, in that it very often happens that already in the desire of our hearts we burn for eternity, already with an entire feeling of devotion we pant in longing desire for the mortification of ourselves; but whereas by reason of our frailty there is still a mixture of earth in what we do, even some of the things forbidden which we have already subdued, we are subject to in thought, and while unclean temptation defiles our thoughts, what else is this than that 'the inwards' of the victim carry dung? But that they may be fit to be burnt, let them be washed, in that it is necessary that tears of fear wash out the impure thoughts of the heart, for [o] love from on high to consume them in acceptance of the sacrifice, and whatever the mind is subject to, proceeding either from untried conflict, or from the remembrance of former practice, let it be washed, that it may burn with so much the sweeter odour in the sight of its Beholder, in proportion as when it begins to draw near to Him, it sets upon the altar of its prayer along with itself nought earthly, nought impure. Therefore let the holy man regard the wretchedness of the human mind, how often it defiles itself with unhallowed thoughts, and after the Judge's remission of the guilt of our doings, even whilst he bewails his own case, let him shew to us ours, for ourselves to bewail, saying, *If I have sinned, and thou sparedst me at the hour, wherefore dost thou not let me be clean from mine iniquity?* As if he said in plain words; 'If Thy forgiveness has taken away my sin, why does it not sweep it from my memory also?' Oftentimes the mind is so shaken from its centre at the recollection of sin, that it is prompted to the commission thereof far worse than it had been before subjected to it, and when entangled it is filled with fears, and being driven with different impulses, throws itself into disorder. It dreads lest it should be overcome by temptations, and in resisting, it shudders at this very fact, that it is harassed with the long toils of conflict. Hence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 15. *If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head: I am full of affliction and misery.*

[lvi]

85. Yea, the wicked man has 'woe,' and the righteous man 'affliction,' in that both everlasting damnation follows the lost sinner, and each one of the Elect is purified by the pains of temporary affliction. The wicked man lifts up his head, yet when so lifted up he cannot escape the woe that pursues him. The righteous man, faring ill with the toils of his conflict, is not suffered to lift up his head, but while hard pressed, he is freed from everlasting affliction. The one sets himself up in pleasure, but is plunging himself into the punishment that succeeds. The others sinks himself to the earth in sorrow, yet hides himself from the weight of eternal visitation. Thus let the holy man consider how man either in striving against evil, is afflicted with present trouble, or giving up the contest, he is delivered over to eternal anguish, and let him say, *If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head: I am full of affliction and misery;* as if he lamented openly, saying, 'Either bowed down under the desires of the flesh, I am exposed to eternal punishment, or if I fight against unlawful impulses, I am tormented with present woe, seeing that I am not quit of the toils of the fight.' But the Providence of the Most High does for this reason suffer us who serve Him with all the bent of the mind, to be buffeted by the assaults of our flesh, lest our mind, by presuming on its own security, dare to lift itself up in pride, that whereas, when a shock comes it is filled with fears, it may set the foot of hope the stronger, in the aid of its Maker alone. Hence it is further added fitly,

Ver. 16. *And by reason of pride, Thou wilt take me like a lioness.*

[lvii]

86. When a lioness hunts for food for her whelps, she rushes with ravening jaws into the pitfall. For as the account goes from certain countries, they make a pit in her path, and deposit a sheep in it, that the lioness in her ravening appetite may be provoked to precipitate herself into it, and they make it both narrow and deep at the same time, that she may have room to tumble into it in circling round it, but never get out by taking a leap. There is another pit too dug, which is to be close to the former, but which is joined to the one in which the sheep is, by the opening of the part at the bottom. And in this is put a cage, that the lioness tumbling in, forasmuch as she is pressed by terrors from above, when she goes about as it were to hide herself in the more secret part of the pit, may of her own will go into the cage; her savage temper being now no longer an object of fear, seeing that she is lifted up enclosed in the cage. For the beast that threw itself of its own accord into the pit is brought back to the regions above hedged round with bars. Thus, thus is it that the mind of man is taken, which being created in the liberty of free will, whilst it craved to feed the desires of the flesh, was like a lioness seeking food for her cubs, and fell into the pit of self-deception, in that at the suggestion of the enemy it stretched forth the hand to take the forbidden food, but it quickly found a cage in the pit, in that coming by its own act to death, it exposed itself at once to the prison house of its own corruption, and is brought back to the free air by grace intervening. But whereas it tries to do many things, and has no power, it is bound by the hindrances of that same corruption, as though by the bars of a cage. It is now free of that pit of damnation into which it had fallen, in that receiving help from the hand of Redemption, in being brought back to pardon, it has got above the punishment of the death to follow. But yet, being shut in close, it feels the cage, in that it is encircled by the bands of heavenly discipline, that it may not roam through the desires of the flesh. And she that of her own will went down into the pit; returns to the free air in confinement, in that she both fell into sin by the liberty of the will, and yet the grace of the Creator holds her in by constraint, and against her will, from following her own motions. And so after the pit she has the cage to bear, in that being rescued from eternal punishment, she is withheld from the motions of a froward liberty, under the controlling hand of the heavenly Artificer. Therefore he says aright, *And by reason of pride, Thou wilt take me like a lioness*; in that both when free, man brought death upon himself through food, and on being brought back to pardon, he lives shut up under discipline for his greater good. Therefore like a lioness he was taken by reason of pride, in that the discipline, that belongs to his corrupt condition, now keeps him down from the very same cause, that not fearing the transgression of the commandment he boldly leapt into the pit.

87. But if for a short space we turn aside the eye of our mind from the sin of our first parent, we find that we ourselves are every day taken like the lioness, by the evil habit of pride. For it often happens that by the virtues that have been vouchsafed him, man is lifted up into the boldness of self-presumption, but by a wonderful ordering of Providence, some object is set before his eyes for him to fall therein. And whilst he seeks something in sin, what else is this but that he longs for the prey in the pit? With open mouth he falls by his own act, but has no power to rise by his own strength. And whereas he sees that of himself he is nothing, assuredly he learns Whose aid he must seek. Yet the heavenly Compassion draws him, thus taken out of the pit, as it were, in that as soon as his weakness is known, It restores him to pardon. And so like a lioness, by reason of pride that man hastes back to the upper regions within the cage [p], who when he is lifted up in the score of

virtuous attainments, after he has fallen into evil desires, is bound fast in humility. For whereas he had in the first case brought himself to destruction by his presuming on self, it is brought to pass by wonderful pitifulness, that he now lives walled in by the knowledge of his own weakness. And because the holy man sees that this often happens to his fellow creatures, he adopts in his own person the cry of peril that belongs to us, that when we read of his lamentations, we may be instructed what the things are in ourselves that we ought to lament. Now when pride uplifts the mind, the piercing sense of love for the Highest departs from us, but when grace from above descends upon us, immediately it prompts us to longings for itself in tears. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

*And returning, Thou dost torture me marvellously.*

[lviii]

88. When we are forsaken by our Creator, we do not at all feel even the very ills of our abandonment. For in proportion as our Creator goes far off from us, our mind becomes more hardened in insensibility, loves nothing that is of God, entertains no longing for things above, and because it has no warmth of interior love, it lies frozen towards the earth, and in a pitiable way it becomes every day the more self-secure, in proportion as it becomes worse; and whereas it no longer remembers whence it has fallen, and no longer dreads the punishments to come, it knows nothing how deeply it is to be bewailed. But if it be touched by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, at once it wakes up to the thought of its ruin, rouses itself in the pursuit after heavenly things, glows with the hot emotions of love towards the Highest, takes thought of the ills which every way beset it round about, and she weeps while making progress, who before was going to ruin in high glee. Therefore it is well said to the Creator, *And returning Thou dost torture me marvelously.* For by the same act whereby Almighty God in visiting our soul lifts it to the love of Himself, He makes it the more to sorrow in tears. As if it were in plain words, 'In going from me Thou dost not influence me, because Thou renderest me insensible, but when Thou returnest, Thou dost torture me, because whilst Thou dost cause Thyself to enter into me, Thou shewest to me mine own self, and how deeply I am to be pitied.' And hence he never says that he is tortured judicially, but 'marvellously,' since while the mind is transported on high in weeping, with a feeling of joy it marvels at the pains of its piercing sorrow, and it is its joy to be so touched, because it sees that by its anguish it is lifted up on high. But often when heavenly Pity sees us slacken in the exercising ourselves in holy desires, It presents to our view the example of those that cleave to Itself, that the mind which is unbraced by indolence, in proportion as it observes in the case of others the advancement of minds well awake, may take shame for the dulness of sloth in itself. Hence it is rightly added,

Ver. 17. *Thou renewest Thy witnesses against me, and multiplieth Thy wrath: and pains war in me.*

[lix]

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

89. For 'God's witnesses' are they, who bear witness by the practice of holy works, what are the rewards of Truth that shall overtake the Elect. Hence too those, whom we see to have suffered for the sake of the Truth, we style in the Greek tongue, 'Martyrs,' i.e. witnesses. And the Lord says by John in the Angel's voice, *Even in those days, wherein Antipas was my faithful witness, who was*

*slain among you.* Now the Lord 'renews His witnesses against us' when He multiplies the lives of the Elect to confront our wickedness, for the purpose of convicting and of instructing us. And so His 'witnesses are renewed against us,' in that all things that they do are opposed to the ends and aims of our wickedness. Hence too the word of Truth is called 'an adversary,' where it is said by the voice of the Mediator in the Gospel, *Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him.* [Matt. 5, 25] And the sons of perdition in their persecutions say concerning that same Redeemer, *And He is clean contrary to our doings;* and soon afterwards, *For His life is not like other men's.* [Wisd. 2, 12. 15] Thus the Lord 'renews His witnesses against us,' in that the good things which we neglect to do ourselves, He shews us to be done by others to our upbraiding, that we who are not inflamed by precepts, may at least be stirred up by examples, and that in longing after righteousness, our mind may account nothing to be difficult to itself, that it sees to be done perfectly by others; and it is very commonly brought to pass, that while we behold the good actions of another man's life, we are more anxiously afraid of the deficiencies of our own, and it is made appear the plainer by what a weight of judgment we are afterwards assailed, in proportion as we are now widely at variance with the ways of the good.

90. Hence after the renewal of the witnesses has been mentioned it is thereupon fitly added, *And multiplieth Thy wrath upon me.* God's wrath is said to be 'multiplied upon us,' in proportion as it is shewn to be manifold, since by the very lives and labours of the good we are instructed, if, whilst we have time, we will not amend our ways now, what a terrible visitation shall be dealt us hereafter. For we see the Elect of God at one and the same time leading godly lives and undergoing numberless sore hardships. And therefore we collect from hence with what rigour the strict Judge will There smite those whom He condemns, if he so torments here below those whom He loves; as Peter witnesses, who says, *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?* [1 Peter 4, 17] Therefore Almighty God, when He 'renews His witnesses' against us, 'multiplies His wrath,' in that in proportion as He sets before our eyes the life of the good, He shews with what severity He will smite obduracy in the commission of sin at the Judgment. Now whereas He multiplies His gifts to those alone that follow Him, He shews that He has already forsaken those that go on in sloth. Thus when we see good things in others, it is very necessary to mix exultation with the dread that we feel, and dread with our exultation, that both charity may rejoice for the proficiencies of other men, and conscience tremble for its own frailties. But when we are gladdened with the proficiency of a brother, when we calculate the severity of the interior Judge against us for our mere slothfulness by itself, what is there left but that the mind turn back to search into itself, and that whatever it meets with in itself, that is blameworthy, whatever that is bad, it should chastise? Hence it is fitly subjoined, *Pains fight in me.* For upon considering the witnesses of God, 'pains fight in us,' in that whilst we behold their deeds, that command our admiration, our own life, which by comparison with theirs is displeasing in our eyes, we visit with serious self-chastening, that whatever pollution our deeds may have caused in us, our tears may wash clean, and if the guilt of taking pleasure therein still somewhat defiles us, the chastening of a sorrowful heart may cleanse away the stain. Therefore because blessed Job has his eye fixed on the life of the fathers of old time, he ascertains more exactly what he ought to bewail in himself. And by the preceptorship of extraordinary sorrow, whilst he bewails his own case, he instructs us to lamentation, that in proportion as we perceive excellencies in other men, we may anxiously fear for our own offences in the sight of the strict Judge. It goes on,

Ver. 19. *Wherefore then hast Thou brought me forth out of the womb. Oh that I had been consumed, and no eye had seen me.*

[lx]

91. Which same sentiment he had already uttered in his first speech, saying, *Why died I not from the womb?* [Job 3, 11] and whilst he subjoins that which he adds here, *I should have been as though I had not been, I should have been carried from the womb to the grave;* he adds in other words, but no other sense, saying, *Or as a hidden untimely birth I had not been, as infants which never saw light.* [Book IV, §48 &c.] But forasmuch as we have made out these particulars very much at length above, to avoid wearying the reader we forbear to unfold points already explained. It goes on,

Ver. 20. *Will not the small number of my days be finished in a short time?*

[lxi]

92. He shews himself to live with good heed and circumspection, who, in considering the shortness of the present life does not look to the furtherance but to the ending of it, so as to gather from the end, that all is nought that delights while it is passing. For hence it is said by Solomon, *But if a man live many years and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the time of darkness, and the days that shall be many; and when they come, the past shall be convinced of vanity.* [Eccles. 11, 8]

Hence again it is written, *Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember thine end, and thou shalt never do amiss.* [Ecclus. 7, 36] Therefore when sin tempts the mind, it is requisite that the soul should regard the shortness of its gratification, lest iniquity hurry it on to a living death, when it is plain that a mortal life is quickly speeding to an end. But often the eye of our contemplation is bewildered, while our pain is heightened by thickening scourges. It is good to bewail the exile of the present life, yet for mere anguish alone the mind cannot take account of the ills of its blind state. Hence he directly adds,

*And let me go, that I may bewail my sorrow a little.*

[lxii]

93. For as moderate distress gives vent to tears, so excessive sorrow checks them, since that grief itself is as it were made void of grief, which by swallowing up the mind of the person afflicted, takes away the sense of grief. Therefore the holy man shrinks from being stricken more than he is equal to bear, saying, *And let me go, that I may bewail my sorrow a little.* As if it were in plain words, 'Qualify the strokes of Thy scourging, that, my pains being made moderate, in weeping I may have power to estimate the miseries I endure.' Which same nevertheless may likewise be understood in another sense. For oftentimes the sinner is so bound by the chains of his wickedness, that he bears indeed the burthen of his sins, and knows not that he is bearing it. Often if he does know with what an amount of guilt he is burthened, he strives to break loose and cannot, so as to hunt it down in himself with free spirit and full conversion. Thus he is unable to 'bewail his sorrow,' for at once he sees the guilt of his sinful state, and by reason of the weight of earthly business, is not at liberty to bewail it. He is unable to 'bewail his sorrow,' who strives indeed to resist evil habits, yet is weighed down by the still increasing desires of the flesh. The presence of this sorrow had inflicted anguish upon the spirit of the Prophet, when he said, *My sorrow is*

*continually before me; for I will declare my iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin; [Ps. 38, 17. 18.] but the bands of his sin being loosed, he knew that he was 'let go,' who gave vent to his exultation, saying, Thou hast loosed my bonds, I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving. [Ps. 116, 16. 17.]*

94. Therefore God then 'lets us go' to bewail our sorrow, when He both shews us the evil things that we have done, and helps us to bewail the same, when we know them; He sets our transgressions before our eyes, and with the pitying hand of grace unlooses the bands of the heart, that our soul may lift itself up to liberty for the work of repentance, and loosed from the fetters of the flesh, may with free spirit stretch out towards its Maker the footsteps of love. For it very commonly happens that we the same persons blame our course of life, and yet readily do the very thing that we justly condemn in ourselves. The spirit lifts us up to righteousness, the flesh holds us back to habit; the soul struggles against self-love, but quickly overcome with delight is made captive. Thus it is well said, *Let me go that I may bewail my sorrow a little*. For except we be 'let go' in mercy from the guilt of sin, with which we are tied and bound, we cannot lament that which we grieve for in ourselves being set against ourselves. But the woe of our guiltiness is then really bewailed, when that dark retribution of the place below is fore-reckoned with lively apprehension. Hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 21. *Before I go whence I shall not return, even to a land of darkness, and covered with the shadow of death.*

[lxiii]

95. For what is denoted by 'the land of darkness' saving the dreary caverns of Tartarus, which are covered by the shadow of eternal death, in that it keeps all the damned for evermore severed from the light of life. Neither is the place below improperly called a land. For all they that have been made captive by it, are held fast and firm. As it is written; *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth abideth for ever*. [Eccl. 1, 4] Thus the dungeons of hell are rightly designated 'a land of darkness,' for all, whom they receive doomed to punishment, they torment with no transient infliction or phantasm of the imagination, but keep in the substantial vengeance of everlasting damnation. Yet they are sometimes denoted by the title of 'a lake,' as the Prophet bears witness, when he says, *They have borne their shame with them that go down into the lake*. [Ezek. 32, 24. 25] Thus hell is both called 'a land,' because it holds stedfastly all that it takes in, and 'a lake,' because it swallows up those whom it has once received, ever tossing and quaking in weltering floods of torment; but the holy man, whether in his own voice or in the voice of mankind, beseeches that he may be 'let go' before he departs, not because he that bewails his sin is to 'go to the land of darkness,' but because everyone that neglects to bewail it doth assuredly go thither, according as the creditor says to his debtor, 'Pay thy debt, before thou art put in bonds for the debt;' whereas he is not put in bonds, if he delays not to pay all that he owes. In which place too it is rightly added, *Whence I shall not return*, in that His pity in sparing never any more sets them free, whom His justice in judging once assigns their doom in the places of punishment, which same places are yet more minutely described, where it is said,

Ver. 22. *A land of misery and darkness.*

[lxiv]

96. 'Misery' has relation to pain, 'darkness' relates to blindness. That land then which holds all those that are banished the presence of the strict Judge, is entitled 'a land of misery and darkness,' for pain without torments those, whom blindness darkens within, severed from the true Light. Not but that 'the land of misery and darkness' may be understood in another sense also. For this land too, in which we are born, is indeed 'a land of misery,' but not 'of darkness,' in that we here suffer the many ills of our corrupt condition, yet whilst we are in it, we are still brought back to the light through the grace of conversion; as Truth counsels us, Who saith, *Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.* [John 12, 35] But that land is 'a land of misery and darkness' together, for everyone, that has gone down to suffer the woes thereof, never any further returns to the light; for the describing of which same it is further added, *Where is the shadow of death, without any order.*

[lxv]

97. As external death divides the flesh from the soul, so internal death severs the soul from God. Thus the 'shadow of death' is the darkness of separation, in that every one of the damned, whilst he is consumed with everlasting fire, is in darkness to the internal light. Now it is the nature of fire to give out both light and a property of consuming from itself, but the fire that is the avenger of past sins has a consuming property but no light. It is hence that 'Truth' saith to the lost, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* [Mat. 25, 41] And representing in one individual the whole body of them all, He saith, *Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness.* [Mat. 22, 1] Accordingly, if the fire that torments the lost could have had light, he that is cast off would never be said to 'be cast into darkness.' Hence too the Psalmist hath it; *Fire hath fallen upon them, and they have not seen the sun.* [Ps. 58, 8. Vulg.] For 'fire falls' upon the ungodly, but 'the sun is not seen' on the fire falling; for as the flame of hell devours them, it blinds them to the vision of the true Light, that at the same time both the pain of consuming fire should torment them without, and the infliction of blindness darken them within, so that they, who have done wrong against their Maker both in body and in heart, may at one and the same time be punished in body and in heart, and that they may be made to feel pangs in both ways, who, whilst they lived here, ministered to their depraved gratifications in both. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war.* [Ezek. 32, 37] For the arms of sinners are the members of the body, by means of which they execute the wrong desires they conceive. Hence it is said rightly by Paul, *Neither yield ye your members as instruments if unrighteousness unto sin.* [Rom. 6, 19] And so to 'go down into hell with the weapons of war' is together with those same members, with which they fulfilled the gratifications of self-indulgence, to undergo the torrents of eternal condemnation, that at that time woe may every way swallow them up, who being now subjected to their gratifications, every way fight against His justice, Who judgeth justly.

98. But that is very wonderful that is said, *without order*, since Almighty God, Who punishes evil things well, never permits even the torments to be 'without order;' because [read '*quia*'] the very punishments that proceed from the scales of justice, cannot in any way be inflicted 'without order.' For how is it that there is no order in His punishment, since according to the measure of his guilt is likewise the recompense of vengeance which pursues everyone of the damned. For hence it is written, *But mighty men, shall be mightily tormented, and stronger torment shall come upon the stronger ones.* [Wisd. 6, 6. 8.] Hence it is uttered in the sentence of Babylon, *How much she hath*

*glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.* [Rev. 18, 7] If then the infliction is marked out according to the measure of the sin, it is undeniably true that there is order preserved in the punishments, and except the acts of desert did distribute His aggregate of torment, the Judge that shall come would never declare that He will say to the reapers, *Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them.* [Mat. 13, 30] For if there were no order observed in dealing punishment, why are the tares that are to be burnt bound in bundles? But doubtless to bind up the bundles for the burning, is to unite like to like of those that are destined to be given over to everlasting fire, that all whom a like sin pollutes, an equal punishment may bind in one, and that they who were defiled by iniquity in no degree dissimilar, may suffer by torments not dissimilar either, that condemnation may dash to the earth together those whom pride uplifted together, and that all, whom ambition made to swell in no unlike proportion, no unlike proportion of suffering may wring hard, and a like flame of punishment torment those whom a like flame of sin kindled in the fire of lust. For as in the house of our Father there are 'many mansions' [John 14, 2] according to the diversities in virtue, so a difference in guilt subjects the damned to a difference of punishment in the fires of hell, which hell, though it be one and the same for all, by no means burns all men in one and the same sort. For as we are all reached by one sun, yet we do not all glow beneath it in one class; for it is according to the kind of the body that the burthen of the heat too is felt, in the same way there is to the damned, but one hell that torments all, yet not one that consumes all men in one kind of manner, for what on the one side an unequal degree of healthiness in bodies occasions, that same on the other an unequal case of merit produces. How then is it said that there is 'no order' in the punishments, wherein without doubt every man is tormented after the measure of his sin?

99. But after the holy man brought in the shadow of death he adds what great disorder there is in the souls of the damned, since the very punishments, which come well ordered by justice, are doubtless far from well ordered in the heart of those undergoing death. For as we have said above, whilst every one of the damned is consumed with flames without, he is devoured by the fire of blindness within, and being in the midst of woe, he is confounded both within and without; so that he is worse tormented by his own confusion. Thus to rejected souls there will be 'no order' in their punishment, because their very confusion of mind torments most cruelly in their death; which same His equity in judging appoints by His wonderful power, that a punishment as it were 'without order' may confound the soul. Or, verily, order is said to be wanting to His punishments, in that when things arise for their punishment, their proper character is not preserved to them. Whence the words are forthwith introduced;

*And everlasting horror dwells.*

[lxvi]

100. In the torments of this life fear has pain, pain has no fear, in that pain never torments the mind, when it has already begun to suffer what it feared. But hell both 'the shadow of death' darkens and 'everlasting horror inhabits;' in that they all, that are given over to its fires, both in their punishments undergo pain, and, in the pressure of pain coming upon them, they are ever stricken with fear, so that they both suffer what they dread, and unceasingly dread What they are suffering. For it is written concerning them, *For their worm shall not die, neither their fire be quenched.* [Is. 66, 24] Here the flame that burns gives light; There, as we have shewn by the words of the Psalmist, the fire that torments veils the light. Here fear is gone so soon as the thing that was



feared has begun to be suffered; There pain rends at the same time that fear pinches. Thus in a horrible manner there will then be to the damned pain along with terror, a flame together with dimness. Then, then, alas! the weight of heavenly equity must be felt by the damned, that they who whilst they lived were not afraid to be at variance with the Will of the Creator, may one day in their destruction find their very torments at variance with their own properties, that in proportion as they are at strife with themselves, their torments may be increased, and as they issue in diverse lines may be felt in many ways. And these punishments doth torture those that are plunged therein beyond their powers, and at the same time preserve them alive, extinguishing in them the forces of life, that the end may so afflict the life, that torment may ever live without end, in that it is both hastening after an end through torments, and failing holds on without end. Therefore there is done upon the wretches death without death, an end without ending, failing without failing; in that both death lives, and the end is ever beginning, and the failing is unable to fail. Therefore whereas death at the same time slays and does not extinguish, pain torments but does not banish fear, the flame burns but does not dispel the darkness, for all that is gathered from a knowledge of the present life, the punishments are without order, in that they do not retain their own character through all particulars.

101. Though there the fire both gives no light for comfort, yet, that it may torment the more, it does give light for a purpose. For the damned shall see, by the flame lighting them, all their followers along with themselves in torment, for the love of whom they transgressed, that whereas they had loved the life of such in a carnal manner against the precepts of the Creator, the destruction of those very persons may also afflict them for the increase of their condemnation. Which doubtless we gather from the testimony of the Gospel, wherein, as 'Truth' declares, that rich man, whose lot it was to descend into the torments of eternal fire, is described as remembering his five brethren, in that he asked of Abraham that he would send to them for their instruction, lest a like punishment should torment them coming thither at some future time. Therefore it is plain without doubt that he who remembers his absent kindred to the increase of his pain might a little while after even see them present to his eyes to the augmentation of his punishment. But what wonder is it if he beholds the damned also burnt along with himself, who to the increase of his woe saw that Lazarus whom he has scorned in the bosom of Abraham. He, therefore, to whom the very Elect Saint appeared, that his pangs might, be added to, why are we not to believe that he might behold in punishment those, whom he had loved in opposition to God? From which it is collected, that those whom the sons of perdition now love with inordinate affection, by a marvellous disposition of judgment, they will then see their fellows in torment; that the carnal tie, which was preferred to their Maker, may increase the pangs of their own punishment, being cursed before their eyes by a like retribution. Thus the fire that torments in darkness must be supposed to preserve light for torture. And if we cannot prove this from testimonies by the expression of the very thing, then it remains that we shew it from the reverse.

102. For the Three Children of the Hebrew People, when the fire of the furnace was kindled by command of the king of Chaldaea, were cast into it with hands and feet tied. Yet when that king commiserating them sought them in the fire of the furnace, he saw them walking about with untouched garments. Where it is plain to infer, that by the wonderful dispensation of our Creator, the property of fire, being modified into an opposite power, at the same time never touched their garments, and yet burnt their chains, and for those holy men the flame was both cooled for the infliction of torment, and burnt out for the service of unbinding. And so as fire knows how to burn

to the Elect in consolation, and yet knows not how to burn in punishment, so in the reverse case, at the same time that the flame of hell yields no light to the damned in the grace of consolation, it does yield light in punishment, that the fire of punishment may both glow with no brightness to the eyes of the damned, and for the increase of their pain may shew how the objects of their affection are tormented. And what wonder is it if we suppose that hell fire contains at the same time the infliction of darkness and of light, when we know by experience that the flame of torches too burns and is dark. The devouring flame then consumes those, whom carnal gratification now pollutes. The gaping and immeasurable gulf of hell swallows up Then all whom vainglory exalts now, and they who by any sinful practice fulfilled here below the will of the crafty counsellor, then being cast off are brought to torments along with their leader.

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

103. And though there is a great difference between the nature of men and angels, yet those are involved in one and the same punishment, who are bound by one and the same guilt in sin. Which is well and shortly conveyed by the Prophet, when he says, *Asshur is there and all his company: his graves are about him.* [Ezek. 32, 22] For who is set forth by the title of Asshur, the proud king, saving that old enemy who fell by pride, who for that he draws numbers into sin, descends with all his multitude into the dungeons of hell. Now ‘graves’ are a shelter for the dead. And what other suffered a bitterer death than he, who, in setting his Creator at nought, forsook life? And when human hearts admit him in this state of death, assuredly they become his graves. Now ‘his graves are about him,’ in that all in whose souls he now buries himself by their affections, hereafter he joins to himself by torments. And whereas the lost now admit evil spirits within themselves by committing unlawful deeds, then the graves will burn together with the dead.

104. See how we are informed, what punishment is in store for the damned, and, by Holy Writ instructing us, have no reason to question, how great may be the fire in damnation, how great the darkness in that fire, how great the terror in that darkness. But what does it advantage us to foreknow these things, if it is not our lot to escape them? Therefore with the whole bent of our mind, we must make it our business, that when the opportunity of being at liberty is ours, by application to living well, we escape the avenging torments of evil doers. For it is hence said by Solomon, *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.* [Eccles. 9, 10] Hence Isaiah saith, *Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.* [Is. 55, 6] Hence Paul says, *Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.* [2 Cor. 6, 2] Hence he says again, *Whilst we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men.* [Gal. 6, 10]

105. But very often the soul girds itself up to walk in the way of uprightness, shakes off sloth, and is so transported into heavenly realms in affection, that it well nigh seems that there is nothing of it left here below; and yet when it is brought back to take account of the flesh, without which the course of the present life can never be accomplished, this keeps it weighed down below, as if it had not as yet reached aught of things above. When the words of the heavenly oracle are heard, the soul is uplifted into love of the heavenly land; but when the occupation of the present life rises up anew, it is buried under the heap of earthly cares, and the seed of the hope above comes to nothing in the soil of the heart, because the thorn of care below grows rank. Which same thorn ‘Truth’ uproots with the hand of holy exhortation by Himself, saying, *Take therefore no thought for the*

*morrow*. [Matt. 6, 34] And in opposition to this, it is said by Paul, *Make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*. [Rom. 13, 14] But in, these words of the Captain and the soldier we see that the soul is then pierced thereby with a mortal wound, when a balance of measure is not kept therein.

106. For whilst we still live in mortal flesh, concern for the flesh is not wholly cut away from us; but it is regulated so that it should serve the mind as discretion dictates. For whereas 'Truth' forbids us to be anxious for the morrow, He does not deny us to take thought in a certain way for the present things, which He does forbid us to extend to the time that succeeds. And truly while Paul will not let provision be made for the flesh in the lusts thereof, most certainly he does permit it to be made in things of necessity. Thus the care of the flesh must be restrained under the discreet guidance of a complete control, that it may always obey and never rule, that it may not as a mistress bring the soul under its power, but being subjected to the dominion of the mind, may like a handmaid wait in attendance, that it may come when bidden, and when repressed dart off at a beck of the heart; that it may scarcely shew itself in the rear of holy thought, and never present itself to one front to front when full of right thoughts. Which is well conveyed to us in the account contained in the sacred Lesson, when Abraham is related to have met the three Angels. [Gen. 18, 2. 9. &c.] For he met them by himself, as they were coming, without the door of the tent, but Sarah stood behind the door; for the Man and the master as it were of the spiritual house, i.e. our understanding, ought, in the acknowledgment of the Trinity, to issue out of the close chamber of the flesh, and, as it were, to go forth out of the door of his dwelling-place below; but let care of the flesh, as a woman, not shew herself out of doors, and let her be ashamed to display herself ostentatiously, that being as it were behind the back of the husband, under the discreet guidance of the Spirit, busied with necessary things alone, she may learn never to go wantonly uncovered, but to be regulated by modesty. But oftentimes, when she is charged never to presume on herself, but to resign herself wholly to undoubting hope in God, she turns away her ear, and disbelieves that, her exertions ceasing, the means of life can be forthcoming to her. And hence this same Sarah, upon hearing the promises of God, laughs, and for laughing is chidden, and still, so soon as she is chidden, she is made a fruitful mother. And she who in the vigour of youth had no power to conceive, when broken by the years of age, conceived in a withered womb; in that when care of the flesh has ceased to entertain confidence in self, by promise from God it receives against hope that which from human reasoning it doubted its ever obtaining. Hence he that is begotten is well called Isaac, i.e. 'laughing,' in that when it conceives sureness of hope in the Highest, what else does our mind give birth to but joy? Therefore we must take heed lest care of the flesh either transgress the limits of necessity, or in that which it discharges with moderation, presume on itself. For oftentimes the mind is betrayed to account that to be necessary, which it desires for pleasure, so that it reckons all that takes its fancy to be 'the useful' that we owe to life. And often because the effect follows the forecasting, the mind is lifted up in self-confidence. And when that is in its hand which is lacking to the rest, it exults in secret thought for the greatness of its foresight, and is so much the further removed from real foresight, in proportion as it is ignorant of the exaltation that it is feeling. Therefore we ought to bethink ourselves, with a heedful earnestness of vigilance, whether of what we execute in deed or what we revolve in heart, lest either earthly care, to the incumbrance of the mind, be multiplied without, or at least lest the spirit be lifted up within for its control thereof; that whilst we dread the judgment of God with temporal heed, we may escape the woes of 'everlasting horror.'

## BOOK X.

The whole of the eleventh chapter of the Book of Job, and the five first verses of the twelfth, being made out, he closes the Second Part of this work.

[i]

1. As often as a mighty wrestler is gone down into the arena of the lists, those who prove no match for him in strength by turns present themselves for the working of his overthrow, and as fast as one is overcome another is directly raised up against him, and, he being subdued, another takes his place, that they may sooner or later find his strength in wrestling more yielding, in that his repeated victory by itself wears it out, so that as each fresh opponent comes to the encounter, he who cannot be overcome by the nature of their powers, may at least be got the better of by the changing of the persons. Thus, then, in this theatre of men and Angels, blessed Job approved himself a mighty wrestler, and how he prevailed against the charges of his adversaries, he shews by his continuance in unabated force; to whom first Eliphaz presents himself, and next Bildad, and finally Zophar puts himself forward in their place in the overthrow of him, and these lift up themselves with all their might to deal him blows, yet never reach so far as to strike the height of that well-fenced breast. For their very words plainly imply that they deal their blows upon the air, in that as they do not rebuke the holy man aright, the words of smiting being uttered in empty air are lost; and this is clearly shewn, whereas the answer of Zophar the Naamathite begins with insult, in that he says, Chap. xi. 2. *Should not he that talketh much hear in his turn? and should a man full of words be justified?*

[ii]

2. It is the practice of the impertinent ever to answer by the opposite what is said aright, lest, if they assent to the things asserted, they should seem inferior. And to these the words of the righteous, however small in number they have been heard, are ‘much,’ in that as they cut their evil habits to the quick, they fall heavy upon the hearing, whence that is even wrested to a crime, which by a right declaration is pronounced against crimes. For the very person, who had delivered strong sentences on grounds of truth, Zophar rebukes and calls full of words, in that, whereas wisdom reprimands sins by the mouth of the righteous, it sounds like superfluity of talkativeness to the ears of the foolish. For froward men account nothing right, but what they themselves think, and they reckon the words of the righteous idle in the degree that they find them differing from their own notions. Nor yet did Zophar deliver a fallacious sentiment, ‘that a man full of words could never be justified,’ in that so long as anyone lets himself out in words, the gravity of silence being gone, he parts with the safe keeping of the soul. For hence it is written, *And the work of righteousness, silence.* [Is. 32, 17] Hence Solomon saith, *He that hath no rule over his own spirit in talking, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.* [Prov. 25, 28] Hence he says again, *In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.* [Prov. 10, 19] Hence the Psalmist bears witness, saying, *Let not a man full of words be established upon the earth; but the worth of a true sentence is lost, when it is not delivered under the keeping of discretion.* [Ps. 140, 11. Vulg.] Thus it is a certain truth, that ‘a man full of words cannot be justified,’ but a good thing is not well said, because there is no heed taken to whom it is spoken. For a true sentence against the wicked, if it is aimed at the virtue of the

good, loses its own virtue, and bounds back with blunted point, in proportion as that is strong which it hits. But that the wicked cannot hear good words with patience, and that wherein they neglect the amending of their life, they brace themselves up to words of rejoinder, Zophar plainly instructs us, in that he subjoins;

Ver. 3. *Should men hold their peace at thee only? and when thou mockest at others, shall no man confute thee?*

[iii]

3. The uninstructed mind, as we have said, is sorely galled by the sentences of truth, and reckons silence to be a punishment; it takes all that is said aright to be the disgrace of mocking at itself. For when a true voice addresses itself to the ears of bad men, guilt stings the recollection, and in the rebuking of evil practices, in proportion as the mind is touched with consciousness within, it is stirred up to eagerness in gainsaying without; it cannot bear the voice, in that, being touched in the wound of its guilt it is put to pain, and by that which is delivered against the wicked generally, it imagines that it is itself attacked in a special manner; and what it inwardly remembers itself to have done, it blushes to hear the sound of without. Whence it presently prepares itself for a defence, that it may cover the shame of its guilt by words of froward gainsaying. For as the righteous, touching certain things which have been done unrighteously by them, account the voice of rebuke to be the service of charity so the froward reckon it to be the insult of mockery. The one sort immediately prostrate themselves to shew obedience, the other are lifted up to shew the madness of self-defence. The one sort take the helping hand of correction as the upholding of their life, by means of which whilst the sin of the present life is corrected, the wrath of the Judge that is to come is abated; the other, when they find themselves assailed by rebuke, see therein the sword of smiting, in that whilst sin is unclothed by the voice of chiding, the conceit of present glory is spoilt. Hence 'Truth' says by Solomon in commendation of the righteous man, *Give instruction to a wise man, and he will hasten to receive it* [Prov. 9, 9]; hence he makes nothing of the obstinacy of the wicked, saying, *He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself wrong* [ver. 7]. For it generally happens that when they cannot defend the evils that are reprov'd in them, they are rendered worse from a feeling of shame, and carry themselves so high in their defence of themselves, that they rake out bad points to urge against the life of the reprov'er, and so they do not account themselves guilty, if they fasten guilty deeds upon the heads of others also. And when they are unable to find true ones, they feign them, that they may also themselves have things they may seem to rebuke with no inferior degree of justice. Hence Zophar, for that it stung him to be as it were mocked at by reproof, forthwith subjoins with lying lips,

Ver. 4. *For Thou hast said, My speech is pure, and I am clean in Thine eyes.*

[iv]

4. Whoso remembers the words of blessed Job, knows how falsely this charge is fastened upon his voice. For how could he call himself pure, who says, *If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me* [Job 9, 20]; but there is this in the wickedness of the unrighteous, that, while it refuses to bewail real evil things in itself it invents them in others, for it makes use of it as a solace of evil doing, if the life of the reprov'er can be also stained with false accusations. But we must know that for the most part the wicked wish what is good so far as the lips, in order that they may shew that that is bad which we have at present, and as if from the good will they bear others, they pray for

favourable circumstances, in order that they may appear full of kindly affection. Whence too Zophar forthwith subjoins, saying,  
*But oh that God would speak with thee, and open His lips unto thee!*

[v]

5. For man by himself speaks to himself when in all that he thinks he is not withdrawn by the Spirit of the Divine Being from the sense of carnal wisdom; when the flesh puts forth a sense, and inviting the mind as it were to the understanding of it, sends it forth abroad. And hence 'Truth' saith to Peter, who was still full of earthly notions, *For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.* [Mark 8, 33] Yet, when he made a good confession, the words are spoken, *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven.* [Mat. 16, 17] Now what do we understand by 'the lips' of God saving His judgments? For when the lips are closed the voice is kept in, and the meaning of the person keeping silence is not known; but when, the lips being opened, speech is put forth, the mind of the person speaking is found out. So 'God opens His lips' when He, manifests His will to men by open visitations. For He as it were speaks with open mouth, when the veil of interior Providence being drawn aside, He declines to conceal what is His will. For as it were with closed lips He forbear to indicate His meaning to us, when by the secresy of His judgments He conceals wherefore He does any thing. Zophar therefore, in order that he might reprove blessed Job on the grounds of a carnal understanding, and shew what kindness of disposition he himself was of, wishes good things for him, which even when they are there present he does not know to be so, saying, *But oh that God would speak with thee, and open His lips with thee.* As if he were to say in plain words, 'I feel for thy uninstructedness more than for thy chastening, in that I know thee to be endued with the wisdom of the flesh alone, and void of the Spirit of Truth. For didst thou discern the secret judgments of God, thou wouldest not give utterance to such daring sentences against Him.' And because when Almighty God raises us to take a view of His judgments, He forthwith puts to flight the mists of the ignorance that is in us, what instruction comes to us by His lips being opened, he forthwith shews by adding in the words, Ver. 6. *And that He would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, and that her law is manifold.*

[vi]

6. The public works of Supreme Wisdom are when Almighty God rules those whom He creates, brings to an end the good things which He begins, and aids by His inspiration those whom He illumines with the light of His visitation. For it is plain to the eyes of all men, that those whom He created of His free bounty, He provides for with lovingkindness. And when He vouchsafes spiritual gifts, He Himself brings to perfection what He has Himself begun in the bounteousness of His lovingkindness. But the secret works of Supreme Wisdom are, when God forsakes those whom He has created; when the good things, which He had begun in us by preventing us, He never brings to completion by going on; when He enlightens us with the brightness of His illuminating grace, and yet by permitting temptation of the flesh, smites us with the mists of blindness; when the good gifts which He bestowed, He cares not to preserve to us; when He at the same time prompts the desires of our soul towards Himself, and yet by a secret judgment presses us with the incompetency of our weak nature.

7. Which same secrets of His Wisdom, but few have strength to investigate, and no man has strength to find out; in that it is most surely just that that which is ordained not unjustly above us, and concerning us, by immortal Wisdom, should be bidden from us while yet in a mortal state. But to contemplate these same secrets of His Wisdom is in some sort already to behold the power of His incomprehensible nature, in that though we fail in the actual investigation of His secret counsels, yet by that very failure we more thoroughly learn Whom we should fear. Paul had strained to reach these secrets of that wisdom, when he said, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His Judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor?* [Rom. 11, 33] He, in a part above, turning faint even with the mere search, and yet through faintness advancing to the knowledge of his own weakness, saith beforehand the words, *Nay but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus?* [Rom. 9, 20] He, then, that being unable to attain to the secrets of God, returned back to the recognition of his own weakness, and by thus falling short, recalled himself to the instructing of himself, in not finding out the secrets of wisdom, so to say, he did find them out. For when his strength failed him for the investigation of the counsels of the most High, he learned how to entertain fear with greater humility, and the man whom his own weakness kept back from the interior knowledge, humility did more thoroughly unite thereto. Thus Zophar, who is both instructed by the pursuit of knowledge, and uninstructed by the effrontery of highswoln speech, because he has no weight himself, wishes for a better man that thing which he has, saying, *But oh that God would speak with thee, and open His lips unto thee; that He might shew thee the secrets of wisdom.* And by wishing he also shews off that wisdom wherewith he reckons himself to be equipped above his friend, when he thereupon adds, *And that her law is manifold.* What should the 'law' of God be here taken to mean, saving charity, whereby we ever read in the inward parts after what manner the precepts of life should be maintained in outward action? For concerning this Law it is delivered by the voice of 'Truth,' *This is My commandment, that ye love one another.* [John 15, 12] Concerning it Paul says, *Love is the fulfilling of the law.* [Rom. 13, 10] Concerning it he saith again, *Bear ye one another's burthens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* [Gal. 6, 2] For what can the Law of Christ be more fitly understood to mean than charity, which we then truly fulfil when we bear the burthens of our brethren from the principle of love?

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

8. But this same Law is called 'manifold;' in that charity, full of eager solicitude, dilates into all deeds of virtue. It sets out indeed with but two precepts, but it reaches out into a countless number. For the beginning of this Law is, the love of God, and the love of our neighbour. But the love of God is distinguished by a triple division. For we are bidden to love our Maker 'with all our heart' and 'with all our soul' and 'with all our might.' Wherein we are to take note that when the Sacred Word lays down the precept that God should be loved, it not only tells us with what, but also instructs us with how much, in that it subjoins, 'with all;' so that indeed he that desires to please God perfectly, must leave to himself nothing of himself. And the love of our neighbour is carried down into two precepts, since on the one hand it is said by a certain righteous man, *Do that to no man which thou hatest.* [Tob. 4, 15] And on the other 'Truth' saith by Himself, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* [Mat. 7, 12] By which two precepts of both Testaments, by the one an evil disposition is restrained, and by the other a good disposition charged upon us, that every man not doing the ill which he would not wish to suffer,

should cease from the working of injuries, and again that rendering the good which he desires to be done to him, he exert himself for the service of his neighbour in kindness of heart. But while these same two are thought on with heedful regard, the heart is made to open itself wide in innumerable offices of virtue, lest whether for the admitting of things which it ought not, the mind being agitated be heated by passions; or for the setting forth of whatsoever it ought, being undone by indolence, it may be rendered inactive. For when it guards against doing to another what it would not on any account itself undergo at the hands of another, it looks about itself on every side with a heedful eye, lest pride lift it up, and while cutting down set up the soul even to contempt of our neighbour; lest coveting mangle the thought of the heart, and while stretching it wide to desire the things of another, straitly confine it; lest lust pollute the heart, and corrupt it, thus become the slave of its passions, in forbidden courses; lest anger increase, and inflame it even to giving vent to insult; lest envy gnaw it, and lest jealous of the successes of others it consume itself with its own torch; lest loquacity drive on the tongue beyond all bounds of moderation, and draw it out even to the extent of license in slander; lest bad feeling stir up hatred, and set on the lips even to let loose the dart of cursing. Again, when it thinks how it may do to another what it looks for at the hands of another for itself, it considers how it may return good things for evil, and better things for good; how to exhibit towards the impertinent the meekness of longsuffering; how to render the kindness of good will to them that pine with the plague of malice, how to join the contentious with the bands of peace, how to train up the peaceable to the longing desire of true Peace; how to supply necessary things to those that are in need; how to shew to those that be gone astray the path of righteousness; how to soothe the distressed by words and by sympathy; how to quench by rebuke those that burn in the desires of the world; how by reasoning to soften down the threats of the powerful, how to lighten the bands of the oppressed by all the means that he is master of; how to oppose patience to those that offer resistance without; how to set forth to those that are full of pride within a lesson of discipline together with patience; how, with reference to the misdeeds of those under our charge, mildness may temper zeal, so that it never relax from earnestness for the rule of right; how zeal may be so kindled for revenge, that yet by kindling thus it never transgress the bounds of pity; how to stir the unthankful to love by benefits; how to preserve in love all that are thankful by services; how to pass by in silence the misdoings of our neighbour, when he has no power to correct them; how when they may be amended by speaking to dread silence as consent to them; how to submit to what he passes by in silence, yet so that none of the poison of annoyance bury itself in his spirit; how to exhibit the service of good will to the malicious, yet not so as to depart from the claims of righteousness from kindness; how to render all things to his neighbours that he is master of, yet in thus rendering them not to be swelled with pride; in the good deeds which he sets forth to shrink from the precipice of pride, yet so as not to slacken in the exercise of doing good; so to lavish the things which he possesses as to take thought how great is the bounteousness of his Rewarder, lest in bestowing earthly things he think of his poverty more than need be, and in the offering of the gift a sad look obscure the light of cheerfulness.

9. Therefore the Law of God is rightly called manifold, in this respect, that whereas it is one and the same principle of charity, if it has taken full possession of the mind, it kindles her in manifold ways to innumerable works. The diverseness whereof we shall set forth in brief if we go through and enumerate her excellencies in each of the Saints severally. Thus she in Abel both presented chosen gifts to God, and without resistance submitted to the brother's sword; Enoch she both taught to live in a spiritual way among men, and even in the body carried him away from men to a life above. Noah she exhibited the only one pleasing to God when all were disregarded, and she



exercised him on the building of the ark with application to a long labour, and she preserved him the survivor of the world by the practice of religious works. In Shem and Japhet she humbly felt shame at the father's nakedness, and with a cloak thrown over their shoulders hid that which she looked not on. She, for that she lifted the right hand of Abraham for the death of his son in the yielding of obedience, made him the father of a numberless offspring of the Gentiles. She, because she ever kept the mind of Isaac in purity, when his eyes were now dim with age, opened it wide to see events that should come to pass long after. She constrained Jacob at the same time to bewail from the core of his heart the good child taken from him, and to bear with composure the presence of the wicked ones. She instructed Joseph, when sold by his brethren, both to endure servitude with unbroken freedom of spirit, and not to lord it afterwards over those brethren with a high mind. She, when the people erred, at once prostrated Moses in prayer, even to the beseeching for death, and lifted him up in eagerness of indignant feeling even to the extent of slaying the people; so that he should both offer himself to die in behalf of the perishing multitude, and in the stead of the Lord in His indignation straightway let loose his rage against them when they sinned. She lifted the arm of Phinees in revenge of the guilty souls, that he should pierce them as they lay with the sword he had seized, and that by being wroth he might appease the wrath of the Lord. She instructed Jesus the spy, so that he both first vindicated the truth by his word against his false countrymen, and afterwards asserted it with his sword against foreign enemies. She both rendered Samuel lowly in authority, and kept him unimpaired in his low estate, who, in that he loved the People that persecuted him, became himself a witness to himself that he loved not the height from whence he was thrust down. David before the wicked king she at once urged with humility to take flight, and filled with pitifulness to grant pardon; who at once in fearing fled from his persecutor, as his lord, and yet, when he had the power of smiting him, did not acknowledge him as an enemy she both uplifted Nathan against the king on his sinning in the authoritativeness of a free rebuke, and, when there was no guilt resting on the king, humbly prostrated him in making request. She in Isaiah blushed not for nakedness of the flesh in the work of preaching, and the fleshly covering withdrawn, she penetrated into heavenly mysteries. [Is. 20, 2] She, for that she taught Elijah to live spiritually with the earnestness of a fervent soul, carried him off even in the body also to enter into life. She, in that she taught Elisha to love his master with a single affection, filled him with a double portion of his master's spirit. Through her Jeremiah withstood that the people should not go down into Egypt, and yet by cherishing them even when they were disobedient he even himself went down where he forbade the going down. She, in that she first raised Ezekiel from all earthly objects of desire, afterwards suspended him in the air by a lock of his head. She in the case of Daniel, for that she refrained his appetite from the royal dainties, closed for him the very mouths of the hungry lions. She, in the Three Children, for that she quenched the flames of evil inclinations in them whilst in a condition of peace, in the season of affliction abated the very flames in the furnace. She in Peter both stoutly withstood the threats of frowning rulers, and in the setting aside of the rite of circumcision, she heard the words of inferiors with humility. She, in Paul, both meekly bore the violence of persecutors, and yet in the matter of circumcision boldly rebuked the notion of one by great inequality his superior. 'Manifold' then is this Law of God, which undergoing no change accords with the several particulars of events, and being susceptible of no variation yet blends itself with varying occasions.

10. The multiplicity of which same law, Paul rightly counts up, in the words, *Charity suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth*

*in the truth.* For charity ‘suffereth long,’ in that she bears with composure the ills that are brought upon her. She ‘is kind,’ in that she renders good for evil with a bounteous hand, She ‘envieth not,’ in that from her coveting nought in the present life, she thinketh not to envy earthly successes. She ‘is not puffed up,’ in that whereas she eagerly desires the recompense of the interior reward, she does not lift herself up on the score of exterior good things. She ‘doth not behave herself unseemly,’ in that in proportion as she spreads herself out in the love of God and our neighbour alone, whatever is at variance with the rule of right is unknown to her. She is not covetous, in that as she is warmly busied within with her own concerns, she never at all covets what belongs to others, ‘She seeketh not her own,’ in that all that she holds here by a transitory tenure, she disregards as though it were another’s, in that she knows well that nothing is her own but what shall stay with her. She ‘is not easily provoked,’ in that even when prompted by wrongs she never stimulates herself to any motions of self avenging, whilst for her great labours she looks hereafter for greater rewards. She ‘thinketh no evil,’ in that basing the soul in the love of purity, while she plucks up all hatred by the roots, she cannot harbour in the mind aught that pollutes. She ‘rejoiceth not in iniquity,’ in that as she yearns towards all men with love alone, she does not triumph even in the ruin of those that are against her, but she ‘rejoiceth in the truth,’ in that loving others as herself, by that which she beholds right in others she is filled with joy as if for the growth of her own proficiency. ‘Manifold,’ then, is this ‘Law of God,’ which by the defence of its instructiveness is proof against the dart of every sin which assaults the soul for its destruction, so that whereas our old enemy besets us with manifold encompassing, she may in many ways rid us of him. Which Law if we consider with heedful attention, we are made to know how greatly we sin each day against our Maker. And if we thoroughly consider our sins, then assuredly we bear afflictions with composure, nor is anyone precipitated into impatience by pain, when conscience gives itself up by its own sentence. Hence Zophar, knowing what it was that he said, but not knowing to whom he said it, after he had premised the words, That He would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, and that her Law is manifold, forthwith adds,

*And that thou mightest know that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.*

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#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

11. For, as we have said, the pain of the stroke is mitigated, when the sin is acknowledged; for everyone too bears the knife of the leach the more patiently, in proportion as he sees what he cuts to be gangrened. He therefore that comprehends the manifold character of the Law, reflects how much too little all is that he is suffering; for from this, that the weight of the sin is acknowledged, the pain of the affliction is made less.

12. But herein we must know that it was not without great iniquity that Zophar reproached the righteous man even to the charging him with iniquity. And thus Truth with justice reproves their boldness, but mercifully restores them to favour; for with the merciful Judge a fault never goes without pardon, when it is done through the heat of zealous feeling in the love of Him. For this oftentimes happens to great and admirable teachers, that in proportion as they are inflamed with the depth of charity, they exceed the due measure of correction, and that the tongue utters somewhat that it never ought, because love inflames the heart to the degree that it ought. But the word of offered affront is the more readily spared, in proportion as it is considered from what root it comes,

whence the Lord rightly commanded by Moses, saying, *As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour merely to hew wood, and the wood of the axe flieth from his hand, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour that he die, he shall flee unto one of these cities and live: lest perchance the kinsman of him whose blood hath been shed pursue the slayer while his heart is hot, and overtake him, and slay him.* [Deut. 19, 5. 6.] For we ‘go to the wood with a friend,’ whensoever we betake ourselves with a neighbour to take a view of our transgressions, and we ‘merely hew wood,’ when with pious purpose we cut away the evil doings of offenders; but the ‘axe flieth from his hand,’ when rebuke carries itself into severity beyond what ought to be, and the ‘head slippeth from the helve,’ when the speech goes off too hard from the act of correcting, and it ‘lighteth upon a neighbour, that he die,’ in that the offered insult kills its hearer as to the spirit of love. For the mind of the person reproved is instantly hurried into hate, if unmeasured censure condemn it beyond what ought to be. But he that heweth wood carelessly, and kills a neighbour, must take refuge in three cities, that he may live unharmed in one of them, in that if betaking himself to the lamentations of repentance, he be hidden in the unity of the Sacrament under hope faith and charity, he is not held guilty of the manslaughter that has been done; and when the ‘kinsman of the slain’ has found him he slayeth him not, in that, when the strict Judge comes, Who has united Himself to us by fellowship with our own nature, He doubtless never exacts retribution for guilt of sin from him, whom faith hope and charity hide beneath the shelter of His pardoning grace. Quickly then is that sin done away which is not committed of the set aim of malice. And hence, Zophar both calls him iniquitous, whom a sentence from above had extolled, and yet he is not rejected and shut out from pardon, in that he is prompted to words of contumely by zeal in the love of God, Who, for that he does not know the merits of blessed Job, further added in ill instructed mockery, saying,

Ver. 7. *Canst thou find out the footsteps of God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?*

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13. What does he call ‘the footsteps of God,’ saving the lovingkindness of His visitation? by which same we are stimulated to advance forward to things above, when we are influenced by the inspiration of His Spirit, and being carried without the narrow compass of the flesh, by love we see and own the likeness of our Maker presented to our contemplation that we may follow it. For when the love of the spiritual Land kindles the heart, He as it were gives knowledge of a way to persons that follow it, and a sort of footstep of God as He goes is imprinted upon the heart laid under it, that the way of life may be kept by the same in right goings of the thoughts. For Him, Whom we do not as yet see, it only remains for us to trace out by the footsteps of His love, that at length the mind may find Him, to the reaching the likeness contemplation gives of Him, Whom now as it were, following Him in the rear, it searches out by holy desires. The Psalmist was well skilled to follow these footsteps of our Creator, when he said, *My soul followeth hard after Thee.* [Ps. 63, 8] Whom too he busied himself that he might find even to attaining the vision of His loftiness, when he said, *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before the face of God?* [Ps. 42, 2] For then Almighty God is found out by clear conception, when the corruption of our mortality being once for all trodden under our feet, He is seen by us that are taken up into heaven in the brightness of His Divine Nature. But at this present time, the grace of the Spirit which is poured into our hearts lifts the soul from carnal aims, and elevates it into a contempt for transitory things, and the mind looks down upon all that it coveted below, and is kindled to objects

of desire above, and by the force of her contemplation she is carried out of the flesh, while by the weight of her corruption she is still held fast in the flesh; she strives to obtain sight of the splendour of uncircumscribed Light, and has not power; for the soul, being burthened with infirmity, both never wins admittance, and yet loves when repelled. For our Creator already exhibits concerning Himself something whereby love may be excited, but He withdraws the appearance of His vision from those so loving. Therefore we all go on seeing only His footsteps, in that only in the tokens of His gifts we follow Him, Whom as yet we see not. Which same 'footsteps' cannot be comprehended, in that it is all unknown, when, where, and by what ways the gifts of His Spirit come, as 'Truth' bears record, saying, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and ye cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.* [John 3, 8] Now in the height of the rewarding the Almighty may be found out in the appearance [*per speciem*] afforded to contemplation, yet He can never be found out to perfection. For though sooner or later we see Him in His brightness, yet we do not perfectly behold His Essence. For the mind whether of Angels or men, whilst it gazes toward the uncircumscribed Light shrinks into little by this alone, viz. that it is a created being; and by its advancement indeed it is made to stretch above its own reach, yet not even when spread wide can it compass the splendours of Him, Who at once in transcending, in supporting, and in filling, encloses all things. Hence it is yet further added,

Ver. 8, 9. *He is higher than heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? His measure is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.*

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14. In that God is set forth as 'higher than heaven,' 'deeper than hell,' 'longer than the earth,' and 'broader than the sea,' this must be understood in a spiritual sense, inasmuch as it is impious to conceive any thing concerning Him after the proportions of body. Now He is 'higher than heaven,' in that He transcends all things by the Incomprehensibility of His spiritual Nature. He is 'deeper than hell,' in that in transcending He sustains beneath. He is 'longer than the earth,' in that He exceeds the measure of created being by the everlasting continuance of His Eternity. He is 'broader than the sea,' in that He so possesses the waves of temporal things in ruling them, that in confining He encompasses them beneath the every way prevailing presence of His Power. Though it is possible that by the designation of 'Heaven' the Angels may be denoted, and by the term 'hell,' the demons, while by the 'earth' the righteous, and by the 'sea' sinners are understood. Thus He is 'higher than the heaven,' in that the very Elect Spirits themselves do not perfectly penetrate the vision of His infinite loftiness? He is 'deeper than hell,' in that He judges and condemns the craft of evil spirits with far more searching exactness than they had ever thought, He is 'longer than the earth,' in that He surpasses our long-suffering by the patience of Divine long-suffering, which both bears with us in our sins, and welcomes us when we are turned from them to the rewards of His recompensing. He is 'wider than the sea,' in that he every where enters into the doings of sinners by the presence of His retributive power, so that even when He is not seen present by His appearance, He is felt present by His judgment.

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

15. Yet all the particulars may be referred to man alone, so that he is Himself 'heaven,' when now in desire he is attached to things above; himself 'hell,' when he lies grovelling in things below, confounded by the mists of his temptations; himself 'earth,' in that he is made to abound in good

works through the fertility of a steadfast hope; himself 'the sea,' for that on some occasions he is shaken with alarm, and agitated by the breath of his feebleness. But God is 'higher than heaven,' in that we are subdued by the mightiness of His power, even when we are lifted above our own selves. He is 'deeper than hell,' in that He goes deeper in judging than the very human mind looks into its own self in the midst of temptations, He is 'longer than the earth,' in that those fruits of our life which He gives at the end, our very hope at the present time comprehends not at all. He is 'wider than the sea,' in that the human mind being tossed to and fro throws out many fancies concerning the things that are coming, but when it now begins to see the things that it had made estimate of, it owns itself to have been too stinted in its reckoning. Therefore He is made 'higher than heaven,' since our contemplation itself fails toward Him. Hence the Psalmist too had set his heart on high, yet he felt that he had not yet reached unto Him, saying, *Thy knowledge is too wonderful for me, it is mighty, I cannot attain unto it.* [Ps. 139, 6] He knew One deeper than hell, who when sifting his own heart, yet dreading His more searching judgment, said, *For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord.* [1 Cor. 4, 4] He saw One 'longer than the earth,' when he was brought to reflect that the wishes of man's heart were too little for him, saying, *Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.* [Eph. 3, 20] He had beheld One 'broader than the sea,' who considered whilst he feared that the human mind may never know the immeasurableness of His severity, however it may toss and fret in enquiring after it, saying, *Who knoweth the power of Thine anger, and for fear can tell Thy wrath?* [Ps. 90, 11] Whose Power the inimitable teacher rightly gives us the knowledge of, when he briefly says, *That ye may be able to comprehend with all Saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.* [Eph. 3, 18] For God has 'breadth,' in that He extends His love even to gathering in the very persecutors. He has 'length,' in that He leads us onwards by bearing with us in long-suffering to the country of life. He has 'loftiness,' in that He far transcends the understanding of the very beings themselves that have been admitted into the heavenly assemblage. He has 'depth,' in that upon the damned below He displays the visitation of His severity in an incomprehensible manner. And these same four attributes He exercises towards each one of us, that are placed in this life, in that by loving, He manifests His 'breadth;' by suffering, His 'length;' by surpassing not only our understanding, but even our very wishes, His 'height;' and His 'depth,' by judging with strictness the hidden and unlawful motions of the thoughts. Now His height and depth how unsearchable it is no man knows saving he, who has begun either by contemplation to be carried up on high, or in resisting the hidden motions of the heart to be troubled by the urgency of temptation. And hence the words are spoken to blessed Job, *He is higher than heaven what canst thou do? deeper than hell, whence canst thou know?* As if it were said to him in open contempt, 'His depth and excellency when mayest thou ever discover, who are not taught either to be lifted up on high by virtue, or to deal severely with thyself in temptations. It goes on, Ver. 10. *If He overturn all things, or shut them up together, then who shall gainsay Him? Or who can say to Him, Why doest Thou so?*

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16. The Lord 'overturns heaven,' when by His terrible and secret ordering He pulls down the height of man's contemplations. He 'subverts hell,' when He allows the soul of any affrighted under its temptations to fall even into worse extremes. He 'overturns the earth,' when He cuts off the fruitfulness of good works by adversities pouring in. He 'overturns the sea,' when He confounds the fluctuations of our wavering spirit, by the rise of a sudden panic. For the heart,

disquieted by its own uncertainty, fears horribly for this alone, that she goes thus wavering; and it is as if the sea were overturned, when our very trembling towards God is itself confounded on the terribleness of His judgment being thought on. Whereas therefore we have described in brief, in what sort heaven and hell, earth and sea, are overturned, now the somewhat more difficult task awaits us, to shew how these may be ‘shut up together.’

17. For it very often happens that the spirit already lifts the mind on high, yet that the flesh assails it with pressing temptations; and when the soul is led forward to the contemplation of heavenly things, it is struck back by the images of unlawful practice being presented. For the sting of the flesh suddenly wounds him, whom holy contemplation was bearing away beyond the flesh. Therefore heaven and hell are shut up together, when one and the same mind is at once enlightened by the uplifting of contemplation, and bedimmed by the pressure of temptation, so that both by straining forward it sees what it should desire, and through being bowed down be in thought subject to that which it should blush for. For light springs from heaven, but hell is held of darkness. Heaven and hell then are brought into one, when the soul which already sees the light of the land above, also sustains the darkness of secret temptation coming from the warfare of the flesh. Yea, Paul had already gone up to the height of the third heaven, already learnt the secrets of Paradise, and yet being still subject to the assaults of the flesh, he groaned, saying, *But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] How then was it with the heart of this illustrious Preacher, saving that God had ‘shut up together’ heaven and hell, in that he had both already obtained the light of the interior vision, and yet continued to suffer darkness from the flesh? Above himself he had seen what to seek after with joy, in himself he perceived what to bewail with fear. The light of the heavenly land had already shed abroad its rays, yet the dimness of temptation embarrassed the soul. Therefore he underwent hell together with heaven, in that assurance set him erect in his enlightenment, and lamentation laid him low in his temptation.

18. And it often happens that faith is now vigorous in the soul, and yet in some slight point it is wasted with uncertainty, so that both being well-assured, it lifts itself up from visible objects, and at the same time being unassured it disquiets itself in certain points. For very often it lifts itself to seek after the things of eternity, and being driven by the incitements of thoughts that arise, it is set at strife with its very own self. Therefore the ‘earth and sea are shut up together,’ when one and the same mind is both established by the certainty of rooted faith, and yet is influenced by the breath of doubt, through some slight fickleness of unbelief. Did not he experience that ‘earth and sea were shut up together’ in his breast, who both hoping through faith and wavering through faithlessness, cried, *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief?* [Mark 9, 23] How is it then that at the same time he declares that he believes, and begs to have the unbelief in him helped, saving that he had found out that earth and sea were shut up together in his thoughts, who both being assured had already begun to implore through faith, and being unassured still endured the waves of faithlessness from unbelief.

19. And this is allowed by secret providence to be brought about, that when the soul has now begun to arise to uprightness, it should be assailed by the remnant of its wickedness, in order that this very assault may either exercise it if it resist, or if it be beguiled by enjoyment may break it down. Therefore it is well said here, *If He overturn all things, or shut them up together, who shalt gainsay Him? Or who can say to Him, Why doest Thou so?* For God's decree can neither lose any

thing by opposition, nor be ascertained by enquiry, when He either withdraws the good graces which He had vouchsafed, or not entirely withdrawing them, lets them be shaken by the assault of evil inclinations. For oftentimes the heart is lifted up in highmindedness when it is established strongly in virtue by instances of joyful success, but when our Creator beholds the motions of presumption lurking in the heart, He forsakes man for the shewing him to himself, that his soul thus forsaken may discover what she is, in that she wrongly exulted in herself in a feeling of security. Hence whereas it is said that ‘all is overturned and shut up together,’ he therefore adds, Ver. 11. *For He knoweth the vanity of men; when He seeth wickedness also, doth He not consider it?*

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#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

20. As if he were subjoining in explaining the things premised, saying, ‘Because He sees that by suffering them evil habits gain growth, by judging He brings to nought His gifts.’ Now the right order is observed in the account, in that vanity is first described to be known, and afterwards iniquity to be considered. For all iniquity is vanity, but not all vanity, iniquity. For we do vain things as often as we give heed to what is transitory. Whence too that is said to vanish, which is suddenly withdrawn from the eyes of the beholder. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Every man living is altogether vanity*. [Ps. 39, 5] For herein, that by living he is only tending to destruction, he is rightly called ‘vanity’ indeed; but by no means lightly called ‘iniquity’ too. For though it is in punishment of sin that he comes to nought, yet this particular circumstance is not itself sin, that he passes swiftly from life. Thus all things are vain that pass by. Whence too the words are spoken by Solomon, *All is vanity*. [Eccles. 1, 2]

21. But ‘iniquity’ is fitly brought in immediately after ‘vanity.’ For whilst we are led onwards through some things transitory, we are to our hurt tied fast to some of them, and when the soul does not hold its seat of unchangeableness, running out from itself it goes headlong into evil ways. From vanity then that mind sinks into iniquity, which from being familiar with things mutable, whilst it is ever being hurried from one sort to another, is defiled by sins springing up. It is possible too that ‘vanity’ may be taken for sin, and that by the title of ‘iniquity’ weightier guilt may be designated; for if vanity were not sometimes sin, the Psalmist would not have said, *Though man walketh in the image of God, surely he is disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them*. [Ps. 29, 6. Vulg.] For though we preserve the image of the Trinity in our natural constitution, yet being disturbed by the vain motions of self-indulgence, we go wrong in our practice; so that in ever-alternating forms lust agitates, fear breaks down, joy beguiles, grief oppresses. Therefore from vanity, as we have also said above, we are led to iniquity, when first we let ourselves out in light misdemeanors, so that habit making all things light, we are not at all afraid to commit even heavier ones too afterwards. For while the tongue neglects to regulate idle words, being caught by the custom of engrained carelessness, it fearlessly gives a loose to mischievous ones. Whilst we give ourselves to gluttony we are straightway betrayed into the madness of an unsteady mind, and when the mind shrinks from overcoming the gratification of the flesh, it very often plunges even into the whirlpool of unbelief. Hence Paul, looking at the mischiefs that befel the Israelitish people, in order to keep off from his hearers threatened ills, was justly mindful to relate in order what took place, saying, *Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is*

written, *The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.* [1 Cor. 10, 7. Ex. 32, 6] For eating and drink set them on to play, and play drew them into idolatry; for if the offence of vanity is not restrained with care, the unheeding mind is swiftly swallowed up by iniquity, as Solomon testifies, who says, *He that despiseth small things falleth little by little.* For if we neglect to take heed to little things, being insensibly led away, we perpetrate even greater things with a bold face; and it is to be observed, that it is not said that iniquity is ‘seen,’ but that it is ‘considered.’ For we look more earnestly at those things which we consider. Thus God ‘knoweth the vanity of men, and considereth their iniquity,’ in that He leaves not even their minor offences unpunished, and prepares Himself with greater earnestness to smite their worse ones. Therefore whereas men set out with lighter misdeeds, and go on to those of a graver order, vanity overcasts while iniquity blinds the mind, which same mind, so soon as it has parted with the light, presently lifts itself so much the higher in swoln pride, in proportion as being taken in the snares of iniquity, it withdraws further from the truth. Hence also he fitly sets forth whereunto vanity forces men joined with iniquity, in that he forthwith adds,  
Ver. 12. *For the vain man is exalted in pride.*

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22. For it is the end of vanity, whereas it mangles the heart by sin, to render it bold by the offence, so that, forgetful of its guiltiness, the soul which feels no sorrow to have lost its innocency, blinded by a righteous retribution, should at the same time part with humility also; and it very often happens, that, enslaving itself to unlawful desires, it rids itself of the yoke of the fear of the Lord; and as if henceforth at liberty for the commission of wickedness, it strives to put in execution all that self-indulgence prompts. Hence when the vain man is said to be exalted in pride, therefore it is brought in,  
*And thinketh himself free born like a wild ass’s colt.*

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23. For by ‘a wild ass’s colt’ is set forth every kind of wild animals, which being left free to the motions of nature, are not held by the reins of persons ruling them. For the fields leave animals in a state of liberty both to roam where they list, and to rest when they are wearied; and though man is immeasurably superior to insensate beasts, yet that is very often not allowed to man, which is granted to brute creatures. For those animals, which are never kept for any other end, assuredly never have their movements held in under the bands of discipline; but man, who is being brought to a life hereafter, must of necessity be held in all his movements under the controlling hand of discipline, and like a tame animal render service, bound with reins, and live restricted by eternal appointments. He then that seeks to put in practice in unrestrained liberty all the things that he has a desire for, what else is this but that he longs to be like the wild ass’s colt, that the reins of discipline may not hold him in, but that he may boldly run at large through the forest of desires?

24. But oftentimes Divine mercy breaks by the encounter of sudden adversity those, whom it sees going into the unruliness of lawless freedom, that being crushed they may learn with what damnable exaltation they had been swoln, that being now tamed by the experience of the scourge, they may like tame animals yield the mind’s neck to the reins of the commandments, and go along the ways of the present life at the ruler’s beck. With these reins he knew well that he was bound,



who said, *I am as a beast before Thee, and I am continually with Thee*. [Ps. 72, 22] Whence too that raging persecutor, when he was brought away from the field of unbelieving self-indulgence to the house of faith, being pricked by the spurs of his ruler, heard the words, *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*. [Acts 9, 5] It remains then, if we would not henceforth be like the wild ass's colt, that in all that we desire we first look out for the token of the interior appointment, so that our mind in all that it strives at may be held in by the bridle of the Supreme control, and may fulfil its wishes the more effectually to the obtaining of life, by the very same act, whereby even against its will it treads under foot the aims and objects of its own life. Zophar delivered many forcible sayings, but he is not conscious that he is addressing them to a better than himself; whence he still further subjoins in words of upbraiding,

Ver. 13. *Thou hast set firm thine heart, and stretched out thine hands towards Him.*

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25. The heart is not here said to be 'set firm' by virtue but by insensibility, for every soul that submits itself to the consideration of the interior severity, is directly softened by the fear thereof; and the shaft of divine dread enters into him, in that he carries weak bowels through humility. But he that is hardened by obstinacy in insensibility, as it were sets his heart firm, that the darts of heavenly fear may not pierce it. Whence the Lord says mercifully to some by the Prophet, *And I will take away the stony heart out of you, and I will give you a heart of flesh*. [Ezek. 36, 26] For He 'takes away the stony heart,' when He removes from us the hardness of pride. And He 'gives us a heart of flesh,' when He thereupon changes that same hardness into sensibility. Now by 'hands' as we have often taught are denoted works. To stretch out the hands to God, then, with sin, is to pride ourselves upon the excellency of our works to the prejudice of the grace of the Giver. For he that, speaking in the presence of the Eternal Judge, ascribes to himself the good that he does, stretches out his hands to God in a spirit of pride. It is in this way truly that the lost ever let themselves loose against the Elect, and so heretics against Catholics; that when they are unable to abuse their doings, they set themselves to blame the good for pride in those doings, that those, whom they cannot upbraid for weak points in practice, they may charge with the guilt of high-mindedness. And hence the good things which are done outwardly, they now no longer reckon to be good, in that they are set forth as it were in the prosecution of swelling conceit. And these oftentimes with swelling thoughts rebuke lowly deeds, and know not that they are dealing blows against themselves by their words. But whereas Zophar had hitherto chidden the righteous man with reproof, now, as giving him lessons of instruction, he subjoins,

Ver. 13, 14, 15. *If the iniquity which is in thine hand thou put far from thee, and wickedness dwell not in thy tabernacle, then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, yea thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear.*

26. Every sin is either committed in thought alone, or it is done in thought and deed together. Therefore 'iniquity in the hand' is offence in deed; but 'wickedness in the tabernacle,' is iniquity in the heart; for our heart is not unfitly called a tabernacle, wherein we are buried within ourselves, when we do not shew ourselves outwardly in act. Zophar therefore, in that he was the friend of a righteous person, knows what he should say, but in that he reproached a righteous person, bearing the likeness of heretics, he does not know how rightly to deliver even the things which he knows. But let us, treading under our feet all that is delivered by him in pride of spirit, reflect how true his words are, if they had but been spoken in a right manner. For first he bids that 'iniquity' be

removed from the 'hand,' and afterwards that 'wickedness' be cut off from the 'tabernacle;' for whosoever has already cut away from himself all wicked deeds without, must of necessity in returning to himself probe himself discreetly in the purpose of his heart, lest sin, which he no longer has in act, still hold out in thought. Hence too it is well said by Solomon, *Prepare thy work without, and diligently work thy field, that afterwards thou mayest build thine house.* [Prov. 24, 27] For what is it when the 'work is prepared,' to 'till the field diligently without,' saving when the briars of iniquity have been plucked up, to train our practice to bearing fruits of recompense? And after the tilling of the field, what else is it to return to the building of our house, than that we very often learn from good deeds the perfect purity of life which we should build up in our thoughts. For almost all good deeds come from the thoughts, but there be some fine points of thought which have their birth in action; for as the deed is derived from the mind, so on the other hand the mind is instructed by the deed; for the soul taking the first beginnings of divine love dictates the good things which should be done, but after the deeds so dictated have begun to be fulfilled, being practised by its own actions, it learns how little it saw when it began to dictate good deeds. Thus the 'field is tilled without, that the house may afterwards be built,' for very often we gain from outward practice what an extreme nicety of righteousness we should keep in our hearts; and Zophar was well minded to observe this order, in that he spake first of 'iniquity being put away from the hands,' and afterwards 'wickedness from the tabernacle;' for the mind can never be completely set upright in thought when it still goes astray in deed.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

27. Now if we thoroughly wipe away these two, we then directly 'lift our face without spot' to God. For the soul is the inner face of man, by which same we are known, that we may be regarded with love by our Maker. Now it is to lift up this same face, to raise the soul in [al. 'to'] God by appliance to the exercises of prayer. But there is a spot that pollutes the uplifted face, when consciousness of its own guilt accuses the mind intent; for it is forthwith dashed from all confidence of hope, if when busied in prayer it be stung with recollection of sin not yet subdued. For it distrusts its being able to obtain what it longs for, in that it bears in mind its still refusing to do what it has heard from God. Hence it is said by John, *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatsoever we ask we shall receive of Him.* [1 John 3, 21. 22.] Hence Solomon saith, *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* [Prov. 28, 9] For our heart blames us in offering up our prayers, when it calls to mind that it is set in opposition to the precepts of Him, whom it implores, and the prayer becomes abomination, when there is a 'turning away' from the control of the law; in that verily it is meet that a man should be a stranger to the favours of Him, to Whose bidding he will not be subject.

28. Wherein there is this salutary remedy, if when the soul reproaches itself upon the remembrance of sin, it first bewail that in prayer, wherein it has gone wrong, that whereas the stain of offences is washed away by tears, in offering up our prayers the face of the heart may be viewed unspotted by our Maker. But we must be over and above on our guard, that the soul do not again fall away headlong to that, which it is overjoyed that it was washed away by tears; but whilst the sin that is deplored is again committed, those very lamentings be made light of in the eyes of the righteous Judge. For we should call to mind what is said, *Do not repeat a word of thy prayer;* [Ecclus. 7, 14] by which same saying the wise man in no sort forbids us to beseech pardon oftentimes, but to

repeat our sins. As if it were expressed in plain words; ‘When thou hast bewailed thy misdoings, never again do any thing for thee to bewail again in prayer.’

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29. Therefore that ‘the face may be lifted up in prayer without spot,’ it behoves that before the seasons of prayer every thing that can possibly be reprov'd in the act of prayer be heedfully looked into, and that the mind when it stays from prayer as well should hasten to shew itself such, as it desires to appear to the Judge in the very season itself of prayer. For we often harbour some impure or forbidden thoughts in the mind, when we are disengaged from our prayers. And when the mind has lifted itself up to the exercises of prayer, being made to recoil, it is subject to images of the things whereby before it was burthened of free will whilst unemployed. And the soul is now as it were without ability to lift up the face to God, in that the mind being blotted within, it blushes at the stains of polluted thought. Oftentimes we are ready to busy ourselves with the concerns of the world, and when after such things we apply ourselves to the business of prayer, the mind cannot lift itself to heavenly things, in that the load of earthly solicitude has sunk it down below, and the face is not shewn pure in prayer, in that it is stained by the mire of grovelling imagination.

30. However, sometimes we rid the heart of every encumbrance, and set ourselves against the forbidden motions thereof, even at such time as we are disengaged from prayer, yet because we ourselves commit sins but seldom, we are the more backward in letting go the offences of others, and in proportion as our mind the more anxiously dreads to sin, the more unsparingly it abhors the injuries done to itself by another; whence it is brought to pass that a man is found slow to grant pardon, in the same degree that by going on advancing, he has become heedful against the commission of sin. And as he fears himself to transgress against another, he claims to punish the more severely the transgression that is done against himself. But what can be discovered worse than this spot of bitterness [*doloris*], which in the sight of the Judge does not stain charity, but kills it outright? For every sin stains the life of the soul, but bitterness maintained against our neighbour slays it; for it is fixed in the soul like a sword, and the very hidden parts of the bowels are gored by the point thereof; and if it be not first drawn out of the pierced heart, no whit of divine aid is won in prayer. For the medicines of health cannot be applied to the wounded limbs, unless the iron be first withdrawn from the wound, Hence it is that ‘Truth’ saith by Itself, *If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father Which is in Heaven forgive you your trespasses.* [Matt. 6, 15.] Hence He enjoins, saying, *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any.* [Mark 11, 25] Hence He saith again, *Give, and it shall be given unto you; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.* [Luke 6, 38] Hence to the form of petition, He affixed the condition of pity; saying, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us:* [Matt. 6, 12] that truly the good which we beg from God being pierced with compunction, we first do with our neighbour, being altered by conversion. Therefore we then truly ‘lift our face without spot,’ when we neither commit forbidden misdeeds, nor retain those which have been committed against ourselves from jealous regard for self; for in the hour of prayer our soul is overwhelmed with sore dismay, if either its practice still continue to pollute it, or bitterness kept for the injuring of another lay charge against it; which two when anyone has cleansed away, he forthwith arises free to the things which are subjoined, *Yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear,* in that doubtless he fears the Judge the less, the more stedfast he stands in good deeds. For he gets the mastery of fears, who retains

possession of steadfastness, in that whilst he anxiously busies himself to do what our Creator tenderly enjoins, he bethinks himself in security of that which He threatens with terribleness.

31. Moreover it should be known, that there are some good deeds wherein we persevere unwearied, and again, there are some from which we are continually giving over and falling away, and we are restored to these, not without great endeavours at intervals of time; for in the active life the mind is stablished without failing, but from the contemplative, being overcome by the load of its infirmity, it faints away. For the first endures the more steadfastly in proportion as it opens itself to things about it for our neighbour's weal; the latter falls away the more swiftly, in proportion as passing beyond the barriers of the flesh, it endeavours to soar up above itself. The first directs its way through level places, and therefore plants the foot of practice more strongly; but the other, as it aims at heights above itself, the sooner descends wearied to itself. Which is well and briefly conveyed by Ezekiel, when he relates the motions of the living creatures which he had seen, saying, *They turned not when they went*; and soon after he subjoins in addition, *And the living creatures went and returned*. [Ez. 1, 9. 14.] For sometimes the holy 'living creatures go and return not,' and sometimes they 'go and return forthwith;' for when the minds of the Elect, through the grace of an active life being vouchsafed them, abandon the paths of error, they never return to the evil courses of the world which they have forsaken; but when through the gaze of contemplation they are led to stay themselves from this same active life, they 'go and return,' in that hereby, that they are never able to continue for long in contemplation, they again let themselves out in action, that by busying themselves in such things as are immediately near them, they may recruit their strength, and may be enabled by contemplation again to soar above themselves. But while this practice of contemplation is in due method resumed at intervals of time, we hold on assuredly without failing all its entireness; for though the mind being overcome by the weight of its infirmity fall short, yet being restored again by continual efforts it lays hold thereof. Nor should it be said to have lost its firmness in that, which, though it be ever failing in, it is ever pursuing, even when it has lost the same. It proceeds;

Ver. 16. *Thou shalt also forget thy misery, and no more remember it, as waters that pass away.*

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32. The mind feels the ills of the present life the more severely, in proportion as it neglects to take account of the good that comes after; and as it will not consider the rewards that are in store, it reckons all to be grievous that it undergoes; and hence the blinded imagination murmurs against the stroke of the scourge, and that is taken for an immeasurable woe, which by the days flowing on in their course is daily being brought to an end. But if a man once raise himself to things eternal, and fix the eye of the soul upon those objects which remain without undergoing change, he sees that here below all whatsoever runs to an end is almost nothing at all. He is subject to the adversities of the present life, but he bethinks himself that all that passes away is as nought. For the more vigorously he makes his way into the interior joys, he is the less sensible of pains without. Whence Zophar, not being afraid with boldfaced hardihood to instruct one better than himself, exhorts to righteousness, and shews how little chastening appears in the eyes of the righteous man. As if it were in plain words; 'If thou hast a taste of the joy which remains within, all that gives pain without forthwith becomes light.' Now he does well in likening the miseries of the present life to 'waters that pass away,' for passing calamity never overwhelms the mind of the Elect with the force of a shock, yet it does tinge it with the touch of sorrow. For it drops indeed with the bleeding of the

wound, though it is not dashed from the certainty of its salvation. But it often happens that not only stripes inflict bruises, but that in the mind of each one of the righteous the temptings of evil spirits come in force, so that he is grieved by the stroke without, and is in some sort chilled within by temptation. Yet grace never forsakes him, which same the more severely it smites us in the dealings of Providence, so much the more does it watch over us in pity; for when it has begun to grow dark through temptation, the inward light kindles itself again. Whence too it is added; Ver. 17. *And the noonday splendour shall rise to thee at eventide.*

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#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

33. For 'the noonday splendour at eventide' is the renewing of virtue in the season of temptation, that the soul should be reinvigorated by the sudden heat of charity, which but now was full of fear, that the light of grace had sunk to it; which Zophar further unfolds with more exactness, when he subjoins,

Ver. 18. *And when thou thinkest thyself consumed, thou shalt arise like the morning star.*

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34. For it often comes to pass that so many temptations beset our path, that the very multitude of them almost inclines us to the downfall of desperation. Hence for the most part, when the mind is turned to weariness, it scarce takes account even of the hurts that its virtue sustains, and notwithstanding that it is wholly filled with pain, it is as if it were now dislocated from the sense of pain, and were unable to reckon up with what a tumult of thoughts it is overrun. It sees itself momentarily on the point of falling headlong, and grief itself withstands it worse, that it should not lay hold of the arms of resistance. Mists encompass the eyes, wherever turned about, and whereas darkness ever obstructs the sight, the sad soul sees nought else than darkness; but with the merciful Judge it often happens that this very sadness, which even weighs down the effect of prayer, intercedes for us the more piercingly. For then our Creator sees the blackness of our sorrow, and pours back again the rays of the light withdrawn, so that the mind being immediately braced up by His gifts becomes full of vigour, which same a little before contending evil propensities kept down under the heel of pride. At once it shakes off the load of torpor, and bursts with the light of contemplation after the darkness of its troubled state. At once that is raised to the joy of advancement, which amidst temptations was well nigh driven by despair to a sorer fall. Without a conflict of the heart it looks down upon present things, without let of misgiving it trusts in the retribution to come. Therefore when the righteous man 'thinks himself consumed, he arises like the morning star,' in that so soon as he has begun to be benighted with the blackness of temptations, he is restored anew to the light of grace, and he in himself manifests the day of righteousness, who the moment before, on the point to fall, dreaded the night of guiltiness. Now the life of the righteous is rightly compared to the 'morning star.' For the morning star, being precursor of the sun, proclaims the day. And what does the innocency of the Saints proclaim to us, saving the brightness of the Judge, That cometh after? For in our admiration of them we see what we are to account of the Majesty of the true Light. We do not yet behold the power of our Redeemer, but we admire His goodness in the characters of His Elect. Therefore in that the life of the good presents to our eyes on the consideration of it the force of Truth, the 'morning star' arises bright to us heralding the sun.

35. But be it known that all that we have made out, proceeding upon the opposition of spiritual temptations, may without hindrance be interpreted by external ills, for holy men, because they love the things above from the bottom of their heart, encounter hardships in things below; but at the end they find the light of joy, which in the span of this passing life they care not to have. Whence it is said on this occasion by Zophar, *And the noonday splendour shall arise to thee at eventide*. For the sinner's light in the daytime is dimness at eventide, in that he is buoyed up with good fortune in the present life, but is swallowed up by the darkness of calamity at the end; but to the righteous man the noonday splendour ariseth at eventide, in that he knows what exceeding brightness is in store for him when he has already begun to set. Hence it is written; *Whoso feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last*. [Ecclus. 1, 13] Hence it is declared by the Psalmist; *When He giveth His beloved sleep, this is [hoec est, V. ecce] the heritage of the Lord*. [Ps. 127, 2. 3.] He, while he is still set in the strife of this present life as well, 'when he thinketh himself consumed, ariseth like the morning star;' because whilst falling outwardly he is renewed inwardly. And the more that he encounters crosses without, the more richly he gleams with the light of his virtues within, as Paul testifies, who saith, *Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. [2 Cor. 4, 16] And it ought to be observed, that he never says, 'when thou art consumed,' but, 'when thou thinkest thyself consumed,' in that both that which we see is doubtful, and that which we hope for certain. Whence too the same Paul did not know, but thought, that he was consumed, who even when falling headlong into sufferings and tribulations, shone bright like the morning star, saying, *As dying, and, behold, we live; as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich*. [3 Cor. 6, 9. 10.] And we should know that the worse plight the mind of the good is reduced to for the love of the truth, the more sure and certain its hope of the rewards of eternity. Whence too it is justly added; Ver. 18, *And thou shalt have confidence, because hope is set before thee*,

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36. For hope lifts itself the more firmly rooted in God, in proportion as a man has suffered harder things for His sake, since the joy of the recompensing is never gathered in eternity, which is not first sown here below in religious sorrowing, Hence the Psalmist saith, *They went forth and wept as they went, bearing precious seed, but they shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them*. [Ps. 126, 6] Hence Paul saith, *If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him*. [2 Tim. 2, 11. 12.] Hence he warns his disciples, saying, *And that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God*. [Acts 14, 22] Hence the Angel, shewing the glory of the Saints to John, saith, *These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*. [Rev. 7, 14] Therefore because we now sow in tribulation that we may afterwards reap the fruit of joy, the heart is strengthened with the larger measure of confidence in proportion as it is pressed with the heavier weight of affliction for the Truth's sake. Whence it is therefore fitly added, *Yea, being dug to the bottom [V. defossus], thou shalt rest secure*.

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37. For just as present security begets toil to the wicked, so present toil begets perpetual security to the good. Hence he already knew that it was his 'to rest secure after he had been dug to the bottom,' who said, *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: I have kept the faith Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day.* [2 Tim. 4, 6. 8.] For as he had striven without giving over against transitory ills, doubtless he reckoned without misgiving on enduring joys.

38. Not but that the expression, 'been dug to the bottom,' may be understood in another sense also: for oftentimes being busied with transitory matters, we neglect to consider in what great things we go wrong; but if the eye of reflection being brought in, the pile of earthly thoughts be discharged from the recesses of the heart, what lay hid from sight within is disclosed to view; whence holy men never cease to explore the secret hiding places of their souls; minutely searching themselves, they throw off the cares of earthly things, and their thoughts being thoroughly dug up from the bottom [*effossis*], when they find that they are not cankered in any wise by the guilt of sin, they rest secure in themselves as upon the bed of the heart. For they desire to be hid apart from the courses of this world. They are always thinking on their own concerns, and when they are not at all tied by the harness of government, they decline to pass judgment on what concerns others. Therefore 'having been dug to the bottom they rest secure,' in that whilst with wakeful eye they dive into their inmost recesses, they withdraw themselves from the toilsome burthens of this world under the disengagement of repose. And hence it is yet further added,

Ver. 19. *Also thou shalt lie down, and there shall be none to make thee afraid.*

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39. Whosoever seeks present glory doubtless dreads contempt. He, who is ever agape after gain, is ever surely in fear of loss. For that object, the receiving of which is medicine to him, the loss thereof is his wounding, and as he is rivetted under fetters to things mutable and destined to perish, so he lies grovelling beneath, far apart from the stronghold of security. But, on the other hand, whoever is rooted in the desire of eternity alone, is neither uplifted by good fortune nor shaken by adverse fortune; whilst he has nought in the world which he desires, there is nought which he dreads from the world. For it is hence that Solomon saith, *It shall not grieve the just whatsoever shall happen unto him.* [Prov. 12, 21] Hence he says again, *The righteous as a bold lion shall be without alarm.* [Prov. 28, 1] Therefore it is rightly said here; *Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid*, in that everyone the more completely casts away from himself the fear that cometh from the world, the more thoroughly he overcomes in himself the lust of the world. Did not Paul lie down and rest in heart without fear, when he said, *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor strength* [So Vulg.], *nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* [Rom. 8, 39] The force of which same love is commended by the true voice of the Holy Church, where it is said in the Song of songs, *For love is strong as death.* [Cant. 8, 6] For love is compared to the force of death, in that that soul which it has once taken possession of, it wholly kills to the delightfulness of the world, and sets it up the stronger in authority, that it renders it indifferent towards objects of terror. But herein it is to be known, that when bad men deliver right sentiments, it is very hard for them not to let themselves out upon that, which they are going after in secret within. Hence Zophar forthwith adds;

*Yea, many shall make suit unto thee.*

[xxii]

40. For the righteous do not keep themselves in the narrow paths of innocency with this view, that they may be implored by others, but whether heretics or any that be perverse, all of them, in that they live with an appearance of innocency among men, have the desire to shew themselves as intercessors in behalf of men, and when in talk they convey holy truths, what they themselves are hankering after, they promise to others as something great; and whilst they tell of heavenly things, they soon shew by their pledges what their hearts are bent on. But lest by long continuing to promise earthly things, they may be made appear what they are, they quickly return to words of uprightness. Whence it is immediately added;

*But the eyes if the wicked shall fail and refuge shall perish from them.*

[xxiii]

41. That by the designation of 'eyes' the energy of the intention is set forth to us, 'Truth' testifies in the Gospel, saying, *If thine eye shall be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* [Matt. 6, 22] Forasmuch as if a pure intention have preceded our action, howsoever it may seem otherwise to men, yet to the eyes of our interior Judge, the body of the deed that follows after is presented pure. Therefore the 'eyes' of the wicked are the intentions of carnal desires in them, and these fail for this reason, that they are careless of their eternal interests, and are ever looking for transitory advantages alone. For they aim to get themselves an earthly name, they wish above all things to grow and increase in temporal goods, they are daily advancing with the tide of transient things to the goal of death; but they think not to take account of the things of mortality upon the principles of their mortal nature. The life of the flesh is failing minute by minute, and yet the desire of the flesh is growing; property gotten is snatched off by an instant end, yet the eagerness in getting is not ended the more; but when death withdraws the wicked, then indeed their desires are ended with their life. And the eyes of these fail them through the Avenging of the Most High, for that they would not fail here by their own determination to earthly gratification. These same eyes of such persons the Psalmist had seen closed to their former enjoyment, when he said, *In that day all their thoughts perish.* [Ps. 146, 4] For they meet at once with eternal woes they had never thought on, and on a sudden lose the temporal goods, they had long while held and dealt with. And for these 'all refuge shall perish,' in that their iniquity finds not where to hide itself from the visitation of the searching Judge. For now, when the wicked undergo some slight mishaps or evil chances, they find a hiding-place for refuge, in that they forthwith have recourse to the enjoyment of earthly objects of desire. For that poverty torment them not, they beguile the spirit with riches. Or lest the contempt of their neighbours sink them, they exalt themselves with titles. If the body is cloyed with satiety, it is pampered with the variety of viands set before it. If the mind is weighed down by any impulse to sadness, it is immediately relieved by the beguilements of sportiveness being introduced. Here therefore they have as many places of refuge as they make for themselves entertainments of delight; but one time 'refuge shall perish from them,' in that their soul, when all these are gone, sees only itself and the Judge. Then the pleasure is withdrawn, but the guilt of pleasure is preserved; and ere long the miserable wretches learn by their perishing that they were perishable things they had possession of. Yet these as long as they live in the body never cease to seek after things of a nature to do them harm. Whence it is still further added,



*And their hope shall be the abomination of the soul.*

[xxiv]

42. What does the sinner hope for here in all his thoughts saving to surpass others in power, to go beyond all men in the abundance of his stores, to bow down his rivals in lording it over them, to display himself as an object of admiration to his followers, to gratify anger at will, to make himself known as kind and gracious when he is commended, whatever the appetite longs for to offer to it, to acquiesce in all that pleasure dictates by the fulfilling of the thing? Well then is their hope said to be 'the abomination of the soul,' for the very same objects which carnal men go after, all spiritual persons abominate, according to the sentence of righteousness. For that which sinners account pleasure, the righteous, surely, hold for pain. Therefore the hope of the wicked is the abomination of the soul, for the spirit is wasted while the body is at ease. For as the flesh is sustained by soft treatment, so is the soul by hard dealing; soothing appliances cherish the first, harsh methods exercise the last. The one is fed with enjoyment, the last thrives on bitterness. And as hardships wound the flesh, so softness kills the spirit, as things laborious kill the one, so things delightful destroy the other. Therefore the hope of carnal men is said to be the abomination of the soul; in that the spirit perishes for ever by the same means whereby the flesh lives pleasantly for a while.

43. Now Zophar would have said this aright, if blessed Job had not proclaimed it all more fully even by living accordingly. But whereas he sets himself to give an holier man admonition concerning the way of living, and to instruct one more skilled than himself with the tutoring of wisdom, he by his own act makes the weight of his words light, in that by letting in indiscreetness he undoes all that he says; in that he is pouring on the liquid element of knowledge into a full vessel. For the treasures of knowledge are possessed by the indiscreet just as treasures of corporal substance are often in the possession of fools. For some that are sustained by a full measure of earthly goods at times give largely even to those that have, that they may themselves seem to have them in fuller measure than all men. So the wicked, since they are imbued with truth, speak in some respects right even to those that are more light than they are, not that they may instruct others that hear them, but that they may make it appear with what a fund of instruction they are furnished. For they hold that they excel all men in wisdom, therefore they imagine that there is nothing that they can say to any man beyond the measure of their greatness. Thus all the wicked, thus all heretics are not afraid to instruct their betters with a high tone, in that they look upon all as inferior to themselves. But Holy Church recalls everyone that is high minded from the height of his self esteem, and fashions him anew by the hand of discretion in the jointing of equality. Whence blessed Job, who is a member of the same Holy Church, seeing that the mind of his friend was swoln and big in words of instruction which he delivered, thereupon answered, saying, Chap. xii. 2. *No doubt but ye are the only men, and wisdom shall die with you.*

[xxv]

44. Whosoever reckons himself to excel all men in the faculty of reason, what else does such a man but exult that he is the 'only Man?' And it often happens that when the mind is borne on high through pride, it is uplifted in contempt of all men, and in admiration of self. For self-applause springs up in the imagination, and folly is itself its own flatterer for singularity of wisdom. It

ponders all that it has heard, and considers the words that it utters; and it admires its own, and scoffs at those of others. He then, who thinks that he only is wise, what else is this but that he believes that that same 'wisdom dies with him?' For what he denies to be with others, ascribing to himself alone, he doth, in truth, confine within the period of his brief span. But we are to consider what exact discretion the holy man employs, in order that the arrogance of his friends in the fulness of pride might be brought within bounds, in that he adds forthwith,  
*Ver.3. But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you.*

[xxvi]

45. For who is ignorant how greatly the practice and the knowledge of blessed Job excels the knowledge that his friends have? Now in order to correct their pride, he asserts that he is 'not inferior' to them, and lest he should transgress the limits of his own humility, he keeps to himself that he is superior to them; not by setting himself above, but by equalling himself to them, he points out what they should learn concerning themselves, who are far unlike to him; that whereas that wisdom which is high is voluntarily bowed down, the knowledge which lies grovelling may never erect itself against the nature of its powers, and he does well that he immediately recalls these to a sense of their equal condition, reflecting that they are swoln to excess as if for singularity in greatness, when he afterwards proceeds,  
*Yea, who knoweth not such things as these that ye know?*

[xxvii]

46. As though he said in plain words; Since what ye say is known to all men, wherefore are ye puffed up by the knowledge contained in your sayings, as of singular merit? Therefore whereas in bringing back the pride of the self-conceited to a common level of equality, he has reproved with a full correction, he now breaks out into statements of instruction; that his friends having been humbled first might learn the weightiness of Truth, and how reverently they should hear it. It proceeds,  
*Ver. 4. He that is mocked of his neighbour as I am, calleth upon God, and He answereth him.*

[xxviii]

47. Oftentimes the frail mind, when it is welcomed by the breath of human regard on the score of good actions, runs out into outward delights, so that it lays aside what it inwardly desires, and willingly lies all loosely in that which it gives ear to without. So that it does not so much delight to become as to be called blessed; and whereas it gapes after the words of applause, it gives over what it had begun to be; and so it is severed from God by the same means by which it appeared to be commendable in God. But sometimes it presses forward in good practice with a constant heart, and yet is pushed hard by the scoffs of men; it does admirable deeds, and gets only abuse; and he that might have been made to go forth without by commendations, being repulsed by insults, returns back again into himself; and stablishes himself the more firmly in God, that he findeth no place without when he may rest in peace: for all his hope is fixed in his Creator. And amidst scoffs and revilings, the interior Witness is alone implored. And his soul in his distress becomes God's neighbour, in proportion as he is a stranger to the favour of man's esteem. He forthwith pours himself out in prayer, and being pressed without, he is refined with a more perfect purity to

penetrate into all within. Therefore it is well said at this time, *He that is mocked of his neighbour as I am, will call upon God, and He will hear him.* For whilst the wicked reproach the soul of the good, they are shewing them Whom to seek as the Witness of their actions. And while their soul in compunction braces itself in prayer, it is united within itself to the hearing of the Most High, by the same act whereby it is severed from the applause of man without itself. But we ought to note how thoughtfully the words are inserted, *as I am.* For there be some men whom both the scoffings of their fellow-creatures sink to the ground, and yet they are not such as to be heard by the ears of God. For when mocking issues against sin, surely no virtuous merit is begotten in that mocking. For the priests of Baal, when they called upon him with clamorous voices, were mocked by Elijah, when he said, *Cry aloud; for he is a god either he is talking, or he is staying on a journey.* [1 Kings 18, 27] But this mocking was conducive to the service of virtue, in that it came by the deserts of sin. So that it is advisedly said now, *He that is mocked of his friend, as I am, calleth upon God, and He heareth him.* For the mockery of his fellow-creatures makes Him God's neighbour, whom innocency of life keeps a stranger to his fellow-creatures' wickednesses. It proceeds, *For the upright man's simplicity is laughed to scorn.*

[Missing pages 614 and 615 of the original text.]

with proud scornings; for they mark that that is wholly wanting to them without, which they pant after themselves with their best endeavours. Therefore they look down upon them as fools, who are without those things, by the having or merely loving of which they themselves in truth are perishing; and they take those for dead, whom they observe in no sort to live with themselves after the flesh. For he that dies from the desires of this world, is of course held by earthly minds to be utterly dead. Which is well represented by the miracle of our Redeemer when He frees a man from an unclean spirit, concerning which same it is written: *And the spirit cried and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, he is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up, and he arose:* [Mark 9, 26. 27.] for he looks like one dead that is set free from the power of an evil spirit. For whosoever has already got the better of earthly desires, makes the life of carnal conversation extinct in himself; and he seems dead to the world, in that he lacks the wicked one that possessed him, who urged him by impure desires; and many call him dead, in that they who know not how to live spiritually, look upon him who does not follow carnal good to be wholly lifeless.

51. But because the very scoffers at the simple ones are themselves too enrolled under the name of Christians, being overruled by reverence for religion, they are ashamed to make a display of the sin of open scoffing. Whence it happens that full of pride in themselves, and in silence, they scoff at those whom they take to be utterly mean and abject from their simplicity. Therefore it is well expressed, *A lamp is despised in the thought of the rich;* for all the proud, whereas they are unskilled to estimate the blessings to come, as we have said above, account him almost as nothing whom they do not see to be possessed of that which they are devoted to. For it often happens that each one of the Elect, who is being conducted to eternal bliss, is overwhelmed here with unintermitted calamity, there is no plentifulness of stores that buoys him up, no lustre from titles that makes him conspicuous, no crowd of followers falls to his lot, no pomp of raiment makes him

a figure in the eyes of men, but he is regarded as an object of contempt by all men, and accounted unworthy of the regard of this world. Yet in the eyes of the hidden Judge he is bright with virtues, and full of lustre from the merits of his life; he dreads to be honoured, he never shrinks from being despised, he disciplines the body by continence, he is fattened by love alone in the soul, he ever sets his mind to bear with patience, and standing erect on the ground of righteousness, he exults in the insults he receives, he compassionates the distressed from his heart, he rejoices in the successes of the good as in his own, he carefully ruminates the provender of the sacred word in his heart, and when examined he is unskilled to give a double answer; ‘a lamp’ because he is bright within, ‘despised’ because he is not luminous without. Inwardly he glows with the flame of charity, without he shines with no gloriousness of luster. Therefore he shines and is despised, who, while he glows with virtue, is accounted vile. Hence it is that his own father looked down upon holy David, when he refused to present him to the eyes of the Prophet Samuel, He, when he had brought cut seven sons to receive the grace of anointing, being questioned by the Prophet whether he had gone through the whole number of his children, answered with despair enough, *There remaineth yet a little boy that keepeth the sheep*; and when he was brought forward and chosen, he heard the words, *Man looketh in the face, but the Lord searcheth the heart*. [1 Sam. 16, 10. &c.] Thus David was a lamp by his innocency, but yet a lamp greatly despised, in that he gave no light to those that regard the outside appearance. But be it known that every righteous man is either without temporal glory, or if he has it, he breaks it beneath himself, that he may freely rise on high above his own honour, lest overcome by enjoyment he be brought down beneath it. It is hence that that illustrious Preacher lowered the glory of his Apostleship before the eyes of men, saying, *We have not used this power, when we might have been burthensome as the Apostles of Christ, but we made ourselves little children among you*. [1 Thess. 2, 6. 7.] But the swelling of the neck still remained in the heart of the hearers of that same person, when they said, *For his letters say they are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible*. [2 Cor. 10, 10] For him who they knew could say such things they determined could not live in common with themselves, and when they both saw him lowly in his mode of life and high in his tone of speech, their pride drove them on, that him whose writings had made him to be feared, his words in presence should make an object of little account. What then was Paul, saving ‘a lamp despised in the thought of the rich,’ who by the same act whereby he set forth a lesson of humility, got the affronts of highmindedness from ill-instructed disciples. For in a dreadful way, the sickness of those so filled with pride was increased by the same means, whereby it ought to have subsided; while the proud mind of carnal persons rejected, as if it were worthy of scorn that which their master set forth as deserving of imitation. Was not he ‘a lamp despised,’ who when he shone forth with so many virtues, underwent such adverse treatment at the hands of his persecutors? He discharges his mission in chains, and his bonds are made known in all the palace, he is beaten with rods, he is beset with numberless dangers from his own race and from the Gentiles; at Lystra he is battered with stones, he is dragged by the feet without the city, in that he is taken for dead. But to what point is this ‘lamp despised?’ Up to what point is it held contemptible? Does it never at any point unveil its lustre? Does it never shew, with what excess of brightness it glows? It does shew clearly. For when it is said that the ‘lamp is despised in the thought of the rich,’ it is therefore added,

*Prepared for an appointed time.*

52. For the 'appointed time' for 'the despised lamp' is the predestined Day of final Judgment, wherein it is shewn how each one of the righteous, who is now contemned, shines bright in greatness of power. For then they come as judges with God, who now are judged unjustly for God's sake. Then their Light shines over so much the wider space, the more cruelly the persecutor's hand confines and fetters them now. Then it will be made clear to the eyes of the wicked, that they were supported by heavenly power, who forsook all earthly things of their free will. Whence Truth saith to His own Elect; *Ye which have followed Me, in the Regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* [Mat. 19, 28] Not that the court of the interior Assize will have no more than twelve judges, but, surely, that by the number twelve the amount of the whole is described; for whosoever being urged by the incitement of divine love, has forsaken all that he possessed here, shall doubtless attain there to the height of judicial power; that he may then come as judge in company with the Judge, who now by consideration of the Judgment chastens himself with voluntary poverty. For hence it is that it is said by Solomon concerning the spouse of Holy Church, *Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.* [Prov. 31, 23] Hence Isaiah says, *The Lord will come to judgment, with the elders of His people.* [Is. 3, 14] Hence Truth proclaims these same Elders now no longer servants but friends. *Henceforth I call you not servants, but I have called you friends.* [John 15, 15] And the Psalmist regarding these same saith, *Honourable also are thy friends unto me, O God.* [Ps. 139, 17] And whilst he beheld their loftiness of mind, and how they trod down with the heel of the foot the glory of the world, he thereupon added, *How stablished is their rule!* And that we might not think that they be few, who we learn thus advance even to the summit of such high perfection, he thereupon added, *If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.* For as many persons, then, as now wittingly abase themselves for the love of the Truth, so many lamps shall then blaze forth in the Judgment. Therefore let it be justly said, *A lamp despised in the thought of the rich, prepared for the appointed time;* for the soul of every righteous man is despised as abject, when in passing through life he is without glory; but he is beheld as an object to admire, when he shines from on high.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

53. Amid these things it is good to lift the eye of the mind to the paths of our Redeemer, and to proceed step by step from the members to the head. For He did Himself prove truly 'a lamp' to us, Who by dying upon the Cross for our redemption, poured light through the wood into our benighted minds. John had attained to see that we are lightened by this Lamp, when he said, *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* [John 1, 9] Yet he saw it 'despised in the thought of the rich,' when he soon after brought in, *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.* [ver. 11] Herod desired to examine into the flames of this Lamp, when he longed to see the miracles of that One, as it is written, *For he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him, and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by Him.* [Luke 23, 8] But this Lamp did not shine forth before his eyes with a single ray of light, in that to him, who sought Him not from piety but from curiosity, He exhibited nothing wonderful concerning Himself. For our Redeemer when He was questioned held His peace, when He was looked for, He scorned to shew forth His miracles, and keeping Himself to Himself in secret, those whom He found looking for outward things He left in their ingratitude without, rather choosing to be openly despised by those who were led by pride, than to be commended with empty voice by those that did not believe. And hence this 'Lamp' is straightway 'despised,' according to what is

there added, *And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe.* [Luke 23, 11]

54. Yet the ‘despised lamp,’ which is subject to scoffings on earth, flashes judgment from heaven. Hence it is justly added here, *prepared for an appointed season.* Concerning which same season He saith by the Psalmist, *When I shall receive the time, I will judge uprightly.* [Ps. 75, 2] Hence in the Gospel ‘Truth’ declareth, saying, *My time is not yet come.* [John 7, 6] Hence Peter saith, *Whom the heaven must receive until the times of the restitution of all things.* [Acts 3, 21] Therefore the ‘Lamp’ which is now ‘despised’ is ‘prepared’ for its coming ‘at the appointed season.’ For He by Himself judgeth sin on the last Day, Who now bears with the scoffs of sinners, and then He brings out severity the more rigorously, the more mildly He now spreads low His patience in calling sinners. For he that awaits long while for some to be converted, if they be not converted, torments them without revoke. Which same truth he conveys by the Prophet in few words, saying, *I have long time holden my peace, I have been still and refrained myself; now will I cry like a travailing woman.* [Is. 42, 14] For as we have already before said, a woman in travail with pain gives forth that which she bore for long in her inner parts, He then that for long time held his peace, ‘crieth like a travailing woman,’ in that the Judge that shall come, who for long bore with the deeds of men without taking vengeance, sooner or later brings to light with hotness of examination, as if with pain of mind, the sentence of direful visiting which He kept within. Therefore let none despise this Lamp, when it is out of sight, lest He burn up His despisers when He shineth from heaven. For to whomsoever He does not now burn to give pardon, He shall then assuredly burn to award punishment. Therefore because by grace from above we are vouchsafed the season of our calling, whilst there is still the room left, let us by altering our ways for the better flee from the wrath of Him, Who is every where present. For him alone that visitation fails to find, whom correction keeps in hiding.

55. Let it suffice for us by the Lord's bounty to have now run through these particulars in two volumes [*corporibus*]. For because we cannot embrace in a brief exposition the following parts of the sacred book, drawn out in the stream of mysteries, we must of necessity reserve them for other sheets, that the reader may return the more ardent to the task of reading, in proportion as he has breathing given him by the interruption of what is read.

### PART III.

### BOOK XI.

In which the twelfth chapter, from the sixth verse, the thirteenth, and the first four verses of the fourteenth, are explained, a different style being adopted for the time.

[i] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. THOUGH in a long work variableness of style ought not to be a matter of blame, yet lest any should censure me for change in my way of expressing myself, in the Epistle which was prefixed to these books, I gave the reasons 1 why I never brought the third part of this Work up to a likeness and accordance with the others by amending it. And while these are omitted, there is this added

further, that the interpretation of this same part begins from the verse in which it is said, *The tabernacles of robbers have plenty, &c.* and reaches down in the handling thereof to that which is written, *Their sweetness shall be through the worm, &c.* which in fact includes so much, that it is impossible all should be comprised in one volume, except it be reduced to great brevity; and so let anyone that is free from other employments read the other parts that are given in a multiplied form, but for him, who has no time to read with diligent application, the shortness of this part may be to his mind, wherein we do not so much deliver what we have in our mind, as mark what there is to deliver. Therefore, whereas I have herein left many things such as they were received from me by word of mouth, take kindly, reader, this change of style, in that to people eating often the same meats, a difference in the mode of cooking is acceptable. But as you take the several parts to read, make it your business ever to recall to mind that original of the case which I have set forth; how that both by blessed Job, who is called ‘Grieving,’ are denoted the sufferings of our Lord and of His Body, i.e. the holy Church, and that his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who, as we have often said already, whilst they strive to defend, only offend God; and these, whilst they falsely abet, forcibly wound the souls of Saints. Yet not that in all which they say they are void of understanding in knowledge of the truth, but for the most part they blend what is wise with what is foolish, and the true with the false; that while they first propose somewhat on the side of truth, they may easily draw aside into falsehood. And hence too, what the friends of blessed Job utter is one while worthy of contempt, and at another time deserves admiration, which same the holy man whilst sometimes discarding he condemns it, sometimes approving admits, and turns to the account of righteousness even the very things, which, though right, are not by them rightly delivered; and so he scorns them, when they scorn his destitution, and, placed upon a dunghill in the body, he shews on how high a summit of virtue he is seated within, when he records that this life’s riches are nought, which he describes to be abundantly bestowed even on the sons of perdition, saying; Ver. 6. *The tabernacles of robbers have plenty, and they provoke God with boldness; when He hath given all into their hand.*

[ii]

2. It is easy for a man, at the time, to despise riches, when he has them, but it is hard to hold them worthless, when he lacks them. Hence it is clearly shewn, how great a contempt of earthly things was lodged in the breast of blessed Job, who then declares that all is nought which the lost enjoy in plenty, at the time when he had lost every thing. Thus he says, *The tabernacles of robbers have plenty, and they provoke God with boldness;* for it very commonly happens that bad men set themselves up the more against God, even the more they are enriched by His bounty contrary to their desert, and they that ought to be impelled by good gifts to better conduct, are rendered worse men by the blessings.

3. But we have to make out how they are called ‘robbers,’ whereas it is thereupon added, *When He hath given all into their hands.* For if they are robbers, then they took by force, and there is no doubt that God is no abettor of those that use force. In what sense then does He Himself bestow what they that are robbers carry off by wicked means? We are to know then that what Almighty God in His mercy vouchsafes is one thing, and another thing what in His wrath He suffers men to have; for that which robbers do contrary to right the Equal Dispenser no otherwise than justly permits to be done by them, that both the man who is let to rob being blinded in mind may increase his guilt, and that he who suffers from his robbing, may now in the mischief thereof be chastised

for some sin, which he had been guilty of before. For look, a man taking post in the pass of a mountain lies in wait for travellers passing by; now he that is taking his journey perchance has done some wickedness at one time or another, and Almighty God requiting him his evil-doing in the present life, and giving him into the hands of the lier-in-wait, suffers him either to be spoiled of his goods, or even to be killed. And so what the robber unjustly aimed at, the same the Equitable Judge justly permitted to be done, that both the one might be repaid what he had done contrary to justice, and the other might one time or another receive the worse chastisement, by whose voluntary deed of atrocity Almighty God brought just vengeance for sin upon the head of another. He is cleansed that suffers the wrong: in the case of him that does the wrong guilt is accumulated; that either from the very depth of wickedness he may one day be brought back to repentance, or else be visited with eternal damnation, aggravated in proportion as he was borne with for long in his sin. With the first He deals in mercy that he may bring his sins to an end, with the other in severity that he may greatly add thereto, unless he betake himself to repentance; in the one evil deeds are wiped away while he suffers violence, in the other they are accumulated while he offers it. Therefore it is meet and right that Almighty God suffer that to be done which He forbids to be done, that by the very same act, whereby He now awaits and bears with the unconverted for long, He may one day smite them the worse. Therefore it is rightly said, *The tabernacles of robbers are in plenty, and they provoke God with boldness; when He giveth all into their hand;* for what the wicked take away, He does Himself give them, Who might have withstood them in their rapine, if He had been minded to pity them.

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

4. Yet this may likewise be understood of spiritual things. For it very often happens that some have gifts of teaching vouchsafed them, yet they are swoln with the same, and have a desire to appear great by comparison with others. And to 'provoke' Almighty God is to be lifted up amongst our neighbours on the score of His gifts. Which same also are not unjustly called 'robbers,' in that whilst they speak what they never do, they take away the words of the righteous to serve the turn of their own speech. But because those very words heavenly Grace vouchsafes to some persons, whose lives notwithstanding it leaves in a course of wickedness, in themselves they are 'robbers;' but yet the good that is theirs they have gotten from above. It goes on;  
*Ver. 7, 8. But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee. Or speak to the earth, and it shall answer thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.*

[iii]

5. What are we to understand by 'the beasts,' but men of slow parts; and what by 'the fowls of the air,' but those that are skilled in high and sublime truths? For of 'the beasts,' i.e. the dull of sense, it is written; *Thine animals [V. so] shall dwell therein.* [Ps. 68, 10] And forasmuch as those, who have minds for sublime themes, soar among the words of the Redeemer, it is written, *So that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.* [Matt. 13, 32] And what by 'the earth,' saving men whose taste is for earthly things? Hence too it is said to the first man on his forsaking the things of heaven, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* [Gen. 3, 19] What are we to understand by 'the fishes of the sea,' but the inquisitive ones of this world, concerning whom the Psalmist saith, *The fish of the sea, that pass through the paths of the seas.* [Ps. 8, 8] Which same



busy themselves in large researches into things, as it were in undiscoverable floods. Now what all these teach upon being so interrogated, he adds, saying,

Ver. 9. *Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?*

[iv]

6. As if he said in plain terms; ‘Whether you ask the dull of understanding, or persons full of the loftiest subjects, or those devoted to earthly ways, or the men busied with investigations that belong to this world, all of them acknowledge God to be the Creator of all things, and with one consent agree about His Power, though they do not with one consent live in submission to it. For that which the righteous man speaks by his way of living too, that the unrighteous man generally is constrained to own concerning God by his voice alone, if not otherwise; and it comes to pass that evil-doers, by attesting Him, do homage to the Creator of all things, Whom by their deeds they rebel against, in that Him, Whom they have dared to fight against by their lives, they cannot deny to be the Creator of all things.

#### [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

Yet this same may also be understood to good purpose after the mere form of the letter alone; in that every creature, when it is looked at, as it were utters a voice of its own, bearing witness by that mere form which it has. We ask ‘the beasts,’ or ‘the fowls of the air,’ ‘the earth,’ or ‘the fish,’ whilst we view them, and these answer us with one accord, that ‘the Hand of the Lord hath wrought all things,’ in that whilst they present their lineaments to our eyes, they bear witness that they are not from themselves. For by the mere circumstance that they are created, by the figure they present, they render as it were the voice of confession to their Creator, Who, as He created all things, likewise ordained how they should be conducted. Hence it is added,

Ver.10. *In Whose Hand is the soul of every living thing, and the spirit of all flesh of man.*

[v]

7. For by the ‘Hand’ Power is denoted. Thus ‘the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind,’ is in the Power of Him, from Whom it has its being, that He Himself should appoint in what condition it should be, Who vouchsafed that to be, which was not. But by ‘the soul of every living thing’ may be denoted the life of beasts. Now Almighty God quickens the soul of beasts to the extent of the corporeal senses, but man’s spirit He draws out to a spiritual understanding; and thus ‘in His Hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all flesh of men,’ in that both the one, He bestows this power on the soul that it should give life to the flesh, and in the other He quickens the soul to this degree, that it should attain to the understanding of eternity. But we are to bear in mind that in Holy Writ ‘the spirit of man’ is wont to be put in two ways. For sometimes ‘the spirit’ is put for the soul, sometimes for spiritual agency. Thus ‘the spirit’ is put for the soul, as it is written of our own Head Himself, *And He bowed His Head, and gave up His Spirit* [*spiritum*, Vulg.]. [John 19, 30] For if the Evangelist had called any thing else ‘the spirit’ saving the soul, then surely upon that spirit departing, the soul would have remained. Moreover, the term ‘spirit’ is used for spiritual agency, as where it is written, *Who maketh His Angels spirits, His Ministers a flaming fire*. [Ps. 104, 4] For Preachers are occasionally called ‘Angels,’ i.e. ‘bearers of tidings,’ in Holy Writ, as where it is said by the Prophet, *The priest’s lips keep knowledge, and they*

*seek the law from his mouth: for he is the Angel [V. Angelus] of the Lord of Hosts.* [Mal. 2, 7] Thus Almighty God 'maketh His Angels spirits,' in that He changeth His Preachers into spiritual men. But in this passage, if by 'the soul of every living thing,' the mere life of the body is denoted, by the 'spirit of all flesh of man,' there is set forth the agency of a spiritual understanding. It goes on; Ver. 11. *The ear trieth words, and the mouth of the eater savour.*

[vi]

8. There is scarce a person that is ignorant that the five senses of our body, viz. of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, in all their operations of perceiving and discriminating derive the power of perception and discrimination from the brain. And whereas there is but one judge that presides within, viz. the percipient faculty of the brain, yet by their proper passages he keeps five senses distinct, God causing great marvels, so that neither the eye should hear, nor the ear see, the mouth take in scent, the nose taste, nor the hands smell; and whereas all things are determined by the one faculty of the brain. Yet no one of the senses can do aught but what it received by the Creator's appointment. And so by these corporeal and external arrangements we are left to gather the interior and spiritual ones; so that by that which is open to the eye in us, we ought to pass on to the secret thing that is in us, and escapes our eyes. For we are to observe, that whereas there is one Wisdom, it dwells in one man less, in another more. To one it gives this function, to another that; and in the manner of the brain, it uses ourselves like so many senses, that though in itself it bears no dissimilitude to itself, yet by us it is ever working different and dissimilar operations, so as for this man to receive the gift of wisdom, and that the gift of knowledge; one to have kinds of tongues, and another the grace of healing.

9. But in these words wherein blessed Job saith, *The ear trieth words, and the mouth of the eater savour*, he seems likewise to imply something about the Elect and the damned; for the words of wisdom, which the children of perdition hear, the Elect not only hear but taste too, that that should have a savour for them in the heart, which conveys no sound to the minds of the damned, but only to their ears. For it is one thing to hear food named only, and another thing to taste of it also; then the Elect so hear of the meat of wisdom, that they taste of it, in that what they hear is full of relish to them in their very marrow [*medulitus*] from love; but the knowledge of the reprobate extends only to the cognizance of the sound, so that they hear indeed of virtues, but yet from coldness of heart they know nothing what a relish they have. By which same words blessed Job condemns the inexperience of his friends, and the presumption of all that are puffed up for their learning in wisdom, in that it is one thing to know somewhat concerning God, and another to taste with the mouth of understanding the thing that is known. Therefore it is well said, *Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth of the eater savour?* As if it were said to the presumptuous in plain words, 'The words of instruction, which came to you only so far as to the ear, to me touch the mouth of understanding likewise in the inward savour.' But because a weak age, even when it hath a right sense, should not spring forth with incautious haste to preach, it is rightly added; Ver. 12. *With the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding.*

[vii]

10. For these sayings are set fast in the root of wisdom, which by continuance in living, are also made strong by the practice of deeds. But because there are many to whom at once longer life is

given, and yet no grace of wisdom vouchsafed, it is further shewn with propriety on whose decision the gifts themselves depend, whilst it is added;

Ver. 13. *With Him is wisdom and strength: He hath counsel and understanding.*

[viii]

11. We not unfitly interpret these words of the Only begotten Son of the Supreme Father, so as to understand Him to be Himself 'the Wisdom and Strength of God.' For Paul also bears testimony to our interpretation, in the words, *Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.* [1 Cor. 1, 24] Who is ever 'with Him,' in that, *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* [John 1, 1] But God 'hath counsel and understanding;' 'counsel,' in that He orders His own matters, 'understanding,' in that He knows ours. By the naming of 'counsel' may also be denoted the mere delay of secret judgment alone, as that He is sometimes slow in striking offenders, not because the sin of bad men is not seen, but that their sentence of condemnation, which is delayed for the practising of penance, may seem as if out of counsel slow to issue forth. And so what the public declaration one day reveals without, that lay hid with the Almighty Lord in counsel before the world began. It proceeds;

Ver. 14. *If He break down, there is none that can build again: if He shut up a man, there is none that can open.*

[ix]

12. Almighty God 'breaks down' the heart of man, when He forsakes it; He 'builds it up,' when He fills it. For He does not destroy man's soul by consummation of war, but by withdrawing Himself from it; in that when it is left to itself, it wants nothing to its own ruin. Whence it commonly happens, that when the heart of the hearer, in due of his sins, is not filled with Almighty God's grace, it is in vain that he is outwardly admonished by the preacher. For every mouth that speaks is but mute, if He does not utter a voice in the heart within, Who inspires the words that are admitted into the ears. Hence the Prophet saith, *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* [Ps 127, 1] Hence Solomon saith, *Consider the work of God; for who can set him right whom He hath despised?* [Eccles. 7, 13] Nor is it strange, if the preacher is not attended to by the reprobate soul, since it sometimes happens that the Lord Himself, in the things which He speaks, is withstood by the tempers of those that withstand Him. For hence it is that Cain could be admonished even by the voice of God, yet could not be changed, because as due to the sin of his evil heart, within God had already forsaken the soul, to which outwardly He addressed words to serve for a testimony. And it is well added, *If He shut up a man, there is none that can open;* in that every man, whereinsoever he does wrong, what else does he but make for himself a prison-house of his own conscience, that guiltiness of soul may oppress him even though no man accuse him without? And when by the judgment of God he is left in the blindness of his evil heart, he is as it were shut up within himself, that he may never find a place of escape, which he never deserves to find. For it often happens that there are persons who long to quit their bad practices, but because they are weighed to the ground by the burthen of them, being shut up in the prison-house of bad habit, they are unable to go forth of themselves. And there are some that anxiously desiring to visit their own offences with punishment, turn into worse offences what they reckon themselves to be doing aright; and it is brought to pass in a lamentable way, that what they take for their going out they find to be their imprisoning. Thus the reprobate Judas, when he inflicted death upon himself

to spite sin, was brought to the punishment of eternal death, and repented of sin in a more heinous way than he had committed sin.

13. Therefore let it be said, *If He shutteth up a man, there is none that can open.* For as no man withstands His bountifulness in calling, so no one withstands His justice in forsaking; and so for God to 'shut up' is, not to open to those that are shut up; and hence it is said to Moses concerning Pharaoh, *I will harden his heart.* [Gen. 27, 5] For God is said to harden the heart in executing justice, when He does not soften the reprobate heart in bestowing grace. And so He 'shuts up' the man, whom He leaves in the darkness of his own practices. For Isaac desired to open this shutting up to his first-born son, when he endeavoured to set him before his brother in blessing him. But the son whom the father desired, the Lord rejected; and him, whom the Lord desired, the father blessed even against his will; that he, who had sold his birthright to his brother for a meal, might not get the blessing of the first-born, which he had relinquished through a gluttonous appetite; who, whilst that aiming at earthly objects, following after transitory things, he desired to inherit the blessing, was rejected. For *he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears* [Heb. 12, 17]; for tears have no fruit, which are spent on regretting with sighs things destined to perish. And so Isaac could not open even to his son, whom Almighty God by a just judgment shut up in the prison-house of his evil heart. It proceeds;

Ver. 15. *If He withholdeth the waters, all things are dried up. If He sendeth them out, they will overturn the earth.*

[x]

14. If 'water' be understood of knowledge for preaching, as when it is written, *The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as an overflowing brook* [Prov. 18, 4]; when 'water is withheld, all is dried up,' in that if the knowledge of the preacher is withdrawn, the hearts of those that might have flourished in eternal hope, are forthwith 'dried up,' that they should remain in hopeless barrenness, whilst, in love with transitory things, they care not to look for those which shall abide. But if by the term of 'water' the grace of the Holy Spirit is denoted, as it is said by the voice of truth in the Gospel, *He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* [John 7, 38]; in which place the Evangelist immediately added, *But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should receive*; a suitable sense is laid open in these words wherein he saith, *Behold He withholdeth the waters, and all things are dried up*; in that if the grace of the Holy Spirit be withdrawn from the hearer's mind, the sense is at once 'dried up,' which already through hope seemed to be green in the hearer. But forasmuch as he does not mention 'water' but 'waters,' by the plural designation, he refers to the sevenfold grace of spiritual gifts, inasmuch as everyone is filled, so to speak, with as many waters as he is replenished with gifts, of which it is fitly added,

*Also if He sendeth them out, they will overturn the earth.*

15. For what is 'the earth' taken for, but the sinner, to whom it is said in sentence, *Dust* [Lat. *Terra*] *thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?* Thus the earth remains immoveable when the sinner scorns to obey the precepts of the Lord, when he erects the neck of pride, and shuts the mind's eyes to the light of truth. But whereas it is written, *His feet stood, and the earth was moved* [Hab. 3, 6. see lxx]; in that when Truth is rooted in the heart, the immoveableness of the mind is stirred; if the grace of the Holy Spirit, by bestowal from above, is infused according to the voice of

the preacher, instantly the earth is ‘overturned,’ in that the obduracy of the guilty soul is changed from the stubbornness of its immobility, that it should afterwards bow down itself in weeping to the precepts of the Lord, as much as it afore time erected the neck in swelling high against the Lord. For you may see that the earth of the human heart, when the water of God’s blessing is poured upon it, afterwards gladly bears injuries, which before it outrageously inflicted; afterwards even gives its own, whereas before it even laid hands on the things of others; afterwards tortures the flesh by practising abstinence, whereas before, in the plenishing of the flesh, it let itself loose in the deadly gratifications of gross sensualities; afterwards loves its very persecutors, whereas before it refused to love even those that loved itself. When, then, the human soul watered by God’s bounty begins to act contrary to what was its wont, ‘the earth is overturned,’ in that the part is put down, which before reared itself on high, and the face is lifted upwards, which was before weighed down deeply below.

16. It seems well in illustration of this point to bring forward Paul as one among many. Who when he was on his way to Damascus armed with letters against Christ [Acts 9, 1], being on his journey watered with the grace of the Holy Spirit, was changed on the spot from that bloodthirsty purpose which he had, and afterwards received those strokes in Christ’s behalf, which he was journeying with the intention of inflicting upon Christians; and he who before, when living after the flesh, strove to deliver the Saints of the Lord over to death, is afterwards rejoiced to offer the sacrifice of his flesh for the life of the Saints. Those cold-blooded purposes of cruelty are turned into the warmth of pity; and he that aforetime was a blasphemer and a persecutor, afterwards becomes a humble and compassionate preacher. [1 Tim. 1, 13] He, who accounted it great gain to him to slay Christ in His Disciples [Acts 9, 1], now holds ‘Christ to be his life, and to die gain;’ [Phil. 1, 21] and so when He ‘sendeth out the waters, the earth is overturned,’ in that the mind of Paul, the moment he received the grace of the Holy Spirit, altered the fixture of his stubbornness and cruelty. Contrary to which the Lord utters the complaint against Ephraim, by the Prophet, saying, *Ephraim is a cake under the ashes* [V. so] *not turned*. [Hos. 7, 8] For a cake under the ashes, that hath ashes upon it, lays the cleaner side flat to the ground, and has the upper side the fouler, in proportion as it carries the ashes upon it. And so with the mind that harbours earthly thoughts, what else does it carry upon itself but a load of ashes? But if it will be ‘turned,’ the clean surface, which it had kept downwards, it brings back to the top, when it has shaken off the ashes that it had upon it. If therefore we shake off from the mind the ashes of earthly thoughts, as it were we ‘turn the cake under the ashes,’ that that bent of our mind may henceforth go to the rear, which the ashes of grovelling thought before overlaid, and the clean face come to the top, that our right bent of mind may not henceforth be surcharged with the weight of earthly desire. Which we can never do, except we be bedewed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, in that when Almighty God ‘sendeth out the waters, they will overturn the earth.’ It proceeds;  
Ver. 16. *With Him is strength and wisdom*.

[xi]

17. A little above it had been said, *With Him is wisdom and strength*; but now it is said, *With Him is strength and wisdom*. For because Almighty God, when in the mystery of pitifulness He was made Man, first gave the lesson of mildness, and afterwards at the Judgment He shews what strength He is of; it is rightly done that in the place above Wisdom is mentioned before Strength, when the thing is spoken of the Only Begotten Son of the Father, With Him is Wisdom and

Strength. But forasmuch as when He cometh to judge, He will appear in the terribleness of His power, and the damned being cast off, will manifest to His Elect in His everlasting kingdom, how He is 'the Wisdom' of the Father, it is lightly said in the subsequent sentence, that with Him is first 'strength' and then 'wisdom.' Thus in the first words wherein he saith, *With Him is wisdom and strength*; he plainly shews, that what He taught in mildness how to believe, in the power of the Judgment He will exhibit in terribleness. But in the subsequent words, wherein He saith, *With Him is strength and wisdom*; He makes it clearer than the day, that He first destroys reprobate men in the Judgment by dint of power, and afterwards shines into the souls of the Elect with the perfect light of the eternal kingdom. But because before the day of final Judgment, He never ceases daily to judge the deeds of mortal men by His secret awards, He comes back to that which is done in this present time, where it is added;

Ver. 16, 17. *He knoweth both the deceiver and deceived, He bringeth counsellors to a foolish end, and the judges to dulness.*

[xii]

18. Whereas every man that strives to deceive his neighbour is wicked, and 'Truth' saith to the wicked, *I never knew you, depart from Me ye that work iniquity* [Matt. 7, 23]; in what sense is it said here, that 'the Lord knoweth the deceiver?' But forasmuch as God's 'knowing' sometimes means His taking cognizance, sometimes His approving, He at once knows a wicked man, in that in taking cognizance He judges him, (for He would never judge any wicked man, if He did not take cognizance of him,) and yet He does not know a wicked person, in that He does not approve his doings. And so He both knows him, in that He finds him out, and knows him not, in that He doth not acknowledge him in a likeness to His own Wisdom. As it is said of any truthful man, that he does not know falsehood, not because, when any thing false is said even by others, he is too blind to find fault with it, but this very falsehood he at once knows in the tracing out, and knows not in the affection of the heart, so as not to do that himself, which he condemns the doing of in others. And it may often happen that persons, busy in artful contrivances, spread the nets of their wickedness for another's life, and when he, in ignorance of it, is seen to be taken by the snares, perchance it is questioned whether such things are seen from above, and men wonder, why it is, if God does see them, that He suffers them to be done. *But He knoweth the deceiver and the deceived.* For 'He knoweth the deceiver,' in that generally He sees former sins of his, and by a just judgment suffers him to fall into others also. 'He knoweth the deceiver,' in that, left in the hand of his own doings, He forsaketh him, that he may be precipitated into worse ones, as it is written, *He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he that is filthy let him, be filthy* [Lat. *grow filthy*] *still.* [Rev. 22, 11] Moreover 'He knoweth the deceived' too, in that men often do evil things that they know; and therefore they are suffered to be 'deceived,' so as further to fall into evil things which they know not. However, this is used to be done to the deceived sometimes for their purifying, sometimes as the beginning of vengeance.

19. He bringeth counsellors also to a foolish end, when they do any thing good even, with no good purpose, but are going after the recompensing of a temporary reward. For, if the Only-begotten Son of the Most High Father, because hereby, that He was made Man, He preached eternal truths, is therefore called the *Angel of great counsel*, we rightly interpret 'the counsellors,' those preachers, who furnish the 'counsel' of life to their hearers. But when any preacher preaches the truths of eternity for this, that he may acquire temporal gains, assuredly he is 'brought to a foolish

end,' in that he is aiming to reach that point by laborious effort, whence he ought to have fled in uprightness of mind.

20. And it is rightly added, *And the judges to dulness*. For all that are set over the examination of other men's conduct, are rightly called 'judges;' but when he that has this oversight does not diligently examine the lives of those under his authority, nor acquaint himself whom he should correct, and how, 'the judge is brought to dulness,' in that he, who should have judged things that were ill done, never finds out those things which are to be judged. It proceeds;

Ver. 18. *He looseth the belt of kings, and girdeth their reins with a cord.*

[xiii]

21. They that know how to regulate aright the motions of their members, are not unjustly called 'kings.' But when the mind is touched with pride on the grounds of that very continence, it very often happens that Almighty God, deserting its pride, suffers it to fall into uncleanness of practice. And so 'He looseth the belt of kings,' when in the case of those who seemed to regulate their members aright, on account of the sin of pride he undoes the girdle of chastity. Now what is meant by 'a cord,' but sin? As Solomon says, *His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins*. [Prov. 5, 22] And because fleshly gratification has its dominion in the 'reins,' the strict Judge of the conscience, Who 'looseth the belt of kings,' 'girdeth their reins with a cord,' that, when the girdle of chastity is undone, then the gratification of sin should have dominion over their members, so that those whom pride pollutes in secret, He may shew even publicly to be as abominable as they are. It goes on,

Ver. 19. *He leadeth the priests inglorious, and overthroweth the mighty.*

[xiv]

22. The great glory of the priest is the righteousness of those that are subject to him. Whence the excellent preacher saith well to his disciples; *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord?* [1 Thess. 2, 19] But when the priests neglect the lives of their charge, and bring no fruit from their advancement before the presence of the Lord, what else is this but that they are called [b] 'inglorious?' Since before the strict Judge they do not then find glory, who do not now seek it out in the lives of those subject to their charge by urgency in preaching. And it is well said, *And overthroweth the mighty*. In that, when, by a righteous judgment, He forsakes the heart of those that rule, it does not look for the inward recompensing of the reward, and it is overthrown in that whereby it is deceived, so as to rejoice in temporal superiority instead of eternal glory. Therefore 'the mighty are overthrown,' in that while they lose sight of the real rewards of the heavenly country, they are brought to the ground here in their own pleasures. It goes on,

Ver. 20. *Who changeth the lip of the truthful, and taketh away the instruction of the aged.*

[xv]

23. When the priest does not do the good that he tells, even the very word of his lips is withdrawn from him, that he may not dare to speak what he does not practise; as where it is said by the Prophet, *But unto the wicked God saith, 'What hast thou to do, to declare My statutes, or that thou*

*takest My covenant in thy mouth?* [Ps. 50, 16] Whence also he beseeches, saying, *And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth.* [Ps. 119, 43] For he reflects that Almighty God gives the word of truth to those that do it, and takes it away from those that do it not. He then that prayed that he might not have it 'taken out of his mouth,' what did he else than pray for the grace of good practice? As if he said in plain words, 'Let me not go astray from good works, lest, while I lose the regularity of good living, I also part with the right rule of speaking.' And for the most part the teacher, who ventures to teach what he neglects to practise, when he ceases to speak the good which he scorned to do, begins to teach his charge the evil things that he does, that, by the righteous judgment of the Almighty, that man may not henceforth have a tongue for a good theme, who will not have a good life; so that whilst his mind is inflamed with the love of earthly things, he should be ever speaking of earthly things. Whence 'Truth' saith in the Gospel, *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.* [Matt. 12, 34. 35.] Hence also John saith, *They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world.* [1John 4, 5] Therefore it is well said, *Who changeth the lip of the truthful, and taketh away the instruction of the aged.* In that while they, who were aforetime 'truthful' in preaching heavenly things, setting their affections on those of time, are sunk down to the same, 'the lip of the truthful is changed, and the instruction of the aged taken away;' in that being in love with temporal things, they never follow the precepts of their predecessors, so as to be occupying the place of authority as if but for the fruit of pleasure, and for no good end of labour.

#### [PROPHETIC INTERPRETATION]

24. Which nevertheless may be understood more plainly of the Jews, who before the Lord's Incarnation were 'truthful,' in that they believed that He was to come, and proclaimed the same; but when He appeared in the flesh, they denied that it was He. Therefore 'the lip of the truthful was changed,' in that Him, of Whom they had told that He was about to come, they denied when present; 'and the instruction of the aged was taken away,' in that they never followed in believing the things, which they remembered their fathers to have foretold. Whence too at the coming of Elijah it is promised, that he shall 'turn the hearts of the children to their fathers;' that 'the instruction of the aged,' which is now 'taken away' from the heart of the Jews, upon the Lord taking compassion on them, may then be brought back, when the children begin to understand that concerning the Lord, which their fathers foretold. But if by 'the aged' we understand likewise those same Jews, who, by the persuasions of unbelief, set themselves to oppose the word of 'Truth,' then 'the instruction of the aged was taken away,' when the Church consisting of the Gentiles, being indeed young, received it, as she saith by the Psalmist, *I understand more than the ancients.* [Ps. 119, 100] And because she kept this same in practising it, in what way she came to understand more than the ancients, she makes plain, whereas she adds directly, *Because I keep thy precepts.* For whereas she aimed to fulfil in practising that thing which she learnt, it was vouchsafed her to understand what she might teach. Whence it is still further added with propriety, Ver.21. *He poureth contempt upon princes, and lifteth up those that were oppressed.*

25. For whilst the Jewish people continued in the precept of the Law, and the whole Gentile world knew nothing of the precepts of God, both the former seemed to be as 'Princes' by faith, and the latter lay borne down in the depth by unbelief. But when Judaea denied the mystery of our Lord's Incarnation, and the Gentile world believed it, both 'the princes' fell into contempt, and they that



had been borne down in the sin of unbelief, were 'lifted up' in the liberty of true faith. But Jeremiah seeing this fall of the Israelites long before, says, *The Lord is become as it were an enemy; He hath swallowed up Israel; He hath thrown down all his palaces; He hath destroyed his bulwarks.* [Lam. 2, 5] Now 'palaces' in cities are for ornaments, but the 'bulwarks' are for defence. And the gifts that keep us safe are one thing, those that ornament us are another. For prophetic teaching, different kinds of tongues, the power of working cures, are a kind of 'palaces' of the mind, which though a man have not, yet he is able to stand fast defended by faith and righteousness, though he does not shew himself at all adorned with the towering height of the gifts of virtue; but faith, hope, and charity, are not our 'palaces,' but our 'bulwarks,' which, if we neglect to possess ourselves of, we lie exposed to the snares of the enemy. In the case of Judaea, therefore, seeing that He took away from her prophecy, and teaching, and miraculous signs, 'He overthrows all her palaces.' And because, for her hardness of heart, He let faith, hope, and charity, be taken away from her, He was bent to 'destroy her bulwarks.' Now we have the right order observed, in that the 'palaces' first, and then the 'bulwarks,' are described as destroyed, because, when the sinful soul is forsaken, first the gifts of miraculous powers, which were given in manifestation of the Spirit, are destroyed, and afterwards the foundations of faith, hope, and charity. All which, being taken away from the unfaithful, the Lord bestowed upon the Gentile world, and by the things, which He took from the unbelievers, He adorned the believers' minds. Whence it is written, *And to divide the spoils of the beauty of the house.* [Ps. 68, 12] For when He took away from the Jews the spoils of the powers of virtue, He imparted the beauty of His gifts to the house of the heart of the Gentiles, which He deigned to dwell in by faith. Which same was brought to pass, when the words of God were on the one hand interpreted by the Jewish people after the mere 'letter,' which 'killeth,' and on the other, by the converted Gentiles penetrated in the 'spirit, which maketh alive.' [2 Cor. 3, 6] Whence it is directly added, Ver. 22. *Who discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.*

[xvii]

26. For when the several mystical truths are recognised in the secret words of the Prophets by them that believe, what else is it, than that 'deep things are discovered out of darkness?' Whence too 'Truth' Himself, speaking in parables to the disciples, saith, *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light.* [Matt. 10, 27] For when by explaining we unravel the mystical knots of allegories, then we as it were 'speak in light, what we have heard in darkness.' Now 'the shadow of death' was the hardness of the old Law, which made every one that sinned liable to be punished with the death of the body. But when our Redeemer tempered by mildness the harshness of the sanctions of the Law, nor any longer ordained death of the flesh to be inflicted for sin, but shewed how greatly the death of the spirit was to be dreaded, then, surely, 'He brought out to light the shadow of death.' For this death, wherein the flesh is severed from the soul, is a 'shadow' of that death, wherein the soul is severed from God, and so 'the shadow of death is brought out to light,' when, upon the death of the spirit being understood, the death of the body is no whit feared. Which may likewise be understood in another sense also.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

For those are not unjustly called ‘princes,’ who with great judiciousness of counsel rule the thoughts of their hearts at all times, and by the power of wisdom keep down all the motions of folly. But it very often happens that the mind is in secret lifted up on the grounds of its very wisdom to the topmost pitch of pride, and is brought to the ground under those evil habits, over which it was rejoicing to have gained the victory. Therefore it is well said, *He poureth contempt upon princes*. But because it sometimes happens that they who appear to lie prostrate in evil ways have recourse to tears of penitence, and gather themselves up against the sins, to which they were subjected, it is fitly added, *And lifteth up those that were oppressed*. For there are some, who, being enlightened by the gift from on high, see in what exceeding filthiness of their sinful doings they lie grovelling, wash with tears the stains of their misdeeds, and henceforth keep down beneath them the motions of the flesh, by which they were aforetime weighed to the ground.

27. Which same is brought to pass by the excellent disposal of Almighty God, that so in this life every thing should be accounted uncertain, and no man be set up for possessing chastity, seeing that *He poureth contempt upon princes*, and no man despair from his evil habits weighing him down, seeing that *He lifteth up those that were oppressed*. And because, when these things are done, there is brought forth out of the secret counsels of God an open sentence upon each individual, it is lightly subjoined, *And revealeth deep things out of darkness*.

28. For the Lord ‘revealeth deep things out of darkness,’ when He manifests an open sentence from His secret counsels, so as to shew what He thinks concerning each individual. For because now the Creator seeth all things, and Himself is not seen in His counsels, it is well said of Him by the Psalmist, *He made darkness His secret place*. [Ps. 18, 11] But it is as if He issued out from that darkness into light, when He shews what are His thoughts concerning the actions of each individual. And whereas when he, who was sunk down by the weight of his sins, is brought to the setting up of uprightness, he for the first time sees that very death, wherein he was going on ruining himself, and at the same time too blind to take account of it; it is lightly added, *And bringeth out to light the shadow of death*. For ‘the shadow of death’ is evil doing, which is drawn as if in bodily lineaments by a copy of our old enemy. Concerning whom too, in the character of a certain one, it is said, *And his name was Death*. [Rev. 6, 8] And it very often happens that his evil instigation escapes the minds of men, and by this circumstance, that it is not known, is the more successful. And so ‘the shadow of death is brought to light,’ in that the evil doing of our old enemy is revealed to the minds of the Saints that it may be made an end of. It goes on:

Ver. 23. *Who multiplieth the nations and destroyeth them, and them that are overturned He restoreth entire*.

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[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

29. We may understand it, viz. that ‘the Lord multiplieth the nations and destroyeth them,’ in this way, that day by day men are born destined to die, and that ‘them, that be overturned, He restoreth entire,’ in that they, who were dead, shall rise again; which however we shall interpret in a better sense, if we think how it is that this is done in their souls.

[PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

For ‘He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them,’ in that He both enlarges them by fruitfulness of offspring, and yet leaves them in their own infidelity; but ‘them, that were overturned, He restoreth entire,’ in that those, whom He had left in the downfall of infidelity, He one time or another reestablishes in the seat of faith. And these being restored in a whole state of mind, that ancient People, which seemed faithful to God, being reprobate was cast away in heart, so that, being deceived by its own misbelief, it should afterwards rise up against Him, Whom it had before preached. It goes on;

Ver. 24, 25. *Who changeth the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and deceiveth them, that they wander in vain where there is no way, they shall grope in the dark without any light, and He shall make them to stagger like a drunken man.*

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30. For ‘the heart of the chief of the earth was changed,’ when the chief priests and elders of the people in Judaea set themselves to withstand Him by their counsels, Whom they beforehand proclaimed, that He was to come. And when they strove to put out His Name by persecuting Him, being deceived by their own wickedness they vainly essayed to ‘wander where there is no way,’ because it was impossible that a ‘way’ could be open to their cruelty directed against the Creator of all things. They saw the miracles, they were made to fear by His power [c], *but refusing to believe, they still sought signs, whilst they said, what sign shewest Thou then, that we may see and believe Thee?* [John 6, 30] Therefore it is well said, *They grope in the dark without light?* For he that hesitates in the midst of so many manifest miracles, as it were ‘gropes in the dark,’ in that he sees not what he is touching. But every man that ‘staggers,’ is borne now hither, now thither: And because they were shewn at one time to believe, as when they said, *If this man were not of God He could do nothing* [John 9, 33], and at another time denied that He was from God, as when they said contemning Him, *Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?* [Matt. 13, 55. 56.] it is rightly added, *He maketh, them to stagger like a drunken man.* For they saw both that He raised the dead, and yet that He was a mortal being. Who would not believe that He was God, Whom they beheld raise the dead to life? But on the other hand, when they saw that He was mortal, they scorned to believe that He was immortal God, and so herein, viz. that Almighty God manifested Himself such to their eyes as to be both capable of exhibiting divine signs and of undergoing human sufferings, He ‘made them to stagger like drunken men,’ that their pride, which chose rather to spurn the mystery of the Incarnation, than to follow it, should at one and the same time lift itself up against His human nature, and wonder at the power of His Divine nature shining within. And because all these were made present to the eyes of blessed Job by the spirit of prophecy, it is rightly added;

Chap. xiii 1. *Lo, all!*

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[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

31. For what was to follow he saw as present in Him, Whom neither things future come to, nor things past go from; but all things are present at once and together before His eyes. And because the very things that were to come he saw were part in works and part in words, it is rightly said, *All this mine eye hath seen, mine ear hath heard.* But words are without use, if they lack the understanding of them. Whence it is fitly added, *And I have understood every whit.* For when any

thing is shewn or heard, if the understanding of it be not bestowed, it is little of a prophecy. Thus Pharaoh saw in a dream things that were to come upon Egypt, but, because he could not understand what he saw, he was no prophet. King Balthasar 'saw the fingers of the hand that wrote' upon the wall; but he was no prophet, because he did not attain to the understanding of that thing which he saw. Therefore, that blessed Job might testify that he had the spirit of prophecy, he declares not only that he had 'seen and heard,' but also that he had 'understood all this.' And that he is not elated on the grounds of such understanding, his words subjoined bear witness, when he says, Ver. 2. *What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior to you.*

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32. By which same words he made known what exceeding humility he had, who says that he was 'not inferior' to them, whose life by holy living he very far surpassed. For he makes good that 'what they knew he knew,' who by knowing the things of heaven transcended their earthly thoughts through the spirit of prophecy in addition. It goes on;

Ver 3. *Yet still I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.*

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33. We 'speak with the Almighty,' when we beseech His pity; but we 'reason with Him,' when uniting ourselves to His righteousness, we sift our actions with minute investigation. Or otherwise, to 'reason with God,' is for him who obeyed His commandments here, to come with Him hereafter as Judge to judge the people. As it is said to the Preachers that leave all things, *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* [Matt. 19, 28] Whence the Lord saith by Isaiah too, *Relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together.* [Is. 1, 17. 18.] For it is light that they should reason with God concerning their charges [d] in the Judgment, who, at the words of God, entirely give up the present world. Thus the 'speaking' has to do with prayer, and the 'reasoning' has to do with judgment, Therefore the holy man 'speaks' to the Almighty now, that he may 'reason' with the Almighty hereafter, in that He cometh with God afterwards as a judge, who here in this present time was familiar with Him in prayer. But Holy Church, whom we have already said that blessed Job bears the likeness of, not only then judges the wicked, when the day of final Judgment shall come, but even now doth not cease to judge all that either act wickedly, or think foolishly. And hence it is added;

Ver. 4. *First shewing that ye are builders of lies, and votaries of wrong doctrines.*

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34. By which same words it is clearly shewn that his friends as in the likeness of heretics oppose the decisions of the holy man's judgment. For it is clear that they do not hold the figure of Catholics, who are termed 'votaries of wrong doctrines.' Wherein this likewise ought to be marked, that they are called 'builders of lies.' For as an edifice is 'built' with stones, so a lie is 'built' with words. For when there is not deceitful speech, but a meaning of truth, it is like a fortified mound, arising not by fabrication, but by nature. It goes on,

Ver. 5. *O that ye would altogether hold your peace, and ye should be accounted wise!*

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35. As in a house, when the door is shut, it is not known what members there are hidden within, so, generally speaking, if a fool hold his peace, it is hidden whether he be wise or foolish, only, however, if no other works come to light, which may speak the mind even of one that is silent. For this reason the holy man, seeing that his friends were anxious to appear what they were not, charged them to hold their peace, that they might not appear what they were. And hence it is said by Solomon; *Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise.* [Prov. 17, 28] But because when a fool speaks, from this, that he brings in his own words, he is unable to reflect on the words of the wise, after he had bidden silence, he yet further adds lightly,  
Ver. 6. *Hear now my reproofs, and hearken to the judgment of my lips.*

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36. Now he did well first to bring forward ‘reproof,’ and afterwards ‘judgment.’ For except by reproof first the swelling of the fool be put down, the judgment of the righteous is not by comprehension at all understood. It goes on;  
Ver. 7. *Doth God need your lie, that ye should talk deceitfully for Him?*

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37. God doth not ‘stand in need of a lie,’ in that Truth does not seek to be stayed up by the aid of falsehood. But because Heretics are unable to defend on principles of truth the things which they erroneously conceive about God, it is as if they sought for the shadow of falsehood, to shew the ray of light. And they ‘speak deceitfully for Him,’ in that weak minds, by being senselessly seduced, they deceive in the understanding of Him. It goes on;  
Ver. 8. *Will ye take His person? will ye strive to judge for God?*

[xxvii]

38. For when foolish men behold the doings of the wise, they all seem to them to be worthy of blame; who, forgetting their own emptiness and deficiency, pass judgment on the concerns of others the more eagerly, in proportion as they are more deeply ignorant of their own. But on the other hand, when the righteous reprove the deeds of the wicked, ever conscious of their own weakness, they administer reproof, though in launching forth against them outwardly, yet in sympathizing with them inwardly; in that it belongs to Him alone to scrutinize the sins of men without fellow-feeling, Who by the omnipotence of His nature knows not to commit sin. Therefore, as the friends of blessed Job had so reprov'd his deeds as if they had nothing in themselves to be reprov'd, it is well said in this place, *Will ye take His face? Will ye strive to judge for God?* For to ‘take the face of God’ is to assume His authority in the act of judging; and he as it were ‘strives to judge for God,’ who when he reprov's the several weak points in another, does not feel weak in himself within from fellow-feeling. It goes on;  
Ver. 9. *Or shall it please Him, from Whom nothing can be concealed [celare]? Or like as a man will He be deceived by your deceits.*

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39. Heretics shew God deceit in that they fabricate such things as cannot be pleasing to the very Being, in Whose behalf they say them. And whilst they set themselves as if to defend, they only offend Him, in that they are brought to the ground in [A.B.C.D.M. 'fall into'] fighting against Him, Whom they appear by preaching to be serving. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *That Thou mightest still the enemy and the defender.* [Ps. 8, 2] For every heretic is to Almighty God an 'enemy and defender,' for wherein he strives in his way to defend Him, therein he fights against His truth. But because nothing can escape God's sight, He judges according to that in them, which they think within their heart, but not by their appearing without to be doing Him service. Therefore since by their frauds 'as a man is deceived, God is not so deceived,' it is lightly added, Ver. 10, 11. *He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly take His face. Presently when He ariseth He shall make you afraid; and His dread shall fall upon you.*

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40. This part, wherein He declares that 'the face of God is taken in secret,' may be understood in two ways. For there be some, who at one and the same time perceive truth in their hearts, and yet utter outwardly concerning God things that are false. For lest they should appear to be subdued, they both know the truth within, and yet assail it without. Hence it is well said in this place, *He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly take His face.* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Ye are the more to be blamed in His sight for falsehood, as ye see in yourselves what is true.' And there become, who when they turn back into the interior, contemplate the justice and righteousness of God, and in praying and weeping tremble with fear, but after the hour of contemplation has passed by, they return with as much boldness to their wickednesses, as if, being placed behind His back, they were not seen by the light of His righteousness. And so these with themselves in secret 'take God's face' as if it saw with a bodily sight, in that both, when they are present to Him, they flatter Him with their tears, and, when they are as it were gone from His sight, they make slight of Him by their practices. And these deserve to be beaten more for their evil doings, even in proportion as in the secret of their hearts they know the righteous judgments of God. And hence it is added; *As soon as He stirreth up Himself, He will trouble you, and His dread shall fall upon you.*

41. Seeing that Almighty God is of a nature unchangeable, in the wrath of judgment He is not capable of being moved; but by the expression proper to man, of God's being 'moved,' is understood nothing else than that enforcement of His rule of righteousness, by which the wickedness of man is chastised. Now righteous men conceive a dread of God before His indignation is stirred up against them; they fear Him at rest, lest they should feel Him as moved. But, on the other hand, the wicked then for the first time fear to be smitten, when they are under the rod, and terror then rouses them from the sleep of their insensibility, when vengeance is troubling them. And hence it is said by the Prophet, *And only the vexing alone shall supply understanding to the hearing.* [Is. 28, 19] For when they have begun to be stricken in vengeance for the contempt and neglect of God's precepts, then they understand the thing that they heard. And the Psalmist saith, *When He slew them, then they sought Him.* [Ps. 78, 34] Therefore it is well said, *As soon as He stirreth up Himself, He will trouble you, and His dread will fall upon you;* in that the hearts of the children of perdition have not fear producing repose, but punishment producing fear. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Your remembrances are like unto ashes.*

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42. All that are confounded to this present state of being by an earthly temper of mind, mean, by all that they do, to leave the remembrance of themselves to the world. Some in the toils of war, some in the towering walls of edifices, some in eloquent books of this world's lore, they are eagerly toiling and striving and building up for themselves a name of remembrance. But whereas life itself runs on to an end with speed, what is there in it that will stand stedfast, when even its very self by nature running rapidly speeds away. For a breath of air seizes the ashes, as it is written; *The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff, which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth.* [Ps. 1, 4] And so the remembrance of fools is rightly compared to 'ashes,' in that it is placed there, where it is liable to be carried away by a breath of air. For howsoever a man may toil to achieve the glory of his name, he has placed his 'remembrance like ashes,' in that the wind of mortality hurries it away in a moment. Contrary to which it is written of the just man, *The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.* [Ps. 112, 6] For by the very circumstance, that he imprints his deeds upon the eyes of God alone, he sets firm the name of his remembrance in the eternal world. It goes on;  
*And your necks shall be brought down to the mire.*

[xxxii]

43. As the sight is used to be denoted by the eye, so is pride by the 'neck.' Thus 'the neck is brought down to the mire,' when every proud man is humbled in death, and the flesh that was lifted up rots in corruption. For let us contemplate how and like what the carcasses of the rich lie in their graves, what that form of death is in the lifeless flesh, what the rottenness of corruption. And surely these were the very persons who were lifted up with honours, swollen with the things gotten by them, who looked down upon others, and exulted to stand as it were alone. Yet, while they never considered whereunto they were going, they knew nothing at all what they were. But 'the neck is brought down to the mire,' in that they lie neglected in rottenness, who swelled high in emptiness. 'The neck is brought down to the mire,' because what the might of flesh is good for, the rottenness of corruption evidences. It goes on;  
Ver. 13. *Hold your peace for a little, that I may speak whatsoever my mind shall bid me.*

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44. He shews that they spoke with the perception of the flesh, whom he therefore binds to silence, that he may speak that which 'his mind bids him.' As if he said in plain words, 'I do not speak in a carnal, but in a spiritual way, because; hear by the perception of the Spirit things that I bring forth by the service of the body. Whence he at once mounts up on high, and lifts himself aloft in mysteries, and changes into mystical discourse the reproofs which he had delivered, saying, .  
Ver. 14. *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand?*

[xxxiiii]

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

45. In Holy Scripture ‘teeth’ are sometimes used to be understood for the holy preachers, and sometimes for the interior senses [f]. Thus of the holy preachers it is said to the Bride, *Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing*. [Cant. 4, 2] And hence it is said to one of them, when the Gentiles were represented to him in a figure, *Kill and eat* [Acts 10, 13], i.e. ‘crush their oldness, and convert it into the body of the Church, i.e. into your own members.’ Again, that ‘teeth’ are wont to be understood of the interior senses, is testified by the Prophet Jeremiah, when he says, *He hath broken my teeth by number*. [Lam. 3, 16] For by the ‘teeth’ the food is broken in pieces, to allow of its being swallowed. Hence we not unjustly understand the interior senses by ‘teeth,’ which as it were chew and mince small the several particulars that occur to the mind, and transfer them to the belly of the memory, which the Prophet declares to be ‘broken by number,’ in that according to the measure of each particular sin there is blindness of understanding engendered in our perception, and in proportion to that which each person has committed outwardly, he is made dull of sense in that, which he might have understood of the inward and invisible. Whence too it is rightly written, *Everyone that hath eaten the sour grape, his teeth shall be numbed*. [Jer. 31, 30] For what is ‘the sour grape,’ saving sin? for a ‘sour grape’ is fruit before the time. So whosoever desires to be satisfied with the enjoyments of this present life, is as it were in a hurry to eat fruit before the time. Thus ‘the teeth of him that eateth the sour grape are numbed,’ in that he who feeds in the gratification of the present life, has the interior perceptions tied fast, that they should no longer be able to eat, i.e. to understand spiritual things; in that from the very self-same cause that they gratify themselves in outward things, they are rendered dull in those of the interior. And whereas the soul is fed with sin, it is unable to eat the bread of righteousness, in that the teeth being tied fast by the custom of sin, can never at all chew such good, as has a relish in the interior. In this place then, because, as we have said, we understand ‘the teeth’ to be the interior perceptions, we ought to consider very heedfully what the righteous are wont to do. Who, commonly, if they detect in themselves any points of a carnal sort however slightly, going over these in the interior senses, vehemently prosecute them in their own person, afflict themselves with selfchastisement, and with excessive self-inflctions visit in judgment the very least things wrong in them, and condemn them by penitence. Which same they do for this reason, that in the sight of the eternal Judge, both they may themselves be found as far as may be without blame, and that those, who see them thus judge themselves, may be kindled to reform themselves from worse offences. And this blessed Job had done in the presence of his friends, who kept fast temporal glory, and extolled transitory blessings. Yet he could not bring their sense to see the usefulness of the scourge with which he was afflicted, that so they might bethink themselves that Almighty God not only bestows prosperity, but likewise brings down adversity upon us, when He is favourable. Whence he says well in this place, *Wherefore do I tear my flesh with my teeth?* As if he said in plain words, ‘Why with my interior perceptions do I hunt out things carnal, if there be any such thing done in me, if I cannot thereby benefit my spectators?’ Where too it is fitly added,  
*And carry my life in my hand?*

46. To ‘carry our life in our hands’ is to shew forth the bias of the heart in practice. For the righteous have this thing proper to them, that in all that they do, and all that they say, they not only seek their own increase, but the edification of their neighbours likewise. Sometimes they judge themselves in some point, that they may recall indolent hearers to the consideration of themselves. Sometimes they exhibit good works, that their spectators may be ashamed not to imitate what they see. For it is written, *That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in*



*Heaven.* [Matt. 5, 16] Thus he that exhibits the bent of his mind by his works, ‘carries his life in his hand;’ but when any good man, whether by judging himself or by exhibiting good works, furthers not his neighbour’s welfare by what he has done, he returns to words of sorrow. Whence it is rightly said in this place, *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth? and carry my life in my hand?* i.e. ‘Why do I either judge myself strictly before men, or shew in practice what my heart is bent on, if I do not advance my neighbour’s good either by passing judgment on my evil things, or exhibiting good ones?’ But yet the righteous, even while they speak so, never give over setting their neighbour a good example. Hence blessed Job, still further exemplifying and exhibiting the excellence of patience before the eyes of his friends, saith, *Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.*

[xxxiv] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. There is no room for the virtue of patience in prosperous circumstances. He is really patient, who is at once bruised with misfortune, and yet not bowed down from the erectness of his hope. Concerning the temper of mind of the reprobate man it is written, *He will praise Thee, when Thou doest well to him.* [Ps. 49, 18. Vulg.] Hereby, then, the righteous mind is distinguished from the unrighteous, that even in the midst of affliction the former acknowledges the praise to Almighty God, that he is not broken down together with his worldly fortune, does not fall together with the fall of outward glory, but hereby proves the more, what he was with worldly goods, who even without worldly goods stands the stronger. It goes on; Ver. 15, 16. *But I will rebuke mine own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation.*

48. Whereas Paul the Apostle saith; *For, if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged,* [1 Cor. 11, 31] the Lord is found to be our ‘Salvation’ Then, in proportion as our sin is now rebuked by ourselves, from fear of God. Whence the Elect are used never to spare their own sins, that they may find the Judge of sin rendered propitious; and they look to find Him hereafter truly their ‘Salvation,’ Whom they now strictly fear as their Judge. For, he that spareth himself now in sin, is not spared hereafter in punishment, So let him say, *But I will rebuke mine own ways before Him.* And what use and advantage results from such rebuking, let him add, *He also shall be my salvation.* It goes on; *For an hypocrite, shall not come before Him.*

[xxxvi]

49. Whereas we know that the Judge, when He cometh, will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left, with what reason is it now said, ‘that the hypocrite shall not come before Him,’ when, if he be among the goats, he will appear on the left hand of the Judge? But we are to bear in mind that we come before the Lord in two ways. One, whereby taking exact account of our offences here we punish and judge ourselves before Him with weeping. For as often as we recall to our perception the power of our Creator, we as often, as it were, stand before Him.’ Hence too it is well said by Elijah, the man of God, *The Lord God of Israel liveth, before Whom I stand* [1 Kings 17, 1]. In another way we ‘come before God,’ when at the last Judgment we present ourselves before His Tribunal. And thus the hypocrite in the last reckoning does come before the Judge, but because now he shuts his eyes to consider and bewail transgressions, he refuses to ‘come before’ the Lord. For as righteous men, when they fix their eyes on the severity of the Judge that shall

come, recall their sins to remembrance, bewail the things that they have done, and judge themselves severely that they be not judged; so hypocrites, as they outwardly please the world, hence omit to look inwardly into themselves, and wholly engross themselves in the words of their neighbours, and account themselves to be holy, because they consider that they are so accounted by their fellow-creatures. And when they have dissipated their mind in the words that sound their own praises, they never recall it to the cognizance of sin, never mark wherein they offend the interior Judge, entertain no fears concerning His severity, for they believe that they have pleased Him as they have their fellow-creatures. Yet if they but brought His terribleness to mind, this very circumstance, that fixed in a wrong bias they are making themselves pleasing to their fellow-creatures, would cause them to fear the more. Therefore it is well said, *For an hypocrite shall not come before Him*; in that he does not set before his eyes the severity of God, so long as he is ambitious to please the eyes of men. Who, if he set himself in the presence of God in searching his own conscience, would then assuredly no longer be a hypocrite. It goes on;  
Ver. 17. *Hear my speech, and take in my riddles with your ears*

[xxxvii]

50. Herein, that he names ‘riddles,’ he shews that he has parts of his speech framed in figures. Whence too it is fitly added by the voice of the faithful People;  
Ver. 18. *If I shall be judged, I know that I shall be found just.*

[xxxviii]

51. Which too is not at variance with the person of the self-same blessed Job, since he is only telling that concerning himself without, which ‘Truth’ had inwardly declared to his enemy concerning him; *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?* And yet it is much less that the holy man records concerning himself, than what the Lord declared concerning him. For it is one thing to be ‘just,’ and another to have ‘none like him.’ Therefore he thought humbly of himself, who, whereas he was just beyond comparison with another, described himself not just above others, but simply able to be ‘found just.’ It seems however to furnish this ground for raising a question in his words, viz. that he who said above, *I will rebuke mine own ways before Him*; and again says further on, *Thou wouldest consume me in the iniquities of my youth* [ver. 26]; and seeing his sins with a distinct eye, says still further on, *My transgression is sealed up in a bag*, now saith, *If I shall be judged, I know that I shall be found just.* [Job 14, 17] For it is impossible for sin and righteousness to meet together. But the holy man, attributing wickedness to himself, and the purifying of him to Almighty God, at once sees that he is a sinner in himself, and knows that he is made righteous by free gift. Who even in the midst of good practice earned in superabounding grace to have stripes put upon him. And he already rejoices to be ‘found just’ in Judgment, who beheld himself before Judgment smitten with the rod. Hence too when he says long afterwards, *My transgression is sealed up in a bag*, he adds directly; *but Thou hast healed mine iniquity.* He, then, that describes himself as ‘found just’ in Judgment, says not at all that he is not justly smitten, although the Lord did not intend to obliterate sins by the scourge, but to increase his merits. It proceeds;  
Ver. 19. *Who is he that will plead with me? Let him come.*

[xxxix]

52. Holy men so guard themselves in their good works, with God for their aid, that there can be no where found, without, grounds, whereon to accuse them; but within, in the secret thoughts of their own hearts, they watch over themselves with such good heed, that, if it might be, they may at all times stand blameless before the eyes of the interior Judge. But what they are able to effect, that they never should slip outwardly in act, they are unable to effect inwardly, that they never should make a false step in thought. For man's conscience, from the very fact that it withdraws [g] from the things deepest within, is always on slippery ground. Whence it comes to pass, that even holy men often slip in them. So let holy Job, speaking as well in his own voice as in the voice of the Elect, say, *Who is he that will plead with me? Let him come.* For, seeing that in external actions there is no occasion for which to fasten a blame upon him, he freely looks about for an accuser. But because the consciences even of the righteous sometimes have to charge themselves with foolishness of thought, it is on this account perhaps that it is added;  
*Why am I consumed in silence?*

[xl]

53. For he is 'consumed in silence,' who, in blaming himself for foolishness of thought, is gnawed in his own heart by the tooth of conscience. As if he said in plain words, 'As I have so lived that I should never fear any accuser without, would that I had so lived that I should never have my conscience for mine accuser within me.' For he is 'consumed in silence,' who discovers in himself within cause whereby the fire should gnaw him [*unde uratur*]. It goes on;  
Ver. 20. *Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from Thy face.*

54. What are we to understand here by the 'face of God,' saving His visitation? In which, whilst He beholds, He also punishes our sins, from which no just man even is hidden, if the two things, which he entreats, be not removed; concerning which he adds;  
Ver. 21. *Withdraw Thine hand far from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid.*

[xli]

#### [PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

55. By which same two what else does he ask in a voice of prophecy, but the season of grace and redemption? For the Law held the people obnoxious to the stroke of vengeance, that whoso committed sin under its yoke, should be forthwith punished with death. Nor did the Israelitish people serve God from a principle of love, but of fear. But righteousness can never be perfected [*impleri*] by fear, seeing that according to the voice of John, *perfect love casteth out fear*. [1 John 4, 18] And Paul comforts the children of adoption, by saying, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.* [Rom 8, 15] Therefore in the voice of mankind, longing for the hardness of the stroke of the Law to pass away, and eagerly desiring to advance from fear to love, he names in prayer what 'two things God should put far from him,' saying, *Withdraw Thine hand far from me, and let not Thy dread make me afraid*; i.e. remove from me the hardness of the stroke, take away the weight of dread, and while the grace of love illumines me, pour upon me the spirit of assurance, in that if I be not removed far from the rod and from dread, I know that I shall not be withdrawn from the strictness of Thy searching. Since he cannot be justified before Thee, who serves Thee not on a principle of love, but of fear. Hence he seeks the very presence of his Creator itself, as it were

familiarly, and in a bodily sort, that he may thereby both hear what he is ignorant of, and be heard in the things that he knows. For he adds directly;

Ver. 22. *Then call Thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer Thou me.*

56. Who at the time, when He did appear by the assumption of the flesh to the eyes of mankind, disclosed to men their sins, which they were doing and knew not. Whence it is added;

Ver. 23. *How many are mine iniquities and my sins? make me to know my crimes and my offences.*

[xlili]

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

57. Though the 'calling' and 'answering' may likewise be understood in another way. For God's 'calling' us is His having respect to us in loving and choosing us, and our 'answering' is the yielding obedience to His love by good works. Where it is fitly added, *Or let me speak, and answer Thou me.* For we 'speak,' when we beg for God's face in desire, and God answers our speaking, when He appears to us that love Him. But because whoever pants with longing for the eternal world, examines his doings, taking himself to task with great exactness, and searches lest there be aught in him, whereby he might offend the face of his Creator, he rightly adds, *How many are mine iniquities and my sins? Make me to know my crimes and offences.* This is the task of the righteous in this life, to find out themselves, and on finding out to bring themselves to a better state by weeping and self-chastening. And though John the Apostle tells us that there is no odds between iniquity and sin, when he says, *iniquity is sin* [1 John 3, 4]; yet in the simple usage of speech, 'iniquity' sounds something more than 'sin,' and every one confesses himself a 'sinner,' but he is sometimes ashamed to call himself an iniquitous person. Now between 'crimes' and 'offences' there is this difference, that 'crime' over and above exceeds the weight and measure of sin, but an 'offence' does not exceed the weight of sin; for thus, when a sacrifice is commanded to be offered under the Law, it is doubtless enjoined, as for a 'sin,' the same for an 'offence' too. And crime is never done but in deed, whereas offence is most commonly committed in thought alone. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Who call, understand his offences?* [Ps. 19, 12] seeing that sins of practice are known the quicker, in proportion as they appear externally, but sins of thought are the more difficult to apprehend, that they are committed out of sight. Hence anyone, who being made solicitous by the love of Eternity, has it at heart to appear clean before the Judge that shall come, examines himself so much the more exactly now, in proportion as he bethinks himself how he may then present himself free to His terribleness; and he beseeches to have it shewn him, wherein he offends, that he may punish that thing in himself by penance, and by judging himself here, may be rendered unobnoxious to judgment.

58. But herein it is needful to observe, how great is the punishment of our pilgrimage which has fallen upon us, who have been brought to such a degree of blindness, that we do not know our own selves. We do evil, and yet do not quickly find it out, even when done. For the mind, being banished from the light of truth, finds in itself nothing else than darkness, and very often puts out the foot into the pit of sin, and knows it not. Which it is subject to from the blindness of the state of exile alone, seeing that, being driven away from the illumining of the Lord, it even lost the power to see itself, in that it loved not the face of its Maker. Hence it is added;

Ver. 24. *Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and holdest me for Thine enemy?*

[xliiii]

59. Man enjoyed the light of inward contemplation in Paradise, but by gratifying himself as he departed from himself, he lost the light of the Creator, and fled from His face to the trees of Paradise, seeing that, after his sin, he dreaded to see Him, whom he had used to love. But mark, after sin he is brought into punishment, but from punishment he returns to love, because he finds out what was the consequence of his transgression, and that face, which he feared in sin, being awakened to a right sense, he seeks afresh by punishment, that he may henceforth flee the darkness of his blind condition, and shrink with horror from this alone, that he does not behold his Creator. Pierced with which longing the holy man exclaims, *Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and takest me for Thine enemy?* 'since, if Thou didst regard me as a friend, Thou wouldest not deprive me of the light of Thy vision.' And going on, he adds the fickleness of the human heart, saying, Ver. 25. *Wilt Thou shew Thy power against a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?*

[xliv]

60. For what is man but a leaf, who fell in Paradise from the tree? what but a leaf is he, who is caught by the wind of temptation, and lifted up by the gusts of his passions? For the mind of man is agitated as it were by as many gusts, as it undergoes temptations. Thus very often anger agitates it; when anger is gone, empty mirth succeeds. It is driven by the goadings of lust, by the fever of avarice it is made to stretch itself far and wide to compass the things which belong to the earth. Sometimes pride lifts it up, and sometimes excessive fear sinks it lower than the dust. Therefore seeing that he is lifted and carried by so many gusts of temptation, man is well likened to a 'leaf.' Hence it is well said too by Isaiah, *And we all have fallen as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have taken us away.* For 'our iniquity like a wind has taken us away,' in that being steadied by no weight of virtue, it has lifted us into empty self-elation. And it is well that, after a leaf, man should be called 'stubble' likewise. For he that was a 'tree' by his creating, was by himself made a 'leaf' in his tempting, but afterwards he appeared 'stubble' in his fallen estate. For in that he fell from on high, he was a leaf, but, whereas by the flesh he was fellow to the earth, even when he seemed to stand, he is described as 'stubble.' But because he lost the greenness of interior love, he is henceforth 'dry stubble.' So let the holy man reflect both what meanness man is of, and what severity God is of, and let him say, *Wilt Thou shew Thy power against a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?* As if he openly bewailed, saying, 'Why dost Thou run him down with so much force of righteousness, whom Thou knowest to be so frail in temptation?' It goes on; Ver. 26. *For Thou writest bitter things against me.*

[xlv]

61. For seeing that every thing we speak passes away, but what we write remains, God is said not to 'speak,' but to 'write bitter things,' in that His scourges upon us last for long. For it was said once to man, when he sinned, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return?* And Angels many times appearing gave commandments to men. Moses, the lawgiver, restrained sins by severe means. The Only-Begotten Son of the Most High Father, Himself came to redeem us, He swallowed up death by dying, He announced that everlasting life to us, which He exhibited in Himself; yet that sentence which was given in Paradise concerning the death of our flesh remains

unaltered from the very first beginning of the human race up to the end of the world. For *what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?* which the Psalmist considering well saith again, *Thou, even Thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in Thy sight when once Thou art angry?* Who being 'once angry,' when man sinned in Paradise, fixed the sentence of the mortality of our flesh, which now even to the very last may never be changed a whit. Therefore let him say, *Thou writest bitter things against me. Hence it is further added; And wouldst waste me with the iniquities of my youth.*

[xlvi]

62. Observe, that whereas the holy man finds not that he has ever sinned in his manhood [*juventute*], he dreads the sins of his youth [*adolescentiae*]. Now it is necessary to know, that as in the body, so are there advances of age in the mind also. Thus the first age of man is infancy, when, though he lives in innocence, he cannot speak [h] the innocence which is in him; and then follows boyhood, in which he has henceforth the power of speaking what he wishes; to which youth succeeds, which we know is the first age in active life, which is followed by manhood, i.e. that which is suited to hardihood; and afterwards old age, which from mere time even is now fellow to maturity of mind. Therefore, as we have called the first age fit for good actions 'youth,' and as the righteous when they are far advanced in perfect maturity of mind, sometimes recall to recollection the beginning of their deeds, and blame themselves for their first commencement in an equal degree as they have advanced deeper in gravity of mind, because they find that they were once void of discretion, in proportion as they afterwards more thoroughly attain possession of the stronghold of discretion, it is rightly that now, in the words of the holy man, the sins of his youth are dreaded. But if this is to be held after the bare letter, we ought from this consideration to infer how grievous the sins of grown men and the aged are, if the just so greatly fear even that which they did wrong in the years of weakness. It goes on;

Ver. 27. *Thou puttest my foot also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly into all my paths; Thou markest the prints of my feet.*

[xlvii]

63. God 'set man's foot in the stocks,' in that he bound fast his wickedness with the strong sentence of His severity. And He 'looketh narrowly into all his paths,' in that He judges with minute exactness all the several particulars that belong to him. For a 'path' is usually narrower than a 'way;' but as by 'ways' we understand actions, so by 'paths' we not unjustly understand the mere thoughts of them. So God 'looketh narrowly into all our paths,' in that in all our several actions He takes account of the thoughts of the heart too; and He 'marketh the prints of our feet,' in that He examineth the intentions [i] of our works, how far they are placed aright, lest that which is done a good work, be not done with a right object. But it is possible that by the prints of the feet the several things done badly may be understood. For a foot in the body is a print in the way. And very commonly, when we do some things wrong, whereas our brethren see it, we are setting them a bad example, and our foot being as it were turned out of the way, we leave to those that follow our footsteps all awry, while by our own deeds we lead the way for other men's consciences to stumble. But it is very hard for man to keep on his guard, that he never presume to do evil, that in his good actions he be not unsteady in the intention, and amidst upright deeds let no wrong purpose deceive him. Yet all these particulars Almighty God minutely examines, and weighs each one of

them in judgment. But when can man, bound about as he is by the frailty of the flesh, have power to rise up against all of them with exact particularity, and to maintain the line of uprightness with the thought of the heart unmoved? Hence it is properly added;

Ver. 28. *Who am as a rotten thing to be consumed, and as a garment that is moth eaten.*

[xlvihi]

64. For as a garment is eaten by the moth sprung out of itself, so man containeth rottenness in himself, whereby he consumeth, and that which he is, is that whereby he consumeth that he should not be. Which may be taken in another sense also, if it be said in the voice of man when tempted; *And I as a rotten thing am to consume, as a garment that is moth eaten.* For man 'as a rotten thing consumeth,' in that he is wasted by the corruption of his flesh. And because impure temptation springs up to him from no other source than from himself, like a moth, temptation consumes the flesh, as a garment from which it issues. For man contains in himself the occasion whence he is tempted. Therefore as it were 'the moth consumeth the garment,' whilst it proceeded from that very same garment. However, we ought to bear in mind that the moth digs its way through the garment without any sound, and it very often happens that thought pierces the mind in such a way, that the mind itself is not sensible of it, until after it has been pierced by its sting. Therefore it is well said that man 'consumeth like a garment that is moth eaten,' for sometimes we do not know the wounds of temptation, unless after we be pierced thereby within our souls. Which same frailty of ours the holy man yet further considering justly adds;

Chap. xiv. 1. *Man that is born of a woman liveth a short time, and is full of many miseries.*

65. In Sacred Writ 'woman' is taken either for the sex, or else for 'frailty.' For the 'sex,' as where it is written, *God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law* [Gal. 4, 4]. But for frailty, as where it is said by the Wise Man, *Better is the iniquity of a man than a woman doing well.* [Ecclus. 42, 14] For 'a man' is the term for every strongminded and discreet person, but 'a woman' is understood of the weak or indiscreet mind. And it often happens that even the discreet person suddenly falls into a fault, and that another weak and indiscreet man exhibits good practice. But he that is weak and indiscreet is sometimes lifted up the more on the score of what he has done well, and falls the worse into sin; but the discreet person even from that which he sees that he has done amiss, takes occasion to recall himself with closer application to the rule of strictness, and advances the further in righteousness from the same act, whereby he seemed to have fallen from righteousness for a time. In which respect it is rightly said, *Better is the iniquity of a man than a woman doing well;* in that sometimes the very fault of the strong becomes occasion of virtue, and the virtue of the weak occasion of sin. In this place then by the name of 'a woman,' what else but 'frailty' is denoted, when it is said, *Man that is born of a woman?* As if it were said in plainer words, 'What strength shall he have in himself, who was born in frailty?'

66. *Liveth a short time, and is full of many miseries.* Observe by the holy man's words we have the punishment of man briefly set forth, in that he is at once stinted in life and filled out in misery. For if we consider with exactness all that is done here, it is punishment and misery. For to minister to the corruption of the flesh by itself in things necessary and permitted is misery, in such measure that clothing should be sought out against cold, food against hunger, coolness against heat. That the health of the body is kept only with great care, that even when kept it is lost, when lost it is recovered not without great difficulty, and yet after being restored is always in risk; what else is

this than the misery of the life of mortality? That we love our friends, mistrusting lest they may be offended with us; that we dread our enemies, and truly are not secure touching those whom we dread; that we often talk to our enemies as confidentially as to friends, and often take the sincere words of our friends, and those, perhaps, that love us very much, as the words of enemies; and that we, who wish never either to be deceived or to deceive, err the more by our caution; what, then, is all this but the misery of man's life? That after the heavenly country has been lost, banished man is delighted with his exile, that he is weighed down with cares, and yet shuts his eyes to considering how great the burthen is, in that he is full of a multitude of thoughts; that he is deprived of the interior light, and yet in this life wishes to prolong his state of blindness; what else is this but misery, the offspring of our punishment? Yet though he desire to stay here for long, still he is driven on by the mere current of his mortal life to depart out of it. Hence the holy man lightly adds; Ver. 2. *He cometh forth like a flower, and is crushed: he fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state.*

[1]

67. For, 'as a flower, he cometh forth,' in that he shews fair in the flesh; but he is 'crushed,' in that he is reduced to corruption. For what are men, as born in the world, but a kind of flowers in a field? Let us stretch our interior eyes over the breadth of the present world, and, lo, it is filled as it were with as many flowers as there are human beings. So life in this flesh is the flower in grass. Hence it is well said by the Psalmist, *As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.* [Ps. 103, 15] Isaiah too saith, *All flesh is grass, and all the glory thereof is as the flower of the field.* [Is. 40, 6] For man cometh forth like a flower from concealment, and of a sudden shews himself in open day, and in a moment is by death withdrawn from open view into concealment again. The greenness of the flesh exhibits us to view, but the dryness of dust withdraws us from men's eyes. Like a flower we appeared, who were not; like a 'flower' we wither, who appeared only in time.

68. And whereas man is daily being driven into death moment by moment, it is rightly added, *He fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state.* But as the sun is unceasingly going through his course, and never stays himself in a state of steadfastness, why is the course of man's life likened to 'a shadow' rather than to the 'sun,' excepting that, when he parted with the love of the Creator, he lost the heat of the heart, and remained in the coldness of his iniquity alone? Since according to the voice of Truth, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* [Matt. 24, 2] He, then, who hath not warmth of the heart in the love of God, and yet keepeth not the life, which he loves, assuredly he 'fleeth like a shadow.' Hence it is well written concerning him, *that he hath followed a shadow.* [Ecclus. 34, 2] Now it is well said, *and never continueth in the same state.* For whereas infancy is going on to childhood, childhood to youth, youth to manhood, and manhood to old age, and old age to death, in the course of the present life he is forced by the very steps of his increase upon those of decrease, and is ever wasting from the very cause whence he thinks himself to be gaining ground in the space of his life. For we cannot have a fixed stay here, whither we are come only to pass on; and this very circumstance of our living is to be daily passing out of life. Which same flight the first man could not have known before the transgression, seeing that times passed, himself standing. But after he transgressed, he placed himself on a kind of slide of a temporal condition, and because he ate the forbidden fruit, he found at once the failure of his stay. Which liability to change man suffers, not only without, but



also within him, when he strives to arise to better works. For by the weight of its changeableness the mind is always being driven forwards to some other thing than it is, and, except it be kept in its stay by stringent discipline in self-keeping, it is always sliding back into worse. For that mind which deserted Him, Who ever standeth, lost the stay in which she might have continued.

Henceforth now when he strives after better things, he has as it were to strain against the force of the stream. But when he relaxes in his bent to ascend, without effort he is carried back to the lowest point. Thus whereas in ascent there is effort, in descent rest from effort, the Lord warns us that we have to enter by a narrow gate, saying, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate* [Luke 13, 24]; for when about to mention ‘the entering in of the narrow gate,’ He premised, *Strive*, since unless there be an ardent striving [k] of the heart,’ the water of the world is not surmounted, whereby the soul is ever being borne down to the lowest place. And so whereas man ‘springeth up like a flower and is cut down, and fleeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in his place,’ let us hear what he further subjoins in this train of reflection. It goes on;

Ver. 3. *And dost Thou deign to open Thine eyes upon such an one, and to bring him into judgment with Thee?*

[li]

69. For he surveyed above both the power of Almighty God and his own frailty; he brought before his view himself and God, he considered Who would come into judgment, and with whom. He saw on the one side man, on the other side his Creator, i.e. dust and God; and he lightly exclaims, *Dost Thou deign to open Thine eyes upon such an one?* With Almighty God, to open the eyes is to execute His judgments, to look whom to smite. For as it were with eyes closed He does not wish to look at him, whom He does not wish to smite. Hence it is immediately added also about the judgment itself, *To bring him into judgment with Thee?* But whereas he had viewed God coming to judgment, he again takes a view of his own frailty. He sees that he cannot be clean of himself, who, that he might be able to be, came forth out of uncleanness. And he adds,

Ver. 4. *Who can make clean a thing conceived of unclean seed? Is it not Thou, Who only Art?*

[lii]

70. He That alone is clean in Himself can cleanse the unclean thing. For man, who lives in a corruptible flesh, has the uncleannesses of temptation engrained in him, seeing that he derived them from his birth. For his very conception, for the sake of fleshly gratification, is uncleanness. Hence the Psalmist saith, *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.* [Ps. 51, 7] Hence it is therefore that he is very often tempted even against his will. Hence it is that he is subject to impurities in imagination, even though he strive against them by reason, because being conceived in uncleanness, whilst he follows after cleanness, he is striving to get the better of that which he is. But whoever has mastered the motions of secret temptation, and overcome uncleanness of thought, must never ascribe his cleanness to himself, in that none can make clean a thing conceived of unclean seed, save He Who alone is clean in Himself. Let him, then, that has already reached in mind the place of cleanness, cast his eye upon the way of his conception, which he came by, and thence satisfy himself, that in his own power he has no cleanness of life, the beginning of whose existence was made in uncleanness. But the meaning here may be that blessed Job, regarding the Incarnation of the Redeemer, saw that That Man only in the world was not

conceived of unclean seed, Who so came into the world from the Virgin's womb, that He had nothing derived from unclean conception. For He did not proceed from the man and the woman, but from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. He only then proved truly clean in His Flesh, Who was incapable of being affected by the gratification of the flesh, seeing that it was not by the gratification of the flesh that He came hither.

## BOOK XII.

Wherein after the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Job has been explained, beginning at the fifth verse, the fifteenth chapter entire is explained for the most part in a moral sense.

### [i] [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

IT is the practice of the righteous, to think of the present life, how transitory it is, so much the more heedfully in proportion as they are taught more earnestly to take thought of the eternal blessings of the heavenly Country; for by those things, which they see lasting within, they more exactly mark the flight of things passing away without. Whence blessed Job, when he had delivered a sentence on the transition of man's time, saying, *Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live;* and again, *He seeth also as a shadow, and never continueth in the same state;* further adds of the shortness of his life;

Ver. 5. *The days of man are short, the number of his months is with Thee.*

1. For he sees that that as it were is not with us, which runs by with such great rapidity, but seeing that even things passing away stand with Almighty God, he declares that 'the number of our months is with Him.' Or, indeed, by the 'days,' the shortness of time is denoted, but by the 'months' the spaces of the days are multiplied. Thus to ourselves 'the days are short;' but seeing that our life is further extended afterwards, 'the number of our months' is recorded 'to be with God.' Hence also it is said by Solomon, *Length of days is in her right hand.* [Prov. 3, 16] It goes on;

*Thou hast appointed his bounds, that he cannot pass.*

### [ii]

2. Of the things that happen to men in this world, none come to pass without the secret counsel of Almighty God; for God, foreseeing all things that should follow, before the ages of the world decreed how they should be ordered in the ages of the world. Since it is already appointed to man both to what extent the prosperity of the world shall attend him, or in what degree adversity shall fall upon him, that His Elect neither unbounded prosperity may exalt, nor overmuch adversity sink them too low; moreover it is appointed in this very life of mortality how long he shall live with the conditions of time. For although Almighty God added fifteen years to the life of King Hezekiah, yet at that moment that he suffered him to die, He foresaw he would die. Wherein a question presents itself, viz. how it is that it should be said to him by the Prophet, *Set thine house in order for thou shalt die, and not live?* [2 Kings 20, 1] For he, to whom sentence of death was declared, immediately upon his tears had life added to him. Now, the Lord said by the Prophet at what time he in himself deserved to die, but by the bountifulness of mercy, He kept him for the undergoing

death at that time, which He Himself foreknew before the ages began. Nor even therefore was the Prophet deceptive, because he made known the time of death, at which that man deserved to die, nor were the appointments of the Lord rent and torn, forasmuch as this also, that the years of life should be added to by the bountifulness of God, was foreordained before the ages began; and the period of life, which was added contrary to expectation without, was inwardly appointed without increase upon foreknowledge; and so it is well said, *Thou hast appointed his bounds which he cannot pass.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

3. Which may also be taken according to the spirit, in that we sometimes endeavour to advance in virtuous attainments, and some gifts we are vouchsafed, but being kept off from some, we lie prone in things below. For there is no man who masters that degree of goodness which he desires, in that Almighty God, Who discerneth the inward parts, sets bounds to the very spiritual attainments themselves; that by reason of that which man tries to master, and is unable, he may not exalt himself in those things, in which he has the power. Whence too that great Preacher, that had been carried up into the third heaven, and penetrated the secrets of Paradise, after that revelation, was not left the power to be at rest, and without temptation; but whereas Almighty God has ‘appointed man his bounds, which he cannot pass,’ he both exalted him to know things on high, and set him down again to be subject to weak things, that he looking at the measure of his compass, whilst he endeavoured to lay hold on security, and could not, that he might not be carried out of himself in pride, might be forced in humility ever to return back within his own bounds. It proceeds;  
Ver. 6. *Turn from him a little while, that he may rest, till his longed for day come, as an hireling’s.*

[iii]

4. In this place, *Turn from him*, means, ‘remove from him the force of the stroke,’ for who can rest when He turns away from him, when He Himself alone is rest, and the further off a man is from Him, he is also rendered void of rest in proportion? Thus it is in such sort said, *Turn from him*, that you should understand, ‘from smiting;’ for it is fitly added, *till his longed for day come as an hireling’s*. In proportion as an hireling is far from the end of his work, so is he far from the recompense of his wages. Thus every holy man being set in this life, whilst he sees that he is far from departing out of the present life, laments that he is far from the eternal bliss. What then is it to say, *Turn from him a little while, that he may rest*; but, ‘withdraw now the strokes of the present life, and shew the blessings of eternal rest?’ Whence too it is added concerning that rest itself; till his longed for day come, as an hireling’s; for then the longed for day as of an hireling comes to man, when he receives eternal rest in compensation for his labour. But as far as relates to the aspect of the present life, how despicable is the race of man, so full of miseries, blessed Job yet further tells, and describes how greatly the very things without sense seem to surpass him, when he says;

Ver. 7-10. *For there is a hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will be green again; and that the tender branches thereof will sprout forth. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth foliage as when it was planted. But man, when he is dead, and stripped, and consumed, where is he?*

[iv]

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

5. Now because this is self-evident according to the letter, we must refer the sense to the things of the interior, and search how they are to be made out after the spiritual signification. Thus in Holy Scripture by the name of 'tree' we have represented sometimes the Cross, sometimes the righteous man, or even the unrighteous man, and sometimes the Wisdom of God Incarnate. Thus the Cross is denoted by 'the tree,' when it is said, *Let us put the tree into his bread* [Jer. 11, 19, V.]; for to 'put the tree into the bread' is to apply the Cross to the Body of our Lord. Again by the title of 'the tree' we have the just man, or even the unjust man, set forth, as the Lord saith by the Prophet, *I the Lord have brought down the high tree, and exalted the low tree.* [Ez. 17, 24] Forasmuch as according to the word of the self-same Truth, *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted* [Luke 14, 11]: Solomon also saith, *If the tree fall towards the South, or toward the North, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.* [Ecc. 11, 3] For in the day of their death the just man does 'fall to the South,' and the unjust 'to the North,' in that both the just man in favour of the Spirit is brought to joy, and the sinner, together with the apostate Angel, who said, *I will sit also upon the mount of the testimony, in the sides of the North* [Is. 14, 13], is cast away in his frozen heart. Again, the Wisdom of God Incarnate is represented by 'the Tree,' as where it is written thereon, *She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on Her.* [Prov. 3, 18] And as She Herself says, *If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* [Luke 23, 31] And so in this place whereas a tree is preferred before man, what is man taken for but every carnal person? and what is denoted by the title of 'the tree,' but the life of the righteous? For there is a hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will be green again. For when in a death of painful endurance the just man is hard bestead for the truth, in the greenness of everlasting life he is recovered again; and he who here proved green by faith, there becomes green in actual sight [*speciem*]. 'And his branches shoot,' in that it is most often the case that by the sufferings of the just man, all faithful persons are redoubled in the love of the heavenly country, and they receive the greenness of the spiritual life, while they are glad that he did courageously here in God's behalf. It goes on;

Ver. 8, 9. *Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the dust; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth leaves as when it was first planted.*

[v]

6. What is 'the root' of the righteous, but holy preaching, since it is that he springs out of, and that he holds on in? and what is meant by the name of 'the earth' or of 'dust,' but the sinner? to whom it is said by the voice of the Creator, *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return* [m] [Gen. 3, 19]. Or, indeed, as our Translation reads, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* [so V.] Thus 'the root of the righteous waxes old in the earth, and his stock dies in the dust,' in that in the hearts of the wicked his preaching is despised, and thought dried of all goodness, and 'his stock dies in the dust,' in that amidst the hands of the persecutors his body is bereft of life; for according to the words of Wisdom, *In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, and their departure is taken for misery.* [Wisd. 3, 2] But this one, whose 'root waxed old in the earth, and whose trunk died in the dust,' *through the smell of water, buddeth;* in that through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the example of his conduct he causes the budding of virtue in the hearts of the Elect. For by the designation of water sometimes the watering of the Holy Spirit is used to be understood, as where it is written, *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.* [John 7, 37] *But whosoever drinketh of the water that shall give him, shall never thirst.* [John 4, 14] It follows; *And bring forth foliage*

*as when it was first planted.* To 'bring forth foliage on the stock being cut down' is, when the just man is put an end to in the body, by the mere example of his suffering to raise up the hearts of many, and out of a right faith to shew forth the greenness of truth. And it is well said, *As when it was first planted.* All that is done by the righteous here is a second planting; in that clearly the first planting does not consist in the practice of the good, but in the foreknowledge of the Creator; and whereas all that the Elect do, as it is first seen and settled interiorly, so afterwards is executed outwardly, it is well said, *And bring forth foliage as when it was first planted,* i.e. it shews its greenness in the executing of practice, such as it had before in the foreknowledge of the Creator.

7. The 'root of the righteous' may also be taken for the very nature itself of a human being, by virtue whereof he subsists, which same root waxes old in the earth, when the natural frame of flesh comes to nought being reduced to dust, whose 'stock dies in the dust,' in that the body dismantled of its own form and fashion crumbles to nought; but at the 'scent of water it buds,' in that through the coming of the Holy Spirit it rises again; and it will bring forth boughs as when it was first planted, in that it returns to that form, which it was created to receive, if, when he was set in Paradise, he had refused to sin.

#### [PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

8. Which perhaps may also be taken of the Lord Himself, Who is the Head of all the good; for according to that which we have said before, whereas He saith of Himself, *For if they have done these things in a green tree, what shall be done in a dry?* [Luke 23, 31] He said that Himself was the green tree, and we the dry tree, forasmuch as He contained in His own Person the power of the Divine Nature, but we that are mere men are called a dry tree. And so 'there is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,' in that even if He was able to be put to death by His Passion, yet by the glory of His Resurrection, He came to the greenness of life again; 'His branches shoot,' in that the faithful being multiplied by His Resurrection grew out far and wide; His root as it were waxed old in the earth, in that the preaching of Him was to the unbelief of the Jews a despicable thing; 'and His stock dried in the dust,' in that in the heart of those that persecuted Him, which was uplifted by the wind of their unbelief, He was held as an object of scorn and contempt, in that He was capable of being put to death in the flesh; but 'at the scent of water He budded,' in that through the power of God His Flesh after demise returned to life, according to that which is written, *Whom God hath raised from the dead.* [Acts 3, 15] For in that God is a Trinity, the Holy Trinity, i.e. the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, raised up to life the extinct Flesh of the Only-Begotten Son. And 'It brought forth foliage as when It was first planted,' in that the feebleness of the Apostles, which in the season of His death was afraid and denied, and by denying turned dry, by the glory of His Resurrection was again quickened in faith. In comparison with which Tree what is every man but dust? Hence it is added;

Ver. 10. *But when man is dead, and stripped, and consumed, where, I pray, is he?*

[vi]

9. There is no man without sin, save Him Who came not into this world by sin; and whereas all we are tied fast in the bonds of guilt, we die by the mere loss of righteousness. Of the robe of innocence given us aforetime in Paradise, we are stripped naked, and we are yet further consumed by the subsequent dissolution of the flesh. Thus man being a sinner dies in guilt, is stripped bare of

righteousness, is consumed in punishment. This nakedness of his erring son the Father vouchsafed to cover, who said, on his returning to him, *Bring forth quickly the first robe*. For 'the first robe' is the robe of innocence, which man being created aright received, but being persuaded wrongly by the serpent forfeited. Against this same nakedness it is said, *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked*. For we 'keep our garments,' when we keep the precepts of innocency in our hearts, that whereas guilt strips us naked to the Judge, penance should cover us returning to the innocence we had forfeited. And it is well said, *Where, I pray, is he?* in that the sinner, man, refused to stand there where he was created; while here, where he fell, he is forbidden to stay for long. Willingly he forfeited his country, unwillingly he is driven forth from his exile, which he delights in. Where then is he, who is not in His love, where only it is truly to be? It proceeds;

Ver. 11, 12. *As if the waters fail from the sea, and the river being emptied drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not.*

[vii]

10. The mind of man is the sea, and the thoughts of his mind, as it were, a wave of the sea; which sometimes swell in anger, are made calm by grace, and from hatred run out in bitterness; but when man dieth, 'the waters of the sea fail,' in that according to the words of the Psalmist, *In that very day his thoughts perish*. [Ps. 146, 4] And again it is written concerning the dying soul, *Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy shall perish together*. [Eccl. 9, 6] Thus 'the river being emptied drieth up,' in that, when the soul is withdrawn, the body remains empty. For the lifeless body is as it were the empty channel of a river, wherein it is to be marked with an attentive eye that the present life, i.e. the time while the soul stays in the body, is likened to the sea and to a river, for the water of the sea is bitter, of a river sweet. And because we that are living here are at one time under the influence of certain bitternesses, and at another time are seen to be serene and gentle with sweetness, the course of the present life is set forth by the similitude of the sea and a river.

11. But herein that seems to be exceedingly hard which is added, *So man lieth down, and riseth not*. Wherefore do we so toil and labour, if we are not straining after the recompense of the Resurrection? And how is it said, and riseth not, when it is written: *We shall all rise again, but we shall not all be changed?* [1 Cor. 15, 51 Vulg.] And again, *If in this life only we have hope of life in Christ, we are of all men most miserable* [ver. 19]: and when 'Truth' says by Itself, *All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation*. [John 5, 28. 29.] But the sentence subjoined points out what distinction there is concealed in the sentence preceding. For it is added;

*Till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.*

[viii]

12. For it is plain that they shall not rise again, that is, till the heavens be no more, in that except the end of the world come, the race of mankind shall not wake to life from the sleep of death. Not, then, that he shall not rise again at all, but that before the crumbling of the heavens the human race shall not rise again, is what he teaches. Moreover it is a thing to be marked, why after he had called man dead above, below he designates him not dead, but sleeping, and tells that he shall never rise

again from his sleep until the heaven be crumbled in pieces, which is no otherwise than that it is plainly given us to understand, that by the likeness of the tree quickened afresh to life, he designates man a dead sinner, i.e. extinct from the life of righteousness; but when he speaks of the death of the flesh, he preferred to call this not death but sleep, teaching us surely the hope of the Resurrection; in that as a man quickly awakes out of sleep, so shall he rise in a moment at the nod of his Creator from the death of the body. For the name of death is horribly feared by weak minds, but the title of sleep is not feared. Hence Paul in charging his disciples saith, *But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as men without hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring again with Him.* [1 Thess. 4, 13. 14.] How is it that the great Preacher calls the death of the Lord death, but the death of the servants of the Lord he names not death, but sleep; but that, having regard to the weak hearts of his hearers, he mixes the medicine of his preaching with wonderful art, and Him, Whom they knew to have risen already, he does not doubt to teach them was dead, while those, who had not as yet risen again, that he might teach the hope of the Resurrection, he calls not dead, but sleeping? For he did not fear to call Him dead Whom his hearers knew to have already risen, and He was afraid to call those dead, whose rising again they scarcely believed. Thus blessed Job, seeing that he does not doubt of those that are dead in the flesh waking again to life, calls them sleeping rather than dead. It goes on; Ver. 13. *O that Thou wouldst defend me in hell!*

[ix]

13. That before the coming of the Mediator between God and man, every person, though he might have been of a pure and approved life, descended to the prisons of hell, there can be no doubt; in that man, who fell by his own act, was unable by his own act to return to the rest of Paradise, except that He should come, Who by the mystery of His Incarnation should open the way into that same Paradise. For hence after the sin of the first man it is recorded, that a flaming sword was placed at the entrance of Paradise [Gen. 3, 24], which is also called ‘moveable,’ [*versatilis*, V.] in that the time should come one day, that it might even be removed. Nor yet do we maintain that the souls of the righteous did so go down into hell, that they were imprisoned in places of punishment; but it is to be believed that there are higher regions in hell and that there are lower regions apart, so that both the

righteous might be at rest in the upper regions, and the unrighteous be tormented in the lower ones. Hence the Psalmist, by reason of the grace of God preventing him, says, *Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.* [Ps. 86, 13] Thus blessed Job before the coming of the Mediator, knowing of his going down into hell, implores the protecting hand of his Maker there, in order that he might be a stranger to the places of punishment; where, while he is brought to enjoy rest, he might be kept hidden from punishment. Hence he subjoins; *That thou wouldst keep me secret, until Thy wrath quite [pertransiit, V.] pass by.*

[x]

14. For the wrath of Almighty God does herein execute the force of its severity every day, that those who live unworthily it swallows up in most worthy punishments. Which wrath now indeed ‘passes by,’ but at the end it ‘quite passes by,’ in that now it is executed, but at the end of the world

it is finally consummated. Yet this wrath as to the souls of the righteous ‘quite passed by’ on the coming of our Redeemer, in that those the Mediator between God and man brought back from the prisons of hell to the joys of Paradise, when He did Himself go down there in pity. And on this subject it is necessary to be known, that the term ‘wrath’ does not suit the Divine Being, in that no disquieting influence disorders the simple nature of God. Whence it is said to Him, *But Thou, Ruler of power, judgest with tranquillity, and orderest us with exceeding great regard.* [Wisd. 12, 18] But because the souls of the righteous were one day to be set free by the coming of the Mediator from the regions of hell, though not the places of punishment, this too the righteous man foresees, and beseeching adds;  
*And appoint me a set time, when Thou shouldest remember me.*

[xi]

15. *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law.* [Gal. 4, 4. 5.] Thus the man of the Lord foreseeing this redemption, wherein many of the Gentile world as well were destined to be set free, as he himself says; *Though these things Thou dost hide in Thine heart, yet I know that Thou dost remember all things;* [Job 10, 13] prays for a time for the remembering of him, to be appointed him with Almighty God. For it is hence that the Lord saith in the Gospel, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things unto Me* [John 12, 32], i.e. ‘all things Elect;’ for neither did the Lord, when He returned from hell, draw the Elect and the lost together, but He bore off all those things from thence, which He did foreknow would have attached themselves to Him. Hence He also says by the Prophet Hosea, *I will be thy death, O death; I will be the biting of thee, O hell.* [Hos. 13, 14] Now what we put to death, we do our best that it should not be at all, and of that which we bite, a part we take away, and a part we leave. Therefore whereas the Lord wholly destroyed death in His Elect members, He proved Himself the ‘Death of death;’ but whereas He took a part from hell, and left a part, He did not wholly destroy but did ‘bite hell.’ Therefore He says, *I will be thy Death, O death;* i.e. ‘in Mine Elect, I utterly destroy thee.—*I will be the biting of thee, O hell;* in that in taking those away, I pierce thee in part.’ And so let blessed Job, knowing of this coming of our Redeemer to hell, pray for what he foresaw in the future, and let him say, *And that Thou shouldest appoint me a set time wherein Thou wouldest remember me.* It goes on;  
Ver. 14. *Thinkest thou that a dead man shall live again?*

[xii]

16. It is common with righteous men, in that which they themselves feel to be sure and well grounded, to urge something as if in doubting, so as to put the words of the weak into their own lips; and again by a strong sentence they gainsay utterly him that halts in doubtfulness, that by that which they are seen to put forth doubtfully, they may in some degree condescend to the weak, and hereby, that they deliver a sure sentence, they may draw the doubtful minds of the weak to firm ground. Which whilst they do, they are following the pattern of our Head. For our Lord, when He was near to His passion, took up the voice of those that were weak in Himself, saying, *O My Father, if it be Possible; let this cup pass from Me;* [Matt. 26, 39] and that He might remove their fear, He took it in Himself. And again shewing by obedience the force of strength, He saith, *Nevertheless, not as I wilt, but as Thou wilt.* That so when that thing threatens us which we would not have take place, we should so in weakness pray that it may not, as that in strength we may be



ready for the will of our Creator to be done, even in opposition to our own will. After this pattern, then, the words of weakness are sometimes proper to be adopted by the strong, that by their strong preachings afterwards the hearts of the weak may be more acceptably strengthened. Hence blessed Job when he uttered words as of one in doubt, saying, *Thinkest thou that a dead man shall live again?* presently added the sentence of his sure belief, whereby he saith, *All the days that I now serve militant will I wait, till my change come.*

[xiii]

17. He that waits for his change with such ardent longing, shews how great his certainty was of the Resurrection, and he makes it appear how greatly he looks down upon the course of the present life, who designates it a 'service militant.' For in the militant state there is the going on continually to an end, day by day the finishing of the conclusion is expected. Thus he despises the course of this life, and looks for the settling of fixedness, who hereby, that he is serving subject to changeableness, is in haste to attain to his change. For to the just man in this life the very load of his corruption is burthensome. Because watchings exhaust with weariness, sleep is sought, that the labour and harassing effect of watchings may be moderated: but sometimes even sleep kills. Hunger wastes the body, and that its craving may be banished, victuals are sought after: but frequently even the very victuals oppress, which had been sought in order to banish the oppression of debility. And so the load of corruption is a heavy burthen, which except it were so heavy, Paul would never have said, *For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.* [Rom. 8, 20—22] So let the holy man, longing for the state of incorruption, say, *All the days that I now serve militant will I wait till my change come.* In which same change what it is that takes place, he adds; Ver. 15. *Thou shalt call me, and I will answer Thee.*

[xiv]

18. We are said to answer anyone, when we do works in turn answerable to his deeds. Thus in that change the Lord 'calls,' and man 'answers,' in that, before the brightness of The Incorrupt, man is shewn forth incorrupt after corruption. For now so long as we are subject to corruption, we do not in any wise 'answer' our Creator, seeing that whereas corruption is far from incorruption, there is no similarity suitable to our answering. But of that change it is written, *When He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is.* [1 John 3, 2] Then therefore we shall truly 'answer God,' Who 'calleth,' when at the bidding of the Supreme Incorruption we shall arise incorruptible; and because the creature is not able to earn this by itself, but it is brought to pass by the gift of Almighty God alone, that it should be changed to that exceeding glory of incorruption, it is rightly subjoined; *Thou wilt stretch forth Thy right hand to the work of Thine hands.*

[xv]

19. As if he said in plain words; 'For this reason Thy corruptible creature is able to hold fast unto incorruption, because he is lifted up by the hands of Thy power, and is kept by the grace of Thy

regard, that he should hold fast.’ For the human creature by this alone, that it is a creature, has it inherent in itself to sink down below itself, but man has obtained it from his Creator, that he should both be caught above himself by contemplation, and held fast in himself by incorruption. And so that the creature may not fall away beneath himself, but hold on in incorruption, he is lifted to the steadfastness of immutability by the right hand of His Maker. Moreover it may be that by the title of ‘the Right Hand’ the Son may be designated; in that, *All things were made by Him*. [John 1, 3] Thus Almighty God ‘stretched out His Right Hand to the work of His hands,’ because, that He might lift on high the human race, become refuse and grovelling in the lowest things, He sent the Only-Begotten One, made Incarnate for this end. By Whose Incarnation it has been vouchsafed to us that we, who fall into incorruption of our own will, should one time be enabled to answer God when He calls us in the glory of incorruption. Wherein who can estimate the bountifulness of Divine Mercy, that He should bring man after sin to such a height of glory? God takes account of the bad things we do, yet by the grace of His lovingkindness He remits them to us in mercy. And hence it is added;

Ver. 16. *For now Thou numberest my steps, but Thou sparest my sins.*

[xvi]

20. God ‘numbers our steps,’ when He marks each one of our several deeds for the recompensing them. For what is denoted by the steps, but each particular act of ours? Thus Almighty God both ‘numbers our steps’ and ‘spares our sins,’ in that He at once surveys our actions with exactness, and yet remits them in mercy to those that repent, Who both sees obduracy in those that sin, and yet softens it into penitence by preventing grace. Thus He ‘numbers sins,’ in that He turns us ourselves to bewail the several things which we have done. And He remits them in mercy, in that whilst we our own selves punish them, He Himself never judges them in the last reckoning, as Paul testifies, who saith, *For if we should judge ourselves, we should not be judged*. [1 Cor. 11, 31] Hence it is further added;

Ver. 17. *Thou hast sealed up as it were in a bag my transgressions; but Thou hast healed mine iniquity.*

[xvii]

21. Our ‘transgressions are sealed up as it were in a bag,’ in that that thing which we ourselves do in outward act, except we wash away by penance in the mean while, is kept in the secrecy of God’s judgments under a kind of hiding, that one day it may also come forth out of the bag of secrecy into the publicity of the Judgment. Hence it is said by Moses too; *Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasures? In the day of vengeance I will repay them*. [Deut. 32, 34] But when for the evil things that we have done, we are bruised with the stroke of discipline, and lament the same by penance, He ‘sealeth up,’ and ‘healeth’ our iniquity, in that He neither leaves things unpunished here, nor reserves them to be punished in the Judgment. Thus He ‘seals transgressions,’ in that He marks them with exactness here, to chastise them with the rod, but He ‘heals’ them, in that He wholly remits them in the stroke. Hence the iniquity of that persecutor of Him, whom He laid prostrate on the ground, He did also by sealing heal, seeing that He said concerning him to Ananias; *He is a chosen vessel unto Me to bear My Name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for My Name’s sake*. [Acts 9, 15] For to that man, whom on account of past transgressions He still

threatens with future sufferings, what he had done wrong, surely He kept sealed in the heart; but as surely in so sealing He had healed his transgressions, in that He called him 'a chosen vessel.' Or, surely, 'our transgressions are sealed in a bag,' when the evil things we have been guilty of, we reflect on continually with a heedful heart. For what is the heart of man, but God's 'bag?' wherein whilst we earnestly look to see how much we transgress, we carry our sins as it were 'sealed up in God's bag.' Did not David keep his sin 'sealed up in a bag,' when he said, *For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.* [Ps. 51, 3] And because the faults, which we are made acquainted with in reviewing and repeating, the pitiful Creator remits to us, after the 'transgressions being sealed in a bag,' it is rightly subjoined, *But Thou hast healed mine iniquity:* as if he said in plain speech, 'What things Thou dost now seal, so that I in repenting should see, doubtless Thou dost it, that in the retribution they should never be seen.' It follows;  
Ver. 18, 19. *And surely the mountain falling slippeth away, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones, and by washing little by little the earth is consumed, and so Thou wilt in a like way destroy man.*

[xviii]

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

22. This is very often the case, that upon rocks falling, a piece of rock is removed to other places; that waters wear stones, and little by little the ground is wasted by the washings of the flood: but we have need to make out with great diligence that which is brought in; *and man Thou wilt in a like way destroy.* For what is that, that to a mountain falling, a rock removed, a stone worn hollow, and ground consumed by the washing of the flood, the ruin of man is likened, but this, which we are plainly given to understand, that there are two sorts of temptations, one sort, which passes in the mind even of the good man by sudden accident, that he should be so tempted of a sudden, that by the unexpectedness of the event it should make him reel, and bring him to the ground, and that he does not see his falling, until after he has fallen; while there is another which comes by little and little into the mind, and by gentle suggestions corrupts the resisting soul, and not by its excessiveness but by its importunity wastes all the powers of righteousness therein? And so, whereas there is one sort of temptation, which by a sudden assault very often brings the good down to the ground, let it be said, *And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place,* i.e. the holy mind, whose place was righteousness, is by a sudden impulse removed into sin. Again, because there is another sort of temptation, which infuses itself gently into the heart of man, and wears and wastes all the hardness of its resolution, let it be said, *The waters wear the stones;* in this way, viz. that the unremitted and soft flatteries of lust suck away the hardness of the soul, and the slow and penetrating evil habit corrodes the hard and forcible purpose of the mind. Hence it is added, *And by washing the ground is consumed little by little.* For as when water flows in, 'the ground is consumed little by little,' so when bad habit creeps on [n] by gentle degrees, even the strong mind is engulfed. Hence it is well added, *And Thou wilt in a like way destroy man,* i.e. in this way, that when Thou by a righteous appointment sufferest temptation of a sudden to get the dominion over the mind of him, who is seen to have his stand on high, Thou causes; 'the mountain to fall and slip away,' and when the will is changed to evil, it is as if 'the rock were removed to a new place,' but whilst Thou lettest a gentle and fine yet unremitting temptation prevail over the minds of those, who are accounted strong, 'the waters in a manner wear the stones, and by washing, the ground is consumed little by little,' in that the hardness of the mind being subdued by gentle suggesting is made soft.

23. Let us see how that David was a 'high mountain,' who was enabled to contemplate such great mysteries of God by the Spirit of prophecy; but let us mark how he 'slipped down,' by a sudden fall, who whilst walking on the solar, lusted after and carried off another man's wife, and killed her husband with loss to his own army. Then 'fell a mountain with a sudden fall,' when that mind which was used to dwell with heavenly mysteries, was overcome by sudden temptation, and brought under to such most monstrous pollution. And so 'the rock was removed from its place,' when the mind of the prophet being shut out from the mysteries of prophecy came to imagine filthy things. Let us see moreover how 'the waters wear the stones, and by washing the ground is consumed little by little,' in that Solomon by an immoderate intercourse and frequency with women was brought to this pass, that he built a temple to idols: and he who had before erected a temple to God, by frequency of lust, being even bowed down under misbelief, was not afraid to erect idol temples. And so it came to pass, that by unremitting wantonness of the flesh, he was brought even to misbelief of the spirit. What else then, but that the 'waters did wear away the stone, and by washing the ground was consumed little by little,' in that by the encroaching [*surripiente*] of sin as it flowed in little by little, the ground of his heart crumbled away unto wasting? Thus let blessed Job consider both sorts of temptation, whether the sudden and excessive, or the gentle and prolonged sort, let him contemplate the falls of his fellow-creatures, and from those things which take place outwardly let him catch the keynote of his contemplation within, saying, *And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place:* the waters wear the stones, and by washing little by little the earth is wasted; and Thou wilt in like manner destroy men; i.e. 'as these things without sense at one time are brought to the ground suddenly, at one time are worn little by little by the softness of water being let in; so likewise him, whom Thou hast created a reasoning creature, Thou dost either overthrow by sudden temptation, or permittest to be worn and wasted by a long and gentle one;' and that reasoning creature he directly describes in the following words, saying,

Ver. 20. *Thou hast strengthened him for a little space, that the might pass by for ever.*

[xix] [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

24. Man has been 'strengthened here for a little space,' in that he has received here powers of living for a while, that he should for ever pass away thither, where no end should bound and shut in his life, but in this moment's space where he has been 'strengthened,' he extracts that wherefrom in the everlasting world he may either find how always to have joy, or not ever escape the punishments he has entered upon. And for this reason, that 'he has been strengthened for a little space,' to 'pass away for everlasting,' it is fitly added immediately;  
*Thou wilt change his countenance, and send him away.*

[xx]

25. 'The face of man is changed,' when his form is wasted by death; but 'he is sent away,' in that from those things which he kept willingly he is necessitated to pass away to the eternal world against his will, and while he is brought thereunto, these things which he held long and thought on, how it will be with them now left behind him he knows nothing. Hence it is added;  
Ver. 21. *Whether his sons be in honour or dishonour, he perceiveth not.*

[xxi]

26. For as they, who are still living, know nothing of the souls of the dead, in what place they are held; so the dead, concerning the life of those living after them in the flesh, know not at all how it is ordered; in that both the life of the spirit is far from the life of the flesh, and as the corporeal and incorporeal are things different in kind, so are they parted in knowledge. Which however is not to be imagined concerning holy souls, in that they which behold the brightness of Almighty God within, we cannot for a moment suppose that there is any thing without that they know not [b]. But because carnal persons bestow their chief affection on their children, blessed Job declares that they are hereafter ignorant of that, which they loved here with all their heart, so that 'whether their sons be in honour or dishonour they know not,' whereas their care for these was always preying upon their minds.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

Which however if it is to be understood in a spiritual sense, with no unfitness by the title of sons we have works denoted, as Paul saith of woman, *Notwithstanding, she shall be saved in childbearing.* [1 Tim. 2, 15] Not that a woman, who being devoted to continency never bears children, shall not be saved, but she is said to be 'saved by childbearing,' because by the operation of good works she is united to everlasting salvation. Thus the children in honour are good deeds, and the children in dishonour are bad deeds. And often man strives to do things with a good intention, yet by reason of the many occasions that creep upon him, how his actions are accounted of in the sight of Almighty God is a thing uncertain. And so 'whether his sons be in honour or dishonour he perceiveth not,' in that his works being sifted with a searching scrutiny, whether they be approved or condemned he cannot tell. Thus here man is placed in the painfulness of labour, and thither he is brought in the fearfulness of misgiving. Hence it is yet further subjoined concerning the labour of the present life itself,

Ver. 22. *But his flesh while he liveth shall have pain, and His soul shall mourn over himself.*

[xxii]

27. Concerning the married Paul saith, *Nevertheless, such shall have trouble in the flesh.* [1 Cor. 7, 28] But they may 'have trouble in the flesh here,' who are even now leading spiritual lives.

Wherefore then is it said as it were in a special sense, that there is 'trouble of the flesh' to married persons, seeing that it is not far removed even from the life of the spiritual; excepting that those commonly meet with worse troubles from the flesh, who delight themselves with the pleasures of the flesh? And it is well said, *And his soul within him shall mourn over himself;* in that whosoever desires to rejoice in himself, by this alone is henceforth in woe, viz. that he has gone far from the true joy. For the true joy of the soul is the Creator. Therefore it is meet that man should ever find in himself sorrow, who, forsaking His Creator, sought joy in himself. It proceeds;

Chap. xv. 1. *Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said, Should a wise man answer as if speaking into the wind, and fill his belly with burning?*

[xxiii]

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

28. We have already said frequently that blessed Job bears a type of the Holy Church universal, and that his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who as it were on the plea of defence of the Lord

find occasion of foolish talking, and let loose insulting words against good men; to whom all is displeasing that is thought by the faithful, as though it were uttered to the wind. Whence it is said now, *Should a wise man answer as if speaking into the wind?* Nor do they account the words of the good as the sayings of reason, but as the stings of madness. Whence it is added, *And shall he fill his belly with burning?* in that those things even which they know themselves to say by way of insult, they are ever bent to palliate, as has been said, on the ground of defending the Lord.

Whence Eliphaz adds;

*Thou reprovest with words him that is not equal to thee, and thou speakest what is not expedient for thee.*

[xxiv]

29. Now they suppose that no one has the fear of the Lord, saving him whom they can draw into the foolishness of their own confession. Hence he adds, *Yea, thou castest off fear, and hast taken, prayer before God.* 'Taken' means 'taken away;' as if he said in plain terms, 'Presuming on Thine own righteousness, thou scornest to implore the grace of Thy Creator.' For when heretics do not find real evils to urge against the good, they feign things to reproach them with, that they may seem righteous, and it very often happens, that they come to open words of insult. Whence it is still further added,

*For thine iniquity teacheth, thy mouth, and thou followest the tongue of the crafty.*

30. 'Iniquity teaches the mouth,' when there is conceived by a bad life somewhat to be spoken of a worse kind. Now because blessed Job was free in speech in proportion as he was holy in action, by his friends, who hold the type of heretics, he is found fault with at once on the grounds of a wicked life and of a bold mouth, so that it should be said, *Thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth.* As if it were said to him in plain words, 'What thou speakest wickedly, thou hast learnt of a more wicked life.' But it often happens that heretics, whilst in seeming they venerate God, oppose His mysteries, and they think it humility if they deny the truth. For there are some, who imagine that they are bringing injury upon God, if they confess that He took true flesh, or if they should think that He was capable of really dying for us in the flesh. And whilst they endeavour as it were to bestow upon God a greater degree of honour, they are enforced to deny the real praises of His goodness. For in praise of His charity what is there more efficacious, than that in our behalf He should make those things meet to Himself for the undertaking them, which seem for Him unworthy. But Holy Church confesses His very and true Flesh, His very and true Death, but in declaring these things she is thought by Heretics to put an indignity upon God. Whence it is said now, *And thou followest the tongue of them that blaspheme.* And if any piece of adversity befall her in this world, they say that it was brought upon her by this very injuriousness of her confession. Hence it is yet further added; Ver. 6. *Thine own mouth shall condemn thee, and not I; yea, thine own lips shall answer thee.*

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31. For because they suppose that the evils of adversity break out in consequence of the erroneousness of confession; that say that 'her own lips shall answer her,' so that fault of utterances should be the cause of the scourge. But sometime they desire to repress it as if by reasoning; whence Eliphaz sets himself to reprove blessed Job as it were on principles of reason, saying,

Ver. 7, 8. *Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God? and shall His wisdom be inferior to thee?*

[xxvii]

32. As if He said in plainer words, 'Thou, who speakest of the Eternal One, consider that thou art a creature of time. Thou that arguest concerning His wisdom, remember that Thou knowest not His counsel.' But that Heretics for this take up the words of the defence of the Lord, that they may appear to be learned, and whilst they seem to defend the glory of God, are making known their knowledge to men, the very words of Eliphaz subjoined bear witness, who began indeed to speak of the wisdom of God, but immediately fell into self-elation, saying,

Ver. 9. *What knowest thou that we know not? What understandest thou which is not in us?*

Which same sentences plainly shew in what exaltation of mind all that comes forth, which sounds as if it were for defence of the Lord. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *With us are both the gray headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father.*

33. That all Heretics are gone out of the Holy Church Universal, John testifies, when he says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us.* [1 John 2, 19] But that those things which they maintain they may recommend to the weak minds of their fellow-creatures as on the grounds of antiquity, they testify that they have ancient fathers, and the very Doctors of the Church themselves they declare are the masters of their school; and whilst they look down upon present preachers, they pride themselves with unfounded presumption on the tutorage of the ancient fathers, so that they avouch that the things they themselves assert the old fathers held as well, in order that what they are not able to build up in truth and right, they may strengthen as by the authority of those. But because it is written, *Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*, oftentimes Holy Church travails with countless adversities in this life, and the life of the children of perdition is let to go free of the scourge, in proportion as it is not reserved for any rewards. But Heretics seeing the tribulations of Holy Church, look down upon her, and fancy that she is bruised by such a multitude of strokes, in due of a false creed [*professionis*]. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 11. *Is it a great thing that God should console thee? But thine evil words prevent this.*

[xxix]

34. As if he said to him in plain words; 'If thou wouldest amend thy profession of faith, thou mightest long ago have had consolation in thy scourges.' It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Why does thine heart lift thee up, and hast thou thine eyes astonished as thinking of great things?*

[xxx]

35. Often the mind of the righteous is so suspended in contemplating things on high, that outwardly their face seems to have been struck with stupefaction. But because Heretics are not taught to enforce the power of contemplation in secret, they think that it is done by the just, and those that are imbued with a right understanding, more in hypocrisy than in truth, in that what they

cannot themselves obtain the possession of, they do not suppose exists in others in a genuine way. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *Why dost thy spirit swell against God, that thou lettest such words go out of thy mouth?*

[xxxix]

36. Very often when the righteous are afflicted with any woes, they are forced to confess their works, as blessed Job had done, who after just living was pressed down by the strokes of the rod; but when the unrighteous hear their sayings, they think that they are uttered in self-exaltation rather than in truth. For they weigh the words of the righteous by their own feelings, and do not think that good words can be said in a humble spirit. For as it is a great sin, for a man to ascribe to himself what there is not, so it is commonly no sin at all if he speaks with humility the good that there is. Hence it often happens that the just and unjust have words that are like, but always a heart that is widely unlike, and the same sayings for which the Lord is offended by the unrighteous, He is even propitiated by the righteous. Thus the Pharisee when he entered the temple said, *I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess*. [Luke 18, 12] But the publican went out justified more than he. Hezekiah too, the king, when he was afflicted with sickness of the body, and brought to the last point of life, said with his heart pierced in prayer, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, Nor yet did the Lord disregard this confession of his perfectness, or refuse him, whom He immediately heard effectually in his prayers. See, the Pharisee justified himself in act, and Hezekiah maintained himself to be just in thought as well, and by the same act by which the one offended, the other propitiated God. Wherefore then was this, but that Almighty God estimates the words of each by the thoughts within, and in His ear those are not high, which are uttered with a lowly heart? Hence blessed Job, where he put forward his deeds, did not in the least degree swell out against God, in that those things which he had really done, he spoke with a humble spirit. Now Heretics are accustomed to mix some true points with the statements of their erroneous persuasions. And the friends of blessed Job, though in the reproving of him they are altogether deceived, may yet even say some things true, which they learnt by frequent communication with him, whose words were they all to be contradicted, the Apostle Paul would never have brought forward the sentence of Eliphaz saying, *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness*. [1 Cor. 3, 19] And so, because those things which they say right, they do not rightly say against blessed Job, let us in their sayings at once tread under our feet the mischief of indiscretion, and sift the marrow of rightness. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *What is man, that he should be clean?*

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#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

37. For hereby alone that he is called 'man' he is described as earthly and weak; for man is so named ['homo' from 'humus,' as Hebrew 'Adam'] from the earth. And how is it possible for him to be free from stain, who being made of earth of his own will fell into infirmity? where it is added; *And he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?* For the first piece of unrighteousness the woman proffered to the man in Paradise. And so how shall he appear righteous, who was born of her that proved the bidder of unrighteousness? It goes on;  
Ver. 15. *Behold, among His saints there is no one that is unchangeable; the heavens are not clean in His sight.*



[xxxiii]

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

38. He repeated that with the title of ‘the heavens,’ which he before denoted by the appellation of the ‘Saints.’ For it is written concerning those very Saints; *The heavens are telling the glory of God* [Ps. 19, 1]; all of whom have by nature in themselves changeableness proper to them, but while they earnestly desire to attach themselves always to the unchangeable ‘Truth,’ in attaching themselves they bring it to pass that they become unchangeable; and whilst they keep themselves fixed thereto with a full affection, they one day obtain that being carried above themselves, they get the better of this, that in themselves they were changeable. For what is changeableness but a kind of death? which while it changes one thing into another, as it were kills that which was, that that should begin to be which was not. And it is written concerning the Author of all things, *Who only hath unchangeableness* [1 Tim. 6, 16], in that He only is unchangeable in Himself. Concerning whom it is written by James; *With Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of changing* [Jam. 1, 17]. For changeableness itself is a shadow, which if it altered the light by any changes, would as it were obscure it. But because in God changeableness entereth not, ‘no shadow of changing’ intercepts His Light. Now it is well said, *the heavens are not clean in His sight*, in that by themselves before the strict cognizance of God not even they can be clean to perfection, who are preachers of cleanness, as John testifies, who saith, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves*. [1 John 1, 8] If then ‘among His Saints there is no one unchangeable, and the heavens are not clean in His sight,’ who may presume in himself upon the practice of righteousness? Hence it is further added;

Ver. 16. *How much more abominable and useless is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?*

[xxxiv]

39. He who first said it was impossible that man should of himself be clean from sin, and righteous, calls him ‘abominable’ and ‘useless;’ ‘abominable’ on account of the uncleanness of his stain, but ‘useless’ on account of the unrighteousness of an imperfect life; who however may be understood as ‘abominable and useless’ in another sense. For often a bad man seems to do some things rightly, but by those things which are wrong, even those which are right belonging to him are brought to nought; and because the evil ones are very displeasing to God, neither are those pleasing which seem to be good. And so he, that is ‘abominable’ before God in his evil things, is ‘useless’ in the good; in that whilst he shews himself an object of execration to God by wicked deeds, neither is that which seems right proceeding from him well-pleasing. And it is well said, *Which drinketh iniquity like water*. For what is eaten is swallowed not without delay, seeing that it is chewed in order to be swallowed; but what is drunk has no hindrance to be swallowed, in proportion as it hath again no need to be chewed. And so because sin is committed by the foolish man without any drawing back, iniquity is drunk like water. For because he does unlawful things without fear, he swallows the draught of iniquity without let or hindrance. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *I will shew it thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare to thee.*

[xxxv]

40. All arrogant persons have this proper to them, that when they have a right notion, though the thing be little, they wrest it to serve the turn of pride, and by the same act whereby from understanding they might to themselves be raised higher, from swollen pride they only fall into the

pit of self exalting, account themselves better instructed than the learned, and they exact respect for themselves from their betters, and stand upon it to teach as with authority those that are holier men. Hence it is now said, *I will shew thee, hear me*. And because he teaches with less authority who tells things that he has heard, than he who tells those things which he has seen, in order that Eliphaz may claim to himself the stronger kind of authority, he says, *And that which I have seen I will declare*. But because Heretics are sometimes confounded by their fathers being condemned, and yet bring forward as it were with authority the sentences of those, by whose folly they are deservedly rejected; the very audacity of Heretics is itself rightly introduced, when it is said, Ver. 18. *Wise men confess, and do not hide their fathers*.

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41. And at once they leap out in praise of them, and boast that they had been as it were the only rulers of the Church. Hence it is yet further added, *Unto whom alone the earth was given, and the stranger passed not among them*. They think that ‘the earth was given to their fathers alone,’ in that the masters of their erroneous teaching alone really had rule in the Church. And who is termed ‘the stranger,’ but the Apostate Angel? Whence too it is said by the Psalmist concerning all the wicked spirits together; *For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul*. [Ps. 54, 3] And so Heretics, because they think that the hearts of their doctors were not subject to the Apostate Angel, say that ‘the stranger passed not among them.’ For which same stranger to pass through each individual, is his putting wicked thoughts into his heart. And hence it is said by the voice of the Prophet of the evil spirits arrayed against the soul standing erect, *Which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over*. [Is. 51, 23] But whereas Eliphaz the Temanite, when going to tell some things, wishes to be heard, though he knows many things which were proper to be said, and yet does not know that they were not proper to be said to blessed Job, let us hear the sentences which he uttered against blessed Job. For neither ought we to consider the person to whom, but only what it was that he said. It goes on; Ver. 20. *The wicked man feels proud all his days*.

[xxxvii]

42. The Elect also are apt to feel pride in some of their thoughts and actions. But because they are Elect persons, they cannot feel pride all their days, because before they end their lives, they turn their hearts from self-exaltation to the fearing of humility. But ‘the wicked man feels pride all his days,’ in that he so brings his life to an end, that he never departs from self-exalting. He looks round him on all that is flourishing in time, and he neglects to consider whither he is being carried for ever. He puts his trust in the life of the flesh, and thinks that those things continue for long, which he holds at the moment. His mind is set firm in self-exaltation, every one of his kin is brought into contempt, how suddenly death creeps upon him he never takes thought, how certain his happiness he never reflects; whereas if he did but turn his eyes to the uncertainty of fleeting life, he would never keep for a certainty things uncertain. And hence it is well added; *And the number of the years of his tyranny is uncertain*.

[xxxviii]

43. For he ought not to have felt pride at all, even if he might have had the number of his years assured, so that knowing how long he should live, he might know beforehand when to withdraw himself from self-exaltation. But since the present life is always uncertain, death's creeping upon him ought always to be apprehended the more, insomuch as it can never be foreseen. And he rightly calls the pride of the wicked, 'tyranny.' For he is justly styled a tyrant, who in the commonwealth takes the lead without right. And be it known that every proud man, according to his several measure, exercises tyranny. For what sometimes one person practises in the commonwealth, in this case, by power of high office accorded to him, another in a province, another in a city, another in his own family, this same another by concealed wickedness practises to himself in the thought of his own heart. Nor does the Lord regard what amount of evil each person may be able to do, but what amount he may have the mind to do. And when the power is wanting without, he is, a tyrant within himself, whom iniquity lords it over within; for though he does not oppress his neighbours outwardly, yet inwardly he seeks to possess power, in order to oppress them; and because Almighty God considers the hearts of men, the wicked man has already done in his eyes the thing that he conceived. Now our Creator willed that our end should be hidden from us with this view, that whereas we are uncertain when we may die, we may always be found ready for death. Hence after it has been said, *All his days the wicked man feels proud*, he rightly adds, *and the number of the years of his tyranny is uncertain*. As if it were said in plain words, 'Wherefore is he lifted up as if on the grounds of a certainty, the tenure of whose life is held under the penalty of uncertainty?' But Almighty God not only reserves future punishments for those that live wickedly, but even here, where they go wrong, he besets their hearts with punishments, that by this alone, viz. that they sin, they should be smiting themselves, and that always trembling, always full of suspicion, they should be afraid of meeting with those mischiefs from others, which they remember themselves to have done to others. Whence it is yet further added of this wicked one;  
Ver. 21. *A dreadful sound is alway in his ears, and when there is peace, he suspecteth plots.*

[xxxix]

44. But there is nothing more happy than simplicity of heart, in that in proportion as it shews forth innocency towards others, there is nothing it dreads to meet with from others. For it has its simplicity as a kind of citadel of strength, nor is it suspicious of undergoing what it has no remembrance of having itself done. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence*. Who also says again, *A secure mind is like a perpetual feast*. For the mere repose of security is like the continuance of refreshment. Whereas, on the other hand, the evil mind is always set in pains and labours, since it is either contriving mischiefs that it may bring down, or fearing lest these be brought down upon it by others; and whatever plot it hatches against neighbours, it is afraid of being hatched by neighbours against itself. It is on every side full of suspicions, on every side full of alarms. Everyone that occurs to mind is supposed to be making out things hostile to him, and so he, to whom the repose of security is wanting, has surely 'a dreadful sound in his ears' always. And it often happens that his neighbour, whoever he be, speaks to him with a single intention, and designs nothing hostile, but 'when there is peace, he suspecteth plots;' in that he, who is always dealing craftily, calculates that there is not single dealing towards himself. And whereas it is written, *When the wicked man cometh into the pit of sinners, he contemneth*, he being encompassed with the darkness of his iniquity henceforth despairs of light. Hence too it follows;  
Ver. 22. *He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.*

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45. For because he believes himself to be on all sides stricken from ambush, despairing of salvation, he is ever growing on in wickedness. Now there are times too when this ungodly man turns his eyes to judgments from above as well, and dreads their coming upon him. But whilst he seeks the wages of the present life, these same judgments which he had begun to fear, being conquered by the madness of avarice, he sets at nought. And he thinks indeed that it is possible he may die in sin, but yet he does not cease from sin. Hence it is subjoined;

Ver. 28. *When he has stirred himself to seek bread, he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready in his hand.*

[xli]

46. For 'bread' is the wages of the present life, and 'the day of darkness' is taken for the time of vengeance. And so in the course of his conduct, the wicked man at times weighs well the present wrath of the Judge Above, but he is not diverted from wickedness, so that it too should be itself diverted from his destruction. But his conscience accusing him, he fears to be smitten, yet he is ever increasing that whereby he should be smitten. He makes slight of his return, he despairs of pardon, he carries himself high in sin, yet he has fear within, a witness of his wickedness. And though he seem outwardly to be doing wicked things with a bold front, yet for these in his own heart he is untrained to tremble. Whence it is written; *For whereas wickedness is timorous, she gives witness to condemnation.* [Wisd. 17, 11] For when a man does unlawful things, he is in dread of the thing that he does; and the open witness for his condemning is the very fearfulness of wickedness itself, in that both the thing that is done is feared, and yet the evil that is feared is not overcome. Of which it is yet further added,

Ver. 24. *Trouble shall make him afraid, straits shall besiege him, as a king ready to the battle.*

[xlii]

47. In all that the wicked man does, he is hedged in with anguish, and tribulation, and straits; in that his soul is confounded with anxiety and misgiving. One man secretly longs to seize another's goods by force, and he toils and strains in the thoughts of his heart, that he may not be found out. Another man, forsaking truth, makes up his mind to tell a lie, that he may deceive the mind of those that hear him; but what great labour it is to guard with sufficient heed, that his deceit itself may not be found out! For he sets before his eyes what answer may be made to him by those that know the truth, and with great effort of thought he makes out how by the appliances of falsehood he may surpass the evidences of truth. He cloaks himself about on this side and on that, and against that wherein he might have been found out, he looks about for an answer resembling truth, whereas if he had been minded to tell the truth, assuredly he might have done it without pains. For the path of truth is smooth, and the road of falsehood grievous. And hence it is said by the Prophet, *They have taught their tongue to speak lies, and wearied themselves to commit iniquity.* [Jer. 9, 5] Therefore it is well said, *Trouble shall make him afraid, and straits besiege him*; in that in himself he is undone in the toilsomeness of fear, who forsakes the way of truth, which is the companion of security. And he is rightly compared to a king prepared for battle, seeing that in that very evil that he does he is at once alarmed and presses on; at once made to tremble by conscience, and to pant

from desire; fears, and swells high; is scared with misgivings, and lifts up his spirit in audacity. Moreover, we are to know that 'a king who is prepared for battle' is so apprehensive against the enemy, that he also fears for that very army which he is leading, lest it should be seduced, lest by the desertion of his soldiers he be laid open to the darts of the enemy. And so 'the wicked man is besieged with straits, like a king ready to the battle;' in that whilst practising false things and uttering false words, he dreads lest he should lose his own soldiers; i.e. the appliances of falsehoods; and lie exposed to the darts of truth, if it chance that that be lacking to him, which he might have to oppose on the side of deceit. But though the Spirit trembles, though conscience accuses, yet the wicked man is mastered by his own passion; and forcing under fear, he assumes hardihood from his iniquities. And often when revenge is set before his mind, he lifts himself up against God; he determines to undergo any inflictions at His hands, so long as in this life, while he has the power, he may do all that he pleases. And hence it is added; Ver. 25, 26. *For he hath stretched out his hand against God, and is strengthened against the Almighty; He runneth upon Him with erected neck, and he is armed with a stout neck.*

[xlirii]

48. These things are more plainly understood of the head of the wicked himself, i.e. Antichrist, who, while lifting up his hand against God, is said to be 'strengthened,' in that for a little time he is permitted to be exalted; that in proportion as he is let to glory for a while, he may be punished the more pitilessly for everlasting; but seeing that all the wicked are his members, this, which he then in the end of the world shall do alone in a preeminent way, let us see how it is done now by each one of the wicked severally. Thus there are some who even if they do ever set themselves to do things in opposition to the judgment of Almighty God, disabled by the very impossibility of putting their will in execution, look to themselves, are made to turn themselves to Him Whom they were minded to despise, and they, who might have gone far from Him, if they had been able to execute what they were minded to do, are sometimes hereby saved, because they could not execute what they wickedly had the mind for; and hence being brought back to themselves, they see what condition they are of, and mourn that they had the mind to do things contrary to 'Truth.' And there are some who by the just judgment of God are suffered to execute with worse wickedness that which they wickedly desire to do in opposition to God. And whilst an evil disposition inflames, and power strengthens them, they are henceforth unable to attain to know themselves in their erring course, in proportion as in the affluence of their fortunes they are by power ever being drawn out of themselves. Concerning the bent of whose mind it is here said, *For he stretcheth forth his hand against God, and is strengthened against the Almighty.* For 'to stretch forth the hand against God,' is to persevere in evil doing, setting at nought the judgments of God. And because God is then more wroth, when He suffers that to be fulfilled, which thing ought not to have been conceived at all in thought, this wicked man is 'strengthened against the Almighty,' in that he is suffered to prosper in his wicked course of conduct, so that he should both do wicked things, and yet live in happiness, Of whom it is yet further added, *He runneth upon Him with erected neck.*

49. To 'run against God with erected neck' is to commit with shamelessness such things as are displeasing to the Creator. Of whom it is rightly said, *He ran*, i.e. in doing evil, he had no let or hindrance from adversity. Concerning whom it is yet further added; *And he is armed with a stout neck [pingui cervice]*. 'A stout neck' is wealthy pride, as being buttressed up with overflowing stores, as it were with a quantity of flesh. And so the bad man with power 'is armed against God

with a stout neck,' in that swollen with temporal good things he is set up as by a great bulk of flesh against the precepts of truth. For what is poverty but a sort of leanness, and what is the abundance of stores but the fatness of the present life? And so he lifts himself up 'with a stout neck against God,' who takes temporal abundance to serve the end of pride. For the powerful and wicked have this thing proper to them, that being engrossed with deceitful riches they neglect the true riches of God, and in proportion as they investigate the less what is true, they are the more lifted up by false acquisitions. For the care and concern of earthly things, because it engrosses, utterly blinds the sight. Whence it is yet further added with justness,

*Ver. 27. Fatness hath covered his face.*

[xliv]

50. For the sight is in the face, wherein too is the first more honourable part of the body. Therefore the best of the mind is not unjustly denoted by the face, which wherever we turn it, there we see. And so 'fatness covers the face,' in that the earnestly coveted abundance of earthly good things presses down the eyes of the mind, and that which should be honourable [A.B.C.D. more honorable] in them, it makes foul in the eyes of God, in that it weighs it to the earth with a multitude of concerns. Who do not however find it enough that they themselves should be full of pride, unless those too that are united to them, themselves also are made boastful by their fatness. For there are some who on being countenanced by the patronage of the greater ones, are set up with pride, and on the strength of their power uplifted against the destitute. Hence it is yet further subjoined;

*And the fat hangs from his sides.*

[xlv]

51. Because the fat is the richness of the flesh, and we are accustomed to call those persons the 'sides' [*latera*] of the rich, whom we see united to them, 'the fat hangs down from his sides,' in that every one that attaches himself to the powerful and wicked man is by his power himself also as it were swollen with the fatness of good things, so that following the wickedness of an evil patron he has no fear of God, he distresses the poor, whom he is able, and as much as he is able, and uplifts his heart on the strength of temporal glory. So when there is such an one who is attached to a powerful wicked man, 'from his side,' surely enough, 'the fat hangs down.' Concerning whom it is yet further added;

*Ver. 28. And he dwelleth in desolate communities, and in deserted houses, which are become heaps.*

[xlvi]

52. For as a 'community' has its name from the intercourse of persons living together in common, 'desolate communities' are the actual throngs of wicked followers, by whose shouts this bad man is commended, when he is hurried away by his wickedness into evil deeds. Whence it is written; *The sinner is commended in the desires of his soul, and he that doeth unrighteousness is blessed.* [Ps. 10, 3] But 'deserted houses' are bad thoughts, which this wicked man inhabits, in that by all that he does he seeks to please the thoughts of the wicked. Which communities are rightly called 'desolate,' and houses 'deserted,' in that except Almighty God had abandoned the dealings and

thoughts of such on account of their previous sins, they would never arrive at, the commission of worse ones. And it is well said, *Which are reduced to heaps*. For the ruined buildings of houses and cities make heaps; in that whilst the wicked severally are joined to one another for wicked deeds in confused courses of conduct, they shew without doubt, that they have fallen from the edifice of life. It goes on;

Ver. 29. *He shall not be inhabited, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he send forth his root into the earth.*

[xlvi]

53. That which is here expressed, *He shall not be inhabited*, I have found in some copies, *He shall not be enriched*; but the sense is not at variance, though the phraseology is at variance. For he is 'enriched' with virtuous attainments whose mind is 'inhabited' by Almighty God. But because the thought of the proud man is not 'inhabited' by the grace of his Maker, hereby surely he is not 'enriched' with virtues. On this account then that he is empty within, let it be said, *He shall not be inhabited*. But in respect to that which is swollen up without, being of a transitory nature, it is rightly added, *Nor shall his substance continue*. As though it were said in plain speech, 'This which he seems to have outwardly passes away, and what was not capable of passing away, he has not within.' And hence it is fitly subjoined, *Neither shall he send his root into the earth*. Which if we take as spoken of this earth, doubtless it is plain, that the tree which has no root in the earth, is brought to the ground on being shaken by the very slightest gales of wind; and every proud man while he is 'strengthened against the Almighty Lord,' while he 'runs with erected neck,' and is 'uplifted with a stout neck against his Maker,' is seen to stand like a tree; but his standing is without root, in that as it were at a light breath, so at the stirring of the secret sentence, his life is rooted up. But if in this passage we take 'the earth' for the recompensing of the Eternal Country, concerning which the Prophet saith, *My portion is in the land of the living* [Ps. 142, 5], this wicked man does not 'send forth his root in the earth,' in that he never plants the thoughts of his heart into the desire of the eternal life. For what the root is to the tree, the same is the thought of his own heart to each one of mankind; for in the case of that which is seen outwardly, there is a holding by that which is not seen outwardly [al. 'which (being) within is not seen.']. And hence it is said by the Prophet, *Shall again take root downwardly, and bear fruit upwards*. [Is. 37, 31] For when we stretch our thought in sympathizing with a poor neighbour; 'we as it were send a root downwards, that we may bear the fruit of recompense above.' It follows;

Ver. 30. *He shall not depart out of darkness.*

[xlviii]

54. If this proud man had been minded to turn back from sin to righteousness, he might 'depart out of darkness.' But because he seeks not the light of righteousness, he does not depart out of darkness. After whose example, those likewise, who 'attach themselves to him out breathe themselves in making earthly advancements, are kindled with the torches of avarice, and scorched with the fires of carnal desires. And hence it is added, *The flame shall dry up his branches*.

[xlix]

55. For if he united to himself any that were searching after the Eternal Country, he would have green 'branches' in himself. But because they that are joined to him, are also heated with earthly passions, and the flame of passions kindles the hearts of his followers, it doth surely 'dry up his branches,' that they should not bear the fruit of good works, seeing that for the chace after the lowest objects they pant in wickedness. And it is well added,  
*And by the breath of his mouth shall he be taken away.*

[I]

56. For the proud man, in proportion as he is more strong in this life, the more shamelessly lets loose for himself the reins of his tongue, so as to utter bad things of every sort, to apprehend no man for his words, to wound these with insults, to cast at those with curses. But sometimes he is carried away into blasphemy against his Creator, as it is said by the Psalmist of such persons, *They set their mouths against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.* [Ps. 73, 9] And hence the rich man, being set in the fire, implores to have water dropped for him on his tongue by the finger of Lazarus. By which circumstance it is perceived that in that part where a man has sinned most, there he was the more fiercely burned. Therefore it is rightly said now, *And by the breath of his mouth shall he go away;* in that he received sentence of smiting, in proportion as he did not restrain the breath of his mouth under the fear of God. It goes on;  
Ver. 31. *Let him not believe, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed with any price.*

[li]

57. As often as we do alms after sin, we as it were pay a price for bad actions. Whence too it is said by the Prophet concerning him who doeth these things not, *He will not give God his propitiation, nor the price of the redemption of the soul.* [Ps, 49, 7. 8.] But sometimes the rich being elated oppress those below them, seize on the things of another, and yet in a certain way give somewhat to others, and whilst they bear down multitudes, they sometimes render the support of defence to particular persons, and for the iniquities which they never abandon they seem to offer a price. But the price of alms then frees us from sins, when we lament and renounce things we have been guilty of. For he who would both always be sinning, and as it were always bestowing alms, gives a price in vain, in that he does not redeem his soul, which he does not keep from evil habits. Hence it is now said, *Let him not believe, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed with any price.* For the alms of the rich and proud man has no efficacy to redeem him, seeing that his robbery of the poor man committed at the same moment, will not allow it to rise up before the eyes of God. Which same may likewise be understood in another sense; in that it often happens that proud men of riches, when they bestow alms, do not give it for the desire of the eternal life, but for the extending of the temporal life; they think that they can put off death by gifts, but let him not think, being vainly deceived, that he is to be redeemed with any price; in that he is not able to secure by the gift bestowed, that he should escape the end that is due to him, when his very wickedness cuts asunder his life. Hence too it is added;  
Ver. 32. *Before his days are fulfilled he shall perish, and his hands shall wither.*

[lii]



58. The days foreordained to each individual by the Divine Prescience can neither be increased nor lessened, except it happen that they be so foreknown as either to be longer if they be accompanied with the most perfect works, or shorter with the most wicked, just as Hezekiah obtained increase of days by the bestowing of tears, and as it is written concerning the wicked, *Death meets the undisciplined*. [Ed. Ben. suggests that this may be taken from Ecclus. 20, 9] Yet oftentimes the wicked man, though in the secret foreknowledge of God no protracted periods of life may be predestined him, himself, forasmuch as he desires to live after the flesh, sets length of days before his imagination. And because he cannot attain to that time that he looks forward to, he, as it were, ‘perishes before his days are fulfilled.’ Which same we may likewise understand in another sense also. For very commonly we see persons that both lead wicked lives, and attain to the very extreme of old age. How then is it said, *Before his days are fulfilled, he shall perish*; when in the case of particular persons we often see, that their limbs already fail from age, and yet their passions do not cease to carry out their wickedness?

59. For there are some, who after a lost way of life turn back to themselves, and their conscience accusing them, forsake their froward ways, alter their doings, withstand their old wickedness, flee earthly courses, and pursue heavenly aims, but before they be firmly rooted in those holy aims, from deadness of mind they return to the things which they began to pass sentence on, and fall back to the evil habits which they had determined to eschew. For whereas it often happens that for the profit of many, even holy men bow their necks to external actions, and are busied with the governance of a people, the weak seeing this, and, from their former pride still by them, seeking to follow their example, set themselves in outward ways of action; but in proportion as they do not come thereto well imbued with the things of the Spirit, they execute them in a carnal manner. For except the heart be first confirmed in heavenly desires by long application and a continued conversation, when it is poured back again for the executing of things exterior, it is rooted out from all its standing in good practice. Whence too it is rightly said of this wicked man, *Before his days are fulfilled, he shall perish*. In that even if he begin perchance to do any thing good, before he is strengthened therein by length of time, he falls back to outward things, and wickedly abandons what he appeared to have entered upon rightly. And hence it is fitly added; *And his hands shall wither*; in that whilst he is prematurely involved in exterior actions, he is dried up of all good practice. Hence it is yet further added aright;  
Ver. 33, 34. *His cluster shall be spoilt like a vine in the first flower, and like an olive casting its flower. For the congregation of the hypocrite shall be barren.*

[liii]

60. It is to be observed that the Divine Word so speaks of this wicked man in general terms, that yet it comes down to his particular wickedness. For he that on saying, *His cluster shall be spoilt like a vine in the first flower, and like an olive casting its flower*; directly adds, *For the congregation of the hypocrite shall be barren*, plainly makes it appear that in this wicked man it is against his hypocrisy that he passes sentence of condemnation. Now we have to consider how it is that the hypocrite is ‘spoilt like a vine in the first flower, or like an olive casting its flower.’ If the vine in flowering be touched by excessive cold in an inequality of the weather, it forthwith makes it dry of all moistness of verdure. And there are some, who after bad courses long to follow ways of holiness, but before that good desires are confirmed in them, as we have said, some piece of good fortune of the present life comes upon them, which entangles them with outward concerns, and

whilst it withdraws their mind from the heat of interior love, as it were puts it out by cold, and whatever seemed to be shewing itself of the blossom of virtue in them, it kills. For in earthly courses of action the mind grows very cold, if it be not yet by the interior gifts firmly settled. Whence it follows that higher stations or exterior works, which are intended to be of use to the necessities of man, those persons should take upon them to put them in execution, who have skill to judge of them, and to force them to bow beneath themselves in the power of interior virtue. For when any frail person is drawn away either to the post of government or to execute exterior employments, in proportion as he is as it were carried out of himself, he is rooted up, in that the tree, which does not first send roots deep below, is the sooner laid low by the impulse of the winds, if it lifts itself on high in its top; and is the more speedily brought down to the very lowest, in proportion as it grew higher in the air without roots. But sometimes the vine in flower is dried, not by the cold but by the heat, and when it is touched by excessive heat, its flower being shed, the cluster is made to wither. And it very often happens that they who do not come to good works with a right intention, when they see that they please their fellow-creatures, are the more vehemently inflamed to execute the same good works, anxiously set themselves to do what is calculated to please the eyes of men, and are as it were heated in a holy devotedness. What then but heat in the time of the blossom has come upon these, whom the appetite of human applause has made bare of fruit? Hence it is well added, *And like the olive casting his flower*. For when the olive is in flower, *If it be touched by an immoderate fog, it is bared of the fulness of fruit*. And as often as people that are entering on good works, begin to be extolled by, those that behold them, and to take delight in the commendations of themselves, there is caused a mist of the understanding in the thoughts, that they can now no longer discern with what intention they do a thing, and lose the fruit of practice as it were by the fog of applause. Hence it is well said by Solomon, *Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vines flower, if the blossoms bear fruit*. 'The vines flower,' when the minds of the faithful put forth good works; but they do not 'bear fruit,' if in what they may have purposed, they are disabled, from being overcome by certain erring practices.

61. We have not then to look whether the vines flourish, but if the blossoms are strong for the bearing of fruit, in that it is not any thing to admire if a man begins good works, but it is much to be admired, if with a right intention he holds on in good works. Whence it very often happens that if in good practice a right intention is not kept, even the very work itself which is supposed good is lost. For we have often seen persons abandon the earthly things which they possessed, and henceforth seek nought transitory, and be mixed up with no jarrings for the sake of this life. When then the believing mind exhibits this in itself, it is as if the olive put forth blossom, but when any of this sort begin to seek the glory of the world which they, had contemned, and to pant with insatiable desire after the earthly things which they appeared to have disdained, to give themselves to brawls, to seek out mischiefs upon their neighbours; then indeed the olive has cast her flower, which she put forth, in that she never brought to perfect works the beginnings of a good purpose. But we are to bear in mind that such things are often happening to those who do not follow God with a pure and single aim. Hence it is rightly added, *For the gathering of the hypocrite is barren*. For the good things he has begun he would not lose, if he had not been a hypocrite. Now hypocrites gather together good works, but their gathering itself is barren, in that in the things they do they never make it their object to receive fruit in the eternal recompensing. They look fruitful and green to the eyes of their fellow-creatures, but in the sight of the hidden Judge they appear unfruitful and blasted. But oftentimes, being inflamed with the fever of avarice, they display greater works of

their own before the eyes of men, in proportion as they desire to have larger rewards offered them by their fellow-creatures. Hence it is yet further added;  
*And fire shall consume the tabernacles of those who are ready to take rewards.*

[liv]

62. For as the body dwells in a tabernacle, so the mind dwells in thought. But the 'fire consumes the tabernacles,' when the heat of avarice wastes the thoughts. And it very commonly happens that the hypocrite scorns to receive gold, or the several good things of the body, at the hands of his fellow-creatures, but because he does not take these, he aims to win greater commendations from them; and perhaps he does not reckon that he has 'received a reward,' because he refuses to take the good things of the body. Hence it is proper to be known that a gift is sometimes proffered by the hand, and sometimes by the mouth. Thus one who presents money, has given a reward with the hand; but he that bestows the word of applause, has put forward a reward from the mouth. Though, then, the hypocrite refuse to take external gifts, which may perhaps answer earthly necessity, yet that is a greater thing which he aims to have paid him in return, when desiring to be extolled beyond his desert, he seeks a reward from the mouth. And because in the mere appetite of praise his heart is kindled with overmuch heat, let it be rightly said, *And fire shall consume the tabernacles of those that are ready to take rewards.*

63. But if we are to understand by their 'tabernacles' the bodies which their souls inhabit, then the fire consumes the 'tabernacles,' because those who here are on fire in the soul with the flames of avarice, are there consumed in the flesh too by the fires of hell, and because the mind of the hypocrite is never at rest from the thinking of wickedness, in that whether he goes after the things of earth, or applause, he grudges those things to others, which he pants to have awarded to himself, and strives to make others appear wicked in proportion as he desires to appear more holy to all the world, so that by means of this, that others are rendered contemptible, he may himself at all times appear more worthy of respect. Whence it comes to pass, that as touching his credit with his neighbour, he spreads out the nets of his tongue before the judgments of his fellow-creatures, that he by himself may catch the good opinion of those whom he seeks to please. Whence too it follows;

Ver. 35. *They conceive woe, and bring forth iniquity, and their womb prepareth deceit.*

[lv]

64. For he conceives 'woe,' when he devises wicked things; he 'brings forth iniquity,' when he has begun to fulfil what he has devised; by entertaining envy, he 'conceives woe;' by uttering slanders, he 'brings forth iniquity.' For it is grievous wickedness when he who is wicked strives to make others appear wicked, that he may himself thereby appear as holy, because he has shewn that others are not holy. But we ought to bear in mind, that in Holy Writ by the title of the 'belly' or the 'womb' the mind is used to be understood. Hence it is that it is said by Solomon, *For the candle of the Lord is the breathway of man, searching all the inward parts of the belly.* [Prov. 20, 27] For the light of grace, which comes from above, affords a 'breathway' to man unto life, which same light is said to 'search all the inward parts of the belly,' in that it penetrates all the secrets of the heart, that the things which were hidden from the soul touching itself it may bring back before the eyes thereof with weeping. Hence Jeremiah saith, *My bowels! my bowels! I am pained.* [Jer. 4, 19]

Who, that he might shew what he had called his belly, added, *the senses of my heart are troubled*. So by the title of the womb the mind is rightly understood, in that like as the offspring is conceived in the womb, so is thought engendered in the mind. And as meats are contained in the belly, so are thoughts in the mind; and so the 'womb' of the hypocrite 'prepares deceits,' in that he is ever conceiving in his mind the greater wickedness against his neighbours, in proportion as he aims to appear by himself above all men innocent. Eliphaz therefore put forward these things, in that he looked upon blessed Job as stricken with that great scourge on account of his hypocrisy. But his words, though they apply to many, are at odds with him alone, for whom alone they were said, in that the holy man had nought of double-dealing in his conduct, whom Truth being witness to him praised for the singleness of his heart.

### BOOK XIII.

Wherein is contained a short exposition, moral and typical, of the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of the book of Job.

#### [i] [HISTORICAL AND ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. This is found to be a peculiar way with the wicked, viz. to urge their own bad points slanderously against the good, before they are themselves truly accused of them; and while they dread to be reproached for the things which they do, they testify that the righteous who withstand their wickednesses commit the same. Now holy men hear with forbearance, even what they never remember to have done, although those wrong things which they see to be urged against themselves, they know to be committed by their very accusers; and when they cannot correct them by preaching, they suffer them by submitting to the evil, that if they cannot attain the fruit of their conversion, they may at least-win by those very persons the reward of long endurance. Hence Holy Church says in the words of the Prophet David, sinners have plowed upon my back, in that whilst she puts up with heretics, or lost persons of any kind, whom she is not able to correct, she bears upon her back the deeds of those that commit iniquity. Thus blessed Job, seeing Eliphaz his friend making much complaint against him out of hypocrisy, in that from words of comfort he had broken out into bitterness of upbraiding, and shewed himself a feigned comforter, does by his own patience maintain a type of the Church, which is wont to endure such things in hearing them, and when her discourse is received, by reasoning to bring them to nought; and he says,

Ver. 2. *I have heard many such things.*

#### [ii]

2. For the Elect often hear the wrong things of others, as if they belonged to themselves, and guilt is charged upon them by those, by whom the charges so fastened on them are done. Now by this reply, blessed Job denotes that season of the Church, when, under oppression from her adversaries, she is looked upon as cast to the ground by their temporal power. Whence it follows; burthensome comforters are ye all. Whether they be heretics, or whether any of the wicked, when they see the good travailing in adversity, herein that they aim to console them, they endeavour to prompt wrong things to their minds. Whence not without reason their consoling is rendered burthensome to the mind of good men, in that amongst words of sweetness, they are bent to proffer the poison of error,

and whilst in seeming they lighten their griefs by soothing words, they are in haste to put upon them a load of sin. But Elect persons, even when they are bereft of temporal glory, do not lose the forcibleness of interior judgment. For they are taught both to endure crosses without, and yet unimpaired within to uphold what is right without being daunted. Whence it is added, Ver.3. *Shall windy words have an end?*

[iii]

3. For those are ‘windy words,’ which serve the end of temporal inflating, rather than the end of righteousness. Now oftentimes the wicked speak even good things, but because they do not say them well, they are putting forth ‘windy words:’ for their words, even if they be at any time sound in the sentence, are yet blown out in self-elation. But in this that is said, viz. *burthensome comforters are ye all*; what else are we taught by the tutorage of blessed Job, but that everyone should learn to look to it heedfully, that in the season of sorrow he never urge words of upbraiding? For if there be some points which might be justly found fault with in time of distress, they ought to be put aside, lest the comforter by rebuking heighten the sorrow, which he had it in view to alleviate. It goes on;

*Or is there any thing troublesome to thee, if Thou speakest?*

[iv]

4. When bad men utter abusive words to those that are like to themselves, they are the more quickly silenced, in proportion as they in a moment hear concerning themselves the like to what they say to their hearers. But when they assail good men by words of contumely, nought of annoyance is occasioned them by their abuse, in, that they speak against those that hold their peace, nor are made to hear what they are, seeing that the righteous never return abuse, even when they are made to bear what they are not. And so it is well said, *Or is there any thing troublesome to thee if thou speakest?* As if it were said in plain words to him; ‘Thou speakest the more, that thou hearest not from me any thing unpleasant concerning the conduct.’ Hence it is added, *I also could speak as ye do*. The just man tells what he had the power to do, but lest he should depart from righteousness, he forbears what he might have done. It goes on;

Ver. 4-6. *And O that your soul were for my soul! I too would comfort you with speeches, and move my head over you: I would strengthen you with my mouth, and move my lips as if sparing you.*

[v]

5. It is sometimes necessary that wicked minds, which are incapable of being corrected by man’s preaching, should have the strokes of God wished for them, in a spirit of kindness; and while this is done with great earnestness of love, then plainly not the punishment but the correction of the guilty person is the thing aimed at, and it is shewn to be a prayer rather than a curse. And in these words blessed Job is shewn to aim at this, that the friends, who knew not how to sympathize in his grief through charity, might learn by experience how they ought to have pitied the affliction of another, and, being subdued by griefs might draw from their own suffering, how to minister consolation to others, and then live the more healthfully within, when they are made sensible of something of frailty without. Observe that he does not say, *O that my soul were for your soul*; but, *O that your soul were for my soul*; in that he would have been cursing himself, if he had wished himself to be

made like to them; but it was for them he wished better things in that he sought they should be made like to himself. Now we 'comfort' bad men, placed under the rod, when we point out that by the exterior infliction the interior health is established within them. Moreover, we 'move our head,' when the mind, which is our leading part, we bend to sympathy; and we 'strengthen' these in the midst of strokes of affliction, when we soothe the force of their grief with gentle words; for there are some persons, who, forasmuch as they know nothing of the things of the interior, are overwhelmed with despair by external afflictions; of whom it is said, by the Psalmist, *They shall not hold up in afflictions*; [Ps. 140, 10] for he is well instructed to hold up in outward afflictions, who knows how to exult always in the hope that belongs to the interior.

6. But whereas he says, not, 'sparing,' but, *as if sparing you*; I think that this point ought not to be passed by carelessly, in that Holy Church, while keeping vigorousness of discipline together with an union of gentleness, sometimes even while 'as if sparing,' is far from sparing the wicked, but sometimes, when 'as if not sparing' does spare them; which we shall exhibit the more effectually, if we bring forward the very things themselves which are not unfrequently happening. So then let us place before the eyes of the imagination, two bad men set within the pale of Holy Church, of whom let the one be powerful and insolent, and the other mild and under government. If a fault has stolen upon the one that is gentle and under government, the preacher directly, by rebuking the thing follows hard upon him, and corrects him; and by correcting frees him from guilt, and resets him again in the way of righteousness. What did he then to this man, but spare in sparing not? in that, forasmuch as he did not hold back the word of correction, he the more speedily set him free from sin. For in freely charging him home, he did not spare him; but in this respect, that he rebuked him, he did spare him. But on the other hand, the powerful and insolent man, when he is discovered to have been guilty of any thing, there is an opportunity sought, in order that he may be rebuked for the evil he has committed. For except the preacher wait till such time as he may be able to bear correction in a proper way, he increases in him the evil that he is prosecuting. For it is very often the case that he is of such a character as to receive no words of rebuke. What then is the preacher to do in the case of the sin of this person, but that in the charge of admonition, which he makes for the general wellbeing of all his hearers, he should bring forward such fault, as he sees that he has been guilty of, who is by, and cannot as yet be charged on his own account individually, lest he be rendered worse? and while invective in general is aimed against the fault, the word of rebuke is readily brought home to the mind, in that the powerful bad man does not know that it is delivered against himself in particular. What then did his preacher to this person, but in sparing not spare? against whom he at once brought not words of rebuke with any special reference, and yet hit his wound under a general admonition; and hence it is very often brought to pass that he bewails the sin committed so much the more bitterly, in proportion as even when he feels himself struck, he supposes his guilt not to be known.

7. Therefore it must be managed with wonderful art in preaching that those who are made worse by open rebuke, may by a certain abatement of rebuke be brought to a state of saving health. Whence too Paul saith, *And those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon those we bestow more abundant honour, and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness; for our comely parts have no need.* [1 Cor. 12, 23. 24.] For as there are uncomely members in the body, so there are persons within the bosom of Holy Church, powerful and insolent, who, whereas they do not admit of being stricken with open upbraiding, are as it were cloked with the respectfulness of a covering. But this we speak of the secret transgressions of the powerful; for

when they sin and others know of it, they are also to be rebuked, and others should know of it; lest, if the preacher hold his peace, he seem to have sanctioned the sin, and this which the tongue of the pastor does not cut off, going on increasing, should come to be an example. Thus while Holy Church by her preachers rebukes particular deeds of wicked men under the covert conveyance of a general reproof, she ‘moves her lips, as if sparing;’ but yet while sparing spareth not, in that she does not in general hold her peace to the reproving of a fault, which in the special case she does. It goes on;

Ver. 7. *But what am I to do? Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, it will not depart from me.*

[vi]

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

8. How this accords with the person of blessed Job, there is no one that is ignorant; but if it be drawn into a type of Holy Church, she both when she speaks ‘has not her grief assuaged,’ since she does not see the wicked amended by her speaking; and ‘when she holds her peace, her grief does not depart from her;’ in that though she turns away and holds her peace, this very circumstance of her being silent she laments the more, in that while she is silent, she sees the sin of the wicked grow to a height: It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *But now my grief has oppressed me, and my limbs are brought to nought.*

[vii]

9. Holy Church is oppressed by her grief, when she beholds the wicked grow to a height in their wickedness; and whereas while the wicked increase, the weak too that are in her are set on to follow the bents of wickedness, it is rightly added, *And all my limbs are brought to nought.* For as the strong by ‘bones,’ so by ‘limbs’ the weak sort are wont to be denoted, and so ‘the members of the Church are brought to nought,’ when by the imitating of the wicked that are increased in this world, all the weak are worse weakened. For on seeing the prosperity of the wicked, they often slide away from their very stand in faith itself, they seek after temporal good things, and are in a manner ‘brought to nought;’ in that while they abandon the Being of God that is lasting, loving things that are transitory, they are, as it were, on their way to be not. And it is well said, *But now my grief has oppressed me;* in that the season of the grief of the Church is now, and the time of her joy shall follow hereafter. Now it often happens that Holy Church not only meets with unbelievers and those without her borders as her adversaries, but with difficulty bears with the plots and opposition of those too, whom she has within her. Whence it is fitly said directly by the voice of the blessed man;

Ver. 10. *My wrinkles speak a testimony against me.*

[viii]

10. What is denoted by ‘wrinkles,’ but doubledealing? and so all they are wrinkles of Holy Church, who therein live in doubledealing, who avouch the faith with their voices, disown it by their works. These persons doubtless in time of peace, because they see that with the powers of this world that faith is an honour, falsely feign themselves of the number of believers; but when a sudden storm of adversity disquiets Holy Church, they thereupon shew what they are going after in their heart of unbelief. Now these ‘wrinkles’ Holy Church has not in her Elect, in that they have

not the art to shew one thing in themselves on the outside, and to hold another withinside. Whence the great Preacher says truly, *That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle.* [Eph. 5, 27] For she 'has not spot or wrinkle,' in that she is without both foulness of practice, and doubleness of tongue; but because now she holds within the bosom of the faith numbers even of the children of perdition, when the time of persecution blazes out, she bears those very persons for her enemies, whom she seemed before to be nourishing with words of preaching. Therefore let her say, *My wrinkles speak a testimony against me;* i.e. those very persons, while they persecute, inveigh against me, who now, being fixed in my body, do not mind in themselves the wickedness of their doubled dealing. Whence it is rightly added yet further;  
*And the liar is lifted up against my face, gainsaying me.*

[ix]

11. Even in her time of peace Holy Church is subject to the 'liar,' in that there are numbers in her, who disbelieve in the promise of eternal life, and yet falsely feign themselves to be of the faithful. And as they do not dare openly to gainsay her preaching, she is exposed to the liar, not, as it were, 'before her face,' but behind her back; but when the time of wickedness breaks out, he who now disparages being full of apprehension, comes 'before the face to gainsay,' in that he withstands by open sentences of the voice the words of true faith. But it is to be known that when we meet with such things at the hands of carnal men, it is not so much they individually that rage cruelly in our death, as the evil spirit who rules their minds, as it is said by Paul, *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood; but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world.* [Eph. 6, 12] Whence, whereas here also he is speaking of lying [A.B.D. 'the liar'], with propriety he turns his words directly to tell of the prince of that lying, and says;  
Ver. 9. *He gathered his fury against me; and threatening me he gnashed against me with his teeth; mine enemy looked on me with terrible eyes.*

[x]

12. What else are all wicked men but members of the devil? Therefore he himself does by them, whatever he puts it into their hearts that they ought to do. For the devil even now entertains fury against Holy Church, but his fury is scattered, in that he sets afoot his secret temptations through the agency of individuals; but when he bursts out against her in open persecution, 'he gathers his fury against her,' in that in the afflicting of her he knits up himself with the entire bent of his efforts. But his members in this time of peace have not 'fury gathered' against the Elect in this way, because they feel that they have less power to fulfil their wickedness than they have will; but when they see full range of wickedness at their command, they smite at her the more boldly, in proportion as they are drawn to a head against her in unanimity. And so it is rightly said now; *He gathered up his fury against me.* And that his fury might be still more fully set forth, it is said, *And threatening me, he gnashed upon me with his teeth.* Of whom too it is added, *mine enemy looked on me with terrible eyes.* For that ancient enemy of the Church 'gnashes against her with the teeth,' and 'looks on her with terrible eyes,' in that he executes cruelties by one set, and by another provides cruelties to execute.

13. For 'the teeth' of this enemy are the persecutors and executioners of the good who mangle her members, while they distress her elect ones by their persecutions. But the 'eyes' of this enemy are



those, that provide measures to her hurt, which they may put in practice, and by their counsels light up the cruelties of her persecutors. Thus her old enemy 'gnashes upon her with his teeth,' so long as by the cruel children of perdition in her he hunts down the life of good men within her. He 'looks on her with terrible eyes;' in that, by the counsels of bad men, he never ceases to make out schemes of mischief, by which he may torment her even worse and worse; for as Incarnate 'Truth' in His preaching chose poor common persons and simple men, so on the other hand that accursed man, whom the Apostate Angel will take on him at the end of the world, shall choose for the preaching of his falsity, the cunning and doubleminded, and such as have this world's knowledge. Hence it is said by Isaiah, *Woe to the land, the cymbal of wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. Which sendeth ambassadors by the sea even in vessels of papyrus upon the waters.* For the land, that has woe pronounced against it, is principally that accursed man, who is called a 'cymbal of wings,' in that they who in pride soar up into the height of imagination, by preaching sound forth that man of iniquity. Which same land is rightly described as being 'beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,' for Ethiopia sends forth a black people, and whereas this world brings forth every man a sinner, Ethiopia as it were bears a black people. And the land that has woe pronounced against it, is described as being 'beyond the rivers of Ethiopia,' in that that accursed man is so exceedingly and beyond all measure bad, that he goes beyond the sins of all that commit iniquity; and he 'sends ambassadors by the sea,' in that he spreads his preachers over the world; and it is rightly told of them how they are sent, when it said, *in vessels of papyrus upon the waters*, for from the 'papyrus' paper is made. What then is denoted by the 'papyrus' but secular knowledge? and so the vessels of papyrus are the hearts of the learned of the world. Therefore 'to send ambassadors upon the waters in vessels of papyrus,' is to put the preaching of him in the brains of the carnally wise, and to call the people running out into sin. Those very persons then who are there denoted by 'vessels of papyrus,' here, in that they see with a carnal sight, are denoted by 'eyes.' Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 10. *They have gaped upon me with their mouth, reproaching me.*

[xi]

14. Lost sinners open their mouths 'in reproaching,' when they at once do not fear to proclaim the mischiefs of their errors, and laugh to scorn the announcements of the right faith: with regard to whom be it known that they chiefly prosecute those in Holy Church, whom they see likely to be of service to many, who bruise the life of the carnal by the word of correction, and change them spiritually into the body of the Church. Hence it is added;

*They have smitten me upon the cheek; they have taken their fill of my punishments.*

[xii]

15. For 'the cheek' of the Church, are the holy preachers, as where it is said under the figure of Judaea, by Jeremiah, *She weepeth sore in the night, and the tears are on her cheeks.* [Lam. 1, 2] For in the adversities of the Church those mourn the most, who are used to crush the life of the carnal by preaching; for by these very persons Holy Church breaks and bruises the wicked to bad habits, and as it were swallowing them converts them into members of herself. Hence it is said to the first preacher himself too, as to a 'cheek' of the Church, *Kill and eat* [Acts 10, 13]. It is hence too that Samson laid hold of the jawbone of an ass, and destroyed his enemies [Judges 15, 16]; in that our Redeemer, with the Hand of His power laying hold of the simplicity and submissiveness of

these that preach, killed the carnal to their bad habits. And the jawbone thrown down upon the earth, afterwards poured out water, in that the bodies of the preachers given over to death, shewed great miracles to the people. So the wicked 'smite the cheek' of Holy Church, when they persecute good preachers; and whereas lost sinners thus reckon themselves to have done something great, when they do put an end to the life of the preachers; after the striking of 'the cheek,' it is properly added, *They have taken their fill of my punishments*, for that punishment does fill them to satisfaction, which chastises the mind of the Church in an especial manner. It goes on; Ver. 12. *God hath shut me up with the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.*

[xiii]

16. The people of the Elect is 'shut up with the ungodly man,' when its flesh is given up in this present time to the persecutions of our old adversary; and it is 'turned over,' not to the spirit, but 'the hands of the wicked;' in that in proportion as they cannot take it captive in mind, they are the more pitilessly inflamed against the flesh thereof. But the People of Holy Church, when it begins to suffer adversities to an extreme degree, and sees the weak ones in her going off to worse and worse, recalls to mind the times of her peace, when she fed her faithful children with the richness of her preaching. Hence it is fitly added; Ver. 13. *I, the same that was once rich, am crushed on a sudden.*

[xiv]

17. Herein, viz. that he declared himself to be 'crushed on a sudden,' he denoted the unguarded mind of weak persons: who, whilst they are not skilled to foresee the evils which are destined to come, find them more severe in proportion as they also undergo them contrary to expectation. But to steadfast minds adversities do not come on a sudden, in that they are foreseen before they come. And this Holy Church too does now undergo in certain backsliding people, who, after the richness of instruction, are sometimes so crushed by sudden assaults of evil, that they fall as deeply in certain wicked practices, as if they had never been vouchsafed the food of the word. It proceeds; *He hath held my neck, and broken me in two, and set me up for His mark.*

[xv]

18. As in evil the 'neck' denotes pride, so in good it denotes the lifting up in freedom; whence it is sometimes the case that 'pride' itself is also put for the authority belonging to that lifting up; as when the Lord says by way of promise to Holy Church by the Prophet, *I will set thee for the pride of ages*. [Is. 60, 15] And because in time of persecution some that are weak do not dare to preach with freedom the truths they have a sense of, it is rightly said of this enemy, *He hath held my neck, and broken me in two*. But perchance those are denoted by the appellation of 'neck,' who, in the season of her peace, are lifted up more than befits, and by occasion of defending the cause of right minister to the evil of self-exalting; which same in time of persecution feel adversity the more sensibly on this account, that they are elevated by prosperity. Concerning whom it is rightly said, *He hath held my neck, and broken me in two*; i.e. the pride which she had in her weak members, He bowed down by the severity of His smiting. *And set me up for His mark*. It is known that 'a mark' is for this reason 'set up,' that it may be hit by the sending of the arrow. And so the faithful people is 'set as a mark' to its enemy, in that he is ever assaulting it with his blows and afflicting it with

his persecutions: for he that undergoes perpetual ills in this life, as if set for a mark, receives blows from one striking him; and hence the great Preacher, when he was suffering the ills of persecution, and groaning beneath the persecuting efforts of his enemies, to comfort the tender soul of the disciples touching his troubles, says, *For yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto*. [1 Thess. 3, 3] As if he said to them in plain words; 'Wherefore at this season do ye wonder at my wounds, when, if we seek the joys of the eternal world, we have come hither for this, even to be stricken?' It proceeds;

Ver. 13. *He hath compassed me about with His lances, He hath wounded my loins together, He hath not spared, and He hath poured out my bowels upon the ground.*

[xvi]

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

19. These particulars would seem to accord with blessed Job after the letter, in that it is said, *He hath compassed me with His lances, He hath wounded my loins together, He hath not spared*; if that were not added, which is not read as written about him, *he hath poured out my bowels upon the ground*. From which circumstance it follows, that whereas we cannot find this after the letter, we should investigate after the spirit those points, which in his words sound as of the fact of history. Holy Church is 'beset with lances' by her enemy, whensoever she is in her members assaulted by the cunning assailant with the darts of temptation; and it is well said that we are 'encompassed with lances,' in that our old enemy assails us on every side with the wounding of temptation. Thus oftentimes whilst the appetite is restrained, that lust may be brought under, the dart of vainglory strikes the mind; but if the body is not worn down by the infliction of abstinence, the flame of lust kindles itself against the soul: often whilst we strive to observe economy, we fall into stinginess; and often whilst we give profusely the things we possess, we are led into avarice, in that we seek to make up again what we may have to give. Whereas then the darts of the old enemy assail us in every direction, it is rightly said now, *he hath compassed me about with his lances*. And because, in the case of every sin, the crafty enemy indeed recommends it, but we by consenting to his recommendations execute it, it is fitly subjoined, *he hath wounded my loins together*, for in the loins lust is seated. Hence he who desired to eradicate the delight of lust from the heart, preached the words, *Gird up the loins of your mind*. [1 Pet. 1, 13] And so when our old enemy draws the faithful people into lust, surely he smites that people 'in the loins;' in which place it is deserving of observation, that he does not say 'he has wounded [*vulneravit* 'convulneravit'],' but, *he hath wounded my loins together*. For as to talk is sometimes an act of one person, but to 'talk together' of two or perhaps of many, so our old enemy, in that he does not hurry us into sin without our own will, is never said 'to wound our loins,' but, 'to wound our loins together:' in that what he prompts us amiss we fulfil by following of our own will; and, as it were, 'wound ourselves together' in unity with him, because we are at the same time led to commit the evil deed of free will. It goes on; *he hath not spared*; as if he said, 'he hath not ceased;' and *he hath poured out my bowels upon the ground*. What else are we to understand by 'the bowels' of Holy Church, save the minds of those who contain in themselves certain of her mysteries, who are devoted to the interior Sacraments? But our old adversary, when he draws over to secular concerns any of the faithful, who appeared to be devoted to the interior sacraments, does, surely, 'pour out her bowels upon the ground;' in that he treads those down in things below, who were before buried from sight in secret and spiritual practices. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *He hath broken me with breach upon breach.*

[xvii]

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

20. In her weak members Holy Church is 'broken with breach upon breach,' when sin is added to sin, that transgression should be brought to a more dreadful pitch. Thus for him, whom avarice forces to robbery and robbery leads into deceit, so that the sin committed is further defended by falsehood, how else is it with this man, but that he is *broken with breach upon breach*? When too it is well said by the Prophet; *Cursing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, adultery, have overflowed, and blood toucheth blood.* [Hos. 4, 2] For by the title of 'blood' sin is used to be denoted; whence one who longs to be set free from sin exclaims in penitence, *Deliver me from blood [sanguinibus]*. [Ps. 51, 14] So 'blood toucheth blood,' when sin has heaped on sin; and whereas when breach is added to breach, the powers of our old enemy are the more terribly increased against us, it is rightly added;  
*He runneth upon me like a giant.*

[xviii]

21. The enemy is easy to be resisted, if he is not consented to, whether in many backslidings, or in one for a continuance. But if the soul has been accustomed to submit to his persuasions, the oftener it subjects itself to him, it makes him the harder to itself to bear, so that it has not the power to struggle against him; in that our wicked adversary, 'like a giant,' fights against it, when it is vanquished by bad habit: yet very often Holy Church, even after sins have been committed, brings back the minds of the faithful to penitence, and cleanses away the sins of practice by the efficacy of a voluntary self-chastening. Whence it is well added;  
Ver. 15. *I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and covered my flesh with ashes.*

[xix]

22. What ought to be understood by 'sackcloth and ashes,' but penance; what by 'the skin' and 'the flesh,' but sin of the flesh? And so whereas there are persons who after the backsliding of the flesh are brought back to penance, it is as if 'sackcloth were sewn upon the skin,' and 'the flesh covered with ashes;' because the guilt of the flesh is 'covered with ashes' by penance, that it should not be seen for its avenging in the inquest of the strict Judge. But Holy Church, when she withdraws her weak members from sins, and conducts them to the remedy of penance, these she surely aids with her tears, that they may recover strength to receive the grace of their Maker, and in the strong she bewails what she has not done, which yet in her weak members she has as it were done herself. Hence it is well added yet further;  
Ver. 16. *My face is swelled with weeping.*

[xx]

23. For 'the face' of Holy Church are those, who being set in posts or governorships appear the foremost, that in their goodly appearance should be the honour of the faithful people, even if there were aught deformed in the body hidden from sight. Which same persons that are set over the people bewail the sins of those that go weakly, and so chasten themselves for the downfall of others as if for their own. And often when they see some returning to pardon after sin, and others

persisting in wickedness, they marvel at the secret counsels of Almighty God, but cannot fathom them. For they are dumb at the things which they do not understand. And hence it is fitly added; *And mine eyelids have become darkened.*

[xxi]

24. For they are rightly entitled 'eyelids,' who are on their watch for the fore-ensuring the paths of the feet; but when not even the rulers on the watch can understand the secret judgments of God, 'the eyelids' of Holy Church are 'darkened;' but, as I remember that I have already often said, blessed Job, while bearing a type of Holy Church, uses at one time the voice of the body, and at another time the voice of the Head; and while he is speaking of her members, he is raised on a sudden to speak the words of her Head. Whence here too it is added;

Ver. 17. *I have suffered this without the wickedness of mine hand, whilst I made pure prayers to God.*

[xxii]

25. He suffered without the wickedness of His hand; *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth*, [1 Pet. 2, 22] and yet endured the pain of the Cross for our redemption. Who only above all others 'made pure prayers to God,' in that even in the very anguish of His Passion He prayed in behalf of His persecutors, saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* [Luke 23, 34] For what can be described, what can be conceived more pure in prayer, than when the mercifulness of intercession is vouchsafed even those, from whose hands pain is undergone? Whence it was brought to pass, that that Blood of our Redeemer, which His persecutors in raging had spilt, afterwards in believing they drank, and proclaimed Him to be the Son of God. Concerning which same Blood it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 18. *O earth, cover thou not my blood; and let my cry find no place to lie hid in thee.*

[xxiii]

26. It was said to man on his committing sin, *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return*; [Gen. 3, 19] and this 'earth' does not 'cover the blood' of our Redeemer: in that each several sinner taking to himself the price of his redemption makes confession and sings praise, and publishes it to all of his neighbours that he is able. Moreover, 'earth did not cover His blood,' in that Holy Church has now preached the mystery of His redemption in all parts of the world. And observe what is added: *And let my cry find no place to lie hid in thee.* For the very blood of redemption that is taken is itself 'the cry' of our Redeemer. Hence Paul too says, *And to the Blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better than that of Abel.* [Heb. 12, 24] It had been said of the blood of Abel; *The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground.* [Gen. 4, 10] But 'the Blood of Jesus speaketh better things than the blood of Abel,' because the blood of Abel brought the death of his fratricidal brother, but the blood of the Lord won life for His persecutors. So then that the Sacraments of our Lord's Passion may not be ineffectual in us, we are bound to imitate that which we take, and to preach to others what we adore. For 'His cry does find a place to lie hid in us,' if what the mind has been brought to believe the tongue is silent about. But that His cry may not lie hid in us, it remains that each one of us according to his small measure should make known to his neighbours the mystery of his own quickening. It is good to recall the eyes of the interior to the hour of the

Lord's Passion, when the Jews raged against Him in persecution, and the Disciples fled from Him in alarm. For He that appeared to die in the flesh was not in any wise believed to be God. Hence it is properly added in this place,

Ver. 19. *Also, now, behold my witness is in heaven, and my heart's associate* [*'consciui meus'* lit. *'my accomplice,' 'he who knows my mind'*] *is on high.*

[xxiv]

27. For when the Son was brought to His downfall on earth, there was a witness to Him in heaven. Since the Father is the witness of the Son; concerning Whom He Himself saith in the Gospel, *And the Father Himself, Which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me.* [John 5, 37] Who is also rightly called 'mine heart's associate,' in that with one will, and with one counsel, the Father acts always in union with the Son. Whose witness too He is, in that *no man knoweth the Son but the Father.* [Matt. 11, 27] Thus He had then 'a witness in heaven,' and His 'heart's associate' on high, when they, who saw Him dying in the flesh, had their eyes closed to see the power of His Divine nature; and whereas men did not know, yet in the hour of death the Mediator between God and man did know, that the Father was working together with Himself. Which perhaps may be likewise applied to the voice of His Body. For Holy Church for this reason undergoes the miseries of this life, that the grace above may lead her on her way to the rewards of eternity. She slights the death of her flesh, because she is intent on the glory of the resurrection; and what she suffers is transitory, what she expects everlasting, concerning which same everlasting blessings she has no misgiving, in that she has already a faithful testimony in the glory of her Redeemer. For she sees with the mind the resurrection of His flesh, and is strongly fortified to have hope, in that what she sees already brought to pass in her Head, she hopes without doubting will also follow in His Body, which is herself. Which same Church the Psalmist seeing destined to continue in everlasting perfection, describes her under the title of the moon. *A perfect moon for everlasting.* [Ps. 89, 37] And whereas the Resurrection of the Lord heartens her to entertain the hope of a Resurrection, he properly added, *And a faithful witness in heaven.* Forasmuch as that she may not tremble for her own resurrection, she has Him in heaven for a witness, Who rose again from the dead; and so let the faithful People when it suffers adversity, when it is harassed with sore tribulations, lift up the mind to the hope of the glory to follow, and trusting in the resurrection of the Redeemer, let it say, *Also now behold my witness is in heaven, and mine associate on high.* Who is also rightly called 'an associate,' in that He was acquainted with our nature, not only by creating, but by taking it upon Himself. For His knowing is His having undertaken what belongs to us. Whence too it is said by the Psalmist, *For He knoweth our frame.* [Ps. 103, 14] For what wonder is it if He is said emphatically 'to know our frame,' when it is plain that there is nothing that He does not know? But His 'knowing our frame,' is His having taken it upon Himself out of pitifulness.

#### [MORAL/HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

28. Yet this voice may together with blessed Job suitably apply to each one of ourselves as well; for every man who in what he does aims at human praises, seeks a 'witness' on earth: but he that is eager to please Almighty God by his deeds, takes thought that he has a 'witness in heaven.' And it often happens that the very good things themselves in us are found fault with by inconsiderate men; but he that 'has a witness in heaven,' has no need to fear men's reproofs. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 20. *My friends are full of words; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.*

[xxv]

29. For what is denoted by the eye, but the intent of the heart? as it is written, *if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.* [Matt. 6, 22] For when any thing is done with a good intention, the enacting of that intention contracts no soil in the sight of God; and so when friends are full of words, i.e. when the very same persons detract that are joined with us in faith, 'the eye' must needs 'pour out tears to God,' that so the whole bent of our heart may run out in the piercing of interior love, and lift itself up to the things of the interior, the more exactly that being forced back by external reproaches, it is driven to turn back within, lest it should vanish away without. It proceeds;

Ver.21. *Oh! that a man were so judged with God, as a son of man is judged with his fellow!*

[xxvi]

30. We acknowledge indeed always that we are sinners, yet often, when laid under the rod, we do not know for what sin in particular we are stricken, and we sift ourselves with minute examining, that if we might in any way be able we might trace out the cause of our being struck; and whereas this is for the most part hidden from us, our blindness becomes a load upon us, and we are the more pained at what we are suffering. But anyone that 'comes to judgment with his neighbour,' both says what he thinks, and knows what answer is made in return, and strikes a blow where he will, and knows from what quarter he is struck. But he that is smitten with the visitation of God, while he knows indeed that he is beaten, but knows not why he is beaten, as it were himself says what he thinks, but does not know what may be said against him; seeing that he himself indeed groans under the rod, but God does not declare openly for what cause of vengeance He strikes him.

Therefore it is said now, *Oh! that a man were so judged with God, as a son of man is judged with his neighbour!* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'As in all, that I say, I am heard, so would that I heard all that is said concerning me.' Which, nevertheless, can never be brought about in this life, in that there is a great obstruction before the eyes of our heart, against our beholding the subtle nature of God, even our mere frailty by itself; but we shall then see Him with clearness by Whom we are now searchingly beheld, when this frailty laid aside, we attain to the grace of the interior contemplation, of which Paul saith, *For then shall I know, as also I am known.* [1 Cor. 13, 12] Hence blessed Job, seeing that that knowledge can never be in the fullest way perfected here, groans indeed over the blindness of the present life; yet consoles himself by the shortness thereof, saying,

Ver.22. *When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.*

[xxvii]

31. Every thing that passes is short, even though it should seem slow in being finished, but in the way of death we 'go, and do not return by it,' not because we are not brought back by rising again to the life of the flesh, but because we do not come again to the labours of this mortal life, or to earn rewards by our labours.

Chap. xvii. Ver. 1. *My spirit shall be wasted to thinness.*

[xxviii]

32. 'My spirit is wasted to thinness,' by the fear of judgment; in that the minds of the Elect, the more they feel themselves to be approaching the final Judgment, tremble so much the more fearfully in the searching of their own selves; and if they ever find in themselves any carnal thoughts, they consume them by the fervour of their penance; nor do they suffer their thoughts to expand with carnal delight, in that they pass sentence and inflict punishment on themselves more rigorously in proportion as they are awaiting the strict Judge close at hand; whence it comes to pass, that they look upon their departure as always near. For the minds of the lost do many things wickedly on this account, because they suppose themselves living here for long; and so 'the spirit of the righteous is wasted to thinness,' but the spirit of the wicked is thickened. For in proportion as they swell out in self-elation, they have not the wearing down of the spirit: but the righteous, whilst they consider the shortness of their life, eschew the sins of pride and impurity. And hence it is added;

*My days shall be shortened, and the grave only is left me.*

[xxix]

33. For he that bethinks himself what he will be in death, is always rendered fearful in practice, and from the very cause that henceforth he does not as it were live in his own eyes, he does genuinely live in the eyes of his Creator; he goes after nothing of a nature to pass away, he withstands all the desire of the present life, and views himself as almost dead, in that he is not unaware that he is destined to die. For a perfect life is an imitation of death, which while the righteous diligently enact, they escape the snares of sins. Whence it is written, *Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember thy latter end, and thou shalt never do amiss.* [Ecclus. 7, 36] And hence blessed Job, because he sees that his 'days are shortened,' and reflects that 'the grave only is left him,' fitly subjoins,

*I have not sinned, and mine eye abideth in bitternesses.*

[xxx]

34. As if he expressed himself in plain words; 'I have not been guilty of sin, and I have undergone scourges.' But on this point, seeing that in many passages of this history he confesses himself to have been guilty of sinning, is the mind moved by the thought with what reason he now denies himself to have committed sin? But with reference to this the reason quickly occurs, in that neither did he sin to such an extent as to deserve strokes of the rod, nor yet was capable of being without sin. For that he was stricken not for the correcting of sin, but the increasing of grace, the Judge Himself bears witness, Who praises while He strikes. And again, that he was not without sin neither does he himself deny, who is commended by the Judge, and therefore commended because he denies it not.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But I think that we shall make out these words the better, if we understand them as spoken in the voice of the Head. For our Redeemer, in coming for our Redemption, at once did not sin and did



‘undergo bitterness,’ in that being without sin He undertook the punishment of our sin, in Whose voice it is added,

Ver. 3. *Set me free, and put me beside thee, and let the hand of anyone fight against me.*

[xxxix]

35. For *He* did not sin either in thought or deed: *He* was made to ‘abide in bitterness’ by His Passion, *He* was ‘set free’ by the Resurrection, He was ‘put beside’ the Father by His Ascension; in that having gone up into heaven He sitteth on the right hand of God. And because, after the glory of His Ascension, Judaea was stirred up in the persecuting of His Disciples, it is rightly said here, *Let the hand of anyone fight against me.* For the madness of the persecutors did then rage on His members, then the flame of cruelty blazed out against the life of the faithful; but where should the wicked go, or what should they do, whilst He Whom they persecuted on earth was now seated in heaven? Concerning whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 4. *Thou hast removed their heart far from discipline.*

[xxxix]

36. For if they had been acquainted with the keeping of discipline, nor ever despised the precepts of our Redeemer, the mere mortal condition of their flesh by itself would have excited them to the love of the life immortal; for this very thing, even our being subject to corruption in this life, is of the scourge of discipline. For to be made to feel annoyance from heat and cold, from hunger and thirst, to be afflicted with diseases, and one day even to be put out of existence, what else are all these, but the scourges of sin? Now there are some that both undergo scourges, and yet never fashion anew their life by the fear of Him Who scourges them. Whence it is rightly said now, *Thou hast removed their heart far from discipline*; in that though the body is under discipline, yet the heart is not under discipline, so long as a person is stricken with the rod, and yet not brought back to humbleness of mind. Nor yet is this spoken in such a sense, as if the Almighty and Merciful God ‘removed the heart of man far from discipline,’ but that having fallen away of his own accord, there in executing judgment He suffered him to remain, where he had fallen; as we also say to Him in praying, *And lead us not into temptation.* i.e. ‘do not ever suffer us to be led into temptation.’ It proceeds;

*Therefore they shall not be exalted.*

[xxxix]

37. For if the heart were under discipline, it would seek after things above, it would not be openmouthed to obtain transitory good things. Of those, then, whose heart is not under discipline, it is rightly said, *Therefore they shall not be exalted*, in that while let go at large in the lowest enjoyments, they are ever longing for the good things of earth, they never lift the heart to the delights of heaven; for they would be exalted, if they lifted their minds to the hope of the heavenly country; but they, who do not make it their business to guard their way by discipline, ever in their desires lie grovelling in things below and what is more grievous, in lying low set themselves up, in that they are uplifted on the ground of things transitory. And they may be uplifted, but cannot be exalted, in that they are sunk the deeper below, by the very act by which they are rendered higher to themselves; and so the heart that is without discipline cannot be exalted, in that the human mind, as

when elevated amiss it is forced down below, so forced down aright is lifted up on high. It proceeds;

Ver. 5. *He promiseth prey to his friends; and the eyes of his children shall fail.*

[xxxiv]

38. After that blessed Job had uttered a sentence relating to the multitude of the wicked, i.e. the body of our old enemy; he directly shifts the sentence to the very leader of them, i.e. the head of all the children of perdition, and returns from the plural to the singular number: for the devil and all wicked people are so one body, that it very often happens that the body is rated with the name of the head, and the head designated by the title of the body. Thus the body is rated with the name of the head, when it is said of a bad man, *And one of you is a devil*. [John 6, 70] And again the head is designated by the title of the body, when it is said of the apostate Angel himself, *A man* [Vulg. *'inimicus homo'*] *that is an enemy hath done this*. [Matt. 13, 28] Thus the prince of all the wicked has some for 'associates' and some as 'children.' For who are his associates, but those apostate Angels, who fell with him from the seat of the heavenly country? or what others has he as children, saving bad men, who are begotten by his evil persuading in the practice of wickedness. Whence too it is said by the voice of Truth to unbelievers, *Ye are of your father the devil*. [John 8, 44]

39. So that evil author of error promises 'prey' to his 'associates,' in that he promises the evil spirits the souls of bad men to be seized at their latter end; and the eyes of his children shall fail, in that while he sets on the aims of men to look for earthly things only, he causes them to love that which they cannot keep for long: for neither can the bent of misdirected love remain, when it appears that both that which he loves, and he himself, who loves it, are tending to nought at a rapid rate. It may also be, that by 'the associates' perhaps are understood all those that are most cruel and already full of every kind of wickedness; but by the sons, those who being still deluded by beguiling promises, are being nourished up to increasing of wickedness; that henceforth the devil should as it were by the title of wickedness, have these as his 'associates,' who now no longer have whereunto to grow in perdition, while these he has as sons, whom he suckles with promises, that they may go on advancing to worse. But 'the eyes of his children shall fail,' in that the aims of the wicked fall to the ground, when all that they go after here, they leave behind, and there suffer without end what is fitted to fill them with grief. It proceeds;

Ver.6. *He hath made me, as it were, a byword of the people, and I am an example before them.*

[xxxv]

40. This let blessed Job say in his own person, yea and in the voice of all of the Elect. For everyone that is stricken with the rod, is, as it were, 'made a byword of the people,' in that every fool, when he desires to curse anyone, takes up his cursing in a likeness to him, whom he sees stricken with a temporal stroke, and wishes that punishment for his adversary, which he sees to have befallen the righteous man. And so it comes to pass that with persons not endowed with a right perception, the uptight man is brought into an example, while both the punishment of the just passes current for the condemnation of him, and the glory that is in store for him is not foreseen by any expectance of faith. It proceeds;

Ver. 7. *Mine eye is dim, for indignation, and all my members are as it were brought to nothing.*

[xxxvi]

41. For 'the eye is dim for indignation,' when those very persons likewise, who in the Lord's Body, i.e. in the Church, are endued with the light of truth, whilst they see themselves too long despised and disdained by the wicked, are confounded in astonishment at the inscrutable judgment, and fail to fathom the secret of God; for what reason it is that the wicked are suffered to prevail against the innocence of the good? For who is not amazed, when Herodias by her daughter's dancing obtains at the hands of the drunken king, that the head of that *Friend of the Bridegroom*, that '*Prophet, and more than a Prophet*,' should be brought before the faces of his guests upon a charger? Now when the just are 'dimmed in indignation,' the weak very commonly go headlong into actual infidelity; whence it is added, *And any members are as it were brought to nothing*. For by the term of 'members,' we have the tenderness of the weak set forth, who, while they behold bad men flourishing, and good men tormented, are sometimes brought to this pass, that they regret that they even began in good things, and so speedily fall back to doing evil things, as if the good they had begun were a detriment to their life. But this that he says, *Mine eye is dimmed in indignation*, he unfolds in plainer words, when he adds;

Ver. 8. *Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.*

[xxxvii]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

42. In this place, 'the innocent' is taken for the as yet imperfectly righteous, who, as yet but commencing in good ways, though he is not minded to do mischief to others, yet is not at all able himself to do things that are perfect; and because the hearts of the little ones, while they see the wicked flourishing in the present life, are set on fire with the brands of envy; (for a man the more envies others present good in proportion as he less despises it himself. Since of that which cannot be possessed by all men all of it together, what this one has would be so much lacking [*'desit'* al. '*defit*,' or '*deficit*'] to the other.) Now 'the innocent is kindled against the hypocrite,' when even he who is not used to injure anyone, envies the glory of the dissembler. But if in this passage the innocent means any one perfect in goodness, 'the innocent is moved against the hypocrite;' when he both sees him flourishing, and contemns him and all his flourishing, and by preaching the things that are right plainly says that he ought to be despised by others, the more in proportion as he sees him eagerly in quest of things, which cannot abide with him for long, and in this point of view it is yet further added;

Ver. 9. *The righteous also shall hold on his way, and to clean hands he shall add strength.*

[xxxviii]

43. On considering the hypocrite, 'the righteous holds on his way,' in that whilst he sees that it is by a wicked will that he obtains the things that are of the world, he is himself tied and bound the stronger to the love of heavenly things, knowing that to good desires eternal rewards shall not be wanting, whereas both to bad and double hearts the good things of time are not denied; from which circumstance it comes that 'to clean hands he adds strength,' in that seeing bad men win temporal glory, he brings his good works to perfection, and looks down upon temporal things from the loftier height in proportion as he sees them to abound even to the wicked. For he sees how much those things deserve to be despised, which Almighty God vouchsafes even to bad men: for if they were

primarily great, the Creator would never vouchsafe them to His adversaries; and hence he considers that it is to himself an unworthy thing, that he should go after that good, which he sees to abound even to the wicked; but he applies his mind to the winning of heavenly blessings, which can never be shared with him by the children of perdition. Thus after he had introduced the outward advancements of the wicked, and the interior advancements of the good, he brought forward words of exhortation, saying,

Ver. 10. *But as for you all, do ye turn and come now.*

[xxxix]

44. Which same words of exhortation he properly frames to the Elect, whom he calls to the eternal world; who are bidden in two ways, viz. that they should ‘turn,’ and that they should ‘come;’ ‘turn’ by faith, ‘come’ by practice. Or indeed that they ‘turn’ by abandoning evil deeds, and ‘come’ by doing good ones; as it is written, *Depart from evil, and do good:* [Ps. 37, 27] but that is wonderful which is added,

*And may I not find one wise man among you.*

[xl]

45. For what does this mean, that he bids them to wisdom, and yet wishes that he may not find them wise, saving that they cannot come to true wisdom, who are deceived in confidence in their own false wisdom? Concerning whom it is written, *Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight* [Is. 5, 21]; and to whom it is said again, *Be not wise with your own selves* [Rom. 12, 16]; whence that same great preacher sought that those, whom he found carnally wise, in order that they might attain true wisdom, should first become foolish; saying, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* [1 Cor. 3, 18] And ‘Truth’ saith by Itself, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* [Matt. 11, 25] And so because they that are wise in themselves cannot come to true wisdom, blessed Job, being anxious for the conversion of his hearers, rightly desires that he may not ‘find any wise man among them.’ As if he said to them in plain speech; ‘Learn to be foolish in your own selves, that ye may be truly wise in God.’ It goes on;

Ver. 11. *My days are past away, my thoughts are scattered, racking my heart.*

[xli]

[ALLEGORICAL / MORAL INTERPRETATION]

46. The Holy Church of the Elect sees that the spaces of her life pass in periods of day and night, in that it is hers in adversity to have ‘a night,’ and in prosperity, ‘a day.’ For there riseth as it were light unto her from the tranquillity of peace, and night from the grief of persecution. Now as often as after the pauses of rest she returns to the toilsomeness of persecution, growing to a head against her, she testifies that her ‘days have past;’ in which days, however, she is accustomed to be weighed down with so much the heavier cares, in proportion as she bethinks her that for that very tranquillity of rest a more exact reckoning is required of her by the Judge. For in the tranquil state of peace, at one time she is employed with the profits of souls, at another time she attends to the ministrations of earthly things, which same ministrations of earthly affairs are more burthensome to the minds of good men, in proportion as by the act of looking at them they are torn away though

but for a brief space from looking at the things of heaven. Whence blessed Job, whether in his own voice, or the voice of the Church Universal, after testifying that ‘his days were past,’ thereupon subjoined, *My thoughts are scattered, racking my heart*; in that when temporal glory is gone to the minds of the good, even that charge of earthly stewardship is likewise removed from them, which seemed to be torturing them within their thoughts; for while they aim to be always bent upward for the perception of the things of heaven, by this very circumstance that sometimes in their earthly stewardships they are made to descend to take thought of the lowest matters, they feel themselves to be put to torture. Whence it is brought to pass, that the very hostility of persecution is itself too changed into a mighty exultation of joy, on account of the repose of the heart that is obtained.

Hence it is fitly added,

Ver. 12. *They have changed the night into day.*

[xlii]

47. For ‘the thoughts being scattered change night into day,’ in that it is sometimes more grateful to the righteous through adversity to undergo sufferings, rather than as the effect of prosperity to be harassed with the charge of earthly ministering. But because they have learnt by paying attention that both adversity passes away, and prosperity dawns again, it is fitly added;

*And again after darkness I look for light.*

[xliii]

48. For ‘the light is looked for after darkness,’ in that after the night of the present life, the light eternal is discerned, or adversity and prosperity do so alternate here, that they do not cease to succeed one another by turns. Whence it comes to pass that even in the light night is suspected, and in the night light is presumed on; as when it is written, *In the day of prosperity be not forgetful of affliction, and in the day of affliction be not forgetful of prosperity.* [Ecclus. 11, 25] But mark, forasmuch as we have been redeemed by the grace of our Maker, we henceforth have this boon of heavenly bestowal, that when we are removed from dwelling in our flesh, we are at once carried off to receive heavenly rewards; in that since our Creator and Redeemer, penetrating the bars of hell, brought out from thence the souls of the Elect, He does not permit us to go there, from whence He has already by descending set others free. But they who were brought into this world before His Coming, whatsoever eminency of righteousness they may have had, could not on being divested of the body at once be admitted into the bosom of the heavenly country [a]; seeing that He had not as yet come, Who by His own descending should unloose the bars of hell, and place the souls of the righteous henceforth in their everlasting seat. Hence blessed Job, both feeling the stroke of affliction, and knowing that the recompensing of the righteous was as yet delayed, fitly subjoins; Ver. 13. *If I wait, hell is mine house; and I have made my bed in the darkness.*

[xliv]

49. For the former Saints could undergo adversity, and yet could not, when brought out of the body, be at once freed from the regions of hell; in that He had not yet come, Who should descend thereinto without sin, that He might set free those, who were there bound by right of sin. And man then ‘made his bed in darkness,’ when he forsook the light of righteousness by consenting to the crafty Prompter: and whereas in those very regions of hell the souls of the righteous were kept

imprisoned without torment, so that both on behalf of original sin they should still go down thereunto, and yet by light of their own deeds not undergo punishment; to have ‘made their bed in the darkness,’ in a manner, is to have prepared themselves rest in hell. For it was sad weariness [*grave taedium*] to the Elect, after the dissolution of the flesh, not yet to see the likeness of the Creator. Which wearisomeness blessed Job not improperly designates ‘darkness.’ But whereas this came in the punishment of infirmity, he rightly adds that same infirmity directly, saying, Ver. 14. *I have said to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister.*

[xlv]

50. What does this mean, that he *said to corruption, Thou art my father*; saving that every man descends from an already corrupted origin? and hence it is added, *And to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister*; in this way, viz. that we come into this world once from corruption itself, and along with corruption itself. For as regards the matter of corruptible flesh, the worm is our ‘mother and sister,’ in that we both come forth out of corruption, and come with corruption which we carry about us. And if we may understand it in a spiritual sense, nature is not unappropriately called our ‘mother,’ and habit too a ‘sister,’ in that we are from the one, and along with the other; which same ‘mother and sister’ are ‘worms,’ in that in virtue of a corrupt nature and evil habit we are necessitated, as by a kind of ‘worms,’ so by disquieting thoughts to be gnawed in the mind. For the corrupted nature of the flesh, and bad habit, in that they generate numberless cares in the heart of our frailty, are well called ‘worms our mother and sister.’ For cares gnaw the mind, while they disquiet it. For righteous men do not cease either heedfully to take thought and counsel what they are to do, or thoughtfully to look into it, whither they are destined to be led after the present life. And so because the Elect then, before the Coming of the Lord, both saw that they were in the toils of the present life, and still after the present life did not as yet receive the heavenly blessings, they were made to smart [*urebantur*] with many thoughts of heart. For they waited for the grace of the Redeemer, and yet by living in the flesh could not attain thereto: whence it is fitly added, Ver. 15. *Where then is now my expectation?*

[xlvi]

51. What could be the ‘expectation’ of the righteous, but God who justifieth the righteous, Who should freely go down to (what was) the punishment of mankind, and by the efficacy of His righteousness set free the captives of death? For they never ceased to expect His appearing with intent expectation; they knew that it was to come, but they sought for it to come quickly. Wherefore he does not say, ‘Where, then, is my expectation?’ but, where then is now my expectation? For in that he adds, *now*, he shewed that what was to come one day, he desired might come without delay. It goes on, *And who considereth my patience?*

[xlvii]

52. He expressed the longing desire, wherewith whilst set in the flesh he hastes to be redeemed, and brought back from hell to the regions above. And indeed it belonged to but few men to enter into the consideration of these things, that they, should learn to think of the labours of the present

life, or of the subsequent delay after death. Both of which the just grieved to be subject to before the coming of our Redeemer. And hence it is rightly said, *And who considereth my patience?* Verily, there is not lacking One, to 'consider patience.' But when God does not hear quickly, He is said, as it were, not 'to consider.' For the Redemption of mankind itself, which came at the beginning of the world, by those who came before from the beginning of the world was accounted slow, in that during a long period of time they were severed from the recompensing of the heavenly things, as Truth testifies, Which saith, *Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them.* [Luke 10, 24] And so as to that which is now said, *Who considereth my patience?* the breathings of fervent desire are laid open. For neither, as we said before, does God forbear to consider the patience of the righteous; but not 'to have regard,' in a manner, means to appear less quickly answering to the aspirations of longing desire, and by lengthened periods of time to delay the grace of His Dispensation. Therefore let him say, *Who considereth my patience?* in that what is short to Him that ordereth, is long to him that loves. Hence, still reflecting on the privations of his delay, he repeats that which he had already said before; and being destined to descend below, he redoubles the voice of his grief, saying, Ver. 16. *All of mine shall descend into the lowest hell.*

[xlvihi]

53. Whereas it appears that among those below the righteous are held bound not in places of punishment, but in the bosom of tranquillity above, an important question springs up before us, why it is that blessed Job declares, saying, *All of mine shall descend into the lowest hell*; who even if before the Advent of the Mediator between God and man he had to descend into hell, yet it is plain that into the lowest hell he had not to descend. Does he call the very higher regions of hell, 'the lowest hell?' Plainly because in relation to the loftiness of heaven, the region of this sky may not unappropriately be called the lower region. Whence when the Apostate Angels were plunged from the seats of heaven into this darksome region of the air, the Apostle Peter says, *For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but delivered them, dragged down with infernal chains, into hell, to be reserved for torments in the Judgment.* [2 Pet. 2, 4] If then relatively to the height of heaven this darksome air is infernal, relatively to the elevation of this air, the earth which lies below may be taken both as infernal, and as deep; and relatively to the height of that earth, even those parts of hell which are higher than the other mansions of the place below, may in this place not unsuitably be denoted by the designation of the lowest hell; in that what the sky is to heaven, and the earth to the sky, the same is that higher hollow of the regions below to the earth.

54. But that is very wonderful which he subjoins, *All of mine shall descend*; for whereas the soul alone shall descend into the regions of hell, how is it that the holy man tells that 'all of his' shall descend there, but that he saw himself to be there entire where he perceives the great weight of his recompense? seeing that this which he leaves of himself without sense on the earth, until he returns to the incorruption of the resurrection, he does not feel to be himself. And so he declares that 'all of his will descend into the lowest hell,' whither he sees his soul only shall descend; in that the whole of him is there, where he is capable of having a sense of that which he has got. Or, surely, 'all of his did descend into hell,' in that the recompensing of all his toils was as yet expected to be received only in the rest of hell; and all that he has done as it were 'descends' there, in that there he finds rest in his recompensing for all things. Whence also the expected rest is itself added, when the words are thereupon introduced,

*Dost thou think at least there will be rest for me there?*

[xlix]

55. By which same words he both makes known what he desires, and yet marks that he is still doubtful of receiving the rest, lest he whose holy works so many scourges followed, should by the hidden judgment of the heavenly Judge, after temporal scourges, have lasting torments likewise following him. Wherein it behoves ourselves to consider with exceeding fear which of us is now secure of the everlasting rest, if even he still trembles for it, proclaim of whose virtue the very Judge, Who smites, does Himself sound: *For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?* [1 Pet. 4, 18] For blessed Job knew that he should attain to rest after the strokes of affliction, but that he might shake our hearts with fear, he himself seemed to doubt about the recompensing of Eternal rest, when he says, *Dost thou think?* plainly that we might think well with what exceeding apprehension we ought ever to dread the Judgment to come, if even he, who was commended by the Judge, was not yet in his own words secure of the rewards of the Judgment.

#### BOOK XIV.

Wherein S. Gregory unfolds the historical, allegorical, and moral sense of the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the Book of Job.

[i]

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. In a former part of this work we have handled the point, that Almighty God, in order to amend the hearts of those under the law, brought forward the life of blessed Job for a testimony, who knew not the law and yet kept it, who observed the precepts of life, which he had not received in writing. This man's conduct is first extolled by God's bearing witness to it, and is afterwards suffered to be put to the proof by the devil's plotting against it, that he might prove by the trials of tribulation, how much he had attained before in a state of peace. This man's life the adversary of the human race, evil disposed after his manner, both knew to be commended by the attestation of God, and yet asked for to prove it. And when he could not succeed in bringing him to the ground, smitten with so many losses in his substance, so many bereavements, he set on his wife against him in the goading of mispersuasion, that at all events by the words of his own household he might ruin him, whom he could never bring down by so many torments of tidings. But whereas what by woman's aid he won against Adam first in paradise, he could not make good against this second man sitting on a dunghill, he betook himself to other appliances of tempting, that he should bring in his friends as if administering consolation, and yet stir up their feelings in bitterness of upbraiding, that him whose patience scourges had failed to subdue, at least bitter words in the midst of those scourges might succeed in overcoming. But the adversary, while laying his plots with craft, was a victim to the deceit, which he had contrived against the holy man, in that for all the occasions of ruin that he brought upon the holy man, he supplied him with as many occasions of victory. For against torments he maintained patience, against words, wisdom, in that he at once sustained the pains of stripes with resignation, and restrained the foolishness of ill advisers with wisdom. But whereas in those very sufferings and well-instructed speeches he bears a figure of Holy Church, by his friends,



as we have already often said, uttering some things right and some foolish, heretics are not unjustly represented who in respect of this, that they are friends of the holy man, say many things right of the wicked, but in respect of this, that they bear a likeness of heretics, very often transgress in the excesses of the lips, and they smite the breast of the holy man with the darts of their words, but are tired out by their very own smiting against his indomitable spirit. So then it is our business to distinguish with exact discrimination, both what there is in their words that they think aright concerning the lost, and what that they sound that is foolish as directed against blessed Job.

Ver. 1, 2. *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, Unto what end will ye cast abroad words? understand first, and so let us speak.*

[ii] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

2. All heretics think that in some things that are known to her Holy Church is full of pride, while some things they fancy that she does not even understand. Whence Bildad the Shuhite, as it were, asserts that blessed Job had broken out into pride, when he declares [*fatetur* is used thus] that he ‘casts abroad words.’ But he gives a token with what pride he was himself swoln, who supposed that blessed Job spoke things that he did not understand; and whereas all heretics complain that they are despised by Holy Church in her estimate of them, it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 3. *Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed as vile in your sight?*

[iii]

3. It is natural to the human mind to suppose that the thing that it does is done to itself. Thus they believe themselves to be despised, who are used to despise the ways of the good; and whereas in such things as are capable of being understood by reason, the Church proves against heretics that what they make up is unreasonable, they imagine themselves to be counted as ‘beasts’ in her view. On which supposition of their being despised, they directly break out in disdain, and are urged to abuse of that Church. Whence it is added;

Ver. 4. *Why dost thou ruin thy soul in thy fury?*

[iv]

4. Heretics esteem whether a strong feeling for the rule of right, or the spiritual grace of holy preaching, not as good weight of virtue, but as the madness of fury. By which same fury they believe that ‘the souls of the faithful are ruined,’ in that they imagine that the life of the Church is destroyed by the very same means whereby they see she is made to kindle against themselves. It goes on;

*Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?*

[v]

5. For they think that they themselves worship God every where, that they themselves have occupied the whole world. What is it then to say, *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?* but what they often say to the faithful, viz. ‘that if this thing which you say be true, all the earth is forsaken by God, which we ourselves already occupy from the multitude of us.’ Now the holy Church universal proclaims that God cannot be truly worshipped saving within herself, asserting that all

they that are without her shall never be saved. But conversely heretics, who are confident that it is possible for them to be saved even without her pale, maintain that the Divine aid is rendered to them in every place. Whence they say; *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?* i.e. 'is it so, that whosoever is out of thee cannot be saved?' Whence it is added further; *And shall the rocks be moved out of their place?*

[vi]

6. Heretics call those persons 'rocks' who in their views by the sublimity of their thoughts stand out in the human race, which same they glory that they have for teachers. But when Holy Church addresses herself to the task of gathering together the different erring preachers within the bosom of the right faith, what else is this but that she 'removes the rocks from their places,' that having a right view of things, they may lie down in humility within her, who aforetime were standing stiff in their own wrong notions? But heretics altogether make against the doing of this, and withstand the 'rocks being moved out of their places' on account of her voice, because they are averse that they, who among themselves, being lifted up in their thoughts, were embued with false doctrine, by coming to her should think what is true in a humble spirit.

7. Now, it very often happens that heretics, when they see any persons within the bosom of Holy Church travailing whether with want or calamities, lift themselves up directly in the presumption of righteousness, and whatsoever they see to have happened of an adverse kind to the faithful, they suppose it is done for their iniquities, not knowing doubtless that the complexion of the present life does not in the least degree prove the worth of men's conduct. For very often both good things befall the bad, and bad ones befall the good, on the very principle that real goods are reserved for the good, and real ills for the bad, in the season of the eternal recompensing. Thus Bildad bearing a figure of heretics, who lift themselves up on the grounds of this life's good fortune, swells against the strokes of blessed Job, as if with their voice in opposition to the reproach of the righteous, and expressly he is arguing against the ungodly indeed, but how wickedly he speaks in such terms against a good man, he is not aware. Thus he added, saying,

Ver. 5. *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out, and the flame of his fire cease to shine?*

[vii]

8. If he says this in describing the present life, he is mistaken; in that very often both the light of prosperity is seen in the ungodly, and the darkness of ignominy and poverty envelopes the godly. But if his discourse points to this, viz. to shew what the ungodly meet with in their end, it is said with truth, *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out, and the flame of his fire cease to shine?* Which if it might have been rightly spoken in regard to an ungodly man, ought never to have been delivered against a holy man set fast in the midst of scourges. But let us, considering well the powers of his arm in delivering sentences, reflect how strongly he hurls the darts, and let us cease to look at him whom, while so hurling them, he aims to hit, knowing surely that he strikes a stone with foiled blows. So let him say; *Shall not the light of the wicked be put out?* For even the ungodly have their 'light,' i.e. the good fortune of the present life. But 'the light of the wicked shall be put out,' in that this present life's good fortune is speedily terminated along with life itself. Whence it is fitly added; *and the flame of his fire shall not shine.*

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

9. For every ungodly man has a 'flame of his own fire,' which he kindles in his heart from the heat of temporal desires, whilst he burns now with these now with those lusts, and fans his thoughts into a bigger flame by the diverse flatteries of the world. But if a fire has no flame, it does not shine by shedding any light. And so the flame of the fire is his outward beauty or power, which comes from his burning within. For what he anxiously desires to get, he very often wins, to the heaping up of his own ruin; and whether in the power of the loftiest pitch, or in the wealth of multiplied increase, he as it were shines in external glory. But 'the flame of his fire shall not shine,' in that, in the day of his departure hence, all the fair shew without is removed, and he is consumed by his own burning within alone. And 'so the flame' is removed from the 'fire,' when his exterior glory is separated from his interior burning. Even the righteous too have a flame of their fire, but one doubtless to shine bright, in this respect, that their desires give light in good works. But the light of the wicked does not shine in the least, in that hereby, viz. that they aim at what is evil, they are forced to darkness. And hence it follows ;

Ver. 6. *The light shall be dark in his tabernacle.*

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10. If we very frequently take darkness for sorrow, we ought without unfairness to take light for joy. And so 'the light is dark in his tabernacle,' in that in his conscience, which he inhabits in wickedness, the joy which he had from things temporal is brought to an end. Whence too it is fitly added;

*And the candle that is over him shall be put out.*

For to speak in language grounded on the usage of many, a 'candle [*lucerna*]' is a light in an earthen vessel, but a light in an earthen vessel, is delight in the flesh. And so 'the candle that is over him is put out,' in that when the recompensing of his wickednesses comes upon the ungodly man, carnal delight is brought to nought in his heart. Now it is well that it is not said of this candle, 'which is by him,' but 'which is over him,' in that earthly enjoyments possess the mind of the bad, and so swallow it up in delight, that they are 'over' it, and not 'by' it. But the righteous even when they have the good fortune of the present life, are taught to force it to bow beneath them, that this, viz. that they are made glad in themselves with good things, they may get above by the counsel of a steadied mind, and surmount by the control of virtue. And so 'the candle' of the wicked man, 'which is over him, is put out,' in that his joy is quickly brought to an end, which possessed him wholly in this life, and the man, who now wickedly lets himself out at large in pleasures, punishment hereafter closely encompasses round about in woe. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 7 *The steps of his strength shalt be straitened.*

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11. For now as it were he puts forth 'the steps of his strength,' as often as he executes the violent acts of his power. But 'the steps of his strength shall be straitened,' in that the resources of his wickedness, which he now displays in his own gratification, punishment hereafter binds fast. It goes on;

*And his own counsel shall cast him down.*

[x]

12. Every bad man makes it his counsel now to aim at present things, to abandon the things of eternity, to do what is unjust, to sneer at what is just; but when the Judge of the just and unjust shall come, every ungodly person is 'cast down by his counsel,' in that for this that he chose to go after here with bad intent, he is drowned in the darkness of eternal woe. For that man whom temporal glory uplifts here, punishment without end there sinks down. He who here revels in self-gratification, is there tortured with everlasting vengeance. And it often happens that the very prosperity of this life, which is so eagerly hankered after by the ungodly, so clogs their steps, that even when they have the mind to return to good works, they are scarcely able: in that they have not the power to do what is right, while they fear to displease the lovers of this world. Whence it is brought to pass, that through that glory which the ungodly man derives from sin, his sins are yet further doubled and redoubled. Which Bildad rightly sets forth, when he adds;

Ver. 8. *For he hath put his own foot into the net, and he walketh in the meshes [masculis] of it.*

[xi]

13. He, who 'puts his feet into a net,' cannot get them out, when he has a mind; so he that lets himself down, into habits of sin, cannot rise up the moment he wishes it; and he 'that walketh in the meshes of a net,' entangles his steps in walking, and when he tries to extricate himself to walk, he is tied and bound that he cannot. 'For it very often happens that a man, beguiled by the delightfulness of this world, reaches after the gloriousness of the honour thereof, that he attains to the effecting of his desires, and rejoices to have attained the object which he sought after; but seeing that the good things of this world, when not possessed, are objects of love, and very often, when possessed, grow worthless, he learns by the act of obtaining how worthless that is which he sought after. Whence being brought back to himself, he looks out how without sin to get quit of that which he sees himself to have gotten with sin; but the very same dignity which entangled him, holds him fast, and he cannot without further sins flee from thence, whereunto he came not without sin. And so he has 'put his feet into the net, and walketh in the meshes thereof,' in that when he strives to get quit, he then sees in a true light with what hard knots he is held bound. For we do not even know of our binding in a true sense, save when in striving to get free, we as it were try to lift our feet. And hence he makes known this same binding, by adding,

Ver. 9. *The gin shall take him by the heel;*

in that the end shall be made fast in sin. And because the enemy of mankind, when he binds up in sin the life of each individual, eagerly pants after his death, it is rightly added;

*And thirst shall burn furiously against him.*

[xii]

14. For our old enemy, when he ensnares the life in sin, thirsts that he may drink the death of the sinner. Which however may also be understood in another sense. For the evil mind when it sees that it has been brought into sin, seeks with a certain superficialness of thought to escape out of the snares of sin; but fearing either the threats or reproaches of men, it chooses rather to die for ever, than to undergo a little of adversity for a season, whence it abandons itself wholly to evil ways, in which it perceives itself to be already once bound. And so he whose life is bound fast in sin even to

the end, has his 'heel held by the gin.' But forasmuch as in the same degree that he minds that he is tied and bound with evil habits, he is in despair of his return, by that very despairing he henceforth kindles more fiercely to the lusts of this world, the heat of desire arises within him, and the mind having been ensnared by previous sins, is inflamed to even worse transgressions. And hence it is added; *And thirst shall burn furiously against him.* For in his mind there is a 'thirst that burns out against him,' in that in proportion as he is used to do wicked things, he is the more vehemently on fire to drink down evil. Since for the ungodly man to 'thirst' is to lust after the good things of this world. And hence our Redeemer cures the man with the dropsy before the Pharisee's house, and when he was arguing against avarice, it is written, *And the Pharisees also who were covetous heard all things; and they derided Him.* [Luke 16, 14] What does it mean then that the man with the dropsy is cured before the house of the Pharisee, but that by the sickness of one man's body the sickness of heart in another is represented? For one sick of a dropsy, the more he drinks, thirsts the more, and every covetous person redoubles his thirst by drinking, in that when he has got the things he desires, he pants the more in desiring others. For he that by getting is made to long for more, has his thirst increased by drinking. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *His snare is buried in the earth, and his trap upon the way.*

[xiii]

15. His 'snare is buried in the earth,' when sin is hidden under earthly interests. For our enemy in executing his plots shews to the human mind something to long after in earthly gain, and hides the snare of sin, that it may bind his soul tight, so that he should see indeed what he might set his heart on, and yet never see in what a snare of sin he is putting his foot. Now a trap [*decipula*] has its name from entrapping. And 'a trap is' then 'placed' by our old enemy 'upon the way,' when in the course of this world's practice, which the mind is bent to follow, the snare of sin is prepared, which same would not so easily entrap, if it were possible to be seen. For a trap is so set, that, while the meat is displayed, it is not itself seen by the passers by. For like to meat in a trap is gain with sin, and the prosperity of this world with wickedness; and so when gain is sought after by one with a covetous view, it is as if the trap which is not seen laid hold of the foot of the mind. Thus there are often set before the mind along with sin, honours, riches, health, and temporal life, which, while the weak mind sees like food, and does not see the trap, by the meat, which on seeing it longs after, it is caught fast in the sin, which is not seen. For there are kinds of tempers which border upon certain bad qualities. Thus harsh tempers are usually found to be united either to cruelty or to pride; but tempers that are soft, and joyous beyond what is becoming, are sometimes allied to lust and dissoluteness. Therefore the enemy of mankind surveys the tempers of each individual," to see what bad quality they are allied to, and he sets those objects before the face, which he sees the mind is most readily inclined to, so that to the soft and joyous tempers he often proposes dissoluteness, and sometimes vainglory, but to harsh dispositions he proposes pride or cruelty, and so there he sets a trap, where he sees the path of the mind to be, in that he there introduces peril by deception, where he has found that there is the 'way' of a kindred turn of thought. And, whereas all that the bad man does, he fears to undergo too, and reckons that to be doing by all others toward himself, which he himself prepares for all others, whom he is able, it rightly follows;

Ver. 11. *Terrors shall make him afraid on every side.*

[xiv]

16. For he imagines all men to be such toward himself, as he himself strives to be towards all. And what effect these same terrors have in his conduct, is brought in, when it is said;  
*And shall entangle his feet.*

For if 'the feet be entangled,' they cannot have free steps, and are not able to accomplish any journey; in that their own entanglements hold them fast. Therefore bad desires force into vilest practice, and vilest practice holds fast in terror; which same terror entangles the feet, that they should have no power to step out into right practice. And it often happens that a person for this reason fears to be good, that he may not himself suffer that at the hands of the wicked, which he remembers himself to have done to the good; and whereas he dreads to undergo that thing which he has himself done, on every side affrighted, on every side full of misgiving, he as it were has his feet entangled, who is ensnared by fear; he is able to do nothing freely; in that he has in a manner lost his going in good practice by the same act, whereby he stepped out of the line into the evil which he set his heart on. It goes on;

Ver. 12. *Let his strength be hungerbitten, and starvation invade his ribs.*

[xv]

17. After the manner of Holy Scripture, he has the appearance of wishing that which he foresees will be, not surely in the spirit of one uttering curses, but of one pronouncing prophesies. Thus every man, in that he consists of soul and flesh, is as it were made up of strength and weakness. For by virtue of that part, by which he was created a reasoning spirit, he is not improperly called 'strong,' but in respect of that, by which he is of a fleshly substance, he is weak. And so 'the strength' of man is the reasoning soul, which is able to resist by reason the tendencies to evil that assail it. And hence it is said again by blessed Job, *Thou hast strengthened him for a while, that he might pass through for evermore.* [Job 14, 20] Since from a reasoning soul man derives it, that he should live for evermore. And so this wicked man's 'strength is hungerbitten,' in that his soul is not fed by any refreshment of the interior food. Of which same hunger God saith by the Prophet; *I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord.* [Amos 8, 11]

18. And it is well added, *And starvation invade his ribs.* For the ribs lace in the bowels, that lying out of sight within they should be fortified by their solidity. And so the 'ribs' of every one are the senses [Vide b. xi. c. 45. note.] of the mind, which fence the hidden thoughts. Therefore 'starvation invades the ribs,' when all spiritual refreshment being removed, the senses of the mind fail, and cannot either rule or guard their thoughts. 'Starvation invades the ribs' of the wicked man, in that the interior hunger debilitates the senses of the mind, that they may not rule their thoughts at all. For when the senses of the mind are dulled, the thoughts issue forth to things without, and, as it were, the ribs being weak, the bowels which might have lain in secret in a sound state, are poured forth without. Hence it comes that when the thoughts are spread abroad without, the mind being deceived goes after the image of exterior glory, and is pleased with nothing save what it beholds beautiful without; against whom the words yet further subjoined are fitly directed;

Ver. 13. *Let it devour the beauty of his skin; and let the firstborn death consume his arms.*

[xvi]

19. 'The beauty of his skin' is temporal glory, which whereas it is coveted as an object without us, is retained as a beauty on the skin. But by the title of 'arms' works are not unfitly set forth, in that the work of the body is done by the arms. And what is death but sin, which kills the soul to the interior life? Whence it is written; *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection* [Rev. 20, 6], in that he shall hereafter rise again joyfully in the flesh, who whilst set in this life has risen again from the death of his soul. If then sin is death, 'the firstborn death' may not unsuitably be taken for pride; in that it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* [Ecclus. 10, 13] And so 'the beauty of his skin and his arms the firstborn death devoureth,' in that the glory or the practice of the bad man is overthrown by Pride. For he might have been glorious even in this life without sin, if he had not been proud. He might in the judgment of His Creator have been commended for some works, if before His eyes pride had not overturned those very works. Thus we often see rich people, which might have had wealth and glory without guilt, if they would have had them with humility. But they are uplifted by possessions, they are flushed with honours, they disdain the rest of the world, and place their life's whole hope and trust in the mere abundance of good things alone. Hence a certain rich man said, *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* [Luke 12, 19] Which thoughts of their hearts when the Judge above beholds, He plucks them away for this very confidence of theirs by itself. Hence in this place too it is fitly added;

Ver. 14. *Let his confidence be rooted out of his tabernacle, and let death as a king trample on him.*

[xvii]

20. In this place by the title of 'death' we have denoted the enemy of the human race himself, who brought in death, who is set forth by a particular minister of his, of whom it is said to John, *And his name was Death.* [Rev. 6, 8] And so this 'death,' in the day of departure hence, 'tramples upon the wicked man as a king,' in that him, whom he before deceived by soft persuasions, at the last he carries off to punishment in bonds of violence, and forces him down the more cruelly, in proportion as he ties him the stronger in bad deeds. And here too while he possesses the heart of the lost sinner, he 'tramples' upon it, in that as often as he pressed it with feelings of delight, he as it were set upon it the feet of his tyrannical dominion.

21. But if by the title of 'death,' we are to understand not the devil explicitly, but sin, in consequence of which the lost meet with the doom to be dragged to death, then indeed such 'death tramples on the mind like a king,' when it possesses the same making no resistance. For temptation to sin cannot be away from man whilst set in this life. But it is one thing to resist sin tempting us, and another to be enthralled by it tyrannizing over us. And so the wicked man, because he is not taught to resist the persuasions of sin, and is not afraid to be subdued to its dominion, has it rightly said of him, *Death as a king shall trample on him.* For it was the reign of this death that Paul was keeping off from the hearts of his disciples, when he said, *Let not sin there reign in your mortal body.* [Rom. 6, 12] Since he does not say, 'let it not be,' but, *let it not reign,* in that it cannot help but be, but *reign* it may not, in the hearts of the good. And so whereas, when a sin strikes the heart of the bad man, it does not find it resist, but bows it under its dominion, let it rightly be said, *Let his confidence be rooted out of his tabernacle, and let death as a king trample on him.* And so 'his confidence is rooted out of the earth,' when the man, who in this life had provided for himself many goods after his mind, is brought to nought by death in an instant. And 'death as a king tramples on him,' in that he is either pressed upon here by evil habits, or at the time of his death,

hereby, viz. that he is carried off to punishment, he is brought under to the power of the devil. Which is thus done in the minds of the wicked on this account; because, even when the opportunity of committing sin is lacking, the suggestions of the desire are not in the least lacking to their minds. And whereas they do always follow the devil in practice, yet do they doubly bind themselves fast to him in thought. And so there is first sin in thought, and afterwards in act. Whence it is said to the daughter of Babylon, *Come down and sit in the dust, O Virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the earth.* [Is. 47, 1] For whereas dust is always earth, earth is not always dust. What then are we to understand by dust but thoughts, which, while they perseveringly and silently fly up in the mind, blind its eyes? And what is denoted by 'the earth,' but an earthly way of acting? And whereas the mind of the lost sinner is first cast down to imagine wicked things, and afterwards to do them, to the daughter of Babylon, who came down from the judgment of interior uprightness, it is rightly said in a wounding sentence, that first she should 'sit in the dust,' and afterwards 'in the earth,' in that except she had lowered herself in thought, she would never have settled fast in bad practice. It goes on;

*Let his fellows dwell in his tabernacle, because he is not.*

[xviii]

22. i.e. In his mind apostate angels shall have their haunt by vilest thoughts, they being 'his fellows,' who for this reason no longer 'is,' because he has departed from the Supreme Essence, and for this is, by a daily augmented declension, as it were tending 'not to be,' in that he has once fallen from Him Who truly is; who moreover is rightly said 'not to be,' in that he has lost well-being, though he has not lost natural being. Still, yet further setting forth these thoughts of the bad man with more minuteness, he subjoins, saying,

*Let brimstone be scattered upon his habitation.*

[xix]

23. What is 'brimstone' but the fuel of fire, which, however, so cherishes the fire, that it sends out the very foulest stench. What then do we understand by 'brimstone,' but carnal sin, which, while it fills the mind with wicked thoughts like a kind of ill savours, is kindling everlasting fires for it; and whilst it spreads the cloud of its stench in the lost soul, it is as it were providing against it fuel for the flames to come after. For that the ill savour of the flesh is understood by brimstone, the mere history of Holy Writ by itself hears record, which relates that the Lord 'rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom.' Who, when He had determined to punish her carnal wickednesses, by the very character of the punishment marked out the stain of her guilt: since 'brimstone' hath stench, and fire burning; and so, forasmuch as they had been kindled to bad desires in the ill savour of the flesh, it was meet that they should perish by fire and brimstone combined; that by their just punishment they might be taught what they had done in unjust desire. And so this 'sulphur is scattered upon the habitation' of the wicked man, as often as the corrupt indulgence of the flesh exercises dominion within him; and whereas bad thoughts unceasingly occupy him, and forbid his bringing forth the fruit of good practice, it is rightly added;

Ver. 16. *Let his roots be dried up beneath, and above let his crop be spoiled.*

[xx]



24. For what do we understand by the title of 'roots,' which are set out of sight, and bring forth a shoot into open view, but the thoughts, which, while they are not seen in the heart, produce visible works? And hence by the title of a 'crop' there is denoted the same visible practice, which is thus produced from a hidden root. And whereas every bad man first dries up in the imaginings of temptation and afterwards dies off from good deeds, it is rightly said by Bildad, *Let his roots be dried up beneath, and above let his crop be spoiled*, in that, whereas the wicked man sets his thoughts in things below, and neglects to seek the delights of everlasting greenness, what is this but that he lets his 'roots be dried beneath?' Whose 'crop too is spoiled above,' in that all his practice is counted as nothing in the view of the judgment above, even if it seem good in the eyes of man. Thus the 'roots' are at the bottom, and the 'crop' above, in that we first send out good thoughts here, that we may one day deserve to receive the fruit of our good works in eternal recompensing; but every wicked person when he abandons good thoughts, and pours himself forth upon the things that are without, has 'his roots dried up below:' but 'above his crop is spoiled,' in that he, who persists barren here, after this life is bidden to no rewards. It goes on;  
Ver. 17. *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the streets.*

[xxi] [PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

25. It is deserving of our notice, that Bildad the Shuhite so expresses himself of each one of the wicked, that his words are secretly directed against the head of all the wicked; for the head of the wicked is the devil. And he in his own person having in the last times entered into that vessel of perdition, shall be called 'Antichrist,' who will endeavour to spread his name far and wide, which same every individual now likens himself to, when, by the memorial of an earthly name, he strives to extend the gloriousness of his praise, and exults in transitory reputation. Therefore let these words be so understood of each one of the wicked, that they be referred in a particular manner to the head of the wicked himself. Therefore let him say, *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the streets.* For streets [*platea* from *platuv* 'broad'] are called by a Greek term from width, and so Antichrist aims to settle the remembrance of himself upon earth, when he longs, if it were possible, to remain for ever in temporal glory. He delights to have 'his name celebrated in the street,' whilst he spreads the working of his wickedness far and wide. But whereas this wickedness of his is not permitted to be reared to a height for a long time, let it be said, *Let his remembrance perish from the earth, and let not his name be repeated in the street*; i.e. that he should both quickly part with the fame of his earthly power, and lose all the pleasures of his name, which he had spread far and wide in the shortlived prosperity of time. It goes on;  
Ver. 18. *He shall drive him from light into darkness.*

[xxii]

26. He is led 'from light to darkness,' when for honour in the present life, he is condemned to eternal punishments. And hence it is more plainly added,  
*And translate him out of the world.*  
For he is 'translated out of the world,' when upon the Judge above appearing, he is taken away from this world, in which he wickedly glories; and for this, that when the end of the world breaks in upon him, he is condemned with all his followers, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 9. *There shall neither be seed of him, nor offspring in his people, nor any remnant in his parts.*

For it is written, *that the Lord Jesus shall consume him, with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of His coming.* [2 Thess. 2, 8] And so, then, whereas his wickedness is ended together with the settled constitution of the world, there shall be ‘no offspring of him left in his people,’ in that both he himself and his people along with him are equally forced to punishment; and all the wicked, who by his evil advising were born in bad courses, by the brightness of the Lord’s coming are struck with eternal destruction together with that head of theirs. And there is ‘no offspring of him remaining in the world,’ in that the strict Judge ends the iniquities of that one simultaneously with the end of the world. Now that these words are to be understood expressly of Antichrist is shewn, when it is added;

Ver. 20. *In his days the last shall be astonished, and horror shall seize on the first.*

[xxiii]

27. For he will then let himself loose against the righteous with such a measure of iniquity, that even the hearts of the very Elect shall be struck with no small consternation. Whence it is written, *Insomuch that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect.* [Mat. 24, 24] Which, clearly, is said, not because the Elect shall fall, but because they shall tremble with terrible alarms. Now at that time both the latest Elect and the first Elect are described as maintaining the conflict for righteousness against him, in that both they that shall be found among the Elect at the end of the world, are destined to be laid low in the death of the flesh, and they too who proceeded from the former divisions of the world, i.e. Enoch and Elijah, shall be brought back amongst men, and shall be exposed to the savageness of his cruelty still in their mortal flesh. This one’s forces let loose in such terrible power, ‘the latest are astonished at, and the first do dread,’ in that, though in respect of this, viz. that he is lifted up by a spirit of pride, they despise all his temporal power, yet in respect of this, that they are themselves still in mortal flesh, wherein they are liable to suffer temporal anguish, they dread the very punishments, which they bear with resolution; so that there is in them at one and the same time both constancy derived from virtue, and alarm proceeding from the flesh; in that though they be of the number of the Elect, so that they cannot be overcome by torments, yet from this only that they are men, they fear the very torments, that they overcome. So let it be said, *In his days the last shall be astonished, and terror shall seize on the first.* In that he shall then shew forth such signs, and do things so cruel and hard hearted, as to force them to astonishment, whom he shall find at the end of the world, and to pierce with the pang of carnal death the first fathers, who are reserved for his extirpation. Therefore whereas he has described many particulars relating to all the wicked, or to the head of the wicked himself, he immediately adds with a general description,

Ver. 21. *Surely, such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.*

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#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

28. For he had said above; He shall drive him from light into darkness, and translate him out of the world; and upon subjoining his miseries, he added; *Surely, such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.* In that he who is now lifted up from not

knowing God, is then brought to his own 'dwellings,' when his own wickedness plunges him into woes; and one day he finds 'darkness his place,' who, while he made himself glad here in the counterfeit light of righteousness, was occupying the place of another. For bad men in all that they do in dissimulation, are striving to possess themselves of the righteous man's name of credit, as of another's place. But they are then brought to their own place, when they are tormented with everlasting fire, as the desert of their iniquity. For here in all that they do they are ministering to their desire of winning praise, and by the semblance of good works, they are opening wider the bosom of the mind to avarice. So let the wicked man go now, and full blown with complete equipments, let him build his habitations here below, let him spread a name of glory, let him multiply estates, and delight himself in abundant stores, but when he shall be brought to everlasting punishments, then surely he shall know that 'such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.' Now Bildad said this rightly, but he did not know who it was that he was saying it to. But the heart of a good man is seriously afflicted, when sentences are pronounced against him upon an unfair estimate. Whence blessed Job directly answered, saying; *How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?*

[xxv]

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

29. The sayings of the holy man, as we have already often said, are to be understood as spoken sometimes in his own person, sometimes in the voice of the Head, and sometimes in a figure of the Church Universal. Now the soul of the righteous is deeply distressed, when those persons launch severe sentences against the good, who have not learned to lead good lives, and by the words of the mouth claim righteousness to themselves, to which in practice they are enemies. Whence to the friends of blessed Job, who, as we have already often said, bear a type of heretics, himself rightly answers, *How long will ye vex my soul, and wear me with words?* For good men are 'worn' with the words of the wicked, when those swell out against them in words of the lips, who lie low either in a corrupt faith, or in bad habits. It goes on; *Lo, these ten times ye confound me.*

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30. On enumerating the successive times of the speeches of Job's friends, we learn that as yet they had spoken but five times. But for this reason, that he had five times heard rebukes from them, and five times himself replied to their rebukes, he says that he had been ten times confounded; because both herein, viz. that he had been causelessly reproached, he suffered deeply, and in this, that he uttered words of instruction to those that gave no ear, he underwent confusion. And so, while in hearing he held his peace, and in speaking was not heard, that person had trouble put upon him, who both in holding his peace submissively, and in speaking to them fruitlessly, experienced pain within his heart; and hence he says above, What shall I do? If I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, it will not depart from me.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But if we make these words refer to a type of Holy Church, it is well known that it is her great delight to keep the precepts of the Ten Commandments; and the wicked 'confound her ten times,' in that by all that they do wrong in their wicked principles, they forsake the precepts of the Ten

Commandments, and cause confusion to the good as often as they set themselves against the words of God in their doings, It goes on;  
*And ye are not ashamed that ye oppress me.*

[xxvii]

31. There are some persons, whom bad principle suddenly springing up invites to the commission of wickedness, yet respect for their fellow-creatures recalls again. And very often from this, viz. that they are made ashamed outwardly, they are brought back into their own interior heart, and pass an inward judgment upon themselves; in that if they are afraid to do what is evil on man's account, how much more ought they not even to have longed after what is evil, on God's account, Who sees all things? And in the case of these persons it is brought to pass, that they correct greater evil by inferior good, i.e. interior sin by exterior shame. Again, there are some, who, when once they have brought themselves to condemn God in their hearts, despise the judgments of their fellow-creatures much more, and all the evil that they long after, they do not blush to execute boldly, which persons secret wickedness invites to the commission of sin, and outward shame holds not back; as it is said also of a certain wicked judge, *Which feared not God, neither regarded man.* [Luke 18, 2] Hence too it is said of certain persons sinning with shameless effrontery; *And they have declared their sin as Sodom.* [Is. 3, 9] Thus very often there are such persons enemies of Holy Church, persons who are not withheld from committing wicked things, either by the fear of God, or regard of man; and it is well said to these by blessed Job, *And ye are not ashamed that ye oppress me*; seeing that though it was wrong to have wished bad things, it is worse not to be ashamed of things wrongly desired. It goes on;

Ver. 4. *And be it indeed that I have been ignorant, my ignorance remaineth with myself.*

[xxviii]

32. Heretics have this about them, that they are swoln by the empty pretensions of their knowledge, and often turn to ridicule the simplicity of those that believe rightly, and account the life of the humble to be of no worth. On the other hand Holy Church, in all that she has really wise in her, keeps low the level of her view in humility, that she be not puffed up by knowledge, nor be made to swell high on the seeking out of things hidden, and venture to dive into points, that are above her powers. For with more profit to herself she is anxious not to know things she is unable to fathom, rather than boldly to define things she does not know. As it is written; *It is not good to eat much honey: so he that is a searcher of majesty, shall be overwhelmed by glory.* [Prov. 25, 27] For if the sweetness of honey be taken in greater measure than there is occasion for, from the same source whence the palate is gratified, the life of the eater is destroyed, The 'searching into majesty' is also sweet; but he, that seeks to dive into it deeper than the cognizance of human nature admits, finds the mere gloriousness thereof by itself oppress him, in that, like honey takes in excess, it bursts the sense of the searcher which is not capable of holding it. Now that is said to be 'with' us, which is for us; and on the other hand that is said not to be with us, that is against us; and so, because his own knowledge puffs out the heart of the heretic, while his perception of his own ignorance abases the faithful, let blessed Job say in his own voice, let him say also in the confession of the Church Universal, *And be it indeed that I have been ignorant, my ignorance shall be with me.* As if it were said in express words to Heretics; 'All your knowledge is not with you, since it is against you, so long as it uplifts you in foolish pride; but my ignorance is with me, because it is for

me; since, whereas I do not dare to search into any thing relating to God in pride of heart, I keep myself in the truth in a spirit of humility.' And because these very same things that heretics seek to know, they apply perforce to the furtherance of self-elation only, that they may seem learned in contrast to the faithful and humble, it is rightly added;

*But ye are set up against me.*

[xxix]

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

33. But perhaps we shall consider these words more thoroughly, if we point out how they apply to the friends of blessed Job personally in a special sense. For they, when they saw the righteous man smitten, ought to have turned back into their own deepest interior, and not to have persecuted blessed Job with words of upbraiding, but to have bewailed their own case; seeing that, if he was so stricken, who served as he did, with what vengeance did they deserve to be smitten, who had not served like him? And it is rightly said to them, *Ye are set up against me*; as if it were said to them in plainer terms; 'Ye who ought by occasion of my being smitten to have been set up against your own selves,' this being the order of such setting up on the side of goodness, viz. that we be first set up against ourselves, and afterwards against the wicked. For he that is set up against the good, is blown out in pride. Thus we are set up against ourselves, when, reviewing our own evil deeds, we smite ourselves with the severe avenging of penance, when we do not spare ourselves at all in our sins, and are not biassed by any fond thoughts towards ourselves, who, if we first rigidly follow up our evil things in ourselves, it is likewise fair, that we should be set up against the evil in others too for their good, and that the evil which we punish in ourselves, we should subdue in others too, by charging it home to them.

34. But this sort of setting up the wicked know nothing of, because they leave themselves, and attack the good; they incline themselves towards themselves, in their secret heart, by the softness of fond flattering, and they are set up against the lives of good men by the severity of harshness, whence it is now rightly said to the friends of blessed Job swelling against him under his scourge, *Ye are set up against me*: i.e. 'Your own selves, that deserve to be rebuked, ye leave, and me ye rebuke with severe sentences.' For he that does not judge himself first, is ignorant what to judge right in another; and if perchance he did know by the hearing what to judge right, yet he is not able to judge rightly the merits of another, who has no rule of judging supplied him by the consciousness of his own innocence. Hence it is that it is said to certain persons dealing deceitfully, when they brought an adulteress to receive punishment; *He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her*. [John 8, 7] For they went for the punishing of others' sins, and they had left their own behind; and so they are called back to their conscience within them, that they should first correct their own faults, and then reprove those of others. It is hence that, when the tribe of Benjamin was deep sunk in the guilt of carnal sin, all Israel banded together would have avenged that wickedness, yet was once and again itself smitten down in the conflict of war; but on the Lord being consulted whether they should go to take vengeance, it was commanded them. [Judges 20] The People, that went according to the bidding of God's voice, fell both once and again, and then at length effectually smiting the sinning tribe, almost wholly extirpated it. How is it that it is first kindled to the revenge of sin, and yet afterwards itself brought down; but that those are to be chastised first themselves, by whose means the sins of others are chastised; that they may themselves now come cleansed through vengeance, who are forward to chastise the evil of others? Whence it follows that when the vengeance of God's inquest is at rest towards us, our own

conscience should reprove its own self, and by its own act lift itself up against self, to sorrows of penance, neither being set up towards the good, and humble towards itself, but unbending towards itself, and bowed low towards all the good. Thus to proud men administering reproof, it is rightly said; *Ye are set up against me, and ye charge me with my reproaches*. All persons that are set up, account temporal afflictions to be a grievous reproach, and they think every individual to be the more despised by God, in proportion as they see him scourged with the rod of affliction. For they look for nothing in principles, they look for nothing in practices; but whomsoever they see to be stricken in this life, they imagine to be already condemned by God's sentence; whence it is well said on this occasion by the voice of blessed Job;  
*And ye charge me with my reproaches.*

[xxx]

35. In that they, who knew him to be righteous before his strokes, were now judging him to be unrighteous by the mere fact of his being stricken, and hence it very often happens that Heretics, because they see persons within the bosom of Holy Church suffering affliction; (for it is written of God, *And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth* [Heb. 12, 6];) fancy that the sorrows of the faithful arise from nothing but sin, and themselves they for this reason conclude to be righteous, because being left in the thoughts of their evil ways, lacking the rod, they have become hardened. It proceeds;  
Ver. 6. *Know now at least that God hath afflicted me with no just judgment.*

[xxxi]

36. O, how hard does the voice of the righteous man sound, suffering under the infliction of the rod! Which same, however, not pride, but grief gave vent to! Now he is not righteous, who gives up righteousness under sorrow; and blessed Job, because he had a meek spirit, did not sin even by a hard word. For, if we say that he did err by this voice, we make out that the devil accomplished what he purposed, when he said, *Touch his bone and his flesh, and see if he have not blessed Thee to Thy face*. [Job 2, 5] Therefore a serious question arises; for if he did not sin in that he says, *Know now at least that God has not afflicted me with a just judgment*; we agree to God's having done something unjustly, which it is profane to say; but if he did sin, then the devil made appear concerning him the thing that he promised. And so it must be asserted both that God acted rightly in His dealings with blessed Job, and yet that blessed Job herein, viz. that he says that he 'was not afflicted by a just judgment of God,' did not speak an untruth, and that our old enemy in respect of that which he promised of sin in the blessed man did speak an untruth. For sometimes the words of the good are for this reason supposed wrong, because they are not ever considered in their interior signification. Thus blessed Job had turned his eyes to his own life, and he estimated the strokes which he was undergoing, and saw that it was not just that upon such a life such strokes should be dealt. And when he says that he was not afflicted by a just judgment, he spoke that with unreserved voice, which God in His own secrecy had said concerning him to his adversary, *thou movedst Me against him, to afflict him without cause* [v. 3]. For what God expresses, that He 'had afflicted blessed Job without cause,' this blessed Job asserts again in the words that he was not 'afflicted of the Lord by a just judgment?' Wherein then did he sin, who was in nothing at odds with the sentence of his Maker?

37. But perhaps some one will say, that for us to speak that good concerning ourselves, which the Judge may have said in secret concerning us, cannot be done without sin. For he whom the Judge praises, it cannot be doubted, is justly praiseworthy; but if he in his own person praises himself, his righteousness is henceforth supposed to be no longer deserving of praise; and this is said rightly, if what the just Judge delivers in impartial sentence, the person in question should venture to say afterwards concerning himself in pride of heart. For if he himself too continuing in a humble frame, when the occasion or his grief brings it out, has uttered good that is true in his own praise, he has not departed from the line of righteousness, in so far as he was not at all at variance with truth.

38. Whence Paul the Apostle also related many brave things of himself for the edification of his disciples, but he did not commit sin by relating these things, in that both by an undeniable attestation, and a humble mind, he did not depart from the pathway of truth; and so let blessed Job, conscious of his own life being just, say that he is not afflicted by a just judgment; neither yet does he sin by that voice, wherein he is not at variance with His Maker, in that he whom God ‘smote without cause,’ himself also asserts that he was not ‘afflicted by a just judgment.’ But again there arises another question, which I remember has been already solved in the beginning of this work, viz. whereas Almighty God does nothing without cause, why does He bear witness that He had afflicted blessed Job without cause? For our just Creator by those many strokes inflicted upon blessed Job did not aim to do away with evil qualities in him, but to increase his merits; and so that was just, which He did in the heightening of his good deserts; but it did not seem equitable, because it was thought to be the punishing of instances of sin. Now blessed Job believed that sins of his doing were obliterated by those scourges, not that his merits were added to, and therefore he calls it ‘not a just judgment,’ because he tests his life side by side with the scourges: thus, if the life and the scourges be weighed in the scales, that was not equal dealing, which blessed Job, as I have said, supposed to be done to him in the wrathfulness of severity; but if the mercifulness of the Judge be looked to, seeing that by the punishment of the just man the merits of his life are heightened, it was an equal or rather a merciful judgment: therefore at once Job spoke what was true, so long as he balanced his life with the stroke; and God did not afflict Job with an unjust judgment, in that he heightened his merits by the stroke; and the devil did not achieve what he promised; seeing that blessed Job, amidst words which sound hard, was neither removed from a true sentence nor a humble mind. But perhaps we shall understand these words of blessed Job less well, if we are not acquainted with the sentence of the Judge; Who, when He was delivering sentence between the two parties, says to the friends of Job; *Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath.* [Job 42, 7] Who then is there so foolish [ABCD ‘tam.’] in mind as to own that blessed Job had been guilty in his way of speaking, when he is declared to have spoken rightly by the very voice of the Judge itself? Which same voice, indeed, if we refer to the person of Holy Church, we not unsuitably apply it to her weak members, which while, in the season of her persecution, they weigh both her merits and her scourges, forasmuch as they see that the unjust thrive, and the just perish, have no notion that this is just. Now it is well added by the voice of the blessed man, *And compassed me with his scourges.*

[xxxii]

39. For it is one thing to be smitten, and another thing to be ‘compassed with scourges.’ Thus, we are smitten with scourges, when even in our sorrows we have a consolation derived from other

sources; for when affliction lies so heavy on us that the spirit can no longer take breath by consolation from anyone thing; we are now no longer smitten only, but even ‘compassed with scourges,’ in that we are every way surrounded by the rod of affliction. Thus Paul had been compassed with scourges, when he said, *Without were fightings, within were fears.* [2 Cor. 7, 5] He had been compassed with scourges, when he said, *In perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness* [2 Cor. 11, 26], with the other particulars, which he so enumerates, as to shew that he no where had rest. But when Holy Church is ‘compassed with the scourges’ of her tribulation, all the weak in her are brought down in the fall of littleness of mind, so that they now suppose themselves disregarded, in proportion as they see that they are the more slowly heard with effect. And it is rightly added yet further likewise in a figure of them by the voice of the holy man,

Ver. 7. *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no one to Judge.*

[xxxiii]

40. Almighty God, knowing what has in it efficacy to prove our good, shuts His ears to hear the voice of persons mourning, that He may add to their advantage, that their life may be purified by punishment, that the tranquillity of rest which can no where be found here, may be sought for elsewhere. But there are some of the faithful even that know nothing of this grace of Providential ordering, in whose person too it is now said; *Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no one to judge*; for it is said, ‘there is no one to judge,’ when He veils His eyes to judge, in that beside Him ‘there is not any to judge’ our cause against our adversary. Nor yet is this very thing void of judgment, viz. that judgment is delayed; seeing that at the very time that blessed Job said this, both the merits of the holy man and the punishment of his adversary were increased: so then this very deferring of judgment is the act of a judge. But what God settles justly within is one thing, and what the soul bruised by scourges without seeks after is another. Whence he still further adds of that sinking under scourges,

Ver. 8. *He hath fenced up my way, that I cannot pass: and He hath set darkness in my paths.*

[xxxiv]

41. He saw his ‘way fenced up’ with strokes, when anxiously desiring to pass into a state of security, he was not able to escape the scourges, and whereas he saw himself smitten, and yet did not find in himself a life worthy of such smiting, as it were ‘in the paths’ of the heart he met with ‘the darkness’ of his own ignorance, in that he could not fathom the cause wherefore he was so scourged. And this is not unfitly applied to the weak members of Holy Church too, when from this which they remember to have done wickedly, they are made backward in good practice as well, and, frightened by their own weakness, do not venture to attempt strong acts of goodness to match them. For they fear to begin great acts of goodness, who call to mind that they are infirm in their ways; and whereas they very often do not know the very good, which they should choose, they, as it were, shrink from the ‘darkness placed in their paths.’ For the mind often becomes so doubtful of its own doings, as not to know at all which is the virtue and which the fault. Thus he ‘finds darkness in his path,’ who in those things which he desires to do, is ignorant what he ought to choose. Therefore seeing that there is sin often from infirmity, and sometimes from ignorance, it is said in the person of the members that go weakly, *He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass.* While in the person of those who see not clear as to the very good work itself which they should



choose, it is added; *and He hath set darkness in my paths*. For it is punishment of sin, to see the good which we ought to do, and yet not to have the power to fulfil it; and again it is in still worse punishment of sin, not even to see what we ought to do; and hence against both of these it is said by the voice of the Psalmist, *The Lord is my Light and my Salvation; whom then shall I fear?* [Ps. 27, 1] For against the darkness of ignorance the Lord is a 'Light;' against weakness 'Salvation,' whilst He both shews what ought to be desired for the doing it, and supplies the powers, that what He shews may be fulfilled. It goes on;

Ver. 9. *He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.*

[xxxv]

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

42. That all this suits the person of the blessed man set in the midst of tribulation, there can be no doubt; but, since the words of the historical account are plain, they do not require explaining after the letter, therefore they have to be traced out in their mystical senses. Thus he says, *He hath stripped me of my glory*. For the glory of each individual is his righteousness. Now just as a garment protects from the cold, so does righteousness defend from death; hence righteousness is not improperly likened to a garment, where it is said by the Prophet; *Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness*. [Ps. 132, 9] But seeing that in the season of her tribulation this garment of righteousness, which covers her in the sight of God, is lost to Holy Church in her members that go weakly, let it be rightly said; *He hath stripped me of my glory*, i.e. righteousness has been taken away from the weak, whereas it could never possibly have been taken away from them, if it had been infixed in them from the ground of the heart, but for this reason it was possible to be taken away from them, because it was attached to them outwardly, like a garment. Wherein the question offers itself, how they could be called members of Holy Church, who were capable of losing the righteousness which they seemed to maintain. But it is necessary for us to know, that very often righteousness is lost for a while by her weakly members, but when they are afterwards brought back to penitence in the acknowledgment of their fault, they attach themselves to that very righteousness which they had lost more strongly than was supposed credible. And it is yet further added thereby, *and taken the crown from my head*. As the head is the first part of the body, so the leading part of the interior man is the mind. Now the crown is the reward of victory, which is set from Above, in order that he that has contended should be rewarded; and so because many persons, under the pressure of adversities, do not hold out in the contest, in these Holy Church as it were 'loses a crown from her head:' for 'a crown on the head' is the reward from Above in the mind; there are a great many who whilst they are pressed with adversities, neglect to take thought of the rewards above, and cannot reach to the completion of victory; in such, then, 'the crown is taken from the head,' in that the heavenly and spiritual reward is taken away from the aim of the mind, that they should henceforth go after the externally peaceful, nor look out for the eternal rewards, which they used to have at heart.

43. Or otherwise, 'the head' of the faithful is not inappropriately taken to mean the priests, in that they are the first part of the Lord's members; and hence it is expressed by the Prophet, that 'the head and the tail' are rooted out, in which same place both by the title of the 'head' we have the priests denoted, and by the designation of the 'tail' the reprobate prophet. Therefore 'the crown is taken from the head,' when even they abandon the heavenly rewards, who seemed to have the lead in this body of the Church; and it generally happens that, when the leaders fall, the army, that

followed, is the wider worsted; and hence directly after the ills to the greater ones, going on about the manifold undoing of the Church, he added;

Ver. 10. *He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and He hath removed mine hope like as with a tree torn away.*

[xxxvi]

44. The Church is, as it were, ‘destroyed on every side,’ and undone in her weak members, when those very ones that seemed strong, are brought to ruin; when ‘the crown is taken away from the head,’ i.e. when the rewards of eternity are neglected even by those set at the head; and it is well added concerning weak ones falling, *And mine hope hath He removed like as with a tree torn away*; for a tree is pushed by the wind that it falls, and with him whom threats so terrify, as to make him go headlong into unrighteousness, what else is it, but that a tree met with a blast of the wind, and lost the standing of its uprightness? For he has, as it were, lost hope by the wind, who, subdued by the threats and persuasions of the wicked, has parted with those eternal rewards, which he looked forward to; and because it very often happens that a person, from fear of punishment, gives over righteousness, it is brought to pass by God’s decreeing it, that even in giving up righteousness he does not get quit of the punishments, which he was afraid of, and that he who did not fear at all the destruction of the soul, meets even with the ills of the flesh, which he apprehended. Hence it is yet further added;

Ver. 11. *He hath also kindled His wrath against me, and He counteth me unto Him as one of His enemies.*

[xxxvii]

45. For we have, been taught by the excellent Preacher attesting it, that ‘God is faithful, Who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.’ [1 Cor. 10, 13] Moreover the Lord says by the Prophet, *For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement.* [Jer. 30, 14] He then that is so stricken that his powers are overcome by that striking, the Lord no longer now smites him as a son in the course of discipline, but as an enemy in indignation. Thus when the strokes exceed the power of our patience, it is very much to be feared, lest, our sins demanding it, we are now no longer stricken as sons by a Father, but as enemies by the Lord; and whereas it very often comes to pass that evil spirits too press home many things to the hearts of the afflicted, and amidst the scourges which strike them outwardly, infuse bad thoughts into their hearts, after the wrath of the Lord it is rightly added;

Ver. 12. *His robbers come together, and make themselves a way through me.*

[xxxviii]

46. For ‘his robbers’ are evil spirits, who busy themselves in hunting out the deaths of men; and these ‘make themselves a way’ in the hearts of the afflicted, when, amidst the adversities that are undergone outwardly, they do not cease to infuse bad thoughts likewise; of whom it is yet further added;

*And encamp round about my tabernacle.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

For they ‘encamp round about our tabernacle,’ when they encircle the mind on every side with their temptings; which by most wicked prompting they persuade one while to mourn for things temporal, at another time to despair of things eternal, now to go headlong into impatience, and to cast words of blasphemy against God. Yet these words, as we have already said before, agree with blessed Job even taken historically; who, whilst he heaped before his eyes the ills he was enduring, judged himself to be not like a son that must be corrected, but as an enemy stricken with affliction.

Through whom even ‘His robbers made themselves a way,’ in that the evil spirits obtained against him the leave to smite. ‘Round about whose tabernacle they encamped,’ in that after his substance and his children were taken away, they bruised his whole body too with wounds. But it is very extraordinary, why, when he spoke of the ‘robbers,’ he added *His*, clearly with a view to shew that these same robbers belonged to God; on which point, if we make a distinction between the power and the will of evil spirits, it is made evident, why they are called ‘God’s robbers;’ for evil spirits incessantly pant to do us mischief; but while they have a bad will derived from themselves, they have not the power of doing mischief, except the Supreme Will vouchsafes them permission; and while of themselves indeed they long to hurt us unjustly, yet by Almighty God they are not suffered to hurt anyone saving justly; and so whereas the will is unjust in them and the power just, they are at once called ‘robbers,’ and ‘God’s robbers,’ that it should come from themselves, that they aim to bring down evil things unjustly, and from God that the things so desired they do not consummate saving justly; but because, as we have often said already, the holy man set in the midst of the pain of punishment, one while speaks in his own accents, at another time in the accents of the Church, at another time of our Redeemer, and very frequently so describes his own circumstances, that in a figure he delivers those that belong to the Holy Church and to our Redeemer, concern for historical fact being for a little space put aside, let us shew in these things, which he subjoins, how he accords with the accents of our Redeemer, It goes on;

Ver. 13, 14. *He hath put my brethren far from me; and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk, have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.*

[xxxix]

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. We shall shew this the better, if we bring forward the testimony of John, who says, *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not* [John 1, 11]; for His ‘brethren were put far from Him,’ and His ‘acquaintance were estranged’ from Him, Whom the Hebrews that held the Law were taught to prophesy, and never knew to acknowledge when present; whence it is rightly said: *My kinsfolk have failed me, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.* For the Jews; ‘kinsfolk’ in the flesh, ‘acquaintance’ by the teaching of the Law, as it were forgot Him, Whom they had foretold, in that Him they both sung of in the words of the Law, as destined to be made Incarnate, and when made Incarnate denied Him by the words of unbelief. It proceeds;

Ver. 15. *They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger.*

[xl]

48. The inmates of God’s house were the Priests, whose race [*origo*] once set apart in the service of God, was henceforth by office continued in that state. But the ‘maids’ are not improperly taken for the souls of the Levites, servants to the hidden parts of the tabernacle as it were by a more

familiar service to the interior of the bedchamber. Therefore let him say of the Priests, serving with sedulous care, let him say of the Levites attending on the interior of the house of God. *They that dwell in my house, and my maids, have counted me for a stranger*; in that the Incarnate Lord, Whom they had for long foretold in the words of the Law, they refused to acknowledge and to reverence. And he yet more plainly shews that He was not known by their wicked will, when he adds;

*And I was as it were an alien in their sight.*

[xli]

49. For our Redeemer whereas He was not recognised by the Synagogue, was rendered 'as it were an alien' in His own house, Which the Prophet plainly witnesses, saying, *Wherefore shalt thou be as a settler in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry?* [Jer. 14, 8] For whereas He was not heard as the Lord, He was taken not as the owner but for 'a settler of the land;' and He only 'turned aside to tarry as a wayfaring man,' in that He carried off but few out of Judaea, and going on to the calling of the Gentiles finished the journey He had begun; and so 'He was an alien' in their sight, in that while they thought only of the things they could see, they were unable to perceive in the Lord the things they could not see; for whilst they condemn the flesh that was to be seen, they never reached to the unseen Majesty; therefore let it be rightly said; *And I was as it were an alien in their sight.* Concerning which people it is yet further fitly added;

Ver. 16. *I called my servant, and he gave me no answer.*

[xlii]

50. For what was the Jewish people but a 'servant,' which never obeyed the Lord with the love of a son, but the fear of a slave? Contrariwise it is said to us by Paul, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.* [Rom. 8, 15] And so this 'servant' the Lord 'called,' in that by benefits vouchsafed, as by voices given out, He strove to bring it to Himself; but it 'answered not,' in that it was indifferent to render back deeds corresponding to His gifts. For God 'calls' us, when He presents us with His gifts; and we 'answer' to this calling, when we serve Him worthily according to the benefits we have been vouchsafed; therefore because He prevented the people with so many benefits, let him say, *I called my servant*, and because even after such numberless benefits, it contemned Him, let him add; *and he gave me no answer.* It goes on;

*I entreated him with my own mouth.*

[xliii]

51. As though he said more plainly; 'I, the Same that before My Incarnation had given it in charge so many precepts to be practised, by the mouths of the Prophets, coming to it Incarnate, entreated it with my own mouth.' And hence Matthew, when he was telling of precepts being delivered by Him on the Mount, says, *And He opened His mouth, and taught.* [Matt. 5, 2] As if he said in plain speech; 'Then He opened His own mouth, Who before had opened the mouths of the Prophets;' it is hence too that it is said of Him by the Spouse longing for His presence, *Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth* [Cant. 1, 2]; since for all the precepts which she learnt by His preaching, Holy Church, as it were, received so many 'kisses of his mouth.' Now it is well said, I entreated; in that

being exhibited in the flesh, whilst He spoke the precepts of life with humility, He, as it were, besought His servant filled with pride that he would come; and hence it is fitly added;  
*My wife shuddered at my breath.*

[xliv]

52. What does the 'wife' of the Lord mean save the Synagogue, subject to Him in the Covenant of the Law with a carnal perception? Now the breath is from the flesh, and the unbelieving people understood the incarnation of the Lord in a carnal manner; in that it took Him for mere man; and so His 'wife shuddered at His breath,' in that the Synagogue was afraid to take Him for God, Whom it saw to be man; and when it heard the words from His mouth by bodily utterance, it refused to perceive in Him the mysteries of the Divine Nature, and would not believe Him to be Creator, Whom it saw to be created; and so the carnal 'wife shuddered at the breath' of the carnal body, in that being given over to carnal senses, it did not take knowledge of the mystery of the Incarnation. It goes on;

*I entreated the children of mine own womb.*

[xlv]

53. In God, Who is not circumscribed by the figure of a body, the members of the body, i.e. the hand, the eye, the womb, are named in such a way, that by the designation of the members, the effects of His Power are represented. As He is said to have eyes, in that He sees all things; He is described as having hands, in that He works all things. Now in the womb the offspring is conceived, which is brought forth in this life; what then are we to take the 'womb' of God for, but His counsel, wherein before time we were conceived by predestination, that being created in time we might be brought into the world? And so God, Who abides before time, 'besought the children of His womb;' in that those, whom He created with power by His Divine nature, coming Incarnate He besought with humility; but because in that same flesh, wherein He appeared, He was contemned in their estimation, it is subjoined;

Ver. 18. *The foolish too despised me.*

[xlvi]

54. The wise falling away from faith in the truth, there is an addition rightly made concerning 'fools' as well; in that when the Pharisees and the Lawyers despised the Lord, the rabble of the people too followed the example of their incredulousness, which herein, that it saw Him a man, slighted the announcements of the Redeemer of the world. For often by the title of fools, are denoted those who are poor among the common people; whence too it is said by Jeremiah, *Therefore I said, perchance these are poor, and foolish ones, that know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.* [Jer. 5, 4] But leaving the rich and wise of the world, our Redeemer came to seek the poor and foolish, whence it is now said, as if for the heightening of grief, *The foolish despised me.* As if it were expressed in plain speech; 'Even those very persons despised Me, for whose healing I took to Me the foolishness of preaching.' As it is written, *For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* [1 Cor. 1, 21] For the 'Word' is 'the Wisdom of God,' but 'the foolishness' of this 'Wisdom,' the Flesh of the Word is called; that whereas the carnal severally

could not by craft of the flesh attain to the wisdom of God, by the foolishness of preaching, i.e. by the incarnation of the Word, they might be healed. Therefore he says, *The foolish too despised me.* As if it were expressed in plain words; 'Even by those very persons I was despised, for whose sake I was not afraid to be counted foolish.' And whereas the Jewish multitude, when it saw the miracles of our Redeemer, honoured Him for His miracles, saying, *This is the Christ* [John 7, 41. 12.]; but when it beheld the infirmities of His human nature, it disdained to account Him the Creator, saying, *Nay, but He deceiveth the people*; it is rightly subjoined; *And when I departed from them, they spake against me.*

[xlvii]

55. For the Lord as it were drew near to the hearts of people, when He displayed miracles to them; and He as it were 'departed from them,' when He shewed them no signs; but they spake against the Lord so 'departing,' when they refused to yield their faith to Him thus resting from miracles; but what wonder that He met with such treatment from the common folk, when those very persons, who appeared to be teachers of the Law, who gave it out that He was to be made Incarnate in the words of Prophecy, both beheld Him made Incarnate, and yet were parted from Him by the disjoining of unbelief? Concerning whom it is added;

Ver. 19. *They that were once my counsellors abhorred me, and he whom I loved most turned away from me.*

[xlviii]

56. It is plain to all people, that God does not stand in need of counsellors, Who to man's very counsellors themselves too vouchsafes the counsel of wisdom. Of whom moreover it is written, *Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?* [Hom. xi. 34. from Is. 40, 13] but as when bread or clothing is bestowed on one that lacks them, the Lord bears witness that He Himself has received them; so when right counsel is given to one that is ignorant of it, He Himself receives it, of Whom that man is a member, who is so instructed; for all we, that are of the number of the faithful, are members of our Redeemer; and as He Himself is fed in our persons by the pitying of liberality, so He is Himself aided in our persons by the counselling of instruction; and so the scribes and doctors of the Law Who used to instruct the people with respect to life, what else were they but 'counsellors' of the Redeemer, Who was to come? Who, nevertheless, when they beheld the Lord become Incarnate, separated numbers from faith in Him by their counsels, though before they had seemed to teach numbers by the words of the Prophets to believe the mystery of His Incarnation; and because with God he is more in His love, who draws the greatest number to the love of Him, it is further added of that same order of the doctors of the Law and the Pharisees; *and he whom I loved most, turned away from me.* For that very order, through the prompting of unbelief was turned aside from faith in the truth, which before, while serving in the labours of preaching, was most beloved, which same not only to the extent of not believing the Lord, but even of persecuting Him as well, the rabble of the common people followed, and was kindled with the firebrands of cruelty to the very deed of His Passion; in which very Passion too the hearts of the disciples were troubled; whence also it is here added;

Ver. 20. *My bone cleaveth to my skin, through my flesh being wasted.*

[xlix]

57. By 'bone' we have strength, and by flesh weakness of the body denoted; therefore, whereas Christ and the Church are one person, what is signified by the 'bone' but the Lord Himself? what by the 'flesh' save the disciples, who in the hour of His Passion were weakly disposed? but by the 'skin,' which in the body remains more outward than the flesh, what is represented but those holy women, who with the view to furnish the stays of the body, served the Lord by outward offices of ministration? for when His disciples, though not yet firm, were preaching faith to the people, the flesh kept close to its bone; and when the holy women prepared the outward things that were necessary, they as it were like 'a skin' remained on the body outwards; but when it came to the hour of the Cross, exceeding great fear, caused by the persecution of the Jews, took possession of His disciples: they severally fled, the women 'stuck close,' and so, the 'flesh,' as it were, 'being consumed,' 'the bone of the Lord clave to its skin,' in that His strength, when the disciples fled in the hour of the Passion, had the women close beside it. Peter indeed stood for some time, but yet afterwards being affrighted he denied Him. John too stood, to whom at the very time of the Cross it was said, *Behold thy mother.* [John 19, 27] But he could not persevere; since it is also written concerning him [a], *And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body, and the young men laid hold of him. And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked;* [Mark 14, 51. 52.] who although afterwards, to hear the words of his Redeemer, he returned at the hour of the Cross, yet first he was affrighted and fled; but the women are related not only not to have been afraid nor to have fled, but even to have stood fast even to the sepulchre; and so let him say, *My bone cleaveth to my skin, through the flesh being wasted;* i.e. 'they that ought to have attached themselves closer to My strength, in the season of My Passion were consumed with dread; and those whom I set to external ministrations, in My Passion I found attached themselves faithfully to Me without fear.' And here it is plainly implied that these words are delivered in mystery, in that it follows;  
*And the lips only are left about my teeth.*

[1]

58. For what do we have 'about our teeth,' but 'lips,' even if we suffer no scourges of affliction? but what is signified by 'the lips' but talk, what by 'teeth' but the holy Apostles? who are with this intention set in this body of the Church, that they may bite at the life of the carnal by correction, and break it in pieces from the hardness of its obstinacy; and hence it is said to that first of the Apostles, as being set, as a tooth in His Body, *Kill, and eat.* [Acts 10, 13] But because, at the time of His Passion, these 'teeth' from fear of death lost the biting of correction, lost the assurance of strength, lost the efficiency of practice of every sort, so that two of them as they walked, after His death and resurrection, talked by the way and said, *But we trusted that it should have been he which should have redeemed Israel;* [Luke 24, 21] it is rightly said here, *And the lips only are left about my teeth.* They were still conversing about Him, but now they no longer at all believed in Him; and so 'the lips only remained about His teeth,' in that they had parted with the efficiency of good practice, and only retained words of converse about Him. They had lost the bite of correction, and possessed the mooting of speech. Therefore, 'the lips only were left about the teeth,' in that to talk about Him indeed they knew still, but to preach Him now, or to bite the bad ways of unbelievers, they were afraid. Therefore these particulars being finished, which he spoke in the voice of the Head, blessed Job is brought back to his own words, saying;

Ver. 21. *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.*

[li]

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

59. The mind of godly men is used to have this peculiar to itself, that when it suffers unjust treatment at the hands of enemies, it is not so much moved to wrath as to prayer; that if the wickedness of those persons could be made to subside to a calm, they would choose rather to beseech than to be wroth; whence it is rightly said in this place, *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.* Observe, those by whom he sees that he is ever being treated with insults, he calls ‘friends,’ in that to godly minds the very things that seem contrary are made favourable; for any that are wicked are either converted by the sweetness of the good so as to turn back, and by this alone they are friends, viz. that they are made good, or they persevere in their wickedness, and herein also even against their will they are ‘friends,’ in that, if there be any transgressions of the good, by their persecutions they purge them away even unknowingly. Observe too, that with these things which are done with God in secret, the words of the blessed man openly spoken are quite of a piece. Thus he had been smitten by Satan, yet he did not ascribe his being smitten to Satan, but he calls himself ‘touched by the hand of God,’ as Satan himself too had said; *But put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and see if he bless Thee not to Thy face.* [c. 2, 5] For the holy man knew that in that very thing which Satan had done towards him with an evil will, he derived his power not from himself, but from the Lord. It goes on;

Ver. 22. *Why do ye persecute me as God; and are filled with my flesh?*

[lii]

60. It is not at variance with the style of piety that he tells that he is persecuted by God. For there is a good persecutor; as when the Lord says of Himself by the lips of the Prophet, *Him that privily slandereth his neighbour, him did I persecute.* [Ps. 101, 5] But when any Saint is suffered to be stricken, he knows that he is undergoing persecution, sent against evil he has been guilty of, from the interior ordering. Now the savage minds of the persecutors, when they desire the power to smite, are inflamed against the life of the good not with the ardour of purifying, but with the firebrands of envy; and they do that indeed, which Almighty God allows to be done; in that while there is one cause with God transacted too by their agency, yet there is not one will maintained in that cause, since whilst Almighty God, in loving, is enforcing purification, the wickedness of the unjust is exercising malice in raging. This then that is said, *Why do ye persecute me as God?* he spoke with reference to the external smiting, not to the interior intention, in that though they execute that externally which God ordained to be done, yet in their doing it they do not seek that which God does, viz. that good men should be purified by means of affliction. Which too may likewise be understood in another sense also. For Almighty God chastens the evil qualities of others so much the more justly in proportion as He has no whit of evil qualities in Himself; but men when they strike others in the course of discipline, ought so to chasten the frailty of another, that they should at the same time have learnt the habit to recall their eyes to their own frailty, so as to consider from themselves how they ought to spare in smiting others, seeing that they are not unaware that they themselves too are worthy of stripes. And so it is said in this case, *Why do ye persecute me as God?* As if it were expressed in plain words; ‘Ye do so afflict me on the grounds



of my frailties, as if ye yourselves after the manner of God owned nought of infirmity:’ whence it is to be considered, that if perchance there be persons that need sharpness of correction, hard correction is then to be used to them by us, when the hand of God ceases from using the rod; but when strokes from above are upon them, from us there is now due no longer correction but consolation, lest, while in their grief we join our reproach, we put smiting to smiting.

61. Now it is well added, *And are filled with my flesh?* The mind which hungers for the punishing of a neighbour, surely seeks to be ‘filled with the flesh’ of another. Moreover it is necessary to be known, that those also who feed on the slander of another’s life, are as surely ‘filled with the flesh’ of another. Whence it is said by Solomon; *Be not in the feastings of winebibbers; nor eat with those, who bring together flesh to eat.* [Prov. 23, 20] For to ‘bring together flesh to eat,’ is, in the parlance of disparagement to tell by turns the bad qualities of neighbours; concerning whose punishment it is directly added there, they that are given to cups, and that give a contribution, shall be consumed, and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. They are ‘given to cups’ who make themselves drunk [*se debriant*] with slander of another’s life; but to ‘give a contribution [*symbolum*],’ is in the same way that each individual is used to contribute provisions for his share to be eaten, so in the parlance of slander to contribute words. But ‘they that are given to cups and that give a contribution shall be consumed,’ in that as it is written, *Every slanderer shall be rooted out* [Ben. Ed. refers to Prov. 15, 5 perhaps Ps. 101, 5]; but ‘drowsiness shall cover a man with rags,’ in that his death finds him an object of contempt and empty of all good works, whom the sickly habit [*languor*] of detraction took possession of here for the raking out the misdemeanours of another man’s life. But all those hardships which blessed Job undergoes it is not meet should be let pass in silence, and that the obscurity of ignorance should cover them from man’s knowledge; for so many may be edified for the preserving of patience, as they who, by grace from above replenishing them, may be made acquainted with the achievements of his patience. And hence the same blessed Job would have the strokes which he feels carried into an example, in that he immediately adds, saying;

Ver. 23, 24. *O that my words were now written! O that they were graven in a book with an iron pen, and a plate of lead, or surely that they were hewed in the flint!*

[liii]

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

62. Whereas all that blessed Job underwent, that heavy Jewish people, being instructed by the strong declaration of the Fathers, was brought to know, they were written with ‘an iron pen’ and ‘a plate of lead;’ but whereas the hard hearts of the Gentiles also were made acquainted with them, what is this but that we see them ‘hewn in the flint?’ And observe, that what is written on lead, by the mere softness of the metal, is quickly obliterated; but upon the flint letters may be more slowly stamped indeed, but more hardly obliterated. Therefore it is not unsuitably that by ‘the plate of lead’ Judaea is represented, which at once received the precepts of God without labour, and lost them with speed; and rightly by ‘the flint’ the Gentile world is represented, which could with difficulty receive the words of sacred revelation to keep, but kept them when received fixedly. Now by the ‘iron pen’ what else is denoted save the strong sentence of God? Whence too it is said by the Prophet, *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron on a diamond nail* [*ungue*]. [Jer. 17, 1] The end of the body is in the nail, and a diamond is so hard a stone, that it cannot be cut with iron. Now by ‘an iron pen’ there is denoted a strong sentence, but by a ‘diamond nail’ the eternal

end; so the sin of Judah is said to be written with a 'pen of iron upon a diamond nail,' in that the guilt of the Jews is reserved by the strong sentence of God for an end that is endless.

63. Rightly too by 'a plate of lead' we understand those, whom the load of avarice weighs down, to whom it is said by the Prophet with upbraiding, *O ye sons of men, how long heavy in heart!* For by lead, the nature whereof is of a heavy weight, the sin of avarice is in a special manner denoted, which renders the mind it has infected so heavy, that it can never be raised to aim at things on high. Hence it is written in Zechariah, *Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth. And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah* [Lat. *amphora*] *that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their eye throughout all the earth. And behold there was lifted up a talent of lead, and, lo, one woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is wickedness; and he cast her into the midst of the ephah, and he cast the weight of lead on her face* [or *into the mouth thereof*]. [Zech. 5, 5-8] And with reference to this vision of 'the ephah,' and 'the woman,' and 'the lead,' that he might shew more fully what he had been made to know, he yet further added going on, *Then lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold there came out two women, and a spirit was in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a kite, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven. Then said I to the angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? And he said, To build it an house in the land of Shinar.* [v. 9-11] Which testimony of the Prophet we have brought forward as a proof of the lead to no purpose, if we do not also explain it going over it again. Thus he says, *Lift up now thine eyes, and see what is this that goeth forth; and I said, What is this? And he said, It is an ephah that goeth forth.* God desiring to shew to the Prophet, by what sin above all others the human race fell away from Him, by the figure of an ephah as it were denoted the wide-opened mouth of avarice. For avarice is like an ephah, in that it keeps the mouth of the heart open and agape on the stretch [*in ambitu*]. And he said, *This is their eye through all the world.* We see many men of dull sense, and yet we see them sharp in bad practices, as the Prophet too testifies, who saith, *They are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no knowledge.* [Jer. 4, 22] And so these are dull in sense, but in those things which they desire, they are urged on by the goads of avarice; and they that are blind to see good, under the incitements of rewards are quick-eyed to the doing evil things. Hence it is rightly said of this same avarice, *This is their eye in all the world. And behold there was lifted up a talent of lead.* What is 'a talent of lead' but the weight of sin from that very avarice. *And, lo, one woman sitting in the midst of the ephah.* Which same woman, lest perchance we should doubt who she was, the Angel thereupon made known; for it follows there immediately, *And he said, This is impiety; and he cast her into the midst of the ephah.* Impiety is 'cast into the midst of the ephah,' in that in avarice there is always impiety taken in. *And he cast the weight of lead on her face.* The mass of lead is cast on the woman's face, in that the impiety of avarice is borne down by the very weight of its own sin; for if it did not reach after things that are below, it would never prove impious towards God and our neighbour.

64. *Then, lifted I up mine eyes, and looked, and behold there came out two women and a spirit was in their wings.* What do we understand by these 'two women' but the two principal vices, i.e. pride and vain glory, which are without any doubt united to impiety? Which two are described as having 'a spirit in their wings;' in that they are subservient to the will of Satan in their actions; for the Prophet calls that one 'a spirit,' concerning whom Solomon saith, *If the spirit of him that hath power rise above thee, leave not thy place;* [Eccles. 10, 4] and of whom the Lord saith in the Gospel; *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places.* [Mat. 12, 43] 'A spirit is in their wings,' in that in whatsoever they do, pride and vain glory render obedience to

the will of Satan. And they had wings like the wings of a kite. Now the kite is always busied in plotting against the chicken kind. So these women have 'wings like the wings of a kite,' in that surely their doings are like the devil, who is always plotting against the life of the little ones. *And they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heaven.* Pride and vain glory have this peculiar to them, that whosoever is infected by them, they lift up in his own conceit above the rest of his fellow creatures: at one time by pursuit of the gifts of fortune, at another time by the desire of dignities, the man whom they have once gotten captive, they, as it were, lift up into the height of honour. And he that is between the earth and the heaven, at once leaves things below, and fails altogether to attain the things on high.

65. These women, then, 'lift up the ephah between the earth and the heaven,' in that pride and vain glory so exalt the mind taken captive through greediness of honour, that looking down upon all their neighbours, men do, as it were, leave things below, and in proud boasting seek high things. But all such persons, while they give themselves up to pride, at once in imagination mount above those, with whom they are placed, and are far from ever being united to the citizens above. Thus the ephah is said to be 'lifted up between earth and heaven,' in that all covetous persons through pride and vain glory at once despise their neighbours at their side, and never lay hold of the things above, which are beyond them; and so they are carried 'between the earth and the heaven,' in that they neither keep equality of brotherhood in this lower world by charity, nor yet are able to attain the world above by setting themselves up. *And I said to the Angel that talked with me, Whither do these bear the ephah? and he said, To build it an house in the land of Shinar.* That same ephah has a 'house built in the land of Shinar,' for 'Shinar' is rendered 'their ill savour;' and as there is a sweet savour from virtue, as Paul bears witness, who saith; *and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place; For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ;* [2 Cor. 2, 14] so reversely there is an ill savour from vice. *For covetousness is the root of all evil.* [1 Tim. 6, 10] And whereas every thing evil is engendered by avarice, it is meet that the house of avarice should be erected in 'ill savour.' Moreover it is necessary to be known that 'Shinar' is a very wide valley, wherein the tower was begun to be built by men giving themselves to pride, which, when the diversity of tongues was brought to pass, came to destruction; which same tower was called Babylon, forsooth on account of that very confusion of minds and tongues: nor is it inappropriately that the 'ephah' of avarice is placed there, where 'Babylon,' i.e. 'confusion,' is building, in that whereas it is certain that from avarice and impiety all things bad have their origin, this same avarice and impiety are rightly described as dwelling in confusion.

66. We have said these things in few words out of course, that we might shew that the weight of sin is set forth by the 'plate of lead.' Yet these very words of blessed Job are also applicable to Holy Church, who while keeping the two testaments of sacred revelation, as it were begs a second time that her words should be written, saying, *Oh! that my words were now written! Oh! that they were printed in a book!* Which same, in that she speaks with a strong sentence at one time to hearts heavy from the weight of avarice, at another time to hardened hearts, 'writes with a pen of iron upon a plate of lead,' or, surely, 'upon the flint.' Now we say with justice that blessed Job uses the accents of our Redeemer and His Church, if we find any thing that he says explicitly of that same Redeemer of us men; for how is it to be believed that he teaches us any thing connected with Him in a figure, if he does not point Him out to us in express words? But now let him disclose to us what he is sensible of concerning Him, and let him take away from us all misgivings in our thoughts. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *For I know that my Redeemer liveth.*

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

67. For he who does not say, 'Creator,' but 'Redeemer,' expressly tells of Him, Who after He created all things, appeared Incarnate amongst us, that He might redeem us from a state of bondage, and by His Passion set us free from death everlasting; and mark with what sure faith he makes himself secure in the power of His Divine Nature, of Whom it is said by Paul, *For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.* [2 Cor. 13, 4] For he says, *For I know that my Redeemer liveth.* As if he said in express terms; 'The unbelievers may know that He was scourged, mocked, struck with the palms of the hand, covered with a crown of thorns, besmeared with spittings, crucified, dead: I, with sure faith, believe Him to live after death; I confess with unreserved voice, 'that my Redeemer liveth,' Who died by the hands of wicked men.' And how, O blessed Job, through His Resurrection, thou trustest to the resurrection of thine own flesh, declare, I pray, in open speech. It goes on;  
*And that I shall rise at the last day from the earth.*

[lv]

68. That is, because the resurrection which He manifested in His own Person, He will one day bring to pass in ourselves as well; for the resurrection, which He exhibited in Himself, He pledged to us; seeing that the members follow the glory of their Head. Thus our Redeemer underwent death, that we might not fear to die; He manifested the resurrection, that we might have a sure hope that we are capable of rising again. And hence He would not have that death to be of more than three days' duration, lest if the resurrection were deferred in Him, it should be altogether despaired of in ourselves; and this is rightly said of Him by the Prophet; *He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up the head.* [Ps. 110, 7] For He in a manner condescended to drink of that current as it were of our suffering, not in an abiding place, but 'in the way,' in that He met death in a transitory way, i.e. for three days, and in that death which He met He did not, like ourselves, remain unto the end of the world. And so, whereas He rose again on the third day, what then is to come after in His body, i.e. in the Church, He makes appear; for He shewed in example, what He promised in reward, that as believers knew and owned that He had Himself risen again, so they might hope for the rewards of the resurrection in themselves at the end of the world. Lo, we, through the death of the flesh, remain in the dust until the end of the world, but He on the third day budded into life from the dryness of death, that by the very renewal of His flesh by itself He might shew the power of His Divine Nature. Which is well shewn in Moses by the twelve rods placed in the Tabernacle: for when the priesthood of Aaron, who was of the tribe of Levi, was despised, 'and the tribe was not accounted worthy to offer up burnt-offerings, twelve rods according to the twelve tribes were ordered to be put in the Tabernacle, and, lo, the rod of Levi budded, and shewed what efficacy Aaron had in the office. [Num. 17, 8] By which same sign what is conveyed, but that all we who lie in the arms of death until the very end of the world, remain like the rest of the rods in a state of barrenness? But when all the rods remained in a state of dryness, the rod of Levi returned to flowering, in that the body of our Lord, i.e. our true Priest, being set in the dryness of death, burst into the flower of the Resurrection. By which same flowering Aaron is rightly known to be the Priest, in that by this glory of the Resurrection our Redeemer, Who sprung from the tribe of Judah and Levi [Luke 1; 5, 36], is shewn to be an Intercessor in our behalf. And so, lo! the rod of

Aaron buds now after dryness, but the rods of the twelve tribes remain in a dry state, in that already indeed the body of the Lord lives after death, but our bodies are kept back from the glory of the resurrection until the end of the world. Whence he carefully introduced this same delay, by saying, *And that I shall rise at the last [novissimo] day from the earth.*

69. Therefore we have a hope of our own resurrection, by considering the glory of our Head. But lest anyone say perhaps merely in the secret thought of his heart, that it was in this way that He rose again from the dead, viz. that being God and Man in one and the same Person, the death, which He underwent in His Human Nature, He overcame by His Divine Nature, while we, who are mere men, are not able to rise from the curse of death; it happened rightly that, in the season of His resurrection, the bodies of many of the Saints arose at the same time, that both in Himself He might shew us an example, and by the resurrection of others who were like to ourselves in respect of a mere human nature, He might give us a sure confirmation, that whereas man despaired of his obtaining what He that was God and Man had exhibited in His own Person, he might presume that that was capable of being brought to pass in his own case, which he knew to have been brought about in the case of those very persons, who he doubted not were but simple human beings.

70. But there are some who, observing that the spirit is parted from the flesh, that the flesh is turned into corruption, that its corruption is reduced to dust, that this dust is so dissolved into elementary parts that it is incapable of being seen by the eyes of man, despair of the possibility of the resurrection being brought to pass, and whilst they gaze on the dry bones, they distrust its being possible for these to be clothed with flesh, and again flushing into life; which persons, if they do not hold the resurrection of the body on the principle of obedience, ought certainly to hold it on the principle of reason. For what does the universe every day, but imitate in its elements our resurrection? Thus by the lapse of the minutes of the day the temporal light itself as it were dies, when, the shade of night coming on, that light which was beheld is withdrawn from sight, and it daily rises again as it were, when the light that was withdrawn from our eyes, upon the night being suppressed is renewed afresh. For the progress of the seasons too, we see the shrubs lose the greenness of their foliage, and cease from putting forth fruit; and on a sudden as if from dried up wood, by a kind of resurrection coming we see the leaves burst forth, the fruit grow big, and the whole tree clothed with renewed beauty; we unceasingly behold the small seeds of trees committed to the moistness of the ground, wherefrom not long afterwards we behold large trees arise, and bring forth leaves and fruit. Let us then consider the little seed of any tree whatever, which is thrown into the ground, for a tree to be produced therefrom; and let us take in, if we are capable of it, where in that exceeding littleness of the seed that most enormous tree was buried, which proceeded from it? where was the wood? where the bark? where the verdure of the foliage? where the abundance of the fruit? Was there any thing of the kind perceived in the seed, when it was thrown into the ground? [Comp. S. Chrys. on 1 Thess. 4, 15] And yet by the secret Artificer of all things ordering all in a wonderful manner, both in the softness of the seed there lay buried the roughness of the bark, and in its tenderness there was hidden the strength of its timber, and in its dryness fertility of productiveness. What 'wonder, then, if that finest dust, which to our eyes is resolved into the elements, He, when He is minded, fashioneth again into the human being, Who from the finest seeds resuscitates the largest trees? And so, seeing that we have been created reasoning beings, we ought to collect the hope of our own resurrection from the mere aspect and contemplation of the objects of nature. But forasmuch as the faculty of reason was deadened in us, the grace of the Redeemer came in for an example. For our Creator came, He took death upon

Him, He exhibited the Resurrection, in order that we, who would not hold the hope of the Resurrection by reason, might hold it by His succour and example; and so let blessed Job say; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise at the last day from the earth.* And let any one that despairs of the possibility that the power of the Resurrection should be brought to pass in himself, blush at the words of a believing person set in the midst of the Gentile world, and let him reflect with what a weight of punishment he deserves to be stricken, if he still does not believe his own resurrection, who now knows the resurrection of the Lord which has taken place, if even he believed his own, who as yet expected the resurrection of the Lord Jesus to be brought to pass.

71. But see, I hear of the resurrection, but it is the effect of the resurrection that I am searching out. For I believe that I shall rise again, but I wish that I might hear what kind of person; since it is a thing I ought to know, whether I shall rise again perhaps in some other subtle or ethereal body, or in that body wherein I shall die. But if I shall rise again in an ethereal body, it will no longer be myself, who rise again. For how can that be a true resurrection, if there may not be true flesh? so that plain reason suggests, that if it shall not be true flesh, assuredly it will not be a true resurrection; for neither can it be rightly termed a resurrection, when it is not what fell that rises again. But in this too for us, O blessed Job, do thou remove these clouds of misgiving, and whereas through the grace of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed thee thou hast begun to speak to us of the hope of our resurrection, shew in plain words if our flesh shall really rise again. It follows,  
Ver. 26. *And I shall be again encompassed with my skin.*

[lvi]

72. Whereas the 'skin' is expressly named, all doubt of a true resurrection is removed; in that our body will not, as Eutychius the Bishop of Constantinople wrote, in that gloriousness of the resurrection be impalpable, and more subtle than the wind and air: for in that gloriousness of the resurrection our body will be subtle indeed by the efficacy of a spiritual power, but palpable by the reality of its nature; whence also our Redeemer, when the disciples doubted of His resurrection, shewed them His hands and feet, and offered His bones and flesh to be touched, saying, *Handle Me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have.* [Luke 24, 39] And when, being placed in the city of Constantinople, I brought before Eutychius this testimony of truth from the Gospel, he said, 'For this reason the Lord did this, that He might take away all doubt of the resurrection from the hearts of the disciples.' To whom I said; 'This is a very extraordinary thing that you assert, that doubting should arise to ourselves from the same quarter, whence the hearts of the disciples were cured of doubting.' For what can be said worse than that that is made doubtful to us relating to His true flesh, whereby His disciples were restored anew to faith from all doubting? For if He is declared not to have had that, which He manifested; from the same source, from whence the faith of His disciples is confirmed, ours is destroyed. And he further added, saying, 'He had that body which He shewed a palpable body; but after the hearts of those that handled it were confirmed, all that in the Lord which was capable of being handled, was reduced into a certain subtle quality.' To which same I answered, saying; 'It is written, *Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over Him.* [Rom. 6, 9] If then there was aught in the Body which was capable of being altered after His resurrection, contrary to the truly spoken declaration of Paul, the Lord after His resurrection returned into death; and what fool even would venture to say this, save he that denies the true resurrection of His flesh?' Then he objected to me, saying, 'Whereas it is written; *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God,* [1 Cor.

15, 50] by what means is it to be supposed that the flesh truly rises again?' To whom I say; 'In Holy Writ flesh is named in one way according to nature, and in another way according to sin or corruption.' For there is flesh according to nature, as where it is written, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.* [Gen. 2, 23] And, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* [John 1, 14] But there is flesh according to sin, as where it is written, *My Spirit shall not always abide in those men, for that they are flesh.* [Gen. 6, 3] And as the Psalmist saith; *For He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.* [Ps. 78, 39] Whence too Paul said to the disciples; *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit.* [Rom. 8, 9] For it was not that these persons were not in the flesh, to whom he was sending letters, but for that they had subdued the motions of carnal passions, henceforth, free through the efficacy of the Spirit, they 'were not in the flesh.' Therefore in respect to what Paul says, that *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, he would have flesh to be understood as applied to sin, not flesh as applied to nature. Hence directly afterwards that he was speaking of flesh after sin he makes plain, by adding; *Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.* Therefore in that glory of the heavenly kingdom there will be flesh according to nature, but not flesh according to the desire of the passions; in that the sting of death being overcome, it will reign in eternal incorruptibility.'

73. To which words the same Eutychius directly answered that he assented, yet still he denied that the body could rise again a palpable body. Who in the treatise too which he had written concerning the resurrection, had put in the testimony of the Apostle Paul, when he says; *That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain.* [1 Cor. 15, 36. 37.] Being eager to shew this, that the flesh will either be impalpable [Nearly all MSS. read, 'palpabilis,' which, if right, must come under the following negative], or will not be itself identically, seeing that the holy Apostle, when treating of the glory of the resurrection, says that 'it was not sown the body that it shall be.' But the answer to this is soon made. For the Apostle Paul, when he says, *Thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain*, is telling us of what we see; viz. that the grain, which is sown without a stalk or leaves, springs up with a stalk and leaves; so that he, in heightening the glory of the resurrection, did not say that what it was is wanting to it, but that what it was not is present: but this man, whereas he denies the real body to rise again, does not say that what was wanting is there, but that what it was is wanting.

74. Upon this, then, we being led on in long disputing on this point, we began to recoil from one another with the greatest animosity, when the Emperor Tiberius Constantine, of religious memory, bringing myself and him to a private audience, learnt what dispute was being carried on between us, and weighing the statement of both sides, and by his own allegations as well disproving that same book which he had written concerning the resurrection, determined that it ought to be consumed in the flames. Upon our leaving whom, I was seized with a grievous sickness, while to that same Eutychius sickness and death shortly followed. And when he was dead, because there was well nigh no one who followed his statements, I held back from prosecuting what I had commenced, lest I should seem to be darting words at his ashes, but while he was still alive, and I sick of violent fever, I if any of my acquaintance went to him for the sake of greeting him, as I learnt from their relation, he used to take hold on the skin of his hand before their eyes, saying, 'I confess that we shall all rise again in this flesh;' which as they themselves avowed he was before wont altogether to deny.

75. But let us, laying aside these considerations, minutely search out in the words of blessed Job, if there will be a true resurrection, and the true body in that resurrection; for, lo, we are no longer able to doubt of the hope of the resurrection, in that he says, *And that I shall rise at the last day from the earth.* Moreover he has removed all doubting of the true renewal of the body, in that he says, *And I shall be again encompassed with my skin.* And he still further adds, with the view of removing the misgivings of our thought;  
*And in my flesh shall I see God.*

[lvii]

76. Mark, he owns the resurrection, 'the skin,' 'the flesh,' in explicit words. What is there left then, by which our mind should have occasion to doubt? If this holy man then before the fact of the Lord's resurrection, believed in the flesh being destined to be brought back to its entire state, what will be the guilt of our doubting, if the true resurrection of the flesh not even after the proof of our Redeemer obtains credit? For if after the resurrection there will not be a palpable body, surely another person rises again than dies: which is profane to say; viz. to believe that it is I who die, and another that doth rise again [ABCD, 'another shall rise.']. Wherefore I entreat thee, blessed Job, add how thou art minded, and remove from us all ground of scruple on this point. It follows;  
Ver. 27. *Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*

77. For if, as certain votaries of false opinions believe, after the resurrection there shall be no palpable body, but the subtle quality of an invisible body shall be called the flesh, though there be no substance of flesh, then surely he that dies is one person, and he that rises again is another. But blessed Job destroys this assertion for them by a truth-telling voice, in that he says, *Whom I shall see for myself; and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.* But we, following the faith that blessed Job held, and truly believing the palpable Body of our Redeemer after His resurrection, confess that our flesh after the resurrection will be at once both the same and different, the same in respect of nature, different in respect of glory, the same in its reality, different in its power. Thus it will be subtle, in that it will be incorruptible; it will be palpable, in that it will not lose the essence of its very and true nature. But that same assurance of the resurrection the holy man subjoins with what sure hope he holds it, with what certainty he awaits it. It goes on;  
*This my hope is laid up in my bosom.*

[lviii]

18. We suppose that we hold nothing more surely than what we have in our bosom; and so he kept 'hope laid up in his bosom,' in that he laid hold beforehand on true certainty concerning the hope of the resurrection. But whereas he made known that the day of the resurrection would come, he now, whether in his own voice, or in a figure of the holy and universal Church, reproves the deeds of the wicked, and foretells the Judgment which ensues on the day of the resurrection. For he straightway adds;  
Ver. 28, 29. *Wherefore then do ye now say, Let us persecute him, and find out the root of the word against him? Fly therefore from the face of the sword, for the sword is an avenger of wickedness; and know that there is a judgment.*



79. For in the first sentence he reproved the deeds of the wicked, while in the following he made known the punishments proceeding from the Divine judgment, Thus he saith, *Wherefore then do ye now say; Let us persecute him and find out the root of the word against him?* Wicked persons, because they hear with wrong earnestness things well put forth, and seek to find in the tongue of the righteous an inlet for accusation, what else do they but ‘seek the root of the word against him,’ from which same they may take the commencement of speaking, and in the accusing of him expand the branches of evil talkativeness? But when the holy man meets with such things at the hands of wicked men, it is not against them but rather for them that he feels sorrow, and reproveth the things wickedly harboured in the heart, and shews them evil for them to escape, saying, *Fly therefore from the face of the sword; for the sword is the avenger of wickedness; and know that there is a judgment.* Everyone that does wicked things, even herein, that he is too indifferent to fear this, does not know of there being a judgment of God. For if he did know that this was a thing to be feared, he would never do things that are destined to be punished in it. For there are very many who know that there is a final Judgment as far as the words go, but by acting wickedly they bear witness that they do not know it. Since whereas he does not dread this as he ought, he does not yet know with what a tempest of terror it will come. For if he had [al. ‘he who had’] been taught to estimate the weight of the dreadful scrutiny, surely in fearing he would guard against the day of wrath. Moreover, ‘to fly from the face of the sword,’ is to propitiate the sentence of the strict visitation before it appears. For the terribleness of the Judge cannot be avoided saving before the Judgment. Now He is not discerned, but is appeased by prayers. But when He shall sit on that dreadful inquest, He is both able to be seen and not able any longer to be propitiated; in that the doings of the wicked which He bore long while in silence, He shall pay back all of them together in wrath. Whence it is necessary to fear the Judge now, while He does not yet execute judgment, while He bears patiently for long, while He still tolerates the wickedness that He sees, lest when He has once plucked out His hand in the awarding of vengeance, He strike the more severely in judgment, in proportion as He waited longer before judgment.

## BOOK XV.

In which there is a brief explanation given of the twentieth and twenty first chapter of the Book of Job.

THAT the friends of blessed Job could never have been bad men, the words of Zophar the Naamathite bear witness, who on hearing from his lips the terribleness of the Judgment to come, adds directly;

Ver. 1. *Therefore do my thoughts changefully succeed one another, and my mind is transported diverse ways.*

[i]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

1. As though he said in plain words; ‘Because I see the terribleness of the last Judgment, therefore I am confounded in a state of consternation by the tumults of my thoughts.’ For the mind spreads itself wider in its range of thought, the more it considers how dreadful that is which threatens it. And ‘the mind is transported diverse ways,’ when with anxious alarm she weighs and considers, one while the evil she has done, at another time the good she has left undone, now all the blameable

practices that she remains in, and now the right habits that she sees to be lacking to her. But though the friends of blessed Job, instructed by habituation to his life, knew how to live well, yet, being uninstructed to form an exact estimate of God's judgments, that anyone of the righteous can be susceptible of ills here below, they did not believe possible. And hence they imagined that holy man to be wicked, whom they saw scourged, and, in consequence of this suspicion, it came to pass that they slipt aside into the upbraiding of him as well, whereunto nevertheless they do not descend, save under the guise of a kind of respect. Hence Zophar adds in these words;

Ver. 3. *The lesson whereby thou dost reproach me I will hear; and the spirit of my understanding wilt answer me.*

[ii]

2. As though he said in plain words; 'Thy words indeed I hear, but whether they were delivered aright, I discern by the spirit of my understanding.' For they that disregard the words of the teacher, employ his teaching not for an assistance but for an occasion of contention, rather that they may criticise the things heard than to follow them. This then being premised with a sort of restraint, he now springs out into the open reviling of the blessed man, when he adds;

Ver. 4, 5. *I know this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment.*

[iii]

3. Now it is clear to be seen that being puffed up with the spirit of his understanding, he warps the sentences, which he pronounces against the ungodly, to the reproving of blessed Job. For in him whom he first saw following right ways, and afterwards undergoing punishment, he reckons all that he saw to have been but hypocrisy, in that he did not believe it possible for a just servant to be put to distress by a just God. But those same sentences, which, being right, he did not pronounce in a right way, let us go through, weighing them with earnest intentness of mind; and setting at nought what he says untrue against blessed Job, let us consider how true are the things he speaks, if he were speaking them against the ungodly. *I know this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short.* Going to tell the shortness of the present life, he carried back the eye of the interior to the outset of the commencement, in order to collect from the past how nothing all things are, that while they continue to be, seem to be something. For if we carry the eyes of our imagination from the very commencement of the human race up to the present time in which we now are, we see how short all was that was of a nature to come to an end. Let us imagine a man to have lived from the first day of the world's creation to this present day, yet on this day to end the life, which he seemed to have continued to so great a length, lo, the end is come, the things past are already become nought, in that every thing has passed away. For the future in this world is nought, in that not a moment, or the very shortest particle of time remains to our life. Where then is that long time, which, comprehended between the beginning and the end, is so wasted in substance, just as if it had not ever been even short in duration?

4. Therefore because the wicked have their heart centered in this life, surely they set themselves up therein and seek to win applause. They are lifted up by the flattery of the lips, having no desire to be good, but only to be called so. Which praise they think is of a great length while they receive it, but understand to have been brief when they lose it. Whence it is well said against these wicked

persons, *This I know of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short*; and it is well added, *And the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment*. It often happens that while the hypocrite passes himself off for holy, without a fear of letting himself appear wicked, he is honoured of all men, and the high credit of holiness is awarded to him, by those who can make out the outside, but have no eyes to look into the interior of things. Whence it happens, that he triumphs in having the first seat, is overjoyed in getting the first couch, filled with pride at receiving the first invitation, elevated at the respectful address of his followers, swoln in the pride of his heart at the observance of his dependents, as is said of such by the voice of Truth Himself. *But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.* [Matt. 23, 5] But all this joy of theirs, compared with eternity, what will become of it, when, the crisis of death being upon them, it perishes, as though it had never been? Of which same joy the mirth is all gone, the punishment remains, and when the thing is lost, the guilt [*causa, aitia?*] endures. And it is well said; *The joy of the hypocrite like a point*. For in making a point the style is lifted up as soon as set down, and there is no lingering, that it may be drawn along a line to be described. And so the joy of the hypocrite ‘is like a point,’ in that it appears for a moment, and is gone for ever; and just as the style, in the case of a point, while set down is lifted up in one, so the hypocrite, whilst he touches, parts with the joys of the present life. Concerning whom it is also added; Ver. 6, 7. *Though his pride mount up unto the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds: Yet he shall perish at last like the dunghill.*

[iv]

5. The pride of the hypocrite is said to ‘mount up unto the heavens,’ when his high-mindedness has the appearance of leading a heavenly life; and his ‘head as it were reaches unto the clouds,’ when the leading part, i.e. his intellect, is thought to equal the merits of the Saints that have gone before. Yet he ‘perishes at last like the dunghill,’ because at his death, when he is led to torments, being full of the dung of evil habits, he is trodden under foot of evil spirits. For the joys of the present life, which the unrighteous account great good, righteous men look upon as dung. Whence it is written; *A slothful man is stoned with the dung of oxen.* [Ecclus. 22, 2] Thus he that will not follow God is made slothful in the love of the life everlasting. And as often as he is stricken with the loss of temporal goods, he is surely troubled on the score of those things, which the righteous look down upon as ‘dung:’ what else is it with him, then, that is bruised with the buffeting of things earthly, than that he ‘is stoned with the dung of oxen’ And the hypocrite is justly described like a dunghill, in that while he aims to obtain temporal glory, at one time in the imagination of his heart he swells within himself, at another time he grudges that same glory to some, and laughs at others having it really. For all the evil qualities then that he is full of, his breast as it were is defiled with so much dung, in the eye of the Eternal Judge. Therefore it may be said, *Though his pride mount up unto the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish at last like the dunghill.* Which same, though he feign to lead a heavenly life, though he shew his view of truth to accord with the true preachers, yet he ‘perishes like a dunghill in the end,’ in that his soul is damned for the stench of his evil qualities. It goes on; *They which had seen him shall say, Where is he?*

[v]

6. It generally happens that the life of the hypocrite is even by all men discovered at the end to be damnable, for it to be made appear by plainer marks now what sort they were of. They then that saw him elate at this present time shall say of him when dead, Where is he? For neither is he seen here where he was elated, nor yet in the rest of eternity, which he was supposed to be of.

Concerning the shortness of whose life it is yet further added with fitness;

Ver. 8. *He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.*

[vi]

7. What else is the life of the hypocrite but the vision of a phantom, which exhibits that in semblance which it does not possess in truth? Whence too it is justly likened to 'a dream,' in that all praise and glory is, as it were, gone from him whilst it is being held. For oftentimes in a 'vision of the night,' some that are poor are full of wonder that they are made rich, they see honours awarded to them, they behold heaps of riches, a multitude of attendants, the most beautiful garments, abundance of food presented to them. They are delighted to have escaped poverty, which they bore with a grieved spirit; but on a sudden, when they wake, they find how false all the joy was which they felt, and they are sad that they have awoke, in that real want gripes them awake. Thus the minds of hypocrites, whilst what they do is one thing, and what they exhibit to men another, win applause by the mere exhibiting of holy living; in the esteem of men they are set before numbers that are better, and whilst they are highminded with the secret thought within, they exhibit themselves without as humble. And whereas they are excessively commended by men; they imagine that in the eyes of God also they are such, as they delight to make themselves known to be to their fellow-creatures. Hence it comes to pass that they assume that they will likewise obtain the rewards of eternal life, and they who triumph here below, upon the commendations of their fellow-creatures, doubt not for a moment that they will have rest there; but in the midst of this the secret hour of their call creeps upon them, and while they shut the eyes of the flesh they open those of the spirit, and so soon as they have gotten eternal punishments, they there see, that they were rich in the repute for virtues only in sleep. Well then is it said of such a hypocrite, *Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.* For this, that he sees himself for a brief space rich in man's esteem, is of the show of a phantasm, not of the substance of virtue [al. of reality]. For when his soul wakes up at the dissolution of the flesh, it learns, assuredly, that it was in a sleeping state that it saw the partial regards of men about it. It goes on;

Ver. 9. *The eye also which saw him shall see him no more: neither shall his place any more behold him.*

[vii]

8. What is the 'place' of the hypocrite, saving the heart of his flatterers? For there he rests, where he finds partialities towards him. Therefore 'the eye that saw him shall see him no more,' because being removed by death, he is hidden from his foolish lovers, who were wont to behold him, admiring him. 'Neither shall his place any more behold him,' because the tongues of his flatterers do not follow him with their partialities to the Judgment. Yet so long as he lives he does not cease to teach his followers likewise the things that he practises himself; and through the frowardness of

his erring way he begets others also in a likeness to that false pretension which he shews forth.  
Concerning whom it is fitly added in this place,  
Ver. 10. *His children shall be wasted with poverty.*

[viii]

9. It is written, *For into a malicious soul wisdom shall not enter* [Wisd. 1, 4]; and it is declared by the Psalmist, *The rich have lacked and been a hungred* [Ps. 34, 10]. For if their want and hunger were spoken of outward starving, then surely they would be any thing but rich, who were in want of the bread of the body. But forasmuch as whilst they are increased without, they are rendered void within, they are described as rich and needy at one and the same time, in that they never entitle themselves to be filled with the bread of wisdom. And so the children of this hypocrite are ‘worn down with want,’ because they that are born in hypocrisy in mimicry of him, whilst they do not hold the substance of truth, are brought to nought in the penury of the heart.  
*And his hands shall repay him his own grief.*

[ix]

10. What is denoted by ‘hands,’ saving works? Thus ‘his hands will repay him grief,’ because he will reap just damnation from his wicked course of life. Now it is well said, not ‘give,’ but ‘repay,’ in that his froward deeds shall pay him back eternal punishment like a kind of debt. But before he is brought to eternal punishment, let him add more fully the sort of character that he shews himself here. It goes on,  
*His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth, and shall sleep with him in the dust.*

[x]

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

11. The origin of a bad beginning by preoccupying further multiplies the causes of sin. For when a man has begun to do evil, by custom he now grows to a worse height in that which he had begun. What then is the ‘youth’ of this hypocrite, but the beginning of wickedness, since in youth passion now begins to kindle? And the hypocrite then has youth, when he begins to long for and to embrace the passion for glory. Which same, whilst the soft salves of flatterers redouble it, they give strength to, and as it were turn it into bones. For what he begins badly, he is daily strengthening for the worse by custom. Therefore let it be said; *His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth*; in that the rigid habits of evil practices in him are taken from the sin of an ill beginning. Hence it is written in the Proverbs, *The young man according to his own way, when he is old, will never depart therefrom.* [Prov. 22, 6] Which same ‘bones’ truly ‘will sleep with him in the dust,’ for so long do evil practices endure in him, until they drag him to the dust of death. Since for his ‘bones,’ or evil habits, to ‘sleep with him in the dust’ is for these never to quit him even to the very dust, that is, never to cease from sin even until death. Therefore bad habits, which are once begun, keep hold of him, and daily become more hardened. And they ‘sleep with him in the dust,’ because they are never ended but with his life. But this may be taken in another sense also.

12. For the hypocrite occasionally has something in practice that is strong and vigorous, but whilst he makes believe to have many good points that he is without, he loses even these which he has. Whence it is well said now; *His bones shall be full of the sin of his youth.* For whereas in his levity

and fickleness he does many things like a child, even in strong ones which he may do he is enervated in sin. Which same 'bones shall sleep with him in the dust,' because as all that hypocrisy which he carries on is dust, so too whatever he has in him that is strong is robbed of all its solidity, so that by pretension to virtue he loses that also which there might have been in him of a virtuous nature. And so for 'his bones' to 'sleep with him in the dust' is even if there be things done well, for them to come to nought together with his evil deeds. It proceeds;

Ver. 12. *For when wickedness shall be sweet in his mouth, he will hide it under his tongue.*

[xi]

13. 'Wickedness is sweet in the mouth' of the hypocrite, in that evil tastes sweet to him in the thought. For 'the mouth' of the heart is the thought, whereof it is written; *Deceitful lips spake evil in a double heart.* [Ps. 12, 2] Now the evil that is thus sweet in the mouth of the hypocrite is hidden under the tongue, in that the harshness of an evil disposition, which lies hidden in the mind, is concealed under the cloak of a mild address. For the evil would be on the tongue and not under it, if the hypocrite in speaking disclosed the mischievousness of his froward heart. But as is the case with most of the righteous, when they see any persons acting badly, who deserve to be visited with severe rebukes, they put harshness on the tongue, but under the tongue cover the kindness of their feelings; (whence too it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the Spouse; *Honey and milk are under Thy tongue.* [Cant. 4, 11] For they that shrink from disclosing the sweetness of their inward feeling to the weak, and so in speaking strike them with a degree of harshness, and yet amongst their harsh words secretly as it were let drop a sprinkling of sweetness, these persons clearly have sweetness not on the tongue, but under the tongue, in that amidst the hard words which they utter, they give out some that are sweet and softened, whereby the wounded mind may be cheered and refreshed by kindness;) so with the wicked severally, because they have evil not upon the tongue, but under the tongue, in the words of their mouth they hold out sweet things, and in the thoughts of their heart are plotting mischiefs. For it is hence that Joab held the beard of Amasa with his right hand, whilst secretly putting his left hand to his sword, he shed out his bowels. [2 Sam. 20, 9] For to hold the chin with the right hand is to caress as if in kindness. But he puts his left hand to his sword, who in secret strikes in malice. Hence too it is written concerning their head himself; *Under his tongue is mischief and pain.* [Ps. 10, 7] For he that doth not display openly the ill that he designs, does not put forth on the tongue the mischief and pain of those, whose destruction he aims at, but keeps them close under the tongue. Now it is rightly added of this hypocrite,

Ver. 13. *He will spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his throat.*

[xii]

#### [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

14. For the evil that he delights in he 'spares,' because he does not, by practising penance, hunt it down in himself. Whence too it is added; *and forsake it not.* For if he had the mind to 'forsake,' he would not 'spare' it, but would pursue it closely. Now he 'keeps it within his throat;' because he so retains it in thought, that he never utters it in speech. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *His bread in his belly shall be turned into the gall of asps within him.*

[xiii]

15. What bread is in the belly, the same is fulness of earthly gratification in the mind. So let the hypocrite now be filled to the full with the praises tendered him, let him revel in honours, 'his bread in his belly is turned into the gall of asps,' because the fulness of transitory enjoyment, in the final Retribution, will be turned to bitterness, in that what here passed for the praise of greatness is discovered to have been 'the gall of asps,' i.e. the prompting of evil spirits. For the wicked then perceive that they are infected with the venom of the old serpent, when, being delivered over to avenging flames, they are tormented along with that prompter of theirs. And so this 'bread' has one sort of taste in the mouth, and another in the belly, in that the joy of transitory pleasure is sweet, while it is tasted here by a chewing of teeth, as it were, but it turns bitter in the belly, because when the joy is past it is swallowed to his ruine.

16. Or indeed forasmuch as bread is not unsuitably taken for the sense of the Holy Scriptures, which refreshes the mind and furnishes it with the sinews of right practice, and the hypocrite generally makes it his object to be well instructed in the mysteries of Holy Writ, not that he may live by them, but that it may appear to the rest of the world how learned he is, his 'bread in his bowels is turned into the gall of asps,' in that whilst he boasts of the knowledge of the Sacred Law, he converts the draught of life into a cup of poison to himself, and dies in a state of reprobation from the same cause, whence he appeared to derive instruction unto life. Nor is this again unfitly taken to be the meaning, that while the hypocrite sometimes applies himself to the word of instruction for display, being blinded by God's judgment, he takes in a wrong sense that very word which he seeks in a wrong spirit. But when he falls into heretical error, it is his fate, that as by the 'gall of asps,' so the unhappy wretch perishes by 'bread;' and in his own self instruction he finds death, because in the words of life he never sought life. But it often happens that the sentences of divine warning, even if they be understood rightly by the hypocrite, forasmuch as he neglects to observe them in practice, are lost to him even before the course of the present life is at an end, so that it is taken from him to know, what while he knew he refused to practise. Hence it is added; Ver. 15. *The riches he hath swallowed down, he shall vomit up, and God shall cast them out of his belly.*

[xiv]

17. The hypocrite desires to know the revelations of God, yet not to practise them. He would speak sagely, but not live so. For this reason, then, that he does not do what he knows, even that which he knows he loses, that forasmuch as he does not unite pure practice with his knowledge, contemning purity of right practice he loses the knowledge also. Therefore the 'riches' of the Sacred Law, which he 'swallowed' in reading, he vomits in forgetting, and God 'casts them out of his belly,' in that what he would not observe to do, by a righteous judgment He roots out of his recollection, that at all events he should not keep the precepts of God in the tongue, which he kept not in his life. Whence it is said by the Prophet; *But unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, and that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth?* [Ps. 50, 16] Which words of instruction if it ever at any time chance that the hypocrite should seem to retain in his mouth until the end, he will be condemned the more on the very grounds, whereon not even a bad man is ever deprived of the good gift of God. For it is written; *To those that remember His commandments to do them.* [Ps. 103, 18] He then that keeps His commandments in mind, but never does them, such an one holds in the words of instruction the sentences whereby he is condemned.

18. For hence it is written in Zechariah; *What seest thou, Zechariah? And I answered, I see a flying roll; the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits. This said he to me; This is the curse that goeth over the face of the whole earth. For everyone that stealeth shall be judged as on this side according to it.* [Zech. 5, 2. 3.] For what is a 'flying roll' saving Holy Writ, which whilst it tells us of heavenly themes, lifts up the bent of the mind to things on high; for while we see that it is above us, we leave minding, i.e. desiring things below. And it is described as having 'a breadth of ten cubits' and a 'length of twenty cubits,' in that the breadth of our practice is single, and the long expectance of hope is extended to double, since in return for our good practice both here there is peace of mind, and there eternal joys in store for us, as Truth bears witness, Who saith; *And everyone that hath forsaken houses or lands, &c. shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* [Matt. 19, 29] For the number one hundred is completed by the number ten multiplied ten times. Thus he gets back an hundredfold [perhaps 'an hundredfold *here*.' (reading Hic.)], who, though he has nothing, by the mere perfection of his mind alone, no longer seeks to possess any thing in this world. And in this way, since by this same we have a double measure paid back to us for a single one, that roll is justly drawn out through twenty cubits in length, which is carried out in breadth through ten. But because these very sacred oracles stand for eternal condemnation to those who either will not acquaint themselves with them, or in any wise when made acquainted with them set them at nought, it is rightly said of this roll, *This is the curse, which goeth forth over the face of the whole earth.* And wherefore it is called a curse is added; *For everyone that is a thief, as it is therein written, shall be judged.* Therefore the hypocrite, as he cares not to live after the words of the law which he knows, and seeks golden opinions by store of instruction, will be 'a thief to be judged,' since by this, that he speaks just words, he usurps to himself the praise of the just man's life. Concerning whom it is still farther added rightly, Ver.16. *He shall suck the head of asps: the viper's tongue shall slay him.*

[xv]

19. The 'asp' is a small serpent, but the 'viper' hath more length of body. And asps produce eggs, and their young are hatched from the eggs. But when vipers have conceived, their 'young ravin in their womb, which bursting the parents' sides issue out of their bellies. Hence too it is called the 'viper,' because it is a 'parent [*vi parit.*] by violence.' Thus the viper is so produced that it comes forth by violence, and is brought into the world by the killing of the mother. What then is represented by the little asps, saving the hidden suggestions of impure spirits, who steal upon [Ben. 'surripiunt,' Steal from, both others 'surrepunt.'] the hearts of men by slight prompting at first, and what by the 'viper's tongue' save the violent temptation of the devil? For at first he steals upon them gently, but afterwards he drags them even by force. And so he 'sucks the poison of asps,' in that the little beginning of secret suggestion is first produced in the heart, but 'the viper's tongue slayeth him,' in that afterwards the captive soul is killed by the venom of violent temptation. In the first case unclean spirits speak to the heart of man with their crafty counsels, and these, while they persuade with gentleness, as it were infuse the poison of asps. Whence it is written, *They break asps eggs, and weave the spider's web; He that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is hatched breaketh out into a basilisk.* [Is. 59, 5] Since to 'break asps' eggs,' to wicked men is, to manifest by evil deeds the counsels of evil spirits, which lurk in their hearts. Moreover, to 'weave spiders' webs' is, on account of the lust of this world, to be busied in any temporal employments. Which, whilst they are established with no stedfastness, assuredly are carried off by the wind of a mortal



life. And it is well added; *He that eateth of their eggs dieth.* In that he that admits the counsels of impure spirits kills the life of his soul in him. 'And that which is hatched, breaketh out into a basilisk,' in that the suggestion of the bad spirit which is covered up in the heart, is nursed unto full iniquity. For 'basilisk' ['Regulus,' which is a translation of the Greek Basiliscov. see Plin. viii. 21.] means the king of serpents, and who is the head of the sons of perdition, save Antichrist?

Therefore 'that, which is hatched, will break out into a basilisk,' in that he who harbours in himself the counsel of the 'asp' to nourish them to life, being made a member of the wicked head, is engrafted into the body of Antichrist. Of which hypocrite it is said, *He shall suck the head of asps, and the viper's tongue shall slay him,* in that when he gladly welcomes the evil suggestion of our old enemy, afterwards he surrenders himself vanquished to his forcible temptations. Hence too in Paradise, to man when he was standing, he brought in words of soft suggestion, but him whom he once caught away to the act of consent, now henceforth he forces on even resisting him, and conquered by the gratifications of his corrupt state of being, kills him well nigh by dint of violence. But perhaps we may be able to make out the meaning of these same sentences by a contrary mode of interpretation. Thus because the 'asp' kills quickly by its venom, but the 'viper' more slowly, by the 'asp' we have denoted a violent and instantaneous temptation, but by the 'viper' a gentle and prolonged one. And hence to the one death is said to lie in the 'sucking of the head,' but to the viper 'in the tongue,' in that a sudden temptation often as soon as it arises kills the soul off its guard, but a lengthened temptation, because it is longer recommending evil things by the suggesting of them, kills as does a viper with its tongue. And because every hypocrite, being penetrated with the suggestion of evil spirits, as with the poison of serpents, never considers what are the gifts from above of the Holy Spirit, while he spreads abroad the bent of the heart in golden opinions without, it is rightly added;

Ver. 17. *He shall not see the streamlets of the torrent river of honey and butter.*

[xvi]

20. The Lord saith in the Gospel; *He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* [John 7, 38. 39.] Where the Evangelist subjoins, saying, *But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.* And so 'the streamlets of the river' are the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Charity is 'a streamlet of the river,' faith is 'a streamlet of the river,' hope is 'a streamlet of the river.' But because no hypocrite ever loves either God or his neighbour, when he makes the transitory glory of the world his aim, he does not see the streamlets of the river, in that he is not watered with the overflowing of charity. Whereas the hypocrite goes after present gains, he disregards future blessings, and not having faith, he sees not in the mind 'the streamlet of the river,' inasmuch as *faith is the evidence of things not seen.* [Heb. 11, 1] And while the hypocrite clings to the things that are seen, he makes light of those, which are not seen, therefore he does not see the 'streamlets of the river' in desire, in that he is taken up with visible things alone. And it is written, *For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* [Rom. 8, 24] He then would have seen 'streamlets of the river' if he had shut his eyes to the glory of this world, and opened them to the love of the heavenly country. And observe that he does not say 'streams,' but 'streamlets.' For the 'streamlets of the river' may be taken for those spiritual gifts, which trickle in such fine streams from heavenly sources into the soul of him that loveth, that they can never be compassed by the mouth of the flesh. For it is often the case that the spirit of him that loves is filled with such a mighty gift of contemplation, that it has power to see what it has not power to utter. Now the 'torrent river' is the inundation of the Holy Spirit itself, which in

exuberant outpouring is gathered in the soul of him in contemplation, when his mind is full beyond what he is able to comprehend. And it is necessary to be known, that when the grace of the Holy Spirit bathes us, it fills us with 'honey and butter' equally. For 'honey' falls from above, but 'butter' is drawn from the milk of animals, and so 'honey' is from the air, 'butter' from the flesh. But the Only-begotten Son of the Most High Father, while He is God above all things, was made Man one among all things. Who when he replenished us with the sweetness of His Divine Nature and the mystery of His Incarnation, satisfied us with 'honey and butter' at once. And so seeing that the Holy Spirit rejoices the soul It has filled, at once with the sweetness of His divinity and the belief of His Incarnation, these are described as 'the streamlets of the torrent river of honey and butter' together, in that they both refresh the soul with sweetness by the exalted knowledge of God, and anoint it with the mystery of the Benefit [*Charismatis*] by the grace of the Incarnation. But whereas this hypocrite, being dissipated in outward regards, does not taste these interior gifts, he adjoins to what after punishments he is tending, in that it is added;  
Ver. 18. *He shall pay for all the things that he hath done, nor yet shall he be consumed.*

[xvii]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

21. For he 'pays' in torment for those desires, which he retained here contrary to right, and being consigned to avenging flames, he is always dying, in that he is always kept alive in death. For he is never consumed in death, in that if his life in dying were consumed, his punishment likewise would be brought to an end together with his life; but that he may be tormented without end, he is forced to live on without end in punishment, that he whose life here was dead in sin, may have his death there living in punishment. Let him say then; He shall pay for all the things that he hath done, nor yet shall he be consumed, forasmuch as he is tormented, and not put out, he dies and lives, he is falling away and holding on, always finishing, without being finished. These things are very terrible in the healing of the ear only, how infinitely more terrible in the enduring of them! Now because the multiplicity of his wickedness demands that he should never be without punishment, it is fitly added;  
*According to the multitude of his inventions shall he also suffer.*

[xviii]

22. For whereas he found out many things in order to sin, he is tormented with new inventions in punishment. Since what he could not have suspected here, he is made sensible of there, when he is given over to vengeance. For as the Elect in exercising themselves in good works, sometimes set themselves to do more than the Lord thought fit to bid them, (for virginity of the flesh is no where commanded, but only commended; since if it were commanded, then it would follow that wedlock must henceforth be deemed sin, and yet there are many strong in the virtue of virginity, so as to render more in service than they received in command,) so very commonly the wicked are each practised in bad ways, so that they find out in evil doing more for them to do than by the practice of the lost they received examples of wickedness. And hence they are stricken with the torments of an ampler retribution, in that they too of their own heads invented practices on an ampler scale, which they deserve to be stricken for. And so it is well said, According to the multitude of his inventions shall he also suffer. For he would not find out new wickedness, except he also sought it; and he would not seek it, except he was eager to do it of set purpose. Therefore in his tormenting the excessiveness of evil devising is taken into account, and he receives the pain of a worthy

recompense. And although the woe of all the damned is infinite, yet they have worse torments inflicted upon them, who invented many things in wicked ways by their desires as well. Now since Zophar has brought in the punishment of this hypocrite, he immediately adds his sin, nor does he describe anyone in particular, but that from which all sins have their origin. For it is written, *Covetousness is the root of all evil.* [1 Tim. 6, 10] He then, whom covetousness is described as having dominion over, surely is proved to be subject to all evil propensities. Thus he subjoins, Ver. 19, 20. *Because he hath broken down and laid bare the house of the poor, because he hath violently taken it away and not builded it, neither is he satisfied in his belly.*

[xix]

23. He 'breaks in pieces and lays bare the house of the poor,' who is not ashamed as well to rob out of avarice him whom he crushes by power. 'He violently taketh it away and doth not build it.' As if it were expressed in plain words; 'He that ought to have builded it, he over and above takes it away.' For the Lord Who is to come in judgment, shall say to the reprobate, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye covered Me not, &c.* [Matt. 25, 42. 43.] as the consequence of which sin it is added, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* If then he is sentenced to so great a penalty, who is convicted merely of not having given away his own, with what punishment does not that man deserve to be stricken, who is proved to have taken the things of others also? And so he 'took it away and did not build it up,' in that he not only never gave any thing of his own, but also took away what was another's. Now it is well added; *Surely his belly shall not be satisfied.* For the 'belly' of the wicked man is avarice, in that there is collected together in it whatsoever is swallowed with wrong desire. But it is plain that avarice is not extinguished, but increased by the objects desired. For like fire, when it has got fuel to feed on, it increases; and from the same cause that the flame appears to be restrained for a moment, it is seen a little while after to spread itself out. And it often happens that when Almighty God is greatly wroth with the covetous soul, He first lets all things accrue to it according to its wish, and afterwards takes it away in vengeance, that it may undergo eternal punishments on account of them. And hence it is added;  
*And when he shall have that which he desired, he shall not be able to possess it.*

[xx]

24. For it is a mark of greater indignation, when that thing is given which is desired amiss, and therefrom there ensues sudden retribution, because he got that likewise, which he went after when God was wroth the while. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, where the people are described as having lusted after flesh for food in a wrong way; *But while their meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the most of them.* [Ps. 78, 30. 31] For the judgments of God are used to be slower in appearing, when wrong wishes are hindered that they should not be put in execution. For the quicker that a bad wish is suffered to be fulfilled, it is usually punished the more speedily in proportion. And so by the very act, whereby the hypocrite is aggrandized in haste to become powerful, it is brought to pass with proportionate rapidity, that he should not be. For the trees too that grow slower, last to number many years, and those which make way in a short space of time, wither the sooner, and in a manner, whilst they are hasting to be, they are going the way not to be. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *There shall none of his meat be left.*

[xxi]

25. 'His meat' is all that he coveted with wrong desire; but when the hypocrite is struck, 'there is none of his meat left,' in that when he is himself carried to eternal punishments, he is parted from all the good things that he had gotten here. And hence it is yet further added; *Therefore shall nought remain from his goods.*

For if 'aught did remain of his goods,' he would take along with him the things that he had possession of. But because while going after every thing, he would not fear the Judge, upon being removed out of this life, he goes naked to the Judge. To which same wicked man, it is but little for his recompensing that he is tormented in after punishment, if only in this life he is let to go free. But there is no liberty in sin, seeing that it is written; *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*; [2 Cor. 3, 17] and to the wicked soul usually its very own sin becomes its own punishment. And hence it is rightly added; *In the fulness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits.*

[xxii]

26. For first from avarice he pants to heap together things he covets, and when he has gathered together a great multitude as it were in a kind of belly of avarice, 'in the fulness of his sufficiency, he is in straits,' in that whilst he is full of anxiety how he may keep the things he has gotten, his own fulness itself straitens him. For the field of a certain rich man had brought abundant fruits, but because he had not where to lay up such stores, he said, *What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits. And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns, and build greater.* [Luke 12, 17. 18.] He then who from being straitened by his abundance said, What shall I do? was in a fever as if oppressed with a quantity of food. Let us consider with what longings he desired his land might produce abundant crops. Behold now his wishes are completed, seeing that the land did bring him abundant fruits. But forasmuch as there are not places enough to stow it away, the rich man being greatly aggrandized knows not what he should do. O straitness caused by 'fulness of sufficiency!' By the abundance of his land the mind of the covetous man is straitened. For when he says, *What shall I do?* he clearly shews that, surcharged with the engrossments of his desires, he went heavily under a kind of bundle of stores; and so it is well said, *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits.* Since the mind of the covetous man, which had before looked for rest from plenty, was afterwards put to worse trouble for the keeping thereof. And hence it is also yet further added; *He shall burn with heat, and every woe shall come down upon him.*

[xxiii]

27. For first he had sorrow in the mere wearying of his own concupiscence how to snatch hold of the things coveted, how to secure one sort by arts of flattery, another sort by means of threats; but after that having possessed himself of the gifts of fortune he has attained his desire, another annoyance wears him down, viz. that it is with fear and anxiety he keeps safe that which he remembers it cost him infinite trouble to acquire. On every side he dreads conspirators, and fears

to be himself subjected to the very thing that he has done to others. One more powerful he is afraid of, lest he be exposed to violence from him; a poor man, when he sees one, he looks on as a thief. The things themselves which he has hoarded up, he is at great pains about, lest by the failure of their own inherent nature they be consumed by neglect. In all these particulars then, because fear by itself is punishment, the unhappy wretch suffers things as great as he fears to suffer. And after this he is yet further brought to hell, and given over to eternal torments. Therefore 'every woe cometh down upon him,' who is at once consumed first here by the punishment of coveting, afterwards by the trouble of safe keeping, and there at some future time by the punishment of retributive wrath.

28. But it is wonderful security of the heart, not to seek what does not belong to us, but to rest content with each day's sustenance day by day. From which same security it is that the Rest everlasting also arises, seeing that from a good and quiet frame we pass to eternal delights. Contrariwise lost sinners are at once worn down here in desires, and there in torments. And from the labour of taking thought there arises to them the labour of pain, in that by the fever of avarice they are drawn into the fire of hell. And because, as we have already often said, it often happens that the wicked man, the sooner he attains his object, is the more easily carried off to torment, it is added in the form of a wish.

Ver. 23. *Would that his belly might be filled, that God might cast the fury of His wrath upon him, and rain His war upon him.*

[xxiv]

29. The Lord 'rains His war' upon this hypocrite, when he smites his deeds with the swords of His judgments. Thus for God to 'rain war,' is His pressing hard to destruction the life of the wicked man by His strict sentences from on high. God 'raining war' is His smiting the hearts that are lifted up against Himself, and His wounding the blasted soul with the darts of His judgments, as with a kind of thickening drops of rain, that when he is now carried off to judgment, one while he should remind himself how he coveted wickedly, and more wickedly set himself to heap together the things he coveted, at another time grieve that he is parted from the things thus heaped together, and one day feel the very fire of retribution, which, that he might not live well, he was too indifferent to foresee. It goes on;

Ver. 24. *He shall flee from the iron weapons; and rush upon the bow of brass.*

[xxv]

30. We ought to know, that avarice sometimes steals upon men from pride, and sometimes from apprehension. Thus there are some who whilst they aim to appear with greater power, are kindled to the going after the things of others; and there are some, who while they are afraid lest the necessities of the aids of life should be wanting to them, freely give their minds to covetousness, and go after the things of others when they fancy that their own may not be enough for them. Now all necessity is not unaptly termed 'iron,' in that it pains the life of him that wants with the wound of grief, as it is likewise expressed concerning the necessities of him, who, being sold by his brethren, led an afflicted life; *The iron entered into his soul.* [Ps. 105, 18] What then are 'the iron weapons' but necessities of the present life, which press hard upon, and push to extremity, the life of the needy? Since iron is consumed by rust, but brass is naturally more difficult to be consumed

by it. Therefore by 'iron' there is represented present necessity which is transient, but by 'brass' the eternal doom. And whereas the judgment Above is not heeded by the mind of the wicked man, it is justly likened to a 'bow,' since it strikes as it were out of ambush, whilst the person that is struck does not observe it. And thus, He shall flee from the iron weapons, and rush upon the bow of brass; in that whilst from dreading present necessities, he seizes things without number, through maliciousness he is exposing himself before the severe strokes of the final judgment; and, while he 'fleeth the weapons of iron,' he is encountered by the arrows from the bow of brass, in that, while foolishly providing against the ills of time, he is struck by eternal doom. For whosoever with guilt fleeth the hardness of need here, meets there an everlasting duration of just retribution. But before the time that he is hurried off to judgment, what are the things which this wicked man is busied in here, he yet further informs us. It goes on;

Ver. 25. *He is drawn and cometh out of his sheath, yea, lightening in his bitterness.*

[xxvi]

31. This wicked man lays plots in arts of robbery on his neighbours. And whilst he is plotting mischief in the thoughts of his heart, it is as if 'the sword were still in its sheath;' but when he wickedly executes the mischief, which he has contrived, he 'cometh out of his sheath,' in that he is brought out to view, from the secrecy of his thoughts, in the wickedness of evil doing. He is shewn to light in the deed, such as he was, hidden from view, in the thought. And observe that he says, drawn and cometh out; i.e. 'drawn' by the deceiver, but 'coming out' by the act of his own free will. For he that is 'drawn' unquestionably follows one that draws him. But he that 'cometh forth,' seems to act according to his own will. That man, then, who is at once drawn to the several wicked practices by our old enemy, and yet fast bound in the desire of them by his own free will, is described as 'drawn and coming forth from his sheath,' since this thing, that he issues forth from the bad thought to the worst enacting, belongs at once to the wickedness of that spirit that prompted, and of him that consented by an act of his own will.

32. The terribleness of whose power is further shewn, where it is immediately added, *Yea, lightening in his bitterness.* For when the lightning comes suddenly from above, when it shines with terribleness before our eyes, it displays shining brightness, and strikes the object before it. Thus, thus is it with the wicked man, when he has secured to himself the glory of the present life: by the same cause by which he is shewn to view bright by power in the present world, it is brought to pass that he is blasted at the last. For the wicked man's as it were 'lightening,' is his shining in this life's honour; but whereas the splendour of that glory is consigned to the eternal woes of hell, it is rightly said in this place, 'Yea, lightening in his bitterness.' For he that now seems as though he took delight in striking by terribleness and brightness, for this cause afterwards undergoes punishments for everlasting. And indeed it is written of a certain rich man that he 'fared splendidly' every day. Now it is one thing to shew 'splendidly,' and another to 'lighten;' for sometimes there is splendour without striking, but splendour with striking is described by the title of 'lightning.' He then who being placed in power does injury to others, is not unaptly entitled 'lightening,' in that from the same means whereby he is himself exalted against the good, as it were by the light of glory, the life of the good is made to feel torture. It goes on;  
*Terrible ones shall come and go over him.*

[xxvii]

33. Who are here called ‘terrible ones’ except evil spirits, who are to be feared and avoided by godly minds? And whereas those same evil spirits are to be believed to attach themselves severally to certain particular vices, when this wicked man seems to quit for a moment one set of faults, and begins to commit another, then surely ‘the terrible ones come and go over him,’ in that the soul of the bad man though one set of bad habits abandons, yet another takes possession of it. For you may often see the bad man, who is set in earthly power, agitated with furious passion, and executing all that his rage suggests; and when his fury is gone, then directly lust ravages his soul; when lust is stopped for a time, self-exaltation as on the ground of continency is immediately made to take its place in his heart, and that he may be feared by others, he aims to shew himself as an object of terror. But when the occasion requires that he should say any thing with double-dealing, laying aside in a certain sort the terribleness of pride, he flatters with an easy address, and when he ceases to shew himself proud, he does not dread to turn double-dealing. And so it is rightly said of him, in whose mind one vice continually takes the place of another, *Terrible ones come and go upon him*; since for all the evil habits that he is borne down with departing and taking each other’s place, his soul is as it were overrun by as many evil spirits going and returning. But it is these things which he does in act, that issue outwardly by parts and pieces, for on his soul he has all things bad tied fast at once and together. Hence it is added;

Ver. 26. *All darkness is hid in his secret places.*

[xxviii]

34. For though the hypocrite exhibits good actions on the surface, yet a certain ‘darkness’ of evil deeds appears in him; yet it less comes forth in act, than lies buried in his secret thought. For he who does not fulfil all things at once in execution, does in his heart in silence hold all things that may do mischief. Thus ‘all darkness’ is said to be ‘hid in his secret places,’ in that though he does not exhibit to view all things evil in himself, yet he aims to bring down all upon his fellow-creatures. Now let him add the retribution, which this soul so reprobate shall be visited with. It goes on;

*A fire that is not kindled shall consume him.*

[xxix]

35. Most wonderfully in these few words is the fire of hell set forth! For bodily fire, in order to become fire, stands in need of bodily fuel; and when it is necessary for it to be preserved, as we well know, it is nourished by wood heaped upon it, neither can it be, except by being kindled, nor live, save by being cherished. But contrarily the fire of hell, whilst it is a bodily fire, and bodily consumes the children of perdition that are cast into it, is neither kindled by human effort, nor kept alive by wood, but being once made to be, it lasts unextinguishable: at one and the same time it needs no kindling, and lacks not heat. And so it is well said of this wicked one; *A fire not kindled shall consume him*; in that the justice of the Almighty, foreseeing future events, did from the very beginning of the world create the fire of hell, which should once begin in the punishment of the wicked, but never end its heat even without fuel. But it is necessary to know, that all the children of perdition, as they sinned in Spirit and flesh conjointly, are there tormented in spirit and flesh alike. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of Thine anger.* [Ps. 21, 9] The Lord shall confound them in His wrath, and the fire shall devour them. For

an 'oven' is heated within; but he who is 'devoured by fire' begins to be consumed from the outside. Thus that holy Scripture might shew that the lost burn both within and without, it testifies that they are at once 'devoured by fire,' and 'made as a fiery oven,' that by fire they should be tormented in the body, and by grief burn in spirit. Hence in this place too, when it is declared of the ungodly man that *a fire that is not kindled shall consume him*, it is forthwith added concerning his spirit;

*Being left in his tabernacle, it shall go ill with him.*

[xxx]

36. The 'tabernacle' of the wicked man is his flesh, in that he inhabits it in joyfulness, and, if it were possible, wishes he might never quit it. But the righteous, as they place their delight in the prospect of heavenly rewards, and have their conversation in heaven, while they are still in the flesh are as if they were no longer in the flesh, in that they are not fed with any gratification of the flesh. And hence it is said to some persons; *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit* [Rom. 8, 9]: not that they were not in the flesh, who by the epistles of their master received charges of exhortation; but it is in a manner to be no longer 'in the flesh,' not to own aught connected with the love of fleshly objects. But on the other hand this wicked man, because he set all his delight in a fleshly life, 'dwelt in the tabernacle' of the flesh. Which very flesh when he shall receive back in the resurrection, he shall burn along with it delivered over to the fires of hell. Then he longs to be brought out of it; then he seeks, if he might be able, to escape from his torments; then he begins to wish he could get quit of that which he loved: but because he preferred that flesh to God, it is brought to pass by the judgment of God, that by it he is more fully tormented in the fire. Here then he has no mind to leave it, and yet is severed from it, and there he wishes to leave it and yet is kept in it for punishments. And so for the increase of his torments, he is at once both removed out of the body here against his will, and held fast in the body there when he would not. Therefore because his spirit in torment longs [So A.B.C.D.—Ben. 'shall long.' *lewpetrian* Sept.] to get rid of the flesh, which it set before itself in loving amiss, and has not the power, it is lightly said here, being left in his tabernacle it shall go ill with him. Of whose accusing it is directly said;

Ver. 27. *The heavens shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.*

[xxxi]

37. What do we understand by 'the heavens,' but the righteous, and what by 'the earth,' but sinners? And hence in the Lord's prayer we pray; *Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven*, meaning this, that the will of our Creator, in the same way as it is accomplished in all the righteous, may also be fulfilled in all sinners as well. Moreover of the righteous it is said, *The heavens declare the glory of God* [Ps. 19, 1]. And to man when he sinned the sentence is pronounced, *Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt return*. And so of this ungodly man, when dragged to that awful judgment; 'the heavens reveal his iniquity, and the earth rises up against him,' that that man, who here never spared either the good or the bad, should in that tremendous inquest have the life of the righteous and of sinners alike accusing him. And of the two indeed it is worse if a man injure the good rather than sinners; and hence it is said by the Prophet, *For her blood is in the midst of her: she poured it upon the smoothest rock* [*super limpidissimam petram* V.]; *she poured it not upon the ground to cover it with dust*: [Ez. 24, 7] by 'the ground' and 'the dust' indeed denoting sinners, but by the 'very smooth rock,' the righteous man, who is not made rough by the hard grazes of sins;



and so ‘the blood is poured upon the very smooth rock,’ when the wickedness of a bloodthirsty mind rages in the afflicting of the righteous soul. While then it is worse unjustly to distress the righteous than the unrighteous, yet it is much worse to hurt the righteous and unrighteous together; and therefore whereas the wicked have injured both the good and the bad alike, in the accusing to damnation, ‘the heavens shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him, because he at one and the same time set himself against those who savoured the things of heaven, and oppressed those who savoured of things below. But it may be that by ‘the earth’ we have denoted not the sinful and reprobate, but those that being busied in earthly courses, by the help of alms and of tears attain to eternal life. Concerning whom it is said by the Psalmist, when the Lord is proclaimed as coming to Judgment, *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth that He may Judge His people*. [Ps. 50. 4] For He ‘calls the heavens from above,’ when they, who, leaving all that they had, held on the tenour of the heavenly life, are called to sit with Him in judgment, and come with Him as judges; but ‘the earth is called from above,’ when they who were tied down to earthly courses of action, yet sought therein for heavenly more than for earthly profit and advantage, to which persons it is said, *I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed Me*. So ‘the heaven reveals the wickedness’ of the hypocrite, and ‘the earth rises up against him,’ in that both they who come in company with God as judges, and they who through the ordeal of the Judgment are set free, become the witnesses of his iniquity. Thus nought of the things he has committed is hidden from sight in the time of condemnation, and if indeed many of his deeds are now concealed from his fellow-creatures by double-dealing, yet in the day of condemnation; whatever there was that lay hidden within him, it is brought to light. Hence it is fitly added; Ver. 28. *The shoot of his house shall be disclosed, and he shall be taken away in the day of God’s wrath*.

[xxxii]

38. ‘The shoot of his house is disclosed,’ when every thing bad that sprung up in his consciousness is shewn to view. For now the ‘shoot of the hypocrite’s house’ remains hidden from sight, in that though his practice appears good in the delineation, yet the intent lies hidden. Since it is one thing what he does, and another thing what he has in view. But when, at the coming of the Judge, each man’s conscience shall be brought forward for its testimony, (whence it is written, *Their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another*, [Rom. 2, 15]) then the ‘shoot of the hypocrite’s house is herein disclosed,’ because the evil design is laid bare in his heart. ‘And he shall be taken away in the day of God’s wrath,’ in that when the indignation of the Judge is revealed, being given to avenging fires, he is parted from His sight. For he that, whilst he lived, would not take thought of the highest things, being forced down by the weight of his sins, shall fall from the face of the Judge into the depths of punishment. But now the Judge both sees and bears with the sinner in his sins, and because it is the day of forbearance and not as yet the day of fury, He waits for each one for his conversion. Now in this day of forbearance the hypocrite as it were remains unmoved, whilst he both commits many evil deeds, and is chastised by no scourges; but ‘in the day of fury he shall be taken away,’ in that being carried off to punishment in the season of vengeance he is cut off from the countenance of the eternal Judge. It goes on; Ver. 29. *This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage of his words from the Lord*.

[xxxiii]

39. For if, while placed in this life, he had been minded to act rightly, he would have had for his 'portion' with the Lord fellowship in the kingdom of heaven; but because he chose to be subjected to bad desires, his 'portion from the Lord' he found in torment, because he did not seek to obtain a share in the grace of that Lord. But it is well said, *And the heritage of his words from the Lord*. For he that is immersed in punishment for enormous deeds of wickedness perchance it was thought would never be judged for the words which he had spoken amiss. But when the strict justice of Almighty God exacts punishment from lost sinners for their froward deeds, it renders evil things to them even to the recompensing of their words, that they who are debtors for great transgressions, being consigned to punishment, may pay even the very last farthing. For they are spared the least misdemeanours, who rigorously lamented the greater evils in themselves. And those whom great sins weigh down even the very least alike put to pain in hell. Now holy men desire not to receive a portion from the Lord, but to have the Lord Himself for their portion. Hence the Prophet prays, saying, *God is my portion forever* [Ps. 73, 26]: but the wicked man, because he sought not to have the Lord Himself for his 'portion,' found fire for his 'portion' without the Lord, that being shut out from His face, because he did not seek to find joy in Him, he might be tormented beneath Him. These things Zophar brought forward in such a way, that by what he spoke against the hypocrite, he might strike a blow against the life of blessed Job, thinking that he who was stricken by the Lord, had not done with a simple heart all the good things which he had done. For him, whom he saw beneath the rod, he supposed to have displeased God. But the friends of blessed Job likewise maintain a likeness of heretics in this particular, in that whilst they see, in Holy Church, some, that live aright, groaning beneath the rod, they reckon that they have not good merit in good deeds, and set them down as bad men, whom they see afflicted with the scourge of God; not knowing, that is to say, that *Many are the afflictions of the righteous* [Ps. 43, 19], and that *He scourgeth every man whom He receiveth*. [Heb. 12, 6] But blessed Job, after the manner of the Holy and Universal Church, which bears with patience the darts of words at the hands of the froward, and, when she hears the sayings of the proud, never leaves the pathway of her humility, made answer with great humility of heart, saying,

C. xxi. Ver. 2. *Hear I pray you my speech, and practise penitence.*

[xxxiv]

40. For he that when he said *Hear*, added, *I pray you*, shews how humbly he speaks, whilst he entreats persons, swelling with pride against him, to bring back their thought to the teaching of saving truth. But whereas holy men, within the pale of the Universal Church, are not only ready to teach what is right, but also to undergo things that are done against them, they do not dread being laughed at. Hence it is added;

*Suffer me that I may speak; and after my words, if it shall seem so, laugh.*

[xxxv]

41. For when good men speak, there are two points, which they regard in their discourse, viz. that they should be of use to themselves and their hearers, or to themselves alone, if they are unable to be of use to their hearers. For when the good things they deliver are heard to good purpose, they benefit both themselves and their hearers; but when they are turned to ridicule by the hearer, doubtless they were of use to themselves, whom they made quit of the sin of silence. And so let

blessed Job, that he might serve both himself and his hearers, speak the words; *Hear I pray you my speech, and practise repentance*. But that he may discharge himself of the obligation which he owes, even if he is unable to avail his hearers, he adds, *Suffer me that I speak; and after my words, if it shall seem so, laugh*. I observe that whereas he added, and practise repentance, he first premised, *Hear*, but when he added the words, *and after my words, if it shall seem so, laugh*, he premised, *Suffer me that I may speak*; for ‘hearing’ is of one who acts of free will, but ‘bearing’ of one who acts against his own inclination. And so if his friends desire to be taught, let them ‘hear,’ but if they are ready to mock, let them ‘suffer’ the things that are said; seeing that to a proud mind, instruction in humility is a grievous and onerous weight. It goes on;

Ver. 4. *As for me, is my dispute against man, that I should not be justly sad?*

[xxxvi]

42. Whosoever in pleasing God displeases man, has no grounds for sadness. But he, who in pleasing man displeases God, or thinks that he displeases both God and man together, if sadness does not come upon him, proves a stranger to the excellency of wisdom. Now blessed Job believed that he had displeased God in the midst of his strokes, and therefore he called back his mind to sadness, in that He was not to be disregarded, Whom he was afraid that he had displeased. Now, if he had been pleading against man concerning the merits of his life, he would have had no occasion to feel sadness, but seeing that by his present strokes he was made doubtful of his past life, he justly sought for sadness under the scourge. Hence too it is added;

Ver. 5. *Mark me, and be astonished*.

[xxxvii]

43. i.e. Consider what I have done, and be astonished at the things that I undergo under this infliction of the rod. And he yet further rightly introduces the words;

*And lay your finger upon your mouth*.

As if he had said in plain speech; ‘Knowing the good things that I have done and seeing the ills that I am subjected to, your own selves keep even from offence in words, and in my strokes dread your own hurts.’ Or indeed seeing that by our fingers we distinguish things severally, discretion is not unfitly represented by the fingers; and hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Blessed be the Lord my God, Which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight* [Ps. 144, 1]; i.e. by the ‘hands’ denoting practice, and by the ‘fingers,’ discretion. And so the finger is laid to the mouth, when the tongue is bridled by discretion, that by what it utters, it may not fall into the sin of foolishness. And therefore he says, *Lay your finger upon your mouth*; i.e. ‘join the virtue of discretion to your speech, that in those things which ye say light against the hypocrite, ye may see to what persons they are proper to be said.’ It goes on;

Ver. 6. *Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh*.

[xxxviii]

44. That blessed Job was not forgetful of his deeds, the last utterance of his lips proves. Wherefore this which he now says to his friends, *Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh*, must clearly be said in mockery. As if it were in plain words; ‘If I remember that

I have had any thing of the hypocrite in me, directly I tremble in tears of penitence.’ And ‘if he remembered, his flesh was shaken with trembling’ he declares, i.e. that the weakness of practice was disheartened by the dread of vengeance. But as Zophar said many things about the sudden condemnation of the wicked man, whereby he snapped at the powerful estate of blessed Job, the holy man subjoins in answer to his words, saying,

Ver. 7. *Wherefore do the wicked live, are lifted up, and strengthened by riches?*

[xxxix]

45. For except the patience of God bore with them, they would never live long in their sins. For they are ‘lifted up by riches,’ when they first begin to be powerful, but they are ‘strengthened,’ when they are permitted to continue long in this life. Since those whose substance uplifts them, length of days strengthens in the pride of their power. Or surely they are said to be lifted up and strengthened, in that they are ‘lifted up’ by honours, ‘strengthened’ by substance. But there are very many, who while they are both ‘lifted up’ by honours and ‘strengthened’ by riches, are vouchsafed the things which they covet in this life, but deprived of the succession of children. To these their very power is punishment, when they see themselves possessed of a large inheritance, but not possessed of heirs to whom they may leave it. What good then, if every thing be forthcoming, but children be wanting who may become their heirs? It proceeds;

Ver. 8. *Their seed is established in their sight with them.*

[xl]

46. For the increase of exceeding happiness, together with a large patrimony, they have heirs too given them; and that no unavoidable temporal circumstance either may remove from their eyes those in whom their soul delights, it is said of this seed of theirs, *Their seed is established in their sight*. But what if children are vouchsafed, yet the children themselves stricken with barrenness? The family is made extinct in them, in like sort as it was feared it would be made extinct by the barrenness of their parents. It goes on;

*And a crowd of kinfolk and grandchildren before their eyes.*

Observe, life is theirs, honours and riches are theirs, children are theirs, grandchildren are theirs. What if any secret fancy gall the mind, and domestic discord pierce the joys of their security? What is the prosperity of this world, if it be not joyful? It goes on;

Ver. 9. *Their houses are secure and at peace, neither is the rod of God upon them.*

[xli]

47. Their ‘houses are secure and at peace,’ in that they live on committing sin, they do things to be mourned over, and they never leave their joys. And the ‘rod’ of discipline from Above ‘does not smite them,’ and they go on the more unrestrainedly in sin, in proportion as they are punished less for sin. But as we have heard the things, which go prosperously within, what prosperity smiles on them in the field too, let us see. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *Their ox conceiveth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and loseth not her calf:*

It is the usage of common talk to call 'ox [*bos*]' masculine, and 'cow' feminine, but literary phraseology designates 'ox' of the common gender. Hence it is now said, *Their ox conceiveth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and loseth not her calf.* For to the owner of flocks, the first good fortune is that the flocks being free from barrenness conceive, next that the conception come to the birth, and the third that the thing which is produced be by nourishment reared to a growth. And so in order to shew that the wicked had them all together, blessed Job declares that 'their flocks had conceived and not miscarried, that they had brought forth and were not deprived of their own offspring.' But it is inferior good fortune, if whilst the flocks increase, the keepers of them do not thrive at the same time. And hence to the fruitfulness of the flocks we have the fruitfulness of their household [*familiae*] made to succeed immediately. For it is said,  
Ver. 11. *Their little ones go forth like flocks, and their children revel in sports.*

[xlii]

48. That as there are greater stores bestowed on them to have the possession of, so great numbers may spring up to keep them safe. But whereas he said, revel in sports, lest we should imagine that the mere sport of the children in the house of the wicked by itself was too mean and poor, he adds, saying;

Ver. 12. *They take the timbrel, and harp, and rejoice at the noise of the organ.*

As if he said in plain speech; 'Whilst the masters swell with honours and substance, the dependants rejoice in festive sports.' But, O blessed man, wherefore dost thou tell us all these many things of the delights of the wicked? It is now a long time that thou runnest on in the description of them; after much said, in one word point out what thou thinkest. It goes on;

Ver. 13. *They spend their days in wealth, and in a point of time go down to the lower parts.*

[xliii]

49. Yes, O blessed man, thou hadst for long dilated on their joys, how dost thou now declare that 'in a point of time they go down to the lower parts,' saying that all length of time of the present life is then known to be but a 'point,' when it is cut short by the end? For when a person is brought to the last end, he no longer keeps aught of the past, seeing that all the periods of time have elapsed, he has nought in the future, in that there remain not to him the moments of a single hour. So the life, which could be thus narrowed, was but a 'point' of time. For as we have before said, we set down the style in a point, and lift it up; and so he as it were touched life by a point who received and lost it. By a 'point' it is possible that this also may be understood, that it often happens that they that were long borne with in wickedness, are seized by sudden death, that it should not even be granted them to bewail before death the things they have done wrong, but seeing that occasionally the life of the righteous also is cut short by a sudden end, we shall understand it better, if we take the words of their temporal life, in that whatever was capable of passing away was sudden. But the friends of blessed Job, who believed him to be unrighteous on this account that they saw him afflicted with scourges, rightly have the truth shewn them by the voice of that holy man concerning the blooming and ruin of the wicked, in that prosperity in the present life is no witness to innocency, since many are brought back to everlasting life by scourges, and very many die without a scourge to be dragged to infinite woes. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 14. *Who say unto God, Depart from us.*

[xliv]

50. To say this in words even foolish men have not the boldness, yet all wicked persons say to God, not by their words but by their ways, *Depart from us*. For they that do those things which Almighty God forbids, what else are they doing but shutting up their soul against the Almighty. For just as to think of His precepts, is to introduce Him into one's self, so to resist His commandments is to keep Him away from the dwelling-place of the heart. And so they say, *Depart from us*, who refuse to yield Him an approach to them; and assail Him with wicked deeds, even if they seem to praise Him in words. Moreover they say;  
*For we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways*.

[xlv]

51. And that by this alone, that they are too indifferent to acquire the knowledge of Him. For there be some who from this that 'Truth' saith; *And that servant, which knoweth not his Lord's will, and doth things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. But he that knoweth his Lord's will, and did not according to it, shall be beaten with many* [Luke 12, 47. 48.]; choose not to know what they should do, and reckon as if they will be beaten less, if they are ignorant of what they ought to have put in practice. Yet it is one thing not to have known, and another thing not to have chosen to know. For he knoweth not, who is willing to make the acquisition, but is not able. But he who, that he may not know, turns away his ear from the voice of truth, such a person is brought in, not one in ignorance, but a despiser. Now 'the way' of God is peace, 'the way' of God is humility, 'the way' of God is patience. But whilst the wicked disregard all these, they say, *We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways*. For whilst they are big with pride in this life, whilst they are swollen with honours, whilst, even if they have not, they covet, they slight 'the ways' of God in the thoughts of their hearts. For because God's way in this world was humility, this very Lord and God, the Redeemer of us men, came to reproaches, to mockery, to the Passion; and He underwent the adverse treatment of this world with patience, resolutely eschewed its good fortune, that He might both teach the prosperity of the eternal life to be aimed at, and the adversities of the present life not to be dreaded. But because the wicked covet the glory of the present life, and eschew disgrace, they are described as saying, *We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways*. For they are unwilling to know, what they scorn to do. Whose words are further continued, where it is said;  
Ver. 15. *Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?*

[xlvi]

52. For the mind of man being miserably discharged without, is so dissipated in things corporeal, as neither to return to itself within, nor to be able to think of Him, Who is invisible. Thus carnal men setting at nought spiritual commands, because they do not see God with bodily sight, one time or another come to this pass, that they even imagine Him not to be. Hence it is written, *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*. Whence also it is said now, *Who is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?* [Ps. 14, 1] For it very often happens that men make it more their aim to serve their fellow-creatures, whom they see with bodily sight, than to serve God, Whom they do not see. For in all that they do, they stretch towards the reach of their eyes, and because they cannot stretch the eyes of the body to God, they either scorn to pay Him homage, or if they begin they grow

wearied. For, as has been said, they do not believe Him to be, Whom they do not behold with bodily sight. These, did they but seek God the Author of all things in a spirit of humility, would in themselves experience that a thing which is not seen is better than an object which is seen. For they themselves subsist in being by virtue of an invisible soul and a visible body; but if that which is not seen be withdrawn from them, at once that perishes which is seen. And the eyes of the body indeed are open, but they cannot see or perceive any thing. For the sense of sight is gone, because the indweller has quitted, and the house of the flesh remains empty, since that invisible spirit has departed which was wont to look through its windows. Therefore that invisible things are better than visible ones, all carnal persons ought severally to conclude from themselves, and by this ladder of reflection (so to speak) to mount towards God, seeing that He is even herein that He continues invisible, and continues supreme in proportion as He can never be comprehended. But there are some, who do not doubt either that God is, or that He is incomprehensible, who notwithstanding seek from Him not Himself, but His external gifts. And when they see that these are wanting to those that obey Him, they scorn to obey Him themselves. In relation to whose words it is further added;

*And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?*

[xlvi]

53. When, in praying, God is not the object we seek, the mind is soon wearied in praying, in that when a man asks those things, which it may be that God of His secret counsel refuses to bestow, He is Himself brought into loathing, Who will not give the thing which is loved. Now the Lord desires that He may be loved Himself, more than the things which He has made, and that things eternal should be rather prayed for than temporal ones; as it is written, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* [Matt. 6, 33] For in that He saith not, 'shall be given,' but *shall be added unto you* he plainly shews that what is given as principal is one thing, and what is added over and above, another. For whereas to us the eternal world ought to be in the thought and intent, but the world of time in the use, both the one is 'given' and the other 'added' over and above in superabundance. And yet it very often happens, that when men pray for temporal good things, but do not look for eternal rewards, they seek the thing that is added, and do not want that whereunto it should be added. Nor do they reckon it to be the worth of their prayer, if here they be poor in things temporal, and there live for everlasting rich in blessedness; but having their eyes fixed on visible things alone, as has been said, they refuse to purchase for themselves the invisible by the labour of beseeching it. Who if they but sought objects above, would ply their labour already with fruit, in that when the mind, employed in prayers, pants after the form and fashion [*speciem*] of its Maker, burning with divine longings, it is united to that which is above, disjoined from that below, opens itself in the affection of its fervent passion, that it may take in, and while taking in kindles itself: merely to love things above is already to mount on high; and whilst with longing desire, the soul is agape after heavenly objects, in a marvellous way it tastes the very thing it longs to get. It goes on;

Ver. 16. *But because their good things are not in their hand, may their counsel be far from me.*

[xlviii]

54. He 'holds his good things in his hand,' who in despising temporal things, forces them under the dominion of the mind. For whoever loves them over much, subjects himself more to them, than

them to himself. For many of the righteous were rich in this world; sustained by their substance, and by their honour, they seemed to possess many things; yet forasmuch as their mind was not possessed by the excessive enjoyment of these things, which were theirs, 'their good things were in their hand,' because they were held subordinate to the authority of the soul. But on the other hand the wicked so discharge themselves with all their hearts in aims at outward things, that they do not themselves so much hold the things possessed, but are holden with minds in bondage by the things they possess. Therefore because 'their good things are not in their hand,' it is rightly added, *let their counsel be far from me*. For what is 'the counsel of the wicked,' saving to seek earthly and neglect eternal glory, to aim at temporal well-being at the cost of interior detriment, and to change away transitory sorrows for eternal woes? Let the holy man, then, regarding these aims of the wicked, turn from them and say, *Let their counsel be far from me*. Because he sees it to be good beyond comparison, as it is, he had rather for a brief space groan here beneath the rod, than undergo the woes of eternal vengeance. But not even in this life do they, that are bent to make their way prosperous therein, enjoy an uninterrupted course of prosperity. But many times their joys are broken off by groans arising. Whence it is added;

Ver. 17. *How often shall their candle be put out? and how oft shall a flood come over them, and shall He divide sorrows in His fury?*

[xlix]

55. It often happens that the wicked man reckons the life of his children as a 'candle,' but when the son, that is loved overmuch, is taken away, what seemed the 'light' of the wicked is 'put out.' Often the wicked man reckons the credit of present honour his 'candle,' but, whilst, his dignity gone, he is cast down from his height, his candle is extinguished, which shone for him according to his desire. Often the wicked man thinks that the resources of earthly substance are his, like a great candle for light, but when upon ruin falling on him, he loses the riches which he loved more than himself, what else with this man but that he has lost the candle, in the light of which he was rejoicing? And so he that has no wish to rest his joy on the things of Eternity, neither here, where he is minded to establish himself, can he rejoice uninterruptedly. For as often as the 'candle of the wicked is put out,' at once there 'cometh a flood upon them, and God divideth sorrows in His fury.' 'A flood cometh' upon the wicked when they undergo the waves of sorrow from adversity of some kind. For Almighty God, when He sees Himself contemned, and that delight is taken in earthly concupiscence, smites that with woes which He sees is preferred before Himself in the thoughts of the wicked man. Now it is well said, *And divideth sorrows in His fury*. For He that reserves eternal woes for the wicked man in retribution, and sometimes smites through his soul even here with temporal woe, because both here and there too He smites, 'divideth sorrows in His fury' upon the head of the ungodly. For neither does present punishment, which does not turn the mind of the wicked man from his bad desires, set him free from eternal chastisements. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Upon the wicked He shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and blasts of storms; this shall be a portion of their cup*. [Ps. 11, 6] In mentioning 'snares, fire, and brimstone, and blasts of storms,' he introduced indeed a multitude of woes; but because the sinner that is not amended by them is called to eternal punishments, he consequently called these woes no more his whole cup, but 'a portion of his cup,' seeing that their suffering is begun indeed here in woes, but is consummated in everlasting vengeance. Concerning whose end it is yet further added; Ver. 18. *They shall be as chaff before the wind, and as ashes that the storm scattereth.*



[1]

56. When the wicked man is seen in power, when he is utterly without check or restraint in his acts of oppression and violence, by the imaginations of the weak he is accounted too well ballasted, and as rooted in this world. But when the sentence of the strict Judge cometh, 'all the wicked shall be as chaff before the wind,' because, if I may say so, all they are by the sudden blast of wrath lifted and carried to the fire, whom here once in their hasty judgments the tears of the distressed were as unable to move as a superincumbent mass of a stubborn weight. And to the hands of gripping Judgment those are light, who by injustice were heavy upon their neighbours. *And as ashes that the storm scattereth.* Before the eyes of Almighty God, the life of the wicked man is ashes, in that though he appear green for a moment, yet is he already seen consumed by His judgment, seeing that he is set aside for everlasting burning. These ashes the storm disperses, in that, God shall come in state, even our God, and shall not keep silence. *A fire shall devour before Him, and there shall be a mighty tempest round about Him.* [Ps. 50, 3] For by the furiousness of this tempest the wicked are carried away from the sight of the eternal Judge. And those that here had set their mind firm with evil desire, will then appear but 'chaff' and 'ashes,' because those persons the storm seizes and transports to eternal punishment. It goes on;  
Ver. 19. *God shall lay up for his children the grief of their father. And when He repayeth, then he shall know it.*

[li]

57. We know that it is written; *Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth generation.* [Ex. 34, 7] And again it is written, *What mean ye that ye make this a proverb among you concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord, ye shall not have this for a proverb any more in Israel. Behold all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.* [Ezek. 18, 2-4] Thus in these two sentences whereas there is found a dissimilar meaning, the mind of the hearer is instructed, that it should search out with minute care the way of discernment. Since original sin we derive from our parents, and, except by the grace of Baptism we be loosed from it, we bear with us the sins of our very parents, seeing that surely we are still one with them. And so 'He visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,' when on account of the guilt of the parent, the soul of the offspring is polluted by original sin. And again He does not 'visit the sins of the fathers upon the children,' in that when we are freed from original guilt by Baptism, we no longer own the sins of our fathers, but those which we have ourselves been guilty of. Which however may be understood in another way as well, in that whosoever imitates the wicked ways of a bad father, is bound in his sins also. But whosoever does not follow the wickedness of his parent, is never burthened by his offence. And hence it comes to pass that the bad son of a bad father not only pays for his own sins, which he has added; but the sins of his father as well; seeing that to the evil practices of his father, which he is not ignorant that the Lord is angry with, he is not afraid to add yet further his own wickedness too. And it is meet that he who being liable to a strict Judge does not fear to follow the ways of a wicked parent, should be compelled in this present life to pay for even his parent's misdeeds. And hence it is there said, *The soul of the father is Mine, and the soul of the son is Mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die,* because in the flesh by the sin of the father the sons too are sometimes ruined. But now that original sin has been done away, they are not bound in the soul by the parent's

wickedness. For how is it that little children are very often seized by devils, saving that the flesh of the son is mulcted in punishment of the father? For the bad father is stricken in his own person, and is too stubborn to feel the force of the blow. Very often he is stricken in his children, so as to be more sharply stung, and the sorrow of the father is rendered to the flesh of the children, to the end that the evil heart of the parent may be chastened by inflictions on the children. But when not little children, but such as are now more advanced in years, are stricken by the parent's sin, what else are we given clearly to understand, but that they likewise pay the penalties of those whose deeds they have imitated? And hence it is rightly said, *Even unto the third and fourth generation*. For whereas it is possible that 'even to the third and fourth generation,' children may witness the life of their father, which they copy, vengeance extends even to them, who witnessed what they might mischievously imitate.

58. And because sin shuts the eyes of the ungodly, but punishment opens them wide at the last, it is rightly subjoined; *And when He repayeth, then he shall know it*. For the ungodly man knows not the evil things he has done, except when he has already begun to be punished for those same evil deeds. Hence it is said by the Prophet; *And the vexation alone shall give understanding to the hearing*. For he then 'understands' what he has heard, when he now grieves that he is 'vexed' for the neglect of it. Hence it is said by Balaam concerning himself; the man whose eye is shut hath said: *He hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, which shall fail, and so his eyes shall be opened*. [Num. 24, 3. 4.] For he gave counsel against the children of Israel, but he saw afterwards in punishment what it was he had been guilty of before in sin. Now the Elect, forasmuch as they see beforehand so that they should not sin, the eyes of these surely are open before their fall. But the wicked man opens his eyes after his fall, because after his sin he now in his own punishment sees that he ought to have avoided that ill which he did. Concerning the knowledge of which man, at that time useless from henceforth, the words are next introduced; Ver. 20. *His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty*.

[lii]

59. This man, if whilst placed in this life he had been willing to open his eyes to his sin, would not hereafter 'drink of the wrath of the Almighty.' But he that here turns away his eyes from the sight of his guilt, cannot there avoid the sentence of condemnation. But often those that do not fear eternal punishments, at all events on account of temporal chastening are afraid to do what is bad. But there are some that have become so hardened in wickedness that they do not fear to be stricken even in the very things that they love, if only they can accomplish what they have iniquitously planned. Hence it is here added concerning the obduracy of the wicked man, Ver. 21. *For what doth it concern him about his house after him? or if the number of his months be halved?*

[liii]

60. Not that we ought so to understand it as that this wicked one, after he is condemned to everlasting punishment, shall never think of 'his house,' i.e. of his relations, whom he has left; since 'Truth' tells us by His own lips, that the rich man, who was buried in hell, even in the midst of punishment had care and concern touching his five brethren, whom he had left. [Luke 16, 28] For every sinner will turn wise in punishment, who continued foolish in sin, because being now

wrung with anguish there, he opens his eyes to reason, which here being devoted to pleasure he kept shut; and under the torturing of punishment it is forced from him to learn wisdom, who here by pride blinding him made himself foolish. Which person, however, his wisdom will then no longer avail, in that here, where he ought to have acted after the dictates of wisdom, he lost the opportunity. For he covets as the sovereign good here to have progeny of his race, to fill his house with servants and with substance, and to live long in this corrupt condition of the flesh. But if perchance any thing has come into his wishes, which however he cannot obtain except with the offending of his Creator, his mind is disturbed for a while, and he considers that, if he does aught here to incur his Creator's being offended, he is smitten in his house, children, life. But prompted by his pride, he directly hardens himself, and whatever infliction he may feel in his house, or whatever infliction in his life, he minds it nothing, so long as he can accomplish the things he has projected, and whilst he lives, he never ceases to compass his pleasures. For see, his house is struck on account of sin; but what does it concern him about his house after him? See, for the avenging of his evil doing, the length of life, which he might have had, is shortened; but what does it concern him of the number of his months be cut off in the midst? Even in that thing therefore the sinner sets himself stiffly against God, in which Almighty God breaks in pieces his stiffness; and not even the smiting inflicted brings down the mind, which stubbornness on deliberation hardens in resistance to God. And observe how heavy the heinousness of the sin, at once to set before the mind punishment for sin, and yet not even from fear of torment to bend the neck of the heart beneath the yoke of our Maker! But see, when we hear these things said, the question occurs to our mind, why the Almighty and Merciful God permitted the faculty of reason in the human mind to fall into such blindness? But lest anyone presume to sift beyond what he ought the hidden judgments of God, it is rightly added;

Ver. 22. *Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing that He judgeth those that are high.*

[liv]

61. When in the things, which are done concerning us, we have doubts, we ought to look at others, which are well known to us, and to pacify that murmuring of the thought, which had arisen to us in consequence of our uncertainty. For see, whereas scourges recover the Elect to life, and not even scourges keep the wicked from bad deeds, Almighty God's judgments upon us are very secret and are not unjust. But if we stretch the eye of our mind to the things above, we see by those that touching ourselves we have nought to complain of with justice. For Almighty God discerning the merits of Angels, ordained some to abide in eternal light without falling, others, fallen of free will from the standing of their loftiness, He laid low in the vengeance of eternal damnation. By us, then, He doth nothing unjustly, Who judged justly even a nature more refined than ours. So let him say; *Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing that He judgeth those that are high.* For He that doeth wonderful things above our level, it is surely plain that touching ourselves He ordereth all things with knowledge. This then being set first, he adds, where it is the mind of man is wearied in making research. For it is added;

Ver. 23-25. *One dieth in his full strength, being rich and prosperous. His inwards are full of fatness, and his bowels are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and hath never any wealth.*

[lv]

62. These things being so, who may investigate the secrets of Almighty God, to find out wherefore He permits them so to be? Now to the Elect and the Lost, their life indeed is unlike, but the corruption of the flesh in death is no way unlike. Hence it is added;

Ver. 26. *And yet they shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.*

What wonder then if those persons for a moment run a course unlike in the prosperity and adversity of this world, who through the corruption of the flesh return alike to the earth? So that life alone is to be thought on, wherein together with the resurrection of the flesh there is the arrival at an unlike end of recompensing. For what is 'strength and ease' to the wicked, what 'marrow and riches,' seeing that all is left here in a moment, and There that retribution, which may never be left, is found? For as the mirth of this wicked one passes on to woe, so the woe of the innocent soul in affliction passes on to joy. So neither ought riches to lift up the soul, nor poverty to disturb it.

Hence blessed Job in the midst of hurts in substance receives to the mind no hurts in thoughts; but to them that despise him under the infliction of the rod, he adds rebuking them, saying,

Ver. 27, 28. *Behold I know your thoughts, and the devices that ye wrongfully imagine against me. For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwellings of the wicked?*

[lvi]

63. For they had imagined him a wicked man, whom they saw, his substance gone, in a temporal way ruined. But the holy man judges them with a lofty review in proportion as amidst the losses which he had met with, he was standing with undiminished uprightness. For how had his losses of substance without hurt him, who had not lost That Being, Whom he loved within?

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

64. But this that is said, *They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them*, if anyone wish to take in the way of allegory, we may shortly accomplish [see cap. xvi. of this Book.] it, if what has been already said concerning this bad rich man, we repeat again. Thus it is said, *His inwards are full of fatness, and his bones are moistened with marrow*. [v. 30.] For as 'fat' arises from much food, so does pride from abundance of goods, which fattens his mind in his riches, while his spirit is lifted up in his proud behaving. For the pride of the heart is like a kind of richness of fat. Whence, because very many commit sins from abundance, it is said by the Prophet, *Their iniquity has come out as it were from fatness*. [Ps. 73, 7] It follows, *And his bones are moistened with marrow*. The lovers of this life have 'bones' as it were, when in this world they possess the strong stay of dignities. But if in the outward dignity there lack earthly private wealth, as to their judgment they have 'bones' indeed, but 'marrow' in the bones they have not. Whereas then that lover of this world is so stayed up by outward power that he is likewise at the same time stuffed to the full with the inward abundance of his earthly house, it is said, *And his bones are moistened with marrow*. Or otherwise the 'bones' of the rich man are bad and stubborn practices, but the 'marrow in the bones' are the mere desires of bad living alone, which not even in the satisfying of wickedness are filled to the full. Which marrow as it were moistens the bones, when bad desires keep on their evil habits in the gratification of pleasures.

65. And there are some that in this world have not riches, but long to have, and seek to be exalted, though in this world they are unable to get the thing they desire, and whilst they have no substance

or dignity to support them, yet by bad desires conscience declares them guilty in the sight of the interior Judge. For every such person is very often in this accounted distressed, because he cannot be rich and carry himself proudly. Concerning whom it is also added, *And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and without any wealth.* Observe from the same cause whence the rich man emptily rejoices with a proud heart, another that is poor more emptily sorrows with a proud heart. Now it is rightly added concerning both, *And yet they shall lie down together in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.* For to 'lie down in the dust' is to close the eyes of the mind in earthly desires; hence it is said to every individual living in sin, and lying asleep in his wickedness, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.* [Ep. 5, 14] But the 'worms' that spring from the flesh cover them alike, in that carnal cares overlay the mind whether of the rich man or of the poor man carrying himself proudly. For in the things of earth the poor and the rich children of perdition, though they be not sustained by a like share of prosperity, are yet troubled by a like degree of solicitude, in that what the one already possesses with alarm the other longs for with anxiety, and because he is unable to get it he is grieved. So let it be said; *They shall lie down together in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.* In that though they be not alike lifted up by temporal good things, yet in care of temporal good things they are both alike lulled asleep by insensibility of mind. And the worms cover them together, because whether this one, that he may possess what is coveted, or that one, that he may not lose what is possessed, carnal thoughts overlay both.

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

66. But blessed Job, who neither when he had substance was elated, nor when it was taken from him sought it with anxiety, as he was devoured by no thoughts of outward loss, had no worms of the heart covering him; and because he had not sunk his mind in earthly care, he did not 'lie asleep in the dust.' It goes on; *Behold I know your thoughts, and your wrongful sentences against me.* [1 Cor. 2, 11] As it is written, *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?* on what principle is it said here, *Behold I know your thoughts?* But the spirit of a man is then unknown to another, when it is not shewn forth either by words or deeds. For whereas it is written, *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them;* [Matt. 7, 20] it is by the thing that is done outwardly that whatever lies concealed within is brought to sight. Whence too it is rightly said by Solomon, *As in water the faces of beholders shine bright, so the hearts of men are plain to the wise.* [Prov. 27, 19] Again blessed Job, when he declared that he knew the thoughts of his friends who were talking with him, thereupon added, *and your unjust sentences against me:* that by a thing open to view he might shew he had found out that which lay concealed in them. Hence he adds their very wicked sentences themselves as well, saying, *For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?*

67. The weak, that desire to thrive in this world's fortune, and as evils of great magnitude so dread scourges, in the case of those, whom they see smitten, measure offence by the punishment; for those, whom they see struck with the rod, they suppose have displeased God. Hence blessed Job's friends were persuaded that he, whom they be held under the rod, had been ungodly, i.e. as reckoning that if he had not been ungodly, his 'dwelling-places would have remained;' but no man thinks so, saving he who still travails with the weariness of infirmity, who sets fast the footstep of his thoughts in the gratification of the present life, who is not taught to pass on with perfect desires to the eternal land. Hence it is well added;

Ver. 29, 30. *Ask everyone of them that go by the way; and ye will know that he understands this same. Because the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, and he is brought to the day of wrath.*

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[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

68. For often the patience of God bears for long with those, whom it already condemns to punishments foreknown; it suffers those to go on thriving, whom it sees still committing worse things. For whereas He sees to what pit of condemnation they are going on, He esteems to be as nothing to them, that the wicked multiply here things which must be abandoned. But he that is wedded to the glory of the present life, counts it great happiness to thrive here according to his wish, though he be driven hereafter to undergo eternal punishment. Therefore that man only sees it to be nothing for the wicked man to thrive, who has already removed the step of his heart from the love of the present world. Hence, in speaking of the after condemnation of the wicked man, it is rightly premised, *Ask anyone of the wayfarers, and ye shall "now that he understandeth these same things.* For he is called a 'wayfarer,' who minds that the present life is to him a way and not a native land, who thinks it beneath him to fix his heart on the love of this passing state of being, who longs, not to continue in a transitory scene of things, but to reach the eternal world. For he that does not aim to be a wayfarer in this world, is far from setting at nought this world's good fortune, and when he sees those things which he himself covets abounding to others, he wonders. Hence the Prophet David, as he had already passed in heart from the love of the present world, in describing the glory of the wicked man, said; *I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading like a green bay tree.* [Ps. 37, 35. 36.] But because he did not submit his heart to this world, he justly looked down upon him, saying; *I passed on, but, lo, he was not.* For the wicked man would have been something in his esteem, if he had not himself passed on in the bent of his mind from this present scene. But this man, who [Oxf. Mss. read 'qui'] to one not 'passing by' would have been something great, to one 'passing by' in mind, how little he was, was shewn; in that whilst everlasting retribution is thought on, it is seen how little present glory is. Hence Moses, when he was seeking the glory of heavenly contemplation, said, *I will now pass on, and see this great sight.* [Ex. 3, 3] For except he had withdrawn the footstep of the heart from the love of the world, he would never have been able to understand things above. Hence Jeremiah entreating for the sorrow of his heart to be taken thought on, saith, *All ye that pass by, Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!* [Lam. 1, 12] For they who do not pass through the present life like a way, but think on it as their country, are unskilled to take in with the mind's eye the sorrow of heart of the Elect. These persons therefore the Prophet looks out, that they may view his sorrow, whose it was not to have set fast their mind in this world. Hence it is said by Solomon, *Open thy mouth for the dumb, and in the cause of all such as are passing by.* For those are called 'the dumb,' who never set themselves against the Preacher's words by gainsaying them; who are also persons 'passing by,' in that they disdain to fix the bent of their mind in the love of the present life. Therefore that the bad man is being 'reserved for the day of perdition,' and 'brought to the day of fury,' this thing there is none but he who is 'a wayfarer' that understandeth, in that he that has set his heart in the present scene of things does not find out the punishments that follow the wicked man. Of whom it is still further added;

Ver. 31. *Who shall reprove his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done?*

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69. Often that wrath of God, which the wicked man is to suffer for ever, even while placed in this life too he is made to experience, whilst he loses the good fortune that he loves, and meets with the adversity that he dreads. And though even in prosperity he may be rebuked for his wickednesses by the tongue of the righteous, yet we know that it is when his evil deeds bring the bad man to the earth, that the reproof of the righteous gains force. But in what sense is it now said, *Who shall reprove his way to his face?* seeing that the righteous even holding their peace this too is well known, that so often is 'the way of the wicked man reprov'd to his face' here, as often as his prosperity is disturbed by adversity intervening. But blessed Job, while he was speaking of the body of all the wicked, suddenly turns his words to the head of all the wicked.

#### [PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

For he saw that at the end of the world Satan entering into the man, whom Holy Scripture calls Antichrist, is lifted up with such exaltation, lords it with such power, is exalted with such wonderful signs and marvels in the exhibiting of holiness, that his deeds cannot be charged home to him by man, in that with the power of terribleness he likewise unites the signs of holiness which is exhibited, and he says, *Who shall reprove his way to his face?* 'Who,' that is to say, 'of mankind may dare to rebuke him? whose face does he dread to endure [or, 'the sight of whom he dreads']? Yet not only Elijah and Enoch who are brought forward for the rebuking of him, but even all the Elect 'reprove his way to his face,' whilst they shew contempt, and whilst by excellence of mind they oppose his wickedness. But because this they do by divine grace and not by their own powers, it is rightly said now, *Who shall reprove his way before his face?* For 'who' is there save God, by whose aid the Elect are supported to have power to withstand him? For sometimes in Holy Scripture, when in asking a question the word 'who' is put, the Almighty is denoted. Hence it is written, *Who shall raise him up?* [Gen. 49. 9] Of Whom it is said by Paul, *Whom God raised from the dead.* [Gal. 1, 1] In respect then that holy men oppose themselves to his wickedness, it is not themselves, that 'reprove his way,' but it is He, by Whose grace they are strengthened, and whereas his presence, wherewith he will come in man, will be much more dreadful in persecution than it is now, when he is not seen at all, in that he is not as yet preeminently borne by that special vessel of his, it is well said, *before his face.* For there are many now who judge and rebuke the ways of Antichrist, but this they do as it were in his absence, in that they rebuke him whom they do not as yet in a special manner see. But when he shall come in that damned man, whoever withstands his presence, 'reproves his way before his face,' the powers of whom he at once sees and sets at nought. Or surely, to 'reprove his way before his face' is to disturb the prosperity of his course by the interrupting of eternal punishment. Which thing because the Lord alone is to do by His own might, of Whom it is written, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming,* [2 Thess. 2, 8] it is rightly said, *Who shall reprove his way before his face?* And hence the words follow, *And who shall repay him what he hath done?* Who, truly, save the Lord, Who alone shall 'repay that lost man what he hath done,' when by His coming He shall dash in pieces his exceeding mighty power with eternal damnation? But what this exalted prince of the wicked is about, as long as he is in this life, let us hear. It goes on; Ver. 32. *He shall be brought to the graves, and in the heap of the dead bodies he shall watch.*

70. Whereas graves cover dead bodies, what else is denoted by 'the graves' but the lost, in whom their souls extinct of the life of blessedness lie as in graves? Thus this wicked one shall be 'brought to the graves,' in that he shall be admitted in the hearts of the wicked, in that they only admit him, in whom are found souls dead to God, concerning whom it is rightly said by the Prophet likewise where his punishments are described, *His graves are about him, all the slain, and those that felt by the sword*. For they in hell 'are about him,' in whom that evil spirit lies dead, which same fell, having been slain by the sword of his wickedness. Whence it is written, *Who hast delivered David Thy servant from the hurtful sword*. And it is rightly said, in the heap of the dead bodies he shall watch, in that now in the assembly of sinners he puts forth the artifices of his cunning. And on this account, that in the world there is a scarcity of good men, and a multitude of bad, it is rightly called 'the heap of dead bodies,' that the very multitude of the wicked might be denoted. *For broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat*. [Matt. 7, 13] So Satan's 'keeping watch in the heap of dead bodies,' is his exercising the wiles of his wickedness in the hearts of the children of perdition. Of whom it is yet further added; Ver. 33. *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus*.

[lx]

71. 'Cocytus' in the Greek tongue is the term for 'lamentation,' which is used to be taken for the lamentation of women, or any persons going weakly. Now the wise of this world being shut out from the light of truth, endeavoured by making search to hold a kind of shadows of truth. Hence they thought that the river Cocytus ran amongst the dead below, clearly denoting that they that commit deeds worthy of painful inflictions, run to an end into hell unto lamentation. But for ourselves let us make little of the shadow of carnal wisdom, who now hold the light relating to the truth, and let us see that in the utterance of the holy man 'Cocytus' means the lamentation of the weak sort. For it is written, *Be of good courage, and let your heart be strengthened*. [Ps. 31, 24] For they who refuse to be 'strengthened' in God, are going the way to lamentation through weakness of the mind. Now we are used to call by the name of pebbles the little stones of rivers, which the water in running away carries along with it. What then is denoted by *the pebbles of Cocytus*, but the lost, who, being devoted to their gratifications, are as it were ever being dragged by the river down to the lowest depth. For they that refuse to stand strong and steadfast against the pleasures of this life, become 'pebbles of Cocytus,' who by their slippings day by day are going the way to lamentation, that they may hereafter mourn for everlasting, who now indulgently give themselves a loose in their pleasures. And whereas our old enemy, having entered into his vessel, that son of perdition, whilst he bestows gifts on the wicked, whilst he exalts them with honours in this world, whilst he exhibits marvels to their eyes, has all drifting souls admiring and following him in his marvels, it is said well of him here, *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus*. For whilst the Elect despise him, whilst they spurn him with the foot of the mind, those love while they follow him, who are as it were drawn by the water of pleasure to everlasting lamentation, who from earthly concupiscence roll down to the lowest depth like gravel, by slippings day by day. For to some he proffers the taste of his sweetness through pride, to others through avarice; to one set by envy, to another by deceitfulness, and to another by lust, and for all the kinds of evil that he forces men to, he presents to them so many draughts of his sweetness. For when he prompts any thing proud in the heart, the thing becomes sweet that he says, because the wicked man longs to appear advanced above the rest of the world. Whilst he strives to infuse avarice into the mind, that which he speaks in secret becomes sweet, because by abundance need is avoided. When he suggests any



thing to do with envy, what he says is rendered sweet, in that when the froward mind sees another go off, it exults in not appearing at all inferior to him. When it prompts any thing to do with deceitfulness, what it says is made sweet, seeing that by this alone, that it deceives the rest of the world, it appears to itself to be wise. When it speaks lust to the seduced soul, what it recommends is rendered sweet, in that it dissolves the soul in pleasure. Therefore, for all the evil propensities that it insinuates into the hearts of carnal men, it as it were holds out to them so many draughts of its sweetness; which same sweetness, however, as I have before said, none receive save they, who being devoted to present gratifications, are drawn to everlasting lamentation. And so it is well said, *He was sweet to the pebbles of Cocytus*; seeing that he is bitter to the Elect and sweet to the lost. For them only does he feed with his delights, whom by daily slippings he is urging to lamentations, It goes on;

Ver. 33. *And he draweth every man after him, as there are innumerable before him.*

[lxi]

72. In this place by ‘man’ is meant one whose taste is for things human. But whereas ‘everyone’ is more than an ‘innumerable’ quantity, we have to enquire, wherefore he is said before him to draw an ‘innumerable’ quantity, and after him ‘every man’ saving that our old enemy, having then entered into the man of perdition, drags under the yoke of his sovereignty all the carnal ones that he finds; who even now before his appearing ‘draws an innumerable quantity’ indeed, yet not ‘everyone’ of the carnal, in that there are many that are daily recalled to life from carnal practice, and some by a short, others by a long course of penitence return to the state of righteousness. And now he seizes on an ‘innumerable quantity,’ when he does not exhibit the miracles of his falseness for men to marvel at. But when he performs his prodigies before the eyes of the carnal for them to wonder at, he then draws after him not an ‘innumerable quantity,’ but ‘everyone,’ in that they who delight themselves in present good things, submit themselves to his power without repeal. But as we before said, because it is more to ‘draw every man’ than an ‘innumerable quantity,’ wherefore is it first said that he draws every man, and afterwards in augmentation an innumerable quantity is added? For reason requires that first what is least should be spoken of, and afterwards in augmentation that which is more. Now we are to know that in this passage it was more to say, ‘an innumerable quantity’ than ‘every man.’ For he after him ‘draws every man,’ in that in three years and a half all that he may find busied in the pursuits of a carnal life he binds fast to the yoke of his dominion; but before him he draws an innumerable quantity, in that during the successive stages of five thousand years and more, though he could never succeed in drawing all the carnal, yet in so long a period the innumerable quantity whom he carries away before him, are many more in number than ‘all’ whom he finds to carry off in that so short time. And so it is well said, *And he draweth every man after him, also innumerable before him*; in that he both takes away less then, when he takes away ‘every man,’ and he gets a bigger booty now, when he assails the hearts of an ‘innumerable quantity.’ Whereas blessed Job then delivered these things excellently against the prince of the wicked, who is permitted to be exalted in this life, but will be destroyed in the coming of the Lord,

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

touching himself he plainly shews that he received the scourges of the Lord not by his offending, since if the bad man is permitted to prosper ‘in this life, it is necessary that the elect of God should

be held fast under the reins of the scourge. From which circumstance he reproves his friends, saying,

*How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing your answer is shewn to be against Truth?*

[lxii]

73. The friends of blessed Job could not console him, in whom they gainsaid the truth by their discourse, and when they called him a hypocrite or ungodly, hereby that they themselves by lying were guilty of sin, assuredly they augmented the chastisement of the righteous man chastened with wounds. For the minds of the Saints, because they love the truth, even the sin of another's deceit wrings. For in proportion as they see the guilt of falsehood to be grievous, they hate it not only in themselves, but in others also.

## BOOK XVI.

After going through the twenty-second and twenty-third chapters of the Book of Job, and the twenty-fourth to the middle of verse twenty with a brief explanation, he brings the third Part to a close.

### [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

THOSE persons, who being opposed to the words of truth, get the worst in making out a case, often repeat even what is well known, lest by holding their tongue they should seem defeated. Hence Eliphaz, being pressed closely by the sayings of blessed Job, utters things which no one but is aware of. For he says,

Ver. 2. *Can a man be compared unto God, even when he has perfect knowledge?*

[i]

1. By comparison with God, our knowledge is ignorance, for it is by participation, and not by comparison, with God that we become imbued with wisdom. What wonder then when that is said, as if in the way of instruction, which might have been known, even if it had been kept silent? And yet further he subjoins the power of God as defending it.

Ver. 3 *Is it any profit to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?*

[ii]

2. For in all that we do well, we are doing good to ourselves and not to God. And hence by the Psalmist it is said, *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my God, seeing that Thou needest not my goods.* [Ps. 16, 2] For He is truly 'Lord' to us, because He is also assuredly 'God,' Who needs not the good in him that serveth Him, but bestows the goodness which He receives, so that the goodness which is offered up should avail not Himself, but those that first receive and afterwards render back. For though the Lord, when He cometh for Judgment, saith, *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me;* it is with extraordinary

pitifulness that He says this, by sympathy with His members. And He the same Being hereby, viz. that He is our Head, aids, Who by our good deeds in His members is aided. Yet further Eliphaz adds what there is no man but is aware of, saying,

Ver. 4. *Will He reprove thee for fear of thee? Will He enter with thee into judgment?*

[iii]

3. Who that was out of his senses even would think this, that from fear the Lord reproveth us, and from dread sets His judgment against us? But they who do not know how to mete their words, doubtless slip down to idle discourse. Wherein if they never at all take themselves to task, without delay they leap forth to words mischievous and insulting. Hence Eliphaz, who brought in idle words, immediately burst out into abusive ones, saying,

Ver. 5. *Is it not for thy wickedness that is great, and thine iniquities that are infinite?*

[iv]

4. Observe how from a deadened heart he came to idle words, and from idle words in the heinousness of lying he blazed out into insults. For these are the descents of increasing sin, that the tongue when not restrained should never there where it has fallen lie still, but be always descending to what is worse; but these things that are subjoined, because they are very plain taken after the history, do not need to be set forth after the letter.

5. But whereas we have said that the friends of blessed Job bear the likeness of heretics, but that he himself bears the representing of Holy Church, the words of Eliphaz how they fit the falseness of heretics, let us now at once point out. For it proceeds;

Ver. 6-8. *For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary, thou hast withholden bread from the hungry. In the might of thine arm thou didst possess the land, and as the most powerful thou didst hold it.*

[v]

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

6. In Holy Scripture by the term of 'a pledge' sometimes the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and sometimes the confession of sin, are denoted. Thus pledge is taken as the gift of the Holy Spirit, as where it is said by Paul, *And given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.* [2 Cor. 1, 22] For we receive a pledge for this, that we may hold an assurance touching the promise that is made to us. And so the gift of the Holy Spirit is called a pledge, in that by this our soul is strengthened to assuredness of the inward hope. Again by the name of a 'pledge' confession of sin is used to be intended, as it is written in the Law; *If thy brother oweth thee ought, and thou takest away a pledge from him, restore the pledge before the setting of the sun.* [Ex. 22, 25. 26.] For our brother is made a debtor to us, when any fellow-creature is proved to have done any thing wrong against us. For sins we call 'debts.' Whence it is said to the servant when he sinned, *I forgave thee all that debt.* [Matt. 18, 32] And in the Lord's Prayer we pray daily, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* [Matt. 6, 12] Now we 'take a pledge' from our debtor, when from the lips of him who is found to have sinned against us, we have now gotten a confession of his sin, whereby we are entreated to remit the sin, which was committed against us. For he that confesses the sin that he

has done, and begs pardon, has already as it were given a 'pledge' for his debt, which pledge we are bidden to 'restore before the sun set,' because before that in ourselves through pain of heart the Sun of righteousness shall set, we are bound to render back the acknowledgment of pardon to him, from whom we receive the acknowledgment of transgression, that he who remembers that he has done amiss towards us, may be made sensible that what he has done amiss is by us at once remitted. Therefore whereas Holy Church, when it receives back any returning from heretics to the truth of the faith, first persuades them that they must confess the sin of their error, it is said by Eliphaz as under the likeness of heretics; *For thou hast taken away a pledge from thy brother for nought*, i.e. 'From those, that come to thee from us, thou didst exact a confession of error to no purpose.' But, as we said before, if we suppose a 'pledge' the gifts of the Holy Spirit, heretics say that Holy Church has 'taken away the pledge of her brothers,' because they imagine that those that come to her, lose the gifts of the Spirit. Hence it follows, *And stripped the naked of their clothing*.

7. Those whom they draw after them by their perverted preaching, heretics count to have the precepts of their teaching as a kind of garments, and they esteem them to be clothed so long as the things which they themselves preached they witness observed by them, and when any persons return to Holy Church from them, they immediately fancy that they have lost the garments of instruction. But whereas one that is naked cannot be spoiled, we have to enquire how they are first mentioned as 'naked,' and afterwards as 'stripped?' Now it is necessary to know that every one that enjoys purity of mind, by the very circumstance that he has not the cloak of double-dealing, is 'naked.' And there are some among the Heretics, who have purity of heart indeed, but yet take up the corrupt tenets of their teaching. These same are at once by their own purity 'naked,' and by the preaching of those persons they are as it were clothed. And whereas all such are easily brought back to Holy Church, for this reason that they do not use the wickedness of double-dealing, those persons heretics acknowledge as naked, whom they call stripped by her of their clothing, because they look upon all the simple-minded as slow and dull, who, they see, have parted with their own corrupt tenets.

8. It follows; *Thou hast not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry*. Heretics in proportion as they hold not the solid substance of truth, so sometimes they busy themselves, that they may appear full of discourse, and against the faith of Catholics they are boastful as of the knowledge of learning; all that they see they seek to draw to them by their wicked discourings, and by the very same act, whereby they are joining others to themselves for destruction, they think themselves doing something conducive to life. Now we call those 'weary' that are worn down under the wearisome load of this world. And hence Truth saith by Himself, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and will give you rest*. Matt. 11, 28] And so whereas heretics never cease to preach their own doctrines, they mock at Holy Church as if for ignorance. *Thou hast not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry*. For themselves they think they 'give water to the weary' when to persons travailing under their earthly load they supply the cup of their own error. And they look upon it that they themselves have not 'withholden bread from the hungry,' in that when questioned even touching things invisible and incomprehensible, they answer with pride and boldness; and they then set themselves down as learned above all men, when they most miserably presume to speak on things unknown. But Holy Church when she sees anyone hungering for that which it would not be for his good to get, either on the one hand if they be things already known to her keeps them back with reserve, or if they appear to be unknown as yet, confesses it with humility; and such she recalls to a

sense of well-regulated humility, when she bids everyone of them by her Preacher, *not to be wise of himself above that he ought to think, but to think soberly*. [Rom. 12, 3] And again, *Be not highminded, but fear*. [Rom. 11, 20] And again, *Seek not out the things that are too deep for thee; neither search the things that are above thy strength*. [Ecclus. 3, 21] And again, *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest perchance thou be filled therewith, and vomit it*. [Rrov. 25, 16] For to 'find honey,' is to taste the sweetness of holy intelligence. Which is eaten enough of then, when our perception according to the measure of our faculty is held tight under control. For he is 'filled with honey, and vomits it,' who in seeking to dive deeper than he has capacity for loses that too from whence he might have derived nourishment. And so, seeing that Holy Church forbids it to feeble minds to dive into deep truths, it is said to blessed Job, *And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry*.

9. And her greatness also because heretics envy, because she keeps the companies of people every where in the true faith, when they meet with a season of earthly prosperity, they launch out against her in terms of pride, and by their upbraiding disclose how greatly before they secretly envied her power. Thus it follows; *For in the might of thine arm, thou didst possess the earth, and as the most powerful thou didst hold it*. As if he said in plain words, 'Whereas thou didst take possession of the earth every where in thy preaching, it was the power of might, and not the reasonableness of truth. For whereas they see that Christian princes hold fast her preaching, all the credit which is given to her by the people, they look upon not as the efficacy of righteousness, but the account of secular power. It goes on;

Ver. 9. *Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless hast thou broken*.

[vi]

10. The common multitudes that are brought under to heretics on their preaching by a carnal understanding conceive the corrupt seeds of their false doctrine, and are joined to them in their condemnation. But when the preachers of errors themselves, Holy Church either receives into her bosom subdued by reason, or binds in under the fetters of her discipline, being hardened by attachment to evil; heretics, being deserted, when they see that the people remain left with themselves without preachers, what else do they but lament the 'widows' left empty by Holy Church? And whereas when the masters of heretics are withdrawn, they imagine that their disciples are enfeebled in their practice, they complain that the arms of the fatherless are broken by Holy Church as it were. Or in another way, because when Holy Church receives persons coming to her from heretics, it is plain without a doubt that she stands up against their former error. Thus there are some that are so attached to virginity of the flesh, that they condemn marriage, and there are some who so extol abstinence, that they abhor those that take necessary nourishment.

Concerning whom it is said by Paul, *Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain, from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe*. [1 Tim. 4, 5]

Those persons then seeing she recalls from the carnal bias of their superstitious belief, when heretics see such living otherwise than they taught them, they bear witness that to the way of acting which they before maintained, their 'arms are broken' by Holy Church. And hence in this period of discipline, if any piece of misfortune chance to befall her, they suppose that it has come in meet retribution for her sins. For it is added;

Ver. 10. *Therefore snares are round about thee; and sudden fear troubleth thee*.

[vii]

11. That man ‘sudden fear doth trouble,’ who neglects to consider what there is hanging over his head from the severity of the Judge, when He comes. Therefore, whereas heretics look upon the faithful people as borne down by sins of misbelief, they make it a charge that ‘snares are round about them.’ And because they believe that it does not foresee the future, they suppose this people under the smiting to be ‘troubled with sudden fear;’ which persons adding yet further insult subjoin, Ver. 11. *And thou thoughtest [V. And thoughtest thou?] thou wouldest not see darkness; and that thou wouldest not be borne down with the force of overflowing waters.*

As if he said in plain speech; ‘Thou didst promise thyself security of peace in hope, and therefore thou wast glad for thine assurance as for the light, nor ever thoughtest for thyself to be oppressed with tribulation. But see, whilst thou art afflicted with evils coming upon thee, whether what thou maintainest be right, the very darkness of trouble which weighs upon thee makes plain; which same troubles Eliphaz compares to ‘overflowing waters,’ in that whilst one set rushes in over another, as in swoln waters waves follow waves. It goes on, Ver. 12-14. *Dost thou bethink thee that God is in the height of heaven, and high above the height of the stars? And thou sayest, How doth God know? and, He judgeth as in the dark. Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not our matters; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven.*

[viii]

12. There are very many so dull that they cannot dread aught, saving what they see in a bodily form. Whence it is brought to pass that they do not fear God, in that they cannot see Him. But heretics because they think themselves wise utter words of insult against Catholics, and imagine that He is not feared by them, because they are unable to see Him in a bodily shape, so that as it were from deadness of perception they think that their Maker, because He is higher than heaven and exalted above the tops of the stars, is not able to see from a distance, and that because between ourselves and the seat of heaven the regions of the air are interposed, He, ‘as it were buried in a cloud passes judgment out of the darkness,’ and intent upon things above, the less considers those below, and whilst He holds together the binges of heaven by encircling them, doth not see into the interior parts. But who that was out of his right mind even, could suspect such things of God. Who indeed, whereas He is always Omnipotent, so minds all things that He is present to each one individually, and so present to each that His Presence is never wanting to all together. For though He forsakes persons when they sin, yet to those very persons He is present in respect of judgment, to whom He is seen to be wanting in respect of aidance. Therefore He so encircles what is without that He yet fills what is within, so fills what is within that He yet encircles what is without, so rules the heights above that He does not quit the depths below, is in such sort present to the parts beneath that He does not depart from those above, is so concealed in His own appearance that nevertheless He is known in His working, so known in His work that yet He cannot be comprehended by the calculation of the person knowing Him; He is in such a way present that yet He cannot be seen, in such a way impossible to be seen that yet His very own judgments bear witness to His Presence, so yields Himself to be understood by us that yet the very ray of the perception of Himself He overclouds to us, and again so holds us in by the darkness of ignorance that notwithstanding He shines into our minds with the rays of His brightness, so that at once by being lifted up it may see something, and made to recoil may tremble all over, and because such as He is it is impossible to

see Him, may yet know Him by seeing Him some little. But all this heretics do not reckon Holy Church to be acquainted with, because by a foolish judgment they suppose that they alone are wise. In a type of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 15. *Wouldest thou mark the old way, which wicked men have trodden?*

[ix]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

13. As the 'way' of our Redeemer is humility, so the way of the world is pride. And so wicked men tread the way of the world, in that by the desires of this world they walk in self-exaltation. Of which same wicked persons it is yet further added;

Ver. 16. *Which were taken away before their time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood.*

[x]

14. Whereas the period of our life is assuredly foreordained for us in the foreknowledge of God, it is a very important question on what principle it is said now, that the wicked are withdrawn from the present world 'before their time.' For Almighty God though He often change His sentence, yet His counsel never. At that time, then, is every man 'taken away' from this life, at which by Divine power he is foreknown to be before all times. But it is necessary to be known, that Almighty God in creating and disposing of us, according to the deserts of each one also appoints his bounds too, so that either that bad man should live a short time, lest he do mischief to numbers doing right; or that this good man should last longer in life, that he may prove a helper of good practice to numbers; or again that the bad man should be detained longer in life, to add yet more to his wicked deeds, purified by the testing whereof the righteous may live a truer life; or that the good man should be withdrawn more speedily, lest if he were to live long here, wickedness should spoil his innocence. Yet it is to be borne in mind, that it is the loving-kindness of God, to vouchsafe to sinners space for repentance. But because the times vouchsafed they do not turn to the fruits of penance, but to the service of iniquity, what by the mercifulness of God they might have obtained, they let go out of their hands. Although Almighty God foreknows that time of each individual for death, at which his life is brought to an end; nor could any one ever have died at any time, saving at that actual time when he does die. For if to Hezekiah fifteen years are related to have been added for life, the time of his life was increased from that end, indeed, in which of himself he deserved to die; for God's providence foreknew his time at that point whereat He afterwards withdrew him out of the present life. This then being so, what does it mean that it is said, that *the wicked were cut down before their time*, but that all they that love the present life, promise to themselves longer periods of that life? But when death coming on withdraws them from the present life, the spaces of their life, which they were wont as it were in imagination to draw out to themselves longer, it cuts asunder. Of whom it is rightly said, *whose foundation was overflown with a flood.*

15. For the wicked while they neglect in heart to go on to the things of eternity, and do not observe that all things present are fleeting, fix their heart on the love of the present life, and as it were therein construct for themselves the foundation of a long abode, because by desire they are established in earthly things. Thus Cain is described the first to have constructed a city upon earth, who thereby is plainly proved an alien, in that the same set a foundation upon earth, who was alien to the steadfastness of the eternal world; for being a stranger to the things above, he has settled his foundation in things beneath, who has placed the settling of his heart in earthly delight. And hence,

in the stock of that man, Enoch, which is by interpretation ‘dedication,’ is born the first. But in the offspring of the Elect Enoch is described to have been the seventh, in this way, because the sons of perdition by building dedicate themselves in this life which comes first, but the Elect await the dedication of their building up in the end of time, i.e. the seventh number. For one may see great numbers minding temporal things alone, seeking after honours, open-mouthed after the compassing of good things, look out for nothing after this life. What then do these but ‘dedicate themselves’ in the first generation? One may see the Elect seeking nothing of present glory, gladly bearing want, undergoing the ills of this life with a composed mind, that they may be crowned at the end. And so to the Elect Enoch is born in the seventh generation, in that the dedication of their joy they look for in the glory of the last retribution. [Gen. 5, 21] And whereas by the daily lapse of time the mortal state in the present life itself runs to an end, and destroys the dedication of the children of perdition by removing those very children of perdition, it is rightly said of the wicked, *Whose foundation was overflowed with a flood*; i.e. the mere course of changeableness overthrows in them the settlement of wicked rearing. It goes on;

Ver. 17. *Which said unto God, Depart from us.*

[xi]

16. That this too blessed Job had said, who can doubt? But what we have unfolded in his words, on account of wearying the reader, we forbear to repeat. [Job 21, 14] It goes on;  
*And as though the Almighty could do nothing, so reckoned concerning Him.*

In this part likewise the wording, and not the statement, is changed. For what was expressed by blessed Job; *What is the Almighty that we should serve Him?* [Job 21, 15] is expressed by Eliphaz, *And as though the Almighty could do nothing, so reckoned concerning Him.* It goes on;  
Ver. 18. *Yet He has filled their houses with good things.*

[xii]

17. The Lord ‘filleth the houses of the wicked with good things,’ in that even to the unthankful He refuses not His gifts, that either they may blush at the loving-kindness of their Creator and be brought back to goodness, or altogether despising to return thereto, may from the same cause be there worse punished, that here they rendered an evil return for God’s more bounteous good, so that severer woes should there chastise those whose wickedness here not even gifts overcame. It goes on;  
*But let their sentence be far from me.*

This too was expressed by blessed Job. For he says, *Whose counsel be far from me.* [Job 21, 16] Though ‘sentence’ may be taken for one thing and ‘counsel’ for another; for ‘sentence’ is in the mouth, ‘counsel’ in the thoughts. And so whereas Eliphaz wished himself far from the ‘sentence’ of the wicked, and blessed Job from the ‘counsel,’ it is plain without denial, that the first desires to be unlike the words of the wicked, but the other unlike their way of thinking even. It goes on;  
Ver. 19. *The righteous shall see it and be glad; and the innocent one shall laugh them to scorn.*

[xiii]



18. The righteous when they see the unrighteous erring here cannot be glad for the error of persons ruining themselves. For if they rejoice in errings, they cease to be righteous. Again, if in the feeling of triumph they be glad, for this that they are not such as they see others are, they are altogether full of pride. Hence the Pharisee lost his justification, because being glad he set himself above the merits of the Publican, saying, *I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.* Again, if we say that the righteous can triumph with a perfect joy over the death of the wicked, what sort of thing is joy for vengeance on sinners in this world, wherein the life of the righteous is still uncertain? Let us then distinguish between the times of trembling and exulting. For the righteous see the unrighteous now, and pine at their wickedness; and when they see those smitten, they are made distrustful touching their own life too. When then shall the righteous see the destruction of the wicked and be glad, saving when with the strict Judge they incorporate henceforth with perfect sureness of triumphing, when in that final Inquest they shall see the condemnation of those, and shall now no longer have aught to fear for themselves? Now therefore they see the children of perdition and groan, then they shall see them and laugh them to scorn, because in triumphing they shall set at nought those, whom now they neither see doing wickedness without groaning nor dying for their wickedness without fearing. Hence by that which is added it is proved that the thing is spoken as concerning their final condemnation. For the sentence is directly introduced,

Ver. 20. *Is not their erecting cut down, and the remnant of them the fire hath consumed* [al. shall consume]?

[xiv]

19. For here the wicked are erected, in that they are lifted up in bad deeds. For they both do wickedly, and yet for their wicked deeds they are not stricken. They sin and thrive, they add to their sins, and multiply earthly good. But 'their erecting is cut down' then, when they are either dragged from the present life to destruction, or from the sight of the Eternal Judge to the eternal burning of hell. Which people, though here they quit their dead flesh, yet that same in the resurrection they receive again, that together with that flesh they may burn, in which flesh they did their sin. For as their sin was in mind and body, so the punishment shall be in spirit and flesh alike. Therefore, whereas not even that shall be quit of torment to them, which here they leave dead, it is rightly said now, *the remnant of them the fire hath consumed.* It goes on;

Ver. 21, 22. *Be at one then with Him, and be at peace; thereby thou shalt have the best fruits. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.*

[xv]

20. There is the sin of pride in teaching one better than one's self, which heretics are often guilty of, who touching things which they have wrong notions of, take upon them as if to instruct Catholics. For such they think are then 'at one with God,' if it chance for them to assent to their bad ways; and to those thus 'at one' they promise peace in that they henceforth cease to quarrel with those who agree with themselves. Now 'the best fruits' they promise to those agreeing with themselves, in that they believe that they only do good works, whom they triumph in themselves drawing in to their own tenets; which persons this also suits that he adds, *Receive, I pray, the law out of His mouth;* because the things they think of their own heads, they fancy proceed from the mouth of God. *And lay up His words in thine heart;* as if he asserted it in plain words, saying,

‘which up to this present time in thy mouth thou hast held, and not in thine heart.’ For because he [al. Holy Church] rejected their corrupted tenets, they allege against him [al. her, &c.] that the words of God he had held not in the feeling, but in the shewing off. Whence, as if under a certain appearance of sweetness, they insinuate the poison of pestilent persuading, so as to admonish the Church to lay up the words of God in the heart; which words, if they had ever departed from her heart, from those persons she would never have heard such things. It follows;

Ver. 23. *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle.*

[xvi]

21. That the faithful people have gone away from God is the opinion of heretics, because they see it opposed to their preachings; which same, when they see it afflicted with present calamities, they endeavour, as if by admonition, to draw to their Maker’s Grace, saying, *If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up.* As if they said in plain words; Whereas by gainsaying our doctrines thou hast gone away from the Lord, therefore to the building up of righteousness thou art undone. Now by a tabernacle we understand sometimes the habitation of the body, and sometimes the habitation of the heart; for as by the soul we inhabit the body, so by the thoughts we inhabit the mind. Therefore ‘iniquity in the tabernacle’ of the mind is an evil bent in the attachment of the thought. But ‘iniquity in the tabernacle’ of the body is carnal doing in the fulfilment of the deed. Thus Eliphaz, forasmuch as he was the friend of a blessed person, seeing some things true, and yet in those points in which he departs from the right line, holding the likeness of heretics, not knowing that it was in consequence of good qualities blessed Job was stricken, fancied that he had erred whom he saw smitten, and makes him promises if he would return to Almighty God, saying, *Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.* As if he said in plain speech, ‘Whosoever after erring ways is brought back to God, is purified both in thought and in deed together.’ It follows;

Ver. 24. *He shall give the flint for earth, and for the flint golden torrents.*

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#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

22. What is denoted by ‘earth’ but weakness in conduct, what by the hardness of the flint but strength, what do we understand by ‘the golden torrents,’ but the instruction of interior brightness? Now to those that turn themselves to Him Almighty God ‘gives for earth the flint,’ in that for weak conduct He bestows the strength of vigorous practice. He also gives ‘for the flint golden torrents,’ in that for vigorous practice He redoubles the instruction of bright preaching, that every converted sinner may from weak be enabled to prove strong, and in his strength rise up even to the uttering forth words of the inner brightness, so that in that person, both weakness of conduct, in which like earth he is crumbled, by strength of good living may be firmly settled, and whereas perception is derived from the life, from that same firmness torrents of gold may run out, seeing that in the mouth of those that live well brightness of teaching runs over. It follows;

Ver. 25. *Yea the Almighty shall be against thine enemies, and thou shalt have heaps of silver.*

[xviii]

23. What other enemies are we more subject to than evil spirits, who in our thoughts besiege us, that they may break into the city of our minds, and hold it, taken captive, under the yoke of their

dominion? Now by the name of 'silver,' the Psalmist testifies the sacred oracles are denoted, when he says, *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth.* [Ps. 12, 6] And often when we apply ourselves to the sacred oracles, we are more grievously subject to the artifices of evil Spirits, in that they sprinkle upon our mind the dust of earthly thoughts, that the eyes of our heeding they may darken to the light of the interior vision. Which same the Psalmist had undergone when he said, *Depart from me, ye evil ones, and I will search into the commandments of my God;* i.e. plainly teaching us that he could not search into the commandments of God, when he was suffering in mind the snares of the evil spirits. Which thing in the work of Isaac too we know to be represented under the evil doing of the Philistines, who with a heap of earth filled up the wells which Isaac had dug. For these very same wells we ourselves dig, when in the hidden meanings of Holy Scripture we penetrate deep. Which wells however the Philistines secretly fill up, when to us advancing to deep things unclean spirits bring in earthly thoughts, and as it were take away the water of divine knowledge which has been discovered. But because no one can overcome these enemies by his own power, it is said by Eliphaz, *Yea the Almighty shall be against thine enemies, and thou shalt have heaps of silver.* As if it were said in plain words; 'While the Lord drives away from thee the evil spirits by His power, the shining talent of divine revelation within gains growth.' It proceeds;

Ver. 26. *Then shalt thou abound with delicacies over the Almighty.*

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24. To 'abound with delicacies over the Almighty' is in the love of Him to be filled to the full with the banquet of Holy Scripture. In Whose words surely we find as many delicacies, as for our profiting we obtain diversities of meaning, so that now the bare history should be our food, now, veiled under the text of the letter, the moral allegory refresh us from our inmost soul, and now to the deeper things contemplation should hold us suspended, already, in the darkness of the present life, shining in upon us from the light of eternity. And it is necessary to be known, that whosoever 'abounds with delicacies,' is released in a kind of loosening of himself, and slacks from devotion to labour as it were from weariness, because the soul when it has begun to abound with the interior delicacies, henceforth consents not ever to give itself to earthly employments, but being captivated by the love of the Creator, and by its captivity henceforth free, for the contemplating of His likeness fainting it draws breath, and as it were wilst giving over, is invigorated; because whereas sordid burthens it is now no longer able to bear, unto Him through rest it hastens Whom it loves within. Hence also in admiration of the spouse it is written, *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness abounding with delicacies?* [Cant. 8, 5. Vulg.] in that truly except Holy Church 'abounded with the delicacies' of God's words, she could not mount up from the deserts of the present life to the regions above. Thus she 'abounds with delicacies and comes up,' in that whilst she is fed by mystical senses, she is lifted up for the contemplating day by day the things above. Hence likewise the Psalmist says, *Even the night shall be light about me in my delicacies;* [Ps. 139, 11. Vulg.] in that while by mystical perception the earnest mind is regaled, henceforth the darkness of the present life is lighted up in her by the radiance of the day to come. So that even in the blindness of this state of corruption the force of the future light should break out into her understanding, and she being fed with delicacies of words, might learn by thus foretasting what to hunger for of the food of truth. It goes on;

*And shall lift up thy face unto God.*

[xx]

25. To 'lift up the face to God' is to raise the heart for the searching into what is loftiest. For as by the bodily face we are known and distinguishable to man, so by the interior figure to God. But when by the guilt of sin we are weighed to the earth, we are afraid to lift the face of our heart to God; for whereas it is not buoyed up by any of the confidence of good works, the mind is full of affright to gaze on the highest things, because conscience of itself accuses self. But when by the tears of penance sin is now washed out, and things committed are so bewailed that nothing to be bewailed is any more committed, a great confidence springs up in the mind, and for the contemplating the joys of the recompensing from above 'the face of our heart is lifted up.' Now these things Eliphaz would have spoken aright, if he had been admonishing one that was weak; but when he looks down upon a righteous man on account of his scourges, what is this, but that he pours out words of knowledge in not knowing? Which same words if we bring into a type of heretics, they are they that with false promises engage for us to 'lift our face to God.' As if they said plainly to the faithful people, 'As long as thou dost not follow our preaching, thine heart thou sinkest down in things below.' But whereas Eliphaz charged blessed Job to return to God, from Whom observe that same blessed man had never departed, he yet further subjoins, as promising; Ver. 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee.*

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26. For they make their prayer to God, but never obtain to be listened to, who set at nought the precepts of the Lord, when He enjoins them. Whence it is written, *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* [Prov. 28, 9] So long then as Eliphaz believed that blessed Job was not heard, he determined that that person had surely done wrong in his practice. And hence he adds further, *And thou shalt pay thy vows.*

He that has vowed vows, but is unable from weakness to pay the same, has it dealt to him in punishment of sin, that whilst willing good, the having the power should be taken away from him. But when in the sight of the interior Judge, the sin which hinders is done away, it is immediately brought to pass, that the being able attends upon the vow. It goes on; Ver. 28. *Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.*

[xxii]

27. This is used to be the special conclusion of those going weakly, that in such proportion they esteem a man righteous as they see him obtain all that he desires; whereas in truth we know that earthly goods are sometimes withheld from the righteous, while they are bestowed with liberal bounty upon the unrighteous; seeing that to sick persons also when they are despaired of, physicians order whatever they call for to be supplied, but those whom they foresee may be brought back to health, the things which they long for they refuse to have given them. Now if Eliphaz introduced these declarations with reference to spiritual gifts, be it known that 'a thing is decreed and is established' to a man, when the virtue which is longed for in the desire, is, by God's granting it, happily forwarded by the carrying of it out as well. And hence it is yet further added; *And the light shall shine upon thy way.*

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[LITERAL AND MORAL INTERPRETATION]

28. Since for 'light to shine in the ways' of the righteous, is by extraordinary deeds of virtue to scatter the tokens of their brightness, that wherever they go in the bent of the mind, from the hearts of those beholding them they may dispel the night of sin, and by the example of their own practice pour into them the light of righteousness; but whatever justness of practice there may be, in the eye of the interior Judge it is nothing, if pride of heart uplifts it. Hence it is added;

Ver. 29. *For he that has been abased shall be in glory, and he that has bent down his eyes, the same shall be saved.*

[xxiv]

29. Which same sentence is not at variance with the mouth of 'Truth,' when It says, *For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* [Luke 14, 11] And hence it is said by Solomon, *Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.* [Prov. 18, 12] But it is properly said, *For he that has bent down his eyes, the same shall be saved;* in that so far as it is to be discovered through the ministering of the members, the first manifestation of pride is used to be with the eyes. Hence it is written, *And wilt bring down high looks.* [Ps. 18, 27] Hence it is said of the very head himself of those that behave proudly, *He beholdeth all high things.* [Job 41, 34] Hence it is written concerning her, who by unbelief attached herself to him, *There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up.* [Prov. 30, 13] So to 'bend down the eyes, is no man on looking upon him to look down upon, but one's self to look upon as inferior and below all one sees. He then that 'bends down his eyes shall be saved'; because he who quits the false height of pride, scales the loftiness of truth. It goes on;

Ver. 30. *The innocent shall be saved, but he shall be saved by the cleanness of his hands.*

[xxv]

30. Which same sentence now if it be delivered touching the recompense of the kingdom of heaven, is supported by truth, in that whereas it is written concerning God, *Who rendereth to every man according to his deeds* [Rom. 2, 6], that man in the Last Inquest the justice of the Judge Eternal saveth, whom here His pitifulness sets free from impure deeds. But if a man is to this purport supposed to be here saved by the cleanness of his own hands, that by his own powers he should be made innocent, assuredly it is an error; for if Grace above do not prevent him when faulty, assuredly it will never find anyone faultless to recompense without fault. Whence it is said by the truth-telling voice of Moses; *And no man of himself is innocent in Thy sight.* [Exod. 34, 7] And so heavenly pity first works something in ourselves without the help of ourselves, that, our own free will following it up as well, the good which we now desire, it may do along with ourselves; yet the good coming by grace bestowed, in the Last Judgment, He so rewards in ourselves, as if it had proceeded only from ourselves. For whereas the Goodness of God prevents us to make us innocent, Paul says, *But by the grace of God I am what I am.* [1 Cor. 15, 10] And whereas our free will follows that grace, he adds, *And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all.* Who whereas he saw that he was nothing of himself, says, *Yet not I,* and yet forasmuch as he saw that he was something in union

with grace, he added, *but the grace of God with me*. For he would not have said, *with me*, if together with preventing grace he had not had free will following it up. Therefore in order to shew that he was nothing without grace, he says, *Yet not I*, but that he might shew that along with grace he had worked by free will, he added, *but the grace of God with me*. Thus ‘the innocent man shall be saved by the cleanness of his hands,’ in that he who is here prevented by the gift, that he may be made innocent, when he is brought to judgment, is rewarded of merit. All which things, as was before said, Eliphaz though he delivered rightly, yet to whom he was delivering them he knew not; because one better than himself it was not his business to teach, but to hear. All which particulars however agree in a figure with the promises of heretics, who when they find any of the faithful afflicted in the present life suppose them stricken for the sin of misbelief, and promise them if they will follow their doctrine the saving health of innocency by cleanness of good works. But the mind of the faithful looks down upon them so much the deeper down, in proportion as it does not see them to possess the innocency which they promise. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any winged fowl*. For the ‘winged fowl’ are the spirits of good men, which whilst in the hope of truth they soar up to the higher regions, shun the nets of bad men set for their deceiving. It goes on;

Chap. xxiii. 1, 2. *Then Job answered and said, Now also is my complaint bitter: and the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning.*

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[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

31. In his own way blessed Job sets out with the plainer sort of words, but his declaration he closes by the deep following on of mystery. For the pain of the afflicted man ought to have been healed by the consoling of his friends, but because their consoling broke out into the soothing of deceit, the pain of the stricken man was made harsher. For whereas Eliphaz was not afraid to promise him better things on being converted, it was as if by a poisonous remedy the wound were increased. Hence it is rightly said, *Even to-day is my complaint bitter, and the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning*, in this respect, viz. that the straining of unregulated consoling increased the stroke manifold, which it ought to have diminished; by which same words taken in a type of Holy Church, the pain of the faithful is likewise set forth, who groan the more, the more they see the wicked using the acts of flattery, who, according to the declaration of Paul, by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

32. Which words may also be rightly applied to the viewing with greater exactness the mind of the faithful, who can never be without bitterness even if they seem to prosper in this world. Which persons when adversity too befalls, it redoubles that pain which it finds. Whence it is rightly said, *Now also is my complaint bitter*, that it might be plainly shewn that even in prosperity the mind of the Elect should not be without bitterness. And it is well said, *And the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning*. For ‘the hand of a stroke,’ is the force of the striking. For their first striking the Elect see to be, that from the vision of their Creator they are parted, that the brightness of the interior illumining they never enjoy, but groan as being banished in the exile of the present life as in a place of darkness. Thus they always have their groaning in this ‘hand of their stroke,’ but when over and above adversities also befall them in this life, ‘the hand of their stroke is heavier than their groaning.’ For there was groaning for the stroke even when the adversities of the present life were away. But the bitterness of the original stroke is increased over and above by the trial of adversity. Therefore he says, *And the hand of my stroke is heavier than my groaning?* In that any

just man adversity did not smite whilst happy in this life, but came to redouble in him the pain of the wound. Yet it happens by the extraordinary governance of Almighty God, that when in this life the spirit of the righteous man travails most in adversities, he thirsts the more ardently after the beholding of his Maker's face. Hence it is fitly subjoined here,

Ver. 8. *O that one would grant me that I might know and find Him, that I might come even to His seat!*

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33. An elect person if he did not know God, assuredly would not love Him. But it is one thing to 'know' by faith, and another to know by His own Form, one thing to find by trustfulness, another to find Him by contemplation. In consequence whereof it is brought to pass that Him Whom they know by faith, all of the Elect long to see by His own Form as well. With the love of Whom they burn and glow because the honey of His sweetness they already taste of in the mere certainty of their faith. Which that person in the country of the Gerasenes cured of the devils well represents, who wishes to depart with Jesus; but by the Master of health it is, told him, *Return to thine own house, and shew what great things God hath done unto thee.* [Luke 8, 39] For on him that loves delay is still imposed, that by the longing of love delayed the title to rewarding may be heightened. And so to us Almighty God is made sweet in miracles, and yet in His own loftiness remains hidden from our eyes, that both by shewing something of Himself, He may by secret inspiration set us on fire in the love of Him, and yet by hiding the gloriousness of His Majesty may increase the force of that love of Him by the heat of longing desire. For except the holy man sought to see This Being in His Majesty, surely he would not bring in the words, *that I might come even to His seat?* For what is the 'seat' of God but those angelical Spirits, who as Scripture testifies are called 'Thrones?' He then that desires to 'come to the seat of God,' what else does he long for but to be among the Angelic spirits, that no failing moments of the periods of time he henceforth be liable to, but rise up to abiding glory in the contemplation of eternity.

#### [LITERAL AND ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

34. Which words nevertheless are likewise appropriate to the righteous whilst placed in this life. For when they see any thing done against their wish and desire, they have recourse to the hidden judgments of God, that therein they may read that that is not irregularly ordered within, which seems to pass irregularly without. For when they behold with the eyes of faith the Creator of all things, ruling over the Angelical Spirits, then they 'come to His seat.' And whereas they observe that He, Who rules the Angels in a wonderful manner, does not dispose of man in any way contrary to justice, then indeed the principles of cases they see to be as just as they are, whilst the cases themselves externally seem to be unjust. And whereas they do this with humility, they often lay blame to themselves in their will, and their own wishes they sometimes judge in themselves, whilst they ponder that those things are better which the Creator appoints. Hence it is well added in addition,

Ver. 4. *I will order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with reproaches.*

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35. To 'order our cause before God' is within the secret depth of our mind by the contemplating of faith to open the eyes of our view to the awful inquisition of His Majesty, to mark what man as a sinner deserves, of the now hidden and secret Judge to take thought how terrible He will hereafter appear. In consequence of which it happens, that the soul is recalled to the knowledge of itself with greater exactness, and in proportion as it sees its secret Judge the greater object of alarm, is so much the more horribly wrung with fears for its actions. It trembles with anxious alarm; its offences it prosecutes with lamentation; in repenting it charges home what it remembers itself to have been; whence now too after it had been said, *I will order my cause before Him*, it is rightly subjoined, *And fill my mouth with reproaches*. For he who 'orders his cause before God,' does 'fill his mouth with reproaches,' in that while he beholds the exact scrutiny of the awful Judge directed against himself, he pursues himself with the charges of bitter repentance. Now it often happens that whilst we neglect to take account of our faults, what blaming of them may follow in the Judgment we are left ignorant of: but whilst we pursue them by exercising repentance what the Judge in His Inquisition may say to us concerning them, we find out. Whence it is further added with propriety, Ver. 5. *That I may know the words that he will answer me, and understand what he will say unto me.*

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36. For we then bewail our sins, when we begin to weigh them; but we then weigh them the more exactly, when more anxiously we bewail them, and by our lamentations it rises up [one Ms. 'is known'] more perfectly in our hearts, what the severity of God threatens those with that commit sin, what will be those rebukings upon the children of perdition, what the terror, what the abhorrence of the unappeasable Majesty. For so great things shall the Lord then being angry 'say' to the lost, as great as He permits them of justice to undergo. Which same words of His visitation, the righteous, because now they anxiously fear them, escape free from. But who in that inquisition might be found righteous, if God according to the Majesty of His Might, so sifted the life of man? Therefore it is fitly subjoined, Ver. 6. *I would not that He should contend with me with great power, nor oppress me with the weight of His mightiness.*

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37. For the soul of one however righteous, if he be judged with strictness by Almighty God, is borne down by the weight of His mightiness. In which same words this is likewise to be understood, that whereas the holy man shews the might of God, what else of Him does he desire, but His weakness? And it is written, *the weakness of God is stronger than men*. [1 Cor. 1, 25] Whence too he directly adds, Ver. 7. *Let Him put forth equity against me, and my judgment shall come unto victory.*

#### [PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

For who else saving the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, is denoted by the title of 'equity?' Concerning Whom it is written, *Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness*. [I Cor. 1, 30] And whereas this same righteousness came into this world against the ways of sinners, we get the better of our old enemy, by whom we were held captive. So let him



say, *I would not that He should contend with me with great power, nor oppress me with the weight of His mightiness. Let Him put forth equity against me, and my judgment shall come unto victory.* i.e. 'for the rebuking of my ways, let Him send His Incarnate Son, and then the plotting foe, by the sentence of mine absolving, I as victor will turn out.' For if the Only-begotten Son of God had so remained invisible in the strength of the Divine Nature, as not to have admitted aught derived from our weakness, when could weak men ever have found the access of grace to Him? For the weight of His greatness, being considered, would rather have oppressed than aided him; but the Strong above all things came weak among all things, that whereas He agreed with us by assumed weakness, He might elevate us to His own abiding strength. For in Its loftiness the Divine Nature could never have been apprehended by us, inasmuch as being too little, but He bowed Himself down to man through human nature, and we as it were mounted up on Him laid low; He rose, and we were lifted up. Whence this too is added directly, whereby the Divine Being may be shewed invisible and incomprehensible. Thus it goes on;

Ver. 8, 9. *If I go to the East, He appeareth not; if I go to the West, I shall not understand Him; if I go to the left hand, what shall I do? I shall not comprehend Him; if I turn myself to the right hand I shall not see Him.*

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38. For the Creator of all things is not in a part, inasmuch as He is every where. And then He is found the less, when He, That is whole every where, is sought in a part. For the Incomprehensible Spirit containeth all things within Itself, Which at the same time both while filling encompasseth, and while encompassing filleth, both in supporting overtops, and in overtopping supports; and it is well that after it had been said, *if I go to the East, He appeareth not; if I go to the West, I shall not understand Him; if I go to the left hand, what shall I do? I shall not comprehend Him; if I turn myself to the right hand I shall not see Him;* he thereupon added, *But He knoweth the way that I take.* As if he said in plain words, 'I am unable to see Him, Who seeth me, and Him that beholdeth me most minutely, I have no power to behold:' that is to say, that he might shew that He is so much the more heedfully to be feared, in proportion as He is not discernible. For He Who so beholds us that He may not be by us beheld, is so much the more to be dreaded in proportion as in seeing all things He is not seen in the least degree. For when we believe that there is anyone hidden in ambush to assault us, we dread him the more that we do not at all see him; and when we do not at all discover his ambush where it is placed, we apprehend it even there where it does not exist. And our Creator, Who is whole every where, and while discerning all things is not discerned, is the more to be dreaded in proportion as continuing invisible, what He may determine concerning our actions and at what time is not known. Which words, too, may be understood in another sense also. For we 'go to the East,' when we lift up our mind in thinking of His Majesty. But 'He appeareth not,' seeing that such as He is in His own Nature, by mortal thought He cannot be seen to be. *If I go to the West, I shall not understand Him;* we 'go to the west,' when the eye of the heart that is lifted up in God, but made to recoil by the mere immensity of the light, we bring back to our own selves, and being spent with labour, we learn that the thing is very much above us which we were seeking; and viewing our own mortal condition find out that as yet we are creatures unfit to have the power to behold One that is Immortal. *If I go to the left hand what shall I do? I shall not comprehend Him.* To 'go to the left hand' is to yield one's self to the enjoyments of our sins. And it is surely plain, that he cannot 'apprehend God,' who still in the gratification of sin lies prostrate along the left side. If I turn myself to the right side I shall not see Him. He truly is 'turned to the

right hand,' who is lifted up on the ground of virtuous attainments. But he cannot see God, who is glad with selfish joy for his good deeds; because in that man the swelling of pride weighs down the eye of the heart. Whence it is well said elsewhere, *Thou shalt not decline to the right hand nor to the left.* [Deut. 17, 11] In all which particulars the soul very often searches out itself, nor yet is able perfectly to find out itself. Whence it is fitly added here, *But He Himself knoweth the way that I take.*

[xxxii]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

39. As if he said in plain terms, 'I for mine own part both search myself strictly, and am not able to know myself thoroughly; yet He, Whom I have not power to see, seeth most minutely all the things that I do.' It goes on; *And He shall try me like gold which passeth through the fire.*

Gold in the furnace is advanced to the brightness of its nature, whilst it loses the dross. And so like 'gold that passeth through the fire' the souls of the righteous are tried, which by the burning of tribulation through and through, both have their defects removed, and their good points increased. Nor was it of pride that the holy man likened himself as set in tribulation to gold, in that he who, by the voice of God, was pronounced righteous before the stroke, was not for this reason permitted to be tried that bad qualities might be cleared off, but that excellences might be heightened; but gold is purified by fire; less then than he was did he think of his own self, in that, being delivered over to suffer tribulation, he believed that he was being purified, whereas he had not any thing in him to be purified.

40. Now it is necessary for us to know, that though the mind of the righteous entertains humble thoughts touching itself, yet the several things that they do, they see to be as right as they are, while they never presume on the rightness of them. Whence it is yet further added; *My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined. Neither have gone back from the commandment of his lips, and I have hid the words of his mouth in my bosom.* But in the midst of all this let us see whether he thinks himself to be any thing. It follows; *But He is Himself alone.* By the subjoining of which sentence, he shews that amidst all the good things which he had done he believed himself to be nothing. But taking up these same words from the beginning, let us run over them as well as we are able.

Ver. 11. *My foot hath held His steps.*

[xxxiii]

41. For as a kind of footsteps of God are His doings which we see, by which doings both the good and bad man is governed, by which the righteous and unrighteous are arranged in their classes, whereto both everyone that is subject is led on day by day to better things, and he that is in rebellion against them is borne with going headlong into worse. Concerning which same footsteps the Prophet said, *Thy goings have been seen, O God.* [Ps. 68, 24] And so we, when we behold the efficacy of His long-suffering and pitifulness, and upon so beholding strive to imitate the same, what else do we but follow the 'footsteps of His goings,' in that we imitate some outskirts of His method of proceeding. Thus these footsteps of His Father 'Truth' gave it in charge to imitate when He said, *Pray for them which persecute you and falsely accuse you; that ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven. For He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good.* [Matt.

5, 44. 45.] It may be too that blessed Job who had already said with assured faith, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall arise at the latter day from the earth* [Job 19, 25]; so dwelt on the future working of Wisdom Incarnate to be, in like manner as we behold by faith the works of that Wisdom now past, how that the Mediator between God and man should be kind to give, humble to bear, patient to afford an example. Whose life while blessed Job, filled with the Spirit from above, regarded with heedful intentness, foreseeing the future lowliness of His mild character, he refers as it were to a pattern set before him, so that whatever he did in this life he might bind fast to His footsteps in imitating, that so he who was incapable of seeing the high things of His secret ordering, as it were looking on the ground, might keep His footsteps for imitation. Of which same 'footsteps' of Him it is said by Peter, *Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His footsteps*. [1 Pet. 2, 21] Concerning whom it is yet further added; Ver. 11. *His way have I kept, and not declined*.

[xxxiv]

42. For he 'keeps the way and does not decline,' who practises the thing whereon his mind is bent. Since to 'keep' in the bent is 'not to decline' in the practice. For this is the anxiety of the righteous, that day by day they should try their actions by the ways of truth, and proposing these as a rule to themselves, they should not decline from the track of their right course. Thus day by day they strive to get above themselves, and in proportion as they are lifted up upon the summit of virtues, they judge with heedful censure, whatever there is of themselves left remaining below themselves. And they are in haste to draw the whole of themselves there, where they find that they have been brought in part. It goes on;  
Ver. 12. *Neither have I gone back from the commandments of His lips*.

[xxxv]

43. As servants that serve well are ever intent upon their masters' countenances, that the things they may bid they may hear readily, and strive to fulfil; so the minds of the righteous in their bent are upon Almighty God, and in His Scripture they as it were fix their eyes on His face, that whereas God delivers therein all that He wills, they may not be at variance with His will, in proportion as they learn that will in His revelation. Whence it happens, that His words do not pass superfluously through their ears, but that these words they fix in their hearts. Hence it is here added;  
*I have hid the words of His mouth in my breast*.

[xxxvi]

44. For we 'hide the words of His mouth in the bosom of our heart,' when we hear His commandments not in a passing way, but to fulfil them in practice. Hence it is that of the Virgin Mother herself it is written, *But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart*. Which same words even when they come forth to the practising lie hidden in the recesses of the heart, if through that which is done without, the mind of the doer be not lifted up within. For when the word conceived is carried on to the deed, if human praise is aimed at herein, the word of God assuredly is not 'hidden in the bosom of the mind.' But I would know, O blessed man, wherefore thou examinest thyself with so much earnestness, wherefore thou takest thyself to task with so much anxiety? It goes on,

Ver. 13. *But He is Himself alone, and no man can turn away His thought.*

[xxxvii]

45. Are there not angels and men, the heavens and the earth, the air and the waters of the ocean, all the winged creatures, quadrupeds, and creeping things? And surely it is written, *Which God created that they should be.* [Gen.2, 3] Whereas then there is such a multitude of things in the circle of nature, wherefore is it now said by the voice of the blessed man, *He is Himself alone?* Why, it is one thing to be, and another thing to BE primarily, one thing to be subjectly to change, and another thing to BE independently of change. For these are all of them in being, but they are not maintained in being in themselves, and except they be maintained by the hand of a governing agent, they cannot ever be. For all things subsist in Him by Whom they were created, nor do the things that live owe their life to themselves, nor are those that are moved, but do not live, by their own caprice brought to motion. But He moveth all things, Who quickens some with life, whilst some that are not so quickened He preserves, disposing them in a wonderful way for last and lowest being. For all things were made out of nothing, and their being would again go on into nothing, except the Author of all things held it by the hand of governance. All the things then that have been created, by themselves can neither subsist nor be moved, but they only so far subsist, as they have obtained that they should be, are only so far moved, as they are influenced by a secret impulse. For see the sinner is ordained to be scourged by human accidents; the earth is parched in his toilings, the sea tossed in the shipwreck of him, the air on fire in his sweating, the heavens are darkened in floods upon him, his fellow creatures burn with fire in oppressions of him, and the angelical powers are made active in his troubling. Are all these things which we have named being inanimate, or which we have named endued with life, put into activity by their own instincts, or rather by impulses from God? Whatever therefore it be that is arrayed against us outwardly, in that thing That Being is to be regarded Who ordains it inwardly. In every case then He is to be regarded as alone, Who IS primarily, Who also saith to Moses, *I AM THAT I AM, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, He that IS hath sent me unto you.* [Ex. 3, 14] And so, when we are scourged by the things that we see, we ought anxiously to fear Him Whom we do not see. And so let the holy man look down upon all that alarms him without, all that in respect of its being would go on to nothing except it were ruled, and with the eye of the mind, all else being kept back, let him see Him only in comparison with Whose Being for ourselves to be is not to be, and let him say, *He only is Himself alone.*

46. Concerning Whose unchangeableness it is directly after added with propriety, *No man can turn away His thought*, for as He is unchangeable in Nature, so He is unchangeable in Will. For ‘none turneth away His thought,’ in that no man has power to resist His secret judgments. Since though there have been persons who might seem to ‘have turned away His thought,’ yet His interior thought was this, that they should by praying have power to avert His sentence, and that they should obtain from Him what to effect with Him. So let him say, *and no man turneth away His thought*, in that His judgments once fixed can never be altered. Whence it is written, *He hath made a decree which shall not pass.* [Ps. 148, 6] And again, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* [Mark 13, 31] And again, *For My thoughts are not as your thoughts, neither are your ways as My ways.* [Is. 55, 8] And so whenever outwardly the sentence appears to be altered, inwardly the counsel is not altered, in that in relation to each particular thing that is unalterably established within, whatever is done alterably without. It goes on;

*And what His soul desireth, even that He doeth.*

[xxxviii]

47. Whereas God is exterior to all bodies, interior to all minds, that identical power of His, whereby He penetrates all things, and regulates all things, is called His 'soul.' Whose will not even those things oppose, which appear to be done contrary to His will, seeing that even what He does not order, to this end He sometimes suffers to be done, that so through this thing that which He does order may be the more surely done. For the will of the Apostate Angel is bad, yet by God it is wonderfully ordered, so that even his very artifices as well should promote the welfare of the good, whom they purify whilst they try. So then 'whatever His soul desireth, that He doeth,' that from the same source as well He might fulfil His will, whence there seemed to be a resisting of His will. Therefore let the holy man be filled with alarm, and contemplating the weight of that great Majesty, let him find himself out to be weak.

48. But it is well to put the question amidst these words, and to say, 'O blessed Job, wherefore in the midst of such scourges dost thou dread still further afflictions?' Thou art already encompassed with sorrows, by innumerable calamities thou art already straitly beset. Misfortune is to be apprehended, which is not yet entered upon. Thou being in the midst of such great sorrow, what dost thou apprehend? But mark how the holy man satisfying our questioning adds;  
Ver. 14. *For when He hath accomplished His will in me, there are many other such things with Him.*

[xxxix]

49. As if he said in plain words, 'Already I weigh well what I am suffering, but I still dread things that I may undergo.' For He accomplishes His will in me, in that He afflicts one with many strokes, but 'there are many like things with Him,' in that if He is minded to strike, He sees yet further where the stroke may be added to. Hence we may collect how fearful he was before the scourge, who even after being scourged still dreads lest he should be farther stricken. For seeing the incomprehensible force both of power and penetration that resides in Him, the righteous man would not even on the ground of the scourge upon him be secure. And hence fearing still more He adds;

Ver. 15. *Therefore am I troubled at His presence; when I consider I am afraid of Him.*

[xl]

50. He is rightly 'troubled at the presence of the Lord,' who sets before the view of his eyes the terribleness of His Majesty, and is thoroughly shaken by dread of His Righteousness, whilst he sees that he is not fit to render his accounts if he be judged with severity. Now it is rightly said, *When I consider I am afraid of Him*, because the force of the Divine visitation when a man considers little, He dreads but little, and in this life is as it were secure, in proportion as he is a stranger to the consideration of the interior strictness. For the righteous are ever turning back into the secret chamber of the heart, contemplating the power of the hidden strictness, presenting themselves to the judgment of the interior Majesty, that they may one day be the more secure, in proportion as they would not make themselves secure here so long as they lived. For when the minds of

evildoers refuse to consider what they have to fear, sooner or later by rejoicing they are brought to that, which they do not by fearing in any way escape. But see in regard to blessed Job, we know that he was devoted to frequent sacrifices to God, that he was given up to acts of hospitality, to the necessities of the poor, that he was humble towards his own dependants even, kind towards those that opposed him, and yet he received such numberless scourges, nor now became secure amidst them, but still entertained fear, still thinking of the power of the Divine strictness he is made to tremble. What then shall we miserable creatures say? what shall we sinners say, if he so fears, who so acted? But let him make known whether the weight of this great fear he has from himself. It goes on;

Ver. 16. *For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.*

[xli]

51. By divine gift the heart of the righteous man is said to be made soft, in that it is penetrated with the fear of the judgment from Above. For that it is soft, which is capable of being penetrated, but that is hard, which cannot be penetrated. Whence it is said by Solomon, *Happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.* [Prov. 28, 14] And so the merit of his dread he ascribes not to himself but to his Creator, who says, *For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me.* Now the hearts of good men are not secure but troubled, in that whilst they think of the heavy weight of the future reckoning, they do not seek to enjoy rest here, and they interrupt their security by the thought of the interior severity. Which persons nevertheless, in the midst of the very chastenings of fear, often recall their mind to the gifts, and that by comforting they may cheer themselves, amidst this which they fear, they bring back the eye to the gifts which they have received, that hope may buoy up him whom fear bears down. Hence too it follows;

Ver. 17. *Because I have not perished on account of the overhanging darkness; neither hath the darkness covered my face.*

[xlii]

52. For he, being set under the scourge, dies off from the health of the body ‘on account of the overhanging darkness,’ who is for this reason smitten for the past that he may be shielded from future punishments. For scourges inflicted on the good either wipe out evil things done, or parry off future ones which might have been done. But blessed Job, forasmuch as when set under the rod he was neither purified from foregoing sins nor shielded from those that threatened, but only had his goodness increased under the stroke, says with confidence, *Because I have not perished on account of the overhanging darkness, neither hath the darkness covered my face.* For he that always had before his eyes the weight of divine dread, the face of his heart the darkness of sin never covered. And he whom no punishments followed, did not lose the health of the body ‘on account of the overhanging darkness.’

53. And it is to be noted, that in his own person telling what had gone before, he never says ‘neither hath darkness touched my face,’ but ‘neither hath darkness covered my face;’ for often even the hearts of the righteous do thoughts arising defile, and affect them with the gratifications of things earthly, but whereas they are speedily put away by the hand of holy discretion, it is quickly brought to pass that darkness should not cover the face of the heart, which was already touching it

by unlawful enjoyment; for often in the very sacrifice of prayer urgent thoughts press themselves on us, that they should have force to carry off or pollute what we are sacrificing in ourselves to God with weeping eyes. Whence when Abraham at sunset was offering up the sacrifice, he was subject to birds setting on, which he diligently drove away, that they might not carry off the sacrifice which had been offered. So let us, when we offer to God a holocaust upon the altar of our hearts, keep it from unclean birds, that the evil spirits and bad thoughts may not seize upon that which our mind hopes that it is offering up to God to a good end. It goes on;

C. xxiv. 1. *Times are not hidden from the Almighty; they that know Him, know not His days.*

[xliii]

54. What are called 'the days' of God, save His very Eternity itself? which is sometimes described by the announcement of 'one day,' as where it is written, *For one day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.* [Ps. 84, 10] But sometimes on account of its length it is represented by the expression of a number of days, whereof it is written, *Thy years are throughout all generations.* [Ps. 102, 24] We then are wrapped up within the divisions of time, through this that we are created beings. But God, Who is the Creator of all things, by His Eternity encompasses our times. And so he says, *Times are not hidden from the Almighty; they that know Him, know not His days;* seeing that He, indeed, sees all of ours to the comprehending thereof, but all that is His we are in no degree able to comprehend. But whereas the nature of God is simple, it is very much to be wondered at why he should say, *They that know Him, know not His days.* For it is not that He Himself is one thing and His 'days' another; since God is that thing which He hath. For He hath eternity, yet He is Himself Eternity. He hath Light, yet He is Himself His own Light. He hath brightness, yet He is Himself His own Brightness. And so in Him it is not one thing to be, and another thing to have. What does it mean then to say, *They that know Him, know not His days,* except that even they that know Him, do not know Him as yet? For even they who already hold Him by faith, as yet know Him not by appearance. And whereas He, Whom we truly believe, is Himself eternity to Himself, yet in what way there is that eternity of Him we know not. For in the thing that we hear touching the power of the Divine Nature, we are sometimes used to imagine such things as we know by experience. Thus every single thing that begins and ends, is bounded by the beginning and ending. And if it be by any little delay stayed from being ended, it is called long; on which same length whilst a man carries back the eyes of his mind in recollection, and stretches them out before in anticipation, as it were over a space of time he expands them in imagination. And when he hears the eternity of God mentioned in human sort, to his mind on the stretch he sets forth long spaces of life, in which same he may ever measure both what has gone away in the rear as a thing to be retained in the memory, and what remains before as a thing to be looked forward to in the intention.

55. But as often as in the case of eternity we have such thoughts, we do not as yet know eternity. For that which is neither commenced by a beginning nor finished by an ending, is there, where neither is there looked forward to that which shall come, nor does there pass by that which may be recalled to mind, but that alone is, which is everlasting BEING. Which though we and the Angels with a beginning begin to see to be, yet we see it to be without beginning, where it is to be always without end, in such a way, that the mind never extends itself to things following in a sequence, as if things that are were multiplied and made long. For though by the Spirit of Prophecy it is said, *The Lord shall reign for ever and [LXX so.] for worlds and further* [Exod. 15, 18]; after the manner of Holy Writ, the Spirit spoke in man's way to men, so as to speak of 'further' there, where

looking forward could not enter. For eternity has no ‘further,’ which has it always to be, wherein no part of its length goes by that another part should take its place, but the whole at once is Being, that nothing should seem to be wanting to it, which it may not see, in which eternity every thing that is the mind sees to be at once not slow and long. But in speaking such things of the days of eternity we are trying to see something more than we do see. And so let it be rightly said, *They that know Him know not His days*; in that though we already know God by faith, yet how His Eternity is at once without a past before all ages, without a future after all ages, long without delay, and everlasting without looking forward, we do not see. Thus blessed Job, whilst bearing a type of Holy Church, (because he restrains himself under a great bridling of knowledge, so as not to be wiser than he ought to be,) and testifying that the days of God can never be understood, directly brings back the view of the mind to the pride of Heretics who aim to be deeply enlightened, and what they are incapable of taking in at all, they boast that they know in perfect measure, Thus it goes on;

Ver. 2. *Others remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed them.*

[xliv] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

56. Whom does he denote by the title of ‘others,’ saving Heretics, who to the bosom of Holy Church are strangers? For they the same persons remove landmarks, in that the constitutions of the Fathers they by walking awry do overstep. Concerning which same constitutions it is written, *Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.* [Prov. 22, 28] And these violently take away the flocks, and feed them, in that all the inexperienced, by wicked persuasions, they draw to themselves, and with baneful lessons nourish them for slaughtering. For that the ignorant multitudes are represented by the designation of ‘flocks,’ the words of the Spouse bear witness, Who addresses His Espoused, in the words, *Except thou know thyself, O beautiful amongst women, depart forth, and go after the footsteps of the flocks*; i.e. ‘excepting that by living well, thou knowest thine honour whereby thou art created after the likeness of God, depart forth from the sight of the contemplation of Me, and follow the life [al. ‘the way’] of the uninstructed multitudes. It goes on;

Ver. 3. *They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow’s ox for a pledge.*

[xlv]

57. Whom do we understand by the fatherless in this place, but the Elect of God, who are set in tenderness of mind, are nourished with the efficacious grace of faith, and do not yet see the face of their Father, Who has already died in their behalf. And there are very many in the Church, who see certain persons aiming at the things of heaven, having all earthly things in contempt, and though they themselves are toiling with all their strength in this world’s labours, yet to those whom they see panting after heavenly things, from the goods which they possess in this world, they bring this life’s aid and support. And though they cannot themselves follow a spiritual life, yet to those reaching forth to the things above they gladly yield means of support. For an ass is used to bear the burthens of men. He then is as it were a kind of ass of the Elect, who whilst yielding himself to earthly courses, carries loads for the uses of men. And often when Heretics turn aside any such person from the bosom of Holy Church, they are as it were driving off the ass of the fatherless, in that when they force him into their own misbelief, they drive him away from tendance on the good.



58. But who is to be understood by the 'widow' saving Holy Church, who is bereft in the mean seas out of the sight of her slain Husband? Now 'the ox' of this 'widow' is every individual preacher. And it often chances that Heretics by their perverted tenets draw over even those very persons that appeared to be preachers. And so they 'take the widow's ox,' when they carry off from Holy Church even a person preaching. And it is rightly added here *for a pledge*. For when a pledge is taken away, one thing indeed is held in our hands, but another yet further is sought for. And very often Heretics for this reason try to carry off those that preach, that they may draw to them their followers likewise. Thus 'the widow's ox is taken away for a pledge,' when the same person that practised preaching is for this reason carried off, that others may follow after him. By whose downfall it is very often brought about, that they also go forth from the bosom of Holy Church, who, imbued with godly habits in her, seemed to be meek and humble. Hence it is added; Ver. 4. *They have turned the needy out of the way; and have oppressed together the meek of the earth.*

[xlvi]

59. For by the term of 'poverty,' humility is very often denoted, and very often they that appear gentle and humble, if they have not learnt to maintain discretion, fall by the examples of other men. But there are some Heretics, who eschew to mix themselves with the multitudes, and seek the retirement of a life of greater privacy, and these very often with the bane of their persuasion poison those that they meet with the more, in proportion as by the claims of their life they the more seem deserving of respect. Concerning whom it is subjoined; Ver. 5. *Others as wild asses in the desert go forth to their work.*

[xlvii]

60. For the 'onager' is a wild ass; and in this place Heretics are rightly likened to 'wild asses,' in that being let loose in their pleasures, they are strange to the fetters of faith and reason. Hence it is written; *A wild ass used to the wilderness that snuffeth up the wind of his love at his pleasure*. For he is a wild ass used to the wilderness, who whilst he does not cultivate the ground of his heart with excellence of discipline, there dwells, where there is no fruit. Since he 'snuffeth up the wind of his love at his pleasure,' in that the things that from the desire of knowledge he conceives in his mind, are efficacious to puff up but not to edify. Against whom it is said, *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*. [1 Cor. 8, 1] Hence here too the words are suitably brought in; *they go forth to their work*. For it is not the work of God, but their own work that they do, whereas they follow not right doctrines, but their own desires. For it is written, *He that walketh in a perfect way, he served me*. [Ps. 101, 6] So he that does not walk in a perfect way, serves himself more than the Lord. It goes on; *Watching for a prey, they provide bread for their children.*

[xlviii]

61. They 'watch for a prey,' who are always trying to seize the words of the righteous according to their own perception, that by them they may provide the bread of error for evil minded children. Of which some bread it is said in Solomon, in the words of the woman that bears the figure of heretical

wickedness, *Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.* [Prov. 9, 17] It goes on ;  
Ver. 6. *They reap a field not their own, and the vineyard of him whom they have oppressed by violence they gather.*

[xlix]

62. By the name of a 'field' may be denoted the wide compass of Holy Scripture, and Heretics 'reap' it not being their own, in that they carry away from it sentences which are infinitely removed from their own notions; which same is furthermore described by the title of a 'vineyard,' in that through the sentences of truth it puts forth the clusters of the virtues; the owner of which vineyard, i.e. the originator of Holy Scripture, they as it were 'oppress with violence,' because they endeavour violently to twist and turn a sense of His upon [L. only reads 'in the words'] the words of Holy Writ; as He saith, *But thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast given Me labour in thine iniquity.* [Is. 43, 24] And they 'reap the vintage of that vineyard,' in that they heap together therefrom clusters of sentences after the bent of their own understanding. It may be that by the title of a 'field' or of a 'vineyard' the Church Universal is set forth, which corrupt preachers 'reap,' and by oppressing in His members the Author of it, 'gather the vintage,' in that in bearing down upon the grace of our Creator, whilst they seize off therefrom persons who seemed to be righteous, what else is this but that they carry off 'ears' or 'clusters' of souls? Of whom it is yet further added; Ver. 7. *They send men away naked, taking away their garments, who have no covering in the cold.*

[l]

63. As garments cover the body, so do good works the soul. Whence it is said to one, *Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.* [Rev. 16, 15] So Heretics, when in the minds of any they destroy good works, manifestly take away the garments of clothing; and it is well said, *who have no covering in the cold.* For 'covering' has relation to righteousness, 'cold' to sin. And there are some that in some points commit sin, but in some points follow good works. He then that does wrong by one set of actions, and practises righteousness by another, what is this man but clothed in the cold? He is cold, and he is covered, in that in one part of practice he is made warm for righteousness, in another he is made cold for sin. But whenever Heretics take away their good works from such persons, they bring it to pass that they have not in the cold wherewith to clothe themselves. Therefore it is rightly said, *They send men away naked, taking away their garments, who have no covering in the cold;* that is, for the cold of sin by itself to kill those whom the warmth of a different practice in some degree covered. But it may be, that by the cold there is denoted desire, by the garment practice. And there are great numbers who are still agitated with wrong desires, but striving with themselves in the spirit, they fight against themselves by right works, and with good actions cover that which they perceive through temptation to spring against them of the wrong sort. And so these from the cause that they desire what is evil are cold, and by the act by which they practise what is good, they are clothed. But when Heretics by wrong statements do away with the works of a right faith, what else do they bring to pass but that those that still feel the cold of carnal desires should die without the clothing of good works? It proceeds; Ver. 8. *They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the stones for want of a garment.*

[li]

64. 'The showers of the mountains' are the words of the learned. Of which same 'mountains' it is delivered by the voice of Holy Church; I lifted up mine eyes unto the hills: and so those persons, 'the showers of the mountains wet,' in that the streams of the holy fathers fill them to the full. But as we have already said before, 'the garment' we take for the covering of good practice, with which a man is covered, that in the eyes of Almighty God the filthiness of his depravity should be clothed over. Whence it is written, *Blessed are they whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.* [Ps. 32, 1] Whom do we understand by the title of 'the stones' but the strong ones within the bounds of Holy Church, to whom it is declared by the first shepherd; *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house.* [1 Pet. 2, 5] And so those who on the grounds of their own practice have no reliance, fly to the protection of the holy Martyrs, at their sacred bodies set themselves to tears, and entreat, at their intercessions, to obtain pardon [a]. What then do these do by such self-abasement, but because they lack the covering of good practice 'embrace the stones?' It goes on; Ver. 9. *They have done violence in preying on the fatherless, and have spoiled the common folk of the poor* [vulgus pauperum].

[lii]

65. When Heretics lack the good fortune of the present life, to weak minds they recommend by words of soft persuasion things that are wrong; but if the good fortune of the present time at all smiles upon them, they do not cease even by violence to draw those they are able. So that by the title of 'fatherless' they are denoted who are still delicate, being set within the pale of Holy Church, whose life their merciful Father by dying preserved, who are already brought forward to a good purpose of mind, but are not yet confirmed with any efficacy in good deeds. The Heretics, then, 'do violence in preying on the fatherless,' in that upon the weak minds of the faithful they make assault with violence in words and deeds. But 'the common folk of the poor' are the uninstructed multitude, which, if it had the riches of true knowledge, would never part with the covering of its faith. For genuine teachers are like a kind of senators within the bounds of Holy Church, who, while they multiply knowledge in the heart, abound in the true riches in themselves. But Heretics 'spoil the common sort of the poor,' in that whilst the learned they cannot, all the unlearned by their pestilent preaching they strip naked of the covering of the faith. It goes on; Ver. 10. *From the naked, and those going without clothing and a hungered, they have taken away the ears of corn.*

[liii]

66. What he calls naked he repeats in the words *without clothing*, but it is one thing to be naked and another thing to go naked. Thus every person that does neither what is good nor what is bad is naked and idle; but he that does what is evil 'goes naked,' in that without the covering of good practice he is going by the road of wickedness. But there are some who, as knowing the evil of their wickedness, are in haste to be filled with the bread of righteousness, and hunger to receive the sayings of Holy Scripture; and these, as often as they turn over in thought the sentences of the Fathers for the improvement of the mind, as it were from a good crop they carry ears of corn. And so 'from the naked and those going without clothing and a hungered, Heretics take away ears of corn;' in that whether any persons be idle and never exercise themselves in any thing good, or

whether they are going by the way of shamelessness without the covering of good practice, even if they at any time have now the desire to return to repentance, and long for the food of the word, from those same being a hungered they take away the ears of corn, because in the minds of those persons by mischievous persuasions they destroy the sentences of the Fathers. Nor do we improperly say that the ears of corn signify the sentences of the Fathers, in that often whilst they are delivered in forms of figurative diction, we remove the covering of the letter from them like the chaff of corn, that we may be regaled with the marrow of the Spirit. It goes on;

Ver. 11. *They rest at mid-day amid the heaps of those that thirst with the winepresses being trodden.*

[liv]

67. All those that persecute Holy Church, what else do they but ‘tread the winepress?’ Which is allowed to be by the Divine appointment, that the clusters of souls may flow out into spiritual wine, and being divested of the corruptible flesh run into the heavenly realms as into a receptacle. For whilst the unrighteous bear down the righteous, they as it were put clusters of the grape beneath their feet. And the clusters being squeezed run over for the fulness of the heavenly feast, which were before as if hanging in the freedom of this air. Thus David the Prophet, regarding the chastening of Holy Church [b], writes the Psalm ‘for the winepresses.’ Now all that bear hard upon the life of the faithful, tread and thirst, in that by doing things that are cruel they are rendered the more savage; being blinded by just deserts of their ungodliness, they go about to do things more grievous the more they have already done grievous things. But Heretics, when they have not themselves the power of persecuting, stir up the men of this world that have power, and incline their minds for the exercising persecution, and inflame them with what persuasions they are able. And when they see these pursuing cruel measures against the lives of the Catholics, they as it were rest in the very fervour of the sun. Therefore it is well said now, *They rest at mid-day amidst the heaps of those that thirst with the winepresses being trodden*, in that they join the multitude of those whom they see already employed in hard measures and still thirsting after harder ones. And whilst the fervour of these satisfies their desires, they rest in the deeds of such as in the mid-day. It goes on ;

Ver. 12. *They have caused men to groan out of the cities.*

[lv]

68. Whereas cities (*civitates*) are so called from the people living together, (*conviventes*), by the designation of ‘cities’ the churches of the true faith are not unfitly represented, which being settled in the different parts of the world constitute one Catholic Church, in which all the faithful thinking what is right concerning God live together in harmony. For this very harmony of people living together the Lord even by the distinguishing of places set forth in the Gospel, when being about to satisfy the people with five loaves, He bade them lie down by fifties or hundreds in ranks, so that the crowd of the faithful might take its food at once separate in places, and united in ways. For the rest of the jubilee is contained in a mystery of the number fifty, and fifty is carried twice to be brought to a hundred. Therefore because there is first rest from bad practice, that the soul may afterwards rest more perfectly in the thoughts, some lie down by fifties and some by hundreds, since there are some that already enjoy the rest of practice from evil deeds, and there are some that already enjoy the rest of the soul from evil thoughts. Wherefore since Heretics often, attaching

themselves to the powerful evil-doers of this world, bear down upon the united life and harmony of the good, it is rightly said in this place, *They have caused men to groan from the cities.* Whom blessed Job rightly describes as ‘men,’ in that Heretics rather go about to put an end to those, who with perfect steps run in the way of God not effeminately and loosely but manfully; who when they see the wound of misbelieve inflicted in the mind of the faithful little ones, always fall back to crying out and groaning. And hence it is rightly said,  
*And the soul of the wounded crieth, and God suffereth him not to go unavenged.*

[lvi]

69. For the soul of the righteous is ‘wounded,’ when the faith of the weak is unsettled, unto whom this identical thing ‘to cry’ is to be now consumed for the downfall of another. But God does not suffer him to go unavenged, in that though by just appointment he suffers an unjust thing to be done, yet He does not let that unjust thing go unavenged which He has justly permitted to be done, seeing that at once by the injustice of the sons of perdition He smites certain sins of the Elect, which He sees to be in them, and yet by Eternal Justice does not neglect to smite the injustice of those smiters. It goes on,

Ver. 13. *They are rebellions against the light.*

[lvii]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

70. Very often wicked people at once know the right things that they ought to follow, and yet neglect to follow what they know; and so they are ‘rebellious against the light,’ in that following their desires, they condemn the good that they know. They then that do wrong not from ignorance, but pride, present the shield of their exaltation against the darts of truth, that they may not be stricken in heart to their good. By which same pride of theirs it is brought to pass, that whereas they will not do the things that they know, neither do they now know the good they should do, but that their own blindness should utterly exclude them from the light of truth. And hence it is fitly subjoined,

*They know not the ways thereof, nor have returned by the paths thereof.*

[lviii]

71. For they that are first rebels knowing it, are afterwards blinded so as not to know; as it is said of certain, *Because that when they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful.* [Rom 1, 21] Of whom it is added a little while afterwards, *God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.* [v. 28] For because they would not glorify Him Whom they knew, being given over to a reprobate sense, they were left to this fate, that they should not any longer know how to estimate the evil things they did. And it is well said, *They know not the ways thereof, neither have returned by the paths thereof.* For a ‘path’ is narrower than a ‘way.’ Now those that care not to do the plainer good works, never attain to the understanding of the more refined. But Almighty God waited that they might go ‘by the paths thereof.’ And would that they had been minded even to have ‘returned’ by them, that the paths of life which they would not keep by innocency they might at least keep by repentance. Wherein of what great mercifulness are the bowels of God is shewn, in that those whom He sees departing from Him, He seeks that they may return. Hence after the sins; of those doing wrong having been enumerated, He calls back the

Synagogue by the voice of Prophecy, saying; *Therefore at least from this time cry unto Me, My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth.* [Jer. 3, 4] It proceeds;  
Ver. 14. *The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.*

[lix]

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

72. Whereas the murderer in the killing of his neighbours is wont to come upon them chiefly in the silence of the night, why is it that he is said in this place to 'rise with the light' in order to 'kill the poor and needy,' whilst 'in the night' he is described 'to be as a thief?' Now forasmuch as the letter in the bare words alone is not consistent with itself, we are called back for the investigating the hidden meanings of the Spirit. In Holy Scripture the 'morning' is sometimes used to be put for the coming of the Lord's Incarnation, sometimes for the coming of the henceforth dreadful and searching Judge, sometimes for the prosperity of the present life. Thus the coming of the Lord's Incarnation proved a 'morning,' as the Prophet saith, *The morning cometh, and also the night;* [Is. 21, 12] in that both the beginnings of the new light shone forth in the appearing of our Redeemer, and yet the shades of their misbelief were not cleared off from the hearts of the persecutors. Again, by the 'morning' the coming of the Judge is denoted. Whence it is said by the Psalmist, *Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land.* [Ps. 101, 8] As also when personating the Elect, he says, *In the morning will I stand in Thy presence, and will look up.* [Ps. 5, 3] Again, by the 'morning' this life's prosperity is represented. as where it is said by Solomon, *Woe to thee, O land, when thy King is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning.* [Ecc. 10, 16] For whereas the morning is the first part of the day and the evening the last, we ought not ever to be regaled by this life's prosperity which goes first, but by those things which at the end of the day, that is at the termination of the world, follow after. Thus those 'eat in the morning,' who by this world's successes are lifted up, and whilst they passionately interest themselves with present things, pay no heed to the things of the future. For *whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.* [1 John 3, 15] So the 'murderer rises up with the earliest dawn,' in that every wicked man is set up in the glory of the present life, and bears down the life of those, who whilst they thirst after the glory to follow, as it were anxiously look out to be filled in the evening. For the bad man in this world whilst seizing on the dignity of transitory power spreads himself out the more cruelly for the enacting of what is evil, in proportion as there is no man he loves in the bowels of charity. For as often as in the thoughts of his heart he is maddened against the good, so often does he kill the life of the innocent.

73. And if, God ordaining it, he suddenly lose the glory of the power he has gotten, he changes his place but not his disposition, for he directly falls away to that, which is subjoined, *And in the night is as a thief.* For in the night of his tribulation and sunkenness, though he has no power to put forth the hand of cruelty, yet to those whom he sees to be empowered, he recommends counsels of wickedness, and goes about hither and thither, and prompts whatever things he is able toward the injuring of the good. And he is rightly called 'as a thief,' because in all those very evil counsels of his he dreads lest he should be caught out. He then that towards the poor and needy is a murderer in the morning, in the night like a thief is hidden out of sight, in that every bad man, who in this life's prosperity by bearing down kills the life of the humble, being in adversity and abasement, by evil counsels does mischief in a concealed way, and what he is unable to accomplish by himself, that he puts in practice by attaching himself to the powerful ones of this world. It goes on;  
Ver. 15. *The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me.*

[lx]

74. There is nothing to hinder but that this may be understood even after the latter, seeing that he who desires to commit adultery, seeks out the dark. But whereas it is a sentence uttered against Heretics, it is meet that this thing which is declared be understood in a mystical sense. Thus Paul says, *For we are not as many that adulterate* [Vulg. *adulterantes*] *the word of God.* [2 Cor. 2, 17] For the adulterer seeks not offspring, but pleasure in the act of carnal copulation. And every bad man, and that is also a slave to vain-glory, is rightly said to ‘adulterate’ the word of God, because by the sacred word of Revelation he desires not to beget children to God, but to exhibit his own knowledge. For he that is drawn to speak by lust of glory, bestows his pains rather on gratification than the production of children. And it is rightly added there, *No eye shall see me*; because the adultery which is committed in the interior is very hard indeed that it should be penetrated by the eye of man. Which same the froward soul commits with the more assurance, in proportion as it does not fear being seen by men, whom it may blush at. Moreover it is to be known that as he that commits adultery joins to himself unlawfully the flesh of another man’s wife, so all heretics, while they carry off the faithful soul into their own error, are as it were bearing off another’s wife, in this way; because the soul which is spiritually wedded to God and joined to Him as if in a kind of bridechamber of love, when by wicked persuasions it is led on into corruptness of doctrine, is as it were like the wife of another defiled by the corrupter. And it is well added;  
*And disguiseth his face.*

[lxi]

75. It is for this reason that the adulterer ‘disguises his face;’ that he may not be known. Now every man who either in thinking or in acting lives badly, ‘disguises his face,’ because by corruptness in doctrine or in practice he is tending to this, that he should not be able to be recognised in the Judgment by Almighty God. Hence He shall say to certain persons at the end, *I never knew you; depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.* [Matt. 7, 23] And what is the ‘face’ of the human heart, save the likeness of God? which same face the bad man ‘disguiseth,’ that he may not be able to be known, when his life discomposes either by bad deeds, or by the error of misbelief. But every such person when he sees the righteous upheld by this world’s good fortune, never ventures to prompt what is wrong to them, but if any storm of adversity falls upon those persons, he directly breaks out into words of pestilent persuasion. And hence it is added;  
Ver. 16. *In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day time; they know not the light.*

[lxii]

76. For what is there here denoted by the title of ‘houses’ but consciences, wherein we dwell, when we do any thing, busying ourselves with it? Whence it is said to one on being healed, *Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee* [Luke 8, 39]; i.e. henceforth, secure from the evil habit of sin, turn back to thy conscience, and be thou roused into the voice of preaching.’ And so when in the present world the righteous are brightened by the day of prosperity, to those persons the leaders of false tenets are afraid to recommend what is wrong. But they search out counsels, with all care they await the abasement of their prosperity, that in the darkness of adversity they may by their persuading dig through the minds of those, to whom whilst

living prosperously they never presumed to speak wrong things, whom as soon as they see under adversity they rise up and maintain, that no otherwise saving in desert of their sins those suffer such things; because loving the glory of the present life alone, the stroke they take for condemnation. So 'in the dark they dig through houses,' in that the minds of the good by their mere misfortune alone to corrupt is their endeavour. Now it is well said, *which they had marked in the day time*, in that when they saw the righteous to have been made to shine with the light of prosperity, because they were prevented speaking, they were only at liberty for concocting malevolent designs against them. But whether it be heretics or any bad persons, they rejoice when they see the righteous in a depressed condition, whereas when they see those break forth to the height of power for ruling, they are confounded, they are filled with fears, they are consumed with misery. And hence it is added,

Ver. 17. *If the morning suddenly appear, it is to them even as the shadow of death.*

[lxiii]

77. For the wicked look for the afflicting of the righteous, and long to see them in distress, and 'in the dark they dig through houses,' when the heart of the innocent but weak ones they corrupt in the season of their casting down by the worst mode of discourse. But it commonly happens that when they see the good in a sunken state, on a sudden, by the secret appointment of God, any righteous one that seemed to be borne down is upheld by some share of the world's power, and the prosperity of the present life smiles on him, whom the darkness of adversity before overlaid. Which same prosperity of that man when the wicked behold, as it has been said, *they are troubled*. For directly they turn back to their own hearts, they bring back before their minds' eye whatever they remember themselves to have done amiss, they fear for every particular sinful habit to be avenged in them, and by the same means by which he that receives power is made to shine the bad man who dreads to be corrected is darkened in sorrow. And so it is well said, *If the morning suddenly appear, they think it is the shadow of death*. For 'the morning' is the mind of the righteous man, which quitting the darkness of its sin, now breaks out unto the light of eternity, as it is said of Holy Church likewise; *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?* [Cant. 6, 10] Therefore in the same measure that every righteous person shining with the light of righteousness is in the present life reared to a height with honours, in the same measure before the eyes of the wicked comes the 'darkness of death,' in that they who remember that they have done bad things are in fear of being corrected. For they desire always to have a loose given them in their iniquities, to live free from correction, and from sin to have delight; whose fatal mirth is itself appropriately described in the words that are directly introduced,  
*And they walk so in darkness, as in the light.*

[lxiv]

78. For with a froward mind they delight in deeds of wickedness, through their sin they are day by day being dragged to punishment, and are full of assurance. Hence it is said by Solomon, *And there are wicked men that are as secure as if they had the deeds of the righteous*. Concerning whom it is written again, *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the most wicked doings*. Thus 'they walk in darkness as in the light,' in that they so delight in the night of sin as if the light of righteousness spread around them. Or otherwise, whereas darkness not inappropriately represents the present life, wherein the consciences of other men are not seen, whilst our light is the eternal



land, in which when we look at faces, our hearts within us we mutually see; and because the wicked so love the present life, and embrace these times of exile, as if they already reigned in their native country, it is rightly said, *They walk in darkness as in the light*, in that they are as full of gladness in the present state of blindness, as if they already enjoyed the light of the eternal country. It goes on; *He is light above the face of the water*.

[lxv]

79. From the plural number he returns to the singular because most frequently one person begins what is bad, and numbers by imitating him follow after, but the fault is primarily his, who to the bad men following after furnished examples of wickedness; and hence the sentence frequently returns to him who was the leader in sin. Now the surface of water is carried hither and thither by the breath of the air, and not being steadied with any fixedness is put in motion every where. And so the mind of the wicked man is 'lighter than the surface of water,' in that every breath of temptation that touches it, draws it on without any retarding of resistance. For if we imagine the unstable heart of any bad man, what do we discover but a surface of water set in the wind? For that man one while the breath of anger drives on, now the breath of pride, now the breath of lust, now the breath of envy, now the breath of falsehood forces along. And so he is 'light above the surface of the water,' whom every wind of error when it comes drives before it. Whence too it is well said by the Psalmist, *O my God, make them like a wheel, as the stubble before the wind*. For the wicked are 'made like a wheel,' in that being sent into the round of labour, whilst the things that are before they neglect, and those which ought to be given up they follow, in the hind parts they are lifted up, and in the fore parts they fall. And they are likewise rightly compared to 'stubble before the face of the wind,' in that, when the breath of temptation comes upon them, having no principle of gravity to rest upon, they are only lifted up to be dashed to the ground, and they often account themselves of some merit in proportion as the blast of error bears them on high. It goes on; *Let their portion be cursed in the earth; and let him not walk by the way of the vineyards*.

[lxvi]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

80. Whoever in the present life does what is right and meets with misfortunes, is seen indeed to travail in adversity, but for the blessing of the everlasting inheritance he is finished complete; but whoever does what is bad and yet meets with good fortune, and does not even by the bountifulness of blessings withhold himself from wicked deeds, is seen indeed to prosper, but is tied fast by the bond of everlasting cursing. Hence it is rightly said now, *Let their portion be cursed in the earth*, in that though he is blessed for a time, yet he is held fast in the bond of cursing. Concerning whom too it is fitly added, *He walketh not by the way of the vineyards*. For 'the way of the vineyards,' is the rightness of the Churches. Wherein nothing hinders but that we understand either the heretic or every carnal man, because 'the way of the vineyards,' i.e. the rightness of the Churches, is parted with, when either the right faith or the right rule of just living is not held. For he 'walks by the way of the Vineyards,' who taking to heart the preaching of the Holy Catholic Church, deviates neither from the right line of faith nor of good deeds. Since to 'walk in the way of the vineyards' is to behold the Fathers of Holy Church as hanging clusters of the vine, whose words whilst he heeds in the toils of the journey, he is intoxicated with the love of Eternity. It goes on; Ver. 19. *Let him pass to excessive heat from the snow waters*.

[lxvii]

81. Iniquity is on this account likened to cold, because the mind that sins it binds up with insensibility. Hence it is written; *As a fountain has made her waters cold, so she has made her wickedness cold.* Contrariwise charity is 'heat,' in this respect that it fires the soul it fills. Of which 'heat' is written, *Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.* And there are some who while they shun the cold or their wickednesses come to true faith or to the wearing of sanctity, but because they presume on their own faculties for perceiving more than should be, oftentimes in the faith which they receive they are minded to pry curiously into the things that they do not take in, so as to be held fast in God rather by reason than by faith. But because the mind of man has not power to dive into the mysteries of God; all that they cannot get to the bottom of by reason, they care not to believe, and by overmuch investigation they fall into error. So these, when they did not as yet believe, or were still busied for works of wickedness, were 'snow waters;' but when abandoning carnal deeds, in the faith to which they have been brought they aim to dive deeper than they have capacity for, they are hot beyond what they ought to be. And so touching this wicked kind of person the sentence of one prophesying only and not wishing the thing is rightly delivered. *Let him pass in overmuch heat from the snow waters.* As if it were said in plain speech; 'he that is not restrained in humility under the fetters of self-discipline, from his unbelief, or from the coldness of bad practice, through immoderate wisdom falls into error. Whence too the great Preacher getting quit of this excessive heat of too refined wisdom from the hearts of his disciples saith well, *Not to be wise of himself above that he ought to be wise; but to be wise unto sobriety.* [Rom. 12, 3] Lest perchance excessive heat might destroy those, of whom 'snow waters,' i.e. unbelief, or the fruits of deadened actions, held possession in the way to die. And because it is very difficult for him who accounts himself wise to bring down his mind to humility and believe those that preach right things, and reject the view of his own wrong thought, it is rightly said; Ver. 19. *And his sin even to hell.*

[lxviii]

82. For sin is 'brought even to hell,' which before the end of the present life is not by chastening reformed unto repentance. Of which same sin it is said by John, *There is a sin unto death, I do not say that he shall pray for it.* For 'a sin unto death' is a sin even until death in this way, that the pardon of that sin is sought in vain which is not corrected here. Concerning which same it is yet further subjoined;

Ver. 20. *Let mercy forget him.*

Almighty God's mercy is said to 'forget him,' who has forgotten Almighty God's justice, in that whoever does not fear Him now as just, can never find him merciful afterward. Which same sentence is not only held out against him, who abandons the preachings of true faith, but against him likewise, who being in the right faith lives a carnal life, in that the vengeance of eternal condemnation is not got quit of, whether sin lie in faith or practice. For though the kind of condemnation be unequal, yet guilt which is not wiped away by repentance, there is no means supplied for the absolving thereof. It goes on;

*The worm is his sweetness.*

[lxix]

83. Whoever desires to make his way prosperous in this world, to surpass the rest of the world, to swell high with substance and honours, to this man no doubt worldly business is a delight, and repose a labour. For he is very much tired if the business of the world be lacking wherewith to be tired. Now because it belongs to the nature of worms to be put in motion unceasingly every moment, restlessness of thoughts is not unjustly denoted by the name of 'worms.' And so 'the worm is the sweetness' of the wicked soul, in that he is fed to his satisfaction from the same source whence he is unceasingly agitated in restlessness. Moreover it may be that by the title of the 'worm' the flesh may be more plainly denoted. Hence it is said further on, *How much less man that is a worm? or the son of man which is a worm?* [c.17, 14. and 25, 6] And so of everyone that is full of lust and devoted to the pleasures of the flesh, how great is the blindness is shewn, when it is said, *The worm, is his sweetness.* For what is our flesh but 'rottenness' and 'the worm?' And whosoever pants with carnal desires, what else does he but love 'the worm?' For what the substance of the flesh is, our graves bear witness. What parent, what faithful friend can bear to touch the flesh of one however beloved fraught with worms? And so when the flesh is lusted after, let it be considered what it is when lifeless, and it is understood what it is that is loved. For nothing has so much efficacy to subdue the appetite of carnal desire, as for every one to consider, what that which he loves alive will be when dead. For when we consider the corruption of the flesh, we see in a moment, that when the flesh is unlawfully lusted after, corruption is desired. Therefore it is well said of the mind of the lustful man, *the worm is his sweetness*, in that he who is on fire with the desire of carnal corruption, pants after the stink of rottenness.

All this, as I remember that I promised in the beginning of this third part, I have run over in brief, that the things which follow after in this work, as they are involved in great obscurity, may with God's aid be more fully gone into.

## THE FOURTH PART.

### BOOK XVII.

What remains of the twenty-fourth chapter beginning from the middle of verse 20, together with chapters twenty-five and twenty-six entire, he sets forth chiefly in a moral sense.

#### [i] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

As often as in the history of the holy man we betake ourselves in a new book to unravel the mystery of the typical explanation, it must be either from that man's name or course of suffering that we mainly draw out the mystical interpretation, so that after the manner of dwelling houses, whilst we set forth a superscription of the title on the very front of the door post, whereas it is known whose house it is, one may enter with greater security. Now I remember that I have often said that blessed Job, both by his course of suffering and his name, marked out the sufferings of our Redeemer, and of His Body, i.e. Holy Church. For 'Job' is by interpretation 'Grieving.' And who else is represented in this grieving one saving He, concerning Whom it is written, *Surely He hath born our griefs and carried our sorrows.* [Is. 53, 4] Concerning Whom again it is written, *And with His bruise we are healed?* [ib. 5] But his friends bear the likeness of heretics, who, as we have often

said already, while they set themselves to defend, only offend God. Thus let the holy man by words and wounds so tell things of his own as at the same time to set forth ours also, and most often, by the spirit of prophecy, relate things to come, surmount things present, yet sometimes so tell of those present as to be silent touching those future, The keeping then of this exercise of discernment being understood in accordance with the altering of his voice, let our understanding likewise turn about, that it may agree the more truly with his ideas in proportion as it also shifts itself with his accents. Thus by the preceding words the holy man, in sentences eloquently formed by the art of wisdom, set forth the offences of the bad man of whatever kind, and represented how damnable his conduct was, of whose punishment he directly adds, saying,  
*Let him not be in remembrance; let him be crushed like an unfruitful stump.*

[ii] [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

2. For he is not brought back into the 'remembrance' of his Creator, whosoever to the very end of his life is in subjection to evil habits. Since if the recollection of the regard from Above did make itself felt on such an one, assuredly it would recall him from his wickedness. For his deserts require that he should be utterly blotted out from his Maker's remembrance. But it is to be borne in mind that God can never strictly be said to 'remember;' for One Who cannot forget, in what way is it possible for Him to remember? But whereas it is our way that those whom we remember we embrace, but those whom we forget we part far from, after the usage of man God is both said to 'remember,' when He bestows gifts, and to forget, when He forsakes one in guilt. But because He weighs all things, views all without any alternating of intermission, He both remembers the good, whom still He never forgets, and no wise remembers the bad, whom nevertheless in judgment He does ever behold. For He as it were returns to the recollection of the good, which same nevertheless He never quitted, and as it were He never regards the bad, whose deeds howsoever He has an eye on, but reserves for the last scene the judgment of condemnation thereupon. For hence it is written, *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* [Prov. 15, 3] Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *The face of the Lord is upon them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* [Ps. 34, 16] Therefore the persons for Him to punish He does regard, but those very persons before He did not see, in that He 'knows them not.' For He shall say to some at the end, *I know You not whence ye are; depart from me, ye that work iniquity.* [Luke 13, 27] Thus, in a wonderful way, He both beholds and forgets the life of bad men, in that those whom by severity of sentence He judges, as regards the remembrance of mercy He is ignorant of.

3. And these same, because they do not come into His remembrance, like an unfruitful slump are broken to pieces by His judgment. For the earth supported them with a temporal outfitting, the shower of preaching poured down on them from above. But because their life never put forth the fruit of good works, the husbandman in anger cut it clean away, that according to the sentence of Truth it might not cumber the space, which another may occupy for fruit. Of which same 'unfruitful stump' it is said by John, *And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.* [Matt. 3, 10. Luke 3, 9] But in this place, in order that the eternal punishments of the lost sinner may be denoted, the tree is not said to be cut away, but to be broken to pieces, in that the death indeed of the flesh cuts off the reprobate, but the punishment ensuing breaks them in pieces. For here it is as it were cut down, when he is severed from the present life. But in hell it is broken in pieces, when he is tortured with everlasting damnation. But the holy man, as he set forth the strict punishment of

the froward one, at once falls back to the sin, that by the immensity of the unjustness he may effectually teach that that excessive damnation of him was not unjust. It goes on;  
Ver. 21. *For he fed the barren and her that beareth not, and to the widow he did not do good.*

[iii]

4. Who is it in this place that is denominated 'barren' saving the flesh, which while it goes after things present alone is not able to engender good thoughts? and who is styled 'a widow' but the soul, which same because the Maker was minded to unite to Himself, He came to the marriage chamber of the carnal womb, as the Psalmist testifies, who saith, *Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber?* [Ps. 19, 5] And she is rightly called 'a widow,' in that her Husband underwent death in her behalf, and now in the retreats of heaven hidden from her eyes as in the tract of another region He lives. Thus the wicked man 'feeds the barren' and scorns to 'do good to the widow,' because in obeying the desires of the flesh, he makes little of the care of the soul and its life. For with the whole bent and with every effort he considers how without necessities of any kind the flesh which is to die may be made to hold on, and he is indifferent to concern himself for the life of the soul, which either in death or in bliss most surely lives for evermore. Now it is rightly done that when it is said, *He fed the barren*, it is directly added, *and her that beareth not*. For certain women we know from sacred history were found 'barren,' but yet in the end of their days brought forth. But the flesh is not only called barren, but also she that beareth not, in that of her own wit not even at the last is she capable of begetting good thoughts. For from her own vigour she is now already going off, and yet things transitory she still ceases not to long for, and being now spent of original force, is well nigh thrown off by that very world which she loves, yet by mischievous endeavour still strives to acquire what is temporal. She now no longer has the ability to do wicked things, yet does not a whit cease to mind in thought even the things which she does not in act. Rightly therefore is she called not only 'barren,' but also 'one that beareth not,' in that of her own wit, as we said, for the offspring of good thought, not even when she has become powerless does she conceive.

5. Which same may likewise be understood of heretical persons preaching. For every single preacher of error, while he teaches a people set without the pale of the Church's unity, is surely 'feeding the barren, and her that cannot bear,' seeing that he is bestowing the serviceableness of his labour upon her, who never makes any return of spiritual fruits. 'Neither does he do good to the widow,' forasmuch as for that Holy Church Universal, whose Husband suffered the adverse treatment of death, he scorns to live to and to serve. For to 'do good to the widow' is to take much pains in the consoling of her, who by the love of her dead Husband is crushed to the ground. And hence by the voice of the Psalmist this same widow, i.e. Holy Church, makes complaint, saying, *I looked for comforters, but I found none*. Since then only does she 'find a comforter,' when from that death which her husband underwent, she beholds many within herself arise to life. Now very often the preacher of error is allied with the rich of this world, who for this reason, that they strain over earthly employments, are too blind to detect the crafty tricks of the things delivered, and whereas they go about to be powerful without, they are taken without labour by the noose of froward preaching. Hence too it is added;  
Ver. 22. *He took away the mighty in his might.*

6. Since in the might of his wickedness the mighty he severally takes away, whilst by the craftiness of his error he carries off the great ones of this world. In opposition to whom it is said by Paul, *God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty.* [1 Cor. 1, 27] Now the 'might' of the corrupt preacher is the high-flown science of his speaking, puffed up with which he despises all the rest of the world, and in contempt of all men, as being preeminently proficient in himself, he swells big. Who whilst thinking what is great of himself, and not knowing what is true of God, is parted far from knowledge of the faith, and yet endeavours to make himself appear a preacher thereof. Whence it is further added; *And when he standeth, he will not believe his like.*

[v]

7. Every evil preacher 'standeth' in this world, so long as he lives in an earthly body. But he refuses to 'believe his life,' because he is too proud to open his eyes to what is true relating to God. For he would 'believe his life,' if he had right notions concerning the Substance of his Creator. These things, then, we were describing above as spoken of every bad man, but we suddenly made the meaning turn to the preacher of error. Whence it is to be noted, that we are so drawn on to the special case as not yet in any wise to be quite taken off from the general. For every bad man, even if he seem to maintain the faith in the bosom of the Church Universal, 'standeth and believeth not his life,' because they are right things indeed which by faith he understands of his Creator, yet the works of faith he cares not to maintain; and he is convicted of unbelief, in that, even from that which he sets forth as his creed, by his way of living he is condemned. For hence it is said by John, *He that saith he knoweth God, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar.* [1 John 2, 4] Hence Paul saith, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.* [Tit. 1, 16] Hence James saith, *Faith without works is dead.* [Jam. 2, 20. 26.] But amidst all this the Creator by a wonderful economy of counsel at once has an eye to offences, and bestows periods of living, that the lengthened portions of temporal life may to the person either being converted be turned into the furtherance of reward, or not being converted to the heightening of condemnation. Hence it is yet further subjoined,  
Ver. 23. *God hath given unto him room for repentance, and he abuseth it in pride.*

[vi]

8. Whosoever commits sin and lives, such a person Divine Appointment for this reason bears with in iniquity, that it may withhold him from iniquity. But he that is borne with for a longer time, and yet is not withholden from iniquity, is vouchsafed indeed the benefit of the patience Above, yet with the chains of his guilt is by that very benefit binding himself the tighter. For because the times of repentance vouchsafed he diverts to sin, the strict Judge in the end converts the instances of mercy bestowed into punishment. Hence it is said by Paul; *Or knowest thou not that the longsuffering of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.* [Rom. 2, 4.5.] Hence Isaiah saith, *For the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.* [Is. 65, 20] As though he deterred us in plain words, saying, 'The life of a child indeed is drawn to a great length, in order that he may be corrected of childish doings, but if he be not even by length of time restrained from the commission of sin, this very length of life, which he received in pitifulness, is made to grow to him into an

aggravation of cursing.’ Whence it is necessary that the longer time that we see ourselves to be waited for, we fear the very seasons of pitifulness before granted [*praerogatae*] as the grounds of condemnation, lest by the clemency of the Judge the punishment of the sinner should be heightened, and by the same means whereby anyone might have been rescued from death, he should tend to death in a manner the more disastrous. Which is for this reason very often brought to pass, because the eye of the mind is not in the least degree weaned from things present. For the sinner is careless to regard the ways of the Redeemer, and so he grows old in his own paths without stopping. Hence it is added;  
*For his eyes are upon his ways.*

[vii]

9. For the sinner ‘regards his own ways,’ because he sets himself to mind only, to have an eye only for, things which may stand him in stead for temporal advantage. Thus it is hence Paul saith, *All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ’s*. [Phil. 2, 21] For the way of the highminded is pride; the way of the robber, avarice; the way of the lecherous, carnal concupiscence. Thus every bad man bends his eyes down on his own ways, in that he is intent on vicious pursuits alone, that by these he may satisfy his mind. Whence it is said by Solomon, *The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*; because that only they regard with the whole bent of the heart, whereby they may attain to the end of earthly desire. Now the sinner would never fix the gaze of his looking on earth, if he lifted up the eyes of the mind to the holy paths of his Redeemer. Whence it is again said by Solomon, *The wise man’s eyes are in his head*; [Eccl. 2, 14] in this way, viz. that with undivided intentness the wise man regards Him, of Whom he reflects by faith that he is a member. For these ways of man’s walk and conversation, he had deemed it little worth to have in his eye, who said, *I will meditate in Thy statutes, and have respect unto Thy ways*. [Ps. 119, 15] As if he gave his word in plain terms, saying, ‘The things which are mine own I henceforth eschew the seeing of, in that by the path of the imitating of Thee I burn to go on in the steps of behaviour.’ For he who henceforth withstands the present world, by the continual inciting of love presents the ways of his Redeemer to the eyes of the heart, that so the mind may eschew what is prosperous, be in readiness for what is adverse, desire nought that soothes down, dread nought that is supposed to dismay, account sorrow joy, estimate the delights of the present life as the ills of woe, not fear the diminutions of a state of scorn, but thereby-seek room for enduring glory. For these ways Truth shewed to the eyes of those that were following Him, when He said, *If any man serve Me, let him follow Me*. [John 12, 26] To these ways he recalled the swelling hearts of the Disciples, when they were already seeking room for glory, but knew not the pathway of that glory, saying, *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?* For they had been seeking the height of that session with Him on the right hand and on the left hand, but how great the narrowness of the pathway thereunto they did not see; and hence the cup of the Passion is at once presented to their eyes as a thing for them to imitate, that, surely, if they were making for the joys of exaltedness, they should first find the way of humility. And therefore because the sinner is careless to have an eye to the ways of God, but is bent on those only wherein he may be made to delight in a carnal manner, it is rightly said in this place, *For his eyes are upon his ways*. It proceeds;  
Ver. 24. *They are exalted for a little while, but they shall not hold on.*

[viii]

10. The glory of bad men, whilst it is for the most part extended into a multitude of years, is by the minds of the weak reckoned to be long and as it were stable; but when an instantaneous end cuts it off, surely it proves to its face that it was short, because the end by putting a limit makes it known that that which was capable of passing away was little. And so 'they are exalted for a little while, and do not hold on,' because from the mere circumstance that they seek to appear high, they are by self-exalting made far removed from the true essence of God. For they are not able to hold on, because they are severed from the solid basis of the Eternal Essence, and they undergo this first ruining, that by glorying in self they fall in themselves. For hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou castedst them down, when they were lifted up* [Ps. 73, 18]; because they are brought down within, in proportion as they arise wrongly without. Regarding this shortness of temporal glory, he saith again; *I have seen the wicked above measure exalted, and lifted up like a cedar of Libanus; I passed by, and lo, he was gone.* [Ps. 37, 35] Hence again he saith, *For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be.* [ib. 10] Hence James says, *For what is Your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time.* Hence the Prophet reflecting on the shortness of carnal glory, tells it forth, saying, *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of hay.* [Is. 40, 6] For the power of the wicked is likened to the 'flower of hay,' because the glory of the flesh, whilst it shines bright, it falls, whilst it is exalted in itself, cut off by a sudden end it is brought to a close. For in the same way by the blowing of breezes the stubble is caught on high, but by an instantaneous fall it is brought back to earth below. Thus the smoke is lifted up to the clouds, but suddenly whilst swelling out it is scattered to nought. Thus the vapour from beneath thickening lifts itself on high, but the ray of the sun when risen clears it away, as though it had not been. Thus on the surface of the herbs the moisture of the dew of night is sprinkled, but by the sudden heat of the light of day it is dried away. Thus the foamy bubbles of water, raised on showers beginning, come forth racing from within, but being burst asunder they come to nought the more quickly in proportion as being inflated they are raised higher, and when they grow to a head, so as to appear, in growing they make it that they should 'not hold on.' Therefore concerning the wicked that are swoln with the exaltation of temporal glory, and yet not enduring with any stedfastness in this glory, let it be rightly said, *they are exalted for a little while, but they shall not hold on.* Of whom it is yet further added;  
*And they shall be brought low as all things, and shall be taken away.*

[ix]

11. Such should be the advancement of contemplation, that it should be carried off from few things to the taking a view of many, from many to taking a view of all things, so that being led forth step by step it should advance; and whilst judging all things transitory should by comprehending itself grow forth well nigh incomprehensibly. Hence the holy man, whilst he was sifting the glory and the failing of the wicked, stretched to 'all things' presently the eye of the mind, saying, *they shall be brought low as all things, and shall be taken away;* 'all things' earthly assuredly. As though he said in plain words; 'They cannot any way stand, because the very things flee away as well whereon they rest for support, and while they are in love with things temporal, along with these by the currency of time they run to an end.' But it may be asked, whereas it is said by Solomon, *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever* [Eccl. 1, 4]; why does blessed Job declare that all things 'are brought low, and taken away?' Yet this we easily sift out, if we keep distinct how earth and heaven either pass away or remain. For both these in respect of that figure which they now have pass away, yet in respect of their essence they are



held in being without end. Hence it is said by Paul, *For the fashion of this world passeth away*. [1 Cor. 7, 31] Hence Truth saith by Itself, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away*. [Mat. 24, 35] Hence it is told John by the voice of the Angel, *There shall be a new heaven and a new earth*. [Rev. 21, 1] Which indeed are not to be created other things, but these very same are renewed. And thus heaven and earth at once 'pass away' and 'shall be,' seeing that both by fire from that fashion which they now have they are clean wiped out, and yet in their own nature are ever preserved. Hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed*. [Ps. 102, 26] Which same final changing of themselves they do now announce to us by those very successions, whereby for our services they unceasingly shift about. For the earth by the dryness; of winter falls off from its fashion, by the moisture of spring it is made green. Heaven is every day overlaid by the darkness of night, and renewed by the brightness of day. Hence, then, hence let every believer gather that these things both perish, and yet by renewal are restored, which it is plain are now perpetually as it were from decay being refitted. In the midst of all this then the holy man, whilst he beholds the course of the wicked, makes it known with what a visitation they are one day to come to nought, when he forthwith adds;  
*And as the tops of the ears of corn they shall be crushed.*

[x]

12. For the tops of the ears of corn are the beards; now the beards come out joined in an ear of corn, but going on growing little by little they are separated from one another bristly and rough. Thus, verily, thus, as to this world's glory do the evil-minded rich ones rise up. For by a fellowship of nature they are joined to one another, but going on increasing they are in turn divided against one another. For one looks down upon another, and a second is inflamed against a third with the torches of envy; they then who by the swelling of the mind separate themselves from the unity of charity, as it were after the way of beards stand bristling against one another. What then might I have called the evil-minded rich ones of this world but a kind of beards of the human race, who while they are lifted high against one another, but with one consent press hard upon the life of the good, are indeed divided against themselves, yet with one accord bear down the grains beneath.

13. At this present time then the beards spring up on high, the grains lie hidden; because both the power of lost sinners towers high, and the glory of the Elect does not appear. The one shew themselves off in the high estate of honours, the others lower themselves in humility. But the time of winnowing will arrive, which is calculated both to break the bristling of the beards, and not to bruise the solid grains. For then the pride of the wicked is broken in pieces, then the life of the Elect is shewn to view, with what faultlessness it shines bright; in that while the unrighteous are undone, by this very crushing of the beard it is brought to pass that the grains should appear, which were holden out of sight; and when the beards are broken, the whiteness of the grains is made to appear, because upon the wicked falling into everlasting punishments, the righteousness of the Saints is manifested, with what truth it is shining white. Whence too it is rightly said by John, *Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner: but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire*. [Matt. 3, 12] So let blessed Job mark with what awful visitation the pride of bad men shall be broken, and comparing them to beards that perish, let him say, *Like the tops of ears of corn they shall be crushed*. Surely because the bristling of the proud is broken by the stress of the final winnowing, whereas now looking down upon the life of the Elect it is lifted up. It proceeds;

Ver. 25. *And if it be not so now, who will convict me of having lied, and set my words before God?*

[xi]

14. If it be not so as he tells, then surely all people are able to convict him of falsehood. Why then is it said, *And if it be not so now, who will convict me of having lied?* i.e. whilst we know that, one who is false, it is allowed anyone to find fault with? But if we sift out the sense of the speaker with exact questioning, how light the things are that he put forth, we speedily discover. For the righteous man, though he does ever speak any thing wrong, yet it is far from meet that he should be judged by the unrighteous and ill living. Whence the holy man lowering the pride of his friends, not even if it be so, but even 'if it be not so' as he set forth, is confident that he can never be found fault with, because assuredly those are able rightly to reprove things that are false, who are not taught to do things that are false. For the daring of reproof against deceit those persons lose, who still live on principles of deceit. Therefore he says, *And if it be riot so now, who will convict me of having lied?* As if he said in plain words; 'All things are so as I have set forth, but if they were not so, I could not a whit be charged home with them by you; for whilst ye still give way to your own deceit, ye are not able to find fault with the deceit of another.'

15. In which place it is fitly added; *And to set my words before God.* For whoever really finds fault with false sayings in the true way, in thinking on the things he has heard and estimating them by the rule of truth 'sets words before God,' because to himself in the eye of Truth he makes proof what he should outwardly decree against falsehood. Since 'to set words before God' is with the interior Judge kept in view to estimate the exterior sayings. Thus the holy man does not reckon it possible for his 'words to be set before God' by friends behaving with pride. As if he said in plain terms, 'The things which I utter ye are for this reason unable to set before the Judge, because by committing sin ye hide His face from you?' Which same, however, nothing hinders from being understood in type of Holy Church as well, which whilst for her weak members she is found fault with by the scoffing of heretics, laughs to scorn that same craftiness of their scoffing, because with God it is more tolerable that a man should be prostrated in weakness and in ignorance, in conjunction with humility, than that he should compass high themes with self-exaltation. But forasmuch as the holy man had uttered many words against those, who by transitory power are made proud, and with windy honours swell themselves out; by his rebuke Bildad the Shuhite gaining ground has his eyes opened to see with Whom true power is deposited; saying, Ver. 2. *Dominion and fear are with Him; Who maketh peace in His high places.*

[xii]

[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

16. As though he expressed himself in plain words; 'He only truly terrifies the hearts of mortals, who by the power of His Divine nature truly possesses these.' For what terror does the power of man infuse, which knows not when it may lack the light of that power? Now it is rightly said, *He maketh peace in His high places.* Because there are many things at variance with themselves below, but they run answerably to the harmonious fulness of things above, and by the causing of the interior peace it is brought to pass, that oftentimes the things that are without are ordered without peace. Thus the good, Almighty God is advancing to merit, when He permits the bad to rage against their life; and things above are made to fit together in harmony, whilst those below are

thrown into confusion; because in the heavenly world He joins His Elect to the choirs of the Angels by the same means, whereby in the earthly and lowest scene of things, He bears the practices of lost sinners opposing His behests.

17. But herein it is of interest to us to enquire, if the highest peace is maintained 'in the high places,' what that is which is said to Daniel by the Angel, *I am come for thy words; but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.* [Dan. 10, 13] And a little afterward; *And now will I return to fight with the prince of the Persians. For when I was going forth there appeared the prince of the Greeks coming.* [v. 20] Whom else then but Angels does he call the 'Princes' of the nations, that could have had the power to resist him as he went forth? Accordingly what peace can there be 'in the high places,' if even among the Angelical spirits themselves also there is a conflict of warring carried on, who are always standing present to the view of Truth? But because there are fixed charges of the Angels set to superintend the regulating of the several particular nations, when the practices of the subject peoples deserve the assistance of the presiding spirits against one another, the spirits themselves that are set in charge are said to come against one another. Thus the Angel that spake to Daniel is known to have been appointed over the captives of the Israelitish People established in Persia, but Michael is ascertained to be the ruler of those who remained in the land of Judaea from among the same people. And hence it is said a little afterwards to Daniel by this same Angel; *And there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael, your prince.* [v. 21] Concerning whom he says this too which we have before said, *but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me.* Who whereas he is never said 'to be with,' but to 'come to help' is plainly seen to be set over that people which was held captive in another part. What then is it for the Angel to say, *I am come for thy words, but the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me,* but to tell his doings to those under him? As if he said in plain words; 'The claims [*merita*] of thy prayers indeed demand that the Israelitish People should be loosed from the yoke of their captivity, but there is still in that same people that which must be purged by the dominion of the Persians; so that touching the liberation of that people the prince of Persia should by rights withstand me, though to thy prayers the tears of those too who were left in Judaea come in aid.' Whence he subjoins that too which we said; *But, lo, Michael, your prince, came to help me.* And when he goes forth in order to fight against the prince of the Persians, there appeareth to him the prince of the Greeks coming towards him. By which circumstance it is implied that against the Greeks too Judaea had been guilty of somewhat, on account of whom without a doubt it was that he withstood the rescuing of her. So the Angel hears effectually the prayers of the Prophet, but the prince of Persia withstands, because though the life of the righteous one making supplication already claims the rescue of the People, yet the life of that same People still withstands, that whereas those that had been brought into captivity were not yet completely purified, Persia should rightfully have the dominion over them still. Michael gives aid, but the prince of Greece comes to battle, because that lengthened captivity of the People suffering oppression might indeed have merited pardon, but to the benefit of their liberation that also stood opposed, which they had done wrong against the Greeks. Therefore it is rightly said that the Angels come against each other, because the claims of the nations under them are reciprocally at odds with one another. For the lofty Spirits that are princes to those nations never fight in behalf of those that act unjustly, but justly judge and try their deeds. And when either the guilt or guiltlessness of each separate nation is brought into the debate of the Court Above, the ruling Spirit of that nation is said to have won in the conflict or not to have won; the one identical victory of all of whom, however, is the Supreme Will of their Maker above

them, which Will whilst they ever have before their eyes, what they have not the power they have not the mind to obtain. Therefore it is well said, *Who maketh peace in His high places*. It follows; Ver. 3. *Is there any number of His soldiers?*

[xiii]

18. In the cognizance of human reason there is not any number of the spirits above, in that it cannot tell how great is that concourse of the Invisible Host, whereof it is said by Daniel, *Thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him*. [Dan. 7, 10] The number of the citizens above is represented as infinite and definite, in order that that which relatively to God is capable of being numbered may be shewn relatively to man to be incapable of being numbered. Though it is one thing 'to stand before,' and another thing to 'minister to.' For those Powers stand before Him without a doubt, which never go forth for the communicating things to men. But those 'minister to' Him, who come for discharging the offices of bearers of tidings; yet these same beings also, by the act of contemplation, are not withdrawn from the interior world. And because they are more in number than those that preeminently 'stand before Him,' the number of those so 'standing in presence' is represented as being definite, but of those that 'minister' as indefinite.

19. Now the Angelical spirits we rightly call 'the soldiers' of God, because we are not unaware that those war against the powers of the air, which same conflicts however they carry on not by labour but by authority; for whatsoever thing, in acting against impure spirits, they desire for, by the aid of Him Who ruleth all things, they are equal to. So of this army when our King was born it is written, *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host*. [Luke 2, 13] Unto which same heavenly host the number of the Elect of men too is joined, who by the lofty aspirations of the mind are set free from the bondage of an earthly conversation. Concerning whom it is said by Paul, *No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life*. Which same though now they be shewn few in number, yet in the invisible country they reign innumerable many, in that though by comparison with the evil-minded they are few, yet in the concourse of their assemblage they cannot be any way measured. But because the goodness of those soldiers is set firm not by their own powers, but by the inspiration of grace from Above, it is rightly added, *And upon whom doth not His light arise?*

[xiv]

20. For 'the light' of God is preventing grace, which if it never arose of free gift in our heart, assuredly our mind would remain dim in the darkness of its sins. And hence it is added; Ver. 4. *Can a man be justified being compared with God? or can he be found clean that is born of a woman?*

[xv]

21. This verse is spoken above by blessed Job, and is now repeated in the upbraiding of him; since every just man is just by illumination from God, not by comparison with God. For man's righteousness when compared with the Maker is unrighteousness, since, even although man had held fast in his own estate of creation, the creature could never be equalled to the Creator. To

which creature howsoever, unto heavier burthens of deficiency, there accrued sin also, which the serpent by plotting brought in, and woman proving frail recommended. Hence now, forasmuch as man is born by the agency of woman who is made subject to sin, the frailty of the first guilt is inherited in the offspring; and because the branch of the human race was made rotten in the root, it does not hold up in the greenness of its creation. Hence it is rightly said now, *Can a man be justified being compared with God? or can he be found clean that is born of a woman?* As if it were expressed in plain terms, 'Let not man entertain pride against his Creator, let him reflect whence he came hither, and understand what he is.' But observe, there are those that when by the gift of the Spirit they are holpen against the frailty of their flesh, are made to erect themselves, gleam forth in virtues, yea, flash out in the marvels of miraculous signs as well, yet is there no man who may pass through life free from sin, so long as he bears upon him flesh of corruption. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 5. *Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in His sight.*

[xvi]

22. What is denoted by 'the moon' but the whole Church together? what by 'the stars' but the souls of the several persons that live rightly? who amidst the practices of wicked men, whilst they are conspicuous by rare virtues, as it were shine in the darkness of night. Whence likewise it is said by Paul to the disciples; *Among whom ye shine like lights in the world.* [Phil. 2, 15] For that Holy Church is represented by the designation of 'the moon,' the Prophet bears witness, saying, *The sun was lifted up, and the moon stood in her order.* [Hab. 3, 11] For on 'the sun being lifted up, the moon is established in her order,' in that on our Lord ascending into the heavens, Holy Church is thereupon made strong in the authoritative function of preaching. And that by the title of 'stars' the Elect are represented, Paul again informs us, by saying, *For one star differeth from another star in glory.* [1 Cor. 15, 41] So 'the moon doth not shine, and the stars are not clean in His sight,' because neither doth Holy Church by her own power shine forth in so many miracles, except the gifts of preventing grace fall in showers upon her, nor are the minds of the several persons that live rightly clean of the stains of sinful practices, if they be judged apart from pity; because in the eyes of the strict Judge every single individual his own proneness to corruption doth pollute, unless the grace of One sparing day by day wipe this away. For the mind of the Elect strives to go forth to the liberty of righteousness, but is still bound and tied with the fetters of frailty, and it longs indeed perfectly to get the better of offences, but so long as it is fettered by the corruption of the flesh, it is tied with the chains thereof, even when it would not be. Hence therefore let him collect with what a load of sins they are borne down, who neglect to war against the same, if not even they entirely get the better of evil doing, who strenuously fight against it. And hence it is said, *Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not, and the stars are not pure in His sight;* it is directly added;

Ver. 6. *How much more is man rottenness, and the son of man a worm?*

[xvii]

23. As if it were in plain words; 'If those very persons also cannot be void of contagion, who amidst the darkness of the present life shine bright by virtuous attainments, with what guilt of wickedness are they bound, who still live after the flesh? If those persons cannot be free from sin, who are already walking in the way of heavenly desires, what they who still lie under the loads of sinful habits? who whilst they are abandoned to the gratifications of their fleshly part, still bear the

yoke of rottenness? Hence Peter saith; *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* [1 Pet. 4, 18] Hence it is said by Isaiah, *Upon the land of My people shalt come up thorns and briars; how much more upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city.* [Is. 32, 13] For by 'the land of His People,' the Lord meaneth the mind of all of the Elect. Upon which He tells of 'thorns and briars coming up;' because He sees that not even that very mind is free from the prickles of bad habits. But 'the house of joy in the joyous city' is the mind of the wicked, which whilst it neglects to regard the punishments that are destined to come, in the gratification of the flesh going away from itself, revels in empty mirth. Thus he saith; *Upon the land of My people shalt come up thorns and briars, how much more upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city.* As if He said in plain words; If evil habits sink low even the minds of those, who for desire of the heavenly country put themselves to pain, what guilty courses are they brought under, who without any apprehension abandon themselves in the gratification of the flesh?

24. But it is a point to be noticed in his discourse how Bildad observed the order of our creation and of our birth, in that he calls 'man' not 'a worm,' but 'rottenness,' but 'the son of man' 'a worm.' For the first parent of the human race was 'man,' not 'the son of man,' from whom whosoever came forth, was not only 'man,' but 'the son of man' as well. As then from man springs the son of man, so from rottenness springs the worm. Whence man is lightly called 'rottenness,' but the son of man 'a worm.' For the first man was 'rottenness' not 'a worm,' in that though by death he turned to 'rottenness,' yet he did not come by a birth out of rottenness. But he that is the son of man is called 'a worm,' because he is henceforth propagated from the corruption of mortal bodies.

25. Therefore because the words of his friends are concluded, blessed Job sets on with a more penetrating acuteness of the suing, and his words are proportionably strong as they are the last; seeing that even in the same way it is the usage of lawyers, that the argument, by which they beforehand see that they are above their adversaries, they reserve for the conclusion of the suit. It follows;

C. xxvi. 1, 2. *But Job answered and said, Of whom art thou the helper? whether of one that is powerless? or dost thou sustain the arm of him that is not strong?*

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26. To help one that is weak is an act of charity, to wish to help one that is powerful, of Pride; and so because his friends, whilst bearing the likeness of heretics, on the plea of helping God, endeavoured to make a display of their own wisdom, Bildad is justly found fault with, that it should be said, *Of whom art thou the helper? whether of one that is powerless? or dost thou sustain the arm of him that is not strong?* As if he said in plain words; 'While thou settest thyself to help Him, under Whose greatness thou dost sink to the earth, all the encouragement which thou afforest comes of ostentation, not of piety.'

27. But herein it is requisite to be known, that even God, Who surely is not 'powerless,' we help whilst acting with humility. And hence it is said by Paul, *For we are helper's of God.* [1 Cor. 3, 9] For when to him, whom He doth Himself by interior grace pervade, we by the voice of exhortation contribute, this which He through the Spirit brings to pass within, we outwardly by the office of the voice do assist, and then only is our exhortation brought to completion, when God was in the heart,

to be aided. Hence He saith elsewhere; *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.* [ib. 7] For to 'plant' and 'water' is to 'help,' both which will be but a void ministration, if in the heart God 'giveth not the increase.' But they who have high thoughts of their own power of mind, will not be helpers of God with humility; because whilst they reckon themselves to be of use to God, they are making themselves strangers to the fruit of usefulness. And hence it is said to the disciples by the voice of Truth, *When ye shall have done all those things that are commanded you say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.* [Luke 17, 10] It proceeds;

Ver. 3. *To whom hast thou given counsel? perchance to him that hath not wisdom?*

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28. To 'give counsel to one that is foolish' is an office of charity, to give it to one that is wise, of ostentation; but to give it to Wisdom Itself, of wrongmindedness; and because those who we have said bear the likeness of heretics, by their mode of speech, were administering to ostentation rather than to usefulness, it is yet further added rightly against Bildad,  
*And shewn thine own prudence overmuch.*

To one to whom there is right prudence it is not overmuch, because according to Paul's declaration, he seeketh *not to be wise above the degree that he ought to be wise.* But to whomsoever there is overmuch prudence, there is not right prudence. For whilst it is carried beyond due measure, it is made to turn off on one side or another of offence. Now they shew their prudence to be 'overmuch,' who aim to appear fuller of prudence in comparison of others; whence it very frequently happens that whilst they have not the art to be wise in moderation, they even speak things that are foolish. On account of which circumstance, the actual excess of prudence is yet further subjoined, that it should be said,

Ver. 4. *Whom wouldest thou have taught? Was it not Him Who made the breathway?*

[xx]

29. By the 'breathway' we live, by prudence we are wise. But it is ours first to live, and afterwards to be imbued with wisdom; because in order that we have the power to be wise, it is first brought to pass that we should have being. He, then, Who bestowed life, the same doubtless gave prudence as well. But because Bildad thought blessed Job was scourged for sin, that secret judgment of God which he should have adored in humility, he set himself with overweening temerity to penetrate to the bottom. And so that very One he preferred himself before in respect of prudence, Whose judgment without understanding it he judged. That very One he preferred himself before in prudence, from Whom he received the breathway of life, as though he were wise more than He, the very Being from Whom he had it given it him that he should be. But because blessed Job whilst bearing a type of Holy Church delivered a few things in the rebuking of proud men, who, he was not ignorant, bore a likeness of heretics, according as he said above; *I desire to reason with God; first shewing that ye are forgers of lies, and followers of wrong tenets* [Job 13, 3. 4.]; he suddenly lifts himself up to instruction, and in opposition to the ignorance of the highminded, he opens wide the breadth of his knowledge in sentences, saying,

Ver. 5. *Lo, the giants groan under the waters.*

[xxi]

30. For it was fitting that by rebuking he should first beat down the swelling of earthly wisdom, and by instruction afterwards pass on to words replete with mysteries. Thus by 'giants,' either apostate Angels, or all proud men may without objection be understood. For hence it is said by the Prophet, *The dead shall not live, the giants shall not rise up again.* [Is. 26, 14] For whom does he call 'the dead' saving sinners, and whom does he designate 'giants' save those, who over and above take pride in sin. Now the former do 'not live,' because by sinning they have forfeited the life of righteousness; these latter too 'cannot rise up again' after death, because, after their transgression being swoln with pride, they do not have recourse to the remedies of penitence. Hence it is written again, *The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.* [Prov. 21, 16] For whosoever forsakes the way of righteousness, to whose number does he join himself, saving to the number of the proud spirits? Now it is well said in opposition to the high-minded, *Lo, the giants groan under the waters.* As if it were expressed in plain speech; 'Wherefore on the score of knowledge should man be proud, when the abyss of ignorance keeps at the bottom the very proudest of the spirits of the Angels?'

31. But if by the name of 'the giants' the powerful ones of this world are denoted, in 'the waters' we may have the multitudes represented, as John beareth witness, who saith, *The waters, which thou seest, are peoples.* [Rev. 17, 15] Now against him that is filled with pride it is well spoken; *Lo, the giants groan under the waters;* because all that are high and lifted up, while in this life they long to attain the highest pitch of honours, groan under the burthens of peoples. For in proportion as a man is the higher lifted up here, he is burthened with so much the heavier cares. And to those very same people in mind and thoughts he is put under, whom in dignity he is put over. And by these words it is well shewn in brief that all pride lies prostrate on the ground by the mere act by which it lifts itself up on high, so as to be the more effectually bowed down beneath all things from the same cause, that it would fain be set above all. For man when he is lifted up in high stations, bears so many in number over him, as he rules persons put beneath him. But those, that are associated with such persons, are by fellowship in their labour themselves also weighed to the ground. For together with them they likewise bear the toilsomeness of the burthen, whilst along with them they go after the gloriousness of the honour. Hence whereas he said, *Lo, the giants groan under the waters;* he directly added; *And they that dwell along with them.*

[xxii]

32. As though he said; 'Equally with them do they groan,' who by taking delight are associated to their glory. Now the very employment of worldly dignities is borne down with readier vices in proportion as it is charged with heavier cares. For would that the mind of man even at rest might be able to see and eschew sins! And so because he saw that the longed for heights of affairs cannot be administered without sins, and because it is not hidden from the wrath of God, whatsoever is committed of an unlawful kind, he fitly subjoined in pursuance;  
Ver. 6. *Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering.*

[xxiii]



33. Which same Paul likewise saith, *But all things are naked and opened unto His eyes.* [Heb. 4, 13] But by the title of ‘hell’ and ‘perdition’ he denoted the devil and all the associates of his condemnation; but Who that One is before whom ‘hell is naked,’ he goes on with telling; Ver. 7. *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place.*

[xxiv]

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

34. By the title of the ‘north,’ in Holy Writ the devil is used to be designated, who with the thought to bind up the hearts of the nations with the iciness of insensibility, said, *I will sit also upon the mount of the Covenant, in the sides of the north.* [Is. 14, 13] And he is ‘stretched over the empty place,’ because he has possession of those hearts, that are not filled with the grace of the love of God. Yet is it competent to Almighty God, that even those vessels of the devil, empty of every virtue, He may fill with the gift of His grace, and deposit the solid substance of Divine fear in those persons, whom He does not see stablished by any conduct of righteousness. Hence it is fitly added; *And hangeth the earth upon nothing.*

[xxv]

35. For what is denoted by the title of ‘earth,’ saving Holy Church; who, whilst she receives the words of preaching, renders back the fruit of good works? Whereof it is said by Moses, *Let the earth hear the words out of my lips, let my speech be looked for like the rain.* [Deut. 32, 1. 2.] And what but the several gentile peoples are denoted by ‘nothing,’ of whom it is spoken by the Prophet, *All nations before Him are as nothing, and they are counted to Him less than nothing.* [Is. 40, 17] In that ‘nothing,’ then, is ‘the earth hung suspended,’ which before, being a void place, was occupied by the ‘north;’ because those hearts of the Gentiles became filled with the love of God, which had been aforetime weighed down by a deadness of the devil. But it may be that both by this ‘empty place,’ the infidelity of Judaea is denoted, and by ‘the earth,’ as we said, the propagation of Holy Church. Thus let the holy man look at the fall of Judaea in her perishing, and espy the privileges of the gentile world brought back to pardon, and let him say, *He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.* For because the hearts of the Gentiles, being void of faith, were made subject to the devil, ‘He stretched the north over the empty place;’ and because, there being no merits forthcoming, (as it is said, *For nothing shalt Thou save them,* [Ps. 56, 7. Vulg.]) upon the Gentiles the Lord founded His Church, which same Gentiles are by the Prophet called ‘nothing,’ in pursuing the subject he rightly adds, *And hangeth the earth upon nothing.* Now in what order this thing was done, he continues in subjoining with wonderful method. For he saith, Ver. 8. *He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds, that they should not burst forth alike beneath.*

[xxvi]

36. For what does he call ‘the waters’ in this place but knowledge; what ‘clouds’ but the Preachers? For that in Holy Writ ‘water’ may sometimes be a term used for knowledge, we have been taught by Solomon bearing witness to it, who says, *The words of a man’s mouth are as deep waters, and the well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook.* [Prov. 18, 4] That, by water knowledge is denoted, the Prophet David bears witness, saying, *Dark water in clouds of the sky,* [Ps. 18, 11] i.e. secret knowledge in the Prophets, who before the Advent of the Lord, whilst, pregnant with

secret sacraments, they were bearing in them boundless mysteries, to the eyes of beholders had their meaning obscured. But by the name of 'clouds,' what else is denoted in this passage but the holy Preachers, i.e. the Apostles, who being dispatched in every direction through the regions of the world, both knew how to shower in words, and to flash forth [*coruscare*] in miracles? Whom the Prophet Isaiah beholding long before, said, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* [Is. 60, 8] Thus because this man, filled with the spirit of prophecy, in this utterance of his voice longs that for the praise of God the rise of Holy Church may commence, he betakes himself to tell the order of her rise from the preaching of the Apostles, who took the greatest pains to preach to uninstructed people what was plain and comprehensible, not what was high and arduous. For holy knowledge, which is here set forth by the title of water, if in the same way that they drew it from the heart, so they poured it forth from the lips, by the immensity thereof they would overwhelm rather than water their hearers. Hence his knowledge being unbound within, that it should not burst forth alike beneath, in nourishing his hearers with the dropping of words, that 'cloud' spake, saying, *And I brethren could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat.* [1 Cor. 3, 1. 2.] For who could have borne it if he that was caught up to the third heaven, that was caught into paradise, even hearing unutterable words, which it was not permitted to man to speak, had opened such unbounded depths of celestial knowledge? or what hearer's power would he not overwhelm, if all that he might have been able to draw within, as far as tongue of flesh may suffice, overflowing without the mighty flood of this water had poured forth?

37. But that uninstructed hearers might be comforted not by an inundation of knowledge, but by the tempered dropping of preaching, *God tieth up the waters in the clouds, that they may not burst forth alike beneath.* Because He tempers the preaching of the teachers, that so the infirmity of the hearers, being nourished by the dew of the things spoken, may be made strong. Which is well described in the Gospel by a mystical mode of representation, where it is said, *Jesus entered into the boat of Peter, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land; and he sat down thus, and taught the people.* [Luke 5, 3] By Peter's ship what else is denoted but the Church committed to Peter? and that the Lord may preach to the crowds flocking together out of this ship, He orders it to be 'thrust out a little from the land.' Which same he neither bids to be carried into the deep, and yet does bid that it be thrust out from the land, signifying, surely, that to uninstructed people His preachers ought not to preach either what is too deep relating to the heavenly world, nor yet what is earthly. And so 'water is bound up in the clouds,' because the knowledge of the Preachers, speaking to the minds of the frail, is forbidden to teach as much as it is able to see.

38. Since, for the most part, if the heart of the hearers is spoilt by the vastness of the utterance, the tongue of the persons teaching is mulcted in the damage of indiscretion. Whence it is written; *And if a man shall open a cistern, or if a man shall dig a pit and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein, the owner of the pit shall make it good.* [Ex. 21, 33. 34.] For what is it 'to open a cistern,' saving with strong understanding to penetrate the mysteries of Holy Writ? And what is understood by an 'ox' and an 'ass,' viz. a clean and an unclean animal, save every believer and unbeliever? Accordingly, let him that 'diggeth a cistern cover it, lest an ox or an ass tumble headlong therein,' i.e. let him, who already makes out deep things in Holy Writ, by silence cover over his lofty perceptions before those that do not reach that compass, lest by a stumbling-block to the soul he kill either the believing little one, or the unbelieving, who might have been led to believe. For upon the death of the beasts of burthen there are damages due, plainly because he is convicted of having

done that, whereby he is held a debtor for the exercising of penance [a]. Accordingly, 'the cistern must be covered,' in that before little minds, deep knowledge requires to be veiled, lest by the same cause that the heart of the teachers is lifted up to the highest things, the infirmity of the hearer fall away to the lowest. Accordingly let it be said with justice, *He bindeth up the waters in His clouds, that they should not burst forth alike beneath.* For 'the waters would burst forth alike,' if, in the presence of weak hearers, the knowledge came forth from the lips of the speaker as great as it is, if all the whole fulness of preaching poured itself out at once, and reserved nought to itself together with those making progress. For it is fitting that he that preaches should have an eye to the measure of him that hears him, so that the preaching itself may grow with his hearers' stages of growth. For so does it behove every single preacher to do, as it is dealt with himself from heaven; never to tell to the weak all that he has the perception of, because he himself too, so long as by flesh of mortality he is weak, does not perceive all those things that belong to heaven. And therefore he ought not to preach to the ignorant as much as he is acquainted with, because even he himself, touching heavenly mysteries, cannot have his eyes open to see how great they are. For hence it is that Paul the Apostle, after he was admitted to the mysteries of heaven, saith, *For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face.* [1 Cor. 13, 12] And hence it here follows in continuation; Ver. 9. *He holdeth back the face of His Throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it.*

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[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

39. In the face there is wont to be shewn forth acquaintanceship. Thus 'the face of His Throne is held back,' in that by us in this life the gloriousness of His kingdom is not perceived, so great as it is had within; 'upon which the cloud' is rightly said 'to be stretched;' because that glory of the heavenly kingdom is not seen such as it is. *For the corruptible body presseth down the soul; and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things.* [Wisd. 9, 15] And so against seeing it we are besprinkled with a mist, for we are darkened by the mere cloudiness of our ignorance. Whence it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *And darkness was under His feet; and He rode above the Cherubim, and did fly; He did fly above the wings of the wind: He made darkness His secret place.* [Ps. 18, 9–11] For there is 'darkness to Him under His feet,' in that by those beneath He is not seen in that brightness, wherewith He exercises dominion among those above. For He 'rode above the Cherubim, and did fly;' since the 'Cherubim' is a term used for the fulness of knowledge. By consequence he is said above the fulness of knowledge to have 'ridden, and to have flown,' because the loftiness of His Majesty there is no knowledge doth compass. 'He did fly,' because He transported Himself on high, far from the reach of our understanding. 'He did fly above the wings of the wind,' because He transcended the knowledge of souls. He made darkness too His secret place, because whereas we are dimmed with the mists of our infirmity, by virtue of our ignorance He is hidden from us, that He should not be seen by us now in eternal and interior Brightness. Hence in the Song of Songs also it is said to Him by the Spouse, *Escape, my Beloved, escape.* [Cant. 8, 14] 'It escapes us,' we say, as often as that does not occur to our minds which we wish to remember. 'It escapes us,' we say, when that which we wish we do not retain in our recollection. So Holy Church, after that she sets forth the Death and Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, cries out to Him, full of the Spirit of Prophecy, *Escape, my Beloved, escape.* As though she said; 'Thou That art made by the flesh comprehensible, do Thou by Thy Divine Nature transcend the comprehension of our perception, and in Thine own Self remain to us Incomprehensible.' And so He 'holdeth back the face of His throne,' because He hideth the power of His Majesty from mortal beings.

40. But if we render His 'throne' the Angelical Powers, for on these same Powers He sitteth enthroned as on a royal seat, 'He keeps back the face of His Throne' from us, because so long as we have our subsistence in this mortal flesh, what and how wonderful those ministrations of the Angels are, we do not perceive. 'And He spreadeth His cloud upon it' assuredly because He both lifts up our heart for making search, and yet it is brought to pass by a secret mode of control, that by the very endlessness of its searching it is kept back. Whence it is written, *The deep uttered its voice at the loftiness of its imagining*. [Hab. 3, 10] For the mind of man is forced to cry out in admiration, when, in loftiness of survey, it is straitened in its searchings by the very act by which it is enlarged. Or, surely, because we are ourselves the 'throne' of God, He is said not unjustly to 'keep back the face of His throne,' when our knowledge is prevented advancing to things of a higher range. Upon which same throne God is said 'to spread His cloud,' because remaining Himself invisible, He puts forth secret judgments upon us, that at once a thing should be done in promineny, that we should be able to see, and yet the origin of the deed be hidden in concealment, so that the reason wherefore it be done, we should needs not know. Hence too it is fitly added; Ver. 11. *He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the light and darkness come to an end*.

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41. Because very often in Holy Writ, as we said above, by the name of 'waters' peoples are denoted; *the Lord compasseth the waters with bounds*; because He so tempers the knowledge of mankind: that until the successions of the changing seasons pass away, it cannot perfectly attain to the knowledge of the Interior Brightness. But if by the name of 'light' we understand the righteous, and by the designation of 'darkness' sinners; (and hence Paul saith, *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light*, [Eph. 5, 8]) there is nothing to hinder this same thing that we said being understood, 'that the perfect knowledge of eternity is vouchsafed to no one, until the course of the righteous and of the unrighteous is brought to an end.' But because it is not wonderful that carnal people know nothing of things above, the holy man lifts himself up in astonishment at that same Divine power, and considers that it surpasses the very knowledge of Angels and perfect men as well, saying,  
*The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his nod*.

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#### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

42. What else does he call 'the pillars of heaven' but the holy Angels, or the principal preachers of the Church, over whom in the heavenly world the whole structure of the spiritual edifice increasing arose, as Holy Scripture elsewhere bears witness, saying, *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God*. [Rev. 3, 12] For whoever is established firmly by a right purpose of mind in the work of God, is set up as a pillar in the structure of the spiritual edifice; that being placed in this temple, which is the Church, he should be both for usefulness and ornament. But Job calls those 'pillars of heaven' whom the Apostle calls 'pillars' of the Church, saying, *Peter, and James, and John, which seemed to be pillars, gave me the right hand*. [Gal. 2, 9]

43. We may also not inappropriately interpret the 'pillars of heaven' the Churches themselves, which being many in number, constitute one Catholic Church spread over the whole face of the

earth. Hence too the Apostle John writes to the seven Churches, meaning to denote the one Catholic Church replenished with the Spirit of sevenfold grace, and we know that Solomon said of the Lord, *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars*. [Prov. 9, 1] And the same, to make known that it was of the seven Churches he had spoken that, in going on sedulously introduced the very Sacraments themselves too, saying, *She hath killed her sacrifices, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also set forth her table; she hath sent forth her maidens, that they may cry to the citadel and to the walls of the city. If any be a little one, let him come to me*. [Prov. 9, 2–4] For the Lord ‘killed the sacrifices’ by offering Himself on our behalf. He ‘mingled the wine,’ blending together the cup of His precepts from the historical narration and the spiritual signification. Whence it is elsewhere written, *For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture*. [Ps. 75, 8] And ‘He set forth His table,’ i.e. Holy Writ, which with the bread of the word refreshes us when we are wearied, and come to Him away from the burthens of the world, and by its effect of refreshing strengthens us against our adversaries. Whence too it is elsewhere said by the Church; *Thou preparest a table before me, against them that trouble me*. [Ps. 23, 5] He ‘sent forth His maidens,’ i.e. the souls of the Apostles, being in their actual beginning infirm [i.e. thence called *maidens*, see on Job 1, 2 Bk I. §. 20. T. 1.], ‘that they might cry to the citadel and the walls of the city;’ in that whilst they tell of the interior life, they lift us up to the high walls of the City Above, which same walls, surely, except any be humble they do not ascend. Whence it is there added by that same Wisdom; *If any be a little one, let him come unto Me*. As if she said in plain words; ‘Whosoever accounts himself great in his own eyes, contracts the avenue of his approach unto Me; for there is a loftier reaching unto Me in proportion as the mind of each one is in himself the more truly abased.’

44. But with whatever degree of goodness a man may be advanced, with whatever knowledge he may be made to grow, he cannot fathom to the bottom, what a governance of judgments the Lord rules us with. Therefore let him say, *The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his nod*; because in most things not those even are able to reach the lofty height of His will, who whilst announcing see the rewards of that will. Which, as we said above, there is nothing hinders being interpreted of the Holy Angels as well; because the very Powers of the heavenly world themselves, which behold Him without ceasing, in that very contemplation of theirs are made to tremble. But that that should not be a trembling of woe to them, it is one not of fear, but of admiration. Now because he had brought in how great the consternation of his wonderment was, he now relates the order of our salvation. It follows;

Ver. 12. *In His might the seas are suddenly gathered together, and His wisdom hath struck the proud one*.

[xxx]

45. What else is denoted by the title of the sea save the present world, wherein the hearts of men seeking after earthly things swell with the diverse billows of the thoughts? which same being stirred up by the exaltation of pride, whilst with cross sway they thwart one another, do as with confronting waters dash themselves together. But henceforth ‘the seas are gathered together in His might,’ because on the Lord being made Incarnate, the discordant hearts of worldly men believe in agreement. Henceforth Peter ‘walks on the sea,’ because to the preachers of Christ, these once swelling hearts are by lowly hearing bowed down to the earth, so that in the Gospel too it justly represented the gentleness of this world, that the stormy water of the sea, its swelling being forced

down, was trodden by the feet of the Lord. Now in what manner that was done is disclosed, when it is said, *His wisdom hath struck the proud one.*

[ii] [PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

46. Who else is here called 'proud,' saving he who said, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High* [Is. 14, 14]; and concerning whom it is spoken by the voice of God, *Who is made that he should fear none, and himself is king over all the sons of pride.* [Job 41, 24. 25.] With reference to whom moreover the prophet David agrees with this sentence, saying, *Thou hast abased the proud man, like one wounded.* [Ps. 89, 10] But though to the simple nature of Deity it is not one thing to be, and another thing to be wise, nor one thing to be wise, and another to be strong, forasmuch as the strength is identically the same that the wisdom, and the wisdom that the essence of the Deity is, yet I consider it a thing to be regarded with lively attention, that this man being filled with the prophetic spirit, chose to describe the proud devil as stricken by 'the wisdom' rather than the power of God. For he saith not, 'His might,' but, 'His wisdom hath struck the proud one.' For, as we have said, although by right of simple Nature, the Might of God is the Wisdom of God, yet as to the appearance, the Lord overcame the devil, not by power, but by reason; for the devil himself, by overthrowing us in that root of our first parent, as it were rightfully held man under his thralldom, who whilst he was created with free will, yielded consent to him, when he prompted what was unjust. For when created to life in the freedom of his own will, he was of his own accord made the debtor to death. Therefore such a transgression was to be done away; but saving by sacrifice it could not be done away. A sacrifice was to be sought after, but what sacrifice could be found "for the setting men free? For neither was it just that for reasoning man there should be slain sacrifices of brute beasts. Whence the Apostle says, *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.* [Heb. 9, 23] And so if brute creatures on behalf of a rational animal, i.e. in the stead of man, were not proportionate victims, a man was to be sought out, who should be offered for men, that for a reasoning being committing sin there might be offered a reasoning victim. But what of the fact, that a man without sin could not be found? And the victim offered in our stead, when could it cleanse us from sin, if the actual victim itself was not without sin's contagion? Since it being defiled could never have cleansed the defiled. Therefore that it might be a rational victim, Man was to be offered, but that it might cleanse man from his sins, Man and that Man without sin. But who might there be man without sin, if he was descended from a combination in sin? Thereupon in our behalf the Son of God came into the womb of the Virgin; there for our sakes He was made Man. Nature, not sin, was assumed by Him. He offered a sacrifice in our behalf, He set forth His own Body in behalf of sinners, a victim void of sin, that both by human nature He might be capable of dying, and by righteousness be capable of purifying. This One, then, when the ancient enemy saw after the Baptism, then directly fell upon Him with temptations, and by diverse avenues strove to insinuate himself into His interior; he was overcome and laid prostrate by the mere sinlessness of His unconquerable mind.

47. But because to the interior his strength did not reach, he betook himself to His outward man, that because he was subdued by the prowess of the soul, Him, Whom he had not the power to deceive by temptation, he might at all events by the death of the flesh seem to vanquish. And, as it has been said before us, he had leave granted to him against that, which the Mediator had taken from us mortals. But where he had power to do something, there he was vanquished utterly on

every side; and from the same cause that he obtained the power outwardly to kill the flesh of the Lord, his interior power, whereby he held us fast, was killed. For he was himself vanquished within, whilst in seeming he vanquished without; and he, who of right held us the debtors of death, of right lost in us the right of death; because by means of his ministers, he sought for the flesh of Him to be done to death, in Whom he found no whit of the debt of sin. Thus our Lord did in our behalf pay death not due, that death due might not injure us; and so it is well said, *And His wisdom hath struck the proud one*; because our old enemy by the excess of his presumption lost even him, whom by the law of wicked persuasion he got possession of; and whilst he audaciously went after Him, in Whom there was nought at his command, by right he lost him, whom he as it were justly held bound. Therefore he was 'stricken by wisdom,' and not by power, in that while he is let loose for the tempting God, he is unfastened from possessing man; so that him that was under him, he should lose by the same act, whereby he had ventured to come to an encounter with Him, Who is over him. But upon the Lord being killed in the flesh, what gloriousness of powers came upon his Preachers is related, when it is added,  
Ver. 13. *His Spirit garnished the heavens.*

[xxxi]

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

48. What 'heavens,' saving those concerning whom it is written, *The heavens are telling the glory of God?* [Ps. 19, 1] Which 'heavens His Spirit garnished' then, when It 'filled' them. Which we have learnt by Luke's relating, who saith, *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting; and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.* [Acts 2, 2-4] From Him, then, they received the adornments of prowess, whom an exceeding disfigurement of fear before had possession of. For we know that first one of the Apostles, i.e. of the 'heavens,' how often, before the grace of the Holy Spirit was vouchsafed, whilst he feared to die, he denied 'the Life;' who not by punishments, not by inflictions, not by the dreadful power of anyone, but by the simple interrogation of a single slave, was brought to the ground. And truly that that slave the sterner sex might not exhibit as an object to cause alarm, it was by a maidservant putting the question that he was tried. Again, that the weakness of such a sex, by the lowness of her office as well might be made contemptible, he was questioned not by a maidservant only, but by a maidservant keeper of the door. See how contemptible the person is that is sought out for the purpose of trying him, that it might be plainly brought to light, what excessive weakness of fear possessed him, who even before the voice of a maidservant of the door could not stand fast.

49. But this one a little before so full of affright, what after the Coming of the Holy Spirit he became, let us now see. Surely we have learnt by Luke's attesting it, with what an authoritativeness he preached the word, in opposition to the priests and rulers. For when upon a miracle being wrought inquiry had arisen, and the rulers from among the priests, the elders, and the scribes laid their hands together in the persecution of the Apostles, setting those persons in the midst, they busied themselves to ask in what power they had wrought the miracle. Unto whom Peter being filled with the Holy Spirit spake, *Ye rulers of the people and elders; if we be this day examined of the deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom ye*

*crucified, Whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole.* [Acts 4, 8. &c.] And when the rage of the persecutors against this grew to a head, and the priests and rulers forbade those men to preach Jesus, with what independent power Peter rose in height against the wrath of the rulers, is made plain, when it is there added directly, *But Peter and the Apostles answered and said unto them, It is right to obey God rather than man.* [v. 19] But when the commands of those withstanding did not repress the influence of the persons preaching, it comes to scourges. For it is added, *And when the chief priests had beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the Name of Jesus, and let them go.* [Acts 5, 40] But that the prowess of the Apostles not even scourges had power to restrain, is openly shewn, when it is immediately introduced next, *And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus.* And immediately even after the rejoicing of their scourges what they did we have pointed out; *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.* Mark, that man, a little while before full of fears, now speaks with tongues, flashes forth with miracles, with free voice rebukes the unbelief of the priests and rulers, gives to the rest for the preaching of Jesus an example of independence. That he should not speak in His Name, he is restrained by scourgings, and yet is not withheld. He sets at nought the strokes of those that scourged him, who a little while back had dreaded the words of those that questioned him. And he that when asked a question shrunk in consternation from the powers of a maidservant, when beaten with the rod forces back the powers of the rulers. For being henceforth established by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, the heights of this world he trod down with the heel of liberty, that he should see that that was low down on the earth, whatever it was that swelled high against the grace of the Creator.

50. These are the ornaments of the heavens, these are the gifts of the Spirit, that are used to be manifested by divers powers, which as divided by the bestowal of secret distribution Paul reckons up, saying, *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.* [1 Cor. 12, 8–10] All which directly afterwards including in one by a general statement he says, *But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.* Of these ‘heavens’ too it is said in the Psalm, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens set fast.* [Ps. 33, 6] Of these ornaments of the Spirit also it is added, *And all the power of them by the Spirit of His mouth.* Therefore it is well said, *His Spirit hath garnished the heavens;* because the holy Preachers, except they received the gifts of the Paraclete, that were promised to them, would not have shone with any comeliness of might. But because when the Holy Apostles were beautified with the grace of the gifts of virtue, the preaching of life gained ground against the hearts of unbelievers, and our old enemy being expelled by the voices of the preachers, abandoned the minds of the unbelievers, which he had close beset; after the ornaments of the heavens it is fitly subjoined; *And by the midwifery of His hand the crooked serpent is brought forth.*

[xxxii]

#### [PROPHETICAL INTERPRETATION]

51. For who is described by the designation of the ‘serpent,’ but our old enemy, at once slippery and crooked, who for the deceiving of man spake with the mouth of a serpent? Of whom it is said by the Prophet, *Leviathan the bar-serpent, the crooked one* [Is. 27, 1]; who was for this reason



allowed to speak with the mouth of a serpent, that by that very vessel of his man might learn what he was that dwelt within. For a serpent is not only crooked but slippery as well; and so because he stood not in the uprightness of truth, he entered into a crooked animal, and because if to his first suggestion resistance be not made, in a moment whilst it is not perceived he slips in entire into the interior of the heart, he made speech to man by a slippery animal. Now 'the dens' of this serpent were the hearts of wicked men. Which same because he drew on to his own depravity, he as it were rested in the dwelling place of them. But 'by the midwifery of the Lord's hand, the crooked serpent is driven out of his own dens,' in that whilst the Divine grace heals us, he that had held possession of us, our old enemy, is cast out of us, as Truth Incarnate says, *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* [John 12, 31] Hence all the Saints now already he does not possess by holding, but persecutes by trying. For because he does not reign in them within, he fights against them without, and because he has lost his dominion in the interior, he sets on foot wars in the exterior. For him That One drove forth from the carnal hearts of men, Who for the sake of men came to the state of Incarnation; and whereas He took seisin of the hearts of unbelievers, He as it were put His hand to the dens of the serpent. Whence it is rightly said by the Prophet; *And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My Holy Mountain.* [Is. 11, 8. 9.] For whom does he call 'the sucking child,' or 'the weaned child,' saving the Lord? And what did he denote by 'the hole of the asp,' and 'the cockatrice den,' saving the hearts of wicked men? Because our old enemy, whereas he gat himself wholly into their consenting, as a crooked serpent in his own hole, he gathered and wound up the coils of his craftiness; whom he both designates with the title of 'asp' as covertly ravaging, and of a 'cockatrice' as openly wounding. And so the Lord 'put His hand upon the hole of the asp and the cockatrice,' when He took seisin of the hearts of the wicked by Divine power. And the asp and the cockatrice, being seized, i.e. the devil, he drew away therefrom a captive, that 'in His Holy Mountain,' which is the Church, he might not 'harm' His Elect believers.

Thus it is hence said in the Song of Songs, on the coming of the Spouse; *Thou shalt be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens.* [Cant. 4, 8] For what else is denoted by the title of the lions but the devils, which rage against us with the fury of the deadliest cruelty? And because the sinners are called to faith, whose hearts were once 'the dens of lions,' when by their confession the Lord is believed to have overcome death, it is as if He were 'crowned from the lions' dens.' For a crown is the recompense of victory. So often then do the faithful offer a crown to Him, as they confess that He has overcome death by virtue of the Resurrection. And so 'the lion is driven from his den,' because 'by the midwifery of the Lord's hand,' 'the crooked serpent is hindered from dwelling in the dens,' which he had possession of. For he went forth defeated from the hearts of believers, who had aforetime ruled over them with the sceptre of unbelief.

53. Observe how in a few short sentences the holy man related the order of the Lord's Advent, set forth its weighty charges, and in admiring described what by His Incarnation was possible to be done. But He, Who wrought marvellous things when He came in humility, cannot be viewed with all the great terribleness He shall come with, when He appeareth in the mightiness of His Majesty. The order of His first Advent might be viewed and estimated, in so far as in coming to redeem carnal beings, He abated the greatness of His Divinity to carnal eyes. But who might bear the terrors of His Highness, when with the power of the Second Advent in exercising judgment by fire,

He shall glow in the Majesty of His power? Whence the holy man describes His first Advent, but is exhausted for the second, saying,

Ver. 14. *Lo, these things have been spoken for part of His ways; and whilst we scarcely hear a little drop of His words, who shall be able to look on the thunder of His Majesty?*

[xxxiii]

54. What is meant in this place by the designation of the ‘ways,’ but the Lord’s modes of acting?

Hence too the Lord saith by the Prophet; *For My ways are not as your ways.* [Is. 55, 8]

Accordingly in telling of the Advent of the Lord, he had described the ways of God in part; because His method of acting by which He created us was one thing, and that by which He redeemed us another. Thus those things, which he told touching the Lord’s way of acting, making light of by comparison with the final Judgment, he says, *Lo, these things are spoken for part of His ways.*

Which he also calls ‘a little drop of His words,’ for whatsoever thing that is high, whatsoever thing that is terrible, we whilst set in this life are brought to know by the contemplation of Him, from the vast ocean of the secrets of Heaven wells out to us like a slight drop of the liquid element Above.

*And who shall be able to look on the thunder of His Majesty?* As though he expressed himself in plain words; ‘If we scarce endure the wonders of His humility, the loud and dreadful Advent of His Majesty with what nerve do we encounter?’

This thundering of His Advent the Psalmist also sounds out, saying, *Our God shall come in state, our God, and shall not keep silence, a fire shall devour before Him, and a mighty tempest round about Him.* [Ps. 50, 3] Hence Zephaniah the Prophet tells it out, saying, *The Great Day of the Lord is near; it is near and hasteth greatly. The voice of the Day of the Lord is bitter: the mighty man shall be troubled there. That Day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of cloud and whirlwind, a day of the trumpet, and of a dreadful sound.* [Zeph. 14–16]

The terror then of the Strict Inquest, which Zephaniah calls ‘the Trumpet,’ blessed Job designates ‘thundering.’ Which Joel also viewing saith, *Let all the inhabitants of the land be troubled; for the Day of the Lord cometh; for it is nigh at hand, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of cloud and whirlwind. For the Day of the Lord is great, and very terrible, and who shall sustain it?* [Joel 2, 1–3]

But how incomprehensible and unimaginable that Greatness wherewith He shall come in His Second Manifesting, in some degree we estimate aright, if we consider with heedful reflection the weighty particulars of His first Advent. Surely that He might redeem us from death, the Lord came to die, and the impoverishment and punishments of our flesh He underwent in His own Body; Who before He came to the stock of the Cross, suffered Himself to be bound, to be spit on, to be mocked and to be beaten with blows on His cheek. Observe to what disgraceful treatment He for our sakes consented to come, and yet, before He permitted Himself to be laid hold of, He questioned His persecutors, saying, *Whom seek ye?* To Whom they thereupon gave answer, *Jesus of Nazareth.* And when He said to them directly, *I am He,* He only uttered a voice of the mildest answer, and at once prostrated His armed persecutors to the earth. What then shall He do when He cometh to judge the world, who by one utterance of His voice smote His enemies, even when He came to be judged? What is that Judgment which He exercises as immortal, Who in a single utterance could not be endured when He was about to die? Who may sustain His wrath, Whose very mildness even could not be sustained? So then let the holy man consider it and say, *And whilst we scarcely hear a little drop of His words, who shall be able to look on the thundering of His Majesty?*

## BOOK XVIII.

Contains the exposition of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of the Book of Job, to the twenty-first verse and half through it, after manifold senses.

IT is the case for the most part in Holy Writ that there are things of a mystical nature so represented, that nevertheless they seem put forth in accordance with the historical relation. But oftentimes such sort of descriptions are mixed together in that same historical relation, whereby the whole outside of history is rendered null [*cassetur*]; which same whilst they sound of nothing belonging to the history, oblige the reader to look for something else in them. For things being spoken that we suppose plain, when we find any particulars interspersed with a more obscure meaning, we are as it were pricked by a kind of spurs, that we should both be alive for the understanding some things in a deeper sense, and that we should take even those things as put forth in a more obscure sense, which we looked upon as spoken in their plain import. Whereas, then, blessed Job was speaking of the Word of the Lord, and the greatness of His thundering, next in order to these words it is directly introduced;

Chap. xxvii. 1. *Moreover Job added taking up his parable, and said.*

[i]

2. By which same verse it is shewn in how great mystery the words of this most saintly man are delivered, when ‘a parable,’ i.e. a simile, is described as ‘taken up’ by him, who utters nothing below in the way of simile or comparison. For be it far from us in this place to interpret a ‘parable’ that musical instrument [‘We know of no musical instrument so called either now or formerly; but one may imagine some so named from their parabolic figure.’ Ben.]. Since neither is it allowable to suppose that under infliction of chastenings he used music, when Truth saith by His Scripture, Music in mourning is as a tale out of season. The word ‘parable,’ then, having been named, see how we now learn, the text itself telling it, not by the text only to estimate his words. And so every thing must be drawn to turn to that likeness, by which the Church is denoted in a figure. And indeed in the very beginning of his speaking, the things said are put forth in a plain sense, but they are entwined with more obscure ones subjoined. For he begins as he is used, with a plain mode of speech, but he finishes his words with a description pregnant through mystical significations. And so he saith,

Ver. 2. *As God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness.*

[ii]

3. By which same words blessed Job at once tells his own circumstances, and represents the times of Holy Church under affliction, wherein she is borne down by the open frowardness of unbelievers, and vexed by the bitterness of persecution. For in two ways the Church is subject to be tried by her adversaries, viz. that she should suffer persecution either by words or swords. Now Holy Church aims with the greatest diligence to possess wisdom and patience. And her wisdom is exercised when she is tried with words, her patience is exercised when she is tried with swords. Now, however, he is speaking of that persecution, wherein she is provoked not by swords, but by

false statements. Now we know numbers, who when they encounter some things adverse in this life, do not believe that God is, but there are some that hold that God is, but does not concern Himself in the least with the affairs of men. For of the one it is said by David, *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* [Ps. 14, 1] But the latter say in him, *How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?* And again; *Yet they say again; The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.* [Ps. 94, 7] Thus this person who bore a type of Holy Church, whilst set fast in the very bitterness of his affliction, made answer against them both, For as life has 'being,' but death has not, to avow that God is, he saith, *As God liveth*, but that he might tell that God concerns Himself with the affairs of mortals, he added, *Who hath taken away my judgment, and hath brought my soul to bitterness.* For these ills which he suffers he bears record that he suffers not by accident, but by God Who ordereth all things, nor does he attribute the power for his bitterness to his tempter, but to his Creator.

4. For he knows that the devil, though he is ever aiming at the afflicting of the just, yet if he do not receive the power from our Maker is not empowered in the least degree for any tittle of temptation. And hence all the devil's will is unjust, and yet whilst God permits it, all his power is just. For of himself he does unjustly seek to try men indifferently, but those that require to be tempted, in so far as they require to be tried, God does not permit to be tried otherwise than justly. Whence also in the Books of the Kings it is written of the devil, *That the evil spirit of the Lord came upon Saul.* [1 Sam. 18, 10] Where the question justly occurs, 'If it was the Spirit of the Lord, why should it be called an evil spirit? and if an evil spirit, why the Lord's?' But in two words there is comprehended at once the just power and the unjust will in the devil. For both he himself is called an evil spirit in respect of a most evil will, and the same spirit is called the Lord's spirit in respect of the most just power bestowed on him. And so it is well said; *God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness.* For though the enemy rage furiously, who longs to deal the blow, yet it is the Creator, Who permits him to have power for any thing. But forasmuch as the holy man by invoking the life of God bound himself to somewhat, let us hear what in so obliging himself he subjoins. It follows;  
Ver. 3, 4. *All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in, my nostrils, my lips shall not speak iniquity, nor my tongue meditate falsehood.*

[iii]

5. What he first calls 'iniquity,' this repeating afterwards he calls 'falsehood.' For both all 'falsehood' is 'iniquity,' and all 'iniquity' 'falsehood,' because, whatever thing is at variance with truth is surely at odds with equity. But between this which he expresses, 'to speak' and that which he adds afterwards, to 'meditate,' there is a wide difference. For sometimes it is a worse thing to 'meditate' falsehood than to speak it. For to speak is very frequently a matter of precipitation, but to 'meditate' of purposed wickedness. And who could be ignorant by what great difference the sin is distinguished, whether a man tell a lie by precipitation or of set purpose? But the holy man, to be entirely attached to the truth, tells that he would neither lie of set purpose, nor by precipitation. For all lying is very seriously to be guarded against, though sometimes there is a certain sort of lying which is of lighter complexion, if a man lie in rendering good [b]. But seeing that it is written, *The mouth that believeth slayeth the soul.* [Wisd. 1, 11] And, *Thou shalt destroy all them that speak leasing.* [Ps. 5, 7] This kind of lying also those that are perfect eschew with the greatest care, so that not even the life of any man should by deceit of theirs be defended, lest they hurt their own

souls, whilst they busy themselves to give life to another's flesh; though the same particular kind of sin we believe to be very easily remitted. For if any sin is 'by godly practice ensuing after to be done away, how much more is this easily wiped off, which pitifulness, the mother of good works, herself accompanies?

6. But there are some that from the deceit of the midwives endeavour to establish that this species of lying is not sin, chiefly because, upon those midwives lying, it is written, *That the Lord made them houses*. [Exod. 1, 21] By which mode of recompensing it is rather learnt what the offence of lying earns; for the profits of their kindness which might have been repaid them in everlasting life, on account of the sin of lying mixing in are diverted into an earthly recompense, that in their own life, which they were ready to defend by lying, they should receive back the good which they did, and not have any reward of their recompensing, that they might look forward to beyond. For if the thing be weighed with exactness, it was from the love of the present life they lied, not from the being bent on the recompense; for by the act of sparing, they endeavoured to protect the life of the infants; but by the act of lying, their own life.

7. And though in the Old Testament a few such cases may possibly be discovered, yet almost on no occasion will the attentive reader there find this or a like kind of lying practised by those that were perfect, although the lie might seem to bear some sort of semblance of truth; and perchance it might be an offence of a lighter complexion under the Old Testament, wherein by victims of bulls and goats, the sacrifice was not the very Truth itself, but a shadow of the truth. For in the New Testament, after Truth has been manifested by flesh, we are advanced by a higher scale of precepts, and it is meet and right that certain actions which in that People were instrumental to a shadow of the Truth, we should give over. But if there be any man, who would defend his lying by the Old Testament, because there perhaps it was less detrimental to particular persons, he must needs be compelled to say that the robbing of another's property, and the retaliation of an injury, which were there allowed to those in a weak state, cannot be injurious to himself. All of which it is plain to all men with what severe strictures Truth doth visit. Which 'Truth' now henceforth, the shadow of the betokenment of Him set aside, is brought to light in very flesh. But as the holy man gives his word neither to 'speak' nor 'meditate falsehood,' these actual particulars, wherein he agrees with the truth, he subjoins, carrying it on;

Ver. 5. *God forbid that I should justify you; till I die, I will not depart from mine innocency.*

[iv]

8. For he would 'depart from his innocency,' if he reckoned good things of bad persons; as Solomon bears witness, who saith, *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord*. [Prov. 17, 15] For there are persons, who, whilst they extol with commendation deeds of men ill done, heighten that which they ought to have rebuked. For hence it is said by the Prophet, *Woe to those that sew pillows under every elbow of the hand, and make cushions under the head of every age*. [Ez. 13, 18] For a 'pillow' is put for this, that we may rest the easier. Therefore whoever flatters persons doing wrongly is putting a pillow under the head or the elbow of one lying, so that the man that should have been chidden on account of sin, being stayed up therein by commendations, should rest at his ease. Hence again it is written, *And one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it*. [ib. 10.] For by the term of 'a wall,' the hardness of sin is denoted. And so 'to build up a wall' is for a man to rear against himself barriers of sin; but

they' daub the wall,' who flatter those that commit sins, that what the first by doing wickedly build, those same persons by spreading their flatteries should as it were make of bright colour. But the holy man, as he does not think what is bad of the good, so he refuses to judge what is good of the bad; saying, *God forbid that I should Judge you just: till I die, I will not depart from mine innocency.* Where he subjoins in plain words;

Ver. 6. *My righteousness, which I began to hold fast, I will not abandon.*

For 'his righteousness' that he had 'begun with,' he would 'abandon,' if he went out of the way into the praising of persons committing sin. But because we then more truly keep away from the sins of others when we first keep ourselves safe from our own, why he is so afraid to be guilty touching those, he gives the grounds of the principle, when he adds; For neither doth mine heart reproach me in all my life.

[v]

9. As if he expressed himself in plain words; 'On your account I ought not to be drawn into guilt, in that I have dreaded to commit sin in my own affairs.' But it is a thing to be known, that everyone that is at variance with the precepts of the Lord in practice, as often as he hears them, is reproached and confounded by his own heart, because that which he has never done is brought to recollection. For whereinsoever it sees itself to have done amiss, the conscience by itself secretly accuses self. Whence the prophet David beseeches, saying, *Then may I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments.* [Ps. 119, 6] For greatly 'ashamed' is every man, when either by reading or hearing them he turns his eye to the precepts of God, which by his way of living he has disregarded. Thus it is hence declared by the voice of John, *If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him.* [1 John 3, 21. 22.] As if he said in plain speech, 'If that He bids, we do, that we ask, we shall obtain.'

10. For with God both these two do of necessity match with one another exactly, that practice should be sustained by prayer, and prayer by practice. Thus it is hence that Jeremiah saith; *Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens.* [Lam. 3, 40. 41.] For to 'search our ways' is to sift what is inmost in the thoughts. But he 'lifts up his heart with his hands,' who strengthens his prayer by good works. For he that prays, but shuts his eyes to practice, 'lifts up the heart,' but does not 'lift up the hands.' But whosoever practises, but does not pray, 'lifts up the hands,' but does not 'lift up the heart.' And so according to the voice of John, the heart then acquires confidence in prayer, when no wickedness of life withstands it. Of which same confidence it is rightly said now by the holy man; *For neither doth mine heart reproach me in all my life.* As though he said in plain speech, 'It never remembers to have been guilty of that, whereby it might be made ashamed in its prayers.' But it may be asked, on what principle he declares that he is not reproached by his heart, seeing that he accuses himself above of having sinned, saying, *I have sinned: what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men?* [Job 7, 20] Or surely, *If I would justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me.* [Job 9, 20]

11. But it is requisite to be known that there are sins that by righteous men are possible to be avoided, and there are some sins which even by righteous men are not possible to be avoided. For what man's heart, whilst bound up with this corruptible flesh, does not slip in ill bent thought, even

if be not plunged into the very pit of consenting? And yet to think these same wrong thoughts is to commit sin. But while there is a resisting of the thought, the soul is freed from being confounded. And so the mind of the righteous, though it be free from bad practice, yet sometimes it falls to the ground in bad thinking. Thus then into sin too it slips, because in the thought of the heart at all events it is made to swerve, and yet it hath not that whereon to upbraid itself afterwards in weeping, because it recovers itself before that it falls by consenting. And so with just propriety he who confessed himself a sinner, declares that he is never upbraided by his heart, because though perhaps by thinking unlawful thoughts he ever fell short of righteousness, yet the resolute struggle of the soul, he resisted the thought. It follows;

Ver. 7. *Let mine enemy be like the ungodly, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.*

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12. In Holy Writ, the words 'like as' and 'as if' are sometimes put not for a likeness, but for the reality. Whence we have that; *And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.* [John 1, 14] And thus here also 'like,' and 'as' seem to be said rather for the sake of affirmation than similitude. Now between the ungodly and the wicked man there is wont to be this difference sometimes, that every ungodly man is unrighteous, but not every unrighteous man ungodly. For the 'ungodly' is put instead of unbeliever, i.e. a stranger to the godliness of religion. But a man is called unrighteous, who by wrongness of practice is at variance with righteousness, even if he does perhaps bear the name of the Christian Faith. Therefore by the typical voice of blessed Job, Holy Church, which is subject to some gainsaying the right Faith, avouches that she has an 'ungodly man her enemy.' But because she has to bear others under the cloke of the faith within her pale living in bad practices, she abhors the 'unrighteous' man as being her adversary. But if 'like' and 'as' it is right we should understand as put on account of 'likeness,' Holy Church brands by a likeness to the ungodly those whom she is subject to living in a carnal manner within her pale. For within her bounds he is an enemy to her, who whilst he maintains himself a believer by professions, denies it by practices. And because he accounts him as an unbeliever, who, whilst set within her pale in semblance, only assails her with mischief of evil doing, he rightly says, Mine enemy is like the ungodly, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous. As though he said in plain speech; 'He is at variance with me in faith as well, who does not agree with me in practice.' It follows;

Ver. 8. *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, if he seize with covetousness, and God free not his soul?*

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13. The hypocrite, who in the Latin language is termed pretender [*simlator*], aims not to be but to appear just, and therefore he is a covetous robber, because whereas while doing wickedly he desires to be revered for sanctity, he seizes on the praise of a life not his own. But it is said to be the aim of hypocrites, that both what they are they may keep back, and what they are not they may make themselves known to men as being; so that they should surpass their own measure in esteem, and by credit for conduct shew themselves to excel the rest of the world. They eschew the seeming to be that which they are, and before the eyes of men they clothe themselves with a kind of overlaid respectability of innocency. Hence in the Gospel they are rightly upbraided by the voice of our Redeemer, when the words are spoken to them, *Woe unto you, hypocrites! for ye are like unto*

*whited sepulchres, which indeed appear to men beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of covetousness and iniquity.* [Mat. 23, 27. 28.] Contrariwise all that are Saints really not only do not ever at all covet glory that is beyond their measure, but do also eschew appearing that very thing, which they have obtained to be. And hence that great Preacher of truth, in speaking against the false apostles; while he was relating the extraordinary excellences of his practice for the instruction of his disciples; whilst he was describing that he had undergone such countless perils in accumulated persecution, and after this made mention of his having been carried up to the third heaven, and into Paradise again, where he had power to learn things so 'great, as he had not power in any degree to tell; was on the point perhaps of telling things still more marvellous of himself, yet holding himself in from human applause by deep reflecting he adds, *But now I spare, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.* [2 Cor. 12, 6] He then had somewhat yet further to be declared concerning himself, who 'forbears' to speak. But the great Preacher did both, that both by telling the things which he had done he might instruct his disciples, and by being silent keep himself safe within the bounds of humility. For he would have been over ungracious, if he had withheld all relating to himself from the disciples; and perhaps incautious over much, if even to the disciples he had uttered all about himself. But in a wonderful way, as has been said, he did both the one and the other, so that by speaking he might instruct the life of those that heard him, and by holding his peace preserve his own.

14. Now it deserves to be known, that holy men as often as they communicate any thing concerning themselves to their followers, are imitating the custom of their Creator. For God, Who forbids us that we never be commended by our own lips, in Holy Writ does utter His own praises; not that He Himself needs them, Who cannot be a gainer by praises; but whilst He relates to us His greatness, He lifts up our ignorance to Himself, and by telling His own good He teaches us; whereas man would never know Him, if He had been minded to be silent about Himself. And so He for this reason shews His own praises, that we may be able by hearing to know, by knowing to love, by loving to follow, by following to obtain, and by obtaining to enjoy the vision of Him. Whence the Psalmist saith, *He will tell the people the power of His works, and that He may give them the heritage of the heathen.* [Ps. 111, 6] As if he expressed himself in plain terms; 'For this reason He tells the mightiness of His doing, that he that heareth thereof may be enriched with His gifts.' Therefore holy men, imitating the way of their Creator, sometimes reveal things that concern themselves, that those who hear them they may instruct, not that they may themselves be gainers, and yet in these things they keep guard over themselves by bethinking themselves deeply, lest whilst they lift up others from an earthward bent, they should themselves be sunk in the coveting of earthly applause. Whose statements hypocrites for the most part follow, but the meaning of their statements they are wholly blind to, because what the righteous do with a view to the advantaging of their neighbour, this these same do with a view to the extending of their own name. But the holy man beholding that hypocrites seek not at all after future glory, but desire to possess themselves of present glory, says, *What is the hope of the hypocrite?* in that while he loves the present things, he hopes not for the future. For it is written, *For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?* [Rom. 8, 24] And so for this reason there is on the part of the hypocrite no advancing in any degree to the eternal rewards by hope, because that which required to be sought elsewhere, he makes it his pride to have in possession here. And because his offence was set forth, the punishment too is subjoined, when it is forthwith brought in next; *Will God hear his cry, fchen trouble cometh upon him?*



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15. 'His cry in the time of his straits God heareth not,' because in the time of tranquillity he did not himself hear the Lord crying in His precepts. For it is written; *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.* [Prov. 28, 9] And so the holy man seeing that all they that are indifferent to practise what is light now, in the time at the end betake themselves to words of beseeching, saith; Will God hear his cry? By which words assuredly he follows close upon the words of our Redeemer, Who saith, *Last of all come the foolish virgins also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. And it is answered them, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* [Matt. 25, 11] Because great severity is exercised then, in proportion as now greater mercy is prolonged [al. granted beforehand], and He does then with strictness put forth judgment upon persons not corrected, Who now patiently bestows pity upon them going on transgressing. For hence it is the Prophet saith, *Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found; call ye upon Him, while He is near.* [Is. 55, 6] Now He is not seen, and 'is near,' then He shall be seen, and shall not 'be near.' He hath not yet appeared in judgment, and if He be sought, He is found. For in a wonderful way, when He appeareth in judgment He is at once able to be seen, and unable to be found. Hence Solomon describes Wisdom at once caressing sweetly, and judging dreadfully, saying, *Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets.* Whose language he also tells, adding, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools delight in their own harm, and silly ones hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you I will make known my words unto you.* [Prov. 1, 20-28] Mark with what kind of words her sweetness in calling is expressed. Let us see now in what ways her severity in upbraiding is told, that in the end sooner or later her strictness in punishing may have free scope. *Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand; and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof.* Let her now say how she will smite those, whom she bears with so much longsuffering, never turning back to her: *I also will laugh at your destruction, I will mock when your fear cometh, when sudden calamity falleth on you, and your destruction riseth as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall rise up early, but they shall not find me.* By the mouth of Solomon then, the wisest of men, all particulars are carefully set forth relating to the Judgment from Above: because she both at first calls us sweetly, and afterwards upbraids us terribly, and at the last condemns us irretrievably. And so it is well said; *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?* Surely because the hypocrite then findeth not a remedy in crying, who now lets slip the fitting opportunity of crying. Concerning whose wickedness it is yet further added; Ver. 10. *Or will he be able to delight himself in the Almighty?*

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16. For he that is overcome by the love of earthly things, in no degree delights himself in God. The soul indeed can never exist without its delight, for it delights itself either in things below or in things above, and in proportion as it is employed with higher devotion towards those above, it grows deadened with the greater loathing towards those below, and as it glows with a keener interest for those below, it cools in proportion with an accursed ill-sensibility from those above. For both cannot possibly be loved together and alike. Hence the Apostle John, well knowing that amongst the thorns of worldly attachments the crop of heavenly charity can never shoot, before he

produces the seeds of the love eternal, with the holy hand of the word eradicates from the hearts of his hearers the thorns of worldly affections, in the words, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* And he directly subjoins, *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* [1 John 2, 15] As if he said in express terms; 'Both these loves cannot contain themselves in one and the same heart, nor does the crop of charity from Above shoot in that heart, wherein the thorns of gratification down below kill it.' And he reckons up all the prickles arising from that gratification below, saying, *For all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof.* [v. 16. 17.] And so the 'hypocrite cannot delight himself in God,' because heavenly desires never spring forth in his mind, seeing surely that the thorns of earthly love overlay it. Of whom it is fitly added;  
*Will he always call upon God?*

[x]

17. For it is then that the hypocrite 'calls upon God,' when the wretchedness of earthly circumstances wrings him hard. For when in this world he has obtained the carrying out of the good fortune sought for, his Maker, Who vouchsafed him this same good fortune, he asks not for; But because, as we said before, the art of those that teach should be, that in their hearers' minds they should first aim to destroy what is wrong, and afterwards to preach what is right; (lest the hearts that are full of evil things should not contain the good seed of holy preaching, whence it is said to Jeremiah, *See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.* [Jer. 1, 10] For it is first bidden him that he should pull down, and afterwards that he should build, first to pluck up, and afterwards to plant; because the foundation of rightful truth is not laid, except the edifice of error be first pulled down;) blessed Job after that he had mane the case of the Universal Church his answer to the statements of his friends as if in opposition to words of heretics, and that by a manifold rejoinder he had destroyed their pride, describes himself henceforth to teach; that is, that he might be plainly seen in those things which he added to plant what is right, but in those that he premised to have plucked up what is wrong. It goes on;  
*I will teach you by the hand of God, that which is with the Almighty; I will not conceal.*

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18. In such a way does blessed Job speak in his own words as to denote something connected with what relates to us. For Holy Church in teaching, in so far as it is expedient to know it, hides not a particle of truth. Thus because 'the Hand of God' is a name for the Son; for, *by Him were all things made* [John 1, 3]; she tells that by the Hand of God she teaches those, whom she sees continuing foolish in their own wisdom. As if she said in plain words; 'I know not any thing of myself; but whatever I perceive of the Truth, this I comprehend by the bountifulness of that same Truth. Ye for this reason are not embued with right wisdom, because this same wisdom that you have yon ascribe not to the Hand of God, but to your own selves.' For the adversaries of Holy Church, if they do at times perceive any thing true, this they attribute to their own powers, and they deprive themselves so much the more of the Wisdom from Above, in the same proportion as they wish to have it appropriated to themselves as being derived from their own wits. Unto whom it is sometimes vouchsafed for their judgment, that they should indeed know some things aright, but by

this very same knowledge be rendered the more obnoxious to punishment. Whence it is fitly added;

Ver. 12. *Behold, all ye yourselves know: why then do ye utter vain things without cause?*

19. It is written; *And that servant, 'Which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself; neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.* [Luke 12, 47. 48.] But he that knew not, and did not worthily, shall be beaten with few stripes. And again it is written; *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.* [Jam. 4, 17] And so for the heightening of greater guilt Holy Church tells it that her enemies at once know what they ought to follow, and will not follow what they may know. Of which same persons it is elsewhere said; *Let them go down quick into hell.* [Ps. 55, 15] Those are 'quick' that are sensible of the things that are done towards them. For the dead neither know nor are sensible at all, and so 'the dead' who do not feel are used to be put for persons that know not, but 'the quick,' who are sensible, for those that know. Therefore to 'go down quick into hell' is for persons to sin knowing and being sensible of it. It goes on; *This is the portion of an ungodly man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.* Which same 'portion' and 'inheritance' he thereupon gives, when he adds;

Ver. 14. *If his children be multiplied, it is in the sword; and his grandchildren shall not be satisfied with bread.*

20. The title of the 'ungodly' is not without meaning given to heretics, who through the erroneousness of false doctrine are far removed from the knowledge of the truth; whom in the words following he calls 'violent' as well, as being persons who set themselves to wrest by violence to a wrong meaning the sentences of Holy Scripture containing right articles of doctrine. And so they are 'violent' if not in the goods of men, at all events in the senses of precepts. But the 'sons of violent men', are the follower's of heretics, who while they consent to their error, are as It were engendered by their preaching. But while being 'multiplied' 'they shall' be in the sword,' for though now they grow up in an immense multitude in a ruinous liberty, yet they are smitten by the sentence of the Judge to come, Whence the Lord saith by Moses, My sword shall devour flesh. For 'the sword of God devours flesh,' because in the Final Judgment His sentence destroys those, who are carnally wise, On which point it is to be made out why it should be said that the wicked' receive this portion' and inheritance of theirs from the Almighty? Yet to those taking a right view it is plain that though they had it from themselves to act unjustly, yet it comes before the Equity Above, what is unjustly done justly to judge; so that the sentence of God should orderly appoint for punishment those whom their ill-ordered conduct drew into sin, Concerning whom it is fitly subjoined; And his grandchildren shall not be satisfied with bread.

21. For 'the grandchildren' of Heretics are they that are born by the preaching of children in error. And these 'bread fails to satisfy;' because while in the provender of the sacred Word they seek to perceive more than they take in, they are ever a hungering to the knowledge of the truth; and the preachings of instruction, which they are busy to seek for questioning, they are incapable of having for refreshment. But because from the number of these heretics some Holy Church gathers in, some she leaves obstinate in their wickedness, it is thereupon added;

Ver. 15. *Those that remain of him shall be buried in death.*

22. Doubtless' the persons left' of that tribe of heretics 'are buried in death,' for whereas they return not to the light of truth, assuredly they are sunk down in everlasting punishment by an earthly perception. And because it is sometimes the case, that whilst the leader of the common herds in error is carried off to punishment, the common herds that were led astray are new set to a knowledge of the truth, and then the persons under them return to true knowledge, when these persons are brought to eternal punishments, who had been wrongly set over them, it is fitly added; *And his widows shall not weep.*

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23. Whom do we take for 'his widows' but the subject common herds left deserted for their happiness by his death? For oftentimes, as has been said, when the preacher of error is carried off to everlasting punishments, his subject multitudes are brought back to the grace of a true acquaintance. For these multitudes the wicked preacher was set over like a husband, because the seducer of the soul did cleave joined to them for the worse. Or, indeed, 'the widows do not weep,' because whilst continuing in their erring belief, whereas they hold their preacher to have been holy, they are beguiled by a deceitful hope, that they should not mourn. It follows;  
Ver. 16, 17. *Though he heap up silver as the earth, and prepare raiment as the mud; he may prepare, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.*

[xvi]

24. Silver is used to be interpreted the clearness of sacred Writ, as it is elsewhere said; *The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth.* [Ps. 12, 6] And because there are those that long to have the Word of God not inwardly in the exemplifying but externally in the displaying, therefore it is said by the Prophet, All they that are clothed in silver are cut off, being those, who by the word of God do not fill themselves with the interior refreshment, but array themselves in the outward exhibition. Hence their 'silver,' i.e. the word of heretics, is compared to 'earth,' because touching the subject of Holy Writ, that there may be something that they know, they toil and strain from the coveting of earthly applause. And these, too, 'prepare raiment as the mud,' because they make up testimonies of Holy Scripture loosely and bedaubingly, whereby they would defend themselves, He shall 'prepare' indeed, 'but the just shall put them on,' because the person who is full of right faith, which is used to be accounted to the Saints for righteousness, gathers together those selfsame testimonies of Holy Writ, which the heretic adduces, and therefrom he charges home the obstinacy of that one's error. For whereas they fetch against us the testimonies of the Sacred Law, they bring with them unto us that whereby they may be defeated. And hence David representing a type of the Lord, but Goliath the pride of Heretics, they spake that in deeds, which we are disclosing in words. Thus Goliath came to battle with a sword, but David with a shepherd's scrip, but David, defeating that same Goliath, with his own sword slew him. Which thing we likewise do, who by His deigning have obtained to be made members of the promised David [al. 'the promised members of David.']. For when heretics full of pride, and advancing sentences of Holy Writ, we defeat by the same words and sentences, which they bring forward, we as it were behead Goliath in his pride with his own sword. And so 'the just puts on those same garments,' which the unjust man 'prepares,' because the holy man employs in the

service of truth those same sentences by which the bad man strives to exhibit himself a master of learning in opposition to the truth.

25. *And the innocent shall divide the silver.* For 'the innocent to divide the silver' is to set forth the revelations of the Lord piece by piece and with discrimination, and to apply to each individual what may be proportionately suitable. For the Word of the Lord which is here entitled 'silver' or 'garments,' this same is elsewhere denominated 'spoils.' Which the Psalmist likewise witnesses in the way of comparison, saying, *I rejoice at Thy Word as one that findeth great spoils.* [Ps. 119, 162] Which spoils are so called for this reason, because on the Gentile world passing over to the faith of the Lord, the Jews are spoiled of the Sacred Oracles with which they had been invested. And of this division of the silver or of spoils it is elsewhere said, *Benjamin is a ravening wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoils.* [Gen. 49, 27] By which words, no doubt, the Apostle Paul is designated, as being descended from the stock of Benjamin, who 'in the morning devoured the prey,' because in his first beginnings seizing upon all the believers he was able, he glutted his own cruelty. But 'in the evening he divided the spoils,' because afterwards being made a believer, he portioned out the sacred oracles by interpreting them.

26. Though this 'silver,' which 'the innocent divides,' may be understood in another sense as well. For Heretics, that they may be easily able to recommend what is wrong, mix with their statements things that are right, that the minds of those that hear them by right views they may attract, and 'by wrong ones wound. Which same persons, because, in the precepts of God, they are pied with a sound and unsound mode of speech, are, in the Gospel, well represented by the appearance of the ten lepers,' with whose healthy colour whereas an evil whiteness is intermixed, by this excessive whiteness they are rendered foul. Hence we are warned, *Not to think of ourselves more than we ought to think, but to think soberly.* [Rom. 12, 3] And these too, because they do not as yet love either God, of Whom they entertain wrong notions, nor yet their neighbour, from whom they are separated, are opposed to the precepts of the Decalogue, and therefore for the beseeching of the Lord they come ten in number. Now for this cause, that they mixed what is sound with what is unsound, they are pied with a difference of colour; but because they offended in His precepts, they call Him that whereby they had so offended, saying, *Jesus, Preceptor;* and hereby they directly obtained to be healed. And so because the Catholic makes out the things that are thought rightly, or that are thought wrongly by them, 'the innocent divideth the silver,' i.e. distinguisheth what may have been by them delivered either with wholesome or baneful effect. It goes on;  
Ver. 18. *He buildeth his house as a moth.*

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27. 'The moth builds a house' for itself by corrupting. Nor could the heretic have been shewn by a better comparison, who makes a dwelling for his misbelief no where else save in the minds which he has corrupted, who also engages for his followers to be free from everlasting fire. For he pledges to them 'the refreshment of eternal rest, but his words 'have no solidity, because they lack the fulness of truth. Whence it is added, *And as the keeper he maketh a booth.* For' the booth of the keeper' is not set firm by any foundation, but the time passing it is directly destroyed. And the rest promised by heretics is destroyed together with the time, in that after this life it is not found at all. And because oftentimes Heretics in contempt of the Church Universal are supported by the patronage of the powerful ones of the world, and the rich do not cease to aid them with all the

countenance of active agency that they are empowered with, that identical person also, whoever he be, that is made to swell against the face of his Maker by temporal good things, is now touched by the sentence of the holy man, and from the particular ruin of heretics, the discourse is drawn off to a general characterizing of all the self-exalted, when it is added;

Ver. 19. *When the rich man sleepeth, he shall take nothing away with him, he shall open his eyes and shall find nought.*

28. In harmony with which same sentence the Psalmist saith, *All the foolish in heart are troubled, they have slept their sleep, and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands.* [Ps. 75, 5] For in order that the rich after death may 'find something in their hand,' it is told to them before death, in whose hands they should place their riches. Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations. When the rich man sleepeth, he shall take nothing away with him. His goods when he dieth he would take away with him, if whilst he lived, at the voice of him that besought him, he had taken them home to himself; for all things earthly, which we part with by keeping, we keep by bestowing; our patrimony which retained is lost, whilst paid out of hand it remains. For we cannot long continue together with our goods. Since either we by dying abandon them, or they by perishing as it were abandon us while living. And so it remains for us to manage that things doomed unreservedly to perish we may compel to pass over into a reward that does not perish.

29. But that is very much to be wondered at that is spoken, *When he sleepeth, he shall open his eyes and shall find nothing.* For in order to sleep we close our eyes, and on waking up open them. But on this point, forasmuch as man consists of soul and body, while it is called sleep of one subject, the waking of the other is shewn to view; because when the body falls asleep in death, then the soul wakes up in a true acquaintance. And so 'the rich man sleeps, and opens his eyes,' because, when he dies in the flesh, his soul is compelled to see what it despised to foresee. Then indeed it wakes up in true acquaintance; then it sees that all is nothing that it possessed; then it finds itself empty; whereas it used to rejoice in being full of good things above the rest of the world. It sleeps, and takes away nothing along with it, nothing surely, of the goods that it possessed. For the sin of the goods is carried on along with it, though every thing for the sake of which sin was committed be left behind here. So then let him go now, and swell himself out with good things gotten, let him lift himself up above the rest of the world, and Pride himself in having what his neighbour has not. The time will come sooner or later that he shall awake, and then learn how empty that was which he had possessed in sleep. For it often happens to the needy whilst sleeping that he sees himself rich in a dream, and on the strength of those acquisitions uplifts his mind, is overjoyed that he has what he had not, and now counts to be disdainful of those whom it grieved him to be disdained by; but that suddenly waking up he is grieved that he has woken up, in that meanwhile though but while sleeping he possessed the semblance of riches. For he groans directly under the weight of poverty, and is wrung by the straitness of his indigence, and this so much the worse, as though but for the shortest space of time he was even thus emptily rich. Thus, thus, too surely is it with the rich ones of this world, who are bloated with good things acquired. They have no knowledge to do right by their abundance; as persons asleep they are rich; but on waking up they find their poverty, because they 'bring nothing with them' to that Judgment, that is calculated to remain, and in proportion as they are now lifted up the higher for a brief space, the more heavily they groan against themselves for everlasting. So then let him say, *He shall open his eyes, and shall find nothing.* Because he then 'opens those eyes' to punishments, which here he

kept closed to mercy. He 'opens his eyes' and he 'finds not' the fruit of pity, in that he kept them shut here, when he did 'find' it. Those also are slow in 'opening their eyes,' who, as Wisdom is witness, are described as going in the time of their condemnation to say, *What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with, our vaunting brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by.* That the things which they possessed were worthless and transitory they now learn by their loss, which same, so long as they were theirs, seemed to their foolish hearts at once great and lasting. It was late that the rich man 'opened his eyes,' when he saw Lazarus at rest, whom he scorned to see lying at his door. He understood There the thing that here to do he refused: by his condemnation he was forced to learn what it was that he lost, when he did not own his neighbour being in want. Of whom it is yet further added;  
Ver. 20. *Want shall take hold of him like water; a tempest shall overwhelm him in the night.*

30. Let us look now at the want of the rich man as burning, whose abundance was so great as feasting. For he says, *Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame.* [Luke 16, 24] By which same words it is not this that is made known to us, that there in that excessive burning a single drop of water is then asked for as a sufficiency of refreshment, but that he who has sinned by abundance should there be consumed by a want burning to excess. For we see in the words of the rich man, resulting from the exactest judgment of God, how proportionate a punishment answered such sin. For moved by want, he is there driven to beg for the very least, who here, moved by covetousness, went so far as to refuse the very least. What can be paid back more exactly, what more strictly? He begged a drop of water, who refused crumbs of bread; and so 'want taketh hold of him like water.' That want is then not unsuitably likened to water, because there is that tormenting in hell, which, as swallowing up those it receives in the depths below, is used to be denoted by the title of a 'lake.' Whence it is delivered by the Prophet in the voice of mankind, *My life is fallen into the lake.* [Lam. 3, 53] But by the triumphing of those that are escaped it is sung, *O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee and Thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: Thou hast kept me from them that go down into the lake.* [Ps. 30, 2. 3.]

31. A tempest shall overwhelm him in the flight. What in this place does he call 'the night,' but the hidden time of sudden departing? And by the name of 'tempest' he represents the whirlwind of the Judgment. Which the Psalmist also testifies, in the words, *Our God shall come in state, our God, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and round about Him a mighty tempest.* [Ps. 50, 3] Of which same 'tempest' Wisdom also saith by Solomon; *I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind.* [Prov. 1, 26. 27.] And because the very ignorance of the coming departure is itself called 'Night,' 'in the night a tempest shall overwhelm him,' i.e. the whirlwind of Divine Judgment, whilst he is ignorant, shall seize upon Him. For it is hence that Truth saith by Itself, *But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready. For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.* [Mal. 24, 43. 44.] Hence also it is spoken against the 'evil servant;' But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, *My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. Hence Paul says to the disciples, But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light and the*

*children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.* [1 Thess. 5, 4. 5.] Hence to the rich man, 'giving loose to pride, it is said by the voice of God, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?* [Luke 12, 20] In the night he is described as giving up his soul, who whilst not seeing death beforehand is carried off in darkness of the heart. Thus then he saith, *A tempest shall overwhelm him in the night.* For because he is not minded to do the good things that he sees, he is caught by the tempest of his destruction which he seeth not. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 2 *The scorching wind shall carry him off, and take him away.*

32. Who is in this place called the 'scorching wind' but the evil spirit, who stirs up the flames of divers lusts in the heart, that he may drag it to an eternity of punishments? And so 'the scorching wind' is said to 'carry off' any bad men, because the plotter, the evil spirit, who inflames a man whilst living to evil, 'drags him when dying to torments. For that 'the scorching wind' is wont to be meant for the unclean spirit, who by the breath of evil suggesting kindles the hearts of the wicked to earthly desires, the prophet Jeremiah testifies, saying, *A pot kindled I see, and the face thereof by the face of the North.* [Jer. 1, 13] For 'the pot kindled' is the heart of man boiling with the heatings of worldly concerns, and with the restlessness of desires. Which is kindled by 'the face of the North,' i.e. set on fire by the suggestions of the devil. For that very being is used to be called by the title of 'the North,' who said, *I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.* [Is. 14, 13] Thus by the burning effect of this scorching wind the mind of each one of the Elect is cooled down, when the heat of evil inclinations is extinguished therein, and the flame of carnal desires turned to ice. And hence Holy Church in the praises of her spouse cries out with exultation, *I sat down tender the shadow of him, whom I had desired.* [Cant. 2, 3] Of the abatement of this heat it is said to her by Isaiah, by promise of the Lord, *Instead of the ground willow shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle tree.* [Is. 55, 13] For 'instead of the ground willow there comes up in her the fir-tree,' when in the heart

of the Saints, instead of the sunkenness of earthly thought, the elevation of heavenly contemplation rises up. Now the nettle is altogether of a fiery nature. But the myrtle is said to be of cooling virtue, and therefore 'instead of the nettle there comes up the myrtle tree,' when the minds of the righteous are brought from the irritation and heat of bad habits to coolness and quietness of the thoughts, while they now no longer seek earthly things, while they extinguish the flames of the flesh by heavenly aspirations.

33. In reference too to this cooling of the soul, which is given from heaven, it is said to Mary, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee* [Luke 1, 35]; though on this point, by the term of 'the overshadowing,' either Nature of God to be made Incarnate might have been denoted. For a shadow is followed by light and body. Now the Lord is Light in respect of the Divine Nature, Who, by means of a soul intervening, vouchsafed in her womb in respect of human nature to become a body. And so because the Incorporeal Light was in her womb to be made corporeal, to her, who conceived the incorporeal for corporality, it is said, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee;* i.e. The Incorporeal Light of the Divine Nature shall in thee take the corporeal substance of Human Nature. But now let us carry to an end what we began relating to any wicked man. Accordingly 'the scorching wind takes him away,' in this way, viz. that him whom the evil



spirit now kindles with the fire of evil concupiscence, he afterwards carries off to the flames of hell. It goes on;  
*And as a whirlwind shall carry him out of his place.*

[xxi]

34. 'The place' of the wicked is the gratification of the life of time, and the enjoyment of the flesh. Therefore every single individual is in a manner 'carried out of his place by a whirlwind,' when overwhelmed with affright on the Last Day he is severed from all his gratifications. Of which same Last Day it is directly added with justice,  
Ver. 22. *For He shall let loose upon him, and not spare.*

[xxii]

35. God, as often as He chastens the sinner by smiting him, for this reason 'lets loose' the scourge, that He may 'spare.' But when by smiting He brings his life to an end whilst remaining in sin, He 'lets loose' the scourge, but never at all 'spares.' For the Same, Who 'let loose' the scourge that He might 'spare,' one day 'lets it loose' with this view that He may not spare. For in this life the Lord busies Himself so much the more that He may spare, in proportion as He scourges the more in awaiting; as He Himself saith to John by the voice of the Angel, *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten* [Rev. 3, 19]; and as it is elsewhere spoken, *For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.* [Hab. 12, 6] But reversely it is written of the scourge of condemnation, *The wicked is taken in the work of his own hands* [Ps. 9, 16]. Of whom the Lord saith by Jeremiah, when He sees the multitudes transgressing irreclaimably, whom He now no longer regards as sons under discipline, but as enemies under unmitigated scourging, *For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement.* [Jer. 30, 14] And what is said here, *and not spare*, is there likewise brought out in other words; *Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable.* [ver. 15] Whence the Elect always make this provision, that they should return to righteousness before the wrath of the Judge is inextinguishably kindled, lest being caught by the last stroke, they find life ended to them, together with sin, For the rod will then do away with the sin, when it alters the life, since whosoever ways it does not change, his doings it does not atone for. Therefore all smiting from God is either a purifying of the present life in us, or a commencement of the punishment that follows. For with reference to those who profit by the scourge it is written, *Who framest pain in the commandment* [Ps. 94, 20]. For in that case when the wicked man is scourged and amended, to the commandment he would not give ear; to the pain he does. And so there is 'pain framed in the commandment' to him, who by pain as it were in the stead of the commandment is kept back from evil practices, But touching these persons to whom scourges are a curse, not a clearance, it is said, *Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction.* [Jer. 5, 3] With these, their scourges commence in this life, and last on in everlasting smiting, Whence the Lord saith by Moses, *For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell* [Deut. 32, 22]. For so far as regards the present smiting it is rightly said, *A fire is kindled in Mine anger.* But as regards the eternal damnation, it is immediately added with propriety, *And shalt burn unto the lowest hell.* Though by some persons that is used to be alleged, which is written, *God judgeth not twice upon the same thing* [Nah. 1, 9. LXX]. Which persons, howsoever, do not pay regard to this that is spoken by the Prophet of the wicked; *And crush them with double confusion* [Jer. 17, 18]. And that, which is written elsewhere; *Jesus in*

*saving the People out of Egypt, a second time destroyed them that believed not* [Jude 5]. To which persons, however, if we yield assent, that any sin cannot be twice visited with punishment, this must be judged of those persons smitten for sin and dying in their sin, that their smiting begun here is completed there, that so to the unreformed there should be one and the same scourge, which begins here in time, but is consummated in eternal punishments, that to those that wholly refuse to be amended, the dealing of present scourges now should be the beginning of the torments to ensue. And so *God shall let loose upon him, and not spare.* It goes on;  
*Fleeing he shall flee out of His hand,*

[xxiii]

36. For he ‘flees out of the hand’ of the Smiter, who amends the wickedness of his behaviour; or otherwise, because in Holy Writ the hand is used to be taken for acting, he ‘flees from the hand of the smiter,’ who, whilst he marks the destruction of the wicked man, forsakes the path of wickedness. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 23. *He shall bind up his hands over him.*

[xxiv]

37. For to ‘bind up the hands’ is to establish the practices of his life in uprightness, Whence Paul too saith; *Wherefore lift up the loosed hands, and the unstrung knees* [Heb. 12, 12]. While, then, they behold the destruction of another, they are made to turn back to the conscience, to remind themselves of their own, and by the very same cause whereby one man is carried to torments, another is freed from torments, And so ‘he binds up his hands over him,’ because he observes in the punishment of another what to be afraid of; and whilst he sees one living in transgression so smitten, he binds fast his own too loose practices with the sinews of righteousness. And so it is brought to pass that he who, being a bad man, whilst living, had drawn numbers into transgression by the delightfulness of sin, in dying recovers some from transgression by the terribleness of torments. Which same the Psalmist bears witness to be of advantage to the good as well, saying, *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his hands in the blood of sinners.* [Ps. 58, 10] For ‘in the blood of sinners,’ when dying, ‘the righteous do wash their hands,’ because, when their punishment is seen, the life of the person seeing it is cleansed. It goes on;

*And he shall hiss upon him, beholding his place.*

[xxv]

38. What is expressed in the hissing, but the straining of wonderment? But if in the hissing there is some other meaning ought, when the sinner dies, these that witness his death draw tight the mouth in hissing, in that they are converted to those spiritual words, which they had contemned, so that they henceforth begin to believe and to teach, what before, while they perceived the wicked man thriving, they need not to believe. For it very often happens that the mind of the weak is the more unsteadied from the hearing of the truth, as it sees the despisers of the truth flourishing; but when just vengeance takes away the unjust, it keeps others away from wickedness. Whence it is said by Solomon; When the pestilent man is punished, the little one will be wiser. Thus the holy man after

he had adequately filled up the punishments of the men of power that are lifted up in the world, again directs his words to the pride of heretics, who are lifted up in speech, saying ;  
Chap. xxviii. ver. 1. *The silver hath the beginning of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.*

39. In silver the power of speaking, in gold brightness of life or of wisdom is used to be denoted. And because heretics are so filled with pride for the brilliancy of their speaking, that they are not based firmly by any authority of the sacred books, (which books are for speaking like a kind of veins of silver to us, because from those identical books we derive the spring and source of our speaking,) he recalls them to the pages of sacred authority, that if they have a desire to speak in a true way, they may from that source draw forth what to say. And he saith, *The silver hath the beginning of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.*

As if he said in plain words; 'He that is fitting himself for the words of true preaching, the originals of the cases he must of necessity derive from the sacred page, so as to bring round every thing that he speaks to a foundation of divine authority, and in that set firm the edifice of his own speaking. For, as we before said, oftentimes heretics, whilst they are eager to prop up what is bad of their own, broach things which assuredly are not maintained in the page of the sacred books. And hence the great Preacher admonishes his disciple, saying, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane novelties of speaking* [1 Tim. 6, 20], for whereas heretics long to be extolled as if for excellency of wit, they as it were bring out new things which are not maintained in the old books of the ancient Fathers, and thus it follows, that whilst they desire to appear wise, they scatter seeds of foolishness to their wretched hearers.

40. And it is well added; *And to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.* As if he said in plain terms; 'The true wisdom of believers, which has the Church Universal for its place, undergoes tribulation by you persecuting her, but from all the dross of sins by the fire of your persecution she is purified.' Whence it is written; *For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity.* [Ecclus. 2, 5] In which passage this too may be appropriately taken for the meaning, that for their foolish suffering heretics might seem to be rebuked. For oftentimes for the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, they suffer much, and by those same sufferings they look for themselves to become His martyrs. To which persons it is now said by the voice of the holy man; and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it. For according to that which has been already said even before us, he that suffers out of the unity of the Church, punishments he may suffer, but a Martyr he cannot be made; for 'to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.' What then, ye heretics, say ye to these things? Ye are minded to be 'fined' by the afflicting of the flesh, nay even by martyrdom, but the place where ye must be fined, ye know not. Hear ye what is spoken by the voice of the holy preacher. 'To the gold there is a place, where they fille it.' So then, seek ye this 'place for the fining,' this furnace, wherein the gold may be fitly purged, find ye out.

41. There is one Church, .in which he that may have attained to be fined, may likewise be purified from all the dross of sins. If for the sake of God ye undergo aught of bitterness, if aught of tribulation, being without her pale, ye can only be burnt, ye cannot be purified. Let Jeremiah tell, let him tell in what way the fire of your fining is void of all efficacy. *The finer melteth in vain; for their wickednesses are not done away* [Jer. 6, 29]. See how the fire externally melting at once administers a punishment of hard suffering, and yet does not clear off the sin of misbelief; it both

furnishes torments of cruel punishments, and does not cause additions of good merits. Moreover the fire of this fining which is undergone out of the Catholic Church, how utterly it is void of all efficacy the Apostle Paul instructs us, when he says, *And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* [1 Cor. 13, 3] For some think wrong things touching God, and others hold what is right about the Creator, but do not maintain unity with their brethren; the one are sundered by erroneousness of faith, and the others by the commission of schism. And hence in the very first part of the Decalogue the sins of both sides are checked, seeing that it is said by the voice of God, *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.* [Mark 12, 30. 31. Deut. 6, 5] And it is immediately added, *And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* For whoso imagines what is wrong about God, surely it is evident that he does not 'love God.' But he who while he entertains right notions about God is divided from the unity of the Holy Church, it is plain that he does not love his neighbor, whom he refuses to have for his fellow.

42. Whosoever, then, is divided from this unity of the Church our Mother, either through heresy in entertaining wrong notions concerning God, or by the erroneousness of schism in not loving his neighbour, is bereft of the grace of that charity, concerning which Paul saith what we have before given; *And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* As if he expressed himself in plain utterance; 'Without the bounds of its place, the fire of fining being applied to me only afflicts me with torment, and does not purify me by its cleansing.' This place all they that are lovers of holy peace seek with heartiest endeavours, this on seeking they find, this finding they keep, knowing the remission of sin, as to where, or when, or to what sort it is vouchsafed. For where is it, save in the bosom of our Catholic Mother? When, but before the day of coming departure? Because, *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* [2 Cor. 6, 2] And, *Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near.* [Is. 55, 6] To what sort of persons, but to the converted, who after the imitating of little children are fashioned by humility as their mistress? To whom it is said; *Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 19, 14] And, *Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 18, 3] And therefore, because there are no true martyrs made saving in the Catholic Church, it is rightly said, *To the gold there is a place where they fine it.* Because the soul would not be made bright in the radiance of everlasting beauty, except, so to say, it were first burnt here in the workshop of charity.

43. Moreover, we are to consider that there are some whom Almighty God by His secret counsel preserving in innocency from their very beginnings promotes to the topmost heights of virtuous attainments, that, as their age increases, both numerousness of years and loftiness of merits should simultaneously advance in them. But others abandoning in their outset He suffers to go with bad habits fermenting by headlong ways. . Yet for the most part even these He has regard to, and for the following after Him He kindles them with the fire of holy love, and the itchings of bad propensities engrained in their hearts He converts into a fervour of virtue, and they are the more set on fire to the desire of beseeching the pitifulness of God, in proportion as they are the more ashamed at the recollection of their own wickedness; as it often happens, that in the conflict of the fight the soldier, who is placed before the eyes of his leader, basely yields to the enemy's valour, and that whilst he powerlessly turns his back he is struck; yet nevertheless being ashamed of this very thing that he has done [2 Mss. 'yeilded.'] disgracefully before his leader's eyes, from the mere

sense of shame he gathers greater force; and afterwards executes deeds of Prowess, to so high a degree that he may at once achieve present credit of his valour, and cover past disgrace of weakness. In a like way, these persons are sometimes more actively established in the service of God by consequence of past weakness, and such persons for the keeping of His commandments both the desire of things future draws on, and the remembrance of things past urges forward, that on the one side affection to that which is to come should stimulate, and on the other shame for that which is past spur on. Which same however, while the enemies of the Church see to be endowed with the highest virtues, and in their present life cannot any way find out that whereby they may derogate from their merit, they set themselves to impeach them of the past, as the Manichaeans assails our Moses, in whom he endeavours to soil with the sin of a past homicide the grace of subsequent virtuous attainments; in whom he heeds not how patient he was afterwards to endure, but how precipitate he was before to strike. Such adversaries as these blessed Job encountering with the exactest eye of observation, after that he said, *Silver hath the beginning of its veins; and to gold there is a place where they find it*; he justly added;  
*Iron is taken out of the earth.*

[xxvii]

44. Heretics are used to pride themselves against us by the self-priding of their righteousness, and to boast high their practices with the swelling of ostentation, and ourselves, as we have said, they impeach either for being or having been bad persons. Accordingly in a most humble confession, and in a truthful defence against those, the holy man speaks, saying, *Iron is taken out of the earth*. As if he said in plain speech; ‘men of strength, who by the sharpest swords of their tongues are become iron in this pitched battle of the defending of the faith, were one time but’ earth ‘in the lowest sphere of actions.’ For to man on his sinning it was spoken; *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return*. But ‘iron is taken out of the earth,’ when the hardy champion of the Church is separated from an earthly course of conduct, which he before maintained. Accordingly he ought not to be contemned in any thing whatever, that he was, who has already begun to be that which he was not. Was not Matthew found in the earth, who, involved in earthly matters, served the business of the receipt of custom? But having been taken out of the earth, he was strengthened into the forcibleness of iron, in that by his tongue, as by the sharpest sword, the Lord in the enforcing of the Gospel pierced the hearts of unbelievers. And he that before was weak and contemptible by his earthly occupations, was afterwards made strong for heavenly preachings. Hence it is yet further subjoined;

*And the stone being melted with heat is turned into brass.*

45. Then is ‘the stone dissolved with heat,’ when the heart that is hard and cold to the fire of divine love is touched by that same fire of divine love, and melted in the glowing warmth of the Spirit, that to the life that follow’s it should bum with the heat of its longings, which life on hearing of before, it remained uninfluenced. By the power of which same heat, he is at once softened down to love and invigorated to practice, that as before he was hard in the love of the world, so he should afterwards give himself out strong unto the love of God, and what he declined to give ear to before, he should henceforth begin both to believe and to preach. And so, the stone being dissolved with heat is turned into brass, because the hardened mind, being melted by the fire of love from Above, is changed to true strength. So that the sinner that was before unmoved should afterwards be made at once strong in respect of authority, and sounding in respect of preaching. Which is well spoken

by Isaiah; *They that trust in the Lord shall change their strength.* [Is. 40, 31] We 'change our strength,' when being converted, we eschew the present scene of things with as much power and might as we before were seeking it. But because the foregoing life is unfairly by adversaries counted to the character of Catholics, it is rightly added;

Ver. 3. *He hath set a time to darkness, and Himself vieweth the end of all and everyone.*

46. He hath Himself 'set a time to the darkness,' i.e. bounds to the wicked, where they should cease to be wicked. Whence it is said to them by the Apostle; Ye-were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord. Like as to the other disciples as well the same great teacher saith, The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day. Hence also in the Song of Songs on the coming of the Church it is said, Who is she that cometh forth as the morning in rising?

For fitly is the Church described by being compared with 'the morning,' in that, by the knowledge of the faith she is changed from the darkness of sins to be in the bright light of righteousness. By the term of 'all and every one,' he would have both the Elect and the damned to be comprehended. For God both in doing and ordering what is good, yet not doing what is bad, but what by the wicked is done Himself so regulating that the things should not come forth irregularly, 'vieweth the end of all and every one,' and bears all things patiently, and beholds the goal of the Elect, how that from evil they are changed to good. He sees, too, the end of the damned, how that for bad practice they are dragged to a punishment worthy of them. He saw the end of Saul when persecuting, wherein prostrated on the earth he should say, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? He saw the end of the seeming-obedient disciple, that for the guilty deed he had committed he should tie his throat with a noose, and both punish himself when guilty of sin, and by thus punishing, betray himself the worse. He saw the Ninevites transgressing, but beheld the end of the transgressing in the repentance of the reformed. He saw likewise Sodom transgressing, but He beheld the end of the burning of lust in the fire of hell. He saw the end of the Gentile world, how that whilst occupied by the darkness of iniquities, it should be one day brightened with the light of faith. He also saw the end of Judaea, how that from that light of faith, which it held, it should blind itself with the darkness of hardened unbelief. Whence it is yet further added with just applicability, Ver. 4. *The stone likewise of darkness, and the shadow of death, the torrent divides from the people on travel.*

47. What was that people of the Jews, hard by unbelief, that refused to behold by faith that Author of life, whom it foretold by prophecy, but 'a stone of darkness?' because it proved at once hard by cruelty, and clouded by unbelief. Which same is also called by another term 'the shadow of death.' For a shadow is drawn such and of the same sort as the outlines were of that object, from which it is derived, And who is designated by the name of 'death' but the devil? Of whom in a kind of mode of representation by his minister' it is said, *And his name was Death.* [Rev. 6, 8] Of whom that people was a shadow, because in following his wickedness, it presented in itself a semblance of him. But what is named by the title of the 'torrent,' save that fire that issues forth from the sight of the Awful Judge in the final Inquest, and divides the Elect and the damned? Whence too it is said by the Prophet, *A fiery and rapid stream came forth from before Him.* [Dan. 7, 10]

48. But what People is 'on travel' in this world, but that which hastening to the inheritance of the Elect knows well that it has its native country in the heavenly world, and expects that it will there

find its own the more, in proportion as here it reckons all things that pass away to be unconnected with itself? Thus the 'pilgrim People' is the number of all the Elect, who accounting this life a species of exile to themselves, pant with the whole bent of the heart after their native country Above; of which persons Paul saith, *And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.* [Heb. 11, 13. 14.] This pilgrim state that same Apostle also was undergoing when he said, *Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we go pilgrims [peregrinamur] away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight.* [2 Cor. 5, 6. 7.] The woes of this pilgrim state he was in haste to get quit of when he said, *Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ;* [Phil. 1, 23] and again, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* [ver. 21] The burthen of this pilgrimage the Psalmist felt lying heavy upon him, when he said; *Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in, the tents of Kedar! My soul hath been much a sojourner.* [Ps. 120, 5. 6.] From this he was panting to be extricated as speedily as possible, when inflamed with heavenly aspirations he said, *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God!* [Ps. 42, 2] But this desire they are strangers to, who rivet their heart on earthly gratifications. For whilst they love only the things that are visible, surely the invisible things, even if they believe them to exist, they do not love, in that whilst they follow themselves too much with the outward following, even in the interior they become carnal. Thus both people run together in this life, but do not together attain to the life everlasting, because, the stone of darkness and the shadow of death the torrent divides from the people on travel. As if he said in plain speech, 'Those whom in this present time either infidelity makes blind, or cruelty makes hard, the fiery stream that issues from before the Judge Eternal doth then sever from the People of the Elect, that thus from the company of good men the fire of the strict Inquest should part those, whom the darkness of evil habits makes blind in their lusts.

49. Perhaps by the designation of the 'torrent,' the actual whatering of holy preaching may be understood, according to that, that is said by Solomon; *The eye that sneereth at his father and despiseth the travail of his mother, lo the ravens from the torrents shall pick it out.* [Prov. 30, 17] For bad men, while they find fault with the judgments of God, do 'sneer at their father,' and heretics of all sorts whilst in mocking they condemn the preaching of Holy Church, and her fruitfulness, what else is this but that they 'despise the travail of their mother?' whom we not unjustly call the mother of them as well, because from the same they come forth, who speak against the same, as John bears witness, who says, *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* [1 John 2, 19] But 'the ravens from the torrents come,' when the true Preachers come forth for the defence of Holy Church from the streams of the Sacred Books. Which same also are rightly termed 'ravens,' because they never pride themselves on the light of their righteousness, but by the grace of humility confess in themselves the blackness of sins. Whence too, it is spoken by the Church of Elect souls, I am black, but comely. And John says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. Which same ravens, no doubt, 'pick out the eyes' of him that 'sneereth,' because they overcome the aim of bad and froward men. Thus by this testimony, if here as well 'the torrent' is to be taken for preaching; the stone of darkness, and shadow of death, the torrent divides from the people on travel; because the preaching of the Saints gives over the hardened minds of the lost, and betakes itself to the pious hearts of the lowly. Hence it is yet further subjoined, *Those whom the foot of the needy man forgot, al~d the inaccessible ones.*

50. What other in this place is taken to be the needy man, saving Him concerning Whom it is said by Paul, *Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor*. [2 Cor. 8, 9] The 'feet' of which 'needy man' were the holy Preachers, by the presence of which same compassing the Gentile world, He went round about the whole globe. Of whom it is said by the Prophet, *And I will walk in them*. [Lev. 26, 12] Was not he His foot, who whilst held fast in fetters, said, *For which I am an ambassador in bonds?* [2 Cor. 6, 16. Eph 6, 20] But those, who proved themselves 'a shadow of death and a stone of darkness,' 'the foot of the needy Man forgot,' because in the very outset of the new born Church, whereas the holy Apostles were minded to have preached the kingdom of heaven to Judaea, seeing that they profited for nothing at all, they went off for the preaching to the Gentiles, as they themselves say in their Acts; *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*. [Acts 13, 23] Concerning whom also it is said by the Psalmist, *The mountains shall be carried into the heart of the sea* [Ps. 46, 2]; because the Apostles, being thrust off by Judaea, were 'carried' into this scene of the Gentile world. Who then are those, that by unbounded hardness and from dimsightedness of heart, like a kind of 'stone of darkness and the shadow of death,' are divided from the People of the Saints going on travel, saving those whom 'the foot of the needy Man forgot,' i.e. whom the Preachers of the Lord, poor as He was, that is, in respect of human nature, abandoned on account of the swelling of their pride; and those they wholly forgot, whilst they transferred the seeds of their preaching to the getting fruit of the Gentiles only? Whom moreover he rightly calls 'inaccessible' also, because while they were hardened in their infidelity, they refused to give the words of life access to their heart. But this Judaea which grows thus hardened, whether what she was for long, or what she underwent afterwards, let us listen to. It goes on;

Ver. 6. *The earth from which bread arose, is overturned in its place by fire.*

51. Judaea was wont to give bread, in that she used to set before men the words of the Law. Which same Law because the children of perdition could now no longer understand and interpret, the prophet Jeremiah bewails in the Lamentations, saying, *The young children asked bread, and there was no man to break it unto them* [Lam 4, 4]; but this 'earth is overturned in its place with fire,' because on beholding the miracles of the faithful it consumed itself with the firebrand of envy. For because envy is always used to be engendered from pride, she 'perished in her place by fire,' who for this reason burned with envy, because she did not abandon pride. And so 'the earth, which first had bread, was afterwards overturned by fire,' because the Synagogue, which set before men the commandments of God in the Law, by persecuting the new-born Church consumed itself with the fire of envy. Was it not in flames with the brands of its jealousy when on seeing the miracles of our Redeemer; it said by certain of its own, *What do we? for this Man doeth many miracles?* [John 11, 47] Or, surely, *Ye see that we gain nothing; yea, the whole world goeth after Him*. [ib. 12, 19] They saw that whereby they should have been converted, and they were thereby rendered the more froward. They sought to stifle Him, Whom they beheld give life to the dead. They held the Law in the mouth, but persecuted the Author of the Law. Therefore *the earth, from which bread arose, was overturned in its place by fire*. Because Judaea had in her own self first the Law that should refresh, and afterwards envy that should consume her. For the describing of whom it is further added,

Ver. 6. *The stones of it are the place of sapphire, and her clods gold.*

[xxxiii]



52. The proclaim of the glory going before adds to the guilt of the sin following after. For the fall of every individual is of worse criminality, in proportion as before he fell he had the power to be of greater excellency. Thus let it be told of Judaea, let it be told what she was, and let the greatness of the excellencies going before grow into the heightening of the delinquencies succeeding afterwards, Her stones were the place of sapphires, and her clods of gold, What do we understand in this place by 'gold,' but the minds of the Saints and strong ones? For in Holy Scripture 'stones' are wont to be taken sometimes on the side of bad and sometimes on the side of good, For when a 'stone' is put for insensibility, by 'stones' we have hard hearts denoted. Whence also it is said by John; *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham* [Matt. 3, 9]; who, surely, by the name of 'stones' denotes the hearts of the Gentiles, at that time hard and insensible in respect of unbelief, And by the Prophet the Lord promises, saying, *And I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh.* [Ez. 11, 19] Again by 'stones' the minds of the strong ones are used to be denoted. And hence it is said to the Saints by Peter, *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood.* [1 Pet. 2, 5] And by the Prophet the Lord promises to the Church when she comes, saying, *Behold, I will lay down thy stones in order, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy bulwarks jasper, and thy gates in cut stones, and all thy borders into pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* [Is. 54, 11-13] For He did 'lay down in her the stones in order,' in that He distinguished the holy souls in her by the diverseness of merits, He 'laid her foundation in sapphires,' which same stones retain in themselves the likeness of the colour of the air, because the strength of the Church is firmly based in souls seeking after heavenly things. And because a jasper is of a green hue, He 'made his bulwarks of the jasper,' because they are advanced against her adversaries in the defence of Holy Church, who growing green and fresh by interior desires, do not die off by any drying up of damnable lukewarmness. But He 'set her gates in cut stones.' For those are the 'gates' of the Church, by whose life and teaching the multitude of those that believe enter into her, Who also for this reason, that they are rich in great deeds, and that-what by speaking they declare, by living they exhibit, are described to be not plain but 'cut stones.' For in whosoever life right practice is seen, there is as it were represented in those same persons what they have done. Where also embracing all the number of the Elect in a general roll, he added, *and all thy borders in pleasant stones.* And as though we, on hearing these things, begged that he would make known those stones that he spoke of, he added, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* And therefore because from out of Judaea there were never wanting holy souls, to lead a heavenly life, it is said, he? stones are the place of sapphires. And because with an extraordinary brightness of life and of wisdom she shone forth by faith, it is added, *and her clods gold.* What is denoted by 'clods,' but the assemblages and multitudes of the several orders? Now clods are compacted of moisture and dust; and so all they that being watered with the dew of grace confessed with a true-sighted knowledge that by the debt of death they are dust, whilst they were made to shine bright by excellency of life, lay in her like 'clods of gold.' 'Clods' this earth had in the Prophets, 'clods' she had in the teachers, 'clods' in the Ancient Fathers, who by an extraordinary infusion of grace kept themselves close in unanimity of profession and of practice. Therefore let him say, *And the clods of it gold;* because therein the multitude of the spiritual souls shone with greater perfection, in proportion as it bound itself up in God and its neighbour with greater unanimity.

53. But this gold was afterwards dimmed by the darkness of unbelief. Whose blackness, surely, the Prophet Jeremiah surveying laments, saying, *How is the gold become dim? how is the most fine*

*gold changed!* For 'the gold is become dim,' in that that ancient brilliancy in them of faith and innocency, upon unbelief coming upon them, dulled itself with the night of wickedness. Therefore, what it was since we have heard, even that her stollen are the place of sapphires, now let us bear next wherefore that People so beloved of God lost these great blessings. It goes on;  
Ver. 7. *The pathway of the bird it knew not, nor beheld the eyes of the vulture.*

[xxxiv]

54. Who is denoted in this place by the title of 'the bird,' saving He, Who in ascending poised sky wards the fleshly body, which He took to Him. Who furthermore is fitly designated by the title of the 'vulture' as well. For the 'vulture' while it is flies if it sees a carcase lying, drops itself down for the devouring of the carcase, and very often it is in this way taken in death, when it has come from on high after the dead animal. Rightly therefore is the Mediator between God and Man, our Redeemer, denoted by the appellation of a 'vulture,' Who whilst remaining in the loftiness of His Divine Nature, marked as it were from a kind of flight on high the carcase of our mortal being down below, and let Himself drop from the regions of heaven to the lowest places. For in our behalf He vouchsafed to become man, and while he sought the dead creature, He found death among us, Who was deathless in Himself. Now 'the eye' of this 'vulture' was the actual aiming at our Resurrection, because He Himself being dead for three days set us free from everlasting death. And so that faithless people of Judaea saw Him in the state of mortality, but how by His death He should destroy our death, it noted not. It beheld, indeed, the vulture, but 'the eyes of the vulture it did not behold.' Which People, whereas it refused to regard the ways of His humility, whereby He lifted us up on high, 'knew not the pathway of the bird.' For neither did it betake itself to consider that His humility would lift us to the heavenly heights, and the aim of His death renew us to life. Therefore the pathway of the bird it knew not, nor beheld the eyes of the vulture. For though it saw Him Whom it held bound in death, it refused to see what wonderful glory by His death followed our life [al. 'what glory in our life should follow from His death']. And hence it was kindled to the cruelty of persecution likewise; it refused to receive the words of life; the Preachers of the kingdom of heaven, by forbidding, by evil entreating, by smiting it thrust from it. Which same, being so thrust off, abandoning Judaea whereto they had been sent, were dispersed for the gathering together of the Gentile world. And hence it is further added;  
Ver. 8. *The children of the dealers have not trodden it, nor hath the lioness passed through it.*

55. In all the Latin copies we find the word 'Instructors' [*Institutores*] put down, but in the Greek we find 'traders,' [*negiatores*] whereby it may be inferred that in this passage the several copyists from being ignorant put 'instructors' ('institutores') instead of 'institores' ('dealers'). For we call traders 'institores' on this account, that they are 'instant in plying work.' But both the one phrase and the other, though they disagree in utterance, yet are not at variance in meaning, because all those who instruct the practice of the faithful, carry on a spiritual dealing, that while they supply preaching to their hearers, they should receive back from them faith and right works; as where it is written touching Holy Church, She maketh fine linen, and selleth it. Concerning whom it is likewise said a little after in that place, *She perceiveth that her trading is good.* [Prov. 31, 24] Who in this place are called 'instructors' but the holy Prophets, who busied themselves by prophesying to instruct the ways of the Synagogue unto faith? 'Sons' of whom, assuredly, the holy Apostles are styled, who that they should believe God Man were begotten to the same faith by the preaching of those. Concerning whom it is said to the Church by the Psalmist; *Instead of thy fathers are born to*

*thee children, whom thou mayest make princes over all the earth.* [Ps. 45, 16] But because the Apostles being thrust off went out from the borders of the Synagogue, it is lightly said now, *The children of the dealers have not trodden it.* Since the 'children of the dealers' would have 'trodden it,' if the holy Preachers had borne down the badness of the Synagogue with the heel of goodness. But if those same 'dealers' we take for the Preachers of Holy Church, then the 'children' of the dealers, nothing hinders us taking for the Shepherds and Teachers who followed the way of the Apostles. Which did not 'tread' the Synagogue, because whilst their fathers, i.e. the Apostles, were thrust off by that Synagogue, they themselves too ceased from the calling of her.

56. Which same Synagogue' the lioness passed not by,' because Holy Church, being devoted to the assembling together of the Gentiles, never any longer employed itself upon that people of Judaea. Now the Church is lightly called' a lioness,' in that persons living amiss in bad habits, it kills with the mouth of holy preaching. Hence to the first Shepherd himself it is said as to the mouth of this lioness; *slay and eat.* [Acts 10, 13] For what is 'slain' is killed out of life, whilst that which is eaten is changed into the body of the person eating. Accordingly it is said, 'Slay and eat;' i.e. 'Kill those to the sin wherein they are living, and convert them from themselves into thine own members.' And because this Church is the body of the Lord, the Lord likewise Himself by the voice of Jacob is called' a lion' in respect of Himself, a 'lioness' by the body, when it is said to him under the likeness of Judah, *To the prey, my son, art thou gone up. Thou hast couched as a lion, and as a lioness. Who shall rouse him up?* [Gen. 49, 9] Accordingly this lioness it is never said' passed not' Judaea, but' passed not through.' For upon the Apostles preaching, in the first instance three thousand out of her, and afterwards five thousand, believed. And so the Church' passed by' the way of the Synagogue, but' passed not through,' because a few from out of her it carried off to faith, but yet that faithless people it did not utterly make extinct to misbelief. But, what we have already often said, being cast off by the infidelity of the Jews it turned away to the calling of the Gentiles. Hence it is yet further said of that same lioness;

Ver. 9. *He stretcheth out his hand to the flint; He overturneth the mountains by the roots.*

[xxxvi]

57. For 'he stretched out his hand to the flint,' because He put forth the arm of His preaching to the hardness of the Gentiles. Hence the same blessed Job, forewarned of the history of his suffering being destined to be made known to the Gentiles, says, *Let these things be graven with an iron pen in a plate of lead, or hewn in the flint.* [Job 19, 24] But whom in this place do we understand by the' mountains' saving the powerful ones of this world, who on account of earthly substance swell themselves high? Concerning whom the Psalmist saith, *Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke* [Ps. 144, 5]; but the mountains are overturned from the roots, because, on Holy Church preaching the highest powers of this world fell from their inmost thinking into the adoring of Almighty God. For 'the roots' of the mountains are the inmost thoughts of the proud. And 'the mountains fall from the roots,' because for the worshipping of God, the powers of the world are laid level with the earth from the lowest thoughts. For by a root the hidden thought is rightly denoted, because by means of that which is not seen, being within, there bursts out what should be seen without. And hence on the side of good it is said by the Prophet, *And the remnant that is escaped of the House of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.* [Is. 37, 31] As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'Deep down below the thought springs up, that up on high the reward may be rendered back.' So then let him say, *He stretcheth out his hand to the flint, and overturneth the*

*mountains from the roots.* For whilst the sacred preaching sought the hardness of the Gentiles, it entirely frustrated the loftiness of the proud. But because those whom it empties of earthly thoughts, it fills with heavenly gifts, and those, whom it drains of interest below, it waters with streams from Above, it is directly added;

Ver. 10. *He cutteth out streams in the rocks.*

[xxxvii]

58. i.e. in the hard hearts of the Gentiles he opened the rivers of preaching; as it is likewise spoken by the Prophet of watering the dryness of the Gentiles; *He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs.* [Ps. 107, 35] And in the Gospel the Lord promises, saying, *He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* [John 7, 38] What we then heard promised, we now see fulfilled. For see how in the holy preachers, not sprung from Judaea, through the universal Church spread over the whole world, streams of heavenly precepts flow forth in abundance from the mouths of the Gentiles. Thus because in the rocks He opened streams, from hard hearts too there flowed forth the river of holy preaching. It goes on;

*And his eye hath seen every precious thing.*

[xxxviii]

59. It is a thing to be especially borne in mind, that each individual soul is rendered the more precious in the sight of God, by how much it is for Jove of the truth the more despised in its own eyes. *When thou wast little in thine own sight, did I not make thee the head of the tribes of Israel?* [1 Sam. 15, 17] As if he said in plain terms, “Thou wast great with Me, because thou wast contemptible to thyself, but now because thou art great to thyself, thou art become contemptible to Me.’ And hence it is said by the Prophet; *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!* Thus every man becomes the more worthless to God, in proportion as he is more precious to himself, so much the more precious to God as he is for His sake more worthless to himself; because *He regardeth the lowly, and knoweth the high afar off.* Every precious thing, therefore, *His eye saw.* [Ps. 138, 6] In Holy Scripture God’s ‘seeing’ is put for ‘choosing,’ as it is written in the Gospel; *When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee,* [John 1, 48] i.e. I chose thee whilst placed under the shadow of the Law.’ Therefore He ‘saw every thing precious,’ because He chose the lowly. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. He ‘saw the precious thing’ when the human soul, having base views of itself, He visited with the illumination of His grace. Of which same soul it is said by the Prophet; *If thou separatest the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.* [Jer. 15, 19] For the present world is vile with God, but the soul of man is precious to Him. He, then, that ‘separates the precious from the vile’ is called ‘as the mouth of God,’ because by that man God deals forth His words, who by speaking the things that he is able to speak, plucks out the soul of man from the love of the present world. And because the teachers of the New Testament are brought to this, that even the hidden darkness of allegories in the Old Testament they search out, it is rightly added;

Ver. 11. *The depths also of the floods He hath searched, and the hidden things He hath brought to light.*

[xxxix]

60. For what else are here called 'floods' but the sayings of the ancient Fathers. For who might be able to estimate how vehement a flood, whilst he was founding the Law, burst forth from the very breast of Moses? how vehement a flood gushed from the heart of David? what mighty streams of floods flowed out from the lips of Solomon and all the Prophets? Now of these 'floods' Judaea held the shew, when in keeping the surface of the letter she knew not the depths thereof. But we, who, on the Lord coming, seek therein interior spiritual things, search their 'depths.' And this thing the Lord is Himself said to do, because by Himself vouchsafing it we are enabled to do it; and so by us, who follow not the letter which killeth, but the spirit which maketh alive, the Lord 'searcheth the depths of. the floods, and bringeth the hidden things into light,' because the statements of the Law, which the too dark history makes obscure, a spiritual interpretation now lights up. And hence 'Truth' when speaking in parables in the Gospel bade the Disciples, saying, *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house tops.* [Mat. 10, 27] For the plainly spoken words of these interpreting have made the sentences of the ancient Fathers henceforth clear to us. Hence the Prophet Isaiah viewing the words plain by the interpretation of Holy Church, not obscured by the darkness of allegories, exclaimed, saying, *The place of rivers, the broadest and open streams.* [Is. 33, 21] For the sayings of the Old Testament were as narrow and close streams, which bound up the sentences of their lore in the darkest gathering together. But on the other hand the teaching of Holy Church are 'streams both broad and open,' because her declarations are at once many in number to those that find them, and plain to those that seek. Therefore he says, *The depths of the floods he hath searched, and the hidden things he hath brought to light.* Because when He poured into His interpreters the spirit of understanding, He set open the ancient obscurities of those prophesying. And that Holy Church henceforth knows and sees by the Spirit, which the Synagogue before was not at all able to understand by the letter.. Whence Moses also, while he spoke to the people, veiled his face; surely, in order to denote that that People of the Jews knew the words of the Law, but did not at all see the clearness of that Law. And hence it is rightly said by Paul; *But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.* [2 Cor. 3, 15] But because the declarations of God are, without His wisdom, never fathomed at all, (for except him who hath received His Spirit, none knoweth in any sort His words,) the holy man adds words touching the subject of searching out that same Wisdom of God, saying;

Ver. 12-15. *But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof: neither is it found in the land of them that live pleasantly. The depth saith, It is not with me, and the sea saith, It is not with me. Fine gold shall not be given for it: neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof:*

[xl]

61. It is first to be noted, that two points be proposed to himself, and two he adds making answer. For to this that he said above, *Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?* he answered in this verse, *The depth saith, It is not with me; and the sea saith, It is not with me.* But in answer to that which he had said, *Man knoweth not the place thereof; neither is it found in the land of them that live pleasantly;* he gave the lower verse, saying, *Fine gold shall not be given for it; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.* So then he answered to both questions, yet in adding to what he had objected, not in solving it. For when he enquired the place of Wisdom, and then answered below, *The depth saith, It is not with me;* he pointed out not

where it was, but where it was not. Again when he said that 'the price thereof was not known by man,' and rejoined to this below, *fine gold shall not be given for it*; he shewed not what was the price of it, but what was not. For it is plain to all that neither can this wisdom of man be held in a place, nor be bought with riches. But the holy man being full of mystical ideas sends us on for the making out other things, so that we should look for not wisdom created, but Wisdom creating; for except in those words we search the secret depths of allegory, surely those things that follow are utterly deserving of disregard, if they be estimated according to the historical narration alone. For a little afterwards he saith, *Gold and glass cannot equal it*; and while, as we know, glass is far and incomparably of lower price than gold, wherefore after the name of gold, which is unquestionably a precious metal, byway of unlimited praise did he say that 'glass' too is not equal to wisdom? So by the mere difficulty of the letter, we are forced that we be quick sighted to the mystical sentiments in these words. So then what wisdom is it, the holy man is contemplating, but that of which Paul the Apostle saith, *Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God?* [1 Cor. 1, 24] Concerning which it is written by Solomon; *Wisdom hath builded her house* [Prov. 9, 1]; and of which the Psalmist saith; *In wisdom hast Thou made all things*. [Ps. 104, 24] Of this same Wisdom 'man knoweth not the price,' because he findeth nothing worthy of the estimate thereof. Now this price of Wisdom is not said at once 'to be,' and not 'to be known,' but as for this reason 'not to be known,' because it is wanting, in that manner of speaking by which a person caught in a strait, when he finds no remedy of succour, is wont to confess that 'what to do he knows not.'

62. So then 'not to know the price of this Wisdom,' is to find no meriting of meet practice whereby to obtain it. For we give a price with this object, that instead of it we may possess ourselves of that object which we long after. But what have we given, that we should deserve to obtain this Wisdom, which is Christ? Since it is by grace we are redeemed. For those works alone by living badly have we given, for which if a just return were reserved, not Christ but punishments would be rendered back c, But man deserved one thing in the way of justice, and obtained another in respect 'of grace. Let Paul bear witness, before the time that his mind received the seed of unbought ullth, with what briars of error he was overlaid. *Who was before*, he says, *a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief*. [1 Tim. 1, 13] Let him testify for what sort of persons Christ deigned to die, *While we were yet sinners*, he says, *Christ in due time died for the ungodly*. [Rom. 5, 8. 6.] We, then, who on Wisdom's coming were found ungodly, what title of good practice have we given, whereby we might obtain to receive that Wisdom? 'The price of this Wisdom man knoweth not,' because whoso is separated from brute animals by the understanding faculty of reason, understands that he is not saved by his own merits, knows and sees that he had not given any thing of good practice that he might come to faith. For it is as it were to give a price for the obtaining of Wisdom, to anticipate the coming to the knowledge of God by the merchandize of one's conduct.

63. He had learnt that of this Wisdom there is 'no price,' who said, *Who hath first given unto Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again*. [Rom. 11, 35] Hence it is written again, *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God*. [Eph. 2, 8] Not of works, lest any man should boast. Hence concerning himself he again speaks, saying, *By the grace of God I am what I am*. [1 Cor. 15, 10] And as by the inspiration of this same grace, the practices of the parts of virtue are at once engendered in the heart, so that from free will also conduct should follow, which after this life the Eternal Recompensing should answer to, he thereupon added, *And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain*. But there are those who exult that they

are in a sound state by their own powers, and pride themselves that by their own merits going before they have been redeemed, whose declaration, surely, is found to be contradictory to themselves, because, while they maintain themselves at once 'innocent' and 'redeemed,' this very name of redemption they make null and void in themselves. For everyone that is redeemed is doubtless set free from some sort of captivity. Whence then is this said person redeemed, if he was not before captive under sin? It is plain then that he greatly misjudges who judges so. For heavenly grace does not find desert of man, in order to make it come, but after it has come, causes the same; and God, when He comes to the undeserving mind, at once sets it forth to Himself deserving by so coming, and causes therein merit for Him to recompense, whereas He had found only that for Him to punish.

64. It is good herein to recall the eyes of the mind to that robber, who from the jaws of the devil ascended the Cross, and from the Cross mounted to Paradise. Let us behold what sort of person he came to the stock of the Cross, what sort of person he went from the Cross. He came bound by his brother's blood, he came bloodstained, but by interior grace he was changed on the Cross; and he who inflicted death upon a brother, of the Lord when dying proclaimed the life, saying, *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom.* [Luke 23, 42] On the Cross the nails had bound fast his hands and feet, and there remained nought in him that punishment left free, but the tongue and the heart. But God inspiring it, he offered all to Him that he found free in himself, so that according to that which is written, he should *with the heart believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation.* [Rom. 10, 10] But that in the hearts of the faithful there are three virtues in a special inner abiding, the Apostle testifies, saying, *And now abideth faith, hope, charity* [1 Cor. 13, 13]; all of which the robber being filled with instantaneous grace both received and kept on the Cross. For he had faith, who believed the Lord was about to reign, when he saw Him dying equally with himself; he had hope, who begged for admission into His kingdom, saying, *Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.* Charity also in his death he livingly retained, who at once charged home for his iniquity a brother and fellow robber dying for the like crime, and preached to him the life which he had learnt, saying, *Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss.* [Luke 23, 40. 41.] He that came such to the Cross by sin, see what he departed from the Cross by grace. He confessed the Lord, Whom he beheld dying along with himself by human frailty, at the time that the Apostles denied Him, Whom they had seen doing miracles by divine power.

65. But they who make out that man is saved by his own powers, fancy that that same confession of man is from the efficacy of man by himself. Which if it were so, the Psalmist would not say in praise of God, *Confession and great doing are His work.* [Ps. 111, 3] So that from Him we receive it to confess what is right, by Whom it is granted us to practise what is great also. Therefore because we have not given aught of good practice, whereby we might deserve to be vouchsafed this Wisdom, let it be rightly said, *Man knoweth not its price.* Inasmuch as he that henceforth uses reason looks down upon himself under the perception of this Wisdom so much the deeper, in proportion as he more truly knows the interior depth of that Wisdom, so as to see that he has attained to her being unworthy, by the which it is brought to pass without price, that he should be made worthy. Concerning which it is well said;  
*Neither is it found in the land of those that live sweetly.*

[xli]

66. What is denoted in this passage by the title of the 'land,' saving the soul of man? Concerning which the Psalmist saith, *My soul thirsteth after Thee, as a land without water*. [Ps. 143, 6] But this wisdom cannot be 'found in the land of those that live sweetly;' because the man that is still fed with the pleasures of this life, is severed from the perception of Eternal Wisdom. For if he were truly wise-minded, being banished from the interior delights, he would mourn over that blind estate of his exile, whereinto he has fallen. For hence it is said by Solomon; *He that addeth knowledge, addeth pain also*. [Eccl. 1, 18] For the more a man begins to know what he has lost, the more he begins to bewail the sentence of his corruption, which he has met with. For he sees whence and whereto he has fallen; how that from the joys of Paradise he has come to the woes of the present life, from the companyings of the Angels to carings for necessities; he considers in what a number of perils he now lies prostrate, who before without peril disdained to stand; he bewails the exile which being accursed he undergoes, and sighs after the state of heavenly glory, which he might be enjoying in security, if he had not had a mind to commit sin. Which same the Psalmist regarding rightly, saith, *I said in my fear, I am cast out from the face of thine eyes*. [Ps 31, 22] For after contemplating the interior joys of the vision of God, and the assemblage in fellowship of the Angels holding fast, he brought back his eyes to things beneath, he saw where he was laid low, who was created for this end that he might have been able to stand in heavenly realms; he considered where he was, and where he was not he grieved to think, he mourned for himself as 'cast out from the face of God's eyes,' because by comparison with the interior light, he had felt the darkness of his exile, that he was undergoing, to be the heavier. Hence it is that he admits not to his soul the solace of any favouring from the present life, saying, *I refused my soul to be comforted*. For oftentimes the rich ones of this world, being afflicted with weariness of spirit, are used to regard the good gifts bestowed on them in time, and to soften down their sadness. For when they feel themselves affected with something of sadness, they look at their horses, they survey the vessels of their gold and their silver, they go the round of their estates. And while they gladly carry their eyes through the range of these temporal things, they get the better of the sadness of soul that has risen up. And hence Truth saith to them also in the Gospel; *But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have your comfort here*. [Luke 6, 24] But the holy man, who mourns for this, that he has fallen from everlasting joys, does not admit consolation on the ground of things temporal, saying, *I have refused my soul to be comforted*. As though he said in plain speech; 'I, who do not grieve for the loss of temporal things, am utterly unable to be comforted by the abundance thereof.' And as though we ourselves on hearing these things said to him, 'What then dost thou seek, who refuseth to find comfort in those things that are of the world?' he thereupon added; *I remembered God, and was delighted*. As if he said in plain terms; 'Me not even the abundance of things earthly doth cheer, but even able to see, gives me delight.' So then, this is the bitterness the remembrance only of my Maker, Whom as yet I am not of the wise, that whilst they are lifted up on high in hope, they do not bow down the mind here to any delights. For hence it is written; *The heart of the wise is where there is sorrow, and the heart of fools where there is mirth*. [Eccl. 7, 4] Hence James saith: *Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness*. [James 4, 9] Hence 'Truth bears witness by Itself, saying, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*.' [Matt. 5, 4] So wisdom cannot be 'found in the land of those that live sweetly;' because they are the more really foolish, in proportion as whilst parting with the greater things they delight themselves in the least. Hence Peter blames that same folly of the wicked, saying, *That count for pleasure the indulgence of the day of defilement and stain* [Reading



*'coinquinationis,' 'coinquinationes.'* Vulg. as ours.]. [2 Peter 2, 13] Hence Solomon saith, *I counted laughter an error; and said to mirth, Why art thou vainly deceived?* [Eccl. 2, 2] Accordingly let the holy man say concerning Wisdom, *Neither is it found in the land of those that live sweetly.* In this way plainly, that those who in this world live sweetly, are still so besotted, that this very thing too they know not, viz. Whence they have fallen. It follows;  
Ver. 11. *The bottomless pit saith, It is not with me.*

67. What does he call 'the bottomless pit' but the hearts of men, which are at once by the fall all floating, and by the mistiness of double-dealing full of darkness? Which same 'bottomless pit' declares that this Wisdom 'is not with' it; because the wicked mind, while it longs to be wise in a carnal way, shews itself foolish as to things spiritual. For because as Paul testifies, *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*, so much the more completely is every one rendered foolish within, as he endeavours to appear wise without. Concerning this abyss it is said by John, *And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him, into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.* [Rev. 20, 1–3.] For by the number of a thousand, he denoted not the quantity of time but the universality, with which the Church exercises dominion. Now the old serpent is bound with a chain and cast into the bottomless pit, because being tied up from the hearts of the good, while he is shut up in the minds of lost sinners, he rules over them with worse cruelty. And a little while afterwards he is described as brought up out of the hollow of the bottomless pit, in that from the hearts of the wicked which now rage secretly, having then gotten power against the Church, he shall break out into the violence of open persecution. And so this bottomless pit, wherein the devil is now kept hidden, 'saith that Wisdom is not with it,' because by wicked deeds it shows itself a stranger to true wisdom. For, whilst a man covers wickedness in the heart, but with the mouth gives forth flatteries, whilst he overshadows his purposes with double-dealing, whilst he eschews words of singlemindedness as foolishness, whilst he shuns the ways of simple innocency, it is as if the Abyss denies that she has the Wisdom of God. And because minds that are devoted to this world, are disturbed by the cares and anxieties of the present life, and therefore are quite unable to enjoy the repose of that Wisdom, it is rightly added;  
*And the sea saith, It is not with me.*

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68. For what is there denoted by the name of the sea having the bitter disquietude of worldly minds, which while they fall foul of one another in enmities by turns, dash themselves together like encountering waves? For the life of worldly persons is rightly called 'a sea;' because, whilst it is agitated by the tempestuous stirrings of actions, it is parted from the tranquillity and stedfastness of interior Wisdom. Contrary to which it is well said by the Prophet, *Upon whom shall My Spirit rest but upon him that is humble and quiet, and that trembleth at my words?* [Isa. 66, 2] But from earthly minds the Spirit flies the further in proportion as He findeth no rest with them. For it is hence that it is said of certain by the Psalmist; *Bruising and unhappiness is in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known.* [Ps. 13, 7. Vulg. 14, 7. Com. Pr.] From which same bruising of disquietude the Lord calls us back, saying, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in*

*heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* [Matt. 11, 28. 29.] For what is more toilsome in this life than to be fevered with earthly desires? or what is there more full of repose here, than to long for nought of this world? It is hence that the Israelitish people received the keeping of the Sabbath in gift; it is hence on the opposite side that Egypt was smitten with a multitude of flies. For the people, that follows God, receives the Sabbath, i.e. the rest of the spirit, that it should not be worn out in this life by any craving of carnal passions. But Egypt, which bears a likeness of this world, is stricken with flies. For the fly is an excessively intrusive and restless creature. Wherein what else is there represented but the intrusive solicitations of carnal desires. Whence it is said elsewhere, *Dying flies destroy the sweetness of the ointment.* [Eccl. 10, 1] Because superfluous thoughts, which in the mind taken up with things carnal are for ever both springing into life and dying away, destroy that sweetness, with which each individual has been inwardly anointed by the Spirit; because they do not suffer him to enjoy the unadulteratedness thereof. And so Egypt is smitten with flies, because the parts of those persons that love an earthly life, while they are stricken with the disquietudes of their desires, are by the swarms of carnal imaginations borne down beneath, so that they cannot be lifted up to the desire of interior rest. Whence when Truth comes to the heart with the wonderful help of His pitifulness, He first banishes therefrom the fevers of carnal thoughts, and afterwards distributes in it the gifts of the parts of virtue. Which same the sacred history of the Gospel excellently conveys to us; in which when the Lord being besought was led by the way in order to restore the daughter of the ruler to life, it is added directly, *But when the crowd were put forth He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.* [Matt. 9, 20] So the crowd is cast forth without, in order that the damsel may be raised up; because if the importunate throng of worldly cares be not first expelled from the inner recesses of the heart, the soul, which lies dead in the interior, cannot rise up. For whilst it lets itself loose amongst the countless imaginings of earthly desires, it never in any degree gathers itself up to the consideration of self. Thus then, knowing and seeing that in these waves of perturbations Wisdom cannot dwell, he says, *And the sea saith, It is not with me.* For no man receives her fully, saving he who strives to withdraw himself from all the drifting to and fro of carnal courses. And hence it is said elsewhere, *Write wisdom in the time of leisure. And he that is lessened in doing, even he shall win her.* [Ecclus. 38, 24] And again, *Be still, and know that I am God.* [Ps. 46, 10]

69. But how is it that we know that most of the old Fathers at once interiorly held fast this Wisdom in its life, and outwardly administered the affairs of the world in ordinary? Do we call Joseph deprived of the attainment of this Wisdom, who in the time of dearth taking upon himself the affairs of all Egypt not only furnished provisions to the Egyptians, but by the skilfulness of his administration preserved the life of foreign people as well that came to him? Did Daniel prove a stranger to this Wisdom, who, when he was made by the king of the Chaldeans in Babylon chief of the governors, was busied with greater charges in proportion as by a higher pitch of dignity he was likewise set above all? Whereas then it is plain that very often even the good are engaged in earthly charges with no interest, we plainly see that in this way the citizens of Jerusalem sometimes render services [*angarias*] to Babylon, in like manner as oftentimes the citizens of Babylon pay suit and service to Jerusalem. For there are some persons who preach the word of life for the displaying of wisdom alone, they minister the succour of alms from the passion of vain-glory; and indeed the things they do seem to be proper to Jerusalem, but yet are they citizens of Babylon.

70. In this way then it sometimes happens, that they who love the heavenly Country alone, seem to be subjected to the charges of the earthly country. Whose ministration however is distinguished

from the practices of the wicked for the most part in act, but sometimes before the Judge Above in thought only. For being full of wisdom from Above, they distinguish how they may at once be free to one thing inwardly, and busied with another thing outwardly; so that if perchance by God's secret appointment aught of the concerns of this world is charged upon them, they coveting it not, they may yield to God Whom they delight in, and from the love of Him, may interiorly desire His Vision only, but from the fear of Him externally discharge the course imposed upon them with humility, that they should at once desire to be disengaged to God by force of the free attachment of loving affection, and again fulfil the charges imposed upon them by force of the constitution of servitude; and when the affairs of business make a din without, within the most peaceful repose is maintained in love; and the turmoils of employments outwardly clamouring, reason as presiding judge disposes of within, and with tranquil governance regulates the things, which all around it are too little tranquil. For as force of mind is at the head for bridling the motions of the flesh, so very often the love of tranquillity regulates aright the imposed turmoils of business; because exterior charges, if they be not desired with a wrong affection, may be executed with a mind not disordered but regulated. For holy men never court them, but lament them when put upon them by secret appointment, and though in respect of a better aim they shun them, yet in respect of a submissive mind they bear them. Which same they are above every thing eager to avoid if it might be, but fearing the secret dispensations of God, they lay hold of that they eschew, and execute what they avoid. For they go into their conscience, and they there take counsel what the secret will of God would have, and being conscious that they ought to be subject to the Appointments on high, they humble the neck of the heart to the yoke of Divine Providence. But he that is such as this, whatever turmoils are at work without, they never reach to his interior parts. And so it comes to pass that there is one thing maintained within in wish and another thing maintained without in office, and that with this Wisdom their hearts are filled, being no longer troubled and disordered, but in a state of tranquillity. Well, then, is it said thereof, that the depth saith, *It is not with me, and the sea saith, It is not with me*. As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'The troubled minds of the worldly cry out by the mere circumstance of their not being quiet, that they are widely separated from true Wisdom. But because this Wisdom of God, abiding with the Father before the ages of the world, was to be made Incarnate in the end thereof, so that in order to redeem the human race, It should send not the holy Angels, not just men, but in the manifestation of very sight comes by Its own Self, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 15. *Fine gold shall not be given for it.*

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71. For what is denoted by 'fine gold,' save the holy Angels, who are rightly called both 'gold,' and 'fine [*obrysum*];' 'gold,' because they shine with brightness of righteousness; 'fine,' because they never had any defilement of sin. But for just men, so long as they are in this corruptible flesh with the conditions of mortality, 'gold' they may indeed be, 'fine gold' they cannot be in any wise; because the *corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that museth upon many things*. [Wisd. 9, 15] For though in this life they may shine by an extraordinary brightness of righteousness, yet they never purely lack the dross of sins; as John the Apostle bears witness, who says, *if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us* [1 John 1, 8]; and as James affirms, who puts a proof, saying, *For in many things we all offend*. [James 3, 2] As the Prophet likewise beseeches, who says, *Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified*. [Ps. 143, 2] Those then are

termed 'fine gold' who whilst holding fast in that innocency, wherein they were created, at once shine with the brightness of righteousness, and are stained with no dross of sins, no not the very least.

72. But because in the stead of this Wisdom no one of the Angels was to be sent as the Redeemer of the human race, lest in those Angels, who, we have been taught, have often appeared in aid of men, any man should rest his hope, it is said, *Fine gold shall not be given for it*. As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'By Its own Self shall Wisdom be manifested, in order that the human race may be redeemed from sin.' There is no Angel sent in His stead; because it must needs be that by the Creator the creature should be set free. And hence the Lord said in the Gospel, *If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*. [John 8, 36] But the holy man, being filled with the Spirit of that same Wisdom, foresaw that there would not be wanting in Judaea some that should put their hope in the Lawgiver, and make Moses the author of their salvation, even as to the man that had been healed, speaking evil, they say, *Be thou His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples*. [John 9, 28] Whence it is yet further introduced with propriety, *Nor shall silver be weighed in exchange thereof*.

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73. For because the divine revelations are often denoted by 'silver,' by the term of silver it may be that the writers of that revelation are also understood, whose life shone amidst the crowds of their fellow-creatures with the light of virtuous attainments. But because the Law was able to point out sins, but not able to take them away, it was not anyone of the ancient Fathers, nor the Lawgiver Moses, that became the Redeemer of mankind. So 'silver is not weighed in exchange of this Wisdom,' because all that have had power to be holy, by comparison with the Only-begotten Son of God are accounted to have been of no worth, who except they had known and seen that they were servants of that 'Wisdom,' could never at all have been holy. For to this end were they sent, that in the hearts of men they might by preaching prepare a way for this 'Wisdom,' neither yet that for her, but by her they might govern the peoples under their charge. For because it was certain that by the accession of periods of time, the ailments of the waning world should grow to a height, it was brought about that in the end of ages the Eternal Wisdom of God should by Its own Self come to this full grown sick one, with his over great infirmity, i.e. to the human race lying sick, throughout the whole world, that preachers having been dispatched beforehand, like a kind of visitors, the power of the physician might afterwards come so much the more efficacious, in proportion as the sickness of the diseased had more grown to a head. But because there is no one sent in the stead of Him for the saving of us, let it be rightly said, *Nor shall silver be weighed in the exchange thereof*. Forasmuch as the life of the just men who preached, with whatever light of holiness it might abound, doth not by its presence make exchange for the coming of Heavenly Wisdom to us. But there were multitudes of the Gentiles, who being attached to the systems of discipline of this world's wise ones, observed those things which are honourable among men, and believed that, honourable dealing being observed, they were sure to be saved, nor any longer sought a Mediator between God and man, since they held the teaching of the philosophers as being sufficient for them. In contempt of whom it is directly added; Ver. 16. *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India*.

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74. For what is meant by India, which furnishes a black people, saving this world, wherein the life of man is engendered dark in respect of sin? Now 'the dyed colours of India' are the wise ones of this world, who though in respect of infidelity, and oftentimes in respect of behaviour, they be foul, yet before the eyes of men are stained with the hue of overlaid honourableness. But the coeternal Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the dyed colours of India,' in that he, who really takes It in, discovers how widely it differs from those human beings whom the world has worshipped for wise ones. And the very words of His precepts differ from the wise ones of this world, in that while they strain after eloquence, their sayings appear as if fair in shew and in the staining of the dye, and while they lack the power of realities, feign themselves to be something else than what they are by combination of words as by overcoated colours. But on the other hand the instruction of Wisdom is at once fair by preaching and shining by unadulterated truth, nor does it by deceit set itself forth one thing outwardly, and retain another thing inwardly, nor in its sayings aim to appear fair by brilliancy of speech, but by uncorruptness of truth. Therefore in its precepts the Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the dyed colours of India,' since whereas it has not the stained adornments of eloquence, it pleases like a robe without dye. Which staining of the dye Paul rightly despised, when he said, Which things also we speak not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. For he chose rather to display this 'Wisdom' by the simple transparency of truth alone, but not to stain it with thy dyeing of speech.

*Nor to the most precious sardonyx stone, nor to the sapphire.*

75. That the sardonyx and sapphire are not precious stones, who would be ignorant? And whereas there be many other precious stones, which immeasurably exceed these in the account of greatness, why is the sapphire or the sardonyx especially called precious, when either stone by comparison with other stones is most contemptible? except that those stones which are described as precious, when we know not to be precious, we look out for some other thing in the meaning of them. For the sardonyx bears the likeness of red earth, but the sapphire has an aerial appearance. And so it may be that in the sardonyx by the red earth human beings are denoted, in the sapphire by the aerial appearance the Angels are denoted. For whereas the sardonyx stone bears the appearance of red earth, it not improperly denotes man; because 'Adam' himself, who was created the first, is called in the Latin tongue 'Red earth.' What does it mean then that it is said that this Wisdom is not 'compared to the sardonyx nor to the sapphire,' but that He, Who is the 'Power of God and the Wisdom of God,' i.e. the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, surpasses all things by such preeminent greatness that neither the first man on the earth, nor the Angels in heaven, can be compared to Him. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, *Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of God* ['Sons of God' was a common expression for Angels] *can be likened unto the Lord?*

76. But it is possible that by the sardonyx stone the Fathers of the Old Testament, while by the sapphire the Preachers of the New Testament, are set forth. For the first, though they maintained an extraordinary life of righteousness, yet lent themselves to carnal procreation. Therefore whereas it is plain that they did some things of an earthly kind, they are not inappropriately denoted by the sardonyx stone, which as we before said bears the appearance of 'red earth.' But by the sapphire, which is of an ethereal blue, we suitably understand the Preachers of the New Testament, who laying aside the desires of carnal gendering, followed after the things of heaven alone. And hence the Prophet beholding the holy Apostles mounting above all the desires of the flesh with spiritual

fervency, being struck with admiration, saith, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* [Is. 60, 8] As though he expressed it in plain speech; 'We go along by the way of earth, in that we are still involved in marryings and employ acts of the flesh upon the propagating offspring; but these walk not on earth, but they 'fly as clouds,' who whilst they aim at heavenly things touch nought connected with earthly desires.' Therefore he says that the Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the sardonyx or the sapphire stone.' As though he told in plain terms, saying, 'To Him, Who is seen Man among men, neither any in the old Fathers nor any in the new is equalled, in that from His Godhead He derives it that in His Manhood He hath not any like to Him.' Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 17. *The gold and the glass cannot equal it.*

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77. Who that is sound of perception would deem it worthy to understand this according to the letter? For 'glass,' as we said above, is of much less worth than 'gold,' and after it was said that 'gold is not equal' to this Wisdom, it is yet further, as if heightening, subjoined, that 'glass' too cannot equal it either. But the bare letter failing us in the historical sense, sends us to investigating the mystery of the allegory. For we know that the metal gold shines with a superior brightness to all the metals. But it is of the nature of glass that whilst seen without it shines with perfect transparency in the inside. In every other metal whatever is contained within is hidden from sight, but in the case of glass, every liquid, such as it is contained within, such is it shewn to be without, and, so to say, all the liquid in a glass vessel, whilst shut up is open. What other thing, then, do we understand by 'gold and glass,' but that heavenly Country, that society of blessed citizens, whose hearts mutually one with another at once shine with brightness, and are transparent by pureness; which John in Revelations had beheld, when he said, *And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was of pure gold like unto clear glass.* [Rev. 21, 18] For because all the Saints shall shine in the supreme brightness of bliss, it is described as constructed of gold.

78. And because their very brightness itself is reciprocally open to them in each other's breasts, and when the countenance of each one marked his conscience is penetrated along with it, this very gold is described as like pure glass. For there the mind of every person no bodily frame of limbs will hide from the eyes of his fellow, but the interior will be given to view, the very harmony of the body too will also be plain to the eyes of the body, and each one will be in such wise distinguishable to another, as now he cannot be distinguishable to himself. But now our hearts, so long as we are in this life, because they cannot be seen in one by another, are enclosed not within glass vessels, but within vessels of earthenware; in which same clay in respect of the mind being affected the Prophet dreaded to stick, when he said, *Deliver me out of the clay, that I may not stick fast.* [Ps. 69, 14] Which very tabernacle of bodies, Paul calls 'our earthly house,' saying, *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2 Cor, 5, 1] Therefore in this earthly house so long as we live, the mere partition wall of our corrupt state, so to say, we do not penetrate with the eyes of the mind, and the hidden things in each other we cannot see. Hence Holy Church desiring to see the form of her Spouse in the Godhead, yet not being able, because the fashion of His Eternal Being, which she longed to behold, His Manhood, which He took upon Him, hid from her eyes, says mourning in the Song of Songs; *Behold he standeth behind our wall.* [Cant. 2, 9] As if she said in plain speech, 'I desire to see HIM now already in the appearance of His Godhead, but I am

still shut out from the sight of Him by the wall of the flesh He has assumed.' Therefore so long as we live in this corruptible flesh, we see not the thoughts of the hearts in one another. Whence it is said by the same Paul, *For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him?* [1 Cor. 2, 11] And again; *Therefore Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts.* [1 Cor. 4, 5] So then that City, which manifests the hearts of them that are in it to each severally and reciprocally, is described 'of gold like to pure glass,' that by the gold it may be represented bright, and by the glass transparent.

79. But though all the Saints therein glitter with such wonderful brightness, and shine through with such extraordinary transparency, yet that Wisdom, by a likeness of Which they have all that they are, they 'cannot equal.' Therefore it is well said, *The gold and the glass cannot equal it.* For it is for this that all the Saints are brought to those eternal joys, that they may be like to God, as it is written, *When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.* [1 John 3, 2] And yet it is written, *O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto Thee?* [Ps. 89, 9] And again; *Who shall be like unto God among the sons of God?* [ib. v. 6] Whence then shall they be like, and whence not like, but that to this 'Wisdom' they at once be like for a semblance and not like for equality? For by gazing on the Eternity of God, it is brought to pass upon them that they should be eternal, and while they receive the gift of seeing Him, by the receiving of Blessedness they copy the thing that they see. They are both like, then, because they are made blessed; and they are not like to the Creator, because they are a creature. And thus they both have a certain likeness to God, because they are without end; and yet they have no equality to the Incomprehensible One, because they have comprehensible being. Therefore let it be justly said, *The gold and the glass is not equal to it.* For with whatever brightness and transparency the Saints may shine, it is one thing for men to be wise in God, and another thing for a Man to be the Wisdom of God. Which same Wisdom he was truly acquainted with, who never ventured to liken any one of the Saints to the Mediator between God and man. And hence it is added; .

*Neither shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged instead of it.*

[xlix]

80. For a 'lofty vessel of gold' did Elijah prove, 'a lofty vessel of gold' Jeremiah, 'lofty and overtopping vessels of gold' the old Fathers were. But this Wisdom of God, in order that It might redeem us from a carnal kind of life, appeared in the flesh, and he, who did not see that Wisdom in a true light, supposed that the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, was one of the Prophets, which Christ the eyes of the Elect held for God, when they saw by Him but Man. Hence it is said by Him to the holy Disciples, *Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?* [Matt. 16, 13, &c.] And when they thereupon answered Him, *Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some Elias: some Jeremias, or one of the prophets;* they were immediately interrogated touching their own perception; *But whom say ye that I am?* To whom Peter, answering directly in the voice of the whole Church, says, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.* Thus, then, forasmuch as according to the declaration of Paul we 'know Christ, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God,' for this Wisdom Peter refused to 'exchange vessels of gold lofty and overtopping,' because he understood concerning it no other thing than it was. For as has been said, a great 'vessel of gold' was John, a great 'vessel of gold' Elijah, a great vessel of gold 'Jeremiah. Now whoever accounted that That God was anyone of these, did 'exchange a vessel of gold high and overtopping'

for this 'Wisdom.' But for this Wisdom the Church doth not 'exchange vessels of gold high and overtopping,' because it holds that Christ the Son of God is not one of the Prophets, but the One Lord of the Prophets. For seeing that 'Wisdom' Itself had come to her, she refused to keep herself fixed in those golden vessels, but was eager with certainty of faith to pass on into that Wisdom. Whence she saith in the Song of Songs; *The watchmen that keep the city found me; to whom I said, Saw ye him, whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him, whom my soul loveth.* [Cant. 3, 3. 4.] For whom do we take 'the watchmen that go about the city' to be, but the former fathers and prophets who set themselves to watch by the voice of holy preaching for our safe keeping? but when the Church sought her Redeemer, she would not fix her hope in those same ancient preachers, in that she says, *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth.* For Him she had not been able to find, if she had been unwilling 'to pass by through these.' For the unbelievers had rested themselves in those warders, who believed that Christ the Son of God was anyone of those. With the voice then and the faith of Peter, Holy Church passed by the watchmen she found, in that she disdained to believe the Lord Who had been prophesied to be anyone of the number of the prophets. Thus, let it be said, *nor shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged for it.* Because the Elect severally both venerate the life of the Saints for their loftiness, and yet do not take up with it for error. For those whom they know to be simple men they do not all compare to God-Man. Whence it is further added;

Ver. 18. *Nor shall they be mentioned in comparison with her.*

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81. For all the Elect of the Country Above are indeed holy and righteous, but by a participation of Wisdom, not by comparison therewith. For what are men compared with God? Now 'Light' Wisdom is used to be called, 'light' also the servants of Wisdom are wont to be called; but She as light lighting up, they as light lighted up; as it was written; *That was the true Light, Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* [John 1, 9] But to these it is only said, *Ye are the light of the world.* [Matt. 5, 14] 'Righteousness' indeed Wisdom is called 'righteousness,' the servants of 'Wisdom' as well are called: but She righteousness that maketh righteous, they righteousness that is made righteous. For of God, Who is 'Wisdom,' it is said, *That He might Himself be just and the Justifier;* [Rom. 3, 26] but these say, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.* [1 Cor. 5, 21] So then it is after one sort that the 'Light lighting' is to be revered, after another that the 'light lighted' is to be; in one way the Righteousness that maketh righteous, in another way the righteousness that is made righteous. Now Wisdom both is and is wise, nor has She for one thing to be, and for another thing to be wise; but the servants of 'Wisdom' are indeed able to be wise men, but yet they have not their being the same thing as being wise. For they may be, and not be wise. Wisdom hath life, but She hath not one thing, and is another thing, inasmuch as, to Her it is that to be that it is to live. But the servants of 'Wisdom' whilst they have life are one thing and have another, inasmuch as to whom to be is not the identical thing it is to live. For they may be after a sort, and yet not live. For to them it is one thing to be, and a different thing to live; for in the very first parent they had being by a beginning, and life by an addition, since man was first made of the earth, and afterwards as it is written; *He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.* [Gen. 2, 7.] Now Wisdom hath being, She hath life; but this, which She hath, She Her own Self is. Wherefore She lives unchangeably, because she lives not by contingency, but essentially. He then alone Is truly with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to Whose Being ours compared, is not to Be. To this



Wisdom if we be joined, we are, we live, we are wise. If we be compared to Him, we neither are wise, nor live at all, nor are.

82. Hence it is that all the Saints, when they advance in the vision of God, the more they view the interior depths of the Divine Nature, see so much the more that they themselves are nothing. For it is nowhere read that Abraham confessed that he was dust and ashes except when he obtained to enjoy the converse of God. For he says, *I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.* [Gen. 18, 27] For he would perchance have thought that he was something, if he had not perceived at all the true Essence that is above himself. But when for the contemplating of the Unchangeable One he was transported above himself, being filled with so mighty a power of contemplation, when he saw Him, he saw that he himself was nought but 'dust.' Hence it is that the Prophet being filled with the same Wisdom crieth out, *Remember, O Lord, that we are but dust;* [Ps. 103, 14. lxx.] who again viewing the unchangeableness of that Essence, saith, *Yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail.* [Ps. 102, 26. 27.] Hence it is said to Moses, *I AM THAT I AM: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, HE THAT IS hath sent me unto you.* [Ex. 3, 14.] For He alone truly IS, Who alone unchangeably continues. For every thing that now is after this way, and now after another way, is near to not being. For to continue in its standing, it is not able. And in some manner there is a going on not to be, whilst from that which was, it is by the enfarrings of time ever being led away to some other thing. In order then that in the partaking of His Body we may be something, let us know and see our own selves, that we are well nigh nothing. Therefore it is well said, *Nor shall they be made mention of in comparison with her;* because vessels of gold high and overtopping, which by participation of Wisdom are fit objects of reverence to us, in comparison of Wisdom are not even fit to be made mention of. But because this Wisdom is by secret means poured into the hearts of men, (as it is likewise said of the Holy Spirit, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth;* [John 3, 8]) for this reason it is added, *For wisdom is drawn from out of sight.*

[li]

83. 'Wisdom is drawn from out of sight;' because whereas She is invisible, She cannot be found saving in an invisible way. And She is rightly said to be 'drawn' also, because like as we draw the breath, that the body may live, so from the interior depths of Wisdom the Spirit is derived, that the soul may hold on to life. Whence the Psalmist says, *I opened my mouth, and drew in the spirit.* [Ps. 119, 131.] Which very Wisdom, taking human flesh together with [al. 'by the medium of.'] a rational soul, when It had presented Itself from the interior depths close at hand, because this world could not behold its invisible Maker, Him Whom it saw visible Man, it also knew as invisible God as well. The Gentile world was converted from the darkness of its unbelief, being before full of pride by its avertedness; signs and wonders being exhibited, faith gained ground; and the faith being spread abroad, the summit of Holy Church shone forth in reverence with all men. To which same when there were wanting open adversaries, she began to be tried by her own members. For numberless heresies springing up in her, they arrayed against her wars of cruel conflict. For she must be exercised at this time by toiling, who is on the way to her recompensing in that which follows. Whereby it has come to pass that some in her should come forth who should call the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, created mere man, but one by grace made

God, and should attribute so much of holiness to him as they knew in the rest of the Saints, the same being His servants. Which persons blessed Job being inspired with the spirit of prophecy, reproves by the laying out of his sentence, saying,  
Ver. 19. *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it.*

[lii]

84. What do we take 'Ethiopia' for, save the present world, which same by darkness of hue denotes a sinning people in the foulness of its merits. But sometimes by the name of Ethiopia the Gentile world in a special manner is used to be denoted, as being before black by the sins of unbelief. Which same on the Lord's coming, the Prophet Habakkuk beheld affrighted with fear, and says, *The tents of the Ethiopians tremble with dread, the tents of the land of Madian.* [Hab. 3, 7] David also, the Prophet, seeing that the Lord should come for the redeeming of Judaea, but that first the Gentile world should believe, and afterwards Judaea should follow, (as it is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved,* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.]) says, *Ethiopia, her hand shall be first to God;* [Ps. 68, 31] i.e. 'before that Judaea believes, the Gentile world being black with sins offers itself to Almighty God to be saved.' Now the topaz is a precious stone, and because in the Greek tongue *to pan* is the word for 'every thing,' on this account, that it shines bright with every colour, it is called 'topazium,' as if 'topantium.' But when the Gentile world being turned to God believed, numbers from out thereof were so enriched with the gift of His Spirit, that as with many colours, so with many virtues they shone bright. But lest any man be lifted up by the virtues he has received, it is now said by the holy man, *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it.* As though he said in plain words; 'No one of the Saints, with however many virtues he may be filled, yet as being gathered out of this blackness of the world can equal Him, concerning Whom it is written, *That holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* [Luke 1, 35] For we, though we are made holy, yet are: not born holy, because by the mere constitution of a corruptible nature we are tied and bound, that we should say with the Prophet, *Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me.* But He only is truly born holy, Who in order that He might get the better of that same constitution of a corruptible nature, was not conceived by the combining of carnal conjunction.

85. To this Wisdom as it were a kind of 'topaz from Ethiopia wished to equal itself,' when a certain heresiarch [Nestorius, *Ben.*] said, 'I do not envy Christ being made God, because, if I wish even I myself may be made so.' Who imagined our Lord Jesus Christ to be God, not by the mystery of His conception, but by the promotion of grace, arguing by misconstrued proofs that He was born simple man, but in order to be God that He had advanced by merit, and on this account reckoning that both himself and any others might be made coequal with Him, which same are made the children of God by grace, not understanding nor minding that *the topaz from Ethiopia is not equal to Him.* For it is one thing for those born men to receive the grace of adoption, and another for one by the power of Godhead preeminently to have come forth God from the very conception. Neither is it possible that to the glory of the Only-begotten, possessed by nature, another glory should be equal, received by grace. *For the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus,* [1 Tim. 2, 5] is not as this one raves one person in His human nature, and another person in the Divine nature. Not conceived and brought forth simple man, did he afterwards obtain of merit that He should be God. But the Angel announcing it, and the Spirit coming, at once the Word in the womb, at once within the womb the Word made flesh, (that unchangeable Essence likewise

remaining to Him which He has coeternal together with the Father and the Holy Spirit;) did take upon Him within the bowels of the Virgin that whereby He might both being Impassible suffer passion, and Undying suffer death, and whilst Eternal before the world be a temporal being in the end of the world, that through an unutterable mystery, by a holy conception and an inviolate birth, in accordance with the verity of both natures, the same Virgin should be at once the handmaid and mother of the Lord. For so is it said to her by Elisabeth; *Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?* [Luke 1, 43] And the Virgin herself at her conception said, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word.* [v. 38] And though He the same Being is one thing from the Father, and another thing from the Virgin, yet He is not one Person from the Father, and another Person from the Virgin. But the same Person is Eternal from the Father and the same a temporal being from the Mother, the same Who made is the same That was made, the same *beautiful in form above the children of men* [Ps. 45, 2] in respect of the Divine nature, and the same of whom it is written; *We saw Him, and there was no shew, and He hath not form nor comeliness,* [Is. 53, 2] in respect of the human nature. The same before the world from the Father without mother, and the same at the end of the world from the Mother without father. The same a Temple, the same the Builder of the Temple. The same the Maker of the work, and the same the Work of the Maker, remaining one Person from both and in both natures, neither being confounded by the conjunction of natures, nor doubled by the distinctness of natures. But because it is not these points that we have taken upon us to treat of, let us return to our course of interpreting.

86. We are to take note that the holy man, in order to shew that the Angels are, widely distant from this Wisdom, says, *Fine gold shall not be given for it.* Which same that he might exhibit the ancient Fathers likewise, dealers with sacred Revelation, as inferior, added, *Nor shall silver be weighed in exchange thereof.* Moreover that he might point out that the wisdom of the philosopher is far beneath this Wisdom, he brought in; *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India.* And he subjoined, *Nor to the most precious sardonyx stone, nor to the sapphire.* Furthermore in order that he might shew that in that city Above no one attains to equality with the Only-begotten, he added; *The gold or the glass cannot equal it.* That he might make it appear that the Prophets likewise were beneath It, he added; *Neither shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged instead of it. Nor shall they be mentioned in comparison with her. For Wisdom is drawn from out of sight.* Whilst at the last, that he might rebuke the very heretics in the Church themselves as well, who on coming from the error of the Gentile world, split through pride the faith which they receive, he added; *The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it.* As though he taught in plain words, saying; These, who from the blackness of sin come to conversion, cannot equal God-Man, though they may seem to shine bright with many virtues for colours. And that their pride might be thrown over, it is fitly added, *Neither shall the purest dyes be brought into comparison.*

[liii]

87. For those are called 'the purest dyes' who are genuinely humble, and genuinely holy, who know that from themselves indeed they have not the shew of virtuous attainments, but that they hold this by the gift of accessory grace. For they would not be 'dyed,' if they had possessed holiness by nature. But they are 'the purest dyes' because they keep in themselves with humility the superinduced grace of virtues which they have been vouchsafed. Hence it is that it is said by

the voice of the Spouse concerning Holy Church; *Who is this that cometh up blanced?* [Cant. 6, 10] For because Holy Church has not a heavenly life by nature, but on the Spirit adding Itself is arrayed with beautifulness of gifts, she is described not as white but as 'blanced.' And observe, that when he said above, *Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India*, those same colours he did not bring in 'pure;' but in this place that he might distinguish the dye of true virtues from that staining of the philosophers, whilst speaking of dyes, he added 'the purest.' For those are rightly called 'the purest dyes,' who were aforetime foul through wicked deeds, yet, the Spirit coming upon them, are clothed with the brilliancy of grace, that they should appear to be far other than they were. Whence also 'Baptism,' i.e. 'dyeing [*tinctio*],' is the name given to our own descending into the water itself. Since we are dyed, and we, who were before unsightly by the deformity of bad habits, on the faith being received are rendered beautiful by grace and the adornment of virtues. It goes on ;

Ver. 20, 21. *Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living.*

[liv]

88. It deserves to be especially considered, that it is asked by the holy man, whence Wisdom cometh. For It 'comes' from Him from Whom It sprung. Now because It is born of the Invisible and Coeternal Father, the way thereof is hidden. Whence too it is said by the Prophet, *And who shall declare His generations?* [Is. 53, 8] Now 'the place of the understanding of her' is the mind of man, which mind the Wisdom of God when it has filled makes holy. And so because both He is invisible, from Whom It came forth, and it is doubtful to us in whose mind It rests as being understood, it is rightly said now, *Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding?* But this is very wonderful that it is directly brought in; *seeing that it is hidden from the eyes of all living.* For if the Wisdom, which is God, had been 'hidden from the eyes of all living,' then surely this Wisdom no one of the Saints would have seen. But see, I hear John agreeing with this sentence, who says, *No man hath seen God at any time.* [1 John 4, 12] And again, when I look at the Fathers of the Old Testament, I learn that many of those, as the very history of the Sacred Reading is witness, did see God. Thus Jacob saw the Lord, who says, *For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.* [Gen. 32, 30] Moses likewise saw God, of whom it is written, *And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.* [Ex. 33, 11] This very Job saw the Lord, who says, *I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee.* [Job 42, 5] Isaiah saw the Lord, who saith, *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up.* [Is. 6, 1] Michaiah saw the Lord, who saith, *I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left.* [1 Kings 22, 19] What does it mean then that so many Fathers of the Old Testament have witnessed that they have seen God, and yet concerning this Wisdom, which is God, it is said, *Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living?* And John saith, *No man hath seen God at any time.* Seeing this, which is plainly given us to understand, that so long as we live here a mortal life, God may be seen by certain semblances, but by the actual appearance of His Nature He cannot be seen, so that the soul being inspired with the grace of the Spirit should by certain figures behold God, but not attain to the actual power of His Essence? For hence it is that Jacob, who bears witness that he had seen God, saw Him not save in an Angel. Hence it is that Moses who 'talked with God face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,' in the midst of the very words of his speaking, says, *If I have found grace in Thy sight, shew Thyself manifestly to me, that I may see*

*Thee.* [Ex. 33, 13. Vulg. *Shew me Thy face.*] For assuredly if it were not God with whom he was talking, he would have said, 'Shew me God,' and not 'Shew me Thyself.' But if it was God, with Whom he was speaking 'face to face,' wherefore did he pray to see Him, Whom he was seeing? But loom this requesting of his, it is inferred that Him he was athirst to perceive in the brightness of His Incomprehensible nature; Whom he had already begun to see by certain semblances, that so the heavenly Essence might be present to the eyes of his mind, in order that for the vision of Eternity there might not be interposed to him any created semblance with the circumstances of time. And so the Fathers of the Old Testament saw the Lord, and yet according to the voice of John, *No man hath seen God at anytime*; and according to the sentence of blessed Job, the Wisdom Which is God is 'hid from the eyes of all living,' because by persons settled in this mortal life He was both able to be seen in certain comprehensible images, and not able to be seen in the Incomprehensible Light of Eternity.

89. But if it is so, that by some while still living in this corruptible flesh, yet growing in incalculable power by a certain piercingness of contemplation, the Eternal Brightness is able to be seen, this too is not at variance with the sentence of blessed Job, who says, *Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living*; because he that sees 'Wisdom,' Which is God, wholly and entirely dies to this life, that henceforth he should not be held by the love thereof. For no one has seen Her, who still lives in a carnal way, because no man can embrace God and the world at one and the same time. He who sees God dies by the mere circumstance alone, that either by the bent of the interior, or by the causing out of practice, he is separated with all his mind from the gratifications of this life. Hence yet further it is said to that same Moses too; *For there shall no man see Me, and live.* [Ex. 33, 20] As though it were plainly expressed, 'No man ever at any time sees God spiritually and lives to the world carnally.' Hence Paul the Apostle too, who as yet had learnt the invisible things of God, as he himself testifies, *in part*, [1 Cor. 13, 12] related that henceforth he was dead all over to this world, saying, *By Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.* [Gal. 6, 14] For as we have already said far above, it is not enough for him to say, *I am crucified to the world*, except he also first out with, The world is crucified to me, that he might not only bear witness that he was dead to the world, but also that the world was dead to himself, so that neither he himself should covet the world, nor the world henceforth covet him. For if perchance there be two in one place, of whom one is alive, and the other dead, though the dead person does not see the living, yet the live one does see the dead. Now the Preacher of God, in order that he might shew that by the abasement whereby he had cast himself down in humbling himself he was now become such, that neither he himself longed after the world, nor the world after him; not only says that he was crucified to the world, that he himself as one dead should not see the glory of the world, that he might long ,after, but likewise declared the world crucified to him, wherein he had cast himself down to the ground with such humility, that the world itself likewise, as if dead to him, could not now at all see Paul as being humble and despised.

90. But we are to know that there were some persons, who said that even in that region of blessedness God is beheld indeed in His Brightness, but far from beheld in His Nature. Which persons surely too little exactness of enquiry deceived. For not to that simple and unchangeable Essence is Brightness one thing, and Nature another; but Its very Nature is to It Brightness, and the very Brightness is Nature. For that to Its votaries the Wisdom of God should one day display Itself, He Himself pledges His word, saying, *He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.* [John 14, 21] As though He said in plain terms, 'Ye who

see Me in your nature, it remains that ye should see Me in Mine own nature.' Hence He says again; *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* [Matt. 5, 8] Hence Paul says, *For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, then shall I know even as also I am known.* [1 Cor. 13, 12]

91. But because it is said concerning God by the first preacher of the Church, *Whom the Angels desire to look upon*, [1 Pet. 1, 12] there are some who imagine that even the Angels never see God; and yet we know that it is spoken by a sentence of Truth, *In heaven their Angels do always behold the face of My Father, Which is in heaven.* [Matt. 18, 10] Does, then, Truth sound one thing and the preacher of truth another? But if both sentences be compared together, it is ascertained, that they are not at all at variance with one another. For the Angels at once see and desire to see God, and thirst to behold and do behold. For if they so desire to see Him that they never at all enjoy the carrying out of their desire, desire has anxiety without fruit, and anxiety has punishment, But the blessed Angels are far removed from all punishment of anxiety, because never can punishment and blessedness meet in one. Again, when we say that these Angels are satisfied with the vision of God, because the Psalmist too says, *I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness*, [Ps. 17, 15] we are to consider that upon satisfying there follows disgust. So then, that the two may rightly agree together, let Truth say, *that they always see*; and let the excellent Preacher say, *that they always desire to see*. For that there be not anxiety in desire, in desiring they are satisfied, and that there be not disgust in their satisfying, whilst being satisfied they desire. And therefore they desire without suffering, because desire is accompanied by satisfying. And they are satisfied without disgust, because the very satisfying itself is ever being inflamed by desire. So also shall we too one day be, when we shall come to the fountain of life. There shall be delightfully stamped upon us at one and the same time a thirsting and a satisfying. But from the thirsting necessity is far absent, and disgust far from that satisfying, because at once in thirsting we shall be satisfied, and in being satisfied we shall thirst. Therefore we shall see God, and it shall be the very reward of our labour, that after the darkness of this mortal state we should be made glad by His light being approached unto.

92. But when we talk of His light being approached, that presents itself to the mind which Paul says, *Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.* [1 Tim. 6, 16] And again, I hear what the Psalmist says; *Approach unto Him, and be enlightened.* [Ps. 34, 5] How then by approaching are we enlightened, if we see not the very Light by which we are able to be enlightened? But if by approaching to Him we see the very Light whereby we are enlightened, how is it declared to be unapproachable? Wherein it deserves to be considered that he called it unapproachable, but to every man that minds the things of men. Since sacred Scripture is used to mark all the followers of carnal things with the designation of the being 'men.' Whence the same Apostle says to certain persons at strife, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal; and walk as men?* [1 Cor. 3, 3. 4.] To which he soon afterwards appends, *Are ye not men?* And hence he elsewhere brought forward the testimony; *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered in to the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.* [1 Cor. 2, 9] And when he had described this as hidden from 'men,' he added directly, *But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit;* [1 Cor. 2, 10] separating his own self from the designation of 'man' in that having been transported above man he now taste-d what is divine. So also in this place, when he told of the light of God being unapproachable, that he might shew to what persons unapproachable, he added, *Whom no man hath*

*seen, no nor can see.* After his manner calling ‘men’ all whose taste is for things of man. Because they who have a taste for what is divine, are doubtless above men. Therefore we shall see God, if by a heavenly conversation we obtain to be above men. Not yet that we shall so see Him as He Himself sees His very own Self. For the Creator sees Himself in a way far unlike to that in which the creature sees the Creator. For as to the unmeasurableness of God there is a certain measure of contemplation set to us, because we are limited by the mere weight that we are a creature.

93. But assuredly we do not so behold God, as He sees Himself, as we do not so rest in God, as He rests in Himself. For our sight or our rest will be to a certain degree like to His sight or His rest, but not equal to it. For lest we should be prostrate in ourselves, the wing of contemplation, so to say, uplifts us, and we are carried up from ourselves for the beholding Him, and being carried away by the bent of the heart and the sweetness of contemplation, in a certain manner go away from ourselves into Himself, and now this very going away of ours is not to rest, and yet so to go is most perfectly to rest. And so it is perfect rest because God is discerned, and yet it is not to be equalled to His rest, Who doth not pass on from Himself into another, that He may rest, And therefore the rest is, so to say, like and unlike, because what His rest is, our rest imitates. For that we may be blessed and eternal for everlasting, we imitate the Everlasting. And it is a great eternity to us to be imitating eternity. Nor are we heritless of Him Whom we imitate, because in seeing we partake, and in partaking imitate Him. Which same sight is now begun by faith, but is then perfected in Appearance, when we drink at the very springhead the Wisdom coeternal with God which we now derive through the lips of those that preach, as it were in running streams.

## BOOK XIX.

The interpretation being carried on from the last part of the twenty-first verse of the twenty-eighth chapter to the twenty-first verse of the following chapter exclusive, various meanings are laid open not less learnedly than piously, chiefly concerning Christ and the Church.

### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. WHAT wonder is it if the Eternal ‘Wisdom’ of God is not able to be seen, when the very invisible things themselves as well, which were created thereby, cannot be embraced by the eyes of men? So then by things created we learn with what self-abasement to revere the Creator of all things; so that in this life the human mind should not dare to usurp to itself aught belonging to the Appearance of Almighty God, which He reserves for His Elect only as their reward in the ensuing Recompensing. Whence after it was said, *It is hid from the eyes of all living*, we have the words thereupon introduced next;

Chap. xxviii. 21. *And is kept close also from the fowls of the air.*

[i]

2. For in Holy Scripture ‘birds’ are sometimes given to be understood in a bad sense, and sometimes in a good sense. Since by the birds of the air occasionally the powers of the air are denoted, being hostile to the settled purposes of good men. Whence it is said by the mouth of Truth, *And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and*

*devoured it*; [Matt. 13, 4] in this way, because evilspirits besetting the minds of men, whilst they bring in bad thoughts, pluck the word of life out of the memory. Hence again it is said to a certain rich man full of proud thoughts; *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head.* [Matt. 8, 20. Luke 9, 58.] For foxes are very cunning animals, that hide themselves in ditches and caves; and when they face the light, they never run in straight courses, but always by crooked doublings. But the birds as we know with lofty flight lift themselves into the air. So, then, by the name of 'foxes,' the crafty and cunning demons, and by the title of the 'birds of the air' these same proud demons are denoted. As if he said, 'The deceitful and uplifted demons find their habitation in your heart; i.e. in the imagination of pride,' 'but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head,' i.e. 'My humility findeth not rest in your proud mind.' For as by a kind of flight that first bird lifted itself up, which said in the uplifted imagination of the heart; *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 13] Mark how he in flying sought the regions on high with pride. Which same flight also he recommended to the first of human kind as well. For they themselves by flying as it were tried to go above their own selves, when it was told them that they should taste and be like gods. And while they seek after the likeness of the Deity, they lost the blessings of immortality, which same would not by dying have gone into the earth, if they had been willing to stand with humility upon the earth.

3. But, on the other hand, 'the birds of the air' are wont to be put in a good sense, as in the Gospel the Lord, when He was declaring a likeness of the kingdom of heaven by a grain of mustard seed, said, *Unto what is the kingdom of heaven like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and waxed a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.* [Luke 13, 18. 19.] For He is Himself 'a grain of mustard seed,' Who, when He was planted in the burial place of the garden, rose up a great tree. For He was 'a grain,' whereas He died, but 'a tree,' whereas He rose again. 'A grain,' through the abasement of the flesh, 'a tree,' through the mightiness of His Majesty. 'A grain,' because *we have seen Him, and He was not regarded* [Is. 53, 2]; but 'a tree,' *because fairer in form than the children of men.* [Ps. 45, 2] The branches of this tree are the holy preachers. And let us see how wide they are stretched out. For what is said concerning them? *Their sound is gone forth into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.* [Ps. 19, 4] In these 'boughs the birds of the air rest,' because the holy souls, which by a kind of wings of virtues lift themselves up from earthly thinking, do in the word and consolations of these take breath from the wearying of this life. And so in this place after it was said of 'Wisdom,' *It is hid from the eyes of all men*; it is rightly added, *It is kept close also from the fowls of the air*: because being settled in the corruptible flesh, these very persons do not in seeing penetrate the mightiness of His Nature, who earn by holy contemplation even now to fly with wings. Where it is well added, Ver.22. *Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.*

[ii.]

4. Who are denoted by the title of 'destruction and death,' save the evil spirits, who proved the inventors of 'destruction and of death,' as of their leader himself under the appearance of his minister it is said by John, *And his name was Death.* [Rev. 6, 8] Unto whom all spirits of pride being subject, say concerning this 'Wisdom,' Which is God, *we have heard the fame thereof with*



*our ears*, in this way, that the vision thereof doubtless they could not have with complete blessedness. For perfectly to see the Wisdom coeternal with God, is the same thing as to 'have.' Hence it is said to John of the reward of one conquering, *I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.* [Rev. 2, 17] For in this life we are able either to know or see sometimes a thing even which we have not received; but to have 'a new name written on a white stone' is in an eternal recompense to have the knowledge of God strange to the faculties of men, which no man can know saving he that receiveth it. Therefore as we have said, because to see God is the same thing that it is to have, therefore the evil spirits do not see this 'Wisdom,' because being cast off through pride they were never able to have It. For they shut the eyes of the heart to the light of It, resisting the rays thereof shed abroad over them, as that may be also understood of the same evil spirits, which is written, *They are of those that rebel against the light.* [Job 24, 13] And so for evil spirits to have 'heard of the fame of Wisdom,' but not to have seen that Wisdom, is at once to have ascertained the power thereof by its efficacy, and yet to have been unwilling to stand humbly under it. Hence it is said by the voice of Truth of the actual head of evil spirits, *He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth.* [John 8, 44] It follows;

Ver. 23, *God understandeth, the way thereof; and He knoweth the place thereof.*

[iii.]

5. This Wisdom coeternal with God has 'a way' in one sense, and in another sense 'a place;' but only a 'place,' if a person understand it a place not local. For God is not capable of being held close after the manner of a body. But as has been said, a place not local is meant. The 'place' of 'Wisdom' is the Father, 'the place' of the Father is 'Wisdom,' as, Wisdom Herself bearing testimony, it is said, *I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.* [John 14, 10] So then the same identical Wisdom has 'a way' in one sense, and 'a place' in another sense; 'a way' by the passing of the manhood, 'a place' by the settledness' of the Godhead. For She passes not by in the respect that She is eternal, but She does pass by in the respect that for our sakes She appeared subject to time. For it is thus written in the Gospel, *And as they departed from Jericho, the Lord passed by. And, behold, two blind men, sitting by the way side, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David.* [Matt. 20, 29. 30.] At whose voice, as it is there written, *Jesus stood still,* [ver. 32] and restored light. Now what is it to hear passing by, but to restore sight standing still, but that by His manhood He compassionated us, Who by the power of His Godhead banished from us the darkness of our souls? For in that for our sakes He was born and suffered, that He rose again and ascended into heaven, it is as if Jesus passed by, because surely these are doings in time. But He touched and enlightened them standing still, because not as that temporal economy doth likewise the Word's Eternity pass by, Which while remaining in Itself renews all things. For God's standing is His ordering all things mutable by immutable purposing. He, then, Who heard the voices of those imploring Him while 'passing by,' restored light standing still. For though for our sakes He underwent things temporal, yet He bestowed light upon us by the same thing that He knows not to have the passing of mutability. Therefore because when He should through flesh appear to men was an uncertain thing, it is rightly said now, *God understandeth the way thereof; and He knoweth the place thereof.* As though it were expressed in plain words; 'To the thought of man the two are hidden, whether the time when by flesh Wisdom may come to men, or the mode how, even when he appears without, He continues invisible with the Father.

6. Although this may also be understood in another sense. For ‘the way thereof’ is not inappropriately taken to be that actual thing that comes into the mind, and infuses itself into us in the interior. And ‘the place thereof’ the heart becomes, coming unto which She abides. Thus of this Her way it is said, *The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord* [Matt. 3, 3]; i.e. ‘Open in your hearts an entrance to Wisdom at Her coming;’ as it is elsewhere said; *Make a way for him, that ascendeth above the setting.* [Ps. 68, 4. Vulg.] For to ‘ascend over the setting,’ was by rising again to have got the mastery over that very death, He had undergone. And so he says, *For him, that ascendeth above the setting, make ye a way;* i.e. ‘To the Lord on His rising again make a way in your hearts by faith.’ Hence it is said to John by the Spirit; *Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His way.* [Luke 1, 76] For everyone that by preaching cleanses the hearts of those that hear him from the defilements of bad habits, prepares a way for Wisdom on Her coming. Thus, this ‘Wisdom’ hath ‘a way,’ and hath ‘a place;’ ‘a way’ whereby She comes, ‘a place’ wherein She abides; as She Herself saith; *If any man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.* [John 14, 23] So then there is ‘a way’ by which She comes, ‘a place’ wherein She abideth. But whereunto does She come, Who is every where? Is it for Wisdom to come, by the enlightening of our mind to make the presence of Her mightiness to appear? And because it is doubtful to men both into what person’s heart She comes, or in what man, after She has come, She rests in abiding there, it is rightly said now, *God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof.* Because it appertains to the Divine sight alone to see, whether by what methods the perception of Wisdom may come to the heart of man, or whose soul shall not lose by deadly imaginations the understanding of life, which it has been vouchsafed. And because this same ‘Wisdom’ made manifest by the graciousness of the Manhood was destined in all the regions of the world to fill to the full the hearts of the Elect, it is rightly added;  
Ver. 24. *For he regardeth the ends of the earth, and seeth all things that are under the heaven.*

[iv.]

7. For God’s ‘regarding’ is the renewing to His grace the things that were lost and undone; whence it is written, *A King that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with His eyes.* [Prov. 20, 8] For by regarding He restrained the evils of our lightness, and bestowed great worth of maturedness. Whence it is further added;  
*Who made the weight for the winds.*

[v.]

8. For in the Holy Scripture, by the rapidity and subtlety of the winds souls are used to be denoted, as it is spoken by the Psalmist of God; *Who walketh above the things of the winds;* [Ps. 104, 3. Vulg.] i.e. ‘Who passes above the virtues of souls.’ Accordingly ‘He made the weight for the winds,’ in that whilst Wisdom from above fills souls, it renders them weighty with imparted maturity, not with that weightiness, of which it is said, *Ye children of men, how long with a heavy heart.* [Ps. 4, 2] For it is one thing to be weighty in respect of counsel, and another in respect of sin; it is one thing to be weighty, by constancy, another to be weighty by offence. For this latter weightiness has weight of burthen, the other weight of merit. Thus, therefore, souls receive weight, that they should not henceforth with light motion glance off from their aim at God, but be made to settle into Him with immoveable weightiness of constancy. Still was that people lightly moved to

and fro, of which it is said by the Prophet, *And he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart. I have seen his ways: and I let him go.* [Is. 57, 17, 18] But weighty counsel in heart banishes all inconstancy of wandering. And because there are souls, that with light motion are now after one set of objects, now after another, Almighty God, because these very light waverings of men's minds He does not estimate lightly, by abandoning passes judgment on the wandering of the heart. But when through grace He regards the wandering mind, He fixes it into steadfastness of counsel. And so it is rightly said now, *And made weight for the winds*; because the light motions of the mind, when He deigns to regard with mercifulness, He directly fashions that mind to maturedness of constancy. Or otherwise to 'make weight for the winds,' is to qualify with intermixed infirmity the glory resulting from virtuous achievements, which is vouchsafed to the Elect here. Whence it is also subjoined;

*And he weigheth the waters by measure.*

[vi.]

9. 'Waters' in Holy Scripture are wont sometimes to denote the Holy Spirit, sometimes sacred knowledge, sometimes wrong knowledge, sometimes calamity, sometimes drifting peoples, sometimes the minds of those following, the faith. Thus by water we have the Inpouring of the Holy Spirit represented, as when it is said in the Gospel, *He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Where the Evangelist following on added; *But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive.* [John 7, 38. 39.] Again, by water sacred knowledge is denoted, as it is said; *And give him the water of wisdom to drink.* [Ecclus. 15, 3] By water likewise bad knowledge is wont to be designated, as when the woman in Solomon, who bears a type of heresy, charms with crafty persuasion, saying, *Stolen waters are sweet.* [Prov. 9, 17] By the term of waters too tribulation are used to be signified, as it is said by the Psalmist, *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul.* [Ps. 69, 1] By water peoples are denoted, as it is said by John, *Now the waters are peoples.* By water likewise not only the tide of peoples drifting away, but also the minds of good men that follow the preachings of faith, are denoted, as the Prophet saith, *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters.* [Is. 32, 20] And it is said by the Psalmist; *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters.* [Ps. 29, 3] In this place, then, what is denoted by the title of 'waters,' saving the hearts of the Elect, which by the understanding of Wisdom, have now received the hearing of the heavenly voice? Touching whom it is rightly said; *And weigheth the waters by measure.* Because the very Saints, who by the Holy Spirit bearing them up are transported on high, so long as they are in this life, that they may not swell high with any self-elation, are kept down by certain temptations, that they may never have the power to advance as much as they have the wish, but lest they should be exalted by pride, there takes place in them a kind of measure of their very virtues.

10. It is hence that Elijah, after that by so many achievements he had advanced on high, was suspended aloft by a kind of measure, when he afterwards fled from Jezebel, though a queen, yet only a weak woman. For I consider with myself that this man of marvellous power drew down fire from heaven, and once and again by momentary beseeching consumed the captains of fifty with all their men, by a word shut up the heavens from rain, by a word opened the heavens to rain, raising the dead, foreseeing the several things to come, and, lo, again it occurs to mind, with what dismay he fled before a single weak woman. I see the man, as being stricken with fear, from the hand of God seeking death, yet not obtaining it, from the hand of a woman shunning death by taking to

flight. For he sought death, whilst he fled, saying, *It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.* [1 Kings 19, 4] Whence then was he so powerful as to perform those so numerous miracles? whence so weak as to be dismayed at a woman, except that 'the waters are weighed with measure;' that the very Saints of God should at once prevail greatly through the power of God, and again be limited by a kind of measure through their own infirmity. In those powers Elijah learnt what he had received 'from God, in these weaknesses what he had power to be by himself. That mightiness was power, this weakness the keeper of power. In these powers he shewed what he had received, in these weaknesses that which he had received he kept safe. In the miracles Elijah was to be brought out to view, in the weaknesses he was to be preserved secure.

11. In the same way I see that Paul, encountering the perils of rivers and robbers, of the city and the wilderness, of sea and land, bridling the body by fasts and watchings, undergoing the ills of cold and nakedness, exercising himself watchfully and with pastoral care to the safe-keeping of the Churches, [2 Cor. 11, 26] being caught up into the third heaven, and again caught up into Paradise, at once heard secret words which it is not permitted to man to utter, and yet is given over to an angel of Satan to be tempted; he prays that he might be released, and is not heard. And when I look to the mere beginnings of his conversion, I consider with myself that heavenly pity opens the heavens to him, and Jesus shews Himself to him from on high. He that lost the light of the body for a time, received the light of the heart for evermore. He is sent to Ananias, he is called *A chosen vessel*, [Acts 9, 15] and yet from that same city, which he had entered after the vision of Jesus, he departs in flight, as he himself bears witness, saying, *In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept guard over the city of the Damascenes, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands.* [2 Cor. 11, 32. 33.] Unto whom I will take leave to say, 'O Paul, already seest thou Jesus in heaven, and still dost thou fly man on earth? Art thou carried into Paradise, art thou made acquainted with secret words of God, and still art thou tempted by a messenger of Satan? Whence so strong, that thou art caught up to heavenly places, whence so weak that thou fliest from man on the earth, and still sufferest hard handling from a messenger of Satan, saving that the Same, Who lifts thee on high, again limits thee with the minutest measuring, that both in thy miracles thou shouldest preach to us the power of God, and again in thy fear cause us to remember our own infirmity?' Which same infirmity, however, that it may not draw us on into despair when it buffets us, whilst thou wert beseeching God touching thine infirmity, because thou wert not heard, to us also thou hast told what thou didst hear; *My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.* [2 Cor. 12, 9]

12. Thus by the plain voice of God it is shewn that the guardian of power is frailty. For we are then kept to good effect within, when by God's appointment we are tempted to a bearable degree without, sometimes by bad propensities, sometimes by pressing misfortunes. For to these likewise, whom we know to have been men of mighty virtues, there were not wanting temptations and conflicts from the vices. Hence it is that for our encouragement the same great Preacher condescends to bring to view things of that kind concerning his own case, saying, *I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] For the flesh forces down below, that the Spirit may not uplift, and the Spirit draws up on high, that the flesh may not bring to the ground. The Spirit lifts up, that we may not lie grovelling in the lower world, the flesh weighs down, that we should not be lifted up on account of the things on high. If the flesh tempted us, while the Spirit did not uplift us,

too surely by the absoluteness of its tempting it would cast us down below. But again, if the Spirit lifted us above, while the flesh did not tempt, It would by that very uplifting prostrate us the worse in the fall of pride. But by a certain regulating method it takes place, that whilst each one of the Saints is already indeed transported on high inwardly, but is still tempted outwardly, he “neither incurs the downfall of desperation, nor of self-exaltation; seeing that neither does outward temptation bring transgression to its accomplishment, because the interior bent draws upwards; nor again does this interior bent lift up into pride, because the exterior temptation abases whilst it weighs down. Thus by a high appointment we see in the interior advancement what we receive, in the exterior shortcoming what we are, and by a strange method it is brought to pass that a man should neither be lifted up on the ground of virtue, nor despair on the ground of temptation, because while the Spirit draws, and the flesh draws back, by the exactest regulating of the Interior Judgment, the soul is balanced in a kind of mean above the things below, and below the things above. Therefore it is well said,

Ver. 26, 27. *When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the sounding tempests, then did He see it and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out.*

[vii.]

13. By ‘rain’ the sayings of those that preach are used to be denoted. Whence it is said by Moses; *Let my doctrine be waited for as the rain;* [Deut. 32, 2] whose words, that is to say, when they gently persuade are ‘rain,’ but when they thunder out terrible things touching the Judgment to come, they are ‘sounding tempests.’ And it deserves to be noted, that ‘a decree is made for the rain,’ in order that ‘a way may be opened for the sounding tempests.’ For a decree has been set to the preachers themselves, that by living they fulfil what by uttering they are forward to recommend. For the authoritativeness of speaking is lost, when the voice is not supported by the practice. For here it is said by the Psalmist, *But unto the wicked God saith; What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee.* [Ps. 50, 16. 17.] For the words of God the preacher does cast behind himself, when the same that he says he thinks scorn to do. But when may another obey his sayings, whilst he himself rejects in practice what he preaches with the voice, and shews not to hear that he tells? Of this law of preaching it is written; *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoso shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 5, 19] ‘The kingdom of heaven,’ we see, He calls the present Church; concerning which it is written, *And they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend.* [Matt. 13, 41] For in the Kingdom Above ‘offences’ that should have to be gathered out thereof do not take place. He then that breaks in practice, and teaches the like in words, in this kingdom of heaven shall be the least, in the other not even the least. Now ‘He set a way to the sounding tempests,’ when for His preachers He made access to the hearts of men stricken with dread of the Judgment to come. So first ‘a law is set,’ that afterwards ‘a way may be opened,’ because that voice pierceth the heart of him that heareth, which maintains by practice the thing that it has sounded with the lips. Now it was then when ‘He set a law to the showers, and a way to the sounding tempests,’ that God ‘saw, declared, prepared, and searched’ this ‘Wisdom.’ By a mode of speech customary to Holy Writ, for God to see is a phrase for causing us to see, as the Lord saith to the righteous man, *Now I know that thou fearest God.* [Gen. 22, 12] And the Israelites are forewarned; *The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God,* [Deut. 13, 3] i.e. ‘that He may make you to know.’ At that time, then,

when 'He set a law to the showers,' i.e. gave the precept of watching to the preachers, this 'Wisdom' made Incarnate He caused to be 'seen and declared' by the preachers, to be 'prepared and searched' by the hearers. Since he 'prepares' Her for himself, whosoever by living aright is procuring Her favourable against the Day of Judgment. And observe that there are four particulars spoken respecting her. For he says, *He did see it and declare it, He prepared it, yea, He searched it.* Thus He 'saw,' in that She is 'a Likeness;' He 'declared it,' in that She is 'the Word;' 'prepared it,' in that She is a remedy; and 'searched it,' in that She is a thing hidden from sight. But this, viz. that the Eternal Wisdom of God is 'the Likeness' and 'the Word' of the Father, when is it penetrated by the mind of man? For who might understand either a Word apart from time, or a Likeness apart from limiting. Therefore there was need for something to be said, which man might recognise concerning Her by himself; whence it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 28. *And unto man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.'*

[viii.]

14. As though it were spoken in plain speech; 'Man, turn back to thine own self; sift thoroughly the secrets of thine own heart. If thou findest out that thou dost fear God, surely it is plain that of this Wisdom thou art full. Which same if thou art not able to learn what in herself She is, meanwhile thou henceforth findest what She is in thyself. For She that is feared in herself by the Angels, in thee is called 'the fear of the Lord.' Because it is certain that thou possessest Her, if it is not uncertain that thou dost fear God.' Hence also it is said by the Psalmist; *The beginning of Wisdom is the fear of the Lord*, [Ps. 111, 10] because She then begins to penetrate the heart, when She disturbs it by the dread of the final Judgment. Therefore the Word of God draws Itself in to our littleness; just as a father, when he speaks to his little child, in order that he may be able to be understood by him, talks stammeringly of his own accord. For because we are unable to penetrate the nature of Wisdom, what She is in herself, by the condescension of God, we have heard what She is in us, when it is said, *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom.* But because he really understands the force of Divine fear, who keeps himself from all bad practices, it is rightly subjoined; *And, to depart from evil is understanding.* So then the things that come after, that they are full of the spirit of prophecy, the words of the sacred history themselves bear testimony, whereas it is said,

C. xxix. 1. *Moreover Job continued his parable, and said.*

[ix.]

15. For because a parable is a name for a likeness, it plainly appears that through a form of exterior words he speaks mysteries, who with reference to speaking is recorded to have 'taken up a parable.'

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

For when he relates his own circumstances, he is telling all the things that are to come to Holy Church, and through the thing that he himself undergoes he points out what she should undergo. But sometimes he so mixes the words of his own history, that he sounds not of any thing allegorical, while sometimes he so utters his own sorrows as though he were giving utterance in the voice of the sorrowing Church. But in the last part of his discourse, he designates the last time of

the Church, when her adversaries, i.e. carnal persons, or heretics and pagans, whom she now busies herself to repress by the authority of wisdom, being set up with unbridled boastfulness, she is obliged to put up with, while derided. Whence in this discourse likewise it is said; *But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.* [Job 30, 1] And the very principle of the arrangement requires that by the last words of blessed Job, the last days of Holy Church should be denoted, when, persecution increasing, she is forced to bear the undisguised voices of heretics, when those motions of their hearts, which they now cover up within the depths of their thoughts, they then disclose in the utterance of error made manifest. For now, as it is said by John, the dragon is imprisoned and held fast in the *bottomless pit* [Rev. 20, 3], because the wickedness of the devil is hidden from sight in their crafty hearts. But, as is there said, the dragon shall be brought forth out of the bottomless pit, because whatsoever is now covered over from fear, then against the Church openly out of the hearts of the wicked is all that serpent's venom brought to light. For now the envenomed feeling hides itself from sight under a flattering tongue, and malevolence of craft as it were covers itself with a kind of bottomless pit of dissembling. Now the Lord, as it is expressed by the voice of the Psalmist, *gathereth the waters of the sea as in a skin.* [Ps. 33, 7] For the 'skin' is carnal thinking. So 'the waters of the sea are gathered in a skin,' when the bitterness of a froward mind does not burst forth outwardly into the voice of unhallowed liberty. Surely the time shall come, when the froward and the carnal speak forth against her with unreserved voice that which they now go about with secret thought. The time shall come when they shall oppress the Catholic Church not only with unjust words, but with cruel wounds.

16. For from her adversaries the Church suffers persecution in two ways, viz. either by words or by swords. Now when she bears persecution by words, her wisdom is put in exercise, when by swords, her patience. Now persecutions of words we do now too as well daily undergo at the hands of heretics, when heretics themselves flatter us with crafty tongues and with feigned humility, but the persecutions of swords are destined to follow towards the end of the world, that the grains to be stored up in the heavenly granaries may be the more genuinely cleared of the chaff of sins, the more straitly they are bruised with affliction. Then all the Elect, that may be caught in that tribulation, call to mind these times when now the Church secures the peace of the faith, when she holds under the proud necks of heretics, not by the potency of her highness, but by the yoke of reason. They call to mind ourselves, who are passing quiet times of faith, who, though we be straitened in the wars [Alluding to the hostilities of the Lombards especially.] of the nations, yet are not driven to extremity in the sayings of Fathers. Thus blessed Job bearing a type of Holy Church, which is then found in these straits, and yet remembers herself of our tranquillity, as I said, describes the particulars of himself past, and tells the particulars destined to come to others, saying; Ver. 2. *Who would give me that I might be as in the months past?*

[x.]

17. For Holy Church being borne down with sorrows is to say many like things. For it shall be for her to be besieged with such great tribulations, as with great sighing to long for these times, which we undergo with great sorrow. So then let her say, let her say in the voice of blessed Job, *Who would give me that I might be as in the months past?* For because an appointed number of days has the name of 'months,' what else does he signify by the title of months, but the gatherings of souls? For days, while they are gathered in months, are removed away, because in this time as well Holy

Church, while she gathers in souls shining bright with the light of truth, hides them in the interior depths. Sometimes also a month is put for perfection, as when the Prophet says, *It shall be a month from a month*; [Is. 66, 23] i.e. perfection in rest to those, to whom there may now be perfection in practice. So let her remember her perfection of old, let her bring back to mind with what preaching of hers, by souls gathered in, she carried off her gains, and being straitened by tribulations, let her say, *Who would give me that might be as in the months of old?* In which same months, who and what he was, he subjoins in telling over, saying;

Ver. 3. *As in the days when God preserved me; when His lamp shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.*

[xi.]

18. For then, persecution forcing thereto, she sees multitudes of the frail fall from her, whom now as a mother she cherishes as her little ones within the bosom of peace, and keeps close within the quiet cradles of faith, seeing that being mixed with the strong they are nurtured by the very tranquillity of the faith. But then many such are destined to fall, and through the bowels of charity, whatever it sustains in the damage of the little ones, the mind of the perfect laments that itself undergoes. For every damage of the weak is by compassion made to pass to the hearts of the strong, Whence it is said by Paul, *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* [2 Cor. 11, 29] For a man is perfect in such proportion as he perfectly feels the sorrows of others. Whence Holy Church, being brought to a pass by the weak ones falling at that time, shall say with right, *As in the days when God preserved me*; because herself she then accounts to fall in those, who now sees herself in these to be kept safe. And it is well said, *When His lamp shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.* For by the term of a ‘lamp’ the light of Holy Scripture is represented, whereof the Shepherd of the Church himself saith, *We have also the word of prophecy more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts.* [2 Pet. 1, 19] And the Psalmist saith, *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* [Ps. 119, 105] Now because our topmost part is the mind, the mind is rightly styled by the designation of ‘head.’ Whence it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou hast anointed my head with oil.* [Ps. 23, 5] As if he said in plain terms, ‘Thou hast filled my soul with the fatness of charity.’ And so now ‘the lamp shines upon the head’ of the Church, because the sacred Oracles enlighten the darkness of our minds, that in this darksome place of the present life, whilst we receive the light of the word of God, we should see what things are to be done. Now she ‘walks by His light in darkness,’ because the Holy Church Universal, though it penetrate not the secrets of another’s thought, because as it were it does not know the face in the night, yet it sets the steps of good practice, being governed by the light of Heavenly Revelation. It goes on;

Ver.4. *As I was in the days of my youth, when God was secretly in my tabernacle.*

[xii.]

19. As of each individual man, so is the age of Holy Church described. For she was a little one, when fresh from the birth she was unable to preach the Word of Life. Hence it is said of her, *My sister is a little one, and she hath no breasts*; [Cant. 8, 8] in this way, that Holy Church, before she made progress by accessions of virtue, was not able to yield the teats of preaching to the weak ones her hearers. But the Church is called ‘adult’ when being wedded to the Word of God, filled with



the Holy Spirit, by the office of preaching she is with young in the conception of children, with whom by exhorting she travails, whom by converting she brings forth. Of this age of hers it is said to the Lord; *The young maidens have loved Thee*. [Cant. 1, 3] For all the Churches, which constitute one Catholic Church, are called young maidens, not now aged by sin, but young ones by grace, not barren by old age, but by the age of the soul fitted for spiritual fruitfulness. Accordingly then, when in those days being as it were enfeebled by a kind of old age she hath not strength to bring forth children by preaching, she calls to mind the bygone fruitfulness, saying, *As I was in the days of my youth*. Though after those days wherein she is borne down, yet, this notwithstanding, now at length towards the actual end of times, she is empowered with a mighty efficacy of preaching. For the Gentiles being taken in to the full, all the Israelitish people that shall then be found she draws into the bosom of the faith. Since it is written; *Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved*. [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] But before those times there shall be days, in the which she shall appear for a little while borne down by her adversaries, when too she remembers these days, saying,  
*As I was in the days of my youth; when God was secretly in my tabernacle.*

20. What in this place do we take the 'tabernacle' for but the dwelling-place of the mind? Because by all that we do with taking thought, we dwell in the counsel of our heart. But whoever in silence thinks of the precepts of God, to him 'God is secretly in his tabernacle.' For he had seen the dwelling-place of his heart to be before the eyes of God, who said, *And the meditation of my heart always in Thy sight*. [Ps. 19, 14] For outward deeds are open to the eyes of men, but widely and incomparably more our interior and minutest thoughts are open to the eyes of God. For, as it is written, *all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him*. And oftentimes in the outward deed we are afraid to appear disordered before the eyes of men, and in the interior thought are not afraid of the regard of Him, Whom, whilst He sees all things, we see not. For we are much more discernible by God within than we are by men without. And hence all the Saints scan themselves both within and without on every side, and are in fear of either shewing themselves blameworthy outwardly, or wicked inwardly to the invisible seeing. It is hence that the living creatures, which are seen by the Prophet, are recorded to be 'full of eyes round about and within.' [Ez. 1, 18. & 10, 12. Rev. 4, 6. & 8.] For he that orders his outward circumstances respectably, but disregards the inward, has eyes 'round about' but not 'within.' But all the Saints, because they at once scan their exterior ways round and round that they may furnish good examples in themselves to their brethren, and watchfully mark their interior ways, because they are providing themselves irreproachable for the regarding eye of the Interior Judge, are described as having eyes both 'round about and within;' and that they may please God, even more do they make themselves complete within their interior self, as it is said by the Psalmist as well of Holy Church, *All the glory of her, the king's daughter, is from within*. [Ps. 45, 13] But because she keeps her outward things also irreproachable, he added with justice concerning her; *Clothed about in clothing of wrought gold with embroidery*. That she should be at once beautiful to herself 'within,' and to others 'without,' both advancing herself by interior glory, and instructing others by the outward examples of deeds. Thus then let blessed Job say in himself, yea, let him say in the person of the Church Universal, *When God was secretly in my tabernacle*. For that he may make it evident how much he had advanced within, he tells, that 'God was secretly in his tabernacle.' That he may also shew the deeds of righteousness to what extent he outwardly kept them, he adds;  
Ver. 5. *When the Almighty was yet with me; and when my servants were about me.*

[xiii.]

21. Now all that stand in awe of the divine precepts become God's 'tabernacle.' Hence as we have already said above, 'Truth' saith by Himself of the man that keeps His commandments, *I and My Father will come and make Our abode with him.* [John 14, 23] Contrariwise the wicked severally, whereas they do not aim at the things within, pour themselves forth without in the thoughts of their hearts. Whence it is said to them by the Prophet, *Turn back to the heart within, O ye transgressors.* [Is. 46, 8] And again, *Woe to you that devise a vain thing.* [Mic. 2, 1] Since in their actions they are afraid of men, whom they see with bodily sight, and God, Whom they do not see, they do not account to be present to them. Contrary whereunto it is said in commendation of a righteous person, seeing that he disregarded the king of Egypt, and obeyed the commandments of God, *For he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible.* [Heb. 11, 27] For the wicked ruler of the earth he as it were saw not, in that he banished him from the eyes of the heart. But the King Invisible 'as seeing,' 'he endured,' because from the regarding of His fear he turned not aside the eye of the soul. So Holy Church being taken then in great tribulations, when she sees many by evil imagining depart from God, surely she sees the tabernacle of their mind on God's departing to remain empty, and justly lamenting, she says, *When God was secretly in my tabernacle.* By which words, and not inappropriately, the feigning of religion is likewise bewailed, because there are those even now that aim not to be, but to seem Christians. These without question have God in public, not 'in secret.' But Holy Church desires to have God 'in secret,' because He regards those really faithful ones, whom He knows to be holding on to the life of faith with complete affection. Which same, as well also with reference to the external uprightness of her activity, saith, *When the Almighty was yet with me: when my servants were about me.* 'Servants' surely those are called, who do the bidding of the heavenly precepts. Whence the Lord saith by the Prophet, *Behold I, and my servants which the Lord hath given me.* [Is. 8, 18] And again in the Gospel, *Servants* [*Pueri* Vulg. The Greek diminutive hardly bears this.], *have ye any meat?* [John 21, 5] And so now 'the servants are round about her,' because in all nations almost there are found those that keep the commandments of heaven, and obey the rules of spiritual discipline. Which servants, too truly, shall then be lacking to do her service, when the wicked doers, that shall be found, despise her spiritual precepts. It goes on;

Ver. 6. *When I washed my feet with butter.*

[xiv.]

22. Whereas we have already frequently said that Christ and the Church are one person, He, that is to say, the Head of that Body, and She the Body of that Head; these words are to be understood after the voice of the Head in one way, after the voice of the Body in another way. Whom then do we take for 'the feet' of the Lord, but the holy Preachers. Of whom He saith, *And I will walk in them.* [Lev. 26, 12] Thus 'the feet are washed with butter,' because the holy Preachers are filled to the full with the fatness of good works. For, as we have already said above, scarcely is the mere preaching itself carried on without something being done wrong. For any man preaching is either drawn on into some slight indignation, if he is despised, or into some little glorying, if he is revered by those that hear him. Whence the Apostles too had their feet washed, that from any slight defilement contracted in the act of preaching itself they might be cleansed as from a sort of dust collected by a journey. And blessed James saith, *My brethren, be not many masters.* And a little after, *For in many things we offend all.* [Jam. 3, 1. 2.] Thus 'the feet are washed with butter,'

because the dust gathered by glory in preaching is steeped and cleansed by the fatness of good works. Or otherwise 'the feet are washed with butter,' when the wages owing are paid to the holy Preachers by those that hear, and those whom the imposed labour of preaching exhausts, the richness of good practice exhibited by the disciples cheers; not that they preach for this that they may be fed, but that they are therefore fed, that they may preach; i.e. that they may hold up to preach; not so that the action of the preacher should pass into the aim of getting support, but that the ministering of support should be made subservient to the usefulness of preaching. Whence by good preachers it is not for the sake of the means of living that preaching is rendered, but for the sake of preaching that the means of living are accepted. And as often as what is wanted is bestowed on those that preach by those that hear them, they are not used to take delight in the benefit of the good things, but in the reward of those bestowing them. Whence it is said by Paul, *Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit.* [Phil. 4, 17.] For the 'gift' is the actual thing that is bestowed; but the fruit thereof is if with a kindly disposition a thing be bestowed in the pursuit of the future recompense. So we receive the gift in the thing, the fruit thereof in the heart. And because the Apostle was fed rather by the recompense of his disciples than by the benefaction, he avouches that he 'seeks not a gift,' but 'fruit.' Hence he straightway added, saying, But I have all and abound. Therefore 'the feet are washed with butter,' when the holy preachers, as we said, worn out by the actual preaching itself, are regaled with the good deeds of their hearers. For the weary 'feet' he had 'anointed with butter,' who heard, *Because the bowels of the Saints are refreshed by the brother.* [Philem. 7.] With this 'butter the foot was anointed,' which was held fast in fetters, saying, *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.* [2 Tim. 1, 16] So then if by the voice of the Head we form our estimate of the words, we do rightly as has been said in taking 'the feet' for preachers.

23. But if we are to interpret these words in the voice of the Body alone, then the feet of the Church are the ministers of inferior works, which whilst they enforce the things that are without for necessary purposes, by the lowest ministration stick to the ground like feet. But they that are at the head, who are intent on the pursuit of instruction, ought with heedful care to question the hearts of the busied, and by the voice of frequent admonition to administer to them that pouring in of richness which they themselves as disengaged receive, For because in one body the members are interested for one another reciprocally, just as our outermost parts are stayed up by their ministrations, so it is necessary that their interior parts should be filled by our pursuits. When then to persons devoted to the extremest offices the holy doctors preach the anointing oil of our Lord's Incarnation, they 'wash the feet with the butter' of utterance, Moreover the feet are accustomed to be lacerated by the mere ruggedness of the way; whence it is altogether difficult at once to go a journey in the earthly actions of this life, and not sustain any wounds at all from the exertion of the journey. And so when the rulers keeping watch call back to their heart within their hearers engrossed with exterior concerns, that they may ascertain what evil things they have committed amidst the very deeds allowed to be done, and that what they find out they may bewail, 'they wash the feet with butter;' because to the wounds of these persons they administer the ointments of penitence. Therefore let Holy Church being unspeakably afflicted remember how in the time of her peace she purified by the word of exhortation even the furthest members in herself, and let her say, *When I washed my feet with butter.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Which it is wonderfully interesting to view in the case of blessed Job, who amidst so many cares of property, so many interests for children, so many engagements of sacrifices, preached to his dependents, howsoever the very farthest, the good things of the life ensuing, that those he might inoculate touching heavenly things, who were working for him at earthly services. What do we Bishops say to all this, who to those committed to us care not to render the word of life, when a wedded husband, neither the secular garb, nor the management of large means were able to debar the office of preaching.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But saving the historical verity, let us now return to the words of Holy Church, who tells by blessed Job, i.e. by the mouth of a Member of her own, how great are the things that she shall suffer in the last time, when she remembers her past fortunes, when by that same richness of the word the life of those in action was cleansed. Who in more fully following out that same watchfulness of her preachers adds;

*And the rock poured me out rivers of oil.*

[xv.]

24. That by the title of a rock Christ is denoted, the great Preacher avouches, saying, *And that rock was Christ.* [1 Cor. 10, 4] Which very 'rock' doth now 'pour out rivers of oil' for the use of Holy Church, because the Lord by speaking therein gives out the preachings of the interior anointing. 'From this Rock that river of oil issued forth,' the book of Matthew, the book of Mark, the book of Luke, and the book of John. In the several regions of this world for all the preachings she put forth, this 'Rock poured out' as many 'rivers of oil' by the mouths of the Apostles. As many times still 'a river of oil is poured out from this Rock,' as often as to the minds of the hearers, to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, those things are explained which are spoken concerning Christ in the old Books. And they are called 'rivers of oil,' because they run out and anoint; in which same he that is dipped is anointed, and he that is anointed is fattened within. Of which fatness doubtless it is that the Psalmist saith, *Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness.* [Ps. 63, 5] It may be that by the designation of oil the actual anointing of the Holy Spirit is denoted, whereof it is said by the Prophet; *And the yoke shall rot at the presence of the oil.* [Is. 10, 27.] For 'the yoke doth rot at the presence of the oil,' because whilst we are anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are set free from the bondage of our captivity; and whereas the proud dominion of the evil spirit is thrown off, the yoke is broken in pieces, wherewith the necks of our liberty were borne down. Of this oil again it is written; *A vineyard was made to my beloved on the horn, a child of oil.* [Is. 5, 1.] For 'a child of oil,' the faithful people is called, which is engendered to the faith of God by the interior anointing of the Holy Spirit. And so at that time let Holy Church, being borne down by countless sorrows, recal to remembrance the gifts of the Spirit and the marvellous preachings which are her's now, and let her bewail her own silence, saying, *The rock poured me out rivers of oil.* To which words he fitly subjoins;

*Ver.7-10. When I went out to the gate of the city, and in the street they prepared me a chair? The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood. The princes ceased to speak, and laid the finger on the mouth. The rulers held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their mouth.*

[xvi.]

25. It was the custom of the ancients, that the elders should sit together in the gates, and judge the cases of those entering in, that so the people of the city might be the more peaceful, in proportion as it was not allowed to those at variance to enter in. Now we in revering the sacred history hold it certain that all this blessed Job did for the sake of the observance of just dealing, and we are led to the investigating the mysteries of the allegory. What then is denoted by 'the gate of the city' saving every good action, by which the soul enters in to the company of the heavenly Kingdom? Hence the Prophet saith; *Thou, that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all Thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion.* [Ps. 9, 13. 14.] For 'the gates of death' are bad actions, which drag to destruction; but because 'Sion' is the word for 'a viewing,' 'the gates of Sion' we interpret good actions, by which we enter into the Country Above, that we may view the glory of our King. But what is denoted by the seat but the authority of mastership. Now 'a street' in the Greek tongue is equivalent to 'breadth.' And so now Holy Church goes forth to the gate of the city, because that she may obtain access to the heavenly country, she puts herself out in holy actions. For whom there is 'a seat prepared in the street,' because in the breadth of high authority she displays the freedom of her mastership. For she that proclaims with public announcement the right things she has a perception of as it were 'sits in the street on the seat,' in that she fears no one for her preaching, and oppressed by alarms for no man buries herself under silence. Does not she in public sit in command to teach, whom at one and the same time truth in perceiving and power in teaching bear up? But whilst he 'went forth to the gate, and sat in the street on the seat,' what was done by the light-minded, what by the grave, he adds, saying;

Ver. 8. *The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood.*

[xvii.]

26. If we give heed to the history, the things that he said we believe, if to the allegory, we see the things that he foretold; for those use to be called 'young men' who are not burdened with any weightiness of counsels. But Holy Scripture is used to call those 'elders,' not who are ripe by amount of years alone, but by ancientness of character. Hence it was said by one that was wise; *For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years; but the understanding of a man is grey hairs, and a spotless life is old age.* [Wisd. 4, 8. 9.] Whence the Lord also rightly saith to Moses; *Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest that they are elders of the people.* [Num. 11, 16] In whom what else is required saving the old age of the heart, when such sort of persons are bidden to be chosen who are known to be elders? For if it were the old age of the body that were sought for in them, they might have been known by as many as they might have been seen by. But whereas it is said, *whom thou knowest that they are elders of the people;* doubtless it is clear that the old age of the mind and not of the body is told as fit to be chosen. Thus now 'the young men see Holy Church, and hide themselves, and the old men rise up and stand,' because her activity and uprightness the immature are afraid of, the aged magnify. They that are light of mind flee, but the grave and perfect do homage to her by rising up to the merits of her life. Since the discipline thereof the perfect sort love, the imperfect ones blame. And so 'the young men see her and hide themselves,' because they are afraid to be detected in their hidden courses of conduct. But 'the elders rise up and stand,' because all the perfect make it appear by humility how much they have gained ground in good practice. But

because he describes all this of his own people, let him describe as well how he is feared by foreign people.

Ver. 9, 10. *The princes ceased to speak, and laid the finger on the mouth. The rulers held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat.*

[xviii.]

27. Who else in this place can be understood as leaders or princes, but the framers of heretical evil? Concerning whom it is said by the Psalmist, *Strife was poured out upon their princes, and they led them aside in the pathless place, and not in the way.* [Ps. 107, 40] For these identical persons, while they are not afraid to interpret the dispensation of God in a wrong sense, assuredly draw the common herds subject to them not into that way which is 'Christ,' but into 'a pathless place:' over whom 'strife also is lightly said to be poured out,' because by their statements they contradict mutually themselves. For Arius in receiving three Persons in the Divine Nature believed three Gods as well. Contrary to whom Sabellius taking up one God believed there was one Person. Between whom Holy Church unswervingly holding the right pathway of her preaching both in proclaiming one God, asserts against Sabellius three Persons, and in asserting three Persons, confesses against Arius one God. Again, because in sacred Revelation Manichaeus found virginity to be commended, he condemned marriage. But on the other hand Jovinian, because he knew marriages to be allowed, despised the pureness of virginity. Whence it takes place that, heretics being always at cross purposes by a wrong apprehension, reciprocally their wickedness is at once in accordance with itself in sin, and at variance with itself in opinion. But on the other hand Holy Church midway between the disputes of either side moves with composed peace, and knows so to receive the higher good, that she also knows to venerate [note: He probably uses this strong word on account of the *sanctity* of marriage] the lower, so that she should neither equal the highest to the lowest, nor again despise the lowest whilst she venerates the highest. And so now the rulers of heretical multitudes considering well the authority of Holy Church cease to speak, and as it were 'put the finger on their mouth,' whilst with false complaints they signify that they are restrained not by the reasoning of the voice but by the hand of power. 'The rulers hold their peace,' because those same persons who endeavour to draw after them the people going wrong, that they should not now dare to utter what is wrong, are checked at once by the weight of authority and the efficacy of reason. Whose 'tongue cleaveth to their throat,' because though they dare not to speak what is bad with an unrestrained utterance, yet they inwardly cover up in themselves all the things which they go to work to propound untrue against the true faith; therefore these times, the Church, being seized by the tribulation ensuing, calls to mind and laments, saying, *When I went out to the gate through the city, and when they prepared me a seat in the street; the young men saw me and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up; the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouths. The leaders held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat.* As though she said in plain speech; 'When there was an opportunity given me to preach with a voice publicly raised, everyone who was not in subjection to the truth dreaded me.' For at that time, when Holy Church is weighed down by adversity, license of speech is afforded to all the bad preachers severally. Which Jeremiah beholding long while beforehand, saith, *Even the sea-monsters bare the breasts; they give suck to their young ones.* For what else does he designate 'monsters,' [lamiae] saving heretics bearing the face indeed of a human being, but the hearts of brute creatures through impiety? Which same then 'bare the breast,' when they freely preach their error. Then they 'give

suck to their young' in that the misattached souls of the young ones, while they insinuate therein what is wrong, by nourishing they confirm in impiety. It follows;  
Ver. 11. *The ear hearing me, blessed me; and the eye seeing, gave witness to me.*

[xix.] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

28. Whereas blessed Job avouches himself to be 'blessed by those that heard him,' and to 'have witness given to him by those that saw him,' what he was in speech and what in practice, we have shewn us. For neither is he henceforth perfect in practice, whom wickedness of the tongue still withstands, or praiseworthy in speech who does not exhibit in practice the thing that he utters. Therefore that blessed Job being found out by the reproaches of his own friends, might declare that he had both these, he shews himself to have been an object of veneration both to the persons bearing and the persons seeing him. Which if we refer to the voice of Holy Church, that man 'blesses her words,' who completes in practice the things he has heard.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

That person 'gives testimony to her,' who in patterns of life responds to her by living well. For he in a true sense sees Holy Church, whose life bears witness that he sees her. For to this end the righteousness of the good is seen within her, that all that see her may be corrected of their wickednesses. Not yet, then, does he see the good within the pale of Holy Church, who is not reformed from evil habits. But whence 'the testimony is rendered to him,' is shewn, in that he subjoins;

Ver. 12, 13. *Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I comforted the widow's heart.*

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

[xx.]

29. Great mercifulness these deeds are proofs of, to 'deliver the poor that crieth,' to minister aid to the 'fatherless,' to rescue one on the point to perish, to 'cheer the heart of the widow.' For above it was said what he put forth in respect of instruction. For he says; *The ear hearing blessed me*; but now he relates what he rendered in respect of mercifulness, saying, *Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.* Since the voice along with the deed of necessity accords with itself.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

These things blessed Job both exhibited to those under him, and thus notwithstanding represented them as destined to be exhibited by Holy Church. Who doth now unceasingly enact both one and the other, that is to say, that her children she should at once feed by speaking, and protect by shielding, so that she should at once by words replenish the good, and by her patronage defend them from the evil. Now it is well written; *Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind.* [Gen. 1, 11] Which really and truly happened in such

a way, that it was a sign of something really and truly to happen, For by 'the earth' the Church is represented, which both regales us with the provender of the word, and keeps us safe by the shadow of her patronage; which both by speaking feeds and by aiding protects, so that she should not only bring forth the herb of refreshment, but also along with the fruit of the deed, the tree of protection.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

30. I see that it also deserves to be well considered by those who head the governments of the common herds, that in saying above, *The young men saw me and hid themselves*; he now affirms, *I comforted the widow's heart*. What great discipline of rule, that before his presence 'the young men' should 'hide themselves!' What great mildness of pitying that by him 'the widows' hearts should be cheered!' For there are some persons so severe that they lose even all gentleness of kindly affection, and there are some so mild, that they part with the lights of strict rule. Whence by all rulers both are with all diligence to be maintained, that neither in the rigorousness of discipline they abandon the loving-kindness of a mild disposition, not again in gentleness abandon severity of discipline, so that they may neither grow hard to the fellow-feeling of pitifulness, when they chastise the contumacious, nor enervate the strong arm of discipline when they cheer the hearts of the weak. Thus, then, let vigour of discipline control mildness, and mildness adorn vigour, and so let the one be recommended by the other, that neither vigour become hard, nor mildness unstrung.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

31. Now these works of pitifulness, which we have named above, Holy Church at once exhibits corporally, and ceases not to exhibit spiritually. For she 'delivers the poor that crieth,' when to the sinner imploring pardon she remits those sins which he has been guilty of. Since it is of such poor that it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. [Matt. 5, 3] And the cry of such poor ones is the cry of those saying in the voice of the Psalmist, *Let Thy tender mercy speedily prevent us; for we are made very poor*. [Ps. 79, 8] Now she 'delivers the fatherless who hath no helper,' in that everyone who now flying the desires of a persecuting world, his old father the devil being dead, runneth to the bosom of Holy Church, finds therein the help of exhortation. It may be that by the title of 'the fatherless,' any believer may be understood even with reference to the death of a good father, of the sight of whom he is deprived for a while, though not deprived of solace. And 'the blessing' too 'of him that was ready to perish' comes upon her, when she anticipates the destruction of a sinner, and when by holy admonitions she brings him back from the pit of sin. Whence it is written; *He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*. [Jam. 5, 20] For if it is a thing of great recompense to rescue from death the flesh sooner or later to die, of what high merit is it to free the soul from death, to live without end in the heavenly country? Now 'the heart of the widow' she 'comforteth,' in that to each faithful soul he that describes the recompenses of the Lord, as it were recalls to remembrance the blessings of her husband. Unto Whom as the soul is spiritually united, He being dead, she is called 'a widow,' but is cheered by the declarations of Holy Church in consequence of His Resurrection. Great consolation therefore doth the heart of the widow receive, when the faithful soul learns by the words of the Church somewhat concerning the Coming of Him, to Whom she is spiritually united. It goes on;

Ver. 14. *With righteousness was I clothed, and arrayed myself as with raiment.*



[HISTORICAL / MORAL INTERPRETATION]

[xxi.]

32. Surely, when we are clothed with a garment, we are surrounded on every side, and so he is 'clothed with righteousness as with a garment,' who defends himself on every side with good practice, and leaves no part of his conduct naked to sin; for he that is just in some deeds and unjust in others, it is as if he covered over this side, and exposed that one naked; nor are those henceforth good deeds, which are defiled by other evil deeds springing up. For hence it is said by Solomon, *He that offendeth in one thing, shall lose many that are good.* [Eccl. 9, 18. Vulg.] Hence James saith, *But whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he shall be guilty of all.* [Jam. 2, 10] Which same sentence of his be himself diligently unfolded, when he added, *For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.* [Jam. 2, 11]

33. And so with the eyes of the heart stretched out roundabouts, watching must be enforced by us on every side. Hence it is rightly said by Solomon also, *Keep thy heart with all watching, for out of it are the issues of life.* [Prov. 4, 23] For going to say *watching*, he put first *all*, without question that each one might scan himself diligently on this side and on that side, and as long as he is in this life know that he is set in pitched battle against spiritual enemies, lest the reward which he is making up by one set of actions, he should lose by another set, lest on this side he bar the door against the enemy, but on another side open an entrance. For if against plotting enemies a city be encompassed by a great rampart, be girt with strong walls, on every side defended by a sleepless watch, yet a single opening only be left therein undefended through neglect, from this quarter surely the enemy enters in, who seemed to be every way shut out. For that Pharisee who went up into the Temple to pray, with what fortifying he had begirt the city of his soul, let us hear. *I fast twice in the week, he says, I give tithes of all that I possess.* [Luke 18, 12] He that set out with *I thank Thee*, did, surely, employ extraordinary defences. But let us see where he left an opening undefended for a plotting enemy; *Because I am not as this publican.* See how he opened the city of his heart to plotting enemies through self-exalting, which city he fruitlessly shut close by fasting and almsgiving. Vainly is all the rest defended, when one spot by which an entrance lies open to the enemy is not defended. He rightly gave thanks, but wrongly exalted himself above the publican. The city of his heart by being lifted up he betrayed, which by living abstemiously, and by giving alms, he guarded. The greedy appetite was subdued by abstinence, the gluttony of the belly was destroyed, a grasping inclination was got the better of, by bountifulness covetousness was kept down. With what great pains do we suppose this to have been done? But, alas! what a series of painful efforts being struck by one bad point fell to the ground! What great excellencies were killed by the sword of one sin! Whence it is needful with great diligence both always to be doing good things, and to keep ourselves heedfully in the thought of the heart from the very good things themselves, lest, if they uplift the mind, they be not good, which are enlisted not to the Creator, but to pride.

34. With reference to which particular we are not acting irregularly, if from the books, though not Canonical [b], yet brought out for the edifying of the Church, we bring forward testimony. Thus Eleazar in the battle smote and brought down an elephant, but fell under the very beast that he killed. Whom, then, does this one represent, whom his own victory bore down, but those persons

who overcome bad habits, but by being lifted up are brought down under the very things they bring under? For it is as if he died under the enemy he lays low, who is lifted up by the sin that he subdues. Accordingly it deserves above every thing to be considered, that good points cannot avail, if bad ones that creep in unawares are not guarded against. All that is done perishes, if it be not heedfully preserved in humility. Hence too it is well said of the first parent himself; *And the Lord put the man into the Paradise of pleasure, to work and to keep it.* [Gen. 2, 15] For he ‘worketh,’ who does in act the good that is enjoined. But what he has wrought he keepeth not, whom that creepeth upon which is forbidden. Therefore let blessed Job, because he had covered himself on every side with good practice, say, *With righteousness I was clothed, and arrayed myself as with a garment.* Where it is forthwith added, *And my judgment a diadem.*

35. The judgments of the righteous are rightly compared to a ‘diadem,’ because by the gloriousness of great practice, they lead to a crown of rewarding. Which same judgments they carry on with themselves day by day in the interior, what they owe to God, what to their neighbour, they look to with quick discernment, and they kindle themselves with ardour to the doing of what is good, and rebuke themselves with severity for the evil things committed. Hence it is well said by Solomon as well; *The thoughts of the righteous are judgments.* [Prov. 12, 5] Since within they are brought back to their own hearts from all the tumult of the world, and then they mount the tribunal of the mind, and set before the eyes themselves, and their neighbour, and bring forward in the midst the rule of the Testament, wherein it is said, *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.* [Matt. 7, 12] They transfer into themselves the person of their neighbour, and heedfully mark what to themselves, had they been so circumstanced, they would justly have wished done or left undone, and so with strict justice and judgment, they try the cause of themselves and their neighbour by the tables of the Divine Law, in the court of the heart. Therefore it is well said, *The thoughts of the righteous are judgments,* because the very interior motion of their heart is itself as it were a kind of scales of judicial power. Which things being done, because they do not look for recompensing below, their judgments are rightly compared to ‘a diadem.’ For a diadem is set upon the upper part of the body; and so the judgment of the righteous is styled a ‘diadem,’ because they do not thereby covet to find their reward by it in things below and of this earth, but up above. It follows;  
Ver. 15, 16. *I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out.*

[xxiii.] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

36. Herein the mind of the reader might perchance put the question, wherefore it is that blessed Job reckons up his own virtue with so much particularity. For it is a mark of holy men to conceal the good things they may have done, lest it chance that they bring upon themselves the downfall of exaltation. Whence Truth saith by Itself, *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them.* [Matt. 6, 1] It is hence, too, that in giving light to the two blind men sitting by the way-side, He charged them, saying, *See that no man know it.* [Matt. 9, 30] Of which persons it is thereupon said, that they ‘departed and spread abroad the fame of Him throughout all that region.’ Now it is a question for us to consider, what this means, that the Almighty Himself, unto Whom to have the will is the same thing as to have the power, both wished that His extraordinary powers should be kept secret, and notwithstanding by those that were illumined with sight as it

were against His will He is made manifest. Which is nothing else than that to His servants following after Him He gave an example, that of themselves indeed they should desire to have their extraordinary endowments kept hidden from sight, and yet, that others might profit by their example, they should be brought to view against their will, and indeed by concealing their own achievements keep themselves safe, but whilst they are brought to view against their will, convey good examples on to their neighbours. So then let them be hidden in set purpose, and made public by necessity, and let the hiding of them be the safe keeping of self, and the making them public usefulness to others. Again, because it is written, *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but in a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, Which is in heaven.* [Matt. 5, 15. 16.] There are times when holy persons are compelled to do good things even in the presence of their fellow-creatures, or else to tell these very deeds of theirs to their fellow-creatures, but only to this end relating every thing, viz. that by those works not they themselves, but their Father, Which is in heaven, may be glorified. For whilst they preach things holy, the very preaching itself perhaps goes for nought, of those whose life is not known. So they are forced to tell their own life, that they may be able to change the life of their hearers. And they relate their deeds that they may be held in veneration, and they seek to be venerated, that they may be listened to with awe. Since it is written; *And when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them.* [Ez. 1, 21] Because it is so that when the minds of the hearers take in the life of those that preach, surely they necessarily admire the force of the preaching as well.

37. Hence it is therefore that good preachers at once eschew honour on account of being set up, and yet wish to be honoured on account of being imitated. In the same way surely Paul the Apostle, when speaking to the disciples, at once flees honour, and yet shews how greatly he deserved to be honoured. For when he said to the Thessalonians; *For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know; nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness:* he adds going on; *Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor of others, when we might have been, burthensome to you as the Apostles of Christ; But we were gentle among you.* [1 Thess. 2, 5. 6. 7.] Again to the Corinthians, avoiding honour he saith; *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus Christ's sake.* [2 Cor. 4, 5] Which same however he seeing to be led aside from the track of the true faith by the persuasions of false apostles, with the greatest pains shews to them how much he was worthy to be held in reverence, saying, *Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more.* [2 Cor. 11, 22. 23.] To which particulars he likewise adds how that to him the secrets of the third heaven also were set open, how that being caught up he even penetrated the mysteries of Paradise. See, how eschewing honour he proclaims himself the servant of the disciples. See how for the use of his hearers seeking honour, he advances the claims of his life above the false apostles. Since the great teacher acted with this view, that whilst he himself is seen and known for what he was, both the life and the tongue of those that preached amiss might by comparison with him be made worthless. Therefore in a wonderful way he both exhibits the grace of humility, and seeks accessions of usefulness, so as both to proclaim himself a servant of the disciples, and prove himself better than the adversaries. He displays to the disciples what he had been vouchsafed of humility, he displays to the opponents what he had been vouchsafed of loftiness. He makes appear in opposition to adversaries what he had by gift, he makes appear to disciples what he remains in

himself in thought, he makes known to opponents what he is presented without in practice. So holy men, when they are constrained to relate the good things that they do, do not lend themselves to exaltation but usefulness. Whence to his friends, unjustly upbraiding him, and so not knowing the good things in him, blessed Job telling reveals them, that surely they might learn, not whilst upbraiding him to lift themselves up against his life, but holding their peace to copy the same. Though, as we have already often said above, the despair urged on him by those upbraiding him, forced him to recall his own deeds to remembrance. For amidst so many pains of wounding and words of despair, when he tells the things which he did, his mind as it were sunk down by words and wounds he sets anew to hope. So let him say the good things that he has done, that he may not be forced in the midst of so many evil things that he hears to despair of himself. *I was eyes to the blind, feet was I to the lame.*

38. When we are estimating the examples of holy practice, we ought first to mark what a right order is observed in relating them, so that first works of righteousness, next works of mercy should be described. For that man does well what is pitiful, who is taught first to observe what is just, so that the stream of mercy bestowed on our neighbours be brought from the fountain-head of righteousness. For there are many that in a manner render works of mercy to their neighbours, but do not abandon the deeds of unrighteousness, which same if they are anxious truly to shew mercy to their neighbours, ought first by living justly to have shewn pity to themselves. Whence it is written; *Have mercy upon thine own soul by pleasing God.* [Ecclus. 30, 23. (Vulg. 42)] He then that would pity his neighbour must needs derive the original of pitying from himself. For it is written; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* [Matt. 19, 19] How, then, is he pitiful to another by shewing mercy, who by still living unjustly becomes pitiless to himself? Whence it is also said by one that was wise; *He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?* [Ecclus. 14, 5] Since for shewing forth mercy, that it may be rendered to the needy outwardly in perfection, two things necessary agree together, i.e. the man that is to give, and the thing to be given. But the man is by far and without comparison better than the thing. And so he who gives up his outward substance to his neighbour in want, but does not keep his own life from doing evil, gives his estate to God, but himself to sin. The thing which is the lesser he offered to the Creator, and that which is the greater he reserved to wickedness. And so it is well said first by blessed Job, *With justice I was clothed and arrayed myself as with a garment, and with my judgment as with a diadem:* and is next added; *I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.* Because there is then in God's sight the offering of true righteousness, when from the root of righteousness the branches of pitifulness proceed. But because in the very work of mercy itself the spirit is wont to be thought more of with the interior Judge than the thing done, observe that he declares that to 'the blind he had been eyes, to the lame feet.' For by saying these things assuredly he points out that both to the one he had held out a hand by himself, and that the other he bore up by carrying. From which it is gathered how greatly the bowels of his mercy were poured out upon the weak and needy. Whence it is added; *I was a father to the poor.*

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

39. Which same words if we refer to the utterance of Holy Church by a typical mode of interpretation, the same is 'eyes to the blind,' because she gives light by the Word, and the same 'feet to the lame,' because she stays them up by support. For by preaching she enlightens the blind, while the lame by helping she supports. For 'the blind' is he that as yet seeth not whither he is

going, but 'the lame' is he who has not the power to go there where he sees. For frequently sin is committed either by ignorance or weakness, so that either the man knows not what he ought to desire, or cannot do every thing that he has the desire to do. Contrarily it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *The Lord is my light and my salvation*. [Ps. 27, 1] For because the Lord bestows both knowledge and force, at once in opposition to ignorance He is called 'Light,' and in opposition to weakness 'Saving Health.' It is hence that it is said of the wicked, *Let their way be dark and slippery* [Ps. 35, 6]; that is to say, that through the darkness they may not see where they should go, who even if they did see what was right, yet by reason of the slippery quality they should not be able to stand fast therein. And so the one sort through the slipperiness halt in the midst of good things, and the other sort through the darkness, are ignorant what good things to follow. Thus then Holy Church, being seized by tribulations at the end, calls to mind the old times when she was accustomed both to enlighten by teaching and to stablish by helping, and speak with the lips of her foregoing member, saying,

*I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame.*

40. And whereas she has gathered together two Peoples in herself, viz. the Jewish and the Gentile, by the 'blind,' the Gentile People may also be rightly denoted, and by 'the lame' the Jewish. Since the Gentile People had as it were no eyes, because the Law not being received it saw not where it ought to have gone. But on the other hand the Jewish People having eyes was lame, because the Law indeed in knowing it held, but did not stretch forth the step of right practice therein. For if the Gentile People had not been blind, the Prophet would not say, *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light*. [Is. 9, 2] Again, if the Israelitish People had not gone lame to good practice, the Psalmist would never have said in the voice of the Lord, *The strange children have lied to me: the strange children have waxed old, they have gone lame out of their paths*. [Ps. 18, 44. 45.] Which doubtless is for this reason termed a lame People, in that it had not a sound step in practice, since it would not use both feet, while it admitted one Testament, and spurned the other. Which People when Holy Church receives coming to her, because to the same, already holding the Old Testament, she introduces the New Testament as well, for the directing the steps thereof, she as it were joins on another foot. Which faithful People of Holy Church still further adds aright, *I was a father to the poor*, because surely the humble, who are called 'poor in spirit,' are begotten by her preaching. But it is necessary for us in all these particulars to weigh with exactness the actual words of the history. For he says;

Ver.16. *I was a father of the poor, and the cause, which I knew not, I searched out.*

[xxiv.]

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

41. For very often men give much to the poor, not because they love those poor, but because if they do not give, they dread the indignation of the Judge Above; which persons, if they were not afraid of God, would have had no mind to give the things they possess. And indeed in good deeds it is the first step of beginners, that he who does not yet know how to love his neighbour as himself, nevertheless should yet henceforth begin to dread the judgments from Above. Thus because it is one thing to do a good deed by command and another to do it from affection as well, that the holy man may teach us the inward spirit of his practice, let him say, *I was a father to the poor*. For not a patron, or a neighbour, or an helper to the poor, but 'a father' he testifies that he had been; in this way, because by the great attentiveness of his charity he converted the purpose of mercy into the affection of nature, that he should look on those as children by love, whom he was the head of as a

father by protecting. Therefore because the force of his mercy had copied nature, he records himself to have been a father to the poor. Where he likewise adds;  
*And the cause that I knew not, I most carefully searched out.*

[xxv.]

42. In which words we have to consider all the particulars how distinctly they are related, and that no profit is passed over by him. Since he is just in his actions, pitiful in his neighbours' infirmities, active in the concerns of the poor. For he that takes thought of the blessings of the eternal recompensing, must needs extend himself to every occasion of the repayment to follow after. For hence it is said by Solomon; *He that feareth God, neglecteth nothing.* [Eccl. 7, 18] Hence also Paul saith; *prepared unto every good work.* [2 Tim. 2, 21] But herein we ought to bear in mind that occasionally in our actions lesser good things are to be let pass for the usefulness of greater ones. Thus who could be ignorant that it has the merit of a good work to bury the dead: and yet Lo one, who had prayed to be let go in order to the burying of his father, it was said; *Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.* [Luke 9, 60] Thus the dutifulness of this service was to be made to give place to the office of preaching, because by the first he would be burying persons dead in the flesh in the earth, by the other he would be raising up persons dead in the soul to life. By the Prophet likewise it is said to the chiefs of the Synagogue; *Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed.* [Is. 1, 17] And yet Paul the Apostle says; *Set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the Church.* [1 Cor. 6, 4] For he was kindling his hearers' hearts to the excellency of wisdom, to different kinds of tongues, to the investigating the mysteries of prophecy also, saying, *Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.* But because they would not be capable of 'spiritual gifts,' if earthly matters had weighed them to the ground, he premised long before, saying, *Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church.* As though he said in plain words; 'they that are of least worth in the Church, and not enriched with any power of extraordinary gifts, let these only judge concerning earthly matters, that by whom extraordinary good cannot be supplied, the lesser good may be.' Whom he at once styles 'contemptible,' and yet calls 'wise,' when he says; *Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?* [1 Cor. 6, 5] From which point what else is concluded but that they are to try earthly causes, who have received wisdom in things external? But they that have been enriched with spiritual gifts surely ought never to be entangled with earthly concerns, that while they are not compelled to manage the good things beneath, they may by being exercised be enabled to serve the interests of the good things Above.

43. But above every thing it needs to be looked to, that they who shine forth with spiritual gifts should never entirely abandon the affairs of their neighbours of weak condition, but that they should entrust the same to be managed by others, whom it is meet for. Whence also Moses appointed to the people seventy persons in the stead of himself, that in proportion as he buried himself out of the way of external causes he might with the greater fervour go into the things of the interior. And so it comes to pass, that those that are the highest advance more to Spiritual gifts, when things that are lowest do not trample on their minds, and again the persons that are the last in the Church do not live without good practice, while in matters external they find right things which they may do. For Holy Church is so compacted by a unity of the faithful, as our body is made one by the jointing of the limbs. Thus there are some members in the body which are subservient to beholding the light, others which are never parted from the contact of earth. Since the eye is set

intent on the light, and that it may not be made blind, it is kept safe from the dust. But the foot then rightly discharges its office, when it does not shrink from taking on it the dust of the earth. Which same members of the body, however, are, by imparting their functions to one another, reciprocally united in one, so that the foot should run for the eyes, and the eye look out for the feet.

44. Thus, then, thus ought the members of Holy Church to be at once distinct in office and united in charity, that the highest persons may look out the way of those, who go at liberty in the concerns of earth, so that the foot may as it were walk by the light of the eyes, and again that whatever they execute, being busied with the affairs of earth, this they may apply to the use of the greater sort, so that the foot, whose way is looked out, may step not for itself only but for the eyes as well. And so whilst they suit one another by turns, by reciprocal ministering, in a wonderful way it is brought about, that whereas all the Elect, by bestowing labour on one another, do what they are able, those works too become their own, which they cannot do themselves.

45. But herein we ought to bear in mind, that when those are wanting, who might fitly minister to the exterior occasions of their neighbours, those too who are full of spiritual gifts ought to lower themselves to their inferiority, and, as far as they may with propriety be able, lend themselves with the condescension of charity to the earthly necessities of those persons. Nor should it weary the mind, if its perception, being ever intent on the contemplation of the spiritual, is sometimes as it were bent down, diminished in managing the least concerns, when that Word, by Which all things created are held together, in order that He might benefit mankind, having taken to Him the nature of man, was willing to be ‘made a little less than the Angels.’ What wonder, then, if man for man’s sake draws himself in, when the Creator of men and Angels for man’s sake took upon Him the form of man? Not however that the perception is diminished when it is thus drawn in; because it penetrates the things above with more exact penetration, in proportion as with more abundant humility for the love of the Creator it does not even despise the things beneath. What is there that is unworthy of us or difficult, if we carry the mind above and below, when of the body we wash the face with the same hand, with which we shoe the foot? Therefore let blessed Job, because when he was doing great things he did not think the least things beneath him, let him say, *And the cause that I knew not I very carefully searched out.*

#### [HISTORICAL / MORAL INTERPRETATION]

46. Wherein I see it is to be noted, that for delivering sentence we should not ever be precipitate, that things not examined into we should not rashly judge, that any thing heard of a bad nature should not affect us, that what is reported every where about we should not credit without proving. Which same, without doubt, we shall be afraid of committing, if we consider the doings of our Creator with some degree of minuteness. For that very Creator, that He might withhold us from a precipitate delivery of sentence, whereas ‘all things are naked and open to His eyes,’ [Hev. 4, 13] yet refused to judge the evil deeds of Sodom when heard, in that He saith; *Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is very great, and because their cry is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know.* [Gen. 18, 20. 21.] Thus God, Who is Almighty and knowing all things, wherefore does He before the proving seem to doubt, but in order to set forth to us an example of gravity, that the evil of our fellow-creatures we should never venture to believe before we prove it? Observe how by His Angels He comes down for the ascertaining of the evil, and immediately smites the

culprits; and He That is patient, He Who is gentle, He, of Whom it is written; *But Thou, Lord, judgest with tranquillity*. [Wisd. 12, 18] He, of Whom it is written again; *The Lord is a patient Rewarder*, [Ecclus. 5, 4] finding them involved in such enormous guilt, as it were overlooked patience, and would not await the day of Final Judgment for vengeance, but with the fire of judgment prevented them before the Day of Judgment. See, the evil He in seeming believed with difficulty when He heard it, but visited without backwardness when acquainting Himself He found it true; surely that He might give us an example that worse crimes are both to be believed with difficulty, when they are heard, and to be punished more quickly when they are truly ascertained. For this heedfulness accordingly blessed Job entertaining anxious interest, saith, *The cause that I knew not, I very carefully searched out*. Which same words we may likewise apply not inappropriately in the voice of the Church to a typical way of interpretation. For that same Church by her elect members does when she judges the evil deeds of carnal men ‘search out that, which she knows not,’ in that the evil things which she knows not in doing them, she searches out in correcting them in judgment. And so Holy Church, when she shall be cramped for a time by the villainy of the unjust, remembers, saying, *The cause that I knew not, I very carefully searched out*. As though she said in plain speech; ‘The evil that in mine Elect I knew not in doing, in wicked Men I did, by judging, chasten with severity.’ And because She now bruises the devil by the power of her preaching, and carries off out of his mouth the soul of every one that she receives, he goes on in the words;

Ver. 17. *And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth*.

[xxvi.]

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. Oh what a spoil did “he take from the mouth of the devil, when by converting she carried off Saul himself the spoiler; when *still breathing threats* he was on his way to Damascus, *having received letters*, and whereas by persecuting the faithful he was gathering prey for the devil, he was, by being made acquainted with the faith, himself gathered to Christ. [Acts 9, 12] As many times did the Church ‘pluck the spoil out of the mouth of the wicked,’ as often as by preaching she snatched off a soul from the gripe of error. For who can be more truly called a wicked one than the devil? whose ‘jaws we break,’ as often as by arguing against his deceits, we bring to light his secret contrivances. And so we ‘pluck the spoil out of his teeth,’ because the soul, which he had already bitten by breaking it to sin, by converting we recover to the saving health of life. Since by ‘the jaws’ are exhibited his hidden plots, while by the teeth the now open commission of sin. Of which same jaws and teeth it is said by the Psalmist; *But God shall break their teeth in their mouth; the Lord shall break the jaw bones of the lions*. [Ps. 58, 6] But the holy man declares Himself to ‘break the jaws’ first that he might afterwards be able to ‘carry away the spoil from the teeth’ of that one; because we then truly snatch the prey from his teeth, when we first know how to break his jaws. For it is necessary first to bring to light the secret artifices of his contrivances, that afterwards we may be able to recover the soul of our hearer from open falling. The jaws of this wicked one the chief pastor of the Church himself did by preaching break in pieces, when he said, *Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in the faith*. [1 Pet. 5, 8. 9.] Against this ‘lion’ Holy Church, because she sees his plottings, guards the folds of the faith. Whose ‘jaws she breaks’ as often as she destroys the arguments of heretics, and as many times ‘seizes the spoil out of his teeth,’ as she by preaching converts a man from error. And because there shall then be many of the just, who



reckoned that they would depart out of this world in the time of the Church's peace, blessed Job, while he tells his own case, likewise points out the voices of the just coming after him, saying; Ver. 18. *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm.*

[xxvii.]

48. What else is set forth in this place by the title of a 'nest,' but the tranquil rest of the faith whereby every infirm soul is nourished? For that multitude of the good, which shall be overtaken by the times of persecution, thought to accomplish the days of its nourishings, as in a nest, so in a place of repose. For except that Holy Church now nourished up the weak children severally in the nest of peace, the Psalmist would not say, *Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the turtle a nest where she may lay her young.* [Ps. 84, 3] Since henceforth 'the sparrow hath found her an house,' because our Redeemer has entered into the Eternal dwelling-place of heaven. And 'the turtle hath found a nest,' because Holy Church, influenced by love of the Creator, makes use of frequent sighings, and as it were builds up a 'nest' for herself, i.e. the most peaceful rest of the Faith, wherein her growing children, like callow young, till they fly up to the regions above, she fosters, cherished warm in the bosom of charity. And so because there shall then be those, who thought in the time of peace to take their passage to the regions on high, i.e. to soar away from the nest, their voice is anticipated by the voice of blessed Job, when he says, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest.* But because this same quietness of peace they promised themselves in a length of many days, he rightly subjoins, saying, *And I shall multiply my days as a palm.* For the palm advances slowly, but holds on long in greenness. But with many difficulties Holy Church comes to the firm standing of the Faith, and for the gathering together of very many she desires to be set the longer in the glory of that Faith. And so as 'a palm' she thought 'to multiply her days,' who on the crisis of sudden temptation emerging upon her, grieves for the boon of peace at once slowly gotten by the faithful, and quickly intercepted by the unbelievers.

49. Nor is it unfairly that the life of the righteous is likened to a 'palm,' in this respect, that the palm below is rough to be touched, and in a manner enveloped in dry barks, but above it is fair with fruit even to be looked at; below it is compressed by the enfoldings of its barks, above it is spread out in amplitude of beautiful greenness. For so is the life of the Elect, despised below, beautified above. Down beneath the one is as it were enfolded in many barks, in that it is straitened by innumerable afflictions. But on high the other is as it were spread out with the foliage of beautiful greenness in the amplitude of the rewarding. The palm too has another thing as well, by which it differs from all kinds of trees. For every tree holds, in its timber, large sized towards the ground, but in growing it is narrowed above, and in proportion as it is by degrees higher, it is rendered so much the minuter on high; but the palm sets out of less circumference from the bottom, and arises with wider timber towards the boughs and fruit; and that which goes on slender from the bottom grows up more huge to the top. Accordingly to what but earthly minds are other trees found to be like, expanded below, narrowed above? because surely all the lovers of this world are strong in the things of earth, but feeble in the things of heaven. Thus for temporal glory they long to spend themselves even to death itself; and for the everlasting hope they do not though but a little hold on in exertion. For the sake of earthly gains they submit to any injuries, and for the sake of the heavenly reward they refuse to bear the insults even of the most trifling word. They are strong enough to stand before an earthly judge even a whole day through, but in praying in the presence of God they are tired even with the space of a single hour. Oftentimes they bear nakedness, abjectness

[*dejectionem*], hunger, for the sake of acquiring riches and honours, and they torment themselves with the stinting of those things, which they are in such haste to obtain; but from seeking with hearty endeavour the things that are above, they excuse themselves the more, in proportion as they imagine them to be more slowly paid back. So these as it were after the manner of the rest of the trees are wide spread below, narrow above, because they hold strong towards the parts below, but go off towards the parts above. But on the other hand by the character of palm trees the progressive life of the righteous is represented, who are never strong in earthly pursuits, and weak in heavenly ones, but exhibit themselves devoted to God with a farther and wider extension [*longius atique distantius*] than they remember to have been to the world. For whereas it is said to certain persons by our Preacher, *I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness*; [Rom. 6, 19] without doubt there is a condescending to their infirmity, as though it were said to them in plainer terms; 'If ye cannot any way do more, at all events be ye such in the fruit of good works as ye were for long in the practising of bad habits, so that the holy freedom of charity may not possess you weaker persons, whom the habit of earthly pleasure possessed strong ones in the flesh.

50. But there are some who, while they aim at heavenly things, and forsake the pernicious doings of this world, by the littlemindedness of inconstancy fall away day by day from their setting out. To what but to the rest of the trees should I call these like, who never rise such persons above as they spring up below? For these when they are brought to conversion do not hold on such as they began; and as it were after the way of trees, they are of large size in the beginning, but they grow slight, because little by little through the accessions of the divisions of time they suffer the diminutions of the attainments of virtue. For imperceptibly heavenly desires fade away in them, and they who had proposed to themselves things vigorous and strong, achieve only weak and feeble ones, and whilst they progress by increase of age, grow as it were easy to be bent. But the palm, as has been said, is of vaster extent in the summit than it began with being from the root; because oftentimes the conversion of the Elect accomplishes more in finishing than it purposes on setting out; and if it begins the first things somewhat lukewarmly, it completes the last with more ardour; that is to say, it reckons itself to be always beginning, and therefore it lasts unwearied in newness. It was this constancy of the righteous that the Prophet regarding said, *But they that trust in the Lord shall change their strength; they shall take to them wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint*. [Is. 40, 31] For they 'change their strength,' because they are earnest to be strong in spiritual practice, who were for long strong in the flesh. And they 'take to them the wings as of an eagle,' because by exercising contemplation they fly; 'they walk, and do not faint,' because they hold in the rapidity of their understanding, that they may condescend to the slower sort. But under all circumstances in proportion as the good things they receive they gladly adapt to others, so much the more do they hold on themselves unchangeable in newness; and they that proceed small from the root of the beginning are consolidated as strong in the finishing of the topmost point. So then let blessed Job say in his own person, let him say in the voice of Holy Church in behalf of those whom in the time of peace she had owned, converted to herself, and imagined would persevere in good ways, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm*. For 'as a palm' she thought to 'multiply her days,' in that she supposed that the minds of the faithful would rise up stronger even to the very last. For when the hearts of multitudes worn out with persecutions begin to turn soft, she henceforth grieves that those in her as it were

tend to weakness, whom she used to admire for their having purposed strong things. And because in mind she is always intent upon spiritual knowledge, it is rightly subjoined,  
Ver. 19. *My root is opened beside the waters.*

[xxviii.]

51. For ‘by the waters the root is opened,’ when, for receiving the streams of truth, secretly the thought of the mind is spread out. For as we have already said in a former book, in Holy Writ by the term of ‘the root’ the hidden thought is used to be denoted. Therefore “our root we open by the waters,” when to the Interior watering we stretch the thought of the secret heart. Which same words if we carry on to the voice of Holy Church, her ‘root’ must be taken for the very Incarnation our Redeemer itself. Which ‘root is opened by the waters,’ in that God Invisible by the assumption of His Manhood was laid open to the regards of our sight. Since the Creator, Who was not able to be seen in the Godhead, took to Him from us that whereby He might by us be seen. So ‘the root is opened by the waters,’ because the Author of the human race by means of His human nature is manifested to human beings. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *And he shall be like a tree that is planted beside the runnings of waters.* [Ps. 1, 3] For ‘the runnings of waters’ are the daily passings by of peoples dying off. And Truth saith concerning Itself, *If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* [Luke 23, 31] And so there ‘is a tree beside the runnings of waters,’ because, whilst putting forth fruit and the covering of His shade for us, the Creator appeared in the flesh, that by a rising again He might stay the human race, which by a falling off was day by day going on into death. It goes on;  
*And the dew shall stay on my harvest.*

[xxix.]

52. Understand, *I said*. For the harvest of Holy Church is not inappropriately taken to be, when perfect souls withdrawn from their bodies, like ripe crops cut away from the ground, are transported into the heavenly granaries; which same because it takes place not by our own power, but by heavenly grace vouchsafing it, he saith well, *And the dew shall stay on my harvest*. For the dew falls from above, but the harvest is gathered in from below. And so ‘the dew stays on the harvest,’ because grace coming from above causes it, that we should be meet persons to be gathered in from the world below. For by that same grace watering us from above, we bear the fruit of good practice. Whence also it is rightly said by Paul, *But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain.* [1 Cor. 15, 10] For if it be enquired what is the dew coming from above, he tells us, *By the grace of God I am what I am*. If we look at the crop growing up beneath the dew, he says, *And His grace was not in vain in me, but I laboured more abundantly than they all*. It proceeds;  
Ver. 20. *My glory shall always be fresh, in me, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.*

[xxx.]

53. Understand, *I said*; since all is joined on to the sentence above, that is introduced next in a continuous thread of discourse, when he says, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the palm*; and afterwards it is subjoined, *My root is opened by the waters, and the dew shall stay on my harvest; my glory shall ever be fresh in me, and my bow shall be renewed*

*in mine hand.* To all that know what is true it is clear, that to the old life qualities of evil are proper, to the new qualities of virtue. Thus it is hence that Paul saith, *Putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man.* [Col. 3, 9] Hence he says again, *Our old man was crucified with him.* [Rom 6, 6] Hence the Psalmist speaking in a type of man, as being caught in the midst of evil spirits, saith, *I have waxed old amongst all mine enemies.* [Ps. 6, 7] For unto fervour of mind, whether amidst spiritual enemies, or in the midst of our several carnal neighbours, in some degree by the mere habituation of living 'we wax old,' and the form of newness taken upon us we soil. Against which same oldness, however, if our earnest pains after heedfulness be daily on the watch, by praying, by reading, and living well we are renewed afresh; because our life, while it is washed with tears, exercised in good works, drawn out by holy meditations, is without ceasing restored to its newness. Blessed Job then so tells his own case that he represents ours, because Holy Church, when she sees her faithful ones return to the transgressions of the old life, is forced to lament for those whom she sees lose the newness of the interior. Since the great Preacher says to his disciples, *For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord?* [1 Thess. 2, 19] And so Holy Church bewails her glory departed, when she sees her faithful ones return to the old life. Thus she says, *I said, My glory shall always be made fresh;* because those whom she believed were enlisted within her to the new life, she sees to be lending themselves to old desires.

54. Now by the name of a 'bow' in Holy Scripture, sometimes the plots of evil men, sometimes the Day of Judgment, while sometimes the actual sacred Oracles themselves are denoted. Since by a bow plots are denoted, as where it is said by the Psalmist, *And have bent their bow, a bitter thing.* [Ps. 64, 3] Moreover by 'a bow' the Day of the Last Judgment is denoted, as where it is said again by the same Psalmist, *Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things, Thou hast made us to drink the wine of remorse, Thou hast given a token to them that fear Thee, that they may fly from before the bow.* [Ps. 60, 3. 4.] For in a bow in proportion as the string is drawn out far, the arrow flies off the keener from it. Thus, yes, thus the Day of Judgment, in proportion as it is delayed for long that it should come, when it does come, the keener the sentence goes forth therefrom. But for this reason we are now stricken with sundry losses, in order that being amended thereby, we may then be found more prepared. Whence it is there premised, *Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things,* i.e. the scourges of the present state, which are forerunners of the Day of Judgment, to follow far worse. Thou hast made us to drink the wine of remorse, so that earthly joys should be converted into tears. Thou hast given a token to them that fear Thee, that they may fly from before the bow. As though he said in plain terms; 'This is the season of mercy, that shall be the time of Judgment.' Thus by these scourges of this present time Thou dost betoken how Thou wilt then strike when Thou judgest not sparing, Who dost now strike so sharply when Thou sparest.

55. But sometimes by a 'bow' Holy Scripture is denoted as well. For that is the 'bow' of the Church, that is the 'bow' of the Lord, wherefrom like arrows striking, so do terrifying sentences come to the hearts of men. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *He hath bent His bow, and made it ready; He hath also prepared in it the vessels of death, He hath made His arrows for the burning ones.* [Ps, 7, 12. 13.] For the Lord hath 'bent His bow,' because to all sinners He hath set forth threats in sacred Revelation. In which same bow He 'prepares the vessels of death,' because according to the sentence of His Revelation, those that neglect to be reformed now, He condemns as reprobate. In which bow also He 'made His arrows for the burning ones,' because against those persons, whom He amends by terror, He sends forth the kindled sentences of words.

Concerning this bow of the preachers it is declared by Isaiah; *With arrows and with bows they enter in thither*; [Is. 7, 24] in this way, because the holy Apostles came for the smiting the hardness of the Gentiles' life with the keen dartings of words. What then in this place is to be understood by the name of the bow but sacred Revelation? For by the string the New Testament, while by the bow the Old Testament, is understood. Now in a bow, when the string is drawn, the horn is bended: so in this same sacred Revelation, when the New Testament is read, the hardness of the Old is rendered pliant. For to the spiritual and mild precepts of this, the rigidness of the letter of the other bends itself; because whilst the New Testament as it were by a kind of arm of good practice is drawn, in the Old Testament the claims of severity are relaxed. Nor do we improperly say that the string accords with the New Testament, which it is certain came out by the Incarnation of the Lord. And so as it were the string is drawn and the horns bent; because when in the New Testament the Incarnation of our Mediator is seen, the rigidness of the Old Testament is made to bend to a spiritual signification. Therefore the holy man says, *I said, My glory shall always be fresh, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.*

56. 'A bow in the hand' is Holy Writ in the practising. For he holds 'a bow in his hand,' who performs by the practising the divine revelations which he learns by apprehension. Thus the 'bow is renewed in the hand,' in that whatever is learnt belonging to Holy Revelation by studying is fulfilled by living accordingly. Hence also Solomon when he was describing the strong warriors of the spiritual fight, says, *All holding swords, being well instructed for wars.* [Cant. 3, 8] For what is represented in Divine Writ by 'a sword,' Paul laid open by saying, *And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.* [Eph. 6, 17] Now Solomon saith not 'all having' but 'all holding swords;' surely because not only to know the word of God is admirable, but likewise to do it. For he has but does not 'hold' a sword, who knows indeed Divine Revelation, but neglects to live according to it, and he cannot now any longer be 'well instructed to wars,' who never exercises the spiritual sword that he has. For he is altogether not equal to resist temptations, who by living badly puts it behind him to hold this sword of the word of God. So then let Holy Church, which is weighed down by subsequent persecution, taking thought of the multitude of bad and the scarcity of good ones, by the accents of blessed Job foreannounce her own woes, saying, *Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm. My root is opened wide by the waters, and the dew shall stay on my harvest. My glory shall ever be fresh, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.* Which same, whilst taking a view of all things, was never imposed on by a false hope. For they that be perfect now see many her supporters, but doubtless they reflect that on the crisis of temptation coming forth, the greater number of these become her enemies, who in the time of peace seem to be her citizens. But they do not despair of all in like manner, yet nevertheless it very frequently falls out that those persons, touching whom they had entertained more confident assurance as to the Faith, themselves become fiercer enemies of the Faith, so that they then see those acting against the sacred Oracles, by whose working they had thought to restore those same sacred Oracles to the benefit of preaching. Which same times, however, we lament have now already commenced, when we see numbers, set within the pale of the Church, who either refuse to practise what they understand, or this very sacred Revelation likewise disdain to see into and to know. For turning away the hearing from the truth, they are turned to fables, whilst all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's. The written words of God every where found are presented to their eyes, but men disdain to acquaint themselves with these, scarce one seeks to know what he has believed. So then let the multitude of good men going before grieve to have

their 'bow destroyed,' which same always thought to have sacred Revelation restored by the efforts of those coming after.

## BOOK XX.

The five concluding verses of chapter twenty-nine of the Book of Job are more largely explained, together with the whole of chapter thirty, chiefly on the subject of heretics and carnal persons distressing the Church.

[i]

1. ALTHOUGH all knowledge and all lore Sacred Scripture without all comparison far excels, to say nothing that it tells forth what is true; that it bids to the heavenly country; that it changes the heart of him that reads it from earthly desires to the embracing of things Above; that by its obscurer statements it exercises the strong, and by its humble strain speaks gently to the little ones; that it is neither so shut up, that it should come to be dreaded, nor so open to view as to become contemptible; that by use it removes weariness, and is the more delighted in the more it is meditated on; that the mind of him, who reads it, by words of a low pitch it assists, and by meanings of a lofty flight uplifts; that in some sort it grows with the persons reading, that by uninstructed readers it is in a manner reviewed, and yet by the well instructed is always found new; so then to say nothing of the weightiness of the subjects, it goes beyond all forms of knowledge and teaching even by the mere manner of its style of speaking, because in one and the same thread of discourse, while it relates the text, it declares a mystery, and has the art so to tell the past, that merely by that alone it knows how to announce the future, and the order of telling remaining unaltered, is instructed by the very self-same forms of speech at once to describe things done before, and to tell things destined to be done, just as it is with these same words of blessed Job, who while he tells his own circumstances foretels ours, and while he points out his own sorrows in respect of the phrase, sounds of the cases and occasions of Holy Church in respect of the meaning. For he says;

Ver. 21-23. *They that heard me awaited my sentence, and listening kept silence at any counsel. They dared not to add any thing to my words, and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as the rain, and opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.*

[ii]

2. For this awe of those under him we unquestionably believe to have been towards blessed Job. But as we have already often said, Holy Church being driven to extremities by the inflictions of heretics or carnal persons, remembers the times past, in which all that is spoken by her is listened to with fear by the faithful, and lamenting the frowardness of her adversaries, she says, *They that heard me awaited my sentence, and listening kept silence at my counsel.* As though she expressed herself in plain speech, 'Not like these forward and swoln ones, who whilst they refuse to admit the words of truth, do as it were in teaching forestall the sentences of my preaching.' Whose disciples now 'intent upon her counsel keep silence,' because her words they dare not to impugn, but take on faith. For that they may be able to profit by these same words, they hear them, doubtless, not with a view to judge them, but to follow them.

3. Of whom it is rightly added, *To my words they dared not to add any thing*; surely because heretics, at that time when against her they are in liberty the most mischievous, free of all check, do 'dare to add something to her words,' in that they busy themselves as if to correct the rightness of her preachings. Which same still further adds touching the good hearers, *And my speech dropped upon them*.

4. By this dropping of speech, what else is understood but the measure of holy preaching? because it is requisite that the boon of exhortation be bestowed to each according to the capacity of his parts. And in respect of this that is said, *To my words they dared not to add any thing*; the reverential feeling of the persons hearing is extolled; but in respect of this, that is added, *And my speech dropped upon them*; the masters' distributing is pointed out. For one who teaches ought to look exactly, that he be not forward to preach more than is comprehended by the one who hears him. For it is his duty by contracting himself to let himself down to the infirmity of his hearers, lest whilst he speaks to little persons lofty things, which for that reason will not profit them, he be more minded to make a display of himself than to benefit his hearers. Now at the Lord's bidding, there are not only flagons but likewise, cups prepared for the table of the Tabernacle. [Ex. 25, 29. 37, 16.] For what is denoted by 'flagons' but ample preaching, and what by cups but the smallest and slightest speaking about God? Therefore on the table of the Lord there are both flagons and cups made ready, in this way because in the teaching of sacred Revelation there are not only to be set forth things great and mysterious that intoxicate, but also little and minute ones, which afford knowledge as it were in a tasting. So then let Holy Church being borne down in the last times remember this most discriminating disposal of hers, and let her say, *And my speech dropped upon them*.

5. Where too it is fitly added, *They waited for me as the rain, and opened their mouth as for the latter rain*. For the words of holy preaching we undergo as rain, when by true humility we learn the dryness of our hearts, that we may be watered by the draught of holy preaching. Whence also it is rightly said to God by the Psalmist, *My soul is like earth without water to Thee*. [Ps. 143, 6] The Prophet charges us to be bathed with these streams of teaching, saying, *Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters*. [Is. 55, 1] Who whilst in the final portion of the world we now receive the words of holy preaching, as it were 'open the mouth of the heart to the latter rain.' For if there were not in the heart 'a mouth,' the Psalmist would not say, *Crafty lips in heart, and with the heart they have spoken evil things*. [Ps. 12, 2] The mouth of the heart, then, because we apply ourselves to the word of the preaching at the end, this, I say, we as it were open to the latter streams. Which same preaching came forth to us by the sacrifice of Him, Who says by the Psalmist, *And the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice*. [Ps. 141, 2] For because our Redeemer at the end of the world underwent the violence of those that persecuted Him, Himself He 'gave an evening sacrifice for us.' Of this 'latter rain' it is elsewhere written, *I will give you rain, both the early, and the latter rain*. [Jer. 5, 24] For He 'gave the early rain,' because in the former period He bestowed on His Elect the knowledge of the Law. [Deut. 11, 14] He 'gave the latter rain,' because He caused the mystery of His Incarnation to be preached in the last days. Which same mystery because Holy Church ceases not to tell forth day by day, she waters the mouths of her hearers' hearts as it were by 'the latter rain.' It goes on;

Ver. 24. *If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance fell not on the ground*.

6. If we understand this according to the words of the history, it must be imagined that the holy man had shewn himself such to those under him, that even in laughing he was able to be feared. But whereas he relates above that he had been ‘a father to the poor, and the comforter of the widows’; the case needs very great penetration to discriminate how and in what way in such terribleness of government there was likewise so much gentleness and mildness of pity there present. For without extraordinary gentleness of loving-kindness there was not this, viz. that he describes himself ‘the father of the poor, and comforter of the widows’; whilst again without great severity he could not even when ‘laughing’ be feared: on which point what else are we taught, but that such ought to be the management of governance, that he who is in command should rule himself towards those under him by this measure, that both while laughing he may be feared, and when angered be loved, that neither excessive mirth should render him contemptible, nor unlimited severity make him hated? For oftentimes we break in pieces those under our charge when we maintain the energy of justice beyond what is just, which energy will surely now no longer be that of justice, if it do not keep itself under just control. And often those under us we unloose from the fear of discipline, if to our rule we let go the reins of mirth, because whilst they behold us joyful as it were at our liberty, they are themselves boldly let loose to what they are not at liberty. But that the countenance of the ruler may even when joyful be feared, it is necessary that he should himself unceasingly fear the countenance of his own Maker. For credit then is with difficulty given to that mind as to gladness, which it is known by those under its charge chastens itself continually for the love of God. For he who with an unintermitted fever of spiritual desire seeks after things above, has this come into very great doubt concerning him, that he is sometimes glad of heart before men. And hence that same blessed Job was not long afterwards to say, *For I always feared God as waves swelling over me*. For he so feared his Judge as immediately impending assaults of waves, now, now on the point to die. He then into whose mind the sadness of the fear of God had poured itself, rightly did those under him not believe his joyfulness; because they were forced not to believe him when he laughed, whose heart they knew what unremitting sadness possessed under the fear of his Creator.

7. That also may not unsuitably be understood after the history, which is next brought in directly; *And the light of my countenance fell not on the ground*. Since it is written; *But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*. [Prov. 17, 24] And again it is said by the same Solomon, *The wise man’s eyes are in his head*. [Ecc. 2, 14] Paul also said; *The head of every man, is Christ*. [1 Cor. 11, 3] So ‘the wise man’s eyes are in his head,’ in that he is ever contemplating the works of his Redeemer that he should imitate them. So ‘the light of his countenance fell not on the ground,’ because those things that are of the earth he beheld not in concupiscence.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

8. But whereas we have made out the outside of the history in brief, what lies concealed in the points belonging to mystical meaning let us consider well. That Christ and the Church are one Person, we have very frequently said already, and it oftentimes happens that the voice of the Head passes to the voice of the Body, and often that the voice of the Body passes over to the voice of the Head. For they that consist in one flesh, nothing hinders but that they also accord in one voice. So then let her say in the voice of the Head touching His Elect members, let the Church say, *If I laughed on them they believed it not*; since for God to ‘laugh’ is for the ways of the Saints to be



made to prosper by His favour following them. As it is also expressed by common usage of those, whom in this world the caresses of good fortune accompany; 'The time smiled upon them.' Whence reversely it is called the wrath of God to be disabled from good practice. As it is written; *Lest the Lord be angry, and ye perish from the right way.* [Ps. 2, 12] If then the Lord is said to be 'angry' when men lose the way of righteousness, the Lord is rightly described as 'smiling' when our good works the favour of grace from Above accompanies on the way. But all the Elect so long as they are in this life never hold out to themselves the assurance of security. For being at all times alive to suspicion against temptations, they dread the plottings of the hidden enemy, who even on temptation ceasing, are greatly disturbed even by the mere suspecting only. For oftentimes to many heedless security has proved great hazard, so that the plots of the crafty enemy they should be made acquainted with, not when tried, but when already laid low. For we have always to be on the watch, that the mind unceasing in its solicitude never be slackened in its heavenly bent, that abandoning what is painful, laid low in loose thoughts as in a kind of soft litters, the mind be not all undone and prostitute itself to that corrupter the devil on his coming. But the soul must always be gathered up for the encounter of the adversary, always there must be caution provided against secret snares. For hence the Prophet Habakkuk saith; *I will stand upon my watch.* [Hab. 2, 1] Hence again it is written; *Set thee up a watch tower, make thee bitteresses, [thou that preachest glad tidings to Sion. (not in text)]* [Jer. 31, 21] Hence it is said by Solomon, *Happy is the man that always feareth; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.* [Prov. 28, 14] Hence he saith again; *Every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night.* [Cant. 3, 8] The 'fears in the night' are the hidden snares of temptation. But 'the sword upon the thigh' is watch on guard, keeping down the enticements of the flesh. So then that 'the fear by night,' i.e. secret and sudden temptation, may not creep upon us, it is always necessary that the 'sword' of watching placed thereon should press our thigh. For holy men are so assured touching hope, that nevertheless they are ever mistrustful touching temptation, as being those to whom it is said; *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling:* [Ps. 2, 11] so that by hope rejoicing should be produced, and by mistrust 'trembling.' In whose voice the Psalmist saith again, *Let my heart rejoice that it may fear Thy Name.* [Ps. 86, 11] Wherein it is to be noted, that he does not say, 'Let it rejoice that it may be assured'; but, 'let it rejoice that it may fear.' For they remember that though their course of conduct be made to succeed, they are still in this life, touching which it is said by that same Job; *The life of man upon earth is trial.* [Job 7, 1] They remember again that it is written; *For the corruptible body presseth, down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth, down the mind, that museth upon many things.* [Wisd. 9, 15] They remember and they stand in fear, and they do not dare to promise to themselves in themselves assuredness, but being set between the joy of hope and the fear of temptation, they trust and they fear, they are heartened and they falter, they are assured and they are distrustful. Therefore it is well said by the voice of the elect member under a figure of our Head, *If I laughed on them, they believed it not.* Because our Redeemer as it were smiling on us we do not believe when His many gifts now bearing their testimony, we at once receive the boon of His favour, and yet still go faltering under His judgment for our own frailty.

9. Let us see how to Paul there is henceforth both a 'smiling' through grace from Above, and he himself still 'believes not' as it were through the fear of misgiving. Already the Lord as it were speaking to him from Heaven, and whilst opening his eyes inwardly, closing them outwardly, had displayed the power of His Majesty: already He had said to Ananias concerning Him; *For he is a chosen vessel unto Me.* [Acts 9, 15] Already he had been transported to the third heaven above himself. [1 Cor. 12, 2] Already carried into Paradise he had heard mystic words, which he might,

not tell, and yet being still fearful he says, *But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I should be a castaway.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] See how to Divine grace smiling on him he already trusts in respect of hope, and yet trusts not in respect of self-assurance. For that these words agree perfectly with the words of our Redeemer, those subjoined do also declare, when it is said, *And the light of my countenance did not fall upon the earth.* For what is styled 'the earth' but the sinner, to whom it was said by the first sentence; *Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return?* [Gen. 3, 19] So 'the light of the Lord's countenance does not fall to the earth,' because the brightness of His Vision does not appear to sinners. Thus it is written; *Let the ungodly man be removed away that he see not the glory of God.* [Is. 26, 10] For light would as it were fall upon the earth, if when He comes in the Last Judgment, He manifested the brightness of His Majesty to sinners.

10. But if we receive these words in the voice of Holy Church, we may not unsuitably understand that 'the light of her countenance does not fall upon the earth,' because to them that are busied in earthly courses she forbids to preach the highest mysteries of her contemplation. For what is strong she forbids to be spoken to the weak, lest whilst they hear things incapable of being comprehended, they be borne to the ground by the words of preaching by which they should have been lifted up. For the mere corporeal light, which illumines sound eyes, darkens weak ones, and whilst by weak seeing eyes the gaze is set on the brightness of the sun, there is very frequently darkness produced to them from light. Thus let Holy Church being borne down in the time of her persecution, but bearing in mind her foregoing discrimination, say, *The light of my countenance did not fall upon the earth.* But because these words we began to take as from her Head, let us in the Same still follow out what comes after. For it is added:

Ver. 25. *If I was minded to go to them, I sat chief.*

[iv]

11. Because in the heart of lost sinners, the actions of the flesh are in the first place, and of the soul in the second, surely in their thoughts Christ 'sits' not 'first' but 'last.' But each of the Elect, because above all others they mind the things that are eternal, and if there be any things of a temporal kind, they manage them with an after and the least concern; to whom it is also said by the preceptress voice of Truth, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;* [Matt. 6, 33] in their heart the Lord 'sits first.' In which place it is fitly prefaced, *If I had been minded to go to them.* For because, as has been said, He doeth all things according to the counsel of His Will, not in answer to our desert, but because He is Himself so minded, the Lord enlightens us with His visitation. And so He both comes 'when He is minded,' and when He comes He 'sitteth first,' because both His Coming in our heart is gratuitous, and the longing of the desire of Him in the thought of our heart is not the same as the rest of our desires. It goes on;

*And when I sat as a king with an army standing round, nevertheless I was the Comforter of those that mourned.*

[v]

12. The Lord 'sits as a king in the heart,' because He rules the clamouring motions of the heart in our thinking. For in the soul which He inhabits, whilst He stirs up the dull, bridles the restless,

inflames the cold, tempers the inflamed, softens down the hard, and binds up the loose, by this mere diversity of thoughts, a kind of 'army,' as it were, 'stands around Him.' Or surely He 'sitteth as King with an army standing around Him,' because that King, whilst He presides over the minds of the Elect, a host of virtues surround. And He too is 'the comforter of those that mourn,' by that promise, by which He says, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.* [Matt. 5, 4] And again; *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you.* [John 16, 22] But the things which we have delivered concerning the Head of Holy Church, there is nothing hinders us if we should apply to the voice of the same Church as well. For in her the order of the teachers presides like a king, whom the crowd of her believing ones surrounds. Which same multitude of believers is also rightly called 'an army', [Exercitus] because it is unceasingly making ready day by day against the wars of temptations in the array of good works. The hearts of them that mourn Holy Church also comforts, whilst she considers the souls of the Elect borne down by the wofulness of the present pilgrimage, and gladdens them with the promise of the Eternal Country. Moreover she sees that the hearts of the faithful are stricken with divine dread, and those whom she sees have heard concerning God strict things that they should stand in fear, she likewise brings it to pass that they should also hear the gentleness of His pity, that they may have boldness.

13. For thus does Holy Church mix hope and fear to her believers, touching the pity and justice of the Redeemer, in the continued course of her ministry; so that they may not either heedlessly rely on Mercy, nor hopelessly dread justice. For with the words of her Head she cheers up those that are alarmed, saying, *Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.* [Luke 12, 32] And again, those that are presuming she affrights, when she says, *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* [Mark 14, 38] Again, those that are in dread she cheers, saying, *Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* [Luke 10, 20] But those presuming in themselves she affrights, when she says, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.* Those in dread she cheers when she says, *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand.* [John 10, 27. 28.] But those presuming in themselves she affrights, saying, *And shall skew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very Elect.* [Matt. 24, 24] Those in dread she cheers, when she says, *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.* [vs. 13] The presuming she affrights, when she says, *Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?* [Luke 18, 8] The fearing she cheers, when He says to the robber, *To-day shall thou be with Me in paradise.* But she frightens the presuming, when Judas falls from the glory of the Apostleship into the pit of hell. Concerning whom it is said, in the laying down of a declaration, *I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil.* [John 6, 70] One in dread she cheers, when she says, *If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that woman be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord.* [Jer. 3, 1] But one presuming she affrights, when she says; *Why criest thou upon thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable.* [Jer. 30, 15] One dreading she cheers, saying, *From this time at least call me, My father, thou art the guide of my virginity.* [Jer. 3, 4] But the presuming one she frightens, saying, *Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite.* [Ez. 16, 3] One in dread she cheers, when she says, *Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall from you; for I am holy, saith the Lord; and I will not keep anger for ever.* [Jer. 3, 12] But one presuming she affrights, when she debars her prophet from interceding, in the words, *Lift not up cry*

*nor prayer for them; for I will not hear in the time of their crying to me, in the time of their affliction: for though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my soul is not toward this people.* [Jer. 14, 11] Thus her hearer's mind Holy Church both lifts up touching the lovingkindness of mercy, and disquiets touching the strictness of judgment, that in her preaching, whilst she rightly blends both, her Elect may neither presume on the score of righteousness set forth, nor despair on the ground of bygone iniquity.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

14. Yet this which he says, *And when I sat as a King with an army around, nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned*, it is necessary for us to know that even taken according to the history it may very greatly edify the reader, if he considers well how with good rulers both authoritativeness of ruling and loving-kindness of consoling are mixed together. For he says; *And when I sat as a King with an army around*; see the authoritativeness of governance; *nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned*; mark the service of pitifulness. For discipline or mercy is much bared, if the one be maintained without the other. But towards their subjects there ought to be in the hearts of rulers both mercy giving comfort in justice, and justice dealing wrath with pitifulness. It is hence that to the wounds of that half-dead man, who was carried by the Samaritan into the inn, there is both wine applied and oil, that by the wine the wounds should be bitten, and by the oil they should be soothed; that so every one who has the charge over the healing of wounds may by wine apply the biting of strictness, and by oil the softness of pitying; that by the wine what is putrid may be made clean, and by the oil what is to be healed may be soothed. Thus then gentleness is to be mixed with severity, and a certain qualifying process by both to be performed, that those under charge may not either be made sore by much sharpness, nor be relaxed by overmuch kindness. This surely that ark of the tabernacle betokens, in which along with the tables there are the rod and manna together; because when there is the knowledge of sacred Scripture in the breast of a good ruler, if there is the rod of severity, let there also be the manna of sweetness. Hence also David says, *Thy rod and Thy staff comforted me.* [Ps. 23, 4] For we are stricken by the rod, and we are sustained by the staff. If then there be the strictness of the rod that it may smite, let there also be the comfort of the staff that it may sustain. So then let there be love, but not that softens, let there be vigour, but not that grates, let there be zeal, but not that storms to excess, let there be pitifulness that does not spare more than may be expedient. It is good to regard in the breast of Moses mercy united with severity. Let us see him loving pitifully and venting himself severely. Surely when the people of Israel before the eyes of God contracted an almost unpardonable offence, so that its Ruler heard, *Get thee down; thy people have sinned*; [Ex. 32, 7] as though the Voice of God said to him, 'That people which has fallen in so great a sin, is henceforth no longer Mine,' and subjoined, *Now therefore let Me alone, that My fury may wax hot against them, and that I may destroy them, and I will make of thee a great nation*; once and again in behalf of the people that he was set over presenting himself as a bar to the assault of God in His indignation, he saith, *Either forgive them this sin; or if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written.* Let us reflect then with what bowels he loved that people, for whose life he begged to have himself 'blotted out of the book' of life. But yet this one who is tied and bound with such great love of his people, let us consider with what warmth of righteousness he is inflamed against its sins. For directly that by the first request he obtained pardon of the offence, that they should not be blotted out, coming to that people he says, *Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every*

*man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And there fell of the people that day about twenty three thousand men.* [Ex. 32, 27. 28.] See, he who begged for the life of all even with his own death, killed the life of a few with the sword. Within he burned with the fire of love, without he was inflamed by the warmth of severity. So great was his pitifulness, that he did not hesitate to offer himself to death in the sight of the Lord in their behalf, such was his severity, that those whom he had feared to have stricken by divine power, he did himself strike with the sword of judgment; he so loved those whom he was set over, that in their behalf he did not even spare himself, and yet the persons offending, whom he loved, lie so persecuted, that even when the Lord spared them, he laid them low. Both ways a forcible ambassador, both ways an incomparable mediator; the cause of the people he pleaded before God by prayers, the cause of God he pleaded before the people with swords. Within loving he withstood the wrath of God by entreating, without venting himself he consumed sin by smiting. He succours all quickly by the death of a few being manifested. Therefore Almighty God listened the sooner to His faithful servant dealing in behalf of the people, because He saw what he was of himself about to do upon the people in behalf of God. In the governance therefore of the people Moses blended both, that neither should discipline be lacking to mercy, nor mercy to discipline. Hence here also it is said answerably to either excellency; *And when I sat as a King with an army around, nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned.* For to ‘sit with an army around’ is the vigour and discipline of governance, but ‘to comfort the hearts of them that mourn’ is the ministration of pitifulness.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But because in the midst of all this it is necessary that the line of interpretation should fall back to the spiritual meaning, Holy Church when borne down by her adversaries in the last times, calls to mind the laws of her past governance, calls to mind too what great benefits of pitifulness she displayed to them that were afflicted. Whose discipline and mercy are then derided by the light of mind. And hence it is added;

Chap. xxx. 1. *But now they that are younger than I have me in derision.*

[vi]

15. All heretics when compared to the age of the Church Universal are fitly called ‘younger’ in time, because *they* went forth out of her, not *she* out of them. Whence it is rightly also said by John; *They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us.* [1 John 2, 19] For ‘they that are younger in time deride Holy Church,’ when they that went out from her, set at nought the words of her instruction; concerning whom it is further added;

*Whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock.*

Who is the ‘flock’ of Holy Church saving the multitude of the faithful? Or who else are called ‘the dogs’ of this flock, but the holy Teachers, who became the guardians of those believers? Which same whilst in behalf of their Lord they cried aloud, given up to daily and nightly watchings, uttered, so to say, loud barks of preaching. Concerning whom it is said to that Church by the Psalmist, *The tongue of Thy dogs from the enemies by the same.* [Ps. 68, 23] Since there are some that being recalled from the worshipping of idols are made the preachers of God. So ‘the tongue of the dogs’ of the Church goeth forth from enemies, because the Gentiles that are converted the Lord

makes even preachers. Whence the slowness of the Jews, who refused to speak in God's behalf by the Prophet upbraiding them is made matter of blame, where he says, *they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark*. [Is. 56, 10]

16. Now we speak of the fathers of Heretics meaning those whom we style 'Heresiarchs,' by whose evil preaching, i.e. by the seed of speaking, the peoples following them were begotten in error. So then Holy Church 'disdains to set the fathers' of heretics 'with the dogs of her flock,' because the founders of erring tenets on trying she rejects, and contemns to number them among the true Fathers. Which persons though they seemed to have recalled some from the erroneousness of heathenism, to have trained the practices of some to the doing what is right, yet for this that they did not think right things of God, she does not 'set them with the dogs of the flock,' because she does not rank them with right preachers. For it is plain that Arius; Photinus, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus, Severus, and numbers like to these, endeavoured by teaching and persuading to appear fathers. But their errors the Holy Church Universal trying with strict severity, does not 'number those persons among the keepers of' her flock,' whom she condemns as breaking up the unity of that flock. Of which same it is said to the Ephesians by the voice of Paul, *For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock*. [Acts 20, 29] And because it sometimes happens that heretics in proportion as they fall away more into the erroneousness of misbelief, guard themselves the more fully in outward practising, so that they may appear to do great things above the rest of the world, the Holy Church Universal sets at nought all their works, which she observes do not come forth by the authority of faith. Whence also it is rightly added by the voice of blessed Job,

Ver. 2. *The power of whose hands was nothing to me, and of life itself they were accounted unworthy*.

[vii]

17. 'Power in the hand' is greatness in practising. But 'the power of the hands' of Heretics is reckoned 'as nothing to' Holy Church, because she sees that, the true faith being lost, whatsoever they do it is of no merit. For the charity of God and our neighbour they forsake, who both imagine what is false concerning God, and by wrangling are separated from their neighbours. But 'the strength of the hands' without charity the great preacher bears witness is of no avail, in that he says, *And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*. [1 Cor. 13, 3] But sometimes Heretics perform signs and miracles as well, but in order that they may here receive back the rewards of their chastening and abstinence, i.e. the praises, which they go after. And hence it is said by the voice of the Redeemer, *Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, ye that work iniquity*. [Matt. 7, 22] By which same sentence what is there given to be understood, but that in man it is the humbleness of charity and not the signs of miraculous virtues that ought to be revered? Whence Holy Church now, even if there be any miracles of heretics performed, sets it at nought, because she sees that these are no proof of holiness. Since the way to prove holiness is not to perform miracles, but to love every man as one's self; and concerning God to think what is true, and of his fellow-creature to think better things than of himself. For that true power lies in love, and not in the manifesting of a miracle, 'Truth' shews, Who says, *By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to*

*another*. [John 13, 35] For He Who says not, 'in this shall it be known that ye are My disciples, if ye shall perform miraculous signs,' but Who saith, 'if ye have love one to another,' plainly proves that it is not miracles but charity alone that proves the true servants of God. So the witness to the heavenly discipleship is the gift of brotherly charity. Which same love, because all heretics refuse to have, whilst they are divided from the Unity of the Church Universal, it is justly said concerning them; *the strength of whose hands was nothing to me*. And because to these same signs, that they set forth, they do not accord themselves by any humility, it is rightly added, *And of life itself they were accounted unworthy*. Or indeed, all heretics Holy Church declares unworthy of life itself, for this reason, because under the Name of Christ, they fight against the Name of Christ. Of whom it is yet further added;

*Barren by want and hunger.*

[viii]

18. All heretics, whilst in sacred Revelation they make it their aim to dive into secrets of God beyond what they are capable of, by their hunger become barren. For they do not seek those things, whereby they may train themselves to humility, may order their ways in tranquillity, keep patience, shew forth long suffering, but those alone which may prove them learned and talkers; they aim to know those things, by which they may seem to be in a special manner instructed. For they very often treat with boldness of the nature of the Divine Being, whilst, wretched as they are, they know not their own selves. And so they become 'barren by want and hunger,' because they desire to dive into those things, by which they should not bring forth the buddings of a good life. For the things which they dive into are beyond themselves. And whilst they make for that which they are unable to comprehend, they neglect to acquaint themselves with those things, by which they might have been instructed. Which same boldness of theirs the great Preacher rightly checks, saying, *not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly*. [Rom. 12, 3] Hence Solomon says, *Set bounds to thine own wisdom*. [Prov. 23, 4] Hence again he says, *Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it*. [Prov. 25, 16] For the sweetness of spiritual meaning he who seeks to eat beyond what he contains, even what he had eaten he 'vomith'; because whilst he seeks to make out things above, beyond his powers, even the things that he had made out aright, he forfeits. Hence he says again; *As for one to eat much honey is not good, so he that would search out Majesty shall be crushed with, glory*. [v. 27] For the glory of the Invisible Creator, which when searched into with moderation lifts us up, being dived into beyond our powers bears us down. Therefore heretics, because in proportion as they aim to be more completely filled by sublime perception, so much the more entirely they become empty, have it rightly said concerning them, *barren by want and hunger*. Since by unbounded attempts the more they go after the knowledge of heavenly acquaintanceship, the more they lose it.

19. But, on the other hand, they that in Holy Church are truly humble, and truly instructed, are taught touching heavenly mysteries, both some things when viewed to understand, and some things not understood to reverence, that so what they understand they may hold with reverence, and what they do not as yet understand they may look forward to with humility. Whence it is said to us by Moses, that in eating the lamb, *that which remaineth of it we should burn, with fire*; [Ex. 12, 10] for we 'eat the lamb,' when in understanding many particulars of the Lord's human Nature, we deposit them in the belly of the mind. Wherefrom there are some things left to us, which cannot be eaten; because many particulars still remain concerning Him, which can by no means be understood.

Which same nevertheless are to be ‘consumed with fire,’ because the things which we are unable to understand concerning Him, we reserve with humility for the Holy Spirit. Which same humility very often reveals even those things to the perceptions of the Elect, which appeared to be things impossible to be understood. For the froward minds of heretics, whilst they proudly attribute understanding to themselves, as it were presume to deliver fixed decisions even touching what is unknown. Whence it comes to pass, that the self-elation itself which lifts them up in themselves within, should without drive them off from the truth, and that in the declarations of God they should hardly even comprehend the outward things, who thought that they had in an especial manner gone to the bottom of spiritual secrets. Whence it is also added here;

Ver. 3, 4. *Who gnawed in solitude, being scurvy with calamity and misery, and chewed herbs and the barks of trees.*

[ix]

20. That is wont to be ‘gnawed,’ which cannot be eaten. Now heretics because they apply themselves to make out Scripture by their own power, assuredly never can comprehend it, which same whilst they do not make out, they, as it were, do not eat. And because, not being aided by grace from on high, they are unable to eat it, they as it were ‘gnaw’ it with certain efforts. Since they handle it outwardly, when indeed they endeavour but do not attain to the interior parts of it. Which same because they are separated from the society of the Church Universal, are mentioned as gnawing not any where, but ‘in solitude.’ To which same ‘solitude’ that the false teachers draw their followers, Truth long before forewarned, saying, *If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth.* [Matt. 24, 26] And these are rightly recorded as ‘scurvy with affliction and misery,’ because they are despicable at once by the destructiveness of their practices, and the badness of their perceptions. Who do also ‘eat herbs and the barks of trees,’ because being kept off by the bar of self-exaltation, they are unable to perceive in sacred Revelation what is great and interior, but with difficulty discover therein a few things that are tender and exterior. Since by ‘herbs’ the plainer statements, and by ‘the barks of trees’ the exterior declarations of the Fathers are betokened. Those then who seek to know those things, by which they may not at all *be* learned, but seem to be, whilst in the sacred volumes they do not from the heart’s core search out the force of charity towards God and our neighbour, are as it were ‘fed by the herb and the bark,’ because they are either the lowest or the outer things which nourish the souls of those who carry themselves proudly. Or surely to ‘eat herbs’ is touching Holy Scripture to observe the least precepts, and to disregard the greater ones. Whom Truth rightly rebukes, saying, *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law.* [Matt. 23, 23] Who do also ‘eat the barks of trees,’ because there are some who in the sacred volumes respect the outside of the letter only, nor keep in safety any thing belonging to the spiritual meaning, whereas they imagine that there is nothing more in the words of God, but that which they may hear on the outside. Which persons nevertheless the passion of vain glory possesses in all their errors, and the thirst after honour holds them captives, and generally by the very things that they speak they seek after nothing else but earthly profits. Concerning whom it is said by Paul, *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly.* [Rom. 16, 18] Whence too it is rightly subjoined;  
*And juniper roots for their meat.*

[x]



21. For the juniper tree has prickles instead of leaves, for so bristly is that which they put forth, that like to thorns it is able to prick the person handling it. Now a thorn is all sorts of sin; because whilst it draws into self-gratification, as it were by pricking it wounds the soul. Whence it is spoken by the voice of one righteous and penitent, *I was turned in my calamity, while the thorn is broken*, [Ps. 32, 4] surely because the mind is turned to lamenting, that the prick of sin may be broken by repenting. But in another translation, the thorn is described not as 'broken' ['confringi'], but 'fixed,' ['configi'] which same is not at variance with the same sense, because the mind of the penitent is brought to sorrow when the sin that has been committed is retained fixed fast in the recollection. What then is there denoted by the 'root of the juniper' saving avarice, from which the thorns of all the sins are produced? Concerning which it is said by Paul, *For the love of money is the root of all evil*. [1 Tim. 6, 10] For that springs up covertly in the mind, and brings forth openly the prickles of all sin in the practice. Which same prickles arising from this root the great preacher immediately implies, when he subjoins, *Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows*. For he who spoke of 'many sorrows' made known as it were the prickles arising from this root. So by 'junipers' we understand sins, but by 'the root of junipers' what else do we understand, but avarice, i.e. the material of sins? So then because heretics in their words generally go after external gains alone, yet are not ignorant that they make up what is wrong, but do not abandon the preachings of error, whilst they wish to receive their emoluments as teachers, it is well said of them now by the voice of the holy man, *and juniper roots for their meat*, because whilst they think of avarice with all the faculties of their minds, they are as it were fed by that nourishment, wherefrom assuredly the prickles of sins ensuing are used to be produced. Which persons if ever in sacred Revelation they seemingly discover things with sagacity, which while they do not understand, they fancy make for their statements, they directly scatter these vociferating them to their wretched hearers, whom they covet not the souls of but the substance. Whence it is fitly brought in next,

Ver. 5. *Who carrying these same off from the valleys, when they found each of them, ran to them with clamour.*

[xi]

22. They 'carry them off from the valleys,' because with a high spirit they gather them from the lowly sayings of the Fathers. Which same whilst they exult to have found making for their cause, they run to them with outcries, because every thing that they have a perception of, by the appetite of praise they strive to cry abroad to the ears of men. It goes on;

Ver. 6. *They shall dwell in the desert places of the torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the ground.*

[xii]

23. We give the name of 'torrents' to the brooks, that are gathered by the winter rains, which likewise at certain seasons are dried up. Thus with justice the framers of wrong doctrines are called 'torrents'; because being cold to the warmth of charity, they grow to a height in the deadness of the winter season; because they do not flow out with perpetual fulness, but by the pleadings of Catholics, as by summer suns, are dried up. And indeed the fabricators of wrong doctrines springing up against Holy Church, are already made an end of by the heat of truth, yet

notwithstanding the things which they taught their disciples do not cease to maintain and to defend. Thus then they that follow the errors of those persons ‘dwell in the desert places of torrents,’ i.e. put their trust in the preaching of those, whose effusions are already by the answering and reasoning of Catholics dried up. Now what else do we take ‘the caves of the earth’ for, but the hidden preachings of heretics? For heretics meet together in secret conclaves in such sort, that the reverence, which they cannot invest their erring belief with by reason, they may by concealment, and that to weak souls the speech of pervertedness may appear more to be treated with awe in proportion as it is secret. Hence in Solomon the woman as a type of heresy persuades, saying, *Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.* [Prov. 9, 17] Which self-same secret preachings ‘Truth’ abhors, saying, *Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not.* And again; *Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; Behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West: so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.* [Matt. 24, 23. 26. 27.] So then that is ‘in the secret chambers’ there, which here is phrased in ‘caves.’ Thus heretics ‘dwell in caves,’ because they generally conceal their error by preachings in secret; that in the degree that they forbear to shew themselves to the more learned and wiser sort, they may the more irresistibly draw to them the uninstructed. Whence also the words are rightly brought in next; *Or upon the gravel.* For we call by the name of ‘gravel’ those very little stones which the water of the river draws along. Accordingly, the teachers of perverted doctrines ‘dwell upon the gravel,’ because they draw after them those minds of men which are not established with any steadfastness of gravity, which the streams of errors are as it were ever carrying from place to place. And hence the great preacher, whereas he desired that his hearers should not be led by the chances of time, but that they might be established by firm gravity, charged them, saying, *That we henceforth be no more like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine.* [Eph. 4, 14] Thus Holy Church, being borne down by her adversaries for a space, when she sees the bold minds of those in error insulting over her, recalls to remembrance what the behaviour of those was, saying, *They shall dwell in the desert places of torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the gravel.* For because their wrong preaching, the fire of charity being gone, gained power by coldness of feeling, surely it ‘dwelt in the desert places of torrents.’ And because it was not open and at large, it ‘lay hid’ in caves. And because it held the people not fixed but lightly moved, it remained not upon the rock but ‘upon the gravel.’ Concerning which it is yet further added; Ver. 7. *Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under brambles.*

[xiii]

24. What do we understand by the name of ‘brambles,’ but those ‘piercings’ [§. 21] of sins, which we have already described above. Now because froward minds delight in wickednesses, which they should have bewailed, all heretics uplift themselves with vain joy in proportion as they gain power for worse acts; and they ‘reckon there are delights under the brambles,’ because they lift up the froward mind to joy, from the same cause that they bear the thorns of sins. For if ever they have been able to draw any one to their error, they plume themselves in glee; and by the same act, whereby they are daily heaping to themselves sins, even by ruining others, they exult that they are as it were leaders to righteousness. And so it is well said; *Who rejoiced amongst the like, and reckoned that there are delights under brambles.* For they drag all that they are able to their own destruction; and to be under sins, or to add offences to offences, they imagine their heaping up a superabundance of virtuous acquirements.

Ver. 8. *They were children of fools, yea, children of base men; and in the earth not appearing at all.*

[xiv]

25. That is to say, the children of those, who were the masters of errors. So they are called 'children,' not as engendered by the seed, but by the imitating of those, who by teaching what is wrong were 'fools' in respect of ignorance, and by living wicked lives 'base men' in respect of conduct. Who are not allied to our Redeemer by any relationship of wisdom, or by any of life. Concerning which it is said by the voice of Solomon in commendation of Holy Church, *Her husband is noble in the gates.* [Prov. 31, 23] So these, because they followed the froward examples of those going astray, were recorded as being 'the children of fools and of base men.' Now it is rightly subjoined, *and on the earth not appearing at all.* Because whilst they aim to appear something here, surely from the land of the living they are made outcasts.

26. But this which we have delivered in a type of heretics, nothing is at all in the way, if we understand it as well of persons froward and carnal, though set in the right faith. For neither does Holy Church account those only adversaries to her, who, as placed without, dissent from her faith, but those also who by living amiss inwardly stifle her life. So then let her, afflicted with the wofulness of adversity coming down upon her, survey how in the season of her prosperity, by the wickedness of evil-doers living within her even she was burthened. Let her consider that in due of the deserts of some, the life of all was not unjustly disturbed in her, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude, scurvy with affliction and misery.* As I before said in the first part of this work, the solitude of the interior is sometimes used to be understood in respect of the excellency of contemplation. But in this place, where 'solitude' is mentioned in the way of reproach, what else is there demonstrated but a barrenness of goodness? And hence, under the type of Judaea, Jeremiah mourns over the soul of the sinner, saying, *How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!* [Lam. 1, 1] But when it is said by blessed Job respecting the evil-doers, *they gnawed in solitude,* it is well to look at that also which is delivered by the Psalmist, *His enemies shall lick the dust.* [Ps. 72, 9]

27. For there are two sorts of men that lend themselves to their own ambition, i.e. one which always employs the flatteries of the tongue to serve to avarice, another which is bent on robbery by open force. For we 'gnaw' when we wear away any thing outwardly with strong effort. For there is 'licking' when that which cannot be eaten with ease is tasted by the lightness of the tongue being pressed upon it. All persons then who even under a guise of faith live wickedly, who long after what belongs to another, but are not any way able to seize upon the object that they long after, but try by flattering speeches, and as it were by the softening of sweetness, to carry off the things coveted, what else do they save 'lick the ground?' because the several things of earth, which they cannot by power, they strive to make away with by the softness of the tongue. But they who are sustained in this world by any degree of power, and whilst coveting the things of others, scorn indeed to cozen by deceit, because they are able even by unjust strength to fulfil what they have a mind for, the thing that they long for these persons do not 'lick' but 'gnaw'; because they demolish the life of their fellow-creatures by the forcibleness of power as by the effect of teeth. So then let Holy Church regard the true riches of the Eternal Country, let her behold the throng of the citizens Above, let her discern in her Elect Children the culture of the mind, and the excellencies of

countless virtues, and from these let her recall the eye of the mind to the life of the wicked, which is made void of all goodness, and by comparison with them let her see how and in what way that life is destitute of all virtuous attainments, because it has abandoned the things on high, and coveted those beneath. Let her see how very often that thing which he longs for, if perchance he has power, he even seizes by violence. Let her see that she has long been subject to such persons as set within her pale, and that by their offences she has come even to the very jeopardy and hurts of the good too, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude*. As though she complained openly, saying, 'The things of others they would not gnaw, even by seizing them by violence, except they themselves first remained in their own interior solitary, and bare of the culture of virtues.' But she rightly explains the kind and sort of those, saying, *Scurvy with affliction and misery*. For unhealthy flesh, if it be overlooked to be heedfully taken care of, is by foulness growing over it worse pressed with disease, and whilst to the misfortune of sickness the wretchedness of neglect is superadded, heavier inconvenience is undergone by scurf arising.

28. Therefore Human Nature having been created aright, but having sunk into disease by the demerit of its own will, it fell into utter overthrow, because being pressed by countless necessities, it found nought in this life save that whereby it should be beaten down; but whereas those same necessities of our nature we generally minister to beyond what is advisable, and overlook the care of the soul, by the wretchedness of neglect we add to our infirmity the foulness of sin. For the necessities of nature are such as to have this in them fraught with the greatest danger, that often there is no discerning therein, what there is done relating to them in the aim at usefulness, and what in the evil of self-gratification. For very frequently occasion of beguilement being met with, whilst we render the things due to necessity we are doing service to the evil of self-gratification, if our self-excusing cloaks itself with the veil of infirmity before the eyes of discernment, and as it were hides itself under the countenance of discharging the useful. But to let loose the frailty of our nature by neglect is nothing else than to add misery to affliction, and by that misery to redouble the foulness of the vices. Whence holy men, in every thing they do, discriminate with the most earnest aim, that the frailty of their nature exact not from them more than is owed, and that under the cloak of necessity there grow not up in them the evil of gratification. For they undergo one thing from infirmity, and another thing from the prompting of temptation, and being appointed as a kind of most equitable umpires between necessity and pleasure, they lift up the one by comforting, and bridle the other by keeping down. Whence it comes to pass, that even if they are exposed to the affliction of their infirmity, yet they never descend from neglect to the foulness of misery. For this mere thing, to be in affliction, is to be subject to the necessities of nature from the frailty of flesh still liable to corruption. Which same necessities he longed to get quit of, who said, *Deliver me from my necessities*. [Ps. 25, 17] For he knew that, for the most part, the sins of the pleasures break forth by occasion of necessities, and that he might not of his own will commit aught unlawful, he was busy to have that itself plucked up which he was subject to unwillingly in the roots. [An example of this case is found in St. Augustine's Confessions, B. x. § 43—47.]

29. But on the other hand, the evil-minded take delight in those necessities of their corrupt state, because they force them back to serve the occasion of gratifications. For while they minister to nature by recruiting their bodies with food, through the gratification of the palate they are swelled out in the glutting of delight. When they seek clothing for covering the limbs, they look out not only for things that may cover, but also may uplift, and against the numbness of cold not only what may defend by thickness, but likewise delight by softness; not only what may soothe the touch by

softness, but also beguile the eyes by the colour. So then, to turn occasion of necessity to the use of pleasure, what other thing is it but to join the foulness of misery to his affliction? Thus let the Church, being borne down in the season of adversity, call to mind those by whose deserts she undergoes these things, and let her say, *Who gnawed in solitude, scurvy with affliction and misery.* They indeed would not be made foul by affliction, if they did not superadd to inherent necessities the misery of gratifications. Which same necessities we have earned by the offence of the first parent. But they who add misery to their affliction, from the torture of punishment, break forth into augmentations of guilt. But would that such persons, whilst they scorn to be changed for the better, did things wrong in such a way as not to proffer them to others as well. Would that their own death only were enough for them, and that by their baneful persuasions they did not kill another's life likewise. For they grudge others being what they are not, they grieve for others to obtain the thing that they lose; for if by chance they perceive any good points springing up in the acts of others, they directly pluck them up with the hand of mischievous reviling. Whence too it follows, *And they did eat herbs and the barks of trees.*

30. For what is denoted by 'herbs,' but the life of those beginning well tender and close to the ground? and what by the barks of trees, but the outward deeds of those who henceforth seek after things aloft? For bad men, when they see persons beginning what is right, either by deriding or as if counselling them, offer opposition. But when they now think with themselves that certain persons are making way to the highest things, because they cannot wholly and entirely scatter to the winds their advancements, they divert those persons from some of their deeds. Thus then to 'eat herbs and the barks of trees,' is by pestilent persuasions as by a kind of teeth of their evil-mindedness to scatter to nought, whether the aims of those beginning aright, or the doings of persons now henceforth after the manner of trees making towards that which is above. The children of perdition 'eat herbs,' when by scoffing they consume the beginnings of the frail sort. Likewise they 'eat the barks of trees,' when with the hand of evil counsel they withdraw from the life of those growing rightly the covering of good deeds. Now these latter they strip like trees in particular actions, but those because like herbs they drag whilst despising them, they as it were eat what they tread under them. The strength of some now rising on high they in part make away with, but the tenderness of some even still placed below they utterly break in pieces. So then let him say, *they eat herbs and the barks of trees*, because by wicked mockings in some they broke up piecemeal external deeds, and in some hearts in hope growing lively.

31. Or surely to 'eat herbs' is to copy some things light and tender belonging to the ancient Fathers. Whilst to 'eat the barks of trees' is to practise their deeds so far as the outside, but in these same works not to maintain a right intention. For there are some persons who, whereas they cannot obtain the glory of the present world by that world's courses of conduct, seek after a semblance of sanctity, assume the garb of reverence, long to appear imitators of the old Fathers, and some few things indeed, little and light, they do employ themselves upon, but their strong things, and such as come forth from the root of charity alone, they are indifferent to imitate. These truly 'eat herbs,' because they overlook what is great, and are filled with what is worthless. Yet very often they put in execution even some deeds seemingly more vigorous, but they do not hold a right intention in those same deeds. To which persons surely to 'eat the barks of trees' is to take to them the outward acts of the Elect, and not to have a good intention in good acts. For whilst for the sake of human applause they search out right deeds, but are indifferent to imitate the heart of those doing rightly, they are filled 'by the barks of trees' alone. For with all the desire they seek after the glory or

abundance of the present life. Whence too it is rightly subjoined, *And the root of junipers was their meat.*

32. For being set within by faith, whilst they for the most part lend themselves to thoughts of avarice, they as it were 'eat' that, whereby in the final close of life the roughnesses of punishments are put forth. Which persons, while they do not long after the fruitage of divine revelation, but make themselves subservient for the going after things temporal, are never filled with the bread of wheat, but with the 'root of the juniper.' For the mere things springing up from what is beneath and lowest engross them, that they may prick them afterwards after the manner of the juniper by the hardness of recompensing, as by the sharpness of leaves. For whilst they despise God here, they are never made sensible what great evil it is that they do. For still they are 'eating the root of the juniper,' but how sharp the branches of this root are they do not give heed; because verily bad conduct now as it were in the root gives delight in sin, but afterwards as it were in the branches it pricks in punishment. Where also it is well subjoined; *Who, carrying these same off from the valleys, when they found each one, did run thereto with clamour.*

33. In comparison surely with things above, all the present life is a 'valley.' But these, because they know not to contemplate the heights of mountains, i.e. the strong deeds of the Saints, are always busied in the lowest gratification as in 'the valleys,' and when they find any gain, even of a slight acquisition, they run with clamouring, because they strive even by wrangling to make off with this, for 'upon each being found in the valley to run with clamour,' is on the occasions of cases arising to wrangle even for small payment. Now it very often happens that him, whom good conduct exhibits as holy, occasion of earthly advantage springing up puts to the proof. For you may see persons already employed on what is lofty, already in the practice of abstinence, already in the work of instruction, following after the patterns of the fathers that went before; but when they suddenly find the gain of the present life, as the fruit of the valley, they 'run thereto with clamour'; because the quiet of overlaid sanctity being broken through they spring forth to that.

34. It may be too that by 'herbs and the barks of trees' not only the deeds of the good are meant, as has been said before, but consolations and blessings in this life. For oftentimes Almighty God, when He enriches His Elect with interior gifts, uplifts them with external honours as well. And while He renders them objects of honour by advancing them above others, He exhibits them the wider as objects of imitation; and sometimes the evil-minded despise indeed the life of those, but long to attain their good success in this world. And so because they seek here below the flatteries of transitory comfort, they 'eat herbs'; because in their thoughts they dwell on the external glory of these persons, they 'chew the barks of trees'; and because in all these they minister to avarice alone with the entire bent of their mind, they are filled with the 'root of the juniper.' All which things they 'carry off from the valleys,' because from love of this low corruptible life they are made to burn with boundless lusts. And 'when they find each one, they run thereto with clamours,' because surely of the holy Fathers, whose merits they never seek to acquire, they are busy to lay hold of the posts and governments, and when they very frequently cannot attain these by quiet means, they even try it by bursting asunder the peacefulness of concord.

35. And for this that these are widely separated from the conduct of the Fathers going before, it is rightly subjoined; *They dwelled in the desert places of torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the gravel.* For on the side of good we rightly take the 'torrents' for the holy preachers, who

whilst in the present life they flow into us by divine effusions, are as it were collected by a concourse of waters in the winter season. Who also withdraw themselves on the summer sun appearing, because when the light of the Eternal Country shines forth, they will cease to preach. 'The desert places of these torrents' are the benefits of the life of time. For these they abandon, and betake themselves to the obtaining of heavenly gains. But all these that 'torrent' had forsaken who said; *For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung*. [Phil. 3, 8] But because the minds of the wicked seek to obtain those things in this life, which the righteous abandon despising them, they are related to 'dwell in the desert places of the torrents.' For those things which are unworthy of the Saints, those same long to win as great. But the 'caves of the earth' are wicked thoughts, in which they bury themselves from the eyes of their fellow-creatures. For as they are evil, they shun being seen by men, and whilst they pretend themselves something else than what they are, they conceal themselves in the lurking places of their conscience, as 'in caves of the earth,' which persons would not do all these things, unless they were hopeless of an eternal and substantial life, unless they set their mind in this uncertainty of the temporal state. Whence it is well added, *Or upon the gravel*.

36. For the 'gravel' is the present life, which by the mere failure of mutability, as by the impulse of a river, is unceasingly being brought to its end. Hence to 'dwell upon the gravel' is to attach one's self to the tide of the present life, and there to set the bent of the mind, where it cannot stablish the step by standing firmly. There is another circumstance 'in gravel,' which ought in no wise to be passed over in silence, namely, that when the foot is set upon the top of it, it slips by the mere rolling tendency thereof, and is made to roll down to the bottom. From which circumstance the life of the wicked is in nothing at variance, because whilst for love of the world they set themselves to do some things lawful and respectable, they in a manner set the foot flat upon the top, but suddenly the foot slips to the bottom, because their course of conduct, whilst it ever seeks after more, descends even to what is wicked and unlawful. So then, when Holy Church meets with the crosses of this period, let her in remembrance have recourse to the life of the carnal, whom even in her prosperity she bore as adversaries to her, and by whose deserts it is that she suffers these things let her see and know, saying, *They dwelled in the desert places of torrents, and in caves of the earth, and upon the gravel*. For because they are bared of the teaching of the Fathers, they are related to 'dwell in the desert places of the torrents'; because they cover themselves up in the hidden thoughts of the heart, they are related to 'dwell in caves of the earth'; whilst because they desire to fix their aim in the changeableness of the present state of being, they are related to 'dwell upon the gravel.' But would that such, seeing that sins when they tempt they have no mind to do violence to, even after they have been committed, cleansed them away by weeping: would that at all events, when done, they acquainted themselves with their evil deeds, 'and applied to the barren fig-tree the basket of dung, i.e. to the unfruitful soul the richness of lamenting.

37. But the mind of man has for the most part this thing proper to it, that as soon as ever it falls into transgression, it is still further removed from the knowledge of self. For this very evil, that it commits, inserts itself to the soul as a bar before the eye of reason. Whence it comes to pass, that the soul, being first encompassed by voluntary darkness, afterwards does not any longer even know the good it should seek. For the more it attaches itself to evil things, the less does it apprehend the good ones that it loses. Since the light of truth, because it minutely tries the offences of lost sinners, in the same degree that it is neglected when had, so does it, judging rigidly, allow it to be, that not even when lost it should be sought back, and when it is banished from the act, it departs from the

perception; that that whereof the face, as it were, is slighted in practice, should now no longer have its very hinder parts appear in the remembrance. Thus, hence it is that lost sinners, whilst subject to sins to be lamented, rejoice; concerning whom it is said by Solomon, *Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the worst things*. [Prov. 2, 14] Hence it is that occasions of lamentations they go through dancing; hence it is that the business of their death they carry on laughing. Whence here also it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 7. *Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under the brambles.*

[xv]

38. 'They rejoice in the midst of the like,' because, surely, they give heed to the transitory things which they receive, and neglect to look at the lasting blessings which they lose. And whilst they are on fire with the love of things temporal, they are willingly ignorant of the true joy. Which same if they earnestly sought to acquaint themselves with, how greatly the delights which they seek after are to be wept for, they would see. But, while they are unconcerned to know what are better, they choose those alone for themselves, as the highest, which flatter the eyes in the visible by a fleeting beguilement. That is to say, they fix fast their heart, following after the visible, and rejoice so much the more outwardly, in proportion as they are without the remembrance of themselves inwardly. Yet, generally, there are mixed with their joys calamities, and by the actual things, by which they are filled with pride, they are scourged. For neither can they, without grievous inconveniences of anxieties, either seek when not possessed, or retain when sought, the temporal things that they desire; among their equals aim at superior glory; from inferiors exact respect beyond what is meet, and to superiors shew forth the same less than they ought; for the most part display the mastery by masterfulness; ever do what is wicked, and yet, that they may not have the credit of wickedness, guard themselves with dread. All these things surely sting the wretched persons, but those same stings they do not feel, from being overcome by the mere love of the things of time. And hence it is rightly said now, *And reckoned there were delights under the brambles*; because, being closely encompassed by the enjoyments of sins, from the affecting of the present life, how sharp the things they are that they undergo they are not aware.

39. Therefore they 'rejoice,' but 'under brambles'; because they delight in earthly things indeed, but yet, whilst they are unable to manage those same things of time without trouble, the wretched persons are stung by that same care which they are pressed by. They continue 'under the brambles,' and this very thing they account delight, because they at once endure hardships indeed from the love of the present life, but yet, being bound about by the absorption of over-great desire, they account the trouble of that endurance to be pleasure. Hence Jeremiah, rightly taking upon himself the likeness of all human conduct, complains in lament, saying, *He has made me drunken with; wormwood*. [Lam. 3, 15] For as we have already said before in a part above, any one drunk knows nothing what he is undergoing. But he that is made 'drunk with wormwood,' both has the thing that he has taken bitter, and yet does not understand that same bitterness which he is filled with. So the race of man, being by the right judgment of God left to themselves in their pleasures, and by those same pleasures consigned to voluntary sufferings, is 'drunk with wormwood'; because both these are bitter things which it endures for the love of this life, and yet that same bitterness, by the blindness of concupiscence, as by the insensibility of drunkenness, it remains ignorant of. For thirsting after the glory of the world, whilst it finds instead thereof numberless tribulations, what it drinks is bitter. But because it took this too eagerly, from mere drunkenness it is not now able to



discern the evil of that bitterness. For bad men, for the sake of the glory of this world, love tribulations even, and on account of it willingly lend themselves to all toils, and most devotedly submit their necks to the yoke of heavy labours. Which is well described by Hosea whilst prophesying, under the likeness of Ephraim, saying, *And Ephraim is a heifer that is taught to love threshing.* [Hos. 10, 11] For a heifer accustomed to the labours of threshing, very often, when loosed, returns even not forced to the same customariness of labour. So the mind of the wicked being devoted to the services of this world, and accustomed to the wearings of temporal things, even if it be allowed to be freely at liberty to itself, yet is eager to submit itself to earthly pains and toils, and seeks the usage [al. 'from usage'] of a wretched way of life, 'the threshing' of labour, that it should not be acceptable, even if it were allowable, to give over the yoke of worldly servitude. Which same yoke the Lord loosed from the neck of the disciples, when He said, *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness; and straightway added, and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares.* [Luke 21, 34] And again, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.* [Matt. 11, 28] What is it for the Lord to call Himself 'meek and lowly' in preceptorship, save leaving behind the difficulties for exercising self-exaltation, to point out some plain ways of living well? But because the minds of the wicked are more pleased by what is harsh in self-exalting than by what is gentle in mildness and humility, they 'suppose there are delights under brambles.' For from love of the world they are ready to bear what is hard as things soft and delightful, whilst they try in this life to lay hold of the topmost pinnacles of affairs.

40. The Lord bids ceasing from the labours of the world, He prompts the sweetness of holy tranquillity, and yet the frenzied mind of the wicked is more rejoiced to obtain what is harsh in the carnal way than to hold what is mild in the spiritual way. It is more fed by the bitterness of wearisomeness than by the sweetness of tranquillity. Which the Israelitish people openly shews us in itself, which same, whilst it received the refreshment of manna from above, lusted after the flesh-pots, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, from Egypt. [Numb. 11, 5] For what is denoted by the 'manna,' but the food of grace, having a sweet savour, given from Above for the refreshment of the interior life to persons rightly free? And what by the 'flesh-pots,' saving carnal works, which are with difficulty to be dressed by the toils of tribulations, as by fires? What by 'melons,' but earthly sweets? What by 'leeks and onions,' which those who eat very often shed tears, excepting the hardness of the present life, which is both gone through by the lovers of it not without mourning, and notwithstanding is loved with tears? Therefore, forsaking 'manna,' together with melons and fleshmeats they sought leeks and onions, surely because bad minds despise the gifts of tranquillity, sweet by grace, and for the sake of carnal pleasures they covet the wearisome ways of this life, even though full of tears; they scorn to have where they may rejoice in a spiritual manner, and ardently seek where they may even groan in a carnal way. So then, let Job with a truth-telling voice rebuke the madness of these persons, for no other reason than that by a perverted judgment they set the troubled before the tranquil, the hard before the gentle, the harsh before the mild, the transitory before the eternal, the suspicious before the assured. The madness of such let Holy Church call to remembrance, when she is encompassed with cruel adversities without, which persons she held within herself as if believers, but for long endured their life opposing the faith, and let her say, *Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under brambles;* surely, because the evil things that they do, they learnt by the badness of the wicked going before. Whence also it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 8. *They were children of fools, yea children of base men.*

41. It is right for us to know that some within the pale of Holy Church are styled 'fools,' but yet 'noble,' whilst others are 'fools' and 'base.' For they are called 'fools,' but cannot be 'base,' who contemning the wisdom of the flesh, desire foolishness that shall stand them in stead, and after the newness of the interior descent are exalted by the nobility of virtue, who set at nought the foolish wisdom of the world, and covet the wise foolishness of God. Since it is written, *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men.* This 'foolishness' Paul charges ourselves to lay hold of, when he says, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* [1 Cor. 1, 25] This 'foolishness' they that perfectly followed obtained to hear from the voice of Wisdom, *Ye which have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* [Matt. 19, 28] Mark how by abandoning temporal things they purchased the glory of eternal power. Accordingly what is there more foolish in this world than to abandon one's own? And what more noble in the eternal world than to come with God as judges? Verily the nobility of these judges is made mention of by Solomon bearing record, where this which I have already spoken before is said, *Her husband is noble in the gates, when he sitteth among the senators of the land.* [Prov. 31, 23] For noble above measure does he regard those, whom he calls 'senators.' This 'nobility' Paul had beheld in himself, when being united by the spirit to the relationship of the Creator, he said, *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device;* [Acts 17, 29] i.e. we are styled 'the offspring of God,' not as being brought forth in His Nature, but as being by His Spirit both created by His Will and made anew by His adoption. So much the more then is each one lifted up to this nobility, in proportion as he is renewed in the image he has received to the likeness of That Being in a copy.

42. But contrariwise they are 'fools and base men,' who while, in following themselves, they flee from the wisdom Above, are lulled to sleep in their ignorance as in the vileness of an abject descent. For in proportion as they do not understand that for which they were made, in the same measure they lose the relationship of high birth vouchsafed then in the Likeness. So they are 'fools and base men,' whom the slavery of the soul withholds from the fellowship of the Eternal Inheritance. As it is written, *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.* [John 8, 34] And it is spoken by the voice of the great preacher, *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.* [1 Cor. 3, 19] They then, who whilst they were wise in earthly things were held back from the interior nobility, were 'fools and base men' at once. Whose actions while very many imitate they are rendered 'the children of fools and base men,' and whilst they follow these in notions and practices, they are at once 'fools,' because they do not understand true wisdom, and 'base men,' because they are not renewed by any freedom of the Spirit. But these persons though they may practise the arts of the wicked, yet very often in this life occupy the places of the just, and they account themselves the children of those, whose offices from lust of honour they outwardly discharge. Which persons holy correction recalls to the knowledge of themselves, i.e. that being settled in bad desires, they should mind whose children they are. For they are not the children of those whose places they occupy, but whose deeds they execute: Therefore let it be rightly said, *The children of fools and base men.* Where it is fitly subjoined;  
*And on earth utterly not appearing.*

43. For as there are very many persons upon earth, and they are hidden from the knowledge of their fellow creatures by the lowness of their vile condition, as by a kind of overlaying of a cloak, so there are some in the Church, who whilst they submit themselves to the degradation of wicked deeds, are not known to the Divine sight. To which persons it is one day to be said, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not*. So, 'to be on earth and appear' is in a right faith through the excellency of practice to display the nobility of the soul. 'To be on earth and utterly not appear,' is to be set fast in the Church indeed by faith, but to show forth nothing worthy of faith in practice. These then being within the pale of Holy Church, to the eyes of the Divine Being both 'appear' in respect of judgment, and yet do 'not appear' in respect of the deserts of a good life, because those things, which by confessing they hold, by living they do not shew forth. Concerning whom Paul saith, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him*. [Tit. 1, 16] These persons in Holy Church bear down rather than venerate the faith which they protest that they hold, whereas by her name they covet rather to secure their own profits than her's. But the Elect, whilst they take care to preserve the deservingness of faith by right deeds, are brought near to the knowledge of their Maker even amidst the throngs of lost sinners. Which is well denoted in the Gospel by the woman suffering from the bloody flux. Concerning whom the Lord says, *Who touched Me?* Peter answered reasoning, *Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?* [Luke 8, 45. 46.] But he obtained to hear the causes in true reason, when the Lord said to him, *Somebody hath touched Me, for I likewise perceive that virtue is gone out of Me*. See how the throng 'pressed' the Lord, but she only 'touched' Him, who came to Him in humility, because surely even many lost sinners in Holy Church by learning 'press' the truth, which same they neglect to 'touch' by living well. They 'press' and are far off, because by professions they follow Divine knowledge, by habits flee it. They 'press,' I say, and are far off, because by acting they contradict that faith, which by speaking they assert. As then we are instructed by this testimony, that by touching some do not 'touch' the Lord, so some are not 'seen' by the Lord, even when they are seen; because to His secret regards, and for the punishment of condemnation, they do appear, but for the claim of Election they do not appear. Therefore let it be rightly said, *And on earth utterly not appearing*, because though the Church held them to the extent of seeming, yet those being within her the Creator did not see, in that He did not know them. Who in the season of peace for this reason maintain the faith to the extent of words, because they see that that faith flourishes generally. But when a sudden storm of adversity rises up against that Church, they are directly parted from her by a public denial; and whatever they before held as if venerating her, they afterwards fight against the same as deriding her. Whence it is fitly added; Ver. 9. *And now am I their song, yea, I am become their byword*.

[xviii]

44. By which same words that time of Holy Church is set forth, when she is openly derided by the lost; when the wicked gaining ground, faith shall be for a reproach, and truth shall be for a ground of accusation. For so much the more contemptible shall each individual be in proportion as he may be more righteous; and the worse object of abhorrence, the more worthy object of praise. Therefore the Holy Church of the Elect in the time of calamity 'becomes a proverb' to the wicked, because when they see the good die by torments, they take their likeness of cursing from those. For in proportion as they see a passing death, but do not see a lasting life, so much the more in scoffing do they flee present ills, in proportion as by the understanding interiorly they do not reach to lasting

goods. But the particulars that are subjoined because they are not involved in obscurer sorts of sentences, we must run through in brief, that we may be able to come the sooner to those parts, wherein we have to labour. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.*

[xix]

45. All the wicked ‘fly far’ from Holy Church, not by the paces of footsteps, but by the characters of practices; they fly far not in place, but desert, whereas, pride gaining ground, they condemn her with open upbraiding. For ‘to spit in his face’ is not only to detract from the good in absence, but to give the lie to each one of the just even in presence. And these then whilst the wicked by openly deriding set at nought, they as it were let out in insults upon them loose words, like streams of spittle running down. But Holy Church knows how to gain ground in sufferings, and in the midst of reproaches to maintain an honourable life; she is taught neither to be cast down by adversities, nor to glory in prosperity. She is instructed, in meeting prosperity, to lay low the mind in downcasting; she is taught, in meeting adversity, to lift up the soul to the hope of the height above. She knows how to ascribe her good things to the mercifulness of the Redeemer, she knows how to ascribe her evil things to the justice of the Judge, that both what is good she has by His bestowing, and what is bad she suffers by His permitting. And hence He immediately adds touching the Lord, saying, Ver. 11. *Because He hath opened His quiver and afflicted me.*

[xx]

46. What is denoted by ‘the quiver’ of God, but secret counsel? Now the Lord casts the arrow from the quiver, when from His secret counsel He sends forth an open sentence. For that any man is scourged, we know, but for what cause the scourge comes, we know not. But when after the scourge amendment of life follows, the actual power of counsel is itself disclosed as well. So the quiver shut is hidden counsel. But we are chastened by an open quiver, when by that which follows after the scourge, we see with what counsel we are stricken. When the Lord beholds sins, and yet does not move the hand to vengeance, He as it were holds the quiver shut, but by striking He shews, how greatly that displeased Him in us, which He bore long beholding it. Therefore let the Holy Church of the Elect being pressed by tribulations say, *For He hath opened His quiver, and afflicted me.* Which same on meeting with the insolent voices of her adversaries, when she sees that her preaching is not received, giving over the hardness of some, restrains the words of her preaching. For reflecting that her persecutors are rendered worse at the voice of her exhortation, she rather prefers to hold her peace. And when she sees them persons unworthy to hear, she binds up her preaching with silence drawn over. Whence he fitly adds;  
*And put a bridle into my mouth.*

[xxi]

47. They were acquainted with ‘a bridle put upon themselves’ before certain persons, who said, *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* [Acts 13, 46] Holy men see ‘the bridle’ of silence put upon themselves with the hard hearts of lost sinners, when they say by the Prophet, *How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?* [Ps. 137, 4] Paul

also charged ‘a bridle to be put,’ who enjoined the disciple, saying, *A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth condemned of himself.* [Tit. 3, 10] For holy teachers very often by lofty ken survey the hearts of those that oppose them, and when they see those hearts forsaken by God, afflicted and groaning they hold their peace. Doth not Solomon sometimes ‘put a bridle’ upon the teachers, who saith, *Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee,* [Prov. 9, 8] but if we hold our peace from rebuking for this reason, because we are afraid for the scorner’s hates to rise up against us, we no longer seek God’s profits, but our own. Wherein it requires to be known that sometimes when bad men are reprov’d they become worse. Them therefore we spare, and not ourselves, if from the love of those we cease from the rebuking of them. Whence it is needful that we sometimes endure keeping to ourselves what they are, in order that they may learn in us by good living [al. ‘by seeing’] what they are not. Therefore because Holy Church, who ever gives forth her words in a spirit of charity, sometimes also withholds them on the principle of charity, let her say, *He hath put a bridle in my mouth.* As though he confessed openly, saying, ‘Because in some I did not see the advancement of preaching, from those I refrained assault, that my life at all events by patience they might be taught, whereas my words they would not by the preaching proffered consent to receive.’ But very often this grieves us most in tribulations, that we meet with them from those, in whom we trusted with the love of kin. And hence it is added;

Ver. 12. *At the right hand of the East my calamities on the spot arose.*

[xxii]

48. For ‘calamities’ would ‘rise to the left,’ if at the hand of any persons set without the pale of Religion, and openly denying Christ, she met with the adverse dealings of persecution. But when she undergoes from persons seemingly believers the trial of tormentings, it is as if calamities arose to her at the right hand, because they who are enlisted under Christ’s name, assail Christ’s name in her. For by the very usage of speech we speak of having as ‘on the right’ what we account as great, and as on the left that which we look down upon, which Zechariah openly teaches, saying, *And he shewed me Jesus the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.* [Zech. 3, 1. 2.] Who that he might the more plainly shew this that he set before, added going on; *And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Jesus was clothed with filthy garments.* ‘Jesus was [al. ‘is spoken of as’] clothed with filthy garments,’ because though He was a stranger to all sin, yet He came into the likeness of the flesh of sin. And to Him on His coming Satan stood on His right hand. For the Lord appeared to hold the Jewish People as great, and the Gentiles as nought. But after that He appeared Incarnate, the Gentile world, which had been held as ‘on the left’ believed, whilst the Jewish People swerved aside to unbelief. Thus ‘Satan stood on the right hand to Him’; because he carried off from Him that People, which had been for a long while beloved. But because that same Jewish people, being now lost, shall in the end one day believe, as the Prophet testifies, who says, *The remnant shall be saved;* [Is. 10, 21] the Lord removes Satan from His right hand, saying, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan.* And betokening the deliverance of that same people, he adds, *because He hath chosen Jerusalem.* Which same people because under the guidance of unbelief it let itself run down to the burnings of hell, but whilst it is brought back to faith, is set free from that same burning of everlasting fire, has it directly added there concerning it, *Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*

49. So then as there for 'the right hand' the Jewish people is denoted, so in this place by the term of 'the right hand,' the faithful people of Holy Church is denoted. And hence the Judge that is to come 'shall set the goats on His left Hand, and the sheep on His right Hand.' But when these very persons too fret Holy Church in the time of adversity, who seemed to be of the faithful, surely 'calamities arise to her on the right hand.' Now rightly is this same called 'the right hand of the East'; since it is written of the Head itself of the same, *The East is His Name*. [Zech. 6, 12 Vul.] For seeing that the light springs from the East, He is rightly called 'the East,' by the light of whose righteousness the night of our unrighteousness is enlightened. So 'calamities arise to the right hand of the East'; because these likewise leap forth to persecution, who were supposed to be Elect Members of our Redeemer. Which same calamities he rightly declares 'arise on the spot,' because whereas they who persecute were not persons without her pale, evils are brought about by them suddenly and on the spot. But if 'the right hand' is a designation of those who are truly believers, 'calamities arise to the right of the East,' because on the crisis of persecution breaking forth, the righteous undergo the cruel assaults of the wicked. It follows;  
Ver. 12. *They overturned my feet, and oppressed with their footpaths as with waves.*

[xxiii]

50. What are denoted by the Church's 'feet,' but her outermost members? which while they lend themselves to earthly deeds, are able to be the sooner deceived by adversaries in proportion as they do not understand things on high. Therefore these 'feet adversaries overturn,' that is to say, when they draw her outermost members to the error of their doctrine. The 'feet overturned' cannot keep the way, in that all the weak being either persuaded by the promises of their persecutors, or affrighted by their threats, or broken by their tortures, swerve from the right path. Now 'the paths' of adversaries are rightly likened to waves, when it is said, *and they oppressed with their footpaths as with waves*; in this way, because the life of the evil-minded, mischievous with wayward restlessness, comes down as a tempest for the overwhelming the ship of the heart, so to say. Concerning which same tempest it is said by Solomon, *As a tempest passing, the wicked shall not be*. [Prov. 10, 25] And when the weak man sees the froward flourishing, that man the wave of wretched imitation plunges into the sea of frowardness. It follows;  
Ver. 13. *They did away with my paths, they plotted against me, and prevailed, and there was not any to bring help.*

[xxiv]

51. Let blessed Job tell these things of evil spirits, i.e. of secret enemies. Let the Church Universal speak them of bad men persecuting, i.e. of open adversaries. For these 'do away with her paths,' when in the souls of certain weak ones they interrupt the ways of truth by crafty persuading. These in 'plotting prevail, when those, whom they cannot openly force to evil, they turn aside by pretending what is good, but that is very wonderful, which he subjoins, *And there was not any one to bring help*, when the Psalmist exclaims touching the help of God; *A helper in seasons, in tribulation*. And, *Let them hope in Thee, who know Thy Name, for Thou, Lord, wilt not forsake those that seek Thee*. [Ps. 9, 9. 10.] And when it is written again, *Did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded? or did any abide in His commandments, and was forsaken? Or whom did He ever despise, that called upon Him?* [Ecclus. 2, 10] On what principle, then, is it now said; *And there was not any to bring help*, excepting that those, whom Almighty God loves for all eternity, He

sometimes leaves for a time? Whence it is written; *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, and with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment, and with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee.* [Is. 54, 7. 8.] Hence too the Psalmist besought, saying, *O forsake me not utterly.* [Ps. 119, 8] He then knew that he might be left for a little while with advantage, who prayed that he might not be ‘utterly forsaken.’ For the Lord by coming helps His Saints, by ‘leaving’ puts them to the proof, by gifts he establishes, by tribulations he tries. Whence too it is rightly said by one of Wisdom, *For at the first she will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline until she try him in his thoughts.* [Ecclus. 4, 17] Since the soul of the righteous grace calls, trial puts to the question. And Almighty God allows the adversaries of His Elect to grow to a height in time, that the life of the good may be purified by the pitilessness of the bad.

52. Since the Lord would never suffer them to be hostile to the good except he also saw what great good they did. For whilst the unrighteous deal cruelly, the righteous are purified, and the life of the wicked is enlisted to the advantage of the innocent, in that this same both by bearing down it abases, and by abasing ever fashions to better. Hence too it is rightly said by Solomon; *the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart.* [Prov. 11, 29] And yet we often see the wise subordinate, and fools occupying the stronghold of dominion, wise men paying obedience in servitude, and fools lording it with tyrannical exultation. How then by the marking out of God’s sentence is ‘the fool servant to the wise,’ when generally speaking he keeps him down by the right of temporal dominion? But it is to be borne in mind, that whilst against the life of the wise man the fool being uppermost enforces the terribleness of power, whilst he wearies him out with labours, rends him with insults, such a person surely by burning he purges from all the rust of bad habits. Thus the fool even in ruling is ‘servant to the wise,’ in that by bearing him down he advances him to a better state. In this way it is sometimes the case that over masters under age servants are set for the tutorage of discipline, they frighten, they bear hard upon them, strike them, yet do not at all cease to be servants, because they are appointed to this very end, that to their masters whilst progressing they should render service even by striking them. Therefore because the ills of the children of perdition purify whilst they torment the good, even the power of the wicked is enlisted to the welfare of the just. But very often the just when seized by tribulation account the hand of Him Who helps them slow, when the barbarity of those persecuting them wrings them somewhat too long. And the remedies of the deliverer indeed are quickened, but that which is done quickly by the deliverer, appears slow to him that is in grief. And when there is sought help to present itself to the supplicating voice, if it does not follow the voice directly, it is reckoned that it is wanting. Whence it is said now; *And there was not any one to bring help.* In which same utterance we have set forth the actual force of the suffering, because help from Above, though it is there as to the appointed providence of the protector, yet is thought to be wanting as to the quickened wishes of the sufferer. It follows;

Ver. 14. *As by a wall being broken, and a door being opened, they rushed in upon me, and were rolled down to my miseries.*

[xxv]

53. What is in this place designated by the title of ‘a wall,’ but the Redeemer of the human race, concerning whom it is said by the Prophet for the edifying of Holy Church, *There shall be set in her a wall and a bulwark?* [Is. 26, 1] For that same Redeemer is ‘a wall’ to us, Who forbids the

rushing of evil spirits to reach to our hearts. Who also set 'a bulwark' as well to our faith, because before that He shewed Himself in flesh, He sent prophets as preachers of His mystery. Since they are rightly entitled by the name of 'a bulwark,' ['antemurale'] because, whereas they preached the Lord coming after, they stood as it were 'before the wall.' But it is as if 'the wall were broken,' when by the promptings of the wicked, faith, which is in our Redeemer, is done away in the hearts of some. And when power is awarded to the perverse in this life, what else but 'a door' of error is opened? And so it is as if the wall being burst asunder and the door opened the wicked rush in upon the good, when power being received temporally, the corrupt set themselves to pull down the very defences of faith too in the hearts of some. Concerning whom it is fitly said; *And were rolled down for my miseries*; that is to say, because in the first instance to their own miseries. For except that by living corruptly they fell before to their own 'miseries,' they would never afterwards persuade others also to those miseries. But after their own the children of perdition are 'rolled down to our miseries' also, when to those evil things wherein they are themselves already involved, they draw persons as well who are linked to ourselves.

54. It is possible too that by the title of a wall may be understood the defence of discipline, as Solomon bears witness, who says, *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. And lo, it was all grown over with nettles, and thorns had covered the face thereof; and the stone wall thereof was broken down.* [Prov. 24, 30. 31.] For to 'pass by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding,' is to look into the life of any careless liver, and to take a view of his deeds. Which same 'nettles or thorns fill up,' because in the hearts of the careless, itching earthly desires and the prickles of bad habits sprout forth, since it is written, *In desires is every one that is idle.* 'The stone wall was pulled down,' i.e. the discipline of the Fathers was loosened from his heart. For because 'the stone wall being pulled down' he saw that discipline was loosened, he directly added in that place going on; *Then I saw and laid it up in my heart; and by example I learned instruction.* And therefore as it were the wall being burst the enemy enters in, when by the crafty persuading either of evil spirits, or of bad men, the defences of discipline in the heart are scattered away. But when the vigour of that same discipline is relaxed in the heart of the lost, in their eyes all the deeds of the good are had in contempt, and they account it nothing, whatever they see relating to virtues in the Elect. And hence it is added; Ver. 15. *I was reduced to nought.*

[xxvi]

55. For in the reckoning of the wicked we are 'brought to nought,' when those temporal goods, which they themselves love as chief, we do not retain in our bands. Because the promises from Above being disregarded they desire the things of earth, and if ever aught rises up in the mind of those persons in the way of longing after the Eternal world, it is quickly done away by transitory gratification springing up. And hence it is directly subjoined; *As the wind thou didst take away my desire.*

Since the faithful People declares that itself suffers that, wherein those whom it loves it grieves should suffer. Thus 'the wind takes away desire,' when any transitory object does away the longing after Eternity. And hence it is yet further fitly subjoined; *And as a cloud my health hath passed away.* Since the cloud towers on high, but the breath of wind drives it into career. Thus, surely, then is it with the temporal good things of the wicked. They appear as it were by loftiness of honour to



pass their time as on high, but they are daily driven on to the career of life as by a kind of blasts of their mortality. So 'health passes as a cloud,' because the glory of the wicked, in the degree that it is lofty, is not fixed. But after the desires and the courses of persons going weakly have been finished, the discourse is made to turn to the voice of the Elect, when it is forthwith introduced, Ver. 16. *But now my soul in mine own self is withered, and the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.*

[xxvii]

56. Since 'the soul' of the Elect 'withers now,' because it is afterwards made green in that eternal triumphing. 'Now, the days of affliction take hold upon them,' because the days of joy follow afterwards. As it is written, *To him that feareth God it shall go well at the last.* [Ecclus. 1, 13. 19.] And again it is delivered touching the Church, *And she shall laugh in the last day.* [Prov. 31, 25] For now is the time of affliction to the good, that one day exulting may follow them apart from tears. Hence it is elsewhere said by those, *Thou hast humbled us in the place of affliction.* [Ps. 44, 19] Since 'the place of affliction' is the present life, so the righteous here below, i.e. 'in the place of affliction,' are 'humbled,' because in the eternal life, i.e. in the place of delight, they are elevated. But when he said that 'the soul was withered,' he rightly put before too, *in mine own self*; because in our own selves, indeed, our soul is afflicted, but in God refreshed, and it is become far removed from the greenness of joy, in proportion as still being withheld from the light of the Creator, it draws back to itself. But then it attains to the greenness of true joy, when being lifted up by the grace of eternal contemplation it even transcends its very self. Now these particulars which we have run through by allegorical investigating, it is requisite that we hold in all points after the history as well. Which particulars however I now for this reason pass over, because I am not unaware that they are plain to those that read them. Now in the days of final persecution, because there are many that are lost and a small number that are saved, for this reason the holy man, in the time of his suffering, both utters few particulars touching the good, and a great many touching the wicked. And hence he directly turns his words to the person of those who are brought to the ground, and so conveys his own circumstances, that the things he relates may accord with those that fall. Thus it follows;

Ver. 17. *In the night season my bone is pierced with pangs, and they that eat me sleep not.*

[xxviii]

57. If we mark the history by itself, the case appears plain, because the body of the holy man, through the hollows of ulcers, a swarming multitude of worms was wounding. But if we dive into the mystery of the allegory, what are denoted by 'the bones,' but the strong ones severally in the body of Holy Church? Who, as it were, by their solidity hold together the members, while they bear with stedfastness the practices of those going weakly. But when the heat of the last tribulation is grown to a head against her, *in the night season her bone is pierced with pangs*; because sometimes being overcome with torments, even the very persons let themselves run off to faithlessness, who seemed to be keeping fast others to the faith. Therefore she says, *In the night season my bone is pierced with pangs.* As though she said in plain words, 'Pressed with the darkness of tribulation, they are so penetrated with affliction, that even the very persons, who had within me the firmness of strength, have now, as it were, a kind of piercing of fear.' And it is well said, *And they that eat me take no sleep*; because the evil spirits, that 'eat up' all the carnal out of the Church, know not

how to rest from tempting in proportion as they are not burthened with any weight of flesh. But the persecutors of Holy Church, because they are very corrupt, would that they were few in number! It goes on;

Ver. 18. *In, the multitude of them is my garment consumed, and they have bound me about as with the collar of my coat.*

[xxix]

58. If we give heed to the history, what else do we take 'the garment' of blessed Job for, but his body? whose 'garment indeed is consumed' when the flesh is put to torment. But according to the mystery of allegory, 'the garment' of Holy Church is the life of the faithful. For as the whole Church together is 'the garment' of Christ so the faithful severally are accounted 'garments' of that same Church. For if Holy Church were not Christ's 'garment,' Paul surely would not say, *That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle*; [Eph. 5, 27] i.e. neither in respect of sin 'having spot,' nor in respect of a double mind 'having wrinkle,' because both by righteousness she is clean, And by a single bent stretched. She then that is washed that she should not 'have spot,' and stretched that she should not 'have wrinkle,' assuredly is a 'garment.' Therefore as the clothing of Christ is the name given to the whole Church in general, so the clothing of the Church are the souls of the several persons which being converted from error, by believing that same Church, encircle her by attaching themselves with faithfulness to her. Concerning which same the Lord saith to that Church by the Prophet, *As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely be clothed with them all, as with an ornament*. [Is. 49, 18] But when the storm of cruel persecution arises, very many of the faithful are separated from the love thereof, who seemed to have themselves attached to her heartily. So then let her say, *In the multitude of them is my garment consumed*; because whilst there are many that torment, the greatest number are brought to an end, who were attached to her by the binding tie of love.

59. Now it is well added, *And have bound me about as with the collar of my coat*. Since 'the collar of a coat' encircles the neck of the wearer, but if the neck is tied up, the use of the voice and the puff of life is done for. Holy Church, then, do the children of perdition 'tie up as with a collar of a coat,' because they endeavour by their persecutions to put out in her the life of faith, and the voice of preaching. Since this thing her persecutors are in a special manner wont to essay, that before all things they may take away from her the word of preaching. And hence these persons who withstood the first beginnings of the holy faith told the Apostles beaten with rods, saying, *Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine*. [Acts 5, 28] So the body of Holy Church they had as it were girded with 'the collar of a coat,' who, the preachers being tied up, as it were pressing her neck, wished to shut up the way of the voice in her. But the several Elect are more ready to die in the time of their persecution than to hold their peace. Who whilst they are brought down in death in the body, are accounted despicable and mean by all the foolish and the carnal, because when the lost are unable to see what good things the Elect hold in the spirit, these whom they see brought to an end in the flesh, they account unhappy. And hence it is added;

Ver. 19. *I was likened to mire, and became like dust and ashes.*

[xxx]

60. Since in the judgment of lost sinners the Holy Church of the Elect is 'likened to mire,' because it is trodden under and despised in time; it is 'compared to dust and ashes,' because while they do not see her interior good things, they calculate that she has been brought to those bad things alone, which they see brought to view in her in the body. But the faithful people of the Elect, while it sees many fall from itself, wishes, if it might obtain this, to have the times of its adversities reversed. Because the prayer of this people is delayed, its groaning is increased. Hence it is further added; Ver. 20. *I will cry unto Thee, but Thou wilt not hear me; I stand, and Thou regardest me not.*

[xxxix]

61. Since Holy Church in the time of her persecution 'stands' by faith, and 'cries' by longings. But she is grieved that she is 'not regarded' as it were, when she sees her wishes under tribulations delayed. For by a high counsel, Almighty God, when His Saints are wrung tightly by the persecutions of adversaries, and when they cry with never ceasing entreaties that they may be set free, is wont to put off their voices in entreating Him, that their merits in suffering may be increased, in order that they may be the more heard in answer to merit, the more they are not heard quickly in answer to wishing. Whence it is elsewhere written, *O my God, I cry in the day time, but Thou hearest not, and in the night season.* [Ps. 22, 2] And the very usefulness itself resulting from the delay of hearing is immediately added, when it is there brought in directly, *And not for foolishness to me.* Since for redoubling the wisdom of the Saints it is beneficial, that what is prayed for they receive slowly, that by delay desire may increase, and by desire the understanding may be augmented. But when the understanding is stretched to the full, there is opened a more ardent affection thereof towards God. And the affection is made large for obtaining the things of heaven, in proportion as it was long suffering in expecting. Yet in the midst of these things grief prompts the patience of the Saints to utterance, and whilst being delayed they gain ground, they dread lest their powers failing they should being despised be rejected. It goes on; Ver. 21. *Thou art changed to cruel unto me; and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou opposest Thyself against me.*

[xxxix]

#### [LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

62. The old translation is widely at variance with this sense, because what is spoken in this concerning God, is related in that of adversaries and persecutors. Yet because this new translation is said to have transferred every thing from the Hebrew and Arabic more truly, we should believe whatever is delivered in it, and the right way is that into the word of it our interpretation should search with exactness. Accordingly he says, *Thou art changed to cruel unto me, and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou opposest Thyself to me.* In Holy Scripture when any thing is said of God unworthy, the mind of the reader is affected, as if it were ever the case that any thing that is worthy were spoken of God. Since well nigh every thing that is spoken touching God, is by this alone henceforth unworthy, that it admitted of being spoken. But for Him to Whose praise the conscious faculty, being astounded, is not equal, when may the tongue by speaking suffice? But the Holy Spirit teaching to men that understand this same truth, how unutterable are the things above and the things of God, sometimes uses even those words concerning God, which amongst men are held as a fault, that from these things which seem unworthy of men, and yet are spoken concerning

God, men should be admonished to know that neither are those things even worthy of God, which whilst they are accounted worthy among men, are thought worthy of God.

63. For God is called 'jealous,' as it is written, *The Lord, his Name is 'jealous.'* [Ex. 34, 14] He is called 'wroth,' whence it is written, *The Lord was wroth against Israel.* [Numb. 32, 13.] The Lord is called 'repentant,' as where it is written, *It repenteth Me that I have made man upon the earth.* [Gen. 6, 7] And again; *It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king over Israel.* [1 Sam. 15, 11] He is entitled compassionate, as where it is written, *Merciful and pitiful is the Lord, patient and full of compassion.* [Ps. 86, 15.] He is called 'foreknowing,' as the Apostle saith concerning Him, *For whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son.* [Rom. 8, 29] Whereas neither 'jealousy,' nor 'wrath,' nor 'repentance,' nor strictly speaking 'compassionateness,' nor 'foreknowledge,' can be in God. For all these particulars are derived into Him from human qualities, while there is a descending to words expressive of infirmity, that as it were a kind of steps being made for us, and set beside us, by the things which we see close to us, we may one time be enabled to mount up to the high things of Him. For He is said to 'feel jealous,' who guards the chastity of his wife with torment of mind. 'He is said to be 'wroth,' who is inflamed with heat of spirit against evil that deserves to be punished. He is said to 'repent,' to whom that which he has done is displeasing, and contrarily by changing does some other thing. He is called 'compassionate,' who is moved with pity towards his neighbour. Now 'misericordia' ('commiseration') is so called from 'miserum cor,' ('a miserable heart,') for this reason, because each individual sees a person wretched, and sympathizing with him, while he is affected with grief of mind, he himself makes his heart miserable, that he may free from misery the man that he is set on. He is said to 'foreknow,' who sees each particular event before it comes, and that which is future foresees before it becomes present. How then is God described as being 'jealous,' Who in watching over our chastity, is not affected by any torment of mind? How is He 'wroth,' Who in taking vengeance on our evil ways is not stirred by any agitation of mind? How is He 'repentant,' Who what He has once done is never at all sorry that He has done? How is He 'commiserating,' Who has not ever a heart of misery? How is He foreknowing, whereas nothing but what is future can be foreknown? And we know that to God there is nothing future, before the Eyes of Whom things past there are none, things present pass not by, things future come not; seeing that all that to us was and will be is in His sight at hand, and all that is present He is able to know rather than foreknow. And yet He is called 'jealous,' He is called 'wroth,' He is called 'repentant,' He is called 'commiserating,' He is called 'foreknowing,' that because He watches over the chastity of each individual soul, He should after man's method be called 'jealous,' though He be not touched by torment of mind. And because He smites sins, He is said to be 'wroth,' though He be not affected by any agitation of the spirit. And because Himself unchangeable He changes that that He is minded, He is said to 'repent,' though it is the thing He changes, not His counsel. And when He succours our misery, He is called 'commiserating,' though He succours the miserable, and has not ever a heart of misery. And because the things which to us are future He sees, which same however to the Same Being are always at hand, He is styled 'foreknowing,' though He does not in any way foresee the future, which He sees as present. For even whatsoever things are, in His Eternity are not therefore seen because they are, but therefore they are because they are seen. Whilst therefore there is a coming down to the words of our changeableness, by those, as being made a kind of steps, let him, who is able, mount up to the unchangeableness of God, that he may see One shewing jealousy, without jealousy, One wroth without wrath, One repentant without sorrow or repentance, full of commiseration without a miserable heart, foreknowing without foresight. For in Him can neither

the past nor the future be found, but all things changeable last unchangeably, and things, which in themselves cannot exist together, are all of them at once and together present to Him, and nothing that goes by passes away in Him, because in His Eternal Being, in an incomprehensible manner, all the rolls of ages whilst passing remain, whilst running a race stand still.

64. As then we understand Him 'jealous' without jealousy, 'wroth' without wrath, so He might by the holy man be also called 'cruel' without cruelty. Since he is called 'cruel,' who while smiting with severity spares not; that is to say that in this passage 'cruel' should be taken for one striking with severity, and not sparing the avenging of sin. Hence also Isaiah, when he saw the day of final Judgment was destined to come not henceforth with pardon but with rigour, *says, Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath, and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it.* [Is. 13, 9] Therefore the holy man, that he might declare that this same cruelty is more suited to himself than to God, *says, Thou art changed to cruel unto me.* As though he said in plain terms, 'Thou, Who hast in Thine own Self nought of cruelty, to me, whom Thou sufferest not to draw breath from persecution, Thou seemest cruel.' For so God is not capable of being cruel, just as He is not in the least degree capable of being changed. But because in God there comes not either cruelty or changeableness at any time, whilst He says 'unto me,' he shews that he is sensible that God is in Himself neither 'cruel' nor 'changeable.' But because as concerns ourselves things prosperous and things adverse shift to and fro, in this that we ourselves are changed, we as it were imagine as concerns ourselves His mind changed. But He the same Being remaining unchangeable in Himself, in the thought of men's hearts comes to be felt now one way and now another, according to the character of their minds. For the light of the sun too, whereas it is not at all unlike to itself, seems to weak eyes harsh, but to sound eyes gentle; that is to say, by their changing, not by its own. Therefore as we before said, in saying, *Thou art changed*, he added *unto me*, that this very 'cruelty' and 'changing' might be not in the attributes of the Judge, but in the mind of the sufferer. Which he laid open by other words also, saying, *And in the hardness of Thine hand Thou opposest Thyself to me.* For 'the Hand' of the Lord is thought 'hard,' when being opposed to our will, that thing which displeases Him in us, it follows hard upon by striking; and He redoubles the strokes, when the soul of the sorrower looks for clemency.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Which words, howsoever, according to the mystery of the allegory, suit well the words of Holy Church speaking in the accents of the weak, who very often reckon themselves to be smitten more than they fancy they deserve, and esteem as cruelty of the Judge the severity of the lancing howsoever most just, seeing too that when the wound of the sick man is cut away by the surgeon's steel, the operator is called cruel, who however by the hardness of the hand that cuts is opposed to the wound, but in concert with the health. It proceeds;

Ver. 22. *Thou liftedst me up, and as it were setting me upon the wind, thou dashedst me down strongly.*

[xxxiii]

65. Because the glory of the present life is seen as on high, but is not set firm by any steadfastness, one is as if he were 'lifted up and set upon the wind,' who rejoices in earthly prosperity, because the breath of fleeting happiness lifts him up only for this end, that it may in a moment prostrate him

the worse below. For whereas Holy Church is high in honour with all persons, the weak ones in her, who rejoice in transitory successes, [Some read ‘successibus,’ others ‘successionibus,’ which last may mean ‘advancements occurring in the change of things.’] whereunto do they seem lifted up but as set upon the wind? Because in the succeeding season of persecution, when the breath of prosperity is gone by, their ‘lifting up’ is brought to the earth in a moment, if instantly they learn by falling, that, whilst lifted up before they were seated upon the wind. Which very words in a peculiar manner accord with the person of the holy man also, not as to the thing that was, but as to the thing that seemed to be. For never had fleeting prosperity ‘lifted up’ his mind, which mind in the midst of such overflowing stores of good things he ever kept down by a wonderful weight of virtue. But according to that which might have externally appeared, he who was little in his own eyes, was exalted in the eyes of others, and as it were ‘placed upon the wind,’ he was ‘dashed down strongly,’ because being buoyed up by outward goods, by the same means, whereby he was accounted to rise, he appeared to have fallen. Which same fall in the interior the holy man did not undergo, because no bad fortune throws down the man, whom no good fortune corrupts. For he who is attached to the truth, is in no degree brought under to vanity, because, whereas he has planted with a firm foot the bent of the thought within, all that is brought to pass in change without, reaches not in the least degree to the citadel of the interior. It goes on;

Ver. 23. *I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living.*

[xxxiv]

66. In the preceding part of this work [Book xiii. §. 48 &c.] the point was treated of, that before the Coming of the Lord even the righteous did descend to the abodes of hell, though they were kept not in woes but in rest. Which thing we omit to prove by testimonies now, because we think it is already sufficiently proved there. This, then, that is said, *I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living*, is rightly suited to blessed Job even according to the history, whereas surely it appears that before the grace of the Redeemer even the just were carried to the caverns of hell. For the mere entering [‘admissio’] of ‘hell’ is itself called ‘the house of all living,’ because no one came hither, who before the Advent of the Mediator did not pass by thereunto by the simple constitution of his state of corruption. No one came hither, who did not go on to the death of the flesh, by the steps of that same corruption belonging to him. Of which selfsame death it is evidently said by the Psalmist; *What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?* [Ps 89, 48] For though Elijah is related to have been transported to heaven, nevertheless he delayed, and did not escape death. For by the very mouth of Truth it is said; *Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things.* [Matt. 17, 11] For he shall come to ‘restore all things,’ since for this end surely is he restored to this world, that he may both fulfil the functions of preaching, and pay the debt of the flesh.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

Which sentence however of the holy man suits the accents of Holy Church in the person of the weak sort, who hold the faith to the extent of the word of the lips, but contrary to the precepts of faith act the slave to their desires. For she says; *I know that thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living.* For because she sees multitudes in her devoted to pleasures, and already foresees the destruction of those, she reflects that in the course of the present life they serve their desires indeed, but yet all are brought to the house of death, who in that same course live

carnally. But there are some that are brought down into the pit of their gratifications, yet by the tears of repentance quickly recover the foot from below, which persons the strokes of smiting from Above cut rather for instruction than destruction. In the person of whom it is fitly subjoined; Ver. 24. *Howbeit Thou dost not put forth thine hand for the destroying of them; and if they are brought to the ground, Thou wilt save them Thyself.*

[xxxv]

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

67. In which words assuredly this ought to be perceived with penetration, that blessed Job, while he is telling his own circumstances transfers others into himself.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

For he as it were in a special manner said of himself; *Thou liftedst me up, and as it were setting me upon the wind dashedst me down with strength: I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living;* and yet he adds not concerning himself but others, *Howbeit Thou dost not put forth Thine hand for the destroying of them.* For whereas whilst speaking of himself in arguing, he subjoins cases applying to others, he shews how many he represents the persons of in himself. Accordingly the Lord 'puts not forth His hand for the destroying' of those that sin, when by striking He reforms from sins, and 'He saves those that are falling to the ground,' when those falling into transgression He wounds as to the health of the body; that being brought low outwardly they should arise inwardly, in order that lying prostrate in the body those should be brought back to the standing of the interior, who whilst standing outwardly lay low to the standing of the soul. It goes on; Ver. 25. *I wept of old over him that was in trouble; my soul suffered with the poor.*

[xxxvi]

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

68. Though it is true compassion to concur with the suffering of a fellow creature by bountifulness, yet sometimes when the several outward things are abundantly provided for us to bestow, the hand of him that gives finds the act of giving more quickly than the feeling does sorrow. Hence it is necessary for us to know that he gives in a perfect way, who together with that, which he reaches forth to the afflicted, takes in himself the feeling of the afflicted as well; that he should first transfer the suffering of the person sorrowing into himself, and then, to meet the sorrow of that person by the act of service render concurrence. For often, as we said before, the abundance of good things creates the bestower of a benefit, and not the excellence of compassion. For he, who perfectly compassionates the afflicted, generally even gives that to the persons in want, wherein he himself, if he gives it, is brought to shifts. And then the compassion of our heart is to the full, when we are not afraid to take upon ourselves the evil of want in behalf of a fellow creature, in order that we may set him free from suffering.

69. Which model of pitifulness in very deed the Mediator between God and Man gave to us. Who when He could have succoured us even without dying, yet was minded to come to the aid of

mankind by dying, because plainly He would have loved us too little, except He took upon Him our wounds as well; nor would He exhibit the face of His love to us, unless the thing that He was to take away from us, He did Himself undergo for a time. For He found us subject to suffering, and mortal beings, and He, Who caused us to exist out of nothing, doubtless had the power to restore us from suffering even without death. But that He might shew how great the virtue of Compassion is, He deigned to become in our behalf what He would not have us to be, that He should take upon Him death temporally in His own Person, which death He should banish for evermore from ourselves. Could not He, while continuing invisible to us in the riches of His own Godhead, have been able to enrich us with wonderful powers? But that man might be brought back to the interior riches, God deigned to appear poor without. Hence also the great Preacher, that he might kindle to the kindness of bounty the bowels of our compassion, said, *For our sakes He became poor, when He was rich.* [2 Cor. 8, 9] Who speaks in this way also; *Not that to others there should be a releasing, but to you tribulation.* [ib. v. 13] These things doubtless he brought in condescending to the weak, because some not having the strength to bear want, it is better borne to give less, than after one's bounty to murmur on account of straitness of poverty. For that he might kindle the minds of those that heard him to great affections for giving, a little while after he introduced the words, saying, *But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.* [2 Cor. 9, 6] But we sometimes say that it is more to sympathize in heart than it is to give; because every one who perfectly sympathizes with one in want, reckons as less all that he gives. For except that good will surpassed the hand of a person in giving, that same great Preacher would not have said to the disciple, *Who have begun before not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.* [2, Cor. 8, 10] Since it is easy in good deeds to obey even against one's will. But this great excellence had appeared in the disciples, that the good that was enjoined them, they had been forward to even before.

70. Thus because the holy man knew that with Almighty God greater sometimes is the gift of the mind than of the benefit, let him say, *I wept of old over him that was in trouble, and my soul compassionated the poor man.* For in bestowing outward things, he rendered an object without himself. But he who bestowed upon his neighbour weeping and compassion, gave him something even from his very self. But on this account we say that compassion is more than the gift, because for the most part some sort of thing even he gives who does not entertain compassion, but never does he, who feels true compassion, withhold that which he sees to be necessary for his neighbour.

71. Which sentence surely is well suited to the accents of Holy Church, who while she sees persons afflicted in the tears of penitence, joins her own tears thereto by continual prayer, and sympathizes with the needy person as often as by the entreaties of her intercession she helps the mind bared of virtues. Since we lament over the afflicted sympathizing with him, when we reckon the hurts of others as our own, and by our tears strive to cleanse away the sins of those guilty of transgression. In the doing which, indeed, we very often help ourselves more than we do those in whose behalf it is done, because before the Inmost Umpire, Who also breathes into us the grace of charity, he perfectly washes out his own several acts, who disinterestedly bewails those of others. Therefore let Holy Church, being seized in the time of the last persecution, recall to remembrance the good things which she has done in the time of peace, saying, *I wept of old over him that was afflicted, and my soul compassionated the poor man.* Who longing for the eternal delights of the interior light, yet still delayed, because she is beset with outward ills, may subjoin in the accents of the holy man;



Ver. 26. *When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there broke forth darkness.*

[xxxvii]

72. For the faithful people ‘looks for good,’ but receives evil, and it ‘waits for light,’ and meets with ‘darkness,’ because by the grace of the recompensing it hopes to be now already admitted to the joys of the Angels, and yet being delayed for a longer time here below, it is exposed to the hands of those that persecute it; and he who calculates to enjoy as quickly as possible the recompensing of the Light Eternal, is still forced to suffer here the darkness of his persecutors. Which same ills of those persecuting them would grieve them the less, if they arose from unbelievers and adversaries. But they torture the mind of the Elect the worse in proportion as they proceed from those, upon whom they were foreassuring good. Whence it is yet further added; Ver. 27. *My bowels boiled, and rested not.*

Since for ‘the bowels’ of Holy Church ‘to boil’ is for her to endure in the fierceness of persecution, these very persons too, whom she had before in the love of the faith carried as ‘bowels.’ Which same first acquainting themselves with her secrets, in the same proportion as they know where she suffers the greatest pain, to so much the worse degree never rest from the afflicting of her; which persons however even in the time of her peace she bears heavily with, because she takes thought of their ways as opposite to her own preachings. For she groans when she espies the life of those as unlike to herself. Concerning whom also it is fitly subjoined; *The days of affliction prevented me.*

For the Holy Church of Elect persons knows that in the last persecution she shall suffer many ills, but ‘the days of her affliction prevent her’; because even in the time of peace she bears within herself the life of the wicked with a heavy spirit. For though in the last days there follow the open persecution of the unbelievers, yet this same even before it comes to light, those in her who are believers to the extent of the word only by bad practices forerun. It goes on; Ver. 28. *I went mourning: without rage rising up, I cried out in the crowd.*

[xxxviii]

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

73. I see that it is a thing to be carefully noted historically considered, that the holy man who a little before said, *Thou hast lifted me up*, added below, *I went mourning*. For by a wonderful arrangement at one and the same time there is wont to meet together in the courses of good men, at once without, the honour of the highest pitch, and within, the mourning of afflicted abasement. Hence the holy man likewise, whilst lifted to a height by substance and by honours; ‘went mourning’; for though this man the high credit of power displayed advanced above his fellow-creatures, yet inwardly he offered to the Lord by his mourning the secret sacrifice of a contrite heart. Since *the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit*. [Ps. 51, 17] Now all the Elect are taught by inward reflecting to fight against the temptations of outward superiority. Which persons, if they set their heart to their outward good fortune assuredly would cease to be righteous. But because it cannot be that upon the mere grounds of the successes of fortune alone the heart of man should never be at all tempted with

however slight a degree of pride, holy men strive hard within against their very good fortune itself; I do not say, lest in self exaltation, but lest in the love of that prosperity at all events they should be brought to the ground. And it is most effectually to have been brought under this, to have surrendered the mind in a state of captivity to the desires thereof. But who that has a taste for earthly things, who that embraces temporal objects, would not look upon blessed Job as happy amidst so many circumstances of prosperity, when the health of the body, the life of his children, the preservation of his household, the completeness of his flocks, were all vouchsafed to him? But that in all these circumstances he did not take delight, he is his own witness, in that he says, *I went mourning*. For to the holy man still placed in this state of pilgrimage, all that is full of abundance, without the Vision of God, is destitution; because when the Elect see that all things are theirs, they lament that they do not see the Author of all things, and to them all this is too little, because there is still wanting the appearance of One. And in such sort does the grace of Heavenly Appointment exalt them without, that nevertheless, within, the sorrow of the instructress charity holds them under discipline. By which same they learn, that for the things which they receive outwardly, they should ever be the more humbled to themselves, should keep the mind under the yoke of discipline, should never by the liberty of power be made to break out into impatience. Whence also it is fitly subjoined, *Without rage rising in the crowd, I cried out*. For it often happens that the tumults of seditious men provoke the spirit of their rulers, and by disorderly emotions they transgress the limit of their orderliness.

74. And very often they who are set at the head, except in the mouth of the heart they be held in with the bridle of the Holy Spirit, leap forth into the fierceness of enraged retribution, and as much as they are able to do, reckon themselves to be at liberty to do with those under them. For impatience is almost always the friend of power, and that power when evil it even rules over as subject to it. For what that same feels, power executes. But holy men bow down themselves much more to the yoke of patience inwardly, than they are above others outwardly, and they exhibit without the truer governance, in proportion as they maintain within more lowly servitude to God: and they for this reason often endure persons the more fully, the more they have it in their power to revenge themselves upon them, and lest they should ever pass over into things unlawful, they very often will not put in execution in their own behalf even what is lawful; they are subject to the clamours of those under their charge, they rebuke in love those, whom they bear in mildness. Whence it is rightly said now, *Without rage rising up in the crowd, I cried out*; in this way, because against the clamours of the unruly the good have ‘crying out,’ but they have not ‘rage,’ because those whom they bear with gently they do not cease to teach.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But these particulars which after the historical view we have delivered concerning one individual, it remains that we understand after the allegorical view concerning diverse Elect ones of Holy Church. For she too in her Elect ‘goes mourning,’ even in prosperous circumstances. For she accounts nothing truly prosperous to her, until the good, which she is preeminently seeking after, she may lay hold of. Since her faithful ones enjoy temporal peace indeed, but sigh evermore; they are honoured, and afflicted: because very often they are seen at the highest pitch there, where they are not citizens. She too ‘rises in the crowd without rage, and cries out,’ because she presses upon the life of the evil doers with the eagerness of right jealousy, not with the frenzy of rage. She is

angry and loving, she deals wrathfully and is tranquil, that so her weak members she may reform by zealously, and cherish in pitifulness. It goes on;

Ver. 29. *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches.*

[xxxix]

75. What is there denoted by the title of 'dragons,' but the life of evil minded men? Of whom also it is said by the prophet, *They drew up the wind like dragons*. [Jer. 14, 6] For all wicked men 'draw in wind like dragons,' when they are swoln with evil minded pride. But who are used to be understood by the designation of 'ostriches,' saving pretenders? For the ostrich has wings, but has not flight; because all pretenders have an appearance of sanctity, but the goodness of sanctity they have not. For those persons the appearance of good conduct adorns, but the wing of virtue never lifts them from the earth. So let the Elect people of Holy Church, because in the time of its peace it suffers within itself persons that are evil minded and pretenders, say the words, *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches*. Which too in a special manner accords with the words of blessed Job, who to the highest pitch of great fortitude was a good man amongst bad. For no one is perfect who amidst his neighbours' evil things is not patient. For he who does not bear others' evil with composure, is by his impatience witness to himself that he is very far removed from the plenitude of goodness. For he refuses to be Abel, whom the malice of Cain does not exercise.

76. Thus in the threshing of the floor the grains are squeezed under the chaff; thus the flowers come forth between thorns, and the rose that smells grows along with the thorn that pricks. Thus the first man had two sons, but one was elect, the other refuse. The three sons of Noah too did the ark contain, but while two continued in humility, one went headlong into the mocking of his father. Two sons Abraham had; but one was innocent, the other the persecutor of his brother. Two sons also Isaac had, one saved in humility, while the other even before that he was born was cast away. Twelve sons Jacob begat, but of these one was sold in innocency, while the rest were through wickedness the sellers of their brother. Twelve Apostles too were chosen in Holy Church; but that they might not remain untried, one is mixed with them, who by persecuting should try them. For to a just man there is joined a sinner together with wickedness, just as in the furnace to the gold there is added chaff along with fire, that in proportion as the chaff burns the gold may be purified. So then those are truly good men, who are enabled to hold on in goodness even in the midst of bad men; herein too it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the Spouse; *As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters*. [Cant. 2, 2] Hence the Lord saith to Ezekiel *And thou, son of man, unbelievers and overturners are with thee, and thou dwellest among scorpions*. [Ez. 2, 6] Hence Peter magnifies the life of blessed Lot, saying, *And delivered righteous Lot, when oppressed, from the wrongful conversation of the wicked. For to be seen and to be heard he was righteous, living among, those, who from day to day vexed the soul of the righteous man by wicked works*. [2 Pet. 2, 7. &c.] Hence Paul magnifies the life of his disciples, and in magnifying strengthens it, saying, *In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding the word of life*. [Phil. 2, 15. 16.] Hence by John, the Angel of the Church of Pergamus is borne witness to in the words, *I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith*. [Rev. 2, 15] So then let blessed Job, that he may evince what firmness he is of, tell with whom he lived, saying, *I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches*. Because it would have been but little that he himself did good things,

except that for the heightening of his goodness he likewise sustained what was evil at the hands of others. It goes on;

Ver. 30. *My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.*

[xl]

77. This we forbear to take account of after the history, for this reason, that the force of the speech appears from the pain of the suffering. But because, as we have already often said, blessed Job very frequently so relates things done, as to foretell things to be done, this excellently agrees with the accents of Holy Church, who in her weak members grievously feels the pain of the last persecution. And when others die off from her, all the stronger ones are wrung with sorrow. For her outward concern is earthly dispensing, but the interior is a heavenly charge. And so by the name of the 'skin' the weak are denoted, who now do service in her to exterior usefulness. While by the bones the strong are represented, in that in them the whole jointing of her body is cemented. And therefore because either being invited by bribes, or distressed by persecutions, many weak persons in her fall from the standing of faith, and themselves after they have fallen persecute her, what is it but that she suffers a 'blackness of her skin,' that in those very ones she should afterwards appear foul, in whom she before shewed fair. For whilst they who had been before accustomed to manage outward things aright, afterwards rage against the Elect of God, as it were 'the skin' of the Church has lost the hue of foregoing righteousness, in that it has come to the blackness of iniquity. Which Jeremiah also bewails under the likeness of the principal metal, saying, *How is the gold become dim; how is the fine colour changed?* [Lam. 4, 1] The froward, therefore, when they go forth from her sacraments, very often take a place of honour amongst the children of perdition, so that the very persons should rage against Holy Church with authority, who as it were in knowing despise this Church more cruelly. And hence when he said, *My skin is black*, he added, *upon me*; because those whom she before had as it were white as to the beautifulness of righteousness, she afterwards carries 'black' the worse. But when 'the skin' is turned to 'blackness,' the strong that are in her are consumed with jealousy of the faith. And hence he fitly subjoins; *And my bones are dried up with heat*. For in this way in the time before too that strongest bone of Holy Church, Paul, burned with a certain dryness of weariness, when he said to some persons on their falling; *Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?* [2 Cor. 11, 29] And so 'the skin is made black, and the bones are dried up with heat;' because while the weak leap forth to iniquity, all the strong are tortured with the fire of their zeal. It goes on;

Ver. 31. *My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.*

[xli]

78. Whereas the organ gives its sounds by means of pipes, and the harp by chords; it may be that by the 'harp' right practising is denoted, and by the 'organ' holy preaching. For by the pipes of an organ we not unsuitably understand the mouths of persons preaching, and by the chords of the harps the bent of those living aright. Which whilst it is stretched to another life by the afflicting of the flesh, it is as if the thin drawn chord in the harp sounded in the admiration of those beholding. For the chord is dried that it may give a suitable note on the harp; because holy men also chasten their body, and subject it to service, and are stretched from things below to those above. Moreover it is to be considered that the chord in the harp, if it be strung too little, does not sound, if too much, it sounds harsh; because doubtless the virtue of abstinence is altogether nothing if a man does not

tame his body as much as he is able; or it is very ill ordered if he wears it down more than he is able. For by abstinence the imperfections of the flesh are to be done away, and not the flesh, and every one ought to rule himself with such great control, that both the flesh may not carry itself high for sin, and yet that it may be upheld in practice for the carrying out of righteousness. It is a satisfaction herein to look at the great preacher, with what great skill of preceptorship the souls of believers like chords strung on the harp, one set by stretching the more, he draws fine, another by loosening from their stretch he preserves. For to some he says; *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness*. [Rom. 13, 13] And again he says; *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth*. [Col. 3, 5] And yet to the most beloved preacher he writes, saying, *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake, and for thine often infirmities*. [1 Tim. 5, 23] Thus those chords by drawing thin he stretches, lest by not being stretched they altogether give no sound. But this chord he abates of its stretching, lest whilst it is stretched more, the less it should sound.

79. But whether it be the holy preachers in the Church, or the simpleminded and temperate generally, as far as they are vouchsafed powers, they render to their neighbours in her the song of goodly exhortation. For both the wise sort severally keep discreetly on the watch to the fruit of preaching, and that they may draw others to life they ply themselves with a sound of mighty persuading; and they that appear to be of slower wit within her, by the mere merit of their lives, to the extent that they see that they are able, take upon them authority of exhortation towards others, and cease not to draw to the heavenly Country those whom they are able. But Holy Church being borne down by the last persecutions, when she sees her words to be set at nought by the children of perdition, shapes the goodness of her love to lamentations alone, because surely she bewails those whom she is not able by exhorting to draw. Let her say then, *My harp also is turned to mourning, and mine organ into the voice of them that weep*. As though she avowed in plain words, saying, 'In the season of my peace, indeed, by some I preached little things after the manner of a harp, whilst by others things great and sounding after the manner of an organ; but now 'my harp is turned into mourning and mine organ into the voice of them that weep,' because whilst I see myself to be despised I mourn over those who hear not the song of preaching.' Such things is Holy Church to do by certain persons in the end, these things has she already done by certain in her beginnings. For the first martyr Stephen endeavoured by preaching to benefit the Jews that persecuted him, which persons when he saw, notwithstanding, after the words of preaching to have flocked together to throwing stones, he prayed with his knees set fast, saying, *Lord Jesus, lay not this sin to their charge*. [Acts. 7, 60] How then was it to him who for long had told things both small and great, but that the melody of his 'harp and of his organ' was already mute, and they were 'turned into mourning,' because those whom he had not drawn in preaching, he wept for in loving? Which same Holy Church ceases not daily to do, because she already sees that the word of preaching is almost every where become mute. For some close their mouths from speaking, others scorn to hear right things. But the mind of the Elect whilst it sees the song of preaching to be stilled, returns groaning and in silence to lamentations. Therefore let her say, *My harp is turned into mourning, and mine organ into the voice of them that weep*, because every elect person in proportion as the voice of holy preaching has been stilled, so much the more sorely does he bewail the woes of the Church.

Thus far blessed Job has described the evils that he underwent; but from this place he begins to relate with more particularity the good things that he did. Now the words of grief we have run through by an historical and allegorical explanation: but the deeds of virtuous qualities we in great

measure hold according to the text of the history alone, lest if we draw these to the exploring of mysteries, we should perchance appear to be making void the verity of the deed.

## BOOK XXI.

The thirty-first chapter of the Book of Job is explained to verse twenty-four, exclusive, and chastity, humility, and mercifulness being first commended, many particulars are especially taught relative to the avoiding of the occasion of sin.

[i]

1. The sense of Sacred Revelation requires to be weighed with so exact a balancing between the text and the mystery, that the scale of either side being adjusted, this latter ['hune,' which seems to agree with 'intellectus' referred to 'mysterium.'] neither the weight of over-curious scrutinizing should sink down, nor again the deadness of unconcern leave void. For many sentences thereof are pregnant with such a conception of allegories, that any one who strives to hold them after the history alone, is deprived of the knowledge of them by his indifference. But there are some that are so made subordinate to external precepts, that if a man desires to penetrate them with greater particularity, within indeed he finds nothing, whilst even that too which they tell of without, he hides from himself.

2. Whence it is well said also in historical relation by a method of representing; *And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the almond and plane-trees, and pilled them in strakes, and when the bark was off, where they were stripped, the white appeared, and the parts that were whole remained green; and after this manner the colour was made variegated.* [Gen. 30, 37-39] When it is further added, *And he set them in the gutters in the watering-troughs, that when the flocks came to drink they should have the rods before their eyes, and should conceive in looking on them. And the flocks when they conceived looked on the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, spotted, and speckled.* For what is it to set before the eyes of the cattle 'rods of green poplar, and of the almond and plane-trees,' but through the course Holy Scripture to furnish for an example to the people the lives and sentences of the Ancient Fathers, which same because by the testing of reason they are in a right line, are styled 'rods.' From which he 'peels the bark' in part, that in those which are stripped the inward whiteness may appear, and in part he keeps the bark, that just as they were outwardly, they should remain in greenness. And the colour of the rods is made pied, whereas the bark is in part stripped off, in part retained. Since before the eyes of our reflection the sentences of the foregoing Fathers are placed, like pied rods, in which whereas we very often avoid the sense of the letter, we are as it were withdrawing the bark, and whereas we very often follow the meaning of the letter, we as it were preserve the bark. And when from those same the bark of the letter is removed, the interior whiteness of the allegory is brought to view, and when the bark is left, the green grown examples of the outward meaning are shewn. Which Jacob did well to 'set in the watering-troughs,' because our Redeemer set them in the books of the Sacred Lore by which we are inwardly watered. 'The rams mix with the sheep looking at these,' because our reasoning spirits when they are fixed in the earnest minding of those mingle themselves with the several particular actings, that they should begot such a progeny of works as they see examples of precepts going before in words, and the progeny of

good practice may have a different colour, because both sometimes, the bark of the letter being removed, it sees what is within with acuteness, and sometimes, the covering of the history being preserved, it moulds itself well in the outward.

3. For because the Divine sentences require sometimes to be explored internally, and sometimes to be viewed externally, it is said by Solomon also, *He that strongly presseth the udder for the drawing forth milk squeezeth out butter, and he that wringeth* [‘emungit,’ al. ‘emulget.’] *violently draweth out blood.* For we ‘press the udder strongly,’ when we weigh with minute understanding the word of Sacred Revelation, by which way of ‘pressing whilst we seek ‘milk,’ we find ‘butter,’ because whilst we seek to be fed with but a little insight, we are anointed with the abundance of interior richness. Which, nevertheless, we ought neither to do too much nor at all times, lest while milk is sought for from the udder there should follow blood. For very often persons whilst they sift the words of Sacred Revelation more than they ought, fall into a carnal apprehension. For ‘he draws forth blood, who wringeth violently.’ Since that is rendered carnal which is perceived by an over-great sifting of the spirit. Whence it is requisite that the deeds of blessed Job, which he for this reason relates amidst the words of upbraiding friends, that his afflicted soul might not fall away in despair, we should examine into according to the weight of the history, lest if the mind explain these in a spiritual sense above what is necessary, from the udder of his words there be blood answering us instead of milk. But if he does sometimes relate some things mystical in the relation of his works, it is necessary that the mind with quickened speed return to these considerations, whereunto as is given to be understood the very order of the person speaking itself bids that mind. For the holy man, after he had told the things that had been inflicted on him by the scourge of God, now by enumerating in order his own virtues makes it known what sort of person he was before the scourge, so constructing the history of his life, as to insert therein a something very rare which might be understood in an allegorical way, that both in a large proportion they should be historical facts that he records, and yet occasionally, by means of these same, he should rise up to a spiritual meaning. Thus with what strength he had bound up his exterior conduct from all falling by the training of inward safe-keeping, he tells, saying,  
Ver. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I should not even think upon a maid.*

[ii]

#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

4. Whereas the soul is invisible, it is in no degree affected by the delightfulness of things corporeal, except that, being closely attached to the body, it has the senses of that body as a kind of opening for going forth. For seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, are a kind of ways of the mind, by which it should come forth without, and go a lusting after the things that are without the limits of its substance. For by these senses of the body as by a kind of windows the soul takes a view of the several exterior objects, and on viewing longs after them. For hence Jeremiah saith; *For death is come up through our windows, and is entered into our palaces;* [Jer. 9, 21] for ‘death comes up by the windows and enters into the palace,’ when concupiscence coming through the senses of the body enters the dwelling-place of the mind. Contrary whereunto that which we have often already said touching the righteous is spoken by Isaiah; *Who are they that fly as clouds, and as the doves at their windows?* [Is. 60, 8] For the righteous are said to fly as clouds, because they are lifted up from the defilements of earth, and they are ‘as doves at their windows,’ because

through the senses of the body they do not regard the several objects without with the bent of rapacity, and carnal concupiscence does not carry those persons off without. But he who through those windows of the body heedlessly looks without, very often falls even against his will into the delightfulness of sin, and being fast bound by desires, he begins to will what he willed not. For the precipitate soul, whilst it does not forecast beforehand, that it should not incautiously see what it might lust after, begins afterwards with blinded eyes to desire the thing that it saw. And hence the mind of the Prophet, which being uplifted was often admitted to interior mysteries, because he beheld the wife of another without heed, being darkened afterwards joined her to him without right. But the holy man, who as a kind of judge of greatest equity is set over the senses granted him in the body, as over subject officers, sees offences before they come, and closes the windows of the body as against a plotting enemy, saying, *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I should not even think upon a maid*. For that he might preserve the thoughts of the heart with chastity, he ‘made a covenant with his eyes,’ lest he should first see without caution what he might afterwards love against his will. For it is very greatly that the flesh drags downwards, and the image of a shape once bound on the heart by means of the eye is with difficulty unloosed by the hand of great struggling. So then that we may not deal with things lascivious in thought we have need to take precaution because it is not befitting to look at what is not lawful to be lusted after. For that the mind may be preserved pure in thought, the eyes must be forced away from the wantonness of their pleasure, like a kind of ravishing unto sin. For neither would Eve have touched the forbidden tree, except she had looked on it first without taking heed; since it is written, *And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree delightful to look upon, and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat*. [Gen. 3, 6] Hence, therefore, it is to be estimated with, what great control we who are living a mortal life ought to restrain our sight towards forbidden objects; if the very mother of the living came to death through means of the eyes. Hence too under the voice of Judaea, who, whereas by seeing she coveted external things, parted with interior blessings, the Prophet says; *Mine eye hath robbed mine heart*. [Lam. 3, 51] For by lusting after things visible, she lost the invisible virtues. She, then, who lost the interior fruits by the exterior sight, did by the eye of the body endure the ‘robbing of the heart.’ Hence by ourselves, for safely keeping purity of heart, there ought also to be preserved the disciplining of the exterior senses. For with whatever degree of excellency the mind may be enriched, with whatever amount of gravity it may be invigorated, yet the carnal senses ring outwardly with a something childish, and except they were restrained by the weight of interior gravity, and as it were by a sort of manly energy, they drag the soul unstrung to things loose and light.

5. Let us then see in what manner blessed Job kept in by a manly [‘juvenili.’] vigour of wisdom all that the flesh might breathe of in him of loose and childish. For he says, *I made a covenant with mine eyes*, and because he quenched not only the doing but also the thinking of lust in himself, going on he added; *that I should not even think on a maid*. For he knew that lust has need to be checked in the heart, he knew by the gift of the Holy Spirit that our Redeemer on His coming would go beyond the precepts of the Law, and put away from His Elect not only lustful indulgence of the flesh, but also of the heart, saying, *It hath been written, Thou shall not commit adultery? But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart*. [Matt. 5, 27. 28.] For by Moses lust perpetrated, buy by the Author of purity lust imagined, is condemned. For hence it is that the first Pastor of the Church says to the disciples; *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope perfectly in the grace that is offered to you*. [1 Pet. 1, 13] For to ‘gird up the loins’ of the flesh is to withhold lust from



accomplishment, but 'to gird up the loins of the mind,' is to restrain it from the imagining thereof as well. Hence it is that the Angel who addresses John is described as being 'girt above the paps with a golden girdle.' [Rev. 1, 13] For because the purity of the New Testament puts restraint upon lust of the heart likewise, the Angel who appeared therein, came 'girt' in the breast. Whom a golden girdle rightly binds, because whoever is a citizen of the country Above does not now forsake impurity from dread of punishment, but from the love of charity. Now the wickedness of lust is committed either in thought or deed. For our crafty enemy when he is driven away from the carrying out of the deed, makes it his business to defile by secret thought. Hence too it is said to the serpent by the Lord, *Thou shalt creep on the breast and belly*. That is, 'the serpent creeps with his belly,' when the gliding enemy by the human members subject to him calls lust into exercise even to the fulfilling of the deed; but 'the serpent creeps with the breast,' when those whom he cannot pollute in the deed of lust, he does pollute in the thought. Thus one man now perpetrates lust in act of doing, to this man the serpent creeps by the belly. But another man entertains it in the mind as to be committed, and to him the serpent 'creeps by the breast.' But because through the thought we are brought to the fulfilling deeds, the serpent is rightly described first as 'creeping upon the breast,' and afterwards 'upon the belly.' Hence blessed Job because he maintained discipline even in the thought, by a single guarding mastered both 'the breast and belly of the serpent,' saying, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even, think on a maid*. Which same purity of heart whoever does not aim at acquiring, what else does he but drive away from himself the Author of that purity? whence blessed Job too directly adds;

Ver. 2. *For what portion would God have in me from above, and what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high?*

[iii]

6. As though he said in plain words; 'If I defile, my mind in thought, I can never be the 'inheritance' of Him, Who is the Author of purity.' For the rest are no good things at all, if to the eyes of the secret Judge they be not approved by the testimony of chastity. For all the virtues lift themselves up in the sight of the Creator by reciprocal aid, that because one virtue without another is either none at all or the very least one, they should be mutually supported by their alliance together. For if either humility forsake chastity, or chastity abandon humility, before the Author of humility and chastity, what does either a proud chastity, or a polluted humility avail to benefit us? And so that the holy man might obtain to be owned by his Maker in the remaining particulars of good, keeping purity of the heart, let him say, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even think on a maid. For what portion would God have in me from above, and what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high?* As though he made the confession in plain words, saying, The Creator of the things on high refuses to own me for his possession, if in His sight my mind rots in the lowest desires.

7. But herein it should be known that that is one thing which the mind meets with from the tempting of the flesh, and another thing, when by consent it is tied and bound with gratifications. For very often it is struck by wrong thinking and resists, but very often when it conceives any thing wrong, it revolves this within itself even in the way of desire. And certainly impure thought never in the least defiles the mind when it strikes it, but when it subdues the same to itself by the taking delight. Thus it is hence the great Preacher says, *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man*. [1 Cor. 10, 13] For that is 'temptation common to man,' by which we are very

often reached in the thought of the heart even against our will, because this, viz. that even things forbidden sometimes occur to the mind, this assuredly we have in our own selves derived from the burthen of human nature as subject to corruption. But henceforth it is devilish and not 'human' temptation, when to that which the corruptibility of the flesh prompts, the mind attaches itself by the consent. Hence again he says, *Let not sin reign in your mortal body.* [Rom. 6, 12] For he forbid not that sin should 'be' *in our mortal body*, but that it should 'reign in our mortal body.' Because in flesh subject to corruption it may not 'reign,' but cannot help but 'be.' For this very thing to be tempted touching sin, is sin to it, which same because so long as we live, we are not perfectly and altogether without, holy preaching seeing that it could not wholly banish the same, took away from it its 'reign' from the dwelling-place of our heart, that the unlawful longing, though it very often secretly insinuate itself as a thief in our good thoughts, at all events should not, if it should even win an entrance, exercise dominion. Accordingly the holy man in saying, *I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even think upon a maid*, would not at all be understood, that sin did not touch his mind in thought, but that it never mastered him by the consent. For he defends his soul as the most entire possession of God against the adversary's making a prey of it, who directly subjoins, *For what portion would God have in me from above, or what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high?* As though he said in plain words; 'In my mortal flesh indeed I am subject to the constitution of corruption; but wherein do I serve the Maker, if to Him I do not defend my mind whole and entire from the consent to sin? It goes on;  
Ver. 3. *Is not destruction to the wicked? and estrangement to the workers of iniquity?*

[iv]

8. The speedy comforting of the good is the end of the wicked had regard to. For while by the destruction of those they see the evil that they escape, they account as light whatever of adversity they undergo in this life. So then let the lost sinners now go, and satisfy the desires of their gratifications; in the sentence of their end they are destined to feel that in living badly they were in love with death. But let the Elect be chastened with a temporary infliction of the rod, that strokes may reform from their wickedness those whom fatherly pitifulness keeps for an inheritance. For now the righteous man is scourged und corrected by the rod of discipline, because he is being prepared for the Father's estate of inheritance. But the unjust man is let go in his own pleasures, because temporal good things are supplied to him in the same degree that eternal ones are denied him. The unjust man, whilst running to a deserved death, enjoys pleasures unrestrained; inasmuch as the very steers too that are destined to be slaughtered are left in free pastures. But on the other hand the righteous man is restrained from the pleasantness of transitory gratification, because doubtless the steer too which is assigned to life for the purpose of labour, is held under the yoke. To the Elect, earthly good in this life is denied; because sick persons too, to whom there is a hope of their living, never have allowed them by the physician every thing they long for. But to the lost sinners the good things are granted, which they long after in this life, because to the sick too who are despaired of there is nothing denied that they desire. So then let the righteous weigh well, what are the evils that await the wicked, and never envy their happiness which runs past. For what is there that they should admire about the joys of those, when both themselves are by a rough road making their way to the Country of Salvation, and those as it were through pleasant meadows to the pit? Therefore let the holy man say, *Is not destruction to the wicked? and estrangement to the workers of iniquity?* Which same term of estrangement ['alienatio.'] would have sounded harder, if the interpreter had retained it in the parlance of his own tongue. For what with us is called

‘estrangement’ is among the Hebrews termed ‘anathema.’ And so there will then be ‘estrangement’ to the wicked, when they see that they are an ‘anathema’ to the inheritance of the Strict Judge, because here they set Him at nought by wicked practices. So then let the wicked flourish, strange to the flowering of the Eternal Inheritance. But let the righteous look to themselves with discreet attention, and in all their actions be in dread for that they are seen by the Lord. Whence it is fitly added directly;

Ver. 4. *Doth not He see my ways, and count all my steps?*

[v]

9. What does he tell of by the title of ‘ways’ but ways of acting? Thus it is hence said by Jeremiah; *Make your ways and your doings good.* [Jer. 7, 3] But what do we understand by the name of ‘steps,’ but either the motions of men’s minds or the advancements of merits? By which ‘steps’ indeed Truth calls us to Itself, saying, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.* [Matt. 11, 28] For the Lord bids us ‘come to Him’ not surely by the steps of the body, but by the advances of the heart. For he Himself says, *The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.* [John 4, 21] And a little after, *the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeketh such to worship Him.* [ver. 23] Thus he implies that the steps are in the heart, when He both bids us that we should come, and yet declares that it is not at all by the motion of the body that we pass to other things. Now the Lord so ‘views the ways’ of each one, and so ‘counts all his steps,’ that by His Judgment not even the minutest thoughts or the very slightest words, which have become insignificant in our eyes from use, remain unexamined into. Thus hence He says, *Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Boca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* [Matt. 5, 22] ‘Raca’ in the Hebrew speech is a word of interjection, which indeed shews the temper of one who is angry, but does not give forth a full word of anger. Thus anger without utterance is first blamed, then anger with utterance, but not yet shaped by a complete word, and at last also when it is said, *Thou fool*, anger is reprov’d, which, along with excess of the voice, is fulfilled by the perfecting of speech as well. And it is to be noted that He tells that by anger he is ‘in danger of the judgment;’ by a voice of anger, which is ‘Raca,’ ‘in danger of the council,’ and by a word of the voice, which is ‘Thou fool,’ in danger of hell fire. For by the steps of offence, the order of the sentence increased, because in ‘the judgment’ the case is still under examination, but in the council the sentence of the case is now determining, while ‘in the fire of hell’ the sentence, which proceeds from the council, is fulfilled. And therefore because of human actions ‘the Lord counts up the steps’ with exact scrutiny, anger without the voice is made over ‘to the judgment,’ but anger in the voice ‘to the council,’ and anger in speech and voice to ‘the fire of hell.’ This exactness of His scanning the Prophet had beheld, when he said, *O most strong, Great One, Mighty Lord of hosts is Thy Name, Great in counsel, and Mighty in work, for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of Adam; to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his devices.* [Jer. 32, 18. 19.]

10. Thus the Lord scans those ways with exact scrutiny, that in each one of us He should neither pass over those good points that there are for Him to recompense, nor leave without rebuke the evil things, that are doubtless displeasing to Him. For hence it is that the Angel of the Church of Pergamos He at once commends in some things, and in some rebukes, saying, *I know thy works and*

*where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith.* [Apoc. 2, 13. 14.] And a little while after; *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam.* Hence it is said to the Angel of the Church of Thyatira, *I know thy works, and thy charity, and faith, and service, and thy patience; and thy last works to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee; because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* [ver. 19. 20.] Observe how He records good things, nor yet lets go without penance evil things, that require to be cut off, surely because He so views the ways of each, and so takes account of their steps, 'counting them up,' that by exact counting He thoroughly estimates both how far each one is advancing to what is good, or how far, by deviating to what is evil, he may contravene his advances. For the increase of merits which is heightened by the aims of a good life, is very often held back by a mixture of evil, and the good which the mind builds up by practising it overthrows by committing other things. Whence holy men tie themselves up with greater nicety in the thought of the heart in proportion as they see that they are more searchingly scanned by the Judge Above. For they sift the mind through and through, they seek to find if they have done wrong in aught, that they may be rendered the more unblameable to the Judge, in proportion as daily and without ceasing they blame their own selves. Not, however, that they already derive from this circumstance the delights of security, because they see that they are beheld by Him, Who beholds in them those things as well, which they are not themselves able to see in themselves. And indeed blessed Job among those of old time maintained the life of perfectness, but because by the spirit of prophecy the stretch of his eye breaks forth to the Advent of the Redeemer, in that Redeemer's precepts he for himself reflects how many things belonging to perfection he is short of. Whence he also adds; Ver. 5, 6. *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit, let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know mine integrity.*

[vi]

#### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

11. 'God to know' is said for His making us to know by a customary mode of our speech, who speak of 'a happy day,' by which it happens that we are made happy. For hence it is the Lord saith to Abraham, *Now I know that thou fearest God.* [Gen. 22, 12] For it is not that the Creator of the periods of time learnt any thing from time, but His knowing is His affording the knowledge to us by the instant of each particular case emerging. But who is there represented by the name of 'balances,' saving the Mediator between God and man? in Whom all our merits are weighed with an even scale, and in Whose precepts we find what we have short in our own life. Now we are weighed in these balances as often as we are incited after the examples of His life. Thus it is hence that it is written; *Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps, Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; Who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not.* [1 Pet. 2, 21-23] Hence it is said by Paul, *Let us run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the glory set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame.* [Heb. 12, 1. 2.] Accordingly to this end the Lord appeared in the flesh, that the life of man he might by dealing admonitions arouse, by giving examples kindle, by suffering death redeem, by rising again renew. And so whereas blessed Job finds in himself nothing justly deserving to be blamed, he extends the eyes of the mind to the life of the Redeemer, which surpasses all things, that he may learn by that

how much he comes short, where he says, *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know my simpleness.* As though he said in plain speech; 'If I have ever done aught lightly, if ever mischievously, may the Mediator between God and man appear, that in His life I may read whether I myself am really and truly simple.' For as we have said, he who had surpassed the men of his own times, sought for the Mediator between God and man, that by being weighed in Him he might find out whether he truly maintained a life of simplicity. Therefore let him say, *Let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know my simpleness,* which means, 'let Him cause me to know.' As though he made open confession, saying, 'As far as to the measure of man's life, I see now no points in myself deserving to be found fault with, but except the Mediator between God and man appear accompanied with the precepts of an exacter life, I discover not how much I am at variance with true simplicity.' Now the right order is observed if the foot be said first to have 'hasted on in vanity,' and afterwards 'in deceit.' For 'vanity' bears relation to levity, but 'deceit' to wickedness. And there are often persons, who are brought afterwards to things mischievous, because they do not in the first instance avoid what is light. It goes on;

Ver. 7. *If my step hath turned out of the way.*

[vii]

12. So many times does 'the step go out of the way,' as our thought quits the way of the right, by the consenting of wandering. Now we as it were set as many 'steps out of the way,' as we are parted by bad desires from the delightfulness of the heavenly life. For as we have before stated, being still borne down by the load of corruptible flesh, we are not able to live in such a manner as that not any enjoyment of sin should be able to strike us. But it is one thing for the mind to be touched against its will, and another to be killed whilst consenting. But holy men guard themselves with more watchful solicitude in proportion as they take shame for being assaulted by the misdirected motions even of passing gratification. And hence it is yet further added;

*And if mine eye hath followed mine heart.*

[viii]

#### [HISTORICAL/MORAL INTERPRETATION]

13. See again how by the keeping of inward vigour he returns to the training of the outward members, that if the heart should perchance covet aught forbidden, the eye being kept down by the tutorage of discipline may refuse to look at it. For as it often happens that temptation is derived through the eyes, so sometimes being conceived inwardly it forces the eyes to do service to it outwardly. Thus very often an object is regarded by a mind in a state of innocence, but by that mere look the mind is pierced through by the sword of concupiscence. For it was not (as we have already remarked for the sake of illustration) that David in this way looked of purpose on the wife of Uriah, because he had entertained the desire of her; but rather he lusted after her for this cause, because he beheld her without caution. But it happens by an inquest of right recompensing, that he who employs the external eye carelessly, is not unjustly blinded in the interior eye. Now oftentimes concupiscence rules in the interior, and the mind being seduced, after the manner of a despotism requires the senses of the body to drudge to its occasions, and obliges the eyes to serve its pleasures, and so to say opens the window of light to the dark of blindness. Hence holy men, when they feel themselves to be assailed by a wrong enjoyment, by the tutorage of discipline they

withhold the very eyes themselves by which the likeness of the shape is introduced into the mind, lest the sight acting the pander should do the bidding of unhallowed thought. Which same if it ever be forborne to be guarded with nice particularity, uncleanness of thought presently passes into execution. Hence too it is directly added;  
*And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands.*

[ix]

14. Thus the holy man, knowing well that very often wrong thought comes into the mind through the eyes, said a little above; *I made a covenant with mine eyes that I would not even think on a maid.* Reflecting likewise that sometimes it springs up in the mind, while on its springing up so the eyes wickedly do service to it, he says, *If mine eye hath followed mine heart.* As though he said in plain speech, 'Neither did I wish to see in general things I might long after, nor in looking did I ever follow after the things that I longed for.' So then let him say, *If mine eye hath followed mine heart.* Because even if his mind as being human ever did conceive aught unlawful, his eyes, bound down by the tutoring of higher discipline, it would not should follow it in things forbidden, and drudge to its service. Let us consider our own consciences with reference to these points, and what height this man was of let us see from the sunkenness of our own breast. See, if he did occasionally imagine things unlawful, because he speedily dispatched them within the depths of the heart with the sword of holy vigour, he suffered them not to reach so far as to deeds. Hence as we have set down before, he thereupon adds; *And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands.* For when does a blot cleave to the hands, i.e. sin to the actions, which sin the censorship of discipline did not suffer to make progress in thought? For neither is sin permitted to issue into act, if it be despatched inwardly where it has its birth. But if there is not a speedy resisting of temptation springing up in the heart, it is strengthened by that very delay by which it is fed, and coming forth without in deeds, it is with difficulty able to be overcome, because the very mistress of the members, the mind within, it holds a captive. Now because the holy man had brought forward all the particulars conditionally, *if* had ever been guilty of these, he binds himself with a sentence of malediction, saying;  
Ver. 8. *Then let me sow, and let another eat; let my offspring be rooted out.*

[x]

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

15. After the manner of Sacred Revelation we call it to 'sow' to preach the words of life. Thus it is hence the Prophet says, *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters.* [Is. 32, 20] For the preachers of Holy Church he saw to 'sow upon all waters' because they bestowed the words of life, like grains of heavenly bread, upon all peoples far and wide. But to 'eat' is to be filled to the full with good works. Hence Truth saith by Itself; *My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me.* [John 4, 34] So then, if the things that he gave forth, he forbore to do, he says; *Then let me sow, and another eat.* As though he said in plain words; 'What my mouth utters let not me but another man put in practice.' For the preacher who in his ways is at variance with his own words, sows going hungry what another may eat; because he is not himself fed by His own seed, when by wrong conduct he is made void of the rightness of his word. And because it very often happens that the disciples hear what is good to no purpose, when by the life of the master it is destroyed by the example of actions, it in rightly subjoined; *yea, let my offspring be rooted out.*

16. For 'the offspring' of the teacher is 'rooted out,' when he who is born by the word, is killed by the example, because him whom the heeding tongue begets, heedlessness of the life kills. For neither should we pass over with an insensible mind, that in Solomon the woman killed in sleeping the child, whom she was used to suckle being awake; [1 Kings 3, 19] in this way, because masters awake indeed in knowledge, but asleep in life, upon their hearers, whom they nourish by the watches of preaching, whilst they neglect to do the things that they say, through the sleep of insensibility inflict death, and by neglecting overlay those whom they appeared to be feeding with the milk of words. Hence generally whilst they live themselves in a blameable way, they are at once unable to have disciples of a praiseworthy life, and endeavour to draw over the disciples of others to themselves, that so, whilst they shew themselves to have good followers, in the judgments of men they may excuse the evil things that they do, and as it were by the life of those under them cover their deathdealing negligence. Whence in that place the woman, because she had killed her own, sought for another's child. Yet the sword of Solomon discovered the true mother, because surely what man's fruit may live or what man's die, the wrath of the Strict Judge in the final Judgment brings to light. Where this too is to be regarded with a discreet eye, that the child is first bidden to be divided whilst living, in order that afterwards it may be restored to the mother only, because in this life the disciples' life is in a manner allowed to be divided, whereas it is sometimes the case that from that life one man is permitted to have merit with God, and another man to have praise with men.

17. But the feigned mother did not fear for him to be put to death, whom she did not bear; because masters that are presumptuous and unacquainted with charity, if they are not able to win the fullest character of praise from the disciples of others, hunt down their life with cruelty. For being set on fire with the firebrand of envy, they are not minded for those to live to others whom they see that they cannot themselves possess. Whence in that place the bad woman cries out, *Let it be neither mine nor thine*. [ib. v. 26] For as we said, those whom they do not see to be at their command for temporal glory, they grudge should live to others through truth. But the true mother is at pains that her child may at least be with a stranger woman and live, because genuine masters yield it that by their disciples others indeed should have the praise of preceptorship, if, this notwithstanding, those same disciples do not lose wholeness of life. Through which same bowels of pitifulness this same true mother is known, because all tutorage is tested in the trial of charity, and she alone has earned to receive the whole, who as it were gave up the whole; because the faithful rulers, for this that they not only do not envy others' praise derived from their own good disciples, but also implore for them usefulness for advancement, do themselves receive back the children at once whole and living, when in the Last Inquest from the lives of those they obtain the joys of perfect recompensing. These things we have delivered in few words out of course, that we might point out in what way the offspring of hearers is through the negligence of the teachers made to be extinct; because whosoever does not live according to that which he speaks, uproots by practice from the steadfastness of righteousness those whom he has begotten by speech. But blessed Job never by his way of acting put an end whilst sleeping to those whom by his preaching he had brought forth whilst awake; and therefore he says with confidence, *Then let me sow and another eat, let my offspring be rooted out*; which same still examining himself touching the defilement of bad practice, adds;

Ver. 9. *If mine heart has been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door.*

18. Though it sometimes happens that the sin of fornication is not at all different from the guilt of adultery, seeing that Truth saith; *Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart.* [Matt. 5, 28] (For whereas an adulterer is called by the Greek word, ‘moechus,’ whilst not another man’s wife but a woman is forbidden to be looked at, ‘Truth’ openly shews that by the mere look alone, when only one that is unmarried is vilely lusted after, adultery is perpetrated.) Yet generally speaking the thing is differenced according to the situation or order of the person lusting, that is to say in this way, that purposed concupiscence in like sort defiles one in sacred orders, as the sin of adultery defiles that other. Nevertheless in persons not dissimilar, the same guilt of lust is made different, in whose case that the sin of fornication is distinguished from the guilt of adultery, the tongue of the great Preacher bears witness, who asserts amongst the rest, saying, *Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers—shall inherit the kingdom of heaven.* [1 Cor. 6, 9] For whereas he subjoins sentence to severally distinguished guilt, he shews how very greatly it differs from itself. By this then that is spoken, *If my heart hath been deceived by a woman,* the holy man is proved not even to have entertained a thought connected with the defilement of fornication. But by this that he adds; *Or if I have laid wait at my neighbour’s door,* he openly makes known that he was clear of the guilt of adultery. But perchance a person may say to this, ‘What does the holy man assert extraordinary about himself, if he did preserve himself clear not only from the guilt of adultery, but likewise from the defilement of fornication?’ But we rate these things at little, if we fail to consider the times of his virtuous achievements. For there had not as yet gone forth for the restraining of the flesh the stricter monitorship of revealed grace, which not only blames wantonness of the body, but also of the heart. There had not as yet gone forth the excellencies of chastity of numbers living in continence as patterns for our imitation, yet did blessed Job afford examples of purity, which he had not received. But by numbers even now after the prohibition of God there is impurity of the flesh committed. Accordingly it ought to be inferred from hence, seeing that so great an offence now even after the commandment is perpetrated in heavy matters, with what great praiseworthiness was abstinence kept before in heavy matters. And if he ever had done this thing, he prays for that sin to be turned into punishment to him, saying;

Ver. 10. *Then let my wife be a harlot unto another, and let others bow down upon her.*

[xii]

19. And because it is generally the case that that thing which in the doing of, we do not well consider how heinous it is, in the suffering it we do consider this; the force of that atrocity which, if he were guilty, he declares that he himself ought to undergo, he makes plain by expressing it, saying;

Ver. 11, 12. *For this is an heinous crime; and the chiefest iniquity. For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and that rooteth out all increase.*

There is this difference between ‘sin’ and ‘crime,’ that all crime is sin, but not all sin is crime. And in this life there are numbers without crime, but no one can be without sins. And hence the holy preacher, when he was describing a man worthy of the grace of the priesthood, never said, ‘if any be without sin,’ but *if any be without crime.* [Tit. 1, 6] But who can be without sin, when John saith, *If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* [1 John 1, 8] In which same distinction of sins and crimes it deserves to be considered, that occasional sins pollute the



soul, while crimes slay it; whence blessed Job in characterizing the crime of lust says, *It is a fire that consumeth to destruction*, in this way, that the heinousness of this atrocity not only stains to the length of defilement, but devours to the extent of destruction. And because howsoever many other good deeds there may be, if the enormity of lust is not washed out, they are overwhelmed by the immensity of this crime, he added going on, *and rooting out all offsprings*, for ‘the offsprings’ of the soul are good practices. Which soul, nevertheless, if the right order being reversed, the flesh exercises dominion over, all the things that are put forth well are consumed by the fire of lust. For before the eyes of Almighty God the works of righteousness and of pitifulness are none at all, which are shewn to view unclean by the infection of corruptness. For what does it profit, if a man heartily [‘pie’] compassionates the need of his neighbour, whilst he heartlessly [‘impie’] destroys himself, being the habitation of God? So then if by purity of the heart the flame of lust be not quenched, any virtues whatever spring up in vain, as it is spoken by Moses; *For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth, with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains*. For ‘a fire consumes the earth and her increase,’ when lust consumes the flesh, and all things done well thereby. For whatsoever comes forth belonging to the fruitage of righteousness, this, surely, the flame of corruption burns up. So, then, let him say, *For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and that rooteth up all increase*. Because if there be no stand made against the mischief of corruptness, even those things assuredly come to nought, which seemed to be good. But some there are whom bad qualities are apt to bring down to humility, and good ones exalt to pride of heart. So then it is necessary for us to enquire, whether blessed Job in this extraordinary pureness of chastity was at the same time humble? Now the holy man, whilst he held the highest range of virtues, plainly discourses what low thoughts he entertained of himself, when he subjoins,

Ver. 13. *If I despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me.*

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20. For he who did not refuse to be ‘judged with menservants and maid-servants,’ clearly shews that against no fellow-creature was he at any time swoln with pride in himself. But herein it is interesting to remark with what circumspection the holy man preserved his life in all respects. For not far above he said, *The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat*. [Job 29, 8. &c.] While now he says; *If I have despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me*. Who might be able proportionately to view these high counterpoises of virtues in this holy man? In whom there is so great authority of governance that princes are bound to silence, such lowliness of heart, that ‘maid-servants’ are permitted to come to ‘judgment’ on an equal footing. See how in a wonderful way he appears in power superior to princes, in contest on a level with servants; in the assemblage of princes mindful of his office, in contest with domestics mindful of his creation. For he beholds himself a servant under the real Lord, and therefore he does not in loftiness of heart lift himself up above servants. And hence he adds directly;

Ver. 14. *For what shall I do, when God riseth up to judge; and when He seeketh, what shall I answer Him?*

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21. He who thinks on the Judge to come, is unceasingly day by day preparing the cases of his accounts for the better: he who views the Eternal Lord with trembling of heart, is forced to abate the rights of temporal lordship over those under him. For he considers well that it is nothing that he is set above others in time, when for the rendering account he is beneath Him, Who exercises dominion without end. For oftentimes transitory power hurries away the soul along the sleeps of self-exaltation. And because every one is lifted up in the degree that he sees that he is himself above any persons, it is needful that he ever have regard to Him, Who is above himself, that by the fear of Him, Who is above all things, he may keep down the growing inflation of mind within. For he knows who they are beneath himself, but let him consider under Whom he himself is, that by the considering of the true Lord, the swelling of counterfeit lordship may die off. Hence blessed Job, because he feared the Judgment of Him, Who is above all things, here comes to temporal judgment the equal of servants, saying, *If I despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me. For what shall I do, when God riseth up to judge? and when He seeketh, what shall I answer Him?* Which same, that he might always keep down the heart in humility, never in these servants sees that the condition is unlike to himself, but that the nature is common. Whence also he adds,

Ver. 15. *Did not He Who made me in the womb make him? And did not One make us in the womb?*

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22. To persons possessed of power, the equality of creation kept in the thoughts is great goodness of humility. For all of us men are equal by nature, but it has been added by a distributive arrangement, that we should appear as set over particular persons. So then if we keep down from the imagination that thing which has accrued temporarily, we find out the sooner that which we are naturally. For very often the power vouchsafed presents itself to the mind, and deceives it by high-sworn thoughts. And so by the hand of lowliest reflection the inflation of self-exalting must be kept under. For if the mind in itself descends from the top of the height, it quickly finds the level of the equality of nature. For as we have before said, nature has begotten all of us men equals, but, the order of merits varying, the secret appointment sets some above others. But the very diversity, which has been added from defect, is rightly ordered by the judgments of God, that whereas every man does not go the way of life in a like way, one should be governed by another. But holy men, when they are in authority, do not look to the power of station in themselves, but to the equality of creation, nor do they rejoice to be above, but to be of use to their fellow-creatures. For they know well that our old fathers are recorded to have been not so much kings of men, as shepherds of flocks. And when the Lord said to Noah and to his sons, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and, replenish the earth*, He adds, *and the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth*. [Gen. 9, 1] For He says not 'be upon the men who were to be,' but, *be upon every beast of the earth*.

23. Since man is by nature set over the irrational animals, but not over the rest of mankind, and therefore it is said to him that he should be feared by the beasts and not by men; because it is to swell with pride against nature, to desire to be feared by an equal. Though very often even holy men desire to be feared by those under their charge, only however when they discover that by those their subjects God is not feared, that by dread of man at least they may fear to sin, who do not dread His judgments. Never then do they being set in authority swell with pride from this fear being

sought, in that they seek therein not their own glory but the righteousness of those under their charge. For in this, viz. that they exact for themselves fear from persons living badly, they as it were rule not men but brute animals; because surely, in whatsoever respect those under authority are bestial, in that respect they ought also to be bowed down under fear.

24. But when there is wanting evil, that may have to be corrected, they rejoice, not for the eminency of power, but for the equality of constitution, and they not only shrink from being feared by them, but also from being honoured beyond what is necessary. Nor yet do they think that it is a light loss to humility which they undergo, if perchance for their merit they be reckoned by them of too much rank. It is hence that the chief Shepherd of the Church, when on Cornelius worshipping him, he saw honour offered him which was above him, quickly refers to the equality of his creation, in the words, *Stand up, I myself also am a man.* [Acts 10, 26] For who does not know that man should be bowed down to his Creator, and not to man? Therefore because he saw that his fellow-creature humbled himself to him beyond what he ought, that the mind might not be made to swell beyond the boundaries of human nature, he owned himself to be ‘a man,’ that he might dash down the exaltation of the honour offered to him, by the equality of his creation being had an eye to. Hence the Angel, on being worshipped by John, owned himself to be a creature, saying, *See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren.* [Rev. 19, 10] Hence the Prophet, when he is caught away to see sublime things, is called ‘Son of man,’ that being carried to the heavenly scenes, he might remember that he was man. [Ez. 3, 1] As though the divine voice admonished him in plainer words, saying, ‘Remember what thou art, lest thou be exalted by those things, whereunto thou art caught up, but moderate the loftiness of the revelation by the remembrance of thy creation.’ So then from this it is to be gathered, with what remembrance of a common nature the swelling of earthly power ought to be kept under in the heart, if by the name of man’s nature it is effected that elevation of the heart should not be engendered by heavenly mysteries. Which same human nature blessed Job effectually kept the recollection of at all times, in that he says, *Did not He that made me in the womb, make him? And did not One fashion us in the womb?* As though he said in plain words, ‘Wherefore should not we be examined on an equal footing in the trial of any matter, who are made with equal conditions by the power of the Creator? But whereas we have made ourselves acquainted with the achievements of his chastity and of his humility, let us now acquaint ourselves with the deeds of his munificence. It goes on;

Ver. 10. *If I have denied what they wished for to the poor, or have caused the eyes of the widow to wait.*

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25. By these words the holy man is shewn not only to have ministered to the need of the poor, but also to their desire of having. But what if the poor wished those very things, which perchance it might not be for their good to receive? Is it that, because in Sacred Scripture the lowly are used to be called ‘poor,’ those only are to be accounted the things the poor wish to receive, which the humble seek? And surely it is required, that every thing should be unhesitatingly given that is asked for with true humility; i.e. whatsoever is begged for not from desire but from necessity. For it is to be henceforth very full of pride, to desire any thing beyond the limits of want. And hence it is said to persons asking with pride, *Ye ask, and ye receive not, because ye ask amiss.* [James 4, 3] Because then they are genuinely poor, who are not blown out through the spirit of pride; which same ‘Truth’, plainly represents, when He says, *Blessed are the poor in spirit;* [Matt. 5, 5] it is well

said in this place by the holy man, *If I have denied what they wished for to the poor.* Because they that wish those things, which same it is clear are not expedient for them, by this alone, that they are overflowing with a spirit of pride, are not henceforth poor. But blessed Job, seeing that he called the humble 'poor,' refused not whatsoever the poor man was minded to receive from him, because every truly humble person did not even wish to have what it could not be that he ought to have.

26. But whereas he points out the bountifulness of his spirit, because he shews that he had met the poor to the wish, it is necessary that we enquire whether he had obscured the light of mercifulness by backwardness in the giving. Hence he subjoins; *Or caused the eyes of the widow to wait.* He would not have the widow that besought him 'to wait,' that not only by the gift, but likewise by the speediness of the gift he might increase the merits of good deeds. Hence it is written elsewhere; *Say not unto thy friend, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee.* [Prov. 8, 28] Now there are some that are used to bestow as much outwardly, but rejecting the favour of a life in common, they shrink from having the poor their fellows in domestic intercourse. Hence blessed Job, that he might teach not only that he had given much without, but also to his own presence had received all the needy in domestic intercourse, adds directly;  
Ver. 17. *Or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof.*

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27. That is to say, reckoning that he prejudiced his pitifulness, if he ate alone what the Lord of all created in common. Which same fellowship of intercourse should be carried on within the domestic walls with those persons, by whom the rewards of eternal retribution may be promoted. Whence the holy man describes himself as having had not any indifferent person, but, for eating, the 'fatherless' as his companions. But these extraordinary bowels of pitifulness whether he had derived from himself, or obtained them by the grace of his Creator, let him make known. It proceeds; Ver. 18.  
*For from my infancy compassion grew up with me, and from my mother's womb it came forth with me.*

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28. For though commiseration was a thing at his own command, that it should gain growth with himself, yet it is plain that it was not a thing at his own command that it should 'come forth from the womb along with himself.' Therefore it is plain that he attributes nothing to his own goodness, in that surely he bears witness that he received this same by the gift of his creation. The good then which he implies that he had derived from his creation, it is assuredly plain that he tells to the praise of the Creator, shewing that it was from Him and no other that he had obtained that he should be pitiful, from Whom he obtained that he should be; because as by his own act he was not created in the womb, so neither by his own goodness was he full of pity from the womb. But it is to be taken thought of by us that he declares; *it grew up with me.* For there are some who as they grow to years, go off from innocency. But whilst to the Elect the age of the body increases without, within, if it may be allowed to say so, the age of virtue increases. It goes on;  
Ver. 19, 20. *If I despised any passing by, because he had no covering, and a poor man without clothing, if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep.*

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29. Because he did not despise the poor, he displayed the virtue of humility; and because he covered him, of pitifulness. For these two virtues ought to be so linked together, as to be even supported by reciprocal practice; that so neither humility, when it reverences a fellow-creature, should abandon the grace of free giving, nor pity, when it gives, be made to swell high. Thus towards the need of a fellow-creature, let pity sustain humility, humility sustain pity, so that when thou seest one who is a sharer of thine own nature lacking the necessities of life, thou shouldest neither through pitilessness cease to cover him, nor from pride cease to reverence him, whom thou dost cover. For there are persons who the moment they are entreated for necessities by their brethren in need, afterwards intending to bestow gifts on them, first let loose words of insult against them. Which persons though in things they execute the office of pity, yet in words lose the grace of humility, so that for the most part it seems that they are now paying satisfaction for an injury inflicted, when after abuse they bestow gifts. Nor is it a thing of high practice, that they give the things that are begged for, because by the very boon of their giving they scarcely cover over that transgression of speech. To which persons is it well said by the book of Ecclesiasticus, *To every gift give not the bitterness of an evil word*. And again; *Lo, a word is better than a gift? and both are with a man that is justified*, [Ecclus. 18, 15. 16.] i.e. that a gift should be exhibited through pitifulness, and a good word bestowed through humility. But on the other hand, others are not forward to support their needy brethren with things; but only to cherish them with soft words. Which persons the holy preaching of James strongly rebukes, saying, *If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body: what shall it profit you?* [Jam. 2, 15. 16.] Which persons the Apostle also admonishes, saying, *My little children, Let us not love in word, neither in tongue: but in deed and in truth*. [1 John 3, 18] For our loving affection must always be shewn forth at once by respectfulness of speech, and by the service of almsgiving.

30. But it has very great efficacy for taming down the pride of a person in giving, if when he gives earthly things, he considers with good heed the words of the Heavenly Master, Who says, *Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations*. [Luke 16, 9] For if by the friendships of those we obtain everlasting habitations, assuredly we ought to reflect when we give, that we are rather offering presents to patrons, than bestowing gifts on the needy. Hence it is said by Paul, *That now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, and their abundance also may be a supply for your want*. [2 Cor. 8, 14] That is, that we may heedfully consider, that those whom we now see in need, we shall one day see in abundance, and we, who are beheld abounding, if we neglect to bestow alms, shall one day be in need. He then who now gives temporal support to the poor man, hereafter to receive from him everlasting supports, so to say, for fruit as it were cultivates land, which pays back more abundantly what it has received. It remains then that exaltation should never spring up by benefaction, since, surely, the rich by that which he bestows on the poor man, brings it to pass that he should not be poor for everlasting. Accordingly, blessed Job, that he might carefully shew with what reflection humility and mercifulness were united together in him, says, *If I despised any passing by, because that he had no covering, and a poor man without clothing: if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep*. As though he said in plain words; ‘In the love of a fellow-creature, keeping down by one and the same appointments both the evil of pride and of unpitifulness; any one passing by both humbly, on beholding him, I despised

not, and mercifully I warmed him. For whosoever lifts himself above him that he gives any thing to with the height of self-exaltation, achieves a greater offence by carrying himself proudly within than a recompense by giving alms without, and he himself is made bare of interior good, when in clothing the naked he, despises him, and so brings it to pass that he is rendered worse than his very own self, in proportion as he fancies himself better than his neighbour in need. For he is less in need who is without a garment, than he who is without humility. Whence it follows, that when we see those who are sharers of our own nature without external things, we should reflect how many good things of the interior are wanting to ourselves, that so the thought of our heart may not exalt itself above the needy, in that it sees with an eye of penetration that we ourselves are the more really in want, in proportion as it is more inwardly.

31. And because there are some who cannot stretch the bowels of their compassion so far as to persons unknown to them, but pity those only whom they have learnt to pity by constancy of acquaintance, with whom, in fact, intimacy avails more than nature, whilst to particular persons they give things necessary, not because they are men, but because they are acquaintance, it is well said by blessed Job in this place; *If I despised any passing by because that he had no covering.* For to a fellow-creature unknown he shews himself compassionate, in that he calls him 'any passing by,' because, surely, with a pitiful mind nature has more avail than acquaintance. Since even every individual who is in want, by this mere circumstance, that he is a man, is not any longer unknown to him. It goes on;

Ver. 21. *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself uppermost in the gate.*

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32. It was the custom with those of old that the elders should sit at the gate to make out by judicial trial the quarrels of persons at strife, in order that the city, in which it was befitting that they should dwell in concord, they should never enter at variance. And hence the Lord saith by the Prophet, *Establish judgment in the gate.* [Amos 5, 15] In this place then what is set forth by the title of the 'gate' but that thing which was used to be done in the gate? For as we talk of the 'camp fighting' instead of this, that there is fighting from the camp, so judgment that used to be tarried on in the gate, is called 'the gate.' Thus he 'sees himself uppermost in the gate,' who sees that by the title of just dealing he is of the better side in judgment. Accordingly, blessed Job, because he did not even then put forth his hand against the fatherless, when even by the claim of justice he saw himself the better one, teaching to us the rule of fear, says, *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself uppermost in the gate.* As though he said in plain words, 'Not even then had I the mind to enforce by power the interests of my own advantage against the fatherless, when I saw myself even by justice the better one in judgment.' For holy men, when they are subject to matters of disputings with inferior persons, whilst they are afraid to bear heavily even in the least circumstances, never shun to be themselves pressed upon contrary to justice. For they know that all human justice is charged to be injustice, if it be judged strictly by God. Whence that thing which is at their command, they guard against exacting with passionateness, lest it chance that the Righteousness Above try their actions with exactness. But that they may be able to be found just in the Divine Inquest, very often before the judgments of men they suffer themselves to be borne hard upon even unjustly. Now in relating the lofty height of his life, they are many and wonderful things that blessed Job delivered. But because it very often happens that the human mind refuses to

believe the good things that it does not know how to put in practice, he directly adds the sentence of a curse upon himself, if aught of those things which he had spoken he did not fulfil in act, saying, Ver. 22. *Then let my shoulder fall from its joining, and mine arm be broken in pieces along with its bones.*

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[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

33. Because bodily action is carried on by the shoulder and the arm, if the good things which he put forth with the lips he did not fulfil in deed, he wishes to himself 'the shoulder to fall,' and 'the arm to be broken in pieces.' As though he said in plain words, 'If the things that I said I refused to do, this very member of my body, which was given to me for working withal, may I lose, that surely that may fall from the body which I would not exercise to advantage.' But if this sentence of a curse is to be referred to a spiritual meaning, it is doubtless plain that the arm is joined to the body by the shoulders, and as by the arm good practice, so by the shoulder the knitting together of social life, is denoted. Whence too the Prophet, regarding the holy peoples of the Church universal, that should serve God in concord, says, *And they shall serve Him with one shoulder.* [Zeph. 3, 9] Herein then that he says, *If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw myself above in the gate.* He declares that he had preserved a wonderful force of patience, who declined not the being borne hard upon by the least considerable persons, no not when it was contrary to that which might justly be open to him. Which thing if he had not done, he adds, *May my shoulder fall from its joint.* Because, undoubtedly, he who is indifferent to observe patience, soon gives up a social life from impatience. For 'the shoulder falls from its joining,' when the mind, not being able to bear aught of contradiction, abandons brotherly concord, and it is as if a member were severed from the body, when he who might do what is good is cut off from the general unity of all the good. For never can concord be preserved excepting through patience only. For frequently there arises in human conduct occasion whereby the minds of men are liable to be reciprocally separated from their union and affection. And except the mind prepare itself for the undergoing things that are contrary, surely the shoulder does not hold fast to the body. Thus hence it is that Paul says, *Bear ye one another's burthens, and so ye shall fulfil the law of Christ.* [Gal. 6, 9] Hence Truth says by Itself, *In your patience ye shall possess your souls.* [Luke, 21, 19]

34. Now upon the 'shoulder falling,' it is rightly subjoined, *Let mine arm be broken in pieces with its bones;* because without doubt all our practice, with whatsoever virtues it may seem to be accompanied, is undone, except that through the bond of brotherly love patience be preserved safe. For he foregoes to do good deeds of his own, who refuses to bear evil deeds of others. Since on being wounded by the heat of an angry spirit, a person recoils from loving, and when he does endure to be borne hard upon outwardly, he darkens himself inwardly by the light of charity being lost; nor does he now see where to stretch out the foot of good practice, who has lost the eye of love. But 'the shoulder of the holy man does not fall from its joining,' in this way, because his loving affection does not depart from the concord of social life through impatience. And his arm is not broken, because all his practice is preserved in the joining of the shoulder, i.e. in the binding together of charity. Now with what thought present to him he did these good things of such great magnitude, and kept himself from all bad ones, he adds, saying, Ver. 23. *For I always feared God like waves swelling over me, and I could not endure the weight of*

*Him.*

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[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

35. From the terror that belongs to such a likeness let us reflect what wonderful force of fear there was in the holy man. For when waves swelling hang over us from on high, and when they threaten that death, which they bring down, there is then no concern for temporal things with the voyagers, no enjoyment of the flesh is brought back to mind. Those very things as well they cast forth from the ship, for the sake of which they took long voyages; all things are brought into contempt to their mind by love of living. Accordingly he 'fears God as waves swelling over him,' who whilst he desires the true life, despises all things that here he carries possessing. For when caught by a tempest, we as it were cast out the freight of the vessel, when from the soul that is overborne we remove earthly desires. And it comes to pass that the vessel being lightened floats, which by being loaded was sinking, seeing that doubtless the cares that weigh down in this life, drag the mind into the depth. Which mind is borne so much the higher amidst the billows of temptations, in proportion as it is more heedfully emptied of thought of this world. But there is another circumstance also that ought to be viewed with a regardful eye relating to the tossing of the sea. For when a storm arises, first slight waves, and afterwards greater billows are stirred up, finally the waves lift themselves up on high, and by their very height overturn all them that are at sea. Thus, thus surely does that last tempest of souls hasten that it may overwhelm the whole world. For now it shews us its beginnings by wars and havocs as by a kind of waves, and in proportion as we are daily made nearer to the end, we see heavier billows of tribulations rushing in upon us. But at the last all the elements being in commotion, the Judge from Above when He comes bringeth the end of all things, because at that time surely the tempest lifts the waves to the heavens. Whence too it is said, *Yet a little while and I will shake not only the earth, but heaven also.* Which same tempest because holy men regard with lively attention, they as it were dread 'the waves swelling over them' day by day, and by these tribulations, which strike the world, they forecast what things may follow.

30. Now it is well added; *And I could not bear the weight of Him*, because he who views with mind engrossed the coming of the final Judgment, sees doubtless that such great terror is impending as he not only dreads then to see, but even now dreads that he foresees beforehand. For by the beholding of that great terribleness the soul quivers with dread, and turning aside the eyes of its attention, it refuses to behold that which it foresees. Therefore it is well said, *And the weight of Him I could not bear.* Because the power of the Majesty Above when It comes to Judgment, and the terribleness of that great Inquest, when the mind by considering endeavours to make out, directly falling back to itself, it is afraid at its having found it out. But herein it is to be considered that blessed Job says these things concerning himself after having been pained and smitten. If then at all events for the advancement of his merits he was so stricken, who so feared, how is he to be stricken, who despises? How shall the judgments of God weigh down those who lift themselves up, if even those they weigh down for a time, who always dread these things in humility? How shall he be able to endure the weight of God, who contemns, if this same weight even he underwent under the rod, who foresaw in fear. Whence with the utmost earnestness we ought to dread that inquest of so great strictness. Now it is plain that in this life, when he smites, if amendment follows the stroke, it is the discipline of a Father, not the wrath of a Judge, the love of One correcting, not the strictness of One punishing. And so by that very present scourge itself the eternal judgments ought to be weighed.



For hence we ought with the greatest pains to reflect, how that anger may be borne that casts away, if that anger of His which purifies may scarcely now be borne.

## BOOK XXII.

All that remained of chapter thirty-one of the Book of Job is explained, and submissiveness of mind, and moderation, patience, charity, and earnest interest for those under our charge, are especially commended.

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### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

1. That which has been often said by me already it is not troublesome for me to repeat many times, since the great Preacher too says, *To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is necessary.* [Phil. 3, 1] Blessed Job for this reason relates virtues achieved, because whilst caught between the words of rebuke and the wounds of the rod, he sees that his mind is being loosened from the assurance of hope. For he had heard from his friends upbraiding him that he had done numberless wicked things even, and lest his soul being driven hard by words and scourges simultaneously should break down into despair, by the recollection of his virtuous attainments he resets the same to hope, that it might never cast itself down in woe, in that if remembered that in the season of its repose it had done such lofty deeds. And so whereas we have told the reason of his purpose, it remains that we weigh with exactness his virtues so heard.

2. But this we are to have impressed upon us first of all, that he, who is supposed to be strong in any particular virtue is then really strong when he is not subject to evil habits in another quarter. For if he be under the dominion of evil habits in another thing, not even that is firm and solid wherein he was believed to stand fast. For each separate virtue is of less worth in proportion as the others are wanting. For very often it has happened to us to see some modest indeed but not humble, some seemingly humble but not pitiful, some seeming pitiful but not at all just, some in appearance just, but trusting in themselves rather than in the Lord. And it is certain that there is not even genuine chastity in the heart of him who lacks humility, since by pride corrupting him within he commits fornication, if from loving himself he departs from the love of God. Nor is that true humility that has not pitifulness joined to it, because that has no right to be called humility which refuses to bend itself to sympathy with the affliction of a brother. Nor is that true mercifulness which proves a stranger to the right line of justice, for that which is able to be defiled by injustice, knows not assuredly how to have compassion on its own self. Neither is it real righteousness, which puts its trust not in the Creator of all things, but in itself perhaps, or in things created; since while one withdraws his hope from the Creator, himself overturns to himself the order of the highest justice. And so one virtue without another is either none at all or but imperfect. For that (as it has seemed best to some persons) I may speak of the four first virtues, viz. prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, they are severally so far perfect, in proportion as they are mutually joined to one another. But separated they can never be perfect. For neither is it real prudence which has not justice, temperance, fortitude, nor perfect temperance which has not fortitude, justice, and prudence, nor complete fortitude which is not prudent, temperate, and just, nor genuine justice which has not prudence, fortitude, and temperance.

3. Accordingly blessed Job, because he had not one without another, but the virtues united together in himself, going over them severally makes them known. For telling the excellences of chastity, he says, *If mine heart have been deceived upon a woman.* [c. 31, 9] And that he might shew that to that chastity the grace of humility was in no degree wanting, he adds after the rest, *If I did despise to undergo judgment with my man servant.* [v. 13] And that he might shew that to his humility, mercy was joined, he says a little after, *If I have withheld the poor from their desire.* [v. 16] And that he might shew that his mercy was descended from the root of justice, he promised a little above, saying, *If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted in deceit.* [v. 5] And that it might be shown how alarmed he was at all things, how guarded towards all, he declares below, saying, *For I always feared the Lord as waves swelling over me.* Which same if whilst placed in prosperous circumstances, and buoyed up by the abundance of good things, he had placed hope either in his own doings, or in the good things about him on every side, assuredly he would not be just. But when did this holy man place hope in himself, who says in express terms, *Lo, there is no help to me in myself?* [c. 6, 13] What then now remains but that what feeling he held those very riches with, he should make known. Thus he says,  
*I have made gold my strength, or have said to bullion, Thou art my confidence.*

[ii]

4. We give the name of ‘bullion’ [‘obryzum’] to gold in the rough. So then the holy man neither supposed ‘gold’ to be ‘his strength,’ nor that to him the ‘bullion,’ i.e. the mass of rude gold, was ‘his confidence,’ because resting his hope and satisfaction in the grace of his Creator alone, he sinned neither for the quantity of gold, nor yet in the kind thereof. For it would have been to have given up hope in the Creator, to have placed hope in the creature. But in uncertain objects that rich man had fixed his hope, who said, *Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* But the Voice Above rebukes this man, saying, *Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided.* [Luke 12, 19. 20.] For the same night he was taken off, who had looked for long times in the abundance of good things to him, that in this way he who, whilst hoarding up means for himself, was looking forward a long way, should never see the next day though but a single one. For it is in a manner to lay a foundation in running waters, to wish to settle an assurance of hope in things fleeting. For God for evermore standing still, all things pass away. What then is it to fly from One standing, but to attach ourselves to passing things. For who ever being seized by the swoln eddies of running waters could himself remain fixed, the water racing on downwards? Whosoever then shuns to run to nought, it remains that he eschew that, that does run to nought, lest by that thing which he loves he be driven to go on into that which he avoids. For he that attaches himself to things slipping away, is surely drawn thither, where that is making its way, which he holds. And so it requires first to be looked to that a man love not things temporal, and next in those very temporal things, which he reserves to himself not for gratification, but for use, that he put not his confidence; seeing that by being united to objects running off the soul directly loses its own stay. For the wave of the present life draws away the man whom it lifts up; and he is wholly out of his senses, who is tossed adrift in the water, and yet tries to fix the sole of his feet. But there are very many who while they never place confidence in things transitory, yet when they are supplied to them in abundance for necessary purposes, are full of joy in secret feeling. Whence there is no doubt that every one is the less grieved that the things of eternity should be lacking, the more he is rejoiced that those of time

are supplied to him; and he who grieves the less that temporal things are wanting, looks the more surely that eternal ones should be his. Accordingly this joy derived from things of earth, blessed Job, while testifying that he had not, adds, saying,

Ver. 25. *If I rejoiced over my great wealth, and because mine hand found much.*

[iii]

5. For holy men in the wofulness of this pilgrimage, because that Appearance of their Creator, which they long after, they are not yet suffered to contemplate at all, account all the fulness of the present life as destitution, because nothing out of God suffices the mind which really seeks after God; and it is very often the case that to such persons their very abundance itself becomes exceedingly burthensome, because this thing alone they bear as a grievance, that in hastening to their country they carry many things on the journey. Whence it comes to pass that these things they devotedly share with their neighbours who are in want, in order that while this one gets what he has not, the other may lay aside what he had too much of, that neither the fellow-traveller may walk empty, nor that man whom it might delay on the way an overgreat burthen weigh down. And thus the Elect never rejoice for their great abundance, which same for love of their heavenly inheritance they either in bestowing distribute out of their hands, or by contemning forsake. It follows;

Ver. 26—28. *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath secretly rejoiced, and I have kissed my hand with my mouth; which is an exceeding iniquity, and denial against the Most High God.*

[iv]

6. There is no doubt that both these two luminaries, which are commissioned to ministrations for man, are called ‘the hosts of heaven.’ Into the worshipping whereof we know that numbers have fallen, as Scripture is witness; as where it is written, *And worshipped all the host of heaven.* [2 Kings 17, 16] And because the sun and moon are seen in one way for use, and in a different way for worshipping, in that way in which they are wont to be worshipped by their votaries blessed Job tells that he had never ‘seen the sun and moon, neither had his heart rejoiced; nor had he kissed his hand with his mouth.’ By which act of kissing what else but the gratefulness of adoration is set forth? which thing if he had ever done, he calls it ‘the highest iniquity and denial of God.’ But after that he had related of himself in passages above such great heights of virtuous qualities, what does he now tell so strange, if he shews that he had not ‘adored the sun and moon?’ Whence it deserves to be considered, that after he testifies that he had not had confidence in gold, nor had rejoiced in much riches, he is further led on to things of a higher pitch, that he might instruct so much the more, the more exactly he tells things touching himself. Thus he says, *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath secretly rejoiced.* What is called to ‘see’ in this passage, but to behold with desire? Whence the Psalmist saith, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear.* [Ps. 66, 18] Which iniquity, surely, could never be set forth in the mouth, if it were not ‘regarded in the heart.’ But it is one thing to see in the way of judgment, and another thing to see in the way of desire. Thus then blessed Job tells that ‘the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in its brightness, he had never seen,’ that he might shew that he had not sought after the appearance of the present light. As though after contempt of his earthly abundance, he plainly told us; ‘why should I say, that I never at all rejoiced in gold, who in the very corporeal light itself never took delight? For holy men after that they set at nought all the enjoyments of the

present life, in consideration of the sweetness of the light interior, turn away the mind from this light exterior as if from darkness; and they strive much with themselves within, that they be not carried away by the delightfulness of this light which shines outwardly. For if the visible light be incautiously delighted in, the heart is blinded to the invisible light, because in proportion as the soul is poured out in gazing out of itself, so much the more is it made to recoil in the interior regards. Hence all the wise-hearted, that by their corporeal senses they may not too much fall away to things without, by continual effort gather themselves up within the interior self by the hidden discipline of self-guarding, that they may be found the more whole within, in proportion as they are the less poured forth without. Thus by this vigorousness of discipline he had bound himself up within the depths of his own heart, who in fleeing the desire of the outward life, said, *The day of man I have not desired, Thou knowest.* [Jer. 17, 16] The same, then, that by the Prophet is expressed, *The day of man I have not desired, Thou knowest*, this blessed Job declares concerning his own self in other words, viz. that he had not 'seen the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in its brightness,' and that he did not 'rejoice in these in the secret depths of his heart,' surely because he could not possibly 'rejoice' for those things which he 'saw' not in the desire of delighting.

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

7. But if these several particulars, which we have gone through, handling them according to the history, we also examine into in respect of the mysteries of allegory, what else do we in this place take the gold to be, saving the wit of a bright understanding? what 'fine gold' but the mind, which whilst it is fined clear by the fire of love, ever preserves in itself the brightness of beauty, by a daily renewal of fervour? For the mind knows not to wax old by inertness, which is bent by desire ever to be beginning. Thus it is hence that it is said by Paul, *renewed in the spirit of your mind.* [Eph. 4, 23] Hence the Psalmist, who had already reached to the height of perfection, said as if beginning, *I said, now I begin;* [Ps. 77, 10] in this way, because that, if we are not minded to flag and go off from good begun, it is very requisite that we should believe ourselves to be daily beginning. Nor is it at variance with the order of reason that we say that by 'gold,' man's wit is denoted; for as in ornamenting gold is laid under, that the order of the gems may be arranged above, so the bright talents of the Saints are humbly laid below the benefits of God, and receive the gifts of graces set out in order upon them. And excepting that gold had a something of a like sort with wisdom, that wise man would never have said, *Wisdom hidden from sight, and a treasure, that is not seen, what use is there in either?* [Ecclus. 20, 50] Now holy men do not account 'gold' to be their 'strength,' because let them shine out with ever so great ability, they take thought that by their own powers they are nothing. And whilst they are powerfully able to see into all things, they desire first to understand themselves, that the light of their wit, like the sun, may first illumine the place where it arises, and afterwards all the other things to which it is made to open out in going on; lest if by applying themselves to know others they know not their own selves, the ray of the sun should there be darkened, where it rises. Accordingly, the goodness of their natural parts they apply to acquainting themselves with their own infirmity, and by acquaintance with their own infirmity they are the more effectually endued with power. And so the gold is not taken for 'strength,' if there is not confidence had in the wit wherewith they are endowed. Which Solomon rightly advising of saith, *Put confidence in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own understanding.* [Prov. 3, 5] So then let him say, *If I have made gold my strength, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.* As though he avowed in plain terms; 'Neither what I really understood did I ascribe to my own parts, nor, if it chanced that I did any whit that was good, did I reckon such

things primarily to my own mind:’ who still more particularly telling us the humility of his heart, adds, saying,

Ver. 25. *If I rejoiced over my great riches, and because mine hand had found very many things.*

8. What do we fancy the ‘great riches’ so called in signification, but the abundant subtleties of counsels, which same ‘the hand’ of him that seeks ‘finds,’ in that the thought of him who deals thereunto produces them. For it was these ‘riches’ of wisdom that Solomon having before his eyes, saith, *The crown of the wise is their riches.* [Prov. 14, 24] Which same person, because it is not metals of the earth but understanding that he calls by the name of ‘riches,’ thereupon adds by way of a contrary; *But the foolishness of fools is imprudence.* For if he called earthly riches ‘the crown of the wise,’ surely he would own the senselessness of fools to be poverty rather than imprudence. But whereas he added ‘the foolishness of fools imprudence,’ he made it plain that he called prudence ‘the riches of the wise.’ These ‘riches’ of wisdom Paul viewing in himself and lowering his view by the thought of human infirmity, says, *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels.* [2 Cor. 4, 7] Accordingly we find much riches in ourselves, when in searching into the sacred oracles, we receive the gifts of abundant understanding, and therein see a number of things, yet not at variance with one another. But it is not safe rejoicing to learn in the pages of God things either forcible or many in number, but rather to keep safe the things that we learn. For he that understands aright, sees what by so understanding he owes as a debt. Since the more he is enlarged in perception, the more heartily he is tied and bound to fulfilling deeds. Whence Truth saith in the Gospel; *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.* [Luke 12, 48]

9. Therefore let us reckon understanding given like borrowed money, because the more we have entrusted to us in lovingkindness, the more we are held debtors in practice; and it very often happens that the same money of understanding received, when it is bestowed upon hearers for usury, is lost except it be given in a cautious spirit. For neither should it be slightly regarded in the book of Kings, that while the sons of the prophets were hewing wood on the Jordan, to one of them his ax-head having slipped off the handle into the deep water, disappeared from sight. For the iron on the handle is the gift of understanding in the heart: but to cut down wood thereby is to rebuke persons doing wickedly. Which same sometimes whilst it is done loosely, whilst the downfall of vain-glory in that same knowledge vouchsafed us is not avoided, the iron is lost in the water, because understanding is made witless by undone practice, which same understanding assuredly we know to be given for this end, that before the eyes of the Giver it may be rendered back by good conduct. Whence it happened rightly that he who had lost the iron exclaimed, *Alas, alas, my master, for it was borrowed.* [2 Kings 6, 5] For the Elect have this proper to them, that if at any time a furtive sin of vain glory creep upon them in their knowledge, they speedily turn back into their heart, and whatever they find in themselves worthy of condemnation before the eyes of the strict Judge, they follow hard upon with tears. Who whilst weeping, not only heedfully scan the evil things they have been guilty of, but what good ones as well they ought to have paid back for the benefit vouchsafed them, because surely they the more fuel themselves sinners, in proportion as they are held debtors in the neglected good that they ought to have done. Rightly then did he who lost the iron cry out, *Alas, alas, my master, for it was borrowed.* As though he said, ‘That by the undoing of negligence have I lost, which thing in order that I should pay it back by good works I received from the grace of the Lender.’ But God never abandons the soul which owns itself in its sins in a true way. Hence too Elisha immediately on coming sends the wood down below, and

raises the iron upon the surface, because surely our Redeemer regarding us with pity humbles the heart of a sinner, and fashions anew for him the understanding, which he had lost. He sinks the wood, and lifts up the iron, because He chastens the heart, and restores the knowledge. Whence it is well said in another translation, that he 'broke in pieces the wood' and cast it in, and so raised up the iron. For 'to break the wood in pieces' is to break up the heart from self-exaltation; to cast the wood below is to abase the uplifted heart in acquaintance with its own infirmity, as we said. And thereupon the iron is brought back to the top, because understanding returns for the service of the former mode of employment.

10. Therefore because the gift of understanding that is obtained, is with such numberless difficulties hardly kept safe (for there must be care taken that it be not deadened by inactivity, there must be care that in the exercising of practice it do not go out by the evil of self-elation,) holy men do not exult, when they learn the things for them to do, but when they do the things they have learnt. And if in understanding they congratulate themselves in the benefaction of the Giver, yet sorrowing they take thought of the debt of practice, that is to say, that they may discharge by conduct what has been advanced to them in knowledge. For he is a foolish debtor, who receives rejoicing the money lent, and never minds the time when he must pay it back. But the joy of receiving is abated, when with prudential foresight the appointed season for paying back is thought on as well. Therefore because just men in the things which they perceive by lively attention are not lifted up by assured rejoicing, let it be said aright, *If I rejoiced over my great riches, and because my hand found very many things.* As though it were put in plain words; 'Never did I account myself rich by righteousness in this respect, that I knew right things, which I ought to do, even many in number; nor did understanding lift up the heart, because that the thought of the practice owed in debt kept down.' But it is to be borne in mind, that it very frequently happens that when a high pitch of understanding is received, the mind being very full of anxiety about itself is kept from the downfall of self-exaltation. But when the wonderful things it understands it begins to put in practice likewise, sometimes by the mere circumstance that it is made to display itself without, it slips, and glories that itself excels in its doings all the rest of the world. As, then, the 'gold' of understanding did not uplift blessed Job, so neither did the light of extraordinary practice either before the eyes of men lift him to a height. Hence too he fitly adds; *If I saw the sun when it shined.*

[vi]

11. Since 'the sun in brightness,' is good practice in outward manifesting. For it is written, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven.* [Matt. 5, 16] And again, *Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning.* [Luke 12, 35] For what in this passage is denoted by the 'sun shining,' is in the Gospel denoted by 'lamps burning.' For when good practice shines in the midst of faithless persons, 'a lamp burns' in the night, but when it shines out in the Church, 'the sun shines' in the day. For good practice if it be as yet such as bad men only wonder at, is doubtless a 'lamp' in the night; but if it so makes way that it may be admired by the good and more perfect kind, then it is the sun in the day time. When good practice shines by the active life of the body, it is as if after the manner of a candle light shineth out of an earthenware vessel. But when by the excellence of the mind alone it is raised up in contemplation, it is as if after the manner of the sun light is seen coming from heaven. Therefore because blessed Job had told of himself many good things appertaining to hospitality and

mercifulness, which same surely he knew as still the least, in proportion as done in the bodily way of doing; recalling the eye of the mind to the topmost height of spiritual virtues, he remembered his own perfectness, and the light of examples which he gave to others in himself, he called 'the sun.' But there are some persons who when they do any good things, directly forget their wickednesses, and they fix the eye of the mind in the contemplation of the good practices which they exhibit; and henceforth account themselves holy, in the degree that amidst the good things that they do they shun the recollection of their evil deeds, in which perchance they are still entangled. Which same persons if with lively attention they marked the strictness of the Judge, would fear more for their evil things than exult for their imperfect good ones, would more look to it that for things that are still to be done they are held debtors, than that by practising some things they are already paying a portion of the debt. For neither is the debtor quit who pays back much, but who pays back all; nor does he attain to the prize of victory, who in a large proportion of the exhibition runs with speed, if on nearing the goal, in that which is left he goes off. Nor to persons going to any destined places does it avail when setting out to despatch a long way, if they are not at the same time able to achieve the whole of it. We then who are seeking the Eternal Life, what else are we about but performing a kind of journeys, whereby we are hastening onward to our country. But what does it matter that we despatch so many, if the rest which remain for our arriving we neglect?

12. Thus after the manner of travellers we ought not ever to look how much way we have already gone through, but how much there remains for us to carry through, that by slow degrees that may become past and over, which is unceasingly and fearfully marked as still to be. Therefore we ought much more to survey what good things we have not yet done, than those good things which we are glad that we have already done. But human frailty has this belonging to it, that it is more attractive to it to look at that which pleases it in itself, than that which displeases it in itself. For the sick eye of the heart, while it dreads to be put to pains in its contemplation, as it were asks for a kind of bed of delight in the mind, where it may lie softly; and for this reason it makes out what benefits it has secured by the good things it has done, but what losses it sustains from those which it has left undone it is blind to. For it very often happens that even the Elect are tried by this evil, very often it is put to the hearts of those, that the several good deeds which they have done they should recall to mind, and exult now in the joyfulness of security. But if they be really Elect persons, from that in which they are pleasing to themselves they turn away the eyes of the mind, and force down in themselves all joyfulness for the good things they have done, and for those which they perceive that they have never done they seek out sorrowfulness, they account themselves unworthy persons, and are almost the only ones that do not see the good things, which they afford in themselves to be seen for an example to all men. It is hence that Paul, when he was putting behind him the good things completed in himself, and thinking of those only still remaining, that had to be completed, said, *I count not myself to have apprehended*. [Phil. 3, 13] It is hence that in order that he might abase himself as to the good things he was doing, he set himself to recall to mind the evil things that were past, saying, *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious*. [1 Tim. 1, 13]

13. And even if he at any time said, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*; [2 Tim. 4, 7] we ought above every thing to turn our eye to the fact, that he brought the thing forward at that time when he knew that he was now about to depart out of the body. For he there premised, saying, *For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand*. [v. 6] For then he recalled to his recollection the perfectness of his practice, when he now foresaw time for practising no more to be his as to a field of large extent. For as whilst we live we

are bound to drive out of our recollection our good deeds, that they may not lift us up, so on our departure drawing nigh, we very often bring them again to our recollection, that so they may afford us confidence, and keep down despairing fear. Who though in reckoning up he related his good points to the Corinthians, was bent to confirm them, and not to make a display of himself. For that he paid no regard to the same good points in himself, he taught by the affliction of his own tempting being laid open, which being set forth, he added; *Therefore I take pleasure in mine infirmities*. [2 Cor. 12, 10] So then that he might instruct the disciples, he told what was most high of himself, while that he might keep himself in humbleness, he had fixed the eye of his observation not in his virtues but in his weaknesses. Accordingly, holy men have this proper to them, that the good things they do they see indeed, yet when they have done them they turn away their eyes from the remembrance thereof. Whence it is rightly said by blessed Job, *If I saw the sun when it shined*. As though he said in plain speech; 'My practice, even when it afforded the light of examples to others, I minded not for the boon of foreassurance; because whilst I feared to be uplifted on the grounds thereof, I turned mine eyes away from regarding it.' It goes on; *And the moon walking in her brightness*.

[vii]

14. After the sun had been premised, he justly likewise added, 'the moon walking in her brightness,' because after good practice there follows the praiseworthy report whereby a name of renown is won in this night season of the present life. But if that be true which some think, that the moon through his hidden circuit receives illumination from the ray of the sun, so that she should be able to display light by the courses of the night, this supposition likewise is not at variance with the order of this representation. For fame gains its means from good practice, and it spreads the esteem of applause like the brightness of light. There is also another thing in the moon, which may agree in likeness with fame spreading good. For the light thereof even in the season of darkness shews the road to persons going afoot, because both whilst the light of praise shines out from another's life, it lightens others for the exercising of good practice; and when the esteem of the one is seen in a clear light, to the other as it were going his way upon a journey the light of example is afforded. But it sometimes happens that the practice which is derived from the esteem of another man is framed with an aim not duly pure in the mind. For weak minds when they hear good things of others, sometimes kindle themselves to right practice not by the love of virtue, but the delightfulness of applause. And indeed it is evident that as it is the nature of the sun that whatsoever things it touches it burns and dries up, so it is the property of the fire of the moon that whatever it touches, it burns indeed, but in so burning renders the thing moist. Thus then to a good life, some an affecting of good practice for the love of God kindles and inflames, whilst others the love of praise. But when we are set on fire with an affection to right practice, we are as it were dried up by the fire of the sun from the humidity of evil habits. While him whom the love of praise prompts to good practice, fame coveted touches like the moon, because his mind it at once inflames and unlooses. That is to say, it inflames him to the exercising of practice, but unlooses him to the desire of applause. Yet very often for the exercising of good deeds the examples of others influence us to good effect. And when we adopt the good of another's reputation with a humble mind, we either advance our own good things for the better, or change the bad to good; and when the brightness of fame from the life of our neighbour sheds its rays on ourselves, our mind, as we before said, which is guiding itself with a view to winning the way of virtue, sets the steps as it were in the light of the moon. But as we make way by the esteem of another, so it very often occurs that if we give heed to the praises of



our own fame, we are emptied of virtue, because when the mind is made to take delight in that which it sees to be held without concerning it, it loses sight of that, which it was panting for within.

15. Therefore because the understanding of knowledge did not corrupt the holy man, he held it beneath him to rejoice in his great riches. Now because the greatness of his practice did not puff him up, he 'saw not the sun when it shined;' and because neither did the credit of applause uplift 'him, he never' regarded the moon walking in its brightness.' For there are some persons who are brought down into self-exalting in the degree, that by a nice understanding they find out good things even that they do not do. These, surely, 'rejoice over great riches,' when by making out they discover any things of the highest, and by those self-same discoveries are spoilt in self-exaltation. But there are some persons whom understanding does not indeed uplift, but the practice set forth exalts, who whilst they regard their own doings in their own heart by shewing disdain, set the rest of the world in the background to themselves. These same, though they do not rejoice in great riches, yet 'see the sun when it shineth,' because upon the greatness of good practice alone, they as it were swell themselves out despising others. And there are some whom not even their own practice uplifts, but when they begin to be commended by their fellow-creatures for that same good practice, being overcome by the mere applause of men, by themselves they view themselves as certain great ones in their own imagination, and are unbound from the safe keeping of the heart. These, surely, though they refused to 'see the sun when it shineth,' yet 'behold the moon walking in its brightness;' because amidst the darkness of this world, while they fasten the mind on the brightness of their reputation, as it were by the light of the night they lose the grace of humility, and, whilst beholding the moon, they see not themselves, in that they begin to be blind to themselves, while they fix the eyes of the mind on transitory applause.

16. Now so is the progress of men, as we see the growths of trees to be. For the essence of the future tree is first in the seed, afterwards in the springing, and at last it is carried out into boughs. Thus then, surely the goodness of every one doing works grows up. For it is sown in understanding, it springs up in practising, and at last it is consolidated to the full width of great advancement. But when his understanding uplifts any one, the tree that might have sprung up rots in the seed. And when after good practice he is spoilt by the bane of self-exaltation, it is as if, having already sprung up, it withered. But when neither understanding nor practice corrupt, but its greatness growing up, when the applause of persons commending follows, and overturns from its seat the mind of him that doeth rightly, the tree has encountered the winds of the tongues, and all that had grown up strong in it, the tempest of fame has plucked up by the roots. For in proportion as the tree has risen higher to the regions above, forcibly does it feel the violence of the winds; because the more a man is lifted to a height in good practices, with so much the greater blast is he oppressed by the mouth of those that praise him. Therefore if the tree is still in the seed, there is need to fear lest it should be made rotten by the mere acquaintance with knowledge; if it has now already issued into a shoot, we have to be on our guard that the hand of self-exaltation touch it not, and parch it of the greenness of its conduct; but if it already lifts itself up on high with vigorous strength, it is very greatly to be dreaded lest the over strong wind of praise that is applied pluck it up from the roots.

17. But herein it is necessary to be borne in mind, that, to the end that we be not rooted up by immoderate praises, very often, by the marvellous regulating of our Ruler, we are allowed to be torn in pieces by calumnies even, that so when the voice of one commending lifts up the heart, the tongue of one calumniating should abase it, because the tree too oftentimes, which is so driven by

the impulse of one wind as to seem now that it might well nigh be rooted out of its place, is set up again by a blast of another wind from an opposite quarter; and the tree which suffered bending from this side, is brought back from another to its standing position. And hence that tree, being deeply rooted, had as it were stood fixed amidst contending winds, which said, *By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report.* [2 Cor. 6, 8] For it often happens that praise being unwonted brought home to the ears of the well doer, whilst it echoes in talkings without, engenders to the mind within a kind of tempest in silence, and it comes to happen that this thing, that the soul is delighted by the applause of men, it does not easily display outwardly, but yet it feels the force of corruption in no slight degree inwardly. And there are some whom praise so puffs up that it forces them on even to words of self-exalting. But some, as we said before, are ashamed to lay open this same thing, that they are lifted up, and their encomiums being heard by them they are exalted, but yet do not come forth to the extent of words of exaltation, and never shew openly that they delight in such things. Hence blessed Job, because he knew that he had not been arrogant not only at all in words, but also in the secret thought of the heart as well, after that he said, *If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in its brightness;* therefore added; Ver. 27. *And my heart rejoiced in secret.*

[viii]

18. By which same recording, what else is conveyed to us, but that there is need of great fear and circumspection, lest our mind at any time rejoice even in secret on the grounds of its commendations. For that man who looks on the greatness of his fame as ‘the brightness of the moon,’ and creates delight to himself in the secret of the heart, to whom but to the Maker did such a man prefer himself, by Whose gift he obtained it that he should practise aright, and yet in His benefit is made glad upon the favour of his own praise? For the honour of his Creator being disregarded, he is convicted of loving himself more, by the proclaims of whom he is so gladdened. Though sometimes even holy men rejoice in their own good repute; but when they reflect that through this good repute those that hear them advance to better things, they now no longer rejoice in their own reputation, but in the profiting of their neighbours; because it is one thing to seek marks of favour, and another thing to exult on the ground of advancement. Wherein it follows, that when it does not advance the welfare of the hearers, fame for credit should not lift up, but oppress our mind. For when we are commended by the witnessing of the human tongue, we are asked by a secret smiting what we think concerning our own selves. For the uplifted soul, even when false good is told concerning it, exults, because it makes out in thought not how it lives with God, but how it makes itself known with men. For disregarding the judgment of Almighty God concerning itself, and only seeking after that of men, it is lifted up amidst the praises it hears, and the soul which had looked out for this alone is gladdened as if by the prize of its practice. But on the contrary if the heart be really humble, the good things that it hears of itself it either does not at all acknowledge, and is afraid that false things are said, or otherwise if it knows that they are really there to it, dreads lest they should be lost to the eternal recompensing of God, by this alone that it sees them to be published abroad to men; and it fears very greatly lest the hope of the future reward should be changed into the wages of transitory applause.

19. From which circumstance it takes place that the soul of the Elect is tortured by a great fire of their own praises, and by sorrowfulness of thought fined clear of all the rust of its inertness. For by heedful taking thought it is filled with fear lest either for those things, in the which it is praised, and

they do not exist, it should meet with a worse judgment of God, or for those things wherein it is praised, and they do exist, it lose the suitable reward. Whence it most commonly takes place that like as the unjust man is defiled by his praise, so the just person is purified by his praise reaching his ear. For when the good things he has done he finds out are put forward by men, he dreads, as has been said, the exact inquest of the Final Judgment upon himself, and full of affright flees to the conscience, and whatever there is therein worthy of blame, he corrects. For while he dreads to have his good things made known, fearing greatly the exactness of the Inquest to follow, if there be any hidden evil things in him, he cuts them away. For he is alarmed if he be not exhibited at least such to God, as he is held by men, neither is he satisfied that in that state in which he may have been made known to men he should continue to remain. For already he reckons compensation as it were made to him for his good things, except he add thereto others also which are not known by men. Whence it is well said by Solomon; *As silver is tried in the fining pot and gold in the furnace, so man is tried by the mouth of him that praises.* [Prov. 27, 21] For silver and gold if it be refuse is consumed by the fire, but if proof, it is brought out by the fire. Thus surely is the mind also of him that worketh. For what sort of man he is, is shewn herein that he is praised; for if when his praises reach his ears, he is uplifted, what else was such an one but refuse gold or silver, whom surely the furnace of the tongue consumed? But if on hearing the marks of favour towards him, he returns to the consideration of the Judgment Above, and entertains fear lest he should be heavily charged for these things in the sight of the secret Arbiter, as it were by the fire of purifying he is made to grow to greatness and splendour, and from the same source whence he undergoes the burning of affright, he shines so much the brighter. Therefore blessed Job, because he never preferred himself on the ground of practice, says with confidence, *If I saw the sun when it shined.* And because fame to his credit never diverted this man from the regarding of the Interior Judgment, he adds, *And the moon walking in her brightness.* And because he never suffered, not even in secret thought, that his mind should be mastered by the boon of his repute, he directly added, *And if my heart rejoiced in secret.* And because it very often happens that the unheeding mind, when it does not set itself against transitory applause, is drawn on even to this pass, that it praises itself what it does, to the condition which was set before it is in a manner fitly annexed ,  
*And have kissed my hand with my mouth.*

[ix]

20. For by the 'hand' doing is denoted, and by the 'mouth' speaking; as when it is said by Solomon, *A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and it is labour to him to bring it to his mouth.* [Prov. 19, 24] To the slothful man it is a labour to stretch his hand to his mouth,' because the slothful preacher has no mind to practise even the very thing that he says, Since to stretch the hand to the mouth, is to harmonize with his voice in practice. And so he 'kisses his hand with his mouth,' who praises the thing that he does, and by the testimony of his own speech awards to himself meritoriousness of practice. In which case who is there that is despised, saving He Who bestows the very gifts for practising themselves? Whence it is well said by the great Preacher; *And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* [1 Cor. 4, 7] Now holy men know themselves to be sprung since the fall of our first parent from a corruptible stock, and that not by their own goodness, but by grace from above preventing them they are changed to better wishes and works, and whatever of evil they find to be in them, they feel is earned by mortal derivation, but whatever of good they espy in themselves, they acknowledge as the gift of immortal grace, and they are made debtors to Him for the benefit

vouchsafed, Who both by preventing vouchsafed to them to will the good that they willed not, and by following after vouchsafed them to be able to do the good which they will. Whence it is well said by John; *And worshipped Him That liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord.* [Rev. 4, 10] For 'to cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord' is to attribute not to themselves but to the Maker the victories of their conflicts, so as to refer the glory of praise to Him, from Whom they know themselves to have received powers for the conflict. And so blessed Job, because he so tells the good things that he had practised, that, nevertheless, he never attributes them to his own doing, but goes back to the praise of his Creator, denies that he had 'kissed his hand with his mouth.' As though he said in a plain way, 'I do not bring forward my deeds as mine own; because he is proved to disown the grace of his Creator, whoever attributes to himself the thing that he does in practice.' And hence he adds directly;  
Ver. 28. *Which is the chiefest iniquity, and denial against the Most High God.*

[x]

21. For it is clear that he does deny Him, when setting at nought His grace, he claims to himself the powers of good practice. Which too is rightly called as well 'the chiefest iniquity' because every act of sin which is from infirmity destroyeth not hope, seeing that it asks forgiveness from the Judge Above. But presuming on our own goodness is so much the worse in desperateness, the further it is removed from humility. And when it ascribes the strength of practice to itself, it does not have recourse to the aid of the Maker, and it is brought to pass that the sinner perishes so much the worse, for that even this very thing, that he is a sinner, he is ignorant of. It follows;  
Ver. 29. *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found me.*

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#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

22. That we are disciples of Almighty God, the keeping of charity is the only proof. For it is hence that Truth saith by Itself, *By this shall all men know that ye are My Disciples, if ye have love one toward another.* [John 13, 35] Which same love, if it really fills our heart, is wont to be exhibited in two ways; viz. if we at once love our friends in God, and our enemies for God. But it needs to be known that the love of our enemy is then really kept, when we are neither given up to suffering ['addicimur'] upon his advancement, nor rejoiced at his destruction. For very often in a semblance of love with reference to an enemy, the mind is deceived, and such an one it reckons that it loves, if it do not prove a foe to his life; but the efficacy of love either the promotion, or the fall of an enemy, secretly and really puts to the proof. For on this point the mind of man knows not itself to the full, except that him whom he takes for an enemy to him, he finds whether by advancement or diminution to have changed the measure of his standing. For if he is given over to suffer by the prosperity, and rejoiced by the calamity of him who hates him, it is plain that he does not love him, whom he does not wish to be better; and him he persecutes, even when standing, in wish, about whoso fall he congratulates himself.

23. But herein it is needful to know that it very often happens that without charity being lost, both the destruction of an enemy rejoices us, and again his glory without any sin of envy saddens us, when both he falling to ruin, we believe that there are persons rightly set up, and he being advanced we dread very many being unjustly borne down. In which case neither does his diminution now lift

up our mind, nor his aggrandisement give it over to suffer, if the right thought of our heart regard not what is done in the individual, but what is done by the individual towards others. But for preserving these things a scrutiny of the exactest discrimination is absolutely requisite, lest when we are carrying out our own hatred, we be deceived under the appearance of the utility to another. For if there were not to be any rejoicing at all for the death of an enemy, the Psalmist would never say, *The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance on the ungodly*. [Ps. 58, 10] For it is one thing to bear an ungodly man, and another thing to bear an enemy. For there are a great many enemies that are not ungodly, and there are some ungodly persons who seem not in any special manner enemies to us. But the mind of man accounts every one whom it bears as an enemy, to be ungodly and wicked as well, because the faults of that man spleen as his accuser heightens in its own thinking. But with whatever wickednesses he may be sunk down, he little passes for wicked, if he is not felt to be an adversary. In which point there must be the distinguishing, that it is one thing wherein our enemy harms ourselves, and another thing wherein he harms himself and the rest of the world. For if he is good to others, perchance it may be that it is not without our fault that he is bad to us; nor should there be altogether a rejoicing in his ruin now, whoso hostile treatment it is certain we alone have undergone. But when the enemy of ourselves and a great many persons is destroyed, it must needs be that our heart should be glad for the escape of our neighbours, rather than for the destruction of our enemy.

24. For it is requisite that when an adversary perishes we should minutely consider both what we owe to the destruction of the sinner, and what to the justice of the smiter. For when Almighty God smites any bad man, there must be sorrowing in unison with the wretchedness of the ruined, and rejoicing in unison with the justice of the Judge, so that both the punishment of our neighbour dying should be a sorrow to us, and again the equity exhibited by God in judging should be an occasion of joy, that so we may neither prove enemies to a man in his perishing, nor be found unthankful to God in His judging. And so because he perfectly trod down all feelings of hatred in opposition, let blessed Job say, *If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him*. Who, that is to say, in loving even his enemy, whereas he sympathized with an adversary when ruined, by that one's evil things was himself advanced to good, that this one should go on growing to loving-kindness by the same cause that the evil that he deserved had found that other. But because often there are persons who because they cannot with power, assail with cursing those whom they account enemies to themselves, in which persons it appears plain what evil things they would do if they could, who never cease to imprecate those which they cannot do, blessed Job exhibiting himself free from the sin of cursing as well, added, going on, Ver. 30. *Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul*.

[xii]

25. For he would sin, if he were to desire that to be done by God, which he himself either could not at all be able to do, or if he could it would not be in any wise right. For they who assail an enemy with curses, what other thing do they wish God to do in his case, but what they are either unable or ashamed to do themselves? For they wish death to their enemy, which same even if they have the power, they are afraid to bring upon him; lest they should either be bound as guilty of murder committed, or shew themselves wicked even when they are. What then is it to say to God, 'Kill the man whom I hate,' but to cry out to him in audible accents; 'Do Thou that to mine enemy, which it is not proper for me to do towards him even as a sinner.' In which same words it is to be thought

where had this person read, *Love your enemies?* [Luke 6, 27] where had he read, *Bless, and curse not?* [Rom. 12, 14] and again, *Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing?* [1 Pet. 3, 9] But the precepts of grace from above, not heard with the outward ears he observed, because the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote them in the heart of that man. To whom however it would have been but little that he loved those adversaries situated without, excepting he had to bear these also living within, and holding daily converse with him, even those of his household, as adversaries. Whence he adds,

Ver. 31. *If the men of my tabernacle said not, O that we had of his flesh, that we might be satisfied!*

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[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

26. Which same sentence may also be taken in mystery of the voice of our Redeemer. For 'the men of his tabernacle' longed to be 'satisfied by his flesh,' i.e. whether the Jews in persecuting or the Gentiles in believing. For both the one set themselves as it were by consuming it to put an end to His Body, and the latter desire to satisfy their hungering soul with His flesh, by the daily sacrifice of His immolating.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But now following the gist of the history alone let us reflect with what strenuousness the mind of the holy man, full of concern for all things, is divided within and without; who to those acting unjustly had he either submitted in silence, or not withstood in righteous living, assuredly he would never have had them as adversaries. But hereby, that he kept the paths of life, he found hearty desires of his death. Adversaries he met with, shewing themselves outwardly, lurking inwardly. Now it is inferior goodness in a conflict for a man to see without evils that he has to get the better of, and not to have within aught that he may have to bear. But it is the praise of perfect greatness to meet hostile treatment, without bravely, and within mercifully. For there are some things in the actual common dealing of those of a household, that cannot be corrected without sin in the corrector, and therefore when they either defile him who corrects them, or do not weigh heavily on him who does them, with a great skill of tutoring they require to be winked at, and by this very winking to be borne with, which same when put upon ourselves are the more quickly dismissed from our hearts, if we know our own misdemeanours against our neighbours. Whence it is well said too by Solomon; *Take no heed to all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself also hast cursed others.* [Eccles. 7, 21, 22] For whilst we reflect what we have been towards others, we are the less concerned that others should have proved such persons towards ourselves, because the injustice of another avenges in us what our conscience justly accuses in self. It proceeds;

Ver. 32. *The stranger did not lodge in the street; but my door was open to the traveller.*

[xiv]

27. Whereas, Paul being witness, charily is described as patient and kind, by patience it bears with composure the ill turns of others, by kindness it also renders with mercifulness its own good ones. Whence blessed Job at once patiently bore those of his own household cursing him, and received to him kindly the travellers and strangers, to the first affording examples of morals, the other meeting

with the succour of external things. For the holy man viewing by the Spirit of prophecy the Redeemer of mankind, also kept his pardoning words in practice, whereby He warns us, saying, *Let go, and it shall be let go to you; give and it shall be given unto you.* [Luke 6, 37] For our giving relates to the things which we have outwardly, but our letting go to the dismissing the grief, which we have inwardly contracted by the offence of another. But it requires to be known, that he who 'lets go' but does not 'give,' though he has not done to the full, yet has observed the better part of mercifulness. But he who 'gives' but never 'lets go' does not execute mercy at all; because by Almighty God the gift is not accepted from the hand, which is proffered by a heart tied and bound in wickedness.

28. For there is need for the soul that offers alms first to be made clean, because every thing that is given to God is reckoned according to the feeling of him who gives it. Therefore every stain of evil must be wiped clean from our interior man by the changing of the thought, because the offering has it not to appease the wrath of the Judge, except it be acceptable by the purity of him who offers it. Whence it is written; *And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offerings; but unto Cain and to his offerings He had not respect.* [Gen. 4, 4. 5.] For it is not that sacred Revelation says that 'He had respect to the offerings of Abel, but to the offerings of Cain He had not respect;' but he first says, that *He had respect to Abel*, and afterwards subjoined, *And to his offerings*. And again he says that *to Cain He had not respect*, and next added, *nor to his offerings*. For according to the heart of the giver is the thing that is given received. Therefore not Abel by virtue of his offerings, but by virtue of Abel the gifts offered were well pleasing. For it is read that the Lord had regard first to the person who gave, before the things which he gave. Hence blessed Job going on to tell us his bountifulness in the boon of hospitality did right in bringing forward first his patience and kindness towards enemies, how that he did not 'exult in the destruction of his enemy;' that he did not 'assail his persecutors with words of cursing;' that those enraged against him within, he bore with equanimity; and then at last he brought forward the bountifulness of his hospitality, that, namely, by the order of his relation being listened to, we might learn that exterior gifts are seasoned by the interior pureness of the heart, that the combination of his virtues might teach the reader what sort of person he ought to be in himself, when he administers external good to others.

29. But who would not account himself to be a holy man in the midst of such heights of his virtues? Who would not be in some measure tempted by his mere merits alone being so many in number, so that if at any time as being but man he went wrong, he would not have his transgression made known to men; and would account it as trivial if he did any thing wrong in lesser things; and would rather prefer to cover his offence by silence than disclose it by the voice of confession? For it often comes to pass that the mind being lifted up by virtuous attainments, when it knows that many good things are scattered abroad concerning it in the esteem of neighbours, does not wish it to be known, if there is any thing that it does deserving of blame. Which same darkness of mistaking the mind is for this reason exposed to, because high-swelling clogs the eye of the heart. Hence blessed Job, in the midst of so many distinguished achievements in virtues, who became so lofty in practice, in order to shew how lowly in mind he was, added directly;  
*If I covered my transgression as man, and did hide mine iniquity in my bosom.*

30. For these are the proofs of true humility, both for a man to ascertain his own wickedness, and on being ascertained to discover it by the voice of confession; but on the contrary it is the accustomed evil practice of man's race, at once to commit sin keeping himself hidden from sight,

and when committed to hide it by denying, and when brought home to him, to multiply it by standing up for it. For from that fall of the first man we draw these accessions of wickedness, from which we also draw the very original of sin. For thus he, when he had touched the forbidden tree, hid himself from the face of the Lord amidst the trees of Paradise. In which hiding, because surely he could not escape the eye of God, it is not the effecting of self-concealing that is related, but the affecting thereof is betokened. Who when he was charged by the Lord, how that he had touched of the forbidden tree, thereupon answered; *The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.* [Gen. 3, 12] The woman likewise on being asked, answered, saying, *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* [v. 13] For to this end they were enquired of, that the sin, which by transgressing they had been guilty of, they might by confessing wipe out. Whence too the serpent, that prompter, inasmuch as he was not to be brought back to pardon, was not asked concerning the sin. Thus man was asked the question ‘where he was,’ that he might review the offence committed, and by confessing it take knowledge how far he had departed from the face of his Creator. But both preferred to take to themselves the cordials of defence rather than of confession. And whilst the man was minded to palliate the sin through the woman, and the woman through the serpent, they added to the sin, which they endeavoured to vindicate; Adam by indirectly glancing at the Lord, how that he had Himself proved the author of their sin, in that He had made the woman; and Eve in referring the sin to the Lord, Who had placed the serpent in Paradise. For they who had heard from the mouth of the devil deceiving them, *Ye shall be as Gods;* [v. 5] because they were not able to be like to God in Godhead, for the heightening of their error endeavoured to make God like to themselves in transgression. In this way then, whilst they set themselves to defend their guilt, they made the addition that the sin should be rendered more heinous when examined, than it had been when committed.

31. Hence now also the branches of the human race derive bitterness still from this root, so that when a man is charged home for the evil in him, he hides himself under words of self-defence, as under a kind of leaves of trees, and as it were flies the face of his Creator to a kind of darkened retreats of self-exculpation, whereas he has no mind to have that known that he has been guilty of. By which same concealment he has not hidden himself from the Lord, but the Lord from himself. For he manages that he should not see Him Who sees all things, not that he himself should not be seen. Contrarily to every sinner the first step now of enlightenment is the humility of confessing, in that he now refuses to spare himself, who does not blush to avow the evil that he has done, and he who by defending himself might have been laid open to be accused, by accusing himself defends himself most quickly. And hence to dead Lazarus, who was kept down by a great weight, it is not said, ‘be thou restored to life;’ but, *Come forth,* [John 11, 43] by which same rising again, which was carried on in the body of that man, it is signified in what way we ourselves rise again in the heart, i.e. when it is said to the dead man, *Come forth;* that is to say, that man being dead in his sin, and through the mass of bad habit already buried, because he lies hidden from sight within his own conscience by wickedness, should go forth from himself without by confession. For to the dead man it is said, *Come forth,* that from the excusing and concealing of sin he may be called forth to come out to the accusing of himself with his own lips. Whence David the Prophet, in coming to life from that death of his great guilt, as it were went forth at the voice of the Lord, when being rebuked by Nathan he brought accusation of what he had done.

32. Therefore because this sin of concealing grew to a dreadful excess in the human race, blessed Job, when he was saying, *If I covered my transgression,* rightly inserted the words *as man,* because



he sees that to be proper to man, which descends by the copying of our old parent. Whence it is fitly subjoined; *And did hide mine iniquity in my bosom*. For sacred Scripture is very often used to put the 'bosom' for the mind; as where in the voice of Holy Church it is said by the Psalmist of our persecutors, who are joined to us indeed in nature, but disjoined in life, *And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom*. [Ps. 79, 12] As though he said in plain speech; 'Let them receive that in their minds, which in raging against us they practise over our bodies, that whereas they punish us outwardly in part, they may themselves be punished inwardly to a complete degree.' And so because the 'bosom' is interpreted the privacy of the mind, to 'conceal iniquity in the bosom' is to hide it in the recesses of the conscience, nor to uncover it by confession, but to veil it by defence. Contrarily James says, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be saved*. [James 5, 16] Solomon also says, *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy*. [Prov. 28, 13]

33. But herein it is necessary to be known that men very often both confess their sins and are not humble. For we know many who when no man charges them confess that they are sinners, but when perhaps they are rebuked for their sin, they seek the support of defence that they may not seem to be sinners; which persons, if, when they say the thing of their own accord, they did then with genuine humility see themselves to be sinners, when they are charged home by others would never deny that they are what they had confessed. In which case the tokens of true confession are, if when a man calls himself a sinner, he does not contradict another as well advancing that about him. For because it is written, *The just man in the beginning is the accuser of himself*; [Prov. 18, 17] he does not rather aim to appear a sinner, but a just man, when any one confesses himself a sinner, no man charging him. But when another inveighs against the evil that we have done, he proves the truth of confession. Which same if we defend in a proud spirit, it is clear that it is feignedly that of ourselves we called ourselves sinners. Whence it is above every thing to be taken care of that the evil things we have done, we both confess of our own accord, and do not deny them when others charge us home with them. For it is the evil of pride that the thing which a man as if by his own act deems it meet to confess about himself, this he should disdain to have said to him by others.

34. Thus blessed Job shewed what singular humility he was of, in that he both knew that he was living amongst adversaries, and yet was not afraid to disclose his offences with the voice of confession. But observe that above he tells his virtuous qualities, lower down he confesses his sin. For hence he clearly proves what truth he had spoken of the good in him, in that he would not hold his tongue concerning the evil. One while he points out his virtues, at another time transgressions; that he had both committed sin, and had not kept it silent, he makes plain. Whence it appears without all doubt what extraordinary purity he was of in the sight of Almighty God, who both avoided evil things that he should not commit them, and yet what things it did chance to him to commit he did not conceal from men; so that to him there should at once be the high credit of righteousness to have shunned sin, and the safe keeping of righteousness to have brought to light what he was not able to shun. Let this man seem to any one great in his virtues, to me without doubt he appears most grand even in his sins. Let those, who are so minded, admire in him the self-control of chastity, let them admire the faithfulness of justice, let them admire the bowels of pitifulness; I do not less admire in him the humblest confession of sins, than such lordly achievements of virtue. For I know well that through the shame of infirmity it is generally a worse conflict, to bring to light the sins we have committed, than it is to avoid them not being committed, and each instance of evil, though it may be avoided with more vigorousness, is yet brought to view

with greater humility. Thus blessed Job, who whilst supported by so many great practices was not ashamed to confess his sin, shewed in the midst of his virtues, how humble he was. But because from true humility there ever springs secure authority, so that the soul should dread nothing without, in proportion as by the longing of self-elation it does not pant after the topmost height of affairs, the confession of sin having been set forth, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 34. *Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of neighbours terrify me, and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door?*

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35. It is great assuredness of heart to have nought of worldly concupiscence. For if the heart pants after attaining earthly things, it can never be secure and tranquil, because either things not possessed it desires, in order that it may possess them, or things obtained it is afraid for lest it should lose them, and whilst in adverse circumstances he dreads prosperous ones, so in prosperous circumstances he dreads such as are adverse, and he is tossed hither and thither as it were by a kind of waves, and is hurried about in various fashions by the changeableness of shifting affairs. But if once the mind is fixed with strong steadfastness in the longing after the Country Above, it is less distressed by the annoyance of earthly things. For from all outward commotions it seeks that its aim, like a kind of most secret retreat, and there attaching itself to the Unchangeable, [al. 'Unchangeably attached,' which however would be a hyperbolic expression.] and mounting above all changeable things, by the mere calmness of its repose, while in the world, it is henceforth without the world. It goes beyond all things below by its stressing after the highest, and all the objects which it does not go after it feels itself by a certain liberty to get above, nor within is it subject to the tempest of things temporal, which it views without, for all earthly things which being longed after might have borne down the mind, being looked down upon lie beneath it. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Set a look out for thyself*; [Jer. 31, 21] that whilst a man views things above, he may rise high above things beneath. Hence likewise Habakkuk says, *I will stand upon my watch*. [Hab. 2, 1] For he 'stands upon his watch,' who by wise policy of discipline, does not bow down beneath, but rises high above earthly desires, that while he aims at Eternity, which is ever steadfast, he should have beneath his feet every thing that passes by.

36. Yet because with whatever goodness the holy man has advanced, the infirmity of the flesh still outwardly bears him down whilst set in this life, as it is written, *Though man walk in the image of God, yet he is disquieted in vain*: [Ps. 39, 6] it very often takes place that he is at once disquieted without, and holds on not subject to disquietude within, and that he is liable to be 'disquieted in vain' comes from the infirmity of the flesh, though that he 'walks in the image of God' is from the excellency of the mind, in order that he should both be inwardly strengthened by the Divine aid, and yet be still pressed down without by the human burthen. Whence Habakkuk again has well delivered a single sentence serving for both particulars. For he says, *And trembling entered into my bones, and my power [virtue] was disquieted underneath me*. [Hab. 3, 16] As though he said; 'It is not my power, wherein being transported above, I remain free from liability to disquietude, but it is my own power wherein I am disquieted below.' And so the same is free from disquietude above himself, and the same exposed to disquietude below himself; because he had mounted above himself, in so far as he was caught away to things on high; and he was beneath himself, in so far as he still dragged a remains into that which is below. The same above himself is free from liability to disquietude, because he had now passed away into the contemplation of God: the same under

himself is liable to be disquieted, because beneath himself he still remained a frail human being. The Prophet David according with this sentence saith; *I said in the excess of my mind, All men are liars.* [Ps. 116, 11] To whom the answer may be made; 'If every man, then thou too; and the sentence will henceforth be false, which thou being a liar hast uttered, because whilst thou art true-spoken, every man is not found out a liar.' But observe that it is prefaced, *I said in the excess of my mind.* And so by 'excess of the mind' he transcended himself even, when he determined about the character of man. As though he said in plain speech; 'I delivered a true sentence respecting the falseness of all men from the same cause, whereby I was myself above man;' being now so far himself a 'liar' as far as he was himself man, but so far altogether not a 'liar,' as 'by excess of the mind' he was above man.

37. Thus, therefore, thus all the perfect, though they are still subject to something disquieting from the infirmity of the flesh, yet already enjoy within the calmest privacy by the contemplation of the mind, so that whatsoever thing happens without, it should in nought disquiet them within. Whence blessed Job, exhibiting the security of a holy mind, after he had delivered so many announcements of the parts of virtue with reference to himself, following that which we have set before, added; *If I feared at an exceeding great multitude, or the contempt of neighbours terrified me, and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door.* As though he said in a plainer manner; 'While others were disquieted against me without, I myself remained in mine own self free from being disquieted within.' For what else ought we in this place to take 'the door' to be, but the mouth? For by this we as it were go forth, when with what words we are able, we disclose the secrets of our hearts; and what we remain within in the conscience, such we go forth without by the tongue.

38. But there are some persons who are altogether afraid to be despised, and lest they should chance to be judged as contemptible, aim to appear wise. These are driven to 'go forth out of the door,' because when assailed with insults, how great in themselves they lie buried from sight, they give out telling it. And when being overcome by impatience they put forth things about themselves, which were unknown, they as it were 'go forth by the door' of the mouth. And so blessed Job being about to say, that he had never 'gone forth out of the door of the lips,' justly set before; *I kept silence;* i.e. because agitated by impatience he would have gone forth out of the house of the conscience, if he had not known how to keep silence. For holy men, when they are under the trial of being perturbed, shun wholly and entirely to exhibit themselves to view, and when they cannot benefit those that hear them, they are willing by keeping silence to be even despised, lest they pride themselves upon the exhibition of their own wisdom. And when they say any thing with good understanding, they seek not their own glory, but the life of their hearers. But when they see that they cannot by speaking gain the life of their hearers, by keeping silence they hide their own knowledge. For we hide to the imitating the life of the Lord, as to a kind of mark set before us. For He Himself, because he saw that Herod sought not advancement, but that he desired to wonder at His signs or His knowledge, on being asked by him held His tongue, and because He kept silence with constancy, He went forth derided by him. For it is written; *And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by Him:* [Luke 23, 8] where it is also added; *Then he questioned with Him in many words, but He answered him nothing.* [v. 9] But how greatly the Lord in holding His peace was despised, is shewn when the words are brought in there directly; *And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him.* [v. 11] Which same transaction we ought to hear and learn, in order that as often as our hearers desire to be made

acquainted with things of ours, as things to be praised, and not to alter what is wrong of their own, we should altogether hold our peace; lest, if we speak the Word of God with the design of display, both the fault of those persons, which then was, should not cease to be, and our own fault, which was not, should be brought to pass.

39. A person will perhaps say, 'How do we know with what feelings of the heart a man will hear?' But there are a number of things that bring to light the mind of him who hears; first and foremost, if our hearers both always praise what they hear, and never follow the thing that they praise. This vain glory of speaking the great Preacher had shunned, when he said, *For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as from God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* [2 Cor. 2, 17] For to 'corrupt the Word of God' is to think of Him otherwise than He is, or to seek from it not spiritual fruits, but the corrupt offspring of human praise. But 'to speak as of sincerity,' is not to seek for aught in Revelation beyond what behoves. Now he 'speaks as from God,' who knows that he himself hath not from himself, but that he hath received from God what he says. And he speaks 'before God,' who in all that he speaks seeks not human regards, but minds the presence of Almighty God, and who looks for, not his own glory, but the glory of his Creator. But he who indeed knows well that he has himself received from God the thing that he speaks, and yet in speaking seeks his own glory, speaks 'as from God,' but not 'before God,' because Him he considers as absent, Whom he does not set before his heart, when he preaches Him. But holy men at once 'speak as from God' and 'before God,' in that they both know that they have from Him the thing that they say, and they see that He is Himself present at their discoursings, their Judge and their Hearer. Hence it comes to pass, that whereas they know themselves to be set at nought by their neighbours, and that their words do not advantage the life of the persons hearing them, they hide from sight what great goodness they are of, lest if the speech delivered disclose the secret of the heart to no purpose, it should break forth into vain glory.

40. Therefore blessed Job in the midst of stubborn hearts not aiming to shine forth by the disclosure of his virtue, says, *And if the contempt of neighbours terrified me and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door.* For he who being stedfast through humility never feared to be despised, him never did impatience master, that the tongue should cast him forth out of doors. When it is rightly put first, *If I feared at an exceeding great multitude;* that it might be seen and known what great constancy he was of, in this respect, because no number of men ever terrifies without, whom no rout of bad habits lays waste within. For in this life he who seeks nothing that has to do with prosperity, doubtless dreads nothing that has to do with adversity.

#### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

41. Which same words if we carry on to a mystical meaning, we directly find therein the Redeemer's mode of practice. For *He* was not 'afraid at an exceeding great multitude,' Who smote with a single answer only His persecutors coming with swords and staves, saying, *I am He.* [John 18, 6] 'Him the contempt of His neighbours did not terrify,' Who, in freeing us from eternal punishments, received strokes on the face with a composed mind. '*He* kept silence, and did not go forth out of the door,' Who in the very hour now of His Passion, when He was undergoing the weak conditions of humanity, refused to call into action the power of Divinity. For to the Mediator between God and man it would have been 'to go forth out of the door,' if when He was held as Man He had been minded to display the power of His Majesty, and by the mightiness of His Divinity to

surmount the weak conditions of the flesh taken upon Him. For that He might die manifest to man, He remained hidden God. *For had they known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory.* [1 Cor 2, 8] And so He did not 'go forth out of the door,' Who even when questioned by Pilate kept silence; and in the midst of the hands of the persecutors He both offered His Body to suffering, which He had taken upon Him in behalf of the Elect, and would not display to those that were against Him What He was. Whence also it is said by the Psalmist, *They have made Me an abomination unto them, I was given up, and I went not forth.* [Ps. 88, 8] For when He was despised because He appeared man, He would have 'gone forth,' if He had been minded to display His hidden Majesty. But because he brought infirmity to view, and hid power from sight, herein, that He remained unknown to His persecutors, to those persecutors He did not 'go forth.' Who, however, does 'go forth' to the Elect, because to those that seek for it, He discloses the sweetness of His Divine Nature. Whence it is said to Him by the Prophet, *Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, that Thou mightest save Thine Anointed.* [Hab. 3, 13] It goes on: Ver. 35. *Who would give me a helper that the Almighty might hear my desire.*

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#### [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

42. The holy man after he related so many high achievements of the virtues in him, knowing well that he cannot attain to the things on high by his own deserts, seeks for a helper. And whom verily does he fix his eye on but the Only-begotten Son of God, Who whereas He took upon Him human nature travailing in this mortal state, did give help? For *He* helped man, being made Man; that because to mere man there was no way open of returning to God, there should be made a Way of returning by means of The God-Man [Homo-Deus.]. For we were far removed from the Righteous and Immortal One, being mortal and unrighteous. But between the Immortal and Righteous One and ourselves the mortal and unrighteous, appeared the Mediator of God and man, mortal and righteous, Who might at once own death with mortals, and righteousness with God; that whereas by our things below we were far removed from things above, He might in Himself singly unite the things below with the things above, and that herein there might be a Way made for us of returning to God, in the degree that He joined ours beneath with His own on high. This One then blessed Job, in his personating of the whole Church, asks for as Mediator, who when he had said, *Who would give me a helper*, suitably added, *that the Almighty might hear my desire.* For he knew that for the rest of Eternal deliverance, the prayers of man can never be heard excepting through his Advocate. Concerning Whom it is said by the Apostle John; *If any one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.* [1 John 2, 1. 2.] Concerning Whom Paul likewise saith; *It is Christ Jesus that died for us, yea, rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us.* [Rom. 8, 34] For, for the Only-begotten Son to 'intercede' for man, is to shew Himself Man in the presence of the Coeternal Father, and for Him to have besought for human nature, is to have taken upon Him that same nature in the loftiness of the Divine Nature. And so the Lord intercedes for us not with the voice but by the act of compassionating; because that which He would not should be condemned in the Elect, he set free by taking upon Himself. And so a helper is sought for, that 'the desire may be heard;' because except that the intercession of the Mediator were employed in our behalf, surely the accents of our prayers would remain silent to the ear of God.

43. Moreover it requires to be noted that it is not said, 'my prayers, but, *my desire, that the Almighty might hear*. For true beseeching does not lie in the accents of the lips, but in the thoughts of the heart. For the stronger accents in the deepest ears of God it is not our words that make, but our desires. For if we seek eternal life with the mouth, but yet do not desire it with the heart, in crying out we keep silence. But if we desire in the heart, even when we are silent with the mouth, in being silent we cry out. It is hence that in the wilderness the people clamour with their voices, and Moses is still to the clamouring of words, and yet whilst keeping still he is heard by the ear of divine Pity, whereas it is said, *Wherefore criest thou unto Me?* [Exod. 14, 15] Thus within in the desire is the secret cry, which does not reach to the ears of men, and yet fills the hearing of the Creator. It is hence that Anna going to the temple was silent indeed with the lips, and yet uttered so many accents of her desire. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, *Enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret, and thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly*. [Matt. 6, 6] For 'the door being shut he prays in his chamber,' who while his mouth is silent, pours forth the affection of the heart in the sight of the Pitifulness Above. And the voice is 'heard in secret,' when there is a crying out in silence by holy desires. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, *The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor; Thine ear hath heard the preparing of their heart*. [Ps. 10, 17] Now blessed Job in the subjoined words discloses whom he seeks for himself as a helper, in the 'hearing of his desire,' saying, *And that he himself who judgeth would write a book !*

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44. For because to the People still fearing, the Law was committed by the hands of a Servant, but upon the loving Children, the grace of the Gospel was bestowed by the Lord, Who as coming for our Redemption, instituted the New Covenant for us, but in examining as touching the precept of that Covenant one day cometh as Judge also, it is not requisite that by explaining it should be made clear, that He Who Judges is the Same Who writes a book. For Truth Itself says by Itself, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son*. [John 5, 22] And so He will then be the Enactor of judgment Who is now the Composer of the 'book;' that He should then demand in strictness, what He now bids in mildness. For thus we see every day that masters set children the rudiments of their letters caressing them, but exact those of them dealing hardly with them; and what they give with gentleness, they require back with the rod. For now the precepts of Divine Revelation sound gentle, but they shall be to be thought harsh in the exacting of them. Now, there is a gentle warning of One calling, but then there shall come the strict justice of the Judge, because it is certain that no whit even of the very least commandment will pass without scrutinizing. By which same it is apparent that He that 'judgeth is the Same That wrote the Book,' Which same 'Book' of the New Testament, that the Redeemer of man should Himself frame in His own Person at the last, the Prophet Ezekiel rightly tells forth, saying, *And behold six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn at his reins*. [Ez. 9, 2] For what else is there denoted in the 'six men coming' but the six ages of mankind? [St. Gregory's division of ages, Him. in Ev. xix. §. 1. from Adam to Noah, Noah to Abraham, Abraham to Moses, Moses to Our Lord, and then to the end, will not suit this place. What is meant is probably that in St. Isidore of Seville, Etym. lib. v. c. 39. De Discretionem temporum, where two more divisions are made, at David, and the Captivity. He compares these ages to the days of Creation. The same division is given in the beginning of his Chronicon.] Who 'come from the way of the higher gate,' because from the state of Paradise as from the beginning of the world, they are unwound from the upper generations. Which 'gate looks to the North' in this way, because the

mind of man lying open to evil, except that, abandoning the warmth of charity, it had courted the numbness of the interior, would never have gone out to this breadth of mortality. *And every man a slaughter weapon in his hand;* because each particular generation being evolved by the several respective ages, before the Coming of the Redeemer, had in its practice that wherefrom it took the punishment of condemnation. *And one man among them was clothed with linen.* Because our Redeemer deigned to have parents even of the priestly Tribe ['Tribu,' perhaps 'nation,' but Elizabeth, 'of the daughters of Aaron,' was a kinswoman of the Blessed Virgin. Luke 1, 5. and 36.] after the flesh, he is described as coining 'clothed with linen.' Or, surely, because linen is from the earth, and is not like wool produced from the corruptible flesh, seeing that He derived the covering of His Body from a Virgin mother, and not by the corruptness of copulation, therefore He came to us 'clothed with linen.' *And a writer's inkhorn at his reins.* In the 'reins' is the hind part of the body. And because the Lord Himself after that He died for our sakes, and rose again, and ascended up into heaven, then wrote the New Testament through the Apostles, this man had an 'inkhorn at his reins.' For He Who after He departed framed the writing of the New Testament, as it were, carried an 'inkhorn' behind him. Thus this 'inkhorn' he sees to hold fast to the man 'clothed with linen,' who says, *And that the same who judges would write a book.* But wherefore, blessed Job, desirest thou that a book should be written by Him, Who is Judge? It goes on;

Ver. 36. *That I might bear it upon my shoulder, and put it round me like a crown.*

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45. To 'bear the book upon the shoulder,' is by practising to carry out Holy Scripture. And observe how orderly it is described both first as being 'carried on the shoulder,' and afterwards 'put round' him 'as a crown,' because, that is to say, the precepts of Sacred Revelation, if they be now borne in practice, afterwards set forth for us the crown of victory in the recompensing. But why does blessed Job beg for 'the book to be written by the Judge,' who was not able to attain to the times of the New Testament? But, as has been often said already, he uses the accents of the Elect, and in the personifying of them begs that, which he foresaw would benefit them in all respects. For he himself by the Spirit had for long had that book with him, which by the grace of Inspiration he had obtained, that both by living he should be made acquainted with, and by foreseeing he should announce.

But herein it requires to be known that when we take thought of the precepts of Sacred Revelation, and when we draw off the mind from love of the life of corruption, we as it were hasten on by a kind of footsteps of the heart, to the interior scene of things. Now no man, in abandoning things below, is directly made at the top; because for earning the title to perfection, whilst the soul is day by day being led forward on high, doubtless there is an attaining thereto as it were by a kind of steps of ascending. Whence in this place also it is fitly added;

*By my several steps I will declare it.*

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46. Since concerning these 'steps' of merits it is said by the Psalmist, *They go from virtue to virtue.* [Ps. 84, 7] Concerning these, again, regarding Holy Church he says; *God is distinguished in her steps, what time He shall receive her.* [Ps. 48, 3. not as V.] For neither is there any attaining suddenly to things above, as has been said, but to the topmost pitch of virtuous attainments the soul

is led on by accessions. For hence it is that the same Prophet saith again; *I was exercised, and my spirit failed little by little.* [Ps. 77, 3] What does he mean, then, that he says, *my spirit*, but the spirit of man, i.e. the spirit of exaltation? And because by secret grace we advance to the love of God by a measure regulated from above, in proportion as virtue is daily increased in us by the Spirit of God, our own spirit proportionally goes off. Which spirit of error, because it is not at once cut clean away from us, is justly recorded to have 'failed little by little.' But we then make complete advance in God, when we have wholly and entirely fallen away from ourselves. Thus these measures of growing virtues by the words of the holy man are styled 'steps.' For every elect person sets out from the tenderness of his embryo in the first instance, and afterwards comes to firmness for strong and vigorous achievements. Which thing Truth plainly shews in the Gospel, saying, *So is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how.* Which same seed describing the growths of he adds; *For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* The end of whose progress too he also makes to succeed, saying, *But when it has brought forth the fruits from itself, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.* [Mark 4, 26-29] Observe, by the voice of Truth the accessions of merits are marked out by the characters of fruits. For He says, *first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* Was not Peter still a 'blade' then, when by the mouth of a maid he was in a moment bent down by the blast of a single speech, already green indeed through devotedness, but still tender through infirmity. But he was found 'full corn in the ear' when he withstood the rulers persecuting him, saying, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* [Acts 5, 29] For he was found 'full corn in the ear' when, in the winnowing of persecution, he underwent such numberless wounds, but yet he was never made small after the manner of chaff, but continued whole grain. For little by little in each several soul, so to say, the moisture of interior grace abounds, that the blade may grow into fruit. So let no one when he sees any neighbour still a 'blade' despair of the 'full corn.' Since from the leaves of the blades, which hang softly, flowing hither and thither, the rising grains of fruitage come to firmness.

47. Now the Prophet Daniel, whereas, when the Lord was speaking to him, he made it his business to tell us the posture of his body, did rightly represent those stages of merits. Thus he says; *Yet heard I the voice of his words, and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I dismayed upon my face, and my face clave to the ground. And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the joints of my hands. And he said, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent: and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling; and he said unto me, Fear not.* [Dan. 10, 9-12] Which same posture of his body, whilst he was listening to the words of one speaking inwardly, he would never set forth to us with so much pains, if he had known it to be void of mysteries. For in Sacred Writ not only what holy men say is prophecy, but also very often what they do. Thus the holy man, being pregnant with interior mysteries, by the posture of his body, likewise represents the power of the voice; and by this that he first lay prostrate on the earth, by this that he afterwards set himself up on the joints of his hands and on his knees, by this that at last he stood fast erect indeed, yet trembling, he makes known to us in his own person all the order of our progress. For the words of God we hear 'lying on the ground,' when being settled in our sins, allied to earthly pollution, we are made acquainted with spiritual precepts from the voice of the Saints. At which precepts, we are as it were set up upon our knees and the joints of our hands, because withdrawing ourselves from earthly defilements, we as it were henceforth lift up our mind from things below. For as he wholly



cleaves to the ground, who lies dismayed, so he who is bent down upon his knees and the joints of his fingers, his advancement commencing, is already in a great measure hung aloft from earth. But at the last by the voice of the Lord we stand there erect indeed, yet trembling, in that being perfectly lifted up from earthly objects of desire, the more fully we know the words of God, the more we are afraid. For he as it were still lies prostrate on the ground, who by desires after the earthly cares nothing to be lifted up to the heavenly. But it is as if he being lifted up still 'rested upon his hands and knees,' who already forsakes some defilements, but does not yet withstand some earthly practices. But he now stands there present erect at the words of God, who perfectly lifts up the mind to things aloft, and scorns to be bent down by impure desires.

48. Now he rightly shews that he 'stood trembling;' because the scrutiny of interior exactness is the more fearfully dreaded, the more advanced the progress in respect thereto. Where it is fitly subjoined by the voice of God, *fear not*; because the more that we ourselves learn what we should have occasion to fear, the more we have infused in us from God by interior grace what may call for love, so that both our contempt little by little may pass away into fear, and fear pass away into charity; that wherein God when He seeks us, by contempt we withstand, and by fear flee from, both contempt and fear being one day set aside, we should be joined to Him by love only. For little by little we learn even the very fear of Him [The readings vary. The Ben. Editor seems not to have seen that noticed in the Italian reprint, which is also in the Merton and Trin. Coll. MSS. and others at Oxford, 'Eum timere didiscimus, eique vi solius &c.' 'we unlearn fearing Him, and are attached to Him by the force of love alone.'], to the love of Whom only we are attached. And thus as it were there being placed a kind of steps of our advance, the foot of the mind first by fear we set below, and afterwards by charity lift it to the heights of love, that from that wherewith a man is puffed up he may be checked, so that he fear, and from that, which he now dreads he may be lifted up, that he may have boldness. Now these steps of virtuous attainments it is no great labour to lay hold of, since there is the passing from one to another.

49. But the subject requires the nicest handling, when the mind strives to estimate in the case of one and the same virtue with what steps of advancement it is lifted up. For to mention the first elements of virtue, i.e. faith and wisdom, they cannot be severally gained, except we ascend thereto by marked and ordered methods as by a kind of steps. For faith itself which imbues us for taking in hand in a perfect manner what else there is good, very often in its beginnings both totters and is firmly based, and it is now held most surely, and yet touching the assurance thereof there is still trembling under the effects of misgiving. For a part of it is received first, that it may be afterwards perfectly completed in us. For if there were not an advancing by a sure step in the mind of one who believes, the father of the child to be healed would not have said on being questioned, in the Gospel, *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief*. [Mark 9, 24] And so he was still ascending upwards as to the faith which he had already received, who at one and the same time both cried out that he already believed and still doubled from unbelieving. Hence it is also that it said to our Redeemer by His disciples, *Increase our faith*, that that which had been already received in beginning, might by the accessions of steps arrive at perfection.

50. Moreover Wisdom herself, who is required to be the mistress of good works, is vouchsafed to the panting soul by degrees of increase, that surely the ascending thereto should be by the steps of wonderful regulation. Which some the Prophet Ezekiel well describes in a figurative relation, who concerning that man whom he had seen on a high mountain tells, saying, *He measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the water up to the ancles; again he measured a thousand, and*

*brought me through the water up to the knees; again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the water up to the reins. Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a torrent that I could not pass over, for there swelled deep waters of a torrent, which could not be passed over.* [Ez. 47, 3-5] For what is denoted by the number of a 'thousand,' but the fulness of the benefit vouchsafed? Thus the man who appeared 'measures a thousand cubits,' and the Prophet is led through the waters 'up to the ancles,' because our Redeemer, when to us on our being converted to Him He bestowed the fulness of a good beginning, bathed the first treadings of our practice by the gift of spiritual wisdom. For the water's reaching up to the ancle is our henceforth maintaining the treadings of longed-for righteousness by wisdom being vouchsafed to us. Again, he 'measures a thousand cubits,' and the Prophet is led through the water 'up to the knees,' because when the fulness of good practice is bestowed, our wisdom is increased even to this degree, that there is not henceforth any bending in bad deeds. Thus it is hence said by Paul, *Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet.* [Heb. 12, 12] Thus 'the water reaches to the knees,' when the wisdom that is obtained perfectly braces us to uprightness of good practice. And again, he 'measures a thousand,' and the Prophet is 'led through the water up to the reins' in this way, because the fulness of good practice then grows to a height in us, when the wisdom vouchsafed has killed in us as far as it is possible all the gratification of the flesh as well. For except the gratification of the flesh was seated in the reins, the Psalmist would never have said, *Burn my reins and my heart.* [Ps. 2, 26] Therefore the water comes up 'to the reins,' when the sweetness of wisdom destroys the very incitements of the flesh too, so that the burnings of the flesh that might have scorched up the soul are cooled down. And he still further 'measured a thousand,' 'and it was a torrent which the Prophet could not pass,' of which he also says, *Because there swelled deep waters of a torrent, which could not be passed over.* For perfectness of practice having been received, we come to contemplation; in which same contemplation while the mind is carried up on high, being uplifted it sees in God that the thing that it sees it cannot fathom, and as it were it touches the water of the torrent, which it cannot pass through, because at once it beholds in gazing what it may be pleased to behold, and yet is not able perfectly to behold that very thing that it pleases. And so the Prophet sooner or later comes to the water 'which he cannot pass through,' because when we are at last brought to the contemplation of wisdom, the mere immensity thereof, which by itself lifts man to itself, denies the human mind a full acquaintance, so that it should at once by touching love this wisdom, and yet never by passing through penetrate it.

51. Thus blessed Job called these, increasings of virtues by the title of 'steps,' because he saw them to be in distinct divisions, bestowed on men by gift from above; seeing that by them only do we ascend so as to come to the attaining of heavenly things. And so in making mention of the Sacred Book, i.e. of Divine Revelation, he says; *By my several steps I will declare it*, in this way surely, because he really ascends to the teaching of God, who has broken forth to the attaining thereof by the steps of holy practice. And he as it were 'by his several steps declares the book' who proves that he has been vouchsafed the knowledge of it not in respect of words only, but also of deeds. Whence it is yet further added;  
*And as to a prince I will offer it.*

For every thing that we offer, we hold in our hands. And so 'unto the Prince' coming to Judgment 'to offer the book' is to have held the words of His precepts in our behaviour. It proceeds;  
Ver. 38—40. *If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain: if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof; let the thistle*

*grow for me instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.*

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[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

52. For what is it for the 'land to cry,' for 'the furrows to weep,' and to have 'eaten one's own fruits buying them?' To whom is it necessary to buy what is his own? who has heard 'the land crying?' Who has seen 'the furrows weeping?' And whereas the furrows of the land are always of the land, why is it that by a separate declaration it is both said that the land did not cry, and that the furrows thereof did not weep along with it? For whereas a furrow of the earth is nothing else but earth, it does not need the accounting of much difference, that he adds; *And along with it the furrows thereof weep.* In which same point because the order of the history falls to the ground, the mystical meaning displays itself to us, the doors as it were being now set open. As though it exclaimed in plain speech; 'Whereas ye know that the reasonableness of the letter has dropped dead, doubtless it remains that ye should fall back to me without misgiving. For every one who either by private right rules a domestic household, or for the common advantage is set over faithful multitudes, herein that he possesses the rights of government over the faithful committed to him, what else does he but hold the land to cultivate it? Since it is for this end that each individual is advanced above the rest, by Divine distribution, that the mind of those under him, like land subdued, may be made fruitful by the seed of his preaching. But 'the land crieth against' its possessor, if it chance that against him, who is set at the head, either a private family, or Holy Church utters any just murmur. Since for 'the land to cry,' is for those under charge to grieve with reason against the injustice of him who rules them; where it is rightly subjoined, *And along with it the furrows thereof weep.* For the land even when not cultivated by any works generally produces something of sustenance for the service of man, but when ploughed it bears fruits to superabundance. And there are some persons, who 'not being cleft by any ploughshare of reading, or any of exhortation, do yet of themselves produce some good things, though but the least, like land not yet ploughed up. But there are some who for always hearing and retaining, applying themselves to holy preachings and meditations, as it were cleft with a kind of ploughshare of the tongue, as to the former hardness of the heart, receive the seed of exhortation, and by the furrows of voluntary chastening render the fruits of good practice. But it is very often the case that those who are set at the head do things unjust, and it comes to pass that the very persons injure those under them, who were bound to do them good. Which when uninstructed persons see, being enraged they murmur against their ruler, and yet do not by sympathy grieve violently for their neighbours. But when these who are already broken in pieces by the plough of reading, and dressed for the fruitage of practice, see innocent persons borne down even in the least things, they are forthwith turned by sympathy to tears of sorrow, because they bewail as their own the things that their neighbours suffer unjustly. For the perfect, whereas they are ever affected with regard to what is spiritual, are taught to lament for the bodily hurts of others, so much the more in proportion as they are now instructed not to lament for their own. And so every one who is set in authority, if he executes what is bad in the case of those under him, 'the earth crieth against him and the furrows weep,' because against his injustice the uninstructed peoples indeed break out in accents of murmuring, while all the perfect severally chasten themselves in tears for his wicked practice, and for what the inexperienced cry out and do not grieve, those under authority of a more tried life bewail and hold their peace. And so for 'the furrows to bewail along with the land crying out,' is by that thing whereas the multitude of the faithful complains with justice against the ruler, for persons of a more fruitful life to be brought to

tears of sorrow. Thus the furrows are both of the earth, and yet are distinguished from the term of 'the earth,' because those in Holy Church, who cultivate their mind with the labour of holy meditation, are as much better than the rest of the faithful, in proportion as by the seeds received they render more abundant fruits of deeds. And there are some who being set over holy peoples obtain the payments of livelihood by the bountifulness of the Church, but do not pay the ministrations of exhortation that are due. In opposition to whom the example of the holy man is yet further subjoined aright, when it is directly added by him;

*If I have eaten the fruit thereof without money.*

[xxii]

53. For to 'eat the fruit of the land without money' is to receive indeed our charges from the Church, but not to yield to that Church the price of preaching. Of which same preaching it is said by the voice of the Creator, *Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.* [Matt. 25, 27] And so he 'eats the fruits of the earth without money,' who receives the Church's benefits for the service of the body, but does not pay to the people the ministry of exhortation. What do we pastors say to these things, who while we are the forerunners of the Advent of the Strict Judge, take upon us the function of a herald indeed, but devour the Church's supplies with dumb mouths? We exact all that is owed to our own body, but we do not pay back what we owe to the soul of those committed to our charge. Mark how the holy man, tied down by so many pledges in this world, in the midst of numberless employments, was free for the pursuit of preaching. And he never 'ate the fruits of the earth without money,' because surely he paid back the word of good warning to those under his charge, from whom he received the fruit of bodily serving. For this every one who is set over the people owes to Almighty God, he who is set over many, and he who is set over a smaller number, that he should in such sort exact the due ministration from those subject to him, that he may himself mind with heedful regard what of warning he at all times owes. For all we who subject to the appointment of the Creator are joined amongst ourselves by a vicarious ministry in obedience to our true Lord, what else are we but servants to one another? Whereas, then, he who is subordinate serves in obeisance, assuredly it remains that he who is set over him should serve to the word. Whereas he who is subordinate yields obedience to orders, it is required that he who is at the head should bestow the care and concern of solicitude and of pity. And so it comes to pass, that whilst we studiously endeavour to serve one another now by charity, we may one day rule together with the true Lord in common rejoicing. But there are some, who herein, that they discharge the office of preaching, grudge others the good that they have, and so do not any longer have it in a true sense. To whom it is rightly said by James, *But if ye have bitter envying among yourselves, and strife in your hearts, this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.* [James 3, 14. 15.] Hence here also when it is said, *If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money*, it is rightly subjoined;

*Or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof.*

[xxiii]

54. For they are the 'tillers' of the land, who, being placed in a lower situation, with what earnestness they are able, with the best practice that they can, cooperate in the grace of preaching to the instructing of Holy Church. Which same 'husbandmen of this land' not to afflict, is this, viz.

not to envy their labours; that the ruler of the Church, while he vindicates to himself alone the right of preaching, should not, by envy gnawing him, gainsay others also that preach in a right way. For the religious mind of the pastor, because it seeks not its own glory but the glory of the Creator, desires to have all that it does aided by all persons. For the faithful preacher wishes, if it might be brought to pass, that the truth which he is not able to give utterance to alone, the mouths of all should sound out. Whence when Joshua would have withstood the two who remained in the camp and prophesied, it is rightly said by Moses, *Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!* [Numb. 11, 29] For he was willing for all to prophesy, in that he envied not others the good that he had. Thus because blessed Job introduced all those things as under suspension, and if he had not done them, binds himself with the sentence of cursing, it goes on;

Ver. 40. *Let the thistle grow for me instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.*

[xxiv]

55. As though he said in plain words; 'If I have done aught unjust towards those under me, if I have exacted the debts due to me, and have not myself paid what I owed, if I have envied others the executing of good practice, for the good things which refresh for ever and ever, may evil things that sting be repaid me in the Judgment.' Since 'instead of the wheat there springs up the thistle, and instead of barley the thorn,' when in the final Retribution, wherefrom the recompensing of our labour is looked for, the piercing of pain is met with. And observe, that as barley is different from wheat, though both regale, so the thorn differs from the thistle, though either be a thing that pricks, because the thistle is softer, and the thorn always the harder as to pricking. Thus he says, *Let the thistle grow instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.* As if he said plainly and openly; 'I know indeed that I have both done great good acts and lesser ones; and if it is not so, may lesser evils match me for my great good acts, and the greater evils for the lesser good ones.' Though this may also be understood in another sense. For in 'wheat' there is denoted in spiritual action which regales the mind, but in 'barley' the disposal of earthly things. Wherein while we are often forced to serve the weak and carnal, we as it were prepare their food for the beasts of burthen, and the very practice of our deeds after the manner of barley has somewhat of a mixture of chaff. And it very often happens, that the ruler who is set at the head, while he enforces what is unjust against those under his charge, while he cheers not the good with any soothing, whilst, that which is more grievous, all those acting rightly he distresses out of envy, still some good things he sometimes does, as if he sowed corn, and mixed in the disposing of earthly things at times not in the passion of avarice, but for the use of the carnal, and so looks for the fruit of that labour as a crop of barley. But the several persons under his charge, in consideration of this, that they are borne hard upon in the chief things, cannot feel joy in his lesser good things; because neither is this practice well pleasing in the sight of God, which is defiled by the injustice of other practice, nor yet is the very disposal of earthly things believed to be undertaken for the service of those under his charge, when he who is over them is seen to pant with avarice. Whence it happens that even in answer to the few good things themselves, which they see to be done in the midst of a multitude of evil ones, they give back not praises but groans, and that those that go weakly murmur, while they take thought that that which they see is not a thing of pure practice. And so he says, *If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof: let the thistle grow instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley.* As if he said plainly, 'If the great things which I owed I have not needfully performed, may I

receive the prickings of murmuring from those under me, even with reference to the good that I have done. If I have omitted to set forth what might cheer, may their tongue springing forth into complaint with justice pierce me.'

56. Wherein it requires always to be minded with heedful consideration, that neither they that are set at the head offer examples of bad practice to those under them, and kill the life of those by the sword of their evil doing, nor they that are subject to the control of another presume to judge lightly the deeds of their rulers, and from this, that they utter murmurs touching those who are placed over them, set themselves not against a human appointment but against that Divine Appointment, which disposes all things. For to those it is said, *And as for My flock they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet: they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.* [Ez. 34, 19] For 'the sheep drink what is fouled with the feet,' when those under charge for example of living seek after things, which the persons over them severally corrupt by bad practice. But on the other hand these persons hear from those in command; *And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord.* [Ex. 16, 8] For he that murmurs against power established over him, it is plain reproves Him Who gave that power to man.

At length, God vouchsafing it, we have explored those sentences of blessed Job, full of mystical force, in which he made answer to the words of his friends. Now it remains that we come to the words of Elihu, which are to be weighed with so much the graver caution, in proportion as they are also put forward through the boldness of youth with a hotter spirit.

### BOOK XXIII.

The thirty-second chapter, and the thirty-third, as far as the twenty-second verse, are expounded; in which, while Job keeps silence, Eliu, a younger person, enters on many right and sound topics, though not rightly, or with sound intention.

[i]

1. It is necessary for me to repeat the preface of this work, as often as I divide it into separate volumes, by making a pause in my observations, it order that when it is again begun to be read, the subject of the Treatise may be at once brought afresh to the memory; and that the edifice of teaching may rise the more firmly, the more carefully the foundation is laid in the mind, from considering the first beginning of the subject. Blessed Job, known to God and himself alone in his state of tranquillity, when he was to be brought before our notice, was smitten with a rod, in order that he might scatter more widely the odour of his strength, the more sweetly he gave forth his scent, as spices, from the burning. He had learned in his prosperity to rule over his subjects with gentleness, and to guard himself strictly from evil. He had learned how to use the things he had got: but we could not tell whether he would remain patient under their loss. He had learned to offer daily sacrifices to God for the safety of his children, but it was doubtful, whether he would also offer Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving when he was bereft of them. For fear then that sound health should conceal any defect, it was proper that pain should bring it to light. Permission then to practise temptation against the holy man is given to the crafty foe. But he, in seeking to destroy his goods which were known to many, brings to light the virtue of patience also which was lying hid,

and whom he believed he was pressing hard by his persecutions, he magnified him by his scourges, and far extended him in example. And he exercised with great skill the permission he had received. For he burnt his herds, destroyed his family, overwhelmed his heirs, and, in order to launch against him a weapon of severer temptation, he kept in store the tongue of his wife: that thus he might both lay low the bold and firm heart of the holy man with grief, by the loss of his goods, and pierce it through with a curse, by the words of his wife. But by the many wounds he inflicted in his cruelty, he unintentionally furnished as many triumphs to the holy man. For the faithful servant of God, involved in wounds and reproaches at one and the same time, both endued with patience the sufferings of the flesh, and reprov'd with wisdom the folly of his wife. The ancient enemy, therefore, because he was grieved at being foiled by him in his domestic trials, proceeded to seek for help from abroad. He summoned, therefore, his friends, each from his own place, as if for the purpose of displaying their affection, and opened their lips, under the pretence of giving consolation. But, by these very means, he launched against him shafts of reproach, which would wound more severely the heart of him who securely listened to them, inasmuch as they were inflicting an unexpected wound beneath the cover of a friendship which was professed and not observed. After these, also, Eliu a younger person is urged on even to use insult, in order that the scornful levity of his youth might at all events disturb the tranquillity of such great gentleness. But against these many machinations of the ancient enemy his constancy stood unconquered, his equanimity unbroken. For at one and the same time he opposed his prudence to their hostile words, his conduct to their doings. Let no one then suppose that this holy man (although it was expressly written of him after his scourging, *In all these things Job sinned not with his lips* [Job 1, 22]) sinned afterwards, at least, in his words in his dispute with his friends. For Satan aimed at his temptation, but God, Who had praised him, took on Himself the purport of that contest. If any one, therefore, complains that blessed Job sinned in his words, what else does he do, but confess that God, Who pledged Himself for him, had been the loser.

2. But since the ancient fathers, like fruitful trees, are not merely beautiful in appearance, but also profitable through their fertility, their life must be so considered by us, that when we admire the freshness of their history, we may learn also how fruitful they are in allegory, in order that, since the smell of their leaves is pleasant, we may learn also how sweet is the taste of their fruits. For no one ever possessed the grace of heavenly adoption but he who has received it through the knowledge of the Only-begotten. It is right then that He should shine forth in their life and words, Who so enlightens them that they may be able [mereantur] to shine. For when the light of a candle is kindled in the dark, the candle, which causes other objects to be seen, is first seen itself. And so, if we are truly endeavouring to behold the objects which are enlightened, it is necessary for us to open the eyes of our mind to that Lightening which gives them light. But it is this which shines forth in these very discourses of blessed Job, when the shades of allegory too have been driven away, as though the gloom of midnight had been dispelled, a bright light as it were flaming across them. As when it is said, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in my flesh I shall see God*. [Job 19, 25] Paul had doubtless discovered this light in the night of history, when he said, *All were baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual meat, and all drank the same spiritual drink. But they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, but the Rock was Christ*. [1 Cor. 10, 2-4] If then the Rock represented the Redeemer, why should not blessed Job suggest the type of Him, since he signified in his suffering Him Whom he spake of in his voice? And hence he is not improperly called *Job*, that is to say, "grieving," because he sets forth in his own person the image of Him, of Whom it is announced long before by Isaiah, that He Himself *bore our griefs*. [Is.

53, 4] It should be further known, that our Redeemer has represented Himself as one Person with Holy Church, whom He has assumed to Himself. For it is said of Him, *Which is the Head, even Christ*. [Eph. 4, 15] And again it is written of His Church; *And the body of Christ, which is the Church*. [Col. 1, 24] Blessed Job therefore, who was more truly a type of Christ, since he prophesied of His passion, not by words only, but also by his sufferings, when he dwells on setting forth the Redeemer in his words and deeds, is sometimes suddenly turning to signify His body; in order that, as we believe Christ and His Church to be one Person, we may behold this signified also by the actions of a single man.

3. But what else is signified by his wife, who provokes him to words of blasphemy, but the depravity of carnal men? For placed, with yet unreformed manners, within the pale of the Holy Church, they press harder on those of faithful lives, the nearer they are to them; because when they cannot as being faithful be avoided by the faithful, they are endured as a greater evil, the more inward it is. But his friends, who while pretending to advise, inveigh against him, represent to us heretics, who under the pretence of advising, carry on the business of leading astray. And thus while speaking to Job on behalf of the Lord, they hear His reproof; because all heretics in truth while endeavouring to maintain God's cause, do in fact offend Him. Whence also it is properly said to them by the same holy man, *I desire to reason with God, first shewing that ye are forgers of lies, and followers of corrupt doctrines*. [Job 13, 3. 4.] It is plain then that they typify heretics, since the holy man accuses them of being devoted to the profession of false doctrines. And since Job is by interpretation grieving, (for by his grief is set forth either the passion of the Mediator, or the travails of Holy Church, which is harassed by the manifold labours of this present life,) so do his friends also by the very word which is used for their names set forth the nature of their conduct. For Eliphaz signifies in Latin "contempt of God;" and what else is the conduct of heretics than a proud contempt of God by the false notions they entertain of Him? Bildad is interpreted "oldness alone." And well are all heretics termed oldness alone, in the things they speak of God, since they are anxious to appear preachers, not with any honest intention, but with an earnest desire after worldly honour. For they are urged to speak not by the zeal of the new man, but by the evil principles of their old life. Sophar too is called in Latin 'dissipation of the prospect,' or a 'dissipating of the prospect.' For the minds of the faithful raise themselves to the contemplation of things above: but when the words of the heretics endeavour to draw them aside from the right objects of contemplation, they do their best to dissipate the prospect. In the three names then of Job's friends, there are set forth three cases of the ruin of heretics. For did they not despise God, they would never entertain false notions respecting Him; and did they not contract oldness, they would not err in their estimate of the new life; and unless they marred the contemplation of the good, the divine judgments would not have reprov'd them with so strict a scrutiny, for the faults which they committed in their words. By despising God then, they keep themselves in their oldness: but by remaining in their oldness, they obstruct the view of them that are right by their crooked discoursing.

4. After these also, Eliu, a younger person, is joined to them in their reproaches of blessed Job. In his person is represented a class of teachers, who are faithful, but yet arrogant. Nor do we easily understand his words, unless we consider them by the help of the subsequent reproof of the Lord. *Who is he that involves sentences in unskilful words?* [Job 38, 2] for when He uses the word 'sentences,' but does not immediately subjoin of what nature they are, He intends the word without doubt to be understood favourably. For when 'sentences' are spoken of, unless they are said to be



bad, they cannot be understood in a bad sense. For we always take the word in a good sense, if no unfavourable addition is made; as it is written, *A slothful man seems wiser in his own opinion than seven men uttering sentences*. [Prov. 26, 16] But by its being said that his sentences are involved in unskilful language, it is plainly shewn that they were uttered by him with the folly of pride. For it is a great unskilfulness in him, to be unable to express himself with humility in what he says, and to blend with sentiments of truth the words of pride.

5. For the nature of every thing that is said can be distinguished by four different qualities. If, for instance, either bad things are said badly, good things well, bad things well, or good things badly. A bad thing is badly said, when wrong advice is given; as it is written, *Curse God, and die*. [Job 2, 9] A good thing is well said, when right matters are rightly preached; as John says, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. [Matt. 3, 2] A bad thing is well spoken, when a fault is adduced by the speaker, simply to be reproved; as Paul says, *The women changed their natural use into that which is against nature*. [Rom. 1, 26] In which place he subjoined too the execrable doings of men. But he related these unseemly things in a seemly way, that by telling of things unbecoming, he might recal many to the practice of what is becoming. But a good thing is ill spoken, when what is proper is brought forward with an improper object; as the Pharisees are reported to have said to the blind man who had received his sight, *Be thou His disciple*; [John 9, 28] for they said this for the express purpose of reproaching him, not as wishing what they said; or as Caiaphas says, *It is expedient that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not*. [John 11, 50] It was a good thing which he said, but not with good view; for while he longed for His cruel death, he prophesied the grace of redemption. And in like manner Eliu also is reproved for saying right things in a wrong way: because in the very truths which he utters he is puffed up with arrogance. And he represents thereby the character of the arrogant, because through a sense of what is right he rises up into words of pride.

6. But what is meant by the Divine Voice directing that the three friends should be reconciled by seven sacrifices, while it leaves Eliu only beneath the reproof of a single sentence; except it be that heretics, when bedewed with the superabundance of Divine grace, sometimes return to the unity of Holy Church? This is excellently set forth by the very reconciliation of the friends, for whom nevertheless blessed Job is directed to pray. Because in truth the sacrifices of heretics cannot be acceptable to God, unless they be offered for them by the hands of the Church Catholic, that they may gain a healing remedy by her merits, whom they used to smite, by attacking her with the shafts of their reproaches. And thence is it that seven sacrifices are said to have been offered for them, because whilst they receive on confession the Spirit of sevenfold grace, they are atoned for, as it were, by seven oblations. Wherefore in the Apocalypse of John, the whole Church is represented by the sevenfold number of the Churches: [Rev. 1, 11] and hence is it that Solomon speaks thus of Wisdom, *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars*. [Prov. 9, 1] The heretics then on their reconciliation express, by the very number of the sacrifices, their own former character, since it is only by their returning that they are united to the perfection of sevenfold grace. But they are properly represented as having offered for themselves bulls and rams. For in a bull is designated the neck of pride, in a ram the leading of the flocks that follow. What then is the offering of bulls and rams on their behalf, but the destruction of their proud leadership, that they may think humbly of themselves, and not seduce any longer the hearts of the innocent to follow them? For they had started aside with swelling neck from the general body of the Church, and were drawing after them the weakminded, as flocks following their guidance. Let them come then to

blessed Job, that is, let them return to the Church, and offer bulls and rams to be slaughtered for a sevenfold sacrifice, who in order to be united to the Church Catholic, by the coming in of a spirit of humility, have to put an end to whatever swelling thoughts they before used to entertain from their haughty leadership.

7. But Eliu (by whom are designated those lovers of vain-glory who, living within the pale of the Church, scorn to state in a humble way the sound views which they hold) is not directed to be reconciled by sacrifice. For those who are proud, and yet faithful, because they are already within the pale, cannot be brought back by seven sacrifices. Yet the divine wisdom reproves these people in the person of Eliu, and blames in them not their sentences of truth, but their temper and language of pride. But what is the meaning of the reproof, except that the chiding of the divine severity chastens them with scourges as placed within the Church, or by a righteous judgment leaves them to themselves? For such as these preach the truth within the Church, but, in the judgment of God, deserve to hear an unfavourable sentence, because by the sound truths which they state, which are not their own, they seek not the glory of their author, but their own credit. We must therefore carefully weigh this passage, in which it is said by the Divine Voice respecting Eliu, *Who is he?* An interrogation of this kind is but the beginning of a reproof. For we say not, *Who is he*, except of a person of whom we are ignorant. But God's ignorance is the same as His rejection: whence He will at the end say to some whom He rejects, *I know you not whence you are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [Matt. 7, 23] To ask then of this haughty man, *Who is he?* what is it but plainly to say, I know not the haughty? that is, In the excellence of My wisdom I approve not of their doings, because, by being puffed up by human praise, they are bereft of the true glory of eternal reward. By not rejecting then his sentiments, but blaming the person who uttered them, He plainly teaches, as it were saying, I know what he says, but I know not the speaker: I approve of whatever is stated in accordance with truth, but I acknowledge not him who is elated by the truths he utters.

8. But to shew more plainly how disgracefully Eliu falls away in boastfulness of pride, we ought in the first place to set forth the character of a sound teacher; that from the straightness of this standard the deformity of his distortion may be clearly manifested. Every spiritual preacher then of the Church Catholic carefully examines himself in every thing he says, lest he should be elated with the sin of pride on account of his sound preaching; lest his conduct should be at variance with his words; lest that very peace which he preaches in the Church he should lose in his own person, by sound speaking and evil living. But it is his chief endeavour against the calumnious rumours of the adversaries to defend his conduct by his preaching, and to adorn his preaching by his life. And in all this he seeks not his own glory, but that of His Maker; and considers that every gift of wisdom he has received for the purpose of preaching, as bestowed not for his own deserts, but through the intercessions of those for whom he speaks. And thus while he casts himself down, he rises higher and higher; because he doubtless makes greater progress in gaining his own reward, by ascribing to the merits of others the good gifts he is able to exercise. He counts himself unworthy of all men, even when he lives more worthily than all together. For he is aware that the good qualities which are known to the world at large, can hardly exist in him without great peril. And though he feels himself to be wise, he would wish to be really wise without appearing so: and is especially afraid of that which is spoken of and gets abroad. And he seeks, if possible, to be silent, from perceiving that silence is safer for many, and considers that they are happier, whom a lower part in Holy Church conceals in silence; and though, in defence of the Church, he takes on himself of necessity the duty of speaking, because he is urged by the force of charity, yet he seeks with earnest longing the rest

of silence. The one he maintains as a matter of wish, the other he exercises as a matter of duty. But of such ways of speaking the proud are ignorant. For they speak not because causes arise, but seek for them to arise in order that they may speak. Of such Eliu is now a type, who in what he says sets himself up beyond measure, through the sin of pride. When the words then of blessed Job were ended it is added, *These three men ceased to answer Job, because he seemed just in his own eyes.* [Job 32, 1]

In the expression, *because he seemed to be just in his own eyes*, the author of this sacred history intended to refer to the opinion of Job's friends, and did not himself accuse him of being puffed up with pride. It follows:

Ver. 2. *And Eliu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram, was wroth and indignant.*

[ii]

9. The names either of himself, or of his parent, of his ii. home, or kindred, furnish a mark of his own conduct. For Eliu being interpreted means, "That my God," or, "God the Lord." By whom, as we said to you, is designated the sound faith of proud men placed within the Church. Whence this very name of his is suited to them also. For though they live not according to the commandments of the Lord, they yet recognise God as their Lord, because in the truth of His flesh they realize also the form of the Godhead, as is said by the Prophet, *Know ye that the Lord He is God.* [Ps. 100, 3] But Barachel, signifies when interpreted, "The blessing of God," but Buzite, "contemptible." And either of these expressions is well suited to proud preachers: because in the eloquence of their speech they enjoy the blessing of Divine Grace, but in their proud manners they shew that it is to be despised. For the gifts which they have received they render contemptible, by not knowing how to use them rightly. But he is fitly said to be also of the kindred of Ram. For Ram signifies "lofty." For lofty is the assembly of the faithful, which despises the low and abject things of this life. Lofty are they who can say with Paul, *Our conversation is in heaven.* [Phil. 3, 20] Eliu therefore is said to be 'of the kindred of Ram,' because every haughty preacher within the bosom of the Church Catholic, is united to the holy People in the verity of the faith, however he may be separated from them in conduct by the sinfulness of his pride. It follows,

*But he was angry against Job, because he said he was just before God. Moreover against his friends was he wroth, because they had not found reasonable answers, but had merely condemned Job.*

[iii]

10. It must be carefully observed, that he blames blessed Job for professing himself just before God, but his friends because in condemning him they gave no reasonable reply. For it is plainly inferred, from these marks, that in him are characterized the lovers of vain glory. For he convicts Job of presuming on his righteousness, his friends of making a foolish answer. For all lovers of vain glory, while they prefer themselves to all other, accuse some of folly, others of obtaining what they do not deserve: that is, they consider some to be ignorant, others to be evil livers. And though they may justly accuse of heresy all who are external to the Church, yet they despise those who are within for the meanness of their life, and pride themselves against the one from high notions of their sound faith, against the others as if from the merits of their good living. But Eliu is well said to reprove at one time blessed Job, and at another time his friends: because the lovers of vain glory,

living at times within the pale of Holy Church, both crush her opponents by preaching the truth, and oppose the customs of the same Holy Church in boasting of their preaching. They overwhelm the opponents of the Church by the power of their words, they oppress Holy Church by the way in which they utter them. They assail the one by preaching the truth, the other by their sin of pride. It follows,

Ver. 4, 5. *Elihu therefore waited while Job was speaking, because they who were speaking were his elders. But when he had seen that the three were not able to answer, he was very wroth.*

[iv]

11. Though Holy Church is unquestionably older than her adversaries, (for they went forth from her, not she from them, as is said of them by John, *They went out from us, but they were not of us*, [1 John 2, 19]) yet Eliu is properly described as having been younger than these same adversaries. Because in truth after the contests which arose with heretics, haughty men began to have place in the Church, puffed up with the pride of learning. For when more grievous contests commenced with the enemy, there were certainly required some subtle dart-points of thought, oppositions of arguments, and a more involved research of words. And while men of glowing genius invent these weapons to suit the circumstances, they are frequently puffed up with pride, and (as is generally the case in the sin of pride) they are themselves made to fall by the same subtle meanings with which they assail the foe, while in what they think aright concerning God, they seek not God's glory, but their own. And hence is it that though Eliu says many things aright, he is yet reproved by the Divine voice, as though he had stated errors. But when it is said that Eliu waited while Job was speaking, because they who were speaking were his elders, it is plain that he observed this respect to blessed Job not out of reverence for him, but for his friends; because, namely, haughty men though dwelling within Holy Church, despise that very body which they defend; and it is commonly the case that they pay greater respect to the abilities of those who are wise to an evil purpose, than to the simple life of the innocent; and that they shew greater regard to the eloquence of those without, than to the deserts of those within. And this, though they are opposed to both in opposite ways, as differing from the one in the soundness of their opinion, and from Holy Church in the perverseness of their character. It proceeds,

Ver. 6, 7. *And Eliu the son of Barachel, the Buzite, answered and said, I am younger in age, but ye are more ancient. I therefore held down my head, and feared to shew you my opinion. For I was hoping that greater age would speak, and that a multitude of years would teach wisdom.*

12. All these words, which are uttered by him through swelling pride, must be rather glanced at by the way than expounded more attentively. For whatsoever is deficient in solid gravity, needs not any elaborate exposition. But I think I need only suggest in a few words, that Eliu was more wise, as long as he remained silent on account of his age, but that in despising a multitude of years in others, and setting himself above them, he shewed plainly his childish folly. For both greater age speaks, against his opinion, and wisdom is taught by multitude of years. Because, though length of life does not confer intelligence, yet it gives it much exercise by constant practice. It follows,  
Ver. 8. *But, as I see, there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding.*

[vi]

13. He would be right in saying this, did he not arrogate to himself this same wisdom above all others. For it is no slight [Ben. 'prava,' a misprint for 'parva.'] condemnation for a man to boast within himself of that advantage which is given to him in common with others, to know whence he has received a good gift, and to know not how to use the good he has received. For there are four marks by which every kind of pride of the arrogant is pointed out, either when they think that they possess any good quality from themselves, or if they believe that it is given them from above, yet that they have received it in consequence of their own merits, or unquestionably when they boast of possessing that which they have not, or when they despise others, and wish to appear the sole possessors of what they have. For he boasted that he possessed his good qualities from himself, to whom it is said by the Apostle, *But what hast thou which thou didst not receive? why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* [1 Cor. 4, 7] Again, the same Apostle warns us not to believe that any gift of grace is given us for our precedent deserts, when he says, *By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any one should boast.* [Eph. 2, 8. 9.] Who says also of himself, *Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and contumelious: but I obtained mercy.* [1 Tim. 1, 13] For in these words he plainly declares, that grace is not given according to desert, when he taught us both what he deserved of himself for his evil deeds, and what he obtained by God's benevolence. But again, some persons boast that they have that which they really have not, as the Divine Voice speaks of Moab by the Prophet; *I know his pride and his arrogance, and that his virtue is not according to it.* [Jer. 48, 30] And as is said to the Angel of the Church of Laodicea, *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* [Rev. 3, 17] Some again wish, in contempt of others, to appear to be the sole possessors of the good qualities which they have. Whence also the Pharisee went down from the temple without being justified, because by ascribing to himself as if in a singular manner the merit of good works, he preferred himself to the suppliant publican. [Luke 18, 9-14] The holy Apostles also are warned against this sin of pride; for on returning from their preaching, and saying with pride, *Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name,* [Luke 10, 17] to keep them from rejoicing in this singular gift of miracles, the Lord at once replied to them, saying, *I beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven.* For he had himself said with special pride, *I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven, I will sit in the mount of the covenant, in the sides of the north; I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 13. 14.] And the Lord, in order to bring down pride in the hearts of His disciples, related with wondrous wisdom the judgment of downfall, which the prince of pride himself underwent, that they might learn, from the author of pride, what they had to apprehend from the sin of haughtiness. In the fourth kind of pride then, namely, the boasting of the sole possession of any thing it possesses, the mind of man equally suffers a fall. But it is in this that it approaches more closely to a resemblance of Satan, because whoever rejoices at the singular possession of any good thing, whoever wishes to appear more exalted than others, plainly imitates him who in despising the blessing of the society of Angels, and placing his seat at the north, and proudly desiring to be like the Most High, endeavoured by his evil longing to shoot up to some singular preeminence. Eliu then, though confessing that wisdom is given by God, yet falls in this species of pride, so as to rejoice that he is wiser than others, and foolishly to pride himself on possessing, as it were, a singular advantage. Which he points out in the words which follow, when he says,

Ver. 9, 10, 11. *Old men are not wise, neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I will say, Harken to me, I will shew you my wisdom. For I waited for your words, I heard your wisdom,*

*whilst ye were disputing in words: and as long as I thought that ye said something, I considered.*

[vii]

14. As far as regards the literal meaning, Eliu proves to us, when he speaks, how proudly he remained silent. For when he says, *For I waited for your words, and I was thinking that ye would say something*, he plainly shews that he remained silent, while the aged were speaking, rather with the desire of judging, than with the wish of learning from them. Though these expressions are even a better description of the conduct of proud men, who, when at length brought within Holy Church, are accustomed on looking at her opponents, to consider not so much the years of their age, as the intention of their words. For however older the heretics may be than these same haughty men, they boldly overbear those persons in whose words they reprove false doctrine. It follows, Ver. 12, 13. *But, as I see, there is no one of you who can convince Job, and reply to his words. Lest ye should perchance say, We have found out wisdom; God hath cast him down, not man.*

[viii]

15. Heretics, from the fact that they are wont to appear contemptible even to men, when they behold Holy Church revered by well-nigh all nations, endeavour to impugn the opinion entertained of her by every possible objection; and say that she enjoys all abundance of temporal goods, because the gifts of eternal rewards are taken from her. Eliu meets the objections of such people, by saying, *Lest ye should perchance say, We have found out wisdom; God hath cast him down, not man.* As if they who are found within the Church, but are yet faithful, should say against the heretics, Because ye see that the Church stands high in this world, through the high opinion of men, ye must believe that God hath not cast her aside. For her Redeemer well knows how to administer comfort to her as she is travelling on in this her journey, and to keep in store for her the rewards of heaven, when she arrives at her eternal home. In vain then do ye assert that God hath cast her down, and not man, when ye behold her venerated by almost all men; because the aid of worldly distinction is conferred on her in order that she may be assisted thereby in manifold ways to gain also the rewards of heaven. It follows, Ver. 14. *He spake nothing to me, and I will not reply to him according to your word.*

[ix]

16. What is meant by his saying, *He spake nothing to me*? For does holy Church, when she detects haughty men within her, ever omit to instruct and reprove them by preachers of righteousness? She exercises these duties, and ceases not to exercise them daily. But let Eliu, who had heard blessed Job speaking openly, say, *He spake nothing to me*; because doubtless, all haughty men, though they hear indeed the words of Holy Church, yet pretend that they are not addressed to them, when they make light of correcting the sin of pride. Nor do they think that they are reprov'd for their pride, for they look on themselves as humble; and they also make light of reproof, when they count themselves much wiser even than their reprovers. But in saying, *I will not answer him according to your words*, he well says that he does not answer blessed Job with their speeches. For proud men within the pale of Holy Church reply against her, but yet not as heretics who are without. For they oppose her not by false teaching, but by evil living, because they do not think unworthily of God, as do heretics, but more highly than is necessary of their own selves. It follows,

Ver. 15. *They were afraid, they answered no more, they removed speech from themselves.*

The friends of Job are well said to have been afraid of the words of Eliu, since frequently proud defenders of the Church, though they do not observe due order in what they say, yet confound the adversaries by the very virtue of their words. It follows,

Ver. 16. *Because therefore I have waited, and they have not spoken, they have stood, and have answered no more.*

[x]

17. Wise men are accustomed to make it the limit of their speaking, to speak so far as to silence their adversaries. For they wish not to display their own powers, but to put down the teachers of heresy. But after it is said of the friends of Job, *They were afraid, they answered no more, they removed speech from themselves*, Eliu subjoins and says, *I have waited, and they have not spoken; they have stood, and have answered no more*. Even when they are already silent, he yet multiplies his words, because, being an arrogant man, and representing the character of the arrogant, he is in haste not merely to refute the arguments of his opponents, but to display his own wisdom. Whence it also follows,

Ver. 17. *I will also answer my part, and I will display my knowledge.*

For every proud man considers this to be his part, if he does not so much possess, as make a show of, knowledge. For all proud men are anxious not to possess knowledge, but to make a display of it: against whom Moses well says, *Every vessel which hath not a cover nor binding over it shall be unclean*. [Numb. 19, 15] For the covering or the binding is the reproof of discipline, and every one who is not kept under by it is rejected as an unclean and polluted vessel. And was not Eliu a vessel without a cover, who had considered it to be his part to make a show of the wisdom which he possessed? For he who lays himself open by his desire of display, and is not covered by the veil of silence, is polluted as a vessel without cover or binding. But holy preachers consider that they are performing their part, if they rejoice in themselves at their own wisdom within, and if they outwardly keep back others from error. Nor do they so far go out of themselves in speaking, as to place the delight of their mind in an outward display of eloquent language. But they meditate on the benefits of wisdom in the secret of their heart, and there rejoice when they perceive it; and not when they are obliged to make it known amidst the snares of so many temptations. Although when they make known the good which they receive, yet charity steps in, and they rejoice at the progress of their hearers, and not at their own display. But the arrogant on gaining any knowledge think that they have gained nothing, if it so happens that they keep it concealed. For they place their happiness no where but in the praise of men. It is hence that the foolish virgins are said to have taken no oil in their vessels; [Matt. 25, 3] because such as be arrogant, if perchance they keep themselves from any vices, cannot confine to their own consciences the credit of the glory. But Paul had taken oil in his own vessel, who said, *Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience*. [2 Cor. 1, 12] To carry then an empty vessel, is with a heart empty within to seek for the judgment of men's lips from without. Because Eliu, then, when seeking for glory from without, has not oil within his vessel, he well says, *I will answer my part, and I will display my learning*. And in the words which follow he shews what are his sufferings, from vain-glory raging within, saying, Ver. 18—20. *I am full of words, the spirit of my womb constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as new wine without a vent, which bursts in sunder new vessels. I will speak, and will take breath awhile; I*

*will open my lips and answer.*

[xi]

18. When boastful men observe that holy preachers speak eloquently, and are revered for their eloquence, they frequently imitate the loftiness of their language, and not their useful intention. They are far from loving what the others desire, but are especially anxious to gain great renown amongst men. For it is frequently the case that wise men, when they find that they are not listened to, impose silence on their lips. But frequently when they see that the sins of the ungodly gain strength when they are silent, and cease to reprove, they endure a kind of violence in their spirit, so that they burst forth in language of open reproof. And hence when the Prophet Jeremiah had imposed on himself silence in preaching, saying, *I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name*; he immediately added, *And there was made as it were a burning fire in my bosom, and shut up in my bones: and I was wearied, not being able to bear it; for I have heard the insults of many.* [Jer. 20, 9] For, seeing that he was not listened to, he wished to hold his peace; but when he beheld evil increasing, he no longer persisted in the same silence. For when he ceased to speak without, from being wearied of speaking [Comma after ‘locutionis,’ as the rhythm and the sense both require.], he felt a flame kindled within him by the zeal of charity. For the hearts of the just burn within them, when they behold the deeds of the ungodly gain strength from not being reproved, and they believe that they are themselves partakers in the guilt of those, whom they allow, by their own silence, to go on in iniquity. The prophet David, after he had imposed silence on himself, saying, *I have set a guard upon my mouth, while the sinner stood against me. I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence even from good things:* [Ps. 39, 1] in the midst of his silence blazed forth with this zeal of charity, when he immediately subjoined; *My sorrow was renewed, my heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out.* [Ps. 39, 3] His heart grew hot within him, because the flame of charity refused to burst forth in words of admonition. The fire burned in the meditation of his heart, because his reproof of the ungodly had ceased to flow on with the chiding of his lips. For the zeal of charity tempers itself with wonderful consolation, as it gains strength, when it bursts forth in words of reproof against the deeds of the ungodly, in order that it may not cease to reprove the faults which it cannot amend, lest it should convict itself of partaking in their sins, by consent of keeping silence.

19. But because certain vices frequently assume the guise of virtues, as, for instance, lavishness wishes to appear like pity, stinginess like frugality, cruelty like justice; in like manner, a desire for empty glory, being unable to keep itself within the bounds of silence, inflames like the zeal of charity, and the powerful desire of ostentation impels a person to speak without restraint, and the desire of display breaks out, as if with the wish of offering advice. For it cares not what good it can effect by its speaking, but what show it can make: nor is it anxious to correct the evil which it beholds, but to display the good which it feels. Hence Eliu also, swollen by the spirit of pride, and unable to keep himself within the barriers of silence, says, *I am full of words, the spirit of my womb constraineth me; behold, my belly is as new wine without a vent which bursts in sunder new vessels.* [ver. 18]

20. If we must understand this passage spiritually, by ‘belly’ he means the secret recesses of the heart. But by new wine is understood the warmth of the Holy Spirit, of which the Lord says in the



Gospel, *They put new wine into new skins*. [Matt. 9, 17] For when the Apostles were filled suddenly therewith, and were speaking in every tongue, it was said by the Jews, who knew not the truth and yet bare witness to it, *These men are full of new wine*. [Acts 2, 4] But by vessels we understand not inappropriately either consciences which are weak from their very estate of humanity, or certainly those earthly vessels of our bodies; of which the Apostle Paul says, *We have this treasure in earthen vessels*. [2 Cor. 4, 7] But because Eliu, as we before observed, was so puffed up and swollen with pride, as though he were kindled within, to speak through the grace of charity, by the fire of the Holy Spirit, compares the spirit, which he felt within him when silent, to new wine without a vent. And he well says, *Which bursts asunder new vessels*, because the fire of the Holy Spirit is scarcely kept in by the new life, much less by the old. The new wine then bursts asunder new vessels, because by its violent heat it is too much even for spiritual hearts. *I will speak, and I will take breath a little; I will open my lips and answer*. [ver. 20] He well says, *I will take breath*, for as it is a distress to the holy to behold wickedness, without amending it; so is it a heavy distress to the boastful, if they do not display the wisdom they possess. For they can scarcely endure the violence which boils within them, if they are rather behindhand in making known every thing which they think. And hence, when any good deed is taken in hand, all pride on account of it must first be overcome in the heart, lest, if it should proceed from the root of a bad motive, it should bring forth the bitter fruits of sin.

21. These then, who are as yet engaged in a contest with their sins, ought never to undertake to rule over others by exercising the office of preaching. And this is the reason, why, according to the command of the Divine dispensation, the Levites serve the tabernacle from their twenty-fifth year, but from their fiftieth become the guardians of the sacred vessels. [Numb. 8, 24] For what is meant by the five and twentieth year, when youth is in its full vigour, but the contests against each separate sin? And what is expressed by the fiftieth, in which is signified also the rest of the Jubilee, but the repose of the mind within, when the contest has come to an end? But what is shadowed forth by the vessels of the tabernacle, except the souls of the faithful? The Levites, therefore, serve the tabernacle from their five and twentieth year, and take charge of the vessels from their fiftieth, to shew that they who endure, through pleasurable consent, the contest with sins which still assault them, should not presume to take the charge of others: but that when they have been successful in their contests with temptations, by which they are assured of inward tranquillity, they may then undertake the care of souls. But who can perfectly subdue these assaults of temptations, when Paul says, *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin?* [Rom. 7, 23] But it is one thing boldly to endure contests, another to be unnerved by them and overcome. In the first case virtue is kept in exercise, to secure it from being puffed up; in the other, it is quite quenched that it cease to be. He then who knows how to endure with boldness the temptation of the contest, even when he feels its shock, sits on high in the lofty citadel of peace. For he sees that the assaults of sin are, even when within him, subject to his power, since he does not yield his consent to them, from being overcome by any pleasure. It follows:

Ver. 21, 22. *I will not accept the person of man, I will not equal God to man; for I know not how long I shall continue, or whether after a while my Maker may take me away.*

[xii]

22. Most judiciously he does not make God equal to man, since he knows not how long he may

continue, or when in the judgment of God be taken away. And he well says, *After a while my Maker may take me away*; for however long is the period of the present life, it is short, from the very fact, that it is not enduring. For that which is confined within circumscribed limits has no claim to be considered lasting. But in the midst of these sentences which he utters, based on solid truth, he again bursts out into words of pride, saying,

Chap. xxxiii. ver. 1, 2. *Wherefore, Job, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold, I have opened my mouth; let my tongue speak in my throat.*

[xiii]

23. Let us consider from what a height of pride he comes down in admonishing Job to listen to him, in saying that he had opened his mouth, in promising that his tongue would speak in his throat. For the teaching of the boastful has this peculiarity, that they cannot modestly suggest what they teach, and cannot communicate in a right manner the truths they hold rightly. For they make it plain by their words that they fancy themselves, when teaching, to be seated on some lofty eminence, and that they look upon their hearers as standing far beneath them, as on lower ground, as persons whom they hardly deign to address, not in the tone of advice, but of authority. Well does the Lord address them by the Prophet, *But ye ruled them with austerity and power*. [Ez. 34, 4] For they rule with austerity and power, who are eager to correct “those under them, not by calmly reasoning, but to bend them by the severity of command.

24. But sound teaching, on the other hand, the more earnestly avoids this sin of pride in thought, the more eagerly it assails with the shafts of its words the teacher of pride himself. For it takes heed lest it be rather preaching him by a haughty demeanour, whom it assails with holy words in the hearts of its hearers. For it endeavours to state in its words, and to set forth in its doings, humility, which is the mistress and mother of all virtues, in order that it may enforce it on the disciples of truth more by its conduct than by its words. Whence Paul in speaking to the Thessalonians, as if he had forgotten the height of his own Apostleship, *We became as children in the midst of you*. [1 Thess. 2, 7] Whence the Apostle Peter, when saying, *Ever ready to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you*, [1 Pet. 3, 15] asserted that in the science of teaching the manner of one’s teaching is to be strictly attended to, by subjoining, *But with modesty and fear, having a good conscience*. [ib. 16] But in that which the Apostle Paul says to his disciple, *These things exhort and teach with all authority*; [1 Tim. 4, 11] he does not recommend the tyranny of power, but the authority of his life. [Tit. 2, 15] For that is enjoined with authority which is practised before it is advised. For when conscience makes the tongue falter, it detracts from the authority of one’s talking. He did not recommend him therefore the authority of haughty words, but the confidence of good conduct. Whence it is said of the Lord, *He was teaching as having authority, not as the Scribes and Pharisees*. [Matt. 8, 29] For He alone in a singular and peculiar manner spoke with sound authority, because He had committed no sins from infirmity. For He possessed that from the power of His Godhead, which He has bestowed in us through the sinlessness of His Manhood.

25. For we, because we are feeble men, when we come to speak of God to our fellows, should first of all call to mind our own nature, and thus consider from our own infirmities in what order we should offer advice to our weakly brethren. Let us consider then that we are either now such as some of those whom we are correcting, or were heretofore such, though by the operation of Divine

Grace we are so no longer: that in humility of heart we may correct them with greater forbearance, the more truly we recognise ourselves in the persons of those whom we correct. But if we are neither now such, nor have been such as those still are whom we are anxious to improve; for fear our heart should perchance be proud, and should fall the more fatally by reason of its very innocence, let us recal to our eyes the other good qualities of those whose faults we are correcting. If they have not any such, let us fall back on the secret judgments of God. Because as we have received this very good, which we possess, for no deserts of our own; so is He able to pour on them the grace of power from above, so that though roused to exertion after ourselves, they may be able to outstrip even those good qualities which we received so long before. For who could believe that Saul, who kept at his death the raiment of those that were stoning him, would surpass Stephen who had been stoned, by the honour ['meritum' (or service)] of the Apostleship. Our heart ought then to be first humbled by these thoughts, and then the sin of offenders should be reproved. But as has been often said, Eliu is shewn to be unacquainted with this mode of speaking, who is puffed up in his words, by the haughtiness of pride, as if by the power of a kind of authority, saying, *Wherefore Job hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold I have opened my mouth, let my tongue speak in my throat.*

26. To speak in the throat is to speak softly, and not to vociferate loudly. In which words he designates haughty men living within holy Church. For these are said to speak as if in the throat, when they do not clamour against the adversaries who are without, but reprove some within the bosom of holy Church, as if they were neighbours and placed near them. But haughty men often make a show of avoiding that very pride, which they entertain; and while they do all things so as not to escape the notice of any one, they privately mention them to particular persons, in order that they may boast not merely of their sense of wisdom, but also of their contempt of arrogance before men. Whence it is now said, *Let my tongue speak in my throat.* As if it were plainly said, Behold, I whisper that which I think wisely against thee. But they sometimes break out into such a height of impudence, as, when others are silent, to be accustomed to praise their own sayings. Whence he subjoins,

Ver. 3. *My words are from my simple heart, and my lips shall speak a pure sentence.*

[xiv]

27. To say that speech is simple, is a praise of great weight. But because the haughty possess it not, they assert the more anxiously that they possess it, in order that they may be heard with less apprehension. And they declare that they are going to speak with pure intention, because they are afraid of their wicked duplicity being discovered. But they often also blend together truth and falsehood, that their falsehood may be the more speedily believed, from its being discerned that they speak the truth. Because then Eliu both said that he would speak with pure intention, and by calling his words 'sentences' ushered them in with applause, he subjoins the same 'sentence' which he promised, saying,

Ver. 4. *The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*

[xv]

28. Intending to subjoin truth, he first uttered boastful words, and being about to state the sound opinions he held, he first made known how huge was his swelling. The minds of the arrogant are

doubtless so very mad, that even in what they think rightly, they are disfigured by the deformity of their pride. And hence even their sound opinions do not instruct their hearers, because in truth they lead them by their haughty sentiments not to reverence but to despise them. And when words of folly are blended with wise sayings, even their wisdom is not kept in mind, because their folly is despised by him who hears it. For hence it is said by Moses, *A man who suffers a running of seed shall be unclean*. [Lev. 15, 16] For what are our words but seed? And when this is poured forth in due measure, the mind of the hearer, as the womb of her who conceives, is made fruitful for an offspring of good works. But if it escapes at improper times, polluting him that emits it, it loses its generating power. For if words were not seed, the Athenians would never have said of Paul, as he was preaching to them, *What would this word-sower [‘seminiverbius] say?* [Acts 17, 18] of whom Luke says, *He was the chief speaker*. [Acts 14, 12] Seed, then, which is intended for the purpose of procreation, when it escapes in an improper manner, pollutes the other members: and speech also, by which learning ought to be implanted in the hearts of the hearers, if uttered out of due order, brings disgrace even on the truths it utters. And hence Eliu also pollutes even the truths he is able to entertain, when he is ignorant of what he is saying, or to whom he is saying it, and suffers, as it were, discharge of seed, when he employs his tongue, which is fitted to answer useful purpose, in words of empty sound. But he speaks in proper order of his being made, and receiving life. For he says, that he was made by the Spirit, and that he received life by the breath of God. For it is written of Adam when created, *He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man was made into a living soul*. [Gen. 2, 7] But let us listen whether he proceeds properly with what he has well laid down. It follows,

Ver. 5. *If thou canst, answer me, and stand before my face.*

[xvi]

29. Behold how in relating the true order of his creation, he suddenly bursts forth into the pride of haughty arrogance, and, in other words, repeats the same statement, by saying, Ver. 6, 7. *Behold, God made me as well as thee, and I am also formed of the same clay; yet let not my wonder terrify thee, and my eloquence be burdensome to thee*. What then is meant by Eliu acknowledging the order of his true creation, and not knowing the limits of proper speech? What by his putting himself on a level with Job when created, and setting himself above him when about to speak? What but this, that though haughty men remember that they are equal in nature to other men, yet that through the pride of knowledge they do not deign even to believe that they have even their equals [The text seems scarcely grammatical, but the sense cannot be far from what is given.]: and that though they compare themselves with them, in the condition of their nature, they place themselves above them from pride in their wisdom. They decide that though they were made equal by birth, yet they have not continued so, in their way of life. And from their not being equal to them as it were in their way of life, they count it a greater marvel that they were equal to them when they were born. And hence Eliu says, when inflated with pride, *Behold, God made me as well as thee, and I also was formed from the same clay; yet let not my wonder terrify thee, nor my eloquence be burdensome to thee*. For it is peculiar to the arrogant, that they always believe, even before they speak, that they are going to say some wonderful thing, and that they anticipate their own words by their own admiration, because, with all their acuteness, they are not sensible how great a folly is their very pride. We must observe also that Paul, when he was giving the Hebrews some striking warnings, subjoined, *I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of consolation, for I have written to you in few words*. [Heb. 13, 22] But Eliu uttered empty words, and afterwards added, as if for consolation,

*Let not my wonder terrify thee, nor my eloquence be burdensome to thee.* The one called his sayings the word of consolation, the other called them eloquence, and a marvel. Behold, how different in taste are the fruits which spring forth from diverse roots of thought. The one thinks humbly of his high qualities, the other exalts himself without reason on his scanty endowments. What then is specially to be observed in all this, but that those who are about to rise, think themselves low, and that they who are soon to fall, ever stand on high ground? As Solomon bears witness, *The heart is exalted before destruction, and is brought low before honour.* [Prov. 16, 18] It follows,

Ver. 8. *Thou hast spoken then in mine ears, and I have heard the voice of thy words.* And subjoining the very words, he says,

Ver. 9—11. *I am clean, and without spot of sin, and there is no iniquity in me, because He hath found complaints in me, therefore He hath counted me as His enemy, He hath placed my feet in the stocks, He hath guarded all my ways.* And in answer to these words which he said blessed Job had spoken, he immediately states his own opinion, saying,

Ver. 12. *This is the thing then in which thou art not justified.*

[xvi]

30. Blessed Job had indeed truly said, that he had been scourged without any fault. [Job 27, 6] For he said of himself exactly what the Lord had said of him to the devil, *Thou hast moved Me against him to afflict him without cause.* [Job 2, 3] But Eliu did not believe, that his fault doing nothing in it, he could be scourged as a matter of grace. For he did not know that by his scourgings his fault was not corrected, but his merits increased, and because he had said that he had been scourged without any fault, he reproves him in these words, saying, *This is the thing then in which thou art not justified.* For it is the special fault of the arrogant, to be more eager to convict, than to console; and to consider that whatever sufferings they see befall men, have befallen them solely from their sins. They know not how to enquire deeply into the secret judgments of God [some Mss. add ‘Dei.’], and humbly to investigate that which they cannot understand: for while pride at their knowledge raises them on high, it frequently casts them down from the secret investigation of God’s judgments.

31. For suffering of mind is an impediment in the way of truth: because while it puffs us up, it obscures our view. For if these persons ever seem to acquire wisdom, they feed, as it were, on the husks of things, and not on the marrow of their inmost sweetness; and with their brilliant abilities, they frequently reach only to the outside of things, but know not the savour of their inward taste; for, in truth, though sharp-sighted outwardly, they are blind within. Nor do they form such a notion of God, as tastes secretly within, but such as when thrown outward gives a sound. And though they gain in their understanding a knowledge of some mysteries, they can have no experience of their sweetness: and if they know how they exist, yet they know not, as I said, how they savour. And so it is frequently the case, that though they speak boldly, yet they know not how to live up to what they profess. Whence a certain wise man well said, *May God, grant me to speak these things according to my sentence.* [Wisd. 7, 15] For sentence is derived from sense [‘sententia,’ ‘sensu.’]. And a man who wishes not merely to speak from outward knowledge, but to feel and experience what he says, is anxious to give utterance to the truths he holds, not as a matter of mere knowledge [‘scientia’], but of real feeling [‘sententia’]. But the mind of haughty men does not penetrate the

meaning of its own words; because by a righteous judgment it is driven away from the inward taste of things, and is wrecked by that applause which it desires from without. But real knowledge influences without elating; and makes those whom it has filled, not proud, but sorrowful. For when any one is filled therewith, he is in the first place anxious to know himself: and conscious of his own state, he acquires thereby a greater savour of strength, the more truly sensible he is of his own weakness therein. And this very humility opens to him more widely the pathway of this knowledge, and when he beholds his own weakness, this very knowledge opens to him the hidden recesses of sublime secrets; and pressed down by this knowledge, he is made more subtle to press forward into things hidden. Eliu then does not in the scourgings of blessed Job discover their true reason, because he knows not how to search for it with humility: and being more ready to reproach than to console, he says, *It is in this thing, then, that thou art not justified.*

32. We must observe further, that blessed Job said that his foot was placed in the stocks, [Job 13, 2] but that he never said that he was clean, in the way in which is objected to him, or free from sin, or without spot, and iniquity. But Eliu, in his desire to reprove austere what has been said, falsely added what had not been said. For they who are ever eager to reprove and not to encourage, frequently state many falsehoods in their reproofs. For in order to appear clever in reproving, they frequently invent statements, for the sake of reproving them, and, being eager, as horses, to run their course of ostentation, they clear the way for assailing those who are subject to them by inventing charges of iniquity. It must be understood besides, as I said above, that haughty men often blend forcible words with their words of boasting, and that sometimes they do not consider how they live, but studiously weigh what they teach. Of such Eliu is a specimen in the present case, who is not so anxious to live well, as to teach well. Since then he speaks, though arrogantly, yet with knowledge, let us pass over the pride of his conduct, and consider the solidity of his teaching. After all these boastful words, then, he begins at length to display his knowledge, and says, Ver. 12. *I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.*

[xviii]

33. Some one may perhaps observe, Who knows not that, even without being told it? But no wonder if this remark is believed to be of little value, if it is not considered in the very root of its meaning. He was speaking to one who had been scourged, who had both felt the blows of smiting, and was ignorant of the reason of them. And therefore he remarked, *I will answer thee, that God is greater than man*; that man, when scourged, yet considering that God is greater than himself, may submit himself to the judgment of Him, to Whom he has no doubt he is inferior, and may believe that that which he suffers from his superior is just, even though he does not know the grounds of its justice. For whoever is smitten for his sins, unless he murmurs and struggles against it, begins at once to be a righteous man, from not impugning the justice of Him who smites him. For man is created inferior to God, and returns to the order of his creation, when he submits himself to the equity of his Judge, even when he cannot comprehend it. It is therefore well said, *I will answer thee, that God is greater than man*, in order that on considering the power of the Creator, the swelling of the mind may cease to rage, through the thought of the condition in which it was created. Whence David the Prophet, when compelled by the weight of the blows to burst forth into extravagant words, says on bringing himself back to the consideration of his own origin, *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, since Thou hast made me.* [Ps. 39, 9] For he considered in what rank he was created, and learned the justice of the blow; for He Who kindly created him who as yet

was not, surely smote him only with justice when he was now in being. It follows.  
Ver. 13, 14. *Thou contendest against Him, because He hath not replied to thee to all thy words. God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing a second time.*

[xix]

34. It is natural to the afflicted heart, when it beholds any thing going contrary to its wishes, to wish to gain an answer, if possible, by the voice of God, why things are in this way, and not in that: to consult God in this whole matter under debate, and to acquiesce on learning the meaning of His reply. But Eliu, foreseeing that the Lord was composing holy Scripture, for the purposes of replying therein to the open or secret enquiries of all men, says, *Thou contendest against Him, because He hath not replied to all thy words. God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing a second time.* As if he were to say, God does not reply in private speaking to the hearts of men one by one; but fashions His word in such a manner, as to satisfy the enquiries of all men. For if we look for our own cases one by one, we are sure to find them in the teaching of His Scriptures; nor is there need to seek for a special answer from the voice of God, in our own special sufferings. For there a general reply is given to all of us in our own special sufferings: there the conduct of those who go before is a model for such as come after. To take one instance out of many. We are labouring under some suffering or annoyance of the flesh. We wish perhaps to know the secret reasons of this suffering or annoyance, in order that we may be comforted in our trial from the very knowledge. But because no special reply is given to us one by one, concerning our own special trials, we betake ourselves to holy Scripture. And there is it that we find what Paul heard when tried by the infirmity of the flesh. *My grace is sufficient for thee; for strength is made perfect in weakness.* [2 Cor. 12, 9] And this was spoken to him in his own peculiar suffering, that it might not be spoken to us one by one. We have heard therefore in holy Scripture the voice of God to Paul in his affliction, in order that we may not seek to hear it one by one, for our own private consolation, if perchance we are afflicted. God does not then reply to all our words, because *He will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing again;* that is, He has provided for our instruction, by what He stated to our fathers in holy Scripture. Let the teachers then of Holy Church, let even these men of arrogance, announce, (on beholding some within her sinking from faintheartedness,) that God does not reply to all our words, that *God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing twice.* In other words, He does not now satisfy the doubts and perplexities of individual men by the voice of the Prophets on every side, or by the ministry of Angels. Because He includes in holy Scripture whatever can possibly befall each one of us, and has provided therein for regulating the conduct of those who come after, by the examples of those who have gone before.

35. But yet this remark, *God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing twice,* may be understood in a deeper meaning; that the Father begat His Consubstantial, Only-begotten Son. For God's speaking is His having begotten the Word. But for God to speak once, is for Him to have no other Word beside the Only-begotten. And hence it is fitly subjoined, *And He will not repeat the same thing twice,* because this very Word, that is, the Son, He begat not otherwise than only-begotten. But in that He says not, "He spake," but "will speak," using, namely, not the past tense but the future, it is plain to all, that neither past nor future time is appropriate to God. Any tense is therefore the more freely used in speaking of Him, since no one is used with strict truth. But any tense whatever could not be freely used, if one at least could be used properly. It is allowable then for any tense to be boldly used in speaking of God, since no one is strictly proper. For the Father

begat the Son without regard to time.

36. And who can worthily speak of that ineffable nativity, that the Coeternal is begotten from the Eternal, that He who existed before all ages begat His Equal, that the Son was not posterior to Him Who begat Him? We can marvel at these things, but it is beyond our power to look into them. But to be able to wonder at that mighty nativity is in a certain degree to see it. But how do we see that which we do by no means comprehend? But we must borrow an instance from the habits of the body to illustrate the feelings of the mind. If any one is lying down in a dark place, with his eyes closed, and the light of a candle suddenly flashes before him, his eyes, though closed, are so struck by the very approach of the light, that they open. Why are they thus affected, if they saw nothing when closed? And yet it was not any thing perfect which they could see when closed. For if they had seen the whole object perfectly, why should they when opened seek for something to look at? And thus, thus are we, when we endeavour to behold ought of the incomprehensible nativity. For even in this, that the mind is struck with surprise at the shining, and sees in a manner what it is not able really to see, it beholds as if in darkness the power of the light with closed eyes [Here the older Edd. have a passage which Ben. omits, as it is not in the MSS. 'For Eliu says, *God speaketh once*; but David, looking to the nativity of the only-begotten Word, says, *God spake once*.' For since the only-begotten Son and Word of the Father is both called 'Born' in respect of perfection, and in respect of eternity is even said to be in birth; Holy Scripture useth to say freely of God that He 'hath spoken,' and 'speaketh.' For in that He begat the Word perfect, God 'hath spoken,' and in that He ever begetteth, He surely 'speaketh;' though this which we called 'perfect' we do not say with strictness. for that which is not effected (factum) cannot be strictly said to be 'perfected,' (perfectum.) But we express His fullness with a somewhat straitened form of speech; as also of the Father the Lord saith, *Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect*, (Matt. v. 48) It looks like a note on the former paragraph, which may have been written at the foot of the page.]. But because the secret admiration of the Divine Nature is not easily made known to minds which are occupied with worldly desires, he very fitly suggests the way in which God speaks to us, by saying,

Ver. 15. *In a dream, in a vision of the night, when sleep falleth upon men, and they sleep on their bed.*

[xx]

37. What is meant by the word of God being made known to us in a dream, except that we do not learn the secret things of God, if we are kept awake by worldly desires? For in a dream the outward senses are at rest, and inward objects are discerned. If we wish then to contemplate things within, let us rest from outward engagements. The voice of God, in truth, is heard as if in dreams, when, with minds at ease, we rest from the bustle of this world, and the Divine precepts are pondered by us in the deep silence of the mind. For when the mind is at rest from outward employments, the weight of the Divine precepts is more fully discerned. It is then that the mind penetrates, in a more lively manner, the words of God, when it refuses to admit within the tumult of worldly cares. But a man is awake to little good purpose, when the turmoil of worldly business gives him unusual disturbance. For the crowd of earthly thoughts, when it clamours around, closes the ear of the mind. And the voice of the presiding judge is less plainly heard in the secret tribunal of the mind, the less the sound of tumultuous cares is kept still. For a man when distracted is not fully equal to attend to both together. But while he seeks for inward instruction, but so as yet to be engaged in outward employments; by opening his ear to things without, he becomes deaf within. Moses, when living amongst the Egyptians, was, as it were, awake, and so when dwelling in Egypt he did not hear the voice of God. [Ex. 2, 11. 12.] But after that he had fled into the desert, after the slaughter of the Egyptian, and dwelt there forty years, he fell asleep as it were from the disquieting tumults of



worldly desires; and therefore it was vouchsafed him ['meriut'] to hear the voice of God, because the more indifferent he became through Divine grace to outward objects of desire, the more was he really awake to discern truths within. And again, when appointed to rule over the people of Israel, he is taken up into the Mount, to learn the precepts of the Law, and is preserved from tumults without, that he might penetrate into mysteries within. [Ex. 19, 3]

38. And hence is it that holy men, who are obliged by the necessity of their employments to engage in outward pursuits, are ever studiously betaking themselves to the secrets of their hearts; and there do they ascend the height of secret thought, and learn (as it were) the Law in the Mount: when they put aside the tumults of worldly business, and ponder, on the height of their thought, the sentence of the Divine will. And hence is it that the same Moses frequently retires to the Tabernacle on doubtful points; and there secretly consults God, and learns what certain decision to come to. For to leave the crowd, and retire to the Tabernacle, is to put aside the tumults of outward objects, and to enter into the secret recess of the mind. For the Lord is there consulted, and we hear inwardly and in silence, what we must do openly and without. This course wise rulers daily pursue; when they are aware that they cannot settle doubtful points, they betake themselves to the secret recesses of their mind, as if to a kind of tabernacle. By looking into the Divine Law, they consult the Lord, as it were before the Ark. And what they first hear in silence, they afterwards make known to the world in their conduct. For in order that they may engage in outward employments without injury to themselves, they constantly take care to withdraw to the secrets of their heart. And they thus hear the voice of God, as it were, in a dream, while they withdraw themselves in the thoughts of their mind from the influence of carnal things. Hence is it that, in the Song of Songs, the Bride who said, *I sleep, and my heart is awake*, [Cant. 5, 2] had heard the voice of the Bridegroom in dreams. As if she were saying, While I give my outward senses rest from the anxieties of this world, I have a more lively perception of inward truths, when my mind is unemployed. I am asleep to outward things, but my heart is awake within, because, when I am insensible as it were to outward objects, I have a keen apprehension of inward secrets.

39. Well then says Eliu, that God speaketh by a dream; and fitly did he add, *In a vision of the night*. For a vision of the night usually presents itself to the contemplation of the mind under certain images. But we perceive objects more plainly by daylight, we see less quickly in a vision of the night. And because all holy men, as long as they are in this life, behold the secrets of the Divine Nature only under certain resemblances, (since they do not, as yet, gain a clearer sight of them as they really are;) after Eliu had said that God speaks to us in a dream, he rightly adds, *in a vision of the night*. For 'night' is this present life, and as long as we are in it, we are covered with a mist of uncertain imaginations as far as the sight of inward objects is concerned. For the Prophet was sensible that he was held by a certain mist in his sight of the Lord, when he says, *My soul longed for Thee in the night*. [Is. 26, 9] As if he were to say, I long to behold Thee in the obscurity of this present life, but I am still surrounded by the mist of infirmity. David also wishing to avoid the gloom of this life, and waiting for the brightness of the true light, says, *In the morning I will stand before Thee, and will see*. [Ps. 5, 3] He who longs for the approach of morning, in order to behold God, perceives that he can still see but imperfectly, in the night. But because, as we said, sleeping is ceasing from outward action, Eliu rightly adds, *When sleep falls upon men*. And because holy men, when unemployed in outward action, rest within the chambers of their mind, he fitly subjoins, *and they sleep on their bed*. For holy men to sleep in their bed, is for them to take rest in the chamber of their mind. Whence it is written, *The saints shall exult in glory, they shall rejoice in*

*their beds.* Let it be said then that *God speaks once to us through a dream in a vision of the night, when sleep falls upon men, and they sleep in their bed.* [Ps.149, 5] Because we then doubtless discern the secrets of the Godhead, when we withdraw ourselves into the chambers of our minds from the tumultuous desires of this world. But because, as we have already frequently said before, the turmoil of worldly business closes the ear, and the rest of secret contemplation opens it, he properly subjoins,

Ver. 16. *Then He openeth the ears of men, and teaching, instructeth them with discipline.*

[xxi]

40. For when they are dead to outward objects, they hear with open ears the causes which come before their inward judgment. And when they consider minutely with themselves either their open punishments, or their secret judgments, they cease not to afflict themselves with tears. Whence it is well said, *And teaching, He instructeth them with discipline,* because to a mind which reflects and wounds itself with penitence, the sorrows of compunction are like the stripes of a blow. Whence Solomon also rightly uniting together the force of these kinds of blows, says, *The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil, and blows in the secret parts of the belly.* [Prov. 20, 30] For by the blueness of a wound he implies the discipline of blows on the body. But blows in the secret parts of the belly are the wounds of the mind within, which are inflicted by compunction. For as the belly is distended when filled with food, so is the mind puffed up when swollen with wicked thoughts. The blueness then of a wound, and blows in the secret parts of the belly, cleanse away evil, because both outward discipline does away with faults, and compunction pierces the distended mind with the punishment of penance. But they differ from each other in this respect, that the wounds of blows give us pain, the sorrows of compunction have good savour. The one afflict and torture, the others restore, when they afflict us. Through the one there is sorrow in affliction, through the other there is joy in grief. But because the very act of compunction wounds the mind, he not unfitly calls it discipline.

41. For there are four modes in which the mind of a righteous man is strongly affected by compunction: when he either calls to mind his own sins, and considers WHERE HE HATH BEEN; or when fearing the sentence of God's judgments, and examining his own self, he thinks WHERE HE SHALL BE: or when, carefully observing the evils of this present life, he reflects with sorrow WHERE HE IS; or when he contemplates the blessings of his heavenly country, and, because he does not as yet enjoy them, beholds with regret WHERE HE IS NOT. Paul had called to mind his former sins, and was afflicting himself by the sight of what he had been, when he said, *I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.* [1 Cor. 15, 9] Again, from carefully weighing the Divine sentence, he was afraid that it was bad for him in prospect, when he says, *I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perchance, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] And again, he was considering the evils of this present life, when he said, *While we are in this body, we are absent from the Lord:* [2 Cor. 5, 6] and, *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me captive to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* [Rom. 7, 23] And again, he was considering the blessings of his heavenly country, when saying, *We see now through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known.* [1 Cor. 13, 12] And again, *We know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in*

*the heavens.* [2 Cor. 5, 1] And looking at the blessings of this house, he says to the Ephesians, *That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who have believed.* [Eph. 1, 18. 19.] But blessed Job, considering the evils of this present life, says, *The life of man upon the earth is a temptation.* [Job 7, 1] Whence David says, *Every man that liveth is altogether vanity; and though man walketh in the image of God, yet will he be disquieted in vain.* [Ps. 39, 6] But again, on contemplating his heavenly home, and weighing the evils in which he then was, and considering the good things which he did not as yet enjoy, he says, *Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged;* [Ps. 120, 5] and, *I said in my fear, I am cast out from the sight of Thine eyes.* [Ps. 31, 22] Being raised up in an ecstasy, which our translators properly interpreted *fear*, he saw that he was cast out from the sight of the eyes of God. For after beholding that inward light, which flashed within his mind with bright rays through the grace of contemplation, he returned to himself; and discerned, by the knowledge he had gained, either the blessings which were there, of which he was deprived, or the evils with which he was here surrounded. For no one is able to look on the ills of life as they really are, if he is unable by contemplation to gain a taste of the blessings of the eternal country. Whence also he knew that he had been cast out of the sight of the eyes of God. For when he was raised up in a trance, he saw that which, when he fell back on himself, he lamented that he could not of himself behold.

42. For that compunction with which it dispels all bodily imaginations which crowd upon it, and annoy it, and with which it strives to fix the eye of the heart on the very ray of the boundless light, is wont in truth more deeply to affect a perfect mind. For these appearances of bodily figures it has attracted to itself within, through infirmity of the flesh. But when it is completely filled with compunction, it is here specially on its guard, lest the imagination of circumscribed vision should delude it, when it is searching after truth; and it rejects all imaginations which present themselves to it. For since it has fallen, by their means, beneath itself, it endeavours to rise above itself, by escaping from them: and after it has been distracted, in an unseemly manner, by many objects, it endeavours to gather itself again together; that prevailing by the mighty power of love, it may contemplate one single and incorporeal Being.

43. And hence it is admitted, at times, to taste some unusual savour of sweetness within, and is suddenly in a measure refreshed, when breathed on by the glowing Spirit; and is the more eager, the more it gains a taste of something to love; and it desires that within itself, which it feels to taste sweetly within, because it has in truth, from the love of its sweetness, become vile in its own sight; and after having been able, in whatever way, to enjoy it, it has discovered what it had hitherto been without it. It endeavours to cling closely to it, but is kept from approaching its strength, by its own remaining weakness; and because it is unable to contemplate its purity, it counts it sweet to weep, and, sinking back into itself, to make its bed in the tears of its own weakness. For it cannot fix the eyes of its mind on that, of which it has only taken a hasty glance within; because it is compelled by its own old habits to sink downwards. It meanwhile pants and strives and endeavours to rise above itself, but sinks back, overpowered with weariness, into its own familiar darkness. But because a mind thus affected, has to endure itself as the cause of a stubborn contest against itself, and because all this controversy about ourselves causes no small amount of pain, when we are engaged in it, whatever pleasure may be blended therewith; Eliu, after having said that God speaks to us in a dream, and that our ears are opened by His words, calls this same opening of the ears a discipline, and with good reason. Because the more the sound of inward wisdom by the grace of its

secret inspiration bursts forth upon us, the more does it affect us with distress. For no one would outwardly lament that which he is, if he had not been able to perceive within, that which as yet he is not. For on seeing that we ourselves were created aright, but that we were deceived by giving a fatal consent to the persuasions of the devil, we observe in our own case, that what we made ourselves is one thing, and what we were made is another: that by nature we were sound, but that we became corrupted through our own fault. And therefore when we are pinched by conscience, we seek to escape from what we ourselves have done, that we may be refashioned after the pattern in which we were first made. Whence it fitly follows,

Ver. 17. *That He may withdraw man from the things that he has done, and may deliver him from pride.*

[xxii]

44. For what has man done of himself but sin? And it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* [Ecclus. 10, 13] It is rightly said, then, that when man is withdrawn from what he has done, he is freed from pride. To transgress the commands of our Creator by sin, is to be haughty against Him; because a man casts off, as it were, the yoke of His authority, to Whom he scorns to submit by obedience. On the other hand, he who wishes to avoid what he has done, calls to mind what he was made by God: and humbly returns to the order of his creation, when flying from his own deeds, he loves himself as he was at first created by God. But because eternal glory is obtained, and eternal punishments are avoided, by this wisdom, it is appropriately subjoined,

Ver. 18. *Rescuing his soul from corruption, and his life from passing to the sword.*

[xxiii]

45. For every sinner, in consequence of his corruption by sin here, is compelled to pass thither to the sword of punishment; that he may be justly punished in that world, by the very sins in which he delighted in this.

We must observe therefore, that God, speaking to us in a dream, delivers us first from corruption, and afterwards from the sword: because in truth He delivers the 'life' of that person from avenging punishment there, whose mind He here withdraws from the allurements of sin. Nor has he any thing to fear there from the sword of judgment, whom the pollution of guilt has not here corrupted after his amendment. It is well said then, *Rescuing his soul from corruption, and his life from passing to the sword.* For to pass from corruption to the sword, is, after the commission of sin, to arrive at the punishments which have to be endured. It follows,

Ver. 19. *He chastens him also with pain upon his bed, and makes all his bones to waste away.*

[xiv]

46. By bed, or pallet, or couch in holy Scripture, is understood, sometimes carnal pleasure, sometimes a resting in good works, sometimes temporal rest; for what is meant by what our Lord said in the Gospel to a certain one who was healed, *Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house,* [Matt. 9, 6; Mark 2, 11; Luke 5, 24] except that bodily pleasure is signified by bed? And he is specially commanded, when restored to health, to carry that on which he had lain when sick, since every one, who still delights in sin, lies overpowered with fleshly pleasures. But he carries that,

when healed, on which he had lain when sick, because when rescued by Divine assistance from his sins, he afterwards endures the insults of that very flesh, in the indulgence of which he used to rest content. But again, by bed, or couch, is designated a resting in good works. Whence the Apostle Peter says, in the Acts of the Apostles, *Aeneas, may the Lord Jesus Christ make thee whole; arise, and make thy bed.* [Acts 9, 34] For what is meant by *rise*, but leave off the sins which thou hast committed? and what by *make thy bed*, but engage in those means of grace, in which thou oughtest to rest? So that by rising he was to forsake what he had done, and by making his bed, find after what he should have done. And both these points the Prophet briefly sums up, in saying, *Turn aside from evil, and do good.* [Ps. 37 27] For to turn aside from evil is to rise from that whereon he lay; but to do good, is to make ready those works that win reward, in which he should rest. But he who turns aside from evil, but does not as yet do what is good, has risen from that whereon he lay, but has not yet made for himself a place wherein he is to rest. And again, bed, or couch, is taken for temporal rest; as it is written, *Thou hast turned all his bed in his sickness.* [Ps. 41, 3] For when any one, worn out by secular cares, is urged on by Divine grace to forsake the toilsome ways of this world, he is wont to consider how to avoid the attractions of the present life, and to rest from its labours. He presently seeks for himself the station of rest which he desired, and wishes to find a place of cessation from all his labours, as though it were a kind of bed. But because a man while still in this life, in whatever situation, cannot in the secrecy of any retirement whatever live without temptations; the pain of temptation is found to press more heavily on that spot, which is contrived for the sake of rest. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Thou hast turned all his bed in his sickness.* As if he were to say, All that he has here contrived for himself for the sake of rest, Thou hast by secret judgment converted to his disturbance. And this is so ordained by the merciful design of God, in order that, in the season of his sojourning, the life of the Elect may be exposed to confusion.

47. For our present life is the road by which we journey on to our home [*‘patriam’*]: and we are harassed here by frequent disturbances, in the secret judgment of God, expressly that we may not love our road instead of our home. For some travellers, if they see by accident some pleasant meadows on their road, are wont to delay, and to turn aside from the straight path on which they have entered. And the beauty of the road delays their steps, while it affords them pleasure. The Lord then makes the way of this world rugged to His Elect, who are journeying towards Him: in order that no one when enjoying the rest of this present life, as if it were some beautiful road, might take greater pleasure in prolonging the journey than in speedily arriving at its end; or forget, when delighted by the way, what he used to long for in his home. But because all the rest, which we have happened to secure for ourselves in this world, is liable to disturbance, it is well said, *He chastens him also with pain upon his bed*, that is, He disturbs us in the rest of this world, either by the stings of temptation, or by the affliction of the scourge. For if the mind of man has been engaged in virtuous pursuits for ever so short a time, without temptation, it is often, in consequence of those very pursuits, in which it is tranquilly engaged, soon elated by those very virtues, which it is endeavouring to multiply within, from being conscious of the progress it is making. It is therefore exposed to the assaults of temptations, by the merciful dispensation of our Ruler, that thus pride, at the advance it is making, may be checked within it. Wherefore after he had said, *He chastens him also with pain on his bed*, he fitly subjoined, *And makes all his bones to waste away.*

48. By bones in holy Scripture we understand virtues; as it is written, *The Lord keepeth all his bones; not one of them shall be broken.* [Ps. 34, 20] Which is specially understood not of the bones

of the body, but of the powers of the mind. For we know assuredly, that the bones of many Martyrs were broken in a bodily sense, and the persecutors of the Lord broke the bones of that thief, [John 19, 32] to whom it was said, *To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise*, [Luke 23, 43] as well as those of the other thief on the cross. When He chastens us then with pain on our bed, He makes all our bones to waste away; because when we are assailed with the scourge of temptation, in that rest which we secure for ourselves from this world, we, who might perhaps have been puffed up by our virtues, are brought low by being sore vexed at the knowledge of our infirmity. For when we are advancing as we wish towards God, if no temptation checked our progress, we should believe that we were persons of some strength. But since the Divine dispensation thus deals with us, in order that we may remember our infirmity when tempted, because we forget it when we are advancing, we learn when we advance what we are by the divine gift; and in our temptation what we are by our own strength. But this temptation would in truth entirely hurry us away, did not heavenly protection keep us up. But it strikes us without breaking, it presses on us without moving us, it staggers, but does not cast us down: that we may feel that it is all owing to our own weakness that we are shaken, but that it is the gift of God that we stand firm. But because a soul which is conscious of any good quality in itself, frequently revels in a kind of delight, on calling its virtues to mind, and is bloated as it were by congratulating itself on its own fulness, it is well said that the bones waste away under the assault of temptation. Because while our own weakness is ascertained by the questionings of temptation, all that, as it were, bloated and florid self-congratulation on our own strength, is dried up by the sudden pain of anxiety. And we who, on weighing our good deeds, believed them to be of some value, when smitten somewhat more heavily are afraid that we are about to perish immediately. It is then that all satisfaction at our goodness is changed into fear of punishment. We then discover ourselves to be guilty, though, but just before, we believed ourselves to be saints. Our mind wastes away, our eyes become dull, all the prosperity which used to smile on us vanishes away; the light itself is loathsome, and the darkness of sorrow alone spreads itself over the mind. We see nothing to please us, every thing which comes before us is full of sorrow. Whence it also properly follows,

Ver. 20. *His bread becomes abominable to him in his lips, and to his soul the food which before it desired.*

[xxx]

49. As if he were to say in so many words; A mind under affliction believes that every thing which used easily to satisfy, and give it pleasure, is turned into bitterness. For by bread is understood in holy Scripture sometimes the Lord Himself, sometimes spiritual grace, sometimes the instruction of divine teaching, sometimes the preaching of heretics, sometimes sustenance for this present life, sometimes the agreeableness of worldly pleasure. The Lord is signified by bread, as He Himself says in the Gospel, *I am the living Bread, Who came down from heaven*. [John 6, 51]

Again, by bread is understood the grace of spiritual gifts, as is said by the Prophet, *Who stoppeth his ears, that he should not hear of blood, and shutteth his eyes that he should not see evil, he shall dwell in high places, his high place shall be the munitions of rocks, bread is given to him*. [Is. 33, 15. 16.] For what is to close his ears, not to hear blood, except to refuse consent to those persuasive sins which spring from flesh and blood? or what to close his eyes, not to behold evil, but to disapprove of every thing which is contrary to uprightness? Such an one will dwell in high places; for though the flesh still confines him to things below, he has already fixed his mind on things

above. His high place is the munitions of rocks, because he who tramples beneath his feet his longings for worldly conversation, raises himself to his heavenly country by the patterns of the fathers who have gone before. And because he is satisfied with spiritual grace through the gift of contemplation, it is rightly subjoined, *Bread is given him*; that is, he enjoys the refreshment of spiritual grace, because he has raised himself above the goods of the world, by hoping for those of heaven. Hence also the Lord says of Holy Church by David, *I will satisfy her poor with bread*; [Ps. 132, 15] because the humble-minded who dwell therein are filled with the refreshment of spiritual gifts. Again, by bread is set forth the instruction of heavenly doctrine, as is said by the Prophet, *Ye who dwell in the land of the South, meet with bread him that is flying away*. [Is. 21, 14] For they dwell in the land of the South who, placed within Holy Church, are breathed upon by the love of the Spirit from on high. But he is flying, who is wishing to escape from the evils of this world. He then who dwells in the land of the South, should meet with bread him that is flying; that is, he who is already full of the Holy Spirit within the Church, should console with words of instruction the man who is endeavouring to escape from his evil ways. To meet with bread him that is flying, is surely to offer the food of sound doctrine to one who is in fear of eternal punishments, and at one while to restrain his pride by fear, and at another to comfort his fears by encouragement. But because by bread is not unfitly understood the refreshment of holy Scripture, it is said by the same Prophet to the Jews who looked only to the letter, *Wherefore do ye spend your money, but not in bread*. [Is. 55, 2] As though he were saying, Ye consider the holy words, but not for refreshment, because while ye carefully guard the outward letter alone, ye lose that richness of inward refreshment which results from the spiritual meaning. Whence it is properly subjoined in that passage, *And your labour for that which satisfieth not*.

But again by bread is designated the preaching of heretics; as by Solomon the woman who typifies the congregation [‘ecclesiae’] the heretics, and calls together the foolish, says, *Eat ye gladly bread in secret*. Or, as is written in our translation, *Stolen waters are sweeter, and hidden bread is more pleasant*. [Prov. 9, 17] For there are some heresies which are afraid to preach their views openly, and give a greater flavour [‘condiunt’] to their words in the minds of the weak the more they keep them back, as if through greater reverence. Whence it is not improperly said, *Eat ye gladly bread in secret*. For the secret words of the heretics are more relished by miserable hearts, the more they are not possessed by them in common with other people.

But again, by bread is understood the support of this present life; as Jacob, on his way to Laban, says, *O Lord God, if Thou shalt have given me bread to eat, and raiment to put on*. [Gen. 28, 20] And as the Lord says in the Gospel to the crowds which were following Him, *Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled*. [John 6, 26] For they had been filled of the seven loaves. And in their persons the Lord expresses His detestation of those within Holy Church, who approaching to the Lord by holy ministrations, do not by those ministrations seek to gain higher virtue, but only sustenance for this present life: nor do they think what example they should imitate in their conduct, but what gains they may obtain so as to be satisfied. For to follow the Lord from being filled with the loaves, is to have gained temporal support from Holy Church. And to seek the Lord not for the miracles’ sake, but for bread, is for people to be eager for religious offices, not for the sake of increasing their virtues, but of acquiring a means of support.

Again, by bread is understood the agreeableness of human pleasure. Whence the Prophet Jeremiah

said, while lamenting the abandoned habits of the congregation; *All her people sighs and seeks for bread; they have given all their precious things for food to revive the soul.* [Lam. 1, 11] For the people sighs and seeks for bread, whilst the wicked multitude of men is afflicted, because it is not satisfied, to its heart's desire, with the pleasantness of the present life. And it gives all its precious things for food, because it bows down the virtues of its mind to the desire of transitory pleasure. And it endeavours to revive the soul: because it strives to satisfy its own perverse desires. And hence he immediately well adds in the words of that elect multitude, *See, O Lord, and consider, that I am become vile.* For the People of God becomes vile, when, as the number of the ungodly increases, it engages, in their persons, not in high and heavenly employments, but in worthless and worldly pursuits.

50. What else then does Eliu mean by bread, but the pleasures of this life? For after having stated the power of temptation, he immediately subjoined, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired:* because, in truth, all the sweetness he used before to enjoy from the prosperity of his life, afterwards becomes bitter by the power of temptation. For sometimes whatever joy, and whatever virtue seemed to smile on him, is suddenly lost through fear of temptation, and the sorrowful mind, as if deprived of these very virtues, is possessed by grief alone. For when it is assailed somewhat more violently by the force of temptation, because it cannot put forth the strength of its usual courage, it laments for it as if it were already lost; and feeling itself emptied of itself, it learns its own weakness, from this its emptiness. And thence it is immediately broken off, as it were, from every pleasure, and loathing the dainty morsels of former delight, takes its fill of that grief which alone it eagerly desires. For every one, when success in holy living smiles favourably on him, is full of mirth: and this very mirth refreshes the mind like pleasurable food. But when he is assailed more sharply by imminent temptation, all joy is through the loathing of grief rejected by his mind, though it used before to rejoice as though fully satisfied with that very joy. Because then a man, when tempted, casts out from the mouth of his heart all pleasurable food, and nothing else gives him pleasure but knowing and lamenting himself, it is well said, *Bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired.*

51. But, as we said before, we are allowed to be thus tempted under the government of the secret dispensation, in order that we, who by the Divine gift are making progress in virtue, may call to mind what we are by our own natural infirmity: and that all who produce the deeds of virtue, from having received of the gift, may offer the sacrifice of humility from a remembrance of our own weakness. But sometimes, after we have increased in strength, not only are we assailed by sins, but chastised by scourges. But when we are assailed by sins, we are dealt with by a merciful dispensation, to keep us from being elated by those virtues, in which we are making progress. But when we are scourged with the rod, we are warned, by the chastisement of evil, not to be led away with the blandishments of the world. Whilst our sins tempt us, they bring low the virtues, which are gaining strength within us; whilst scourges try us, they root out the pleasures of this world which are rising in our heart. We learn by our sins, which tempt us, what we are of ourselves; by the scourges, which smite us, what we should avoid in this world. We are restrained by the one from inward pride, we are kept back by the other from desiring any thing without us. As long then as we are in this life, we must needs be scourged by the rod, and at times tempted by our sins. For both in the tortures of the scourge, and in our struggle with our sins, not only does our weakness become known to us, but we learn also what progress we have made in virtue. For no one, when at rest, is



conscious of his powers. For if there is no contest, no opportunities arise for making trial of our virtues. He who boasts of his bravery in peace, is but a short-sighted warrior. Since then the quality of our strength is often made known by sufferings of the rod, Eliu appropriately adds, saying, Ver. 21. *His flesh shall waste away, and his bones which were covered shall be laid bare.*

[xxvi]

52. For when every outward pleasure is worn away by the pressure of the rod, the bones of inward firmness are laid bare. For what is meant in this place by the word flesh, but fleshly pleasure itself? Or what by bones, but the virtues of the soul? The flesh therefore wastes away, and the bones are laid bare, because while carnal pleasure is brought to nought by the reproof of scourges, those sturdy virtues are laid open, which had long been concealed, as it were, beneath the flesh. For no one learns what progress he has made, except in adversity. For in prosperity, the evidences of strength cannot be discerned. Whence it is written elsewhere, *The Lord commanded His loving kindness in the day time, and declared it in the night.* [Ps. 42, 8] Because, in truth, it is in tranquil rest that each man obtains the grace of the heavenly gift, but it is in trouble and adversity that he gives proof how much he has received. Let our flesh then waste away, that our bones may be laid bare. Let us be smitten with the reproofs of a father, that we may know what progress we are making. For by the scourge of the Lord the rankness of carnal pleasure is worn down, but the bones of our virtues are laid bare. Our outward beauty is tarnished by this world's sufferings, but that which was concealed within is made manifest. For when the Apostles had been scourged, they were directed to speak no more in the Name of Jesus. [Acts 5, 40, 41] But they rejoiced with exceeding joy, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus: and they confidently replied to their adversaries, *We ought to obey God rather than man.* [Acts 5, 29] See how the strength of their faith shone forth more vigorously in adversity. See how the soundness of the flesh was cut through, but the bones of their virtues were laid open. It is hence said of them by Wisdom, *God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself.* [Wisd. 3, 5] For, though tried by the blows of adversity, they are found worthy by the laying bare of their bones. For that the trial of their scourging is here meant, is plainly declared by what follows, *As gold in the furnace He tried them, and received them as a victim of a burnt offering.* [ib. 6] Because, then, each man's strength is made known only by adversity, it is well said, *His flesh shall waste away, and his bones which were covered shall be laid bare.* For the flesh wastes away, while every thing which is perishable and weak is worn away by the scourge. The bones are laid bare, while by these means our latent strength is also made manifest. As we have before said, not merely is the strength of our resolution made known, but also the weakness of our nature laid bare, by the very trials of adversity; and every one shews indeed under trial the progress he has made through God, but also confesses under the very inflictions of the scourges, how weak he is in himself; because not only are the bones laid bare, but the flesh also wastes away. It is appropriately subjoined, Ver. 22. *His soul shall draw near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.*

[xxvii]

53. For the soul of every just man when tempted is said to draw near to corruption, when, for fear his virtue should elate him, he is compelled by the rod to feel what he is in his own natural infirmity. He approaches, in truth, to corruption, because he learns that by his own strength he is not far from destruction, in order that he may ascribe not to himself but to the Lord, that he is far

from that destruction. But he approaches to the destroyers, because he sees that, through the infirmity of the flesh, he is very near to sins which cause death: and from these he is the farther removed by the Divine goodness, the more he is conscious that by his own deserts he is very near them. By contemplating his own condition, David had drawn near to corruption, when he said, *Remember, Lord, that we are dust; as for man his day is grass.* [Ps. 103, 14. 15.] Paul also had, by contemplating his own infirmity, approached the destroyers, when he said, *I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am I who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* [Rom. 7, 23. 24.] To approach then to corruption, and to the destroyers, is for a man, on considering the infirmity of our human nature, to see that he is a sinner, as far as concerns his deserts, and that he possesses, of his own strength, no ground of boasting [*arrogantiam*] in himself. For what are we, when bereft of the protection of our Maker? a protection which is considered to be less necessary, if always enjoyed. But it is withdrawn, generally, for our good, that it may be shewn to a man's own self how worthless he is without it. The hand of God, then, which bears us up, even when we know it not, in prosperity, brings us to a true knowledge of ourselves in adversity. And when we begin to fall, from being deprived of it, we are yet supported by its aid. It is a warning to us, that we are trembling to our fall, and His protection, that we remain steadfast.

54. Let no one consider then that he has any real virtues, even if he is able to display any resolution: since, if Divine protection leave him to himself, he is suddenly unnerved and overpowered in that very point in which he used to boast that he was standing firm. For what is meant by the man of God, when directed to prophesy against the altar at Samaria, exerting in the king's presence the authority of bold speaking, by his miraculously withering the extended arm of the rash king, which he afterwards restored to health of his tender pity? by his refusing when invited, to eat in his house, because he kept the commands of the Lord, which forbade him to eat by the way? But yet he was afterwards seduced to eat on the same way, and perished when he had eaten. [1 Kings 13, 1-34] What do we gather from an accurate examination of this matter, what (if I may so speak) do we fear and suspect, except that he was perhaps silently boasting in himself that he had put contempt on the king in obeying the commands of the Lord? Hence it was that he was soon shaken from his inward steadfastness, and that sin stole on him in his work, from the same source as pride sprang up in his heart; in order that he might learn when deceived by the false prophet, that it was not of his own strength that he had withstood the commands of the king. But he rightly received the sentence of death from the mouth of that very person, by whose seduction he had turned away from the precept of life, in order that he might receive the true announcement of his punishment, from the same quarter by which he had through carelessness admitted a fault. Because then the grace of God more especially guards and instructs each of His Elect, at the very time when He seems to smite and forsake them, let it be rightly said, *His soul shall approach to corruption, and his life to the destroyers*; that so the more he is led by adversity to consider that he is in his own strength nigh unto death, he may, in all cases in which he has acted with resolution, have surer ground of life, by flying to the protection which comes from trust in God.

## BOOK XXIV

The last eleven verses of the thirty-third chapter and the eighteen first verses of the

thirty-fourth chapter are expounded, and striking truths are taught concerning Christ the Mediator, contemplation, the course of conversion, and the pastoral office.

[i]

1. It was in speaking of the power of the Divine dispensation, that Eliu observed of the sufferings of each of the Elect, saying, *His soul will draw nigh to corruption, and his life to the destroyers*. And in speaking of the trials of a single person, he shews in what condition of trial the whole human race is placed; and in mentioning what specially befalls individuals, he plainly intimates what takes place generally in all. For he so described the temptation of certain persons, taken in themselves one by one, that the temptation of all men in a body might be also understood thereby. For the whole body of the Elect suffers in this life under the pain of this labour. He therefore immediately introduced a general remedy to cure this general malady, saying, Ver. 23, 24. *If there shall be an Angel, speaking for him one of like things to shew the righteousness of man, he will pity him*.

[ii]

2. For who is this Angel, but He who is called by the Prophet, *The Angel of mighty counsel*? [Is. 9, 6. lxx.] For because to declare is called “evangelize” in Greek, the Lord in announcing Himself to us is called ‘Angel.’ [as Is. 63, 9] And he well says, *If there shall be a messenger [or Angel] speaking for him*; [Rom. 8, 26] because, as the Apostle says, He even intercedes for us. But let us hear what he says for us; *One of like things*. It is the way with medicine to cure disease sometimes by similar, sometimes by contrary, remedies. For it has frequently been wont to cure the hot by warm, and the cold by cold, applications; and on the contrary, the cold by warmth, the hot by cold. Our Physician then, on coming to us from above, and finding us oppressed with such great diseases, applied to our case something of a like, and something of a contrary, nature. For He came to us as Man to men, but as a Just One to those who were in sin. He agreed with us in the truth of His nature, He differed from us in the power of His righteousness. For sinful man could not be amended, except by God. But it was necessary that He who was healing him, should be an object of sight; in order that He might amend our former sinful lives, by setting a pattern for us to imitate. But it was not possible that God could be seen by man; He therefore became man, that He might be seen. The Holy and Invisible God appeared therefore as a visible man, like ourselves; that while He seemed to be of like nature, He might teach us by His holiness. And while agreeing with our condition in verity of nature, He might put a stop to our sickness by the might of His skill.

3. Because then the Lord, when coming in the flesh, did not bear our guilt for His own fault, nor our punishment as a matter of necessity, (for untainted by spot of sin, He could not be involved in our condition of guilt, and therefore voluntarily underwent our death, when He so willed, every kind of necessity lying beneath His feet [‘calcata’],) it is rightly said, that that messenger speaks, in behalf of man when tempted, ‘one of like things,’ because He was neither born as other men, nor was like them in His dying, or His rising again. For He was conceived, not by the cooperation of natural intercourse, but by the Holy Spirit coming on His Mother. [Luke 1, 35] And when born He proved the fecundity of His Mother’s womb, though preserving its virgin purity. But again, we all die when we do not wish it; because we are constrained through the sinfulness of our nature to pay the debt of punishment. But He, from having no admixture of sin, did not submit to any punishment

as a matter of necessity. But because He subdued our guilt by triumphing over [al. 'condemning'] it, He underwent our punishment out of pity for us; as He Himself says, *I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again.* [John 10, 18] Who had also said before, *No one taketh it from Me; but I lay it down of Myself.* But again, He was not raised again like other men; because our resurrection is deferred to the end of the world, while His was celebrated on the third day. And we indeed rise by Him, for He rises by Himself. For He Who was God needed not, as we, to be raised up by any one else. In this then does His resurrection differ from ours, that we do not rise again of ourselves, as He did. For since we are simply men, we need some superior assistance to enable us to rise. But He as God displayed the same power of raising [Oxf. Mss. 'resuscitationis.' edd. 'rising.'] again with the Father and the Holy Spirit, though He alone in His human nature had experience of it. Because then the Lord, though truly born, truly dead, and truly raised again, differs from us, in all these points, in the greatness of His power, but agrees only in the verity of His nature, it is well said that that Messenger speaks for us *one of like things.* For since He surpasses us in all His doings with His immeasurable power, yet in one point, the verity of His nature, He does not differ from us.

4. He speaks in our behalf to the Father, through that in which He shews Himself to be like us. For His speaking or intercession is His proving Himself to be very Man for man's sake. And well, when he had said, *He says one of like things,* he immediately added, *that he might declare the righteousness of man.* Because, if He had not become like unto men, man would not appear just before God. For He announces our righteousness, by the very fact 'that He deigned to take on Himself our infirmity. [Heb. 2, 16, 17] For that fatal persuasion had polluted us all with the infection of sin from our very origin; [Gen. 3, 3] and there was no one who, in speaking to God in behalf of sinners, could appear free from sin; because an equal guilt had involved all alike who were created from the same lump. Therefore the Only-begotten of the Father came to us, and assumed our nature without committing sin. [Rom. 5, 12] For it was requisite that one who could intercede for sinners should be free from sin, because doubtless He could not wipe away the infection of others' guilt, if He had to bear His own. It is well said then, that in appearing in our likeness He announced righteousness to men. For He proved Himself, in interceding for sinners, to be so righteous a Man as to merit forgiveness for others. It follows, Ver. 24. *He will pity him, and will say, Deliver him from going down to corruption; I have found a way to propitiate for him.*

[iii]

5. The Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, shews mercy on man, by having assumed the form of a man. Through this compassion He says to His Father on behalf of redeemed man, *Deliver him from going down to corruption.* For as we before said, His saying, *Deliver him,* is His shewing forth man's nature free by taking it upon Him. For by that flesh which He assumed, He proved the freedom of this also which He redeemed. This ransomed flesh is, in truth, ourselves, who are fettered by the consciousness [al. 'condition.'] of our guilt. But by the righteousness ['aequitate.'] of so mighty a Redeemer are we set free, as He says Himself, *If the Son hath set you free, ye shall be free indeed.* [John 8, 36] And in behalf of this ransomed man it is well said, *That he go not down to corruption.* For it had been said above, *His soul shall draw near to corruption.* It is declared afterwards, *That he go not down to corruption.* As if He were to say, Because he is aware, from a sense of his infirmity, that he is not far from corruption, therefore let him not

descend to the death of corruption. For he would rightly go down to corruption, if he were to consider that by his own strength he was far removed from it. But because he has approached thereto with humility, he ought to be mercifully delivered therefrom; that the more he confesses he is weak by nature, he may be the more strengthened against the sins which assail him. For whoever extols himself above his proper condition, is weighed down by the very burden of his pride, and plunges himself the lower, the more he has rushed into the sin of pride, and has separated himself far from Him Who is truly exalted; [Luke 14, 11] and he sinks the more to the bottom, from the very fact, that he considered himself in union with the highest; as is said by the Prophet to the soul which exalts itself, *The more beautiful thou art, go down, and sleep with the uncircumcised*. [Ez. 32, 19] For every one who neglects to consider the hideousness of his infirmity, but looks through haughtiness of pride to the credit of his virtue, sinks the lower, from his being more beautiful. Since from priding himself on his merits, he falls into the lowest depths of destruction, on account of the very qualities, for which he considered himself worthy of honour. And he descends and sleeps with the uncircumcised, because he perishes in eternal death with other sinners. Because then this man humbly confessed that he was near to corruption, it is well said of him, *Deliver him from going down to corruption*; in order that he may the more escape punishment, from his not turning his eyes towards what is wrong. But because there was no one for whose merits the Lord could have needs been reconciled to us, the Only-begotten of the Father, taking on Himself the form of our infirmity, alone appeared just, in order that He might intercede for sinners.

6. And the Messenger, when speaking in behalf of this ransomed man, well says, *I have found a way to propitiate for him*. As though the Mediator between God and man were plainly to say, Because there was no one to appear before God as a righteous intercessor in behalf of man, I have made Myself a Man, to gain propitiation for mankind; and in manifesting Myself as a Man, I found a way of justly propitiating for him. And because the Lord, in taking on Him infirmity, when He endured our punishment in His death, reversed our corruption by His rising again, that Messenger fitly subjoins the sufferings of our mortal state, and shews pity on them, saying, Ver. 25. *His flesh is consumed by punishments, let him return to the days of his youth*.

[iv]

7. For when that first man fell from God, we were driven from the joys of Paradise, and were involved in the miseries of this mortal life; [Gen. 3, 23. 24.] and we feel, by the pain of our punishment, what a grievous fault we committed by the persuasion of the serpent. For having fallen into this state, we have found nothing, out of God, except affliction. And because we have followed the flesh, through the sight of the eyes, we are tortured by that very flesh which we preferred to the commands of God. For in it we daily suffer sorrow, in it torture, in it death; that the Lord by a marvellous economy might convert that, by which we committed sin, into a means of punishment; and that the severity of punishment might spring from the same source as that which had given rise to sin; so that man might be disciplined to life by the bitter suffering of that very flesh, by the pride of delighting which he had drawn near to death.

8. Since then the human race was oppressed by the innumerable sufferings of this life in the flesh, but both the guilt and punishment of our sin were blotted out by the coming of our Redeemer, let it be said of redeemed man, *His flesh is consumed with punishments; let him return to the days of his youth*. As if he were to say, Through the punishment of his mortality, he is cast down, as it were, by

the age of his old condition; let him return to the days of his youth; that is, let him be renewed in the integrity of his former life, that he may not remain in the state in which he has fallen, but return on his redemption to that for the enjoyment of which he was created. For Holy Scripture is frequently accustomed to put youth for newness of life. Whence it is said to the Bridegroom on his approach, *The young damsels have loved Thee*: [Cant. 1, 3] that is, the souls of the Elect, renewed by the grace of Baptism, which do not yield to the practices of the old life, but are adorned by the conversation of the new man. For he in truth was bewailing the age of the old man which was wasting away in the midst of sins, who says, *I have become old amongst all mine enemies*: [Ps. 6, 7] and some one also on the other hand, advising a person to rejoice in virtue, says, *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth*. [Eccles. 11, 9] As though he were saying, Let each man who is strong rejoice in his renewal; that is, let him place his joy not in the pleasures of his old life, but in the virtue of his new conversation. But since we are brought back to this strength of new life, not by our own powers, but by the mediation of the Redeemer, let the Messenger say, in interceding for this man under the rod, *Let him return to the days of his youth*. And because, as our Redeemer intercedes to the Father in our behalf, we ourselves shake off the torpor of our former life, and are inflamed with a thirst for prayer, it is well added of ransomed man, Ver. 26. *He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him*.

[v]

9. He says that the Messenger implores first, and man afterwards; for did not the Lord first intercede with the Father through His Incarnation, and pray for our life, our insensibility would never rouse itself to ask for those things which are eternal. But the entreaty of His Incarnation came first, that our awakening from sloth might afterwards follow. But because the light of truth bursts forth with secret joy in our hearts, after temptations, and frequently after great griefs, it is rightly added of this man thus tempted, and imploring God, *And he shall see his face in exultation*.

[vi]

10. It was stated above, how God bears us down [‘afficit’] by manifesting Himself to us. But it is now stated how He cheers us, while He thus makes Himself known. For a man hath compunction in one sort, when on looking within he is frightened with dread of his own wickedness, and in another when on looking at heavenly joys he is strengthened with a kind of hope and security. The one emotion excites tears of pain and sorrow, the other tears of joy. For it is called exultation [‘jubilum’], when joy unspeakable is conceived in the mind, a joy which can neither be concealed, nor yet expressed in words. It betrays itself however by certain motions, though not expressed in any suitable words. And hence David the Prophet, on seeing that the souls of the Elect conceive a joy too great for them to bring out in words, declares, *Blessed is the people that knoweth exultation*. [Ps. 89, 15] For he says not “that speaketh,” but “that knoweth,” because exultation can be known in the understanding, though it cannot be expressed in words. For that which is too high for feeling, is felt therein. But since the mind of him who feels it is scarce sufficient for its contemplation, how can the tongue of the speaker suffice to tell of it? Because, then, when the light of truth pierces our hearts, it makes us at one time full of sorrow, from its display of strict justice, and delights us at another by disclosing inward joys: after the bitternesses of temptations, after the sorrows of tribulations, it is fitly subjoined, *He shall see his face in exultation*.

11. For the fire of tribulation is first darted into our mind, from a consideration of our own blindness, in order that all rust of sins may be burnt away. And when the eyes of our heart are purged from sin, that joy of our heavenly home is disclosed to them, that we may first wash away by sorrow that we have done, and afterwards gain in our transports a clearer view of what we are seeking after. For the intervening mist of sin is first wiped away from the eye of the mind, by burning sorrow; and it is then enlightened by the bright coruscations of the boundless light swiftly flashing upon it. At which sight, seen after its measure, it is absorbed in a kind of rapturous security; and carried beyond itself, as though the present life had ceased to be, it is refreshed in a manner by a kind of new being. The mind is then besprinkled with the infusion of heavenly dews from an inexhaustible fountain. It there discerns that it is not sufficient for that enjoyment, to which it has been hurried, and from feeling the truth, it sees that it does not discern how great that truth is. And it counts itself to be further removed from this truth, the nearer it approaches to it, because unless it beheld it in a certain degree, it would never feel that it was unable really to behold it.

12. The effort therefore of the mind is driven back, when directed towards it, by the bright encircling of its boundless nature. For filling all things with itself, it encircles all things; and our mind does not expand itself to comprehend that boundless object which encircles it, because the imperfection of its own circumscribed state keeps it within narrow bounds. It accordingly falls back at once to itself, and having seen as it were some traces of truth before it, is recalled to a sense of its own lowliness. But yet this unsubstantial and hasty vision, which results from contemplation, or rather, so to speak, this semblance of a vision, is called the face of God. For we, who recognise a person by his face, not unnaturally call the knowledge of God, His face. Whence Jacob says, after he had struggled with the Angel, *I have seen the Lord face to face*. [Gen. 32, 30] As though he were to say, I know the Lord, because He Himself has deigned to know me. But Paul declares that this knowledge will take place most completely in the end, when he says, *Then shall I know, even as I am known*. [1 Cor. 13, 12] Because then, after the contests of labours, after the waves of temptations, the soul is often caught up in rapture, in order that it may contemplate a knowledge of the Divine Presence, (a Presence which it can feel, but which it can never fully enjoy,) it is well said of this man who is tempted, after his many labours, *He will see His face in exultation*. But because the more a man contemplates heavenly things, the more does he amend his earthly doings, after the grace of contemplation he fitly adds the righteousness of his doings. *And He will render to man his righteousness*.

[vii]

13. It is called our righteousness, not as being of ourselves, but as made ours by the Divine bounty: as we say in the Lord's prayer, *Give us this day our daily bread*. [Matt. 6, 11] See we both call it ours, and yet pray for it to be given us. For it becomes ours, when we receive it: but yet it is God's, because it is given by Him. [Luke 11, 3] And it is therefore God's, as of His gift, and it becomes truly ours, by virtue of our accepting it. It is in this way then that God in this place renders to man his righteousness: not that which he had of himself, but that which he received, having been so created as to have it; and in which, having fallen, he would not continue. God therefore will render to man that righteousness unto which he was created, that he may take delight in clinging to God, that he may dread His threatening sentence, that he may no longer trust the alluring promises of the crafty serpent.

14. For our ancient enemy ceases not daily to do the very same thing which he did in Paradise. For he endeavours to pluck out the words of God from the hearts of men, and to plant therein the false blandishments of his own promising. He day by day softens down the threatenings of God, and invites to the belief of his false promises. For he falsely promises temporal blessings, to soften down in men's minds those eternal punishments which God threatens. For when he promises the glory of this life, what else does he do but say, *Taste, and ye shall be as gods?* [Gen. 3, 5] As if he said plainly, Lay hold on worldly desires, and appear lofty in this world. And when he endeavours to remove the fear of the Divine sentence, what else does he say but the very words he used to our first parents, *Why hath God commanded you that ye should not eat of every tree of paradise?* [Gen. 3, 1] But because man has, by the Divine gift, recovered on his redemption that righteousness, which he lost long since after his creation, he exerts himself more vigorously against the allurements of crafty persuasion, because he has learnt by experience how obedient he ought to be; to the Divine command. And him whom sin then led to punishment, his own punishment now restrains from sin: in order that he may be the more fearful of offending, the more, through the fear of punishment, he blames the evil he has done. Whence it follows,  
Ver. 27. *He will look on men, and will say, I have sinned.*

[viii]

15. He would not know himself to be a sinner, if he had not righteousness. For no one detects his own deformity, except when he has begun to be upright. For he who is altogether deformed, cannot perceive what he really is. But he who is conscious that he is a sinner, has begun in some measure to be righteous; and from being righteous, blames his conduct when yet unrighteous. And by this accusation of himself he begins to cleave to God; when, passing a righteous sentence against himself, he condemns that in himself, which he perceives to be displeasing to Him. This man then, having regained his righteousness, exclaims, *I have sinned.* And the expression which precedes deserves notice, *He will look on men;* and it is then subjoined, *and will say, I have sinned.* For some persons know not that they have sinned, because they do not observe men. For were they to observe men, they would more readily acknowledge how much they had fallen beneath men by sin. And though Holy Scripture is sometimes accustomed to put "men" for those who savour the things of men, as the Apostle says, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal,* immediately subjoining, *Are ye not men?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] Yet sometimes it calls those 'men,' whom reason distinguishes from the beasts, that is, whom it shews to be unaffected by the bestial influence of passions. To whom the Lord says by the Prophet, *Ye, the flock of My pasture, are men.* [Ez. 34, 31] For the Lord in truth feeds them, whom carnal pleasure does not affect as it does the beasts. But, on the other hand, they who yield to the desires of the flesh, are no longer called men, but beasts. As is said by the Prophet of some who were dying in their sins, *The beasts rolled in their dung* [E.V. *The seed is rotten under their clods.*] [Joel 1, 17] For for beasts to rot in their dung, is for carnal men to finish their life in the filth of lust. For they are said to be no longer men, but beasts, of whom it is said by the Prophet, *Every one was neighing after his neighbour's wife;* [Jer. 5, 8] and of whom another Prophet says, *Their flesh is as the flesh of asses, and their issue the issue of horses.* [Ez. 23, 20] And hence it is said by David, *Man, when he was in honour, did not understand, he has been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them.* [Ps. 49, 20] Since then those are called men, who are supported by reason and justice, and those are termed irrational animals, who are slaves to carnal pleasure, it is well said of this penitent, *He will look on men, and*



*will say, I have sinned.* As though it were said, He beholds the examples of holy men, and considering himself in comparison with them, he discovers that he is sinful. For if a person is desirous of most completely learning his real character, he ought no doubt to look at those who are different from himself: that from the comeliness of the good he may measure the extent of his own deformity, by that of the goodness he has left. For by those who possess every good quality in abundance, he rightly considers of what he is in want. And he beholds in their beauty his own deformity, which he is able to endure within himself, but not to perceive. For a man who wishes to judge of darkness ought to look at the light, in order to see by it what to think of that darkness, by which he is prevented from seeing. For if a sinner looks at himself, without having learnt the character of the righteous, he in no way comprehends himself to be a sinner. For he cannot really see himself; for not knowing the brightness of the light, what else, on looking at himself, does he behold but darkness? We ought then to look at the conduct of the righteous, in order to gain an accurate knowledge of our own. For what they seem to be, is proposed as a kind of model for our imitation.

16. The life of good men is a living study; whence the same righteous men are not undeservedly termed books in the language of Scripture; as it is written, *The Books were opened, and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Books.* [Rev. 20, 12] For the Book of Life is the very sight of the approaching Judge. In this are written as it were, all His commands, for whoever beholds it, soon understands by the testimony of conscience what he has omitted to do. The Books also are said to be opened, because the conduct of just men, in whom the commands of heaven are seen impressed in act, is then made manifest. And the dead were judged out of those things which are written in the Books; because in the conduct of the righteous, which is set forth, they read as in an open book the good which they refused to do themselves, and are condemned on comparison with those who did it. In order therefore that each one then beholding them may not lament his own omissions, let him now observe in them what he should imitate. And this the Elect do not cease to do. For they study the conduct of their betters, and leave off their more depraved course of conduct.

17. And hence in the Song of Songs it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the bridegroom, *Thy two breasts are like two twin kids of the she goat, which feed among the lilies, until the day breathe, and the shadows incline.* [Cant. 4, 5. 6.] For what are the two breasts, except the two peoples coming from Jewry and from among the Gentiles, who are implanted in the body of Holy Church, by the purpose of wisdom, upon the secret of the heart. And they who are elected from these people, are compared to the young of the she-goat, because they are conscious through their humility that they are weak and sinful; but if any obstacles meet them in the way of worldly impediment, as they are hastening on by the power of love, they bound over them, and with the leaps of contemplation climb to the knowledge of heavenly things. And in order to do this, they study the examples of the Saints who have gone before. Whence they are said to feed amongst the lilies. For what is meant by lilies, but the conduct of those who say with all truth, *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ?* [2 Cor. 2, 15] The Elect, therefore, in order to gain strength to attain the highest eminence, feed themselves to the full by beholding the sweet-scented and pure life of the just. They even now thirst to know the Lord, they burn with the fires of love, to be satiated with the contemplation of Him. But because they are unable to do so while still in this life, they feed meanwhile on the examples of the fathers who preceded them. And hence the time of their feeding on the lilies is appropriately defined by the words, *Until the day breathe, and the shadows incline.*

For as long as we are passing along the shades of this mortal state, till the dawn of the eternal day, we need to be refreshed with the examples of the righteous. But when the shade of this temporal corruption has inclined, when this mortal state has passed away, because we behold the light of the day itself within us, we do not seek to be kindled with the love of it by the examples of others. But now, since we cannot as yet behold it, it is specially necessary for us to be roused by looking at the conduct of those who have followed it perfectly. Let us see then how beautiful is the activity of those who pursue their course, and learn how disgraceful is the sloth of the sluggish. For as soon as we behold the conduct of the virtuous, do we condemn ourselves with the punishment of confusion within. Shame presently assails the mind; soon does guilt condemn us with just severity: and we are sore displeased even with that, in which perchance we still disgracefully feel pleasure.

18. Whence it is well said by Ezekiel, *Son of man, shew the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be confounded by their iniquities, and measure the fabric, and blush for all that they have done.* [Ez. 43, 10, 11] For the temple of God. is shewn to the children of Israel to their confusion; when it is shewn to sinners to their confusion, with what great sanctity the soul of each righteous person shines forth, which God inhabits by His inspiration; in order that they may see therein the good which they slight, and blush in themselves at the evil which they commit. But to measure the fabric, is accurately to weigh the conduct of the righteous. But while we measure the fabric, we must needs blush at all that we have done: because the more accurately we consider and enquire into the conduct of the good, the more severely do we reprove in ourselves all our iniquity. But the Prophet is rightly told, to shew the temple. For since a sinner makes shifts not to consider the righteousness of the just, he should learn it at all events by the voice of the preacher. But to shew the temple to sinners, is to relate the deeds of the virtuous to those who refuse to consider them of their own accord. They then, as we said, who desire to attain to the highest eminence, must necessarily always attend to the progress of their superiors, in order that they may condemn their own fault with greater severity, as they behold in them a higher object of admiration.

19. But why do we say this of sinners, when we see the workers of righteousness themselves also carried forward with so high a dispensation? For one receives the gift of wisdom, and yet reaches not the grace of extraordinary abstinence. Another is endowed with great power of abstinence, but yet is not enlarged in the loftiest contemplation of wisdom. Another is able to foresee all future events by the spirit of prophecy: but yet cannot alleviate the evils of present annoyance, by the gift of healing. Another by the gift of healing alleviates the evils which immediately annoy us, but yet, from not possessing the spirit of prophecy, is ignorant of the future. Another is able to give liberally to the indigent much of what is his own, but yet cannot boldly confront the evil doers. Another boldly confronts evil doers, in God's behalf, but yet refuses to give all his goods to the needy. Another by already constraining himself even from idle talk, subdues the wantonness of the tongue, but yet does not trample down the emotions of anger which still rise within him. Another now perfectly controls his rising passion, but still allows his tongue full range in pleasantries. What is it then, that this man needs that good quality, in which another is strong, and that another, though powerful in many ways, yet sighs for the lack of those excellencies, which he observes others abundantly enjoying? Except it be that we are so dealt with by a marvellous dispensation, that by means of this which another enjoys, and this man has not, the one may be shewn to be superior to the other: so that the more a man considers, from the virtues which he has not, that he is inferior to those that possess them, he may the more eagerly advance towards humility. And thus it comes to pass, that while they behold in each other something to admire, their separate virtues both keep

them from loftiness of pride, and kindle in them a desire after greater progress. For we prepare ourselves with great anxiety to undertake our own improvement, when we observe in others that virtue which we have not ourselves. Whence the prophet Ezekiel, when he had described the flying animals, subjoined, *And I heard behind me a voice of a great commotion, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord, from His holy place, and the sound of the wings of the living creatures, striking one against the other.* [Ez. 3, 12, 13] For what must we understand by the wings of living creatures, but the virtues of the Saints? For when they despise the things of earth, they rise on their wings to heaven. Whence it is rightly said by Isaiah, *They who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles.* [Is. 40, 31] The flying creatures then strike one another with their wings, because the minds of the Saints, in their desires after heavenly things, are urged on by the mutual consideration of each other's virtues. For a man strikes me with his wing, who kindles me with desire of better things by the example of his own holiness. And I strike with my wing the next living creature, if ever I present to another person a good deed for him to imitate.

20. But since we have said that the conduct of holy men is signified by these living creatures, let us raise our eyes to the light, and consider attentively with what mutual beating of their wings they excite each other. For Paul, when he surpassed the carefulness of other holy men, by labouring more vigorously in preaching, that he might keep himself from pride, and nourish his strength in the bosom of humility, declares in remembrance of his former cruelty, and on contemplating the innocence of all the Apostles, *For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God.* [1 Cor. 15, 9] And yet the chief ['primus,' 'principatus.'] of these same Apostles, as though in forgetfulness of the preeminence conferred on him, as if he were endowed with less wisdom, admires the wisdom which was in Paul, saying, *As our most beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood.* [2 Pet. 3, 15. 16.] Lo, Paul admires innocence in the Apostles; lo, the chief of the Apostles admires wisdom in Paul. What then is this, except that holy men who mutually prefer others to themselves, from a consideration of their virtues, as flying animals touch each other with the stroke of their wings, in order that they may excite each other to higher flights, the more humbly they observe something in each other to admire? We must therefore infer from hence how anxiously we, who are lying in the lowest depth, should study the lives of those who are our superiors; if even they, who have already arrived at 'such a height of sanctity, are ever looking out for something to admire and imitate in others, in order that by walking in humility they may advance to greater things.

21. But of these things the reprobate are ignorant: for they ever fix their eyes on the lowest objects. And if ever they come into the way of the Lord, they proceed not to trace the footsteps of those who are better, but always to look at the examples of those who are worse than themselves. Nor do they look at the conduct of those to whom they may humbly consider themselves inferior, but of those to whom they may proudly prefer themselves. For they look at those who are worse than themselves, to whom they boast that they are preferable, and therefore they cannot advance to better things, because they consider it sufficient for them that they surpass the very worst. Wretched men! they go on in their way, and yet look backward. In their hope indeed they do as it were put a foot before; but in looking to evil examples they turn their eyes behind them. They are anxious to appear upright, but take a crooked standard by which to find that they are such. For if they wish to know themselves as they really are, they should look at the examples, not of those who

are worse, but of such as are better, than themselves. And therefore they are not conscious that they are sinners, because they do not look at 'men.' For were they to look at men, they would discover how far removed they were from good men, by their sins. Of this penitent then, who considers the examples of good men, in order to make it clear to himself how grievously he has departed from goodness, it is well said,

Ver. 27. *He will look on men, and will say, I have sinned, and have truly done wrong, and I have not received as I deserved.*

[ix]

22. Those even who do not believe that they have sinned, generally confess themselves sinners. For it is frequently the case, that men openly confess themselves sinners, but on hearing a true account of their sins, when other persons attack them, they boldly defend themselves, and endeavour to appear innocent. Every one, then, of this character, if he says that he has sinned, speaks untruly; inasmuch as he proclaims himself a sinner not from the inmost heart, but in words only. For since it is written, *The just man in the beginning accuseth himself* [E.V. He that is *first in his own cause seemeth just.*], [Prov. 18, 17] he wished to gain credit, not to be humbled, by confessing his sin: he desired, by accusing himself, to appear humble, without being so. For did he really wish to be humble, by confessing his sin, he would not attack others when convicting him of the commission of it. The righteous then, in passing sentence on his own conduct, knows from the bottom of his heart, by the examples of holier men, that he really is what he professes to be. For he says, *I have sinned, and have truly done wrong.* And adds further of the very pain which he is enduring, *and have not received as I deserved.*

23. For every one when under the rod, thinks still less of his sins, if he considers that he has been smitten either as, or more than, he deserved. But this man, because the more he considers the examples of greater men, the more strictly does he weigh and test himself, acknowledges that he was smitten less than he deserved. Because he sees, from their righteousness, how heinous is the guilt of his own erring, and does not feel his suffering to be severe, from having learned to pass a severe sentence on his own conduct. But it is very easy for a man, when suffering nothing on account of his sins, to confess himself a sinner. We fearlessly call ourselves unrighteous, when we feel no vengeance for our unrighteousness. For in a time of tranquillity we call ourselves sinners, but when chastened for these very sins, by the blow which falls on us, we murmur. Punishment then puts us to the test, whether we truly acknowledge our fault. Let a righteous man then, from regarding his fault severely, say, even under the rod, *I have not received as I deserved.* It follows, Ver. 28. *For he hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction.*

[x]

24. Because when Divine Grace goes before us in good works, our free will follows it, we, who yield our consent to God Who delivers us, are said to deliver ourselves; and hence Paul when saying, *I laboured more abundantly than they all*, [1 Cor. 15, 1] for fear he should seem to ascribe his labours to himself, immediately added, *Yet not I, but the grace of God* which was *with me*. For since he had followed with his free will the preventing grace of God in him, he properly adds, *with me*, that he might neither be unthankful for the Divine gift, nor yet remain a stranger to the merit of

free-will. But of him, who by gaining a knowledge of himself consented to Him Who set him free, he rightly says [al. 'it is rightly said.'], *He hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction*. It follows,

*But that it should live, and see the light.*

That is to say, the light of truth, which he could not see when dead in heart. Or certainly, because the Lord has said, *I am the Light of the world*, [John 8, 12] even the dead also shall behold the light, when all the ungodly shall have seen Him coming to judgment in the form of Manhood. But he lives, or beholds the light at that time, who has the eyes of his heart set free, and beholds Him in the form of the Godhead. It follows,

Ver. 29. *All these things God worketh three times with every man.*

[xi]

25. Of this man tempted and beaten by the scourge it had been said before, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and his soul hath drawn nigh to corruption, and his life to the destroyers*. [ver. 22] But it was subsequently added, *He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him, and he will see His face with joy; and he hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live, and behold the light*. [ver. 26] In these expressions, then, now collected and accumulated together, the bitterness of sorrow precedes, the joy of security comes after. And it is presently added, *All these things God worketh three times with every man*. As if he were to say, What I have said once of one person only, takes place three times in every person. But we must carefully consider what are these three times, wherein each man is affected with anxiety and sorrow, and is immediately after sorrow called back to the security of joy. For, as I before said, he had stated above, that grievous sorrow first depresses ['afficit'] us, and that great delight raises us up afterwards. If we watch then attentively, we find that these three stages of sorrow and joy succeed each other, in the mind of each of the Elect, in these following ways, that is to say, in his conversion, his temptation, and his death.

26. For in that first occasion of conversion, which we have mentioned, great is the sorrow of a man, when, from considering his own sins, he wishes to burst the fetters of worldly cares, and to walk in the way of God along the course of a secure conversation, to cast aside the heavy burden of temporal anxieties, and to bear the light yoke of the Lord, in a bondage akin to freedom. For as he thinks on these things, there occurs to his mind that old familiar carnal pleasure, which, from having become inveterate, binds him the closer, the longer it has held him; and is the more loath to permit him to escape. And then what pain is there, and what anxiety of heart, when the Spirit calls him on one side, the flesh calls him back on the other, his love for his new life invites him on the one hand, his old depraved habits assail him on the other: on the one side he glows with longings for his heavenly country, and on the other has to bear in himself that desire of the flesh, which pleases him to a certain degree, even against his will? Of a man thus embittered it is rightly said, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and his soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers*. But because Divine Grace does not suffer us to be long exposed to these difficulties, it bursts the chains of our sins, and leads us quickly by its consolation to the liberty of our new life; and the joy which succeeds makes up for the former sorrow. And thus the mind of every one when converted rejoices the more on attaining its wishes, the more it remembers the pain it has endured in its endeavours after them. Unbounded is the joy of the heart: because in its hope

of security it now draws near to Him, Whom it desires; so that it can rightly be said of it, *He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him, and he shall see His face with joy. Or without question, He hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction, but that it should live, and see the light.*

27. But for fear a man should believe himself holy immediately on his conversion, and security should overthrow him, whom the contest with pain could not overpower, he is permitted, in the dispensation of God, after his conversion, to be wearied with the assaults of temptations. The Red sea was already crossed by his conversion, but enemies still oppose him to the face while in the wilderness of this present life. We leave already our past sins behind us, as the Egyptians dead on the shore. But destructive vices still assail us, as fresh enemies to obstruct the way on which we have entered to the land of promise. Our former offences, as enemies who were pursuing us, have been already laid low by the power of God alone. But the assaults of temptations meet us to our face like fresh enemies, to be overcome with our own endeavours also. Conversion in truth produces security: but security is commonly the parent of negligence. To keep security from generating carelessness, it is written, *My son, in coming to the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation.* [Ecclus. 2, 1] For he says, not for rest, but for temptation, because our enemy is the more eager to conquer us as long as we are in this life, the more he discerns that we are rebelling against him. He cares not to buffet those, of whom he perceives that he can hold quiet possession. But he is excited the more vehemently against us, inasmuch as he is expelled from our hearts, as if from the rightful possession of his own habitation. It was this, which the Lord, in a kind of economy, typified in His own person. For he did not permit the devil to tempt Him till after His Baptism: suggesting to us thereby as a kind of sign of our own future conversion, [Matt. 4, 1] that His members would have to endure more severely the wiles of temptation, after they were beginning to advance Godwards. After the first occasion then of sorrow and joy, which every one feels in his endeavour after conversion, does this second time succeed. Because a man is assaulted with the attack of temptations, in order that he may not become relaxed by the carelessness of security. And he is generally welcomed with great sweetness of consolation, at the beginning of his conversion, but he experiences afterwards the severe labour of probation.

28. There are in truth three states of the converted; the beginning, the middle, and the perfection. But in this commencement they experience the charms of sweetness, in the mid-time the contests of temptations, but in the close the plenitude of perfection. Sweets then are first their portion, to comfort, afterwards bitternesses to exercise, and at last transcendent delights to confirm them. For every man too first soothes his bride with sweet blandishments, though he tries her when now united to him, with sharp reproofs, and possesses her, when she is proved, with thoughts of security. And hence also the people of Israel, on being summoned out of Egypt, when God betrothed Himself to the sacred marriage of the soul, was vouchsafed at first, in the place of pledges, the allurements of miracles; but, after marriage, is exercised with trials in the wilderness, and after trial, is confirmed in the land of promise with the plenitude of virtue. It first then tasted in the miracles that which it was to seek for; afterwards it was tried by hard trial, to prove whether it could keep safely what it had tasted; and at the last it also deserved to obtain a fuller enjoyment of that, which it had kept safe when put to the test of suffering. A gentle commencement therefore thus soothes the life of every convert, a rugged course proves it in the way, and afterwards full perfection gives it strength.

29. For converts are frequently granted either the most perfect tranquillity in the flesh, or the gifts of prophecy, or the preaching of doctrine, or signs and wonders, or the grace of healing, immediately on their first commencement. But after this they are harassed by the severe trials of temptations, from which, when they first began, they believed themselves entirely free. And it is thus ordained in the dispensation of Divine Grace, to keep them from being assailed with sharp temptations at their first beginning. For, if bitter temptations were to befall them at the first, they would fall back with ease on the sins they had abandoned, as having removed but a little distance from them. For they would be again involved from their very nearness, in the sins they first despised. Whence it is also written, *When Pharaoh had let the people go, the Lord led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, which is near, thinking lest perhaps they would repent, if they had seen war rising up against them, and might return to Egypt.* [Ex. 13, 17] War [read 'bella'] then is removed out of the way of those who were coming out of Egypt: because, to those who leave the world, there is presented at first a kind of tranquillity, lest from being alarmed in the tenderness of their first beginning, they should return, through fear, to that world from which they have escaped. They feel, then, first the sweetness of security, they are first nurtured in quietness and peace. But having tasted this sweetness, they endure more patiently the contests with temptations, as they have found in God a higher object of affection. Whence also Peter is first led up into the mountain, first beholds the brightness of the Lord's transfiguration, [Mat. 17, 1] and then is afterwards suffered to be tempted by a maid who questioned him; [Mat. 26, 69] in order that, having become conscious of his state by his weakness under trial, he might recur with sorrow and love to the sight which he had beheld; and that, when the wave of fear was sweeping him onwards to the ocean of guilt, there might be an anchor of former sweetness, to keep him back. But the struggles with temptations frequently last as long, as the allurements on the first commencement. But frequently there is greater pleasure given at first, and less trial in the season of labour: and frequently again less pleasure at first, and greater trial in the time of labour. But a disproportionate perfection of strength never succeeds the labour of temptation: because every one is rewarded with the plenitude of perfection, according to the result of the contest. But a convert commonly fails, from believing that he has received the confirmation of perfection, when he is welcomed with certain gifts of grace, in the sweetness of his first beginning: and, from not knowing that they are only the comforts given to beginners, he regards them as the consummation of fulness. Whence it happens, that if assailed by any sudden storm of temptation, he suspects that he is overlooked by God, and lost for ever. But if he were not to place such full reliance on his first commencement, he would, when still prosperous, be preparing his mind for adversity, and would afterwards resist the assaults of sin with the more firmness, as having also foreseen them with greater sagacity. For, by foreseeing these evils, he bears them with greater calmness. But though he foresees, he does not at all decline the contest with them, for the course of our journey is not brought to a close without going through the dust of temptation.

30. But every convert is generally assailed with such temptations, as he never remembers to have been attacked with, before the grace of conversion: not because this same root of temptation did not then exist, but because it did not shew itself. For the mind of man, when engaged with numberless thoughts, frequently remains in a manner unknown to itself, so as to be quite ignorant of what it is suffering: for while it is distracted with many matters, it is diverted from the inward knowledge of itself. But if it desires to have leisure for thinking upon God, and lops off the branches of distracting thought, it then beholds without obstruction, that which springs forth from the inmost depths of the flesh. For if a thistle is growing in the road, it is crushed by the feet of those who

journey along it, and its surface is worn away by the constant passing of travellers, so as not to appear. But though the thorns do not shew themselves above and bear fruit, yet the root still remains concealed beneath. But if the feet of travellers have ceased to bruise and tread it down, whatever living power remained buried in the root soon rises to the surface, and shews itself. It advances in its growth, and comes into view by the thorns that it bears. So also in the heart of the worldly minded, some secret root of temptations seems to grow up with difficulty; for placed as it were in the pathway of daily life, it is crushed by the feet of thoughts which pass over it, and is so trodden down by countless cares, as if by many travellers, as not to be seen. But if the crowd of anxieties is removed by the grace of conversion from the pathway of the heart, so that no importunity of business wears, nor any tumultuous thoughts oppress it, then that which was before concealed is discerned, then the thorn of temptation, springing from the root of sin, freely inflicts its wound. But the hand of the righteous so acts against it, that, as far as may be, it is not covered and concealed, but torn up by the very roots. But till this is done, this thorn so troubles the mind of every convert, that he frequently feels as if nearly overwhelmed by sudden temptation, and fears that its wound has been inflicted with fatal effect to the very quick.

31. But these assaults of temptation are frequently prolonged when they become common, and become, not sharper, but of longer duration. And then they cause less pain, but do more hurt: for the longer they keep hold of the mind, the less terrible do they become, the more usual they are. The mind therefore, when involved in these trials, is distracted here and there, and is confused by the manifold assaults of temptations, and frequently, when summoned from one point to another, it knows not which assailing sin to oppose, or which first to assault itself. It is hence frequently the case that, while rebellious sins severely torture, while they drive to the very brink of desperation the mind of the person who withstands them, a convert is afraid of this very heavenward path, which he chooses as a remedy, and that he stumbles, as it were, when brought to the summit, who used to stand more firmly at the bottom. But he is so hard pressed by the movements of temptations, which rage around him, that it may be rightly said of him, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired*; [ver. 22] or without question, *His soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers*. But because God in His mercy suffers us to be proved by our temptations [*‘probari reprobari’*], not to be cast away, (as it is written, *But God is faithful, who does not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it*, [1 Cor. 10, 13]) He speedily succours us with the aid of consolation, assuages the rising pangs of temptations, and calms with inward peace the emotions of the thoughts which rise up against Him. And then the mind soon derives great delight from its hope of heaven, on beholding the evil, which she had endured, overpowered. So that of this man tempted and delivered it may be justly said, *He shall see His face with joy*; and, *He hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live and behold the light*. When these two stages then, that is of conversion and probation, have been passed in sorrow and in joy, there yet remains the third, whose sorrow he has still to fear, and whose pleasures he has to obtain.

32. For after the struggle of conversion, after the pain of probation, there still remains a hard temptation; because he cannot arrive at the joys of perfect liberty, without the debt of human nature is first paid. But every convert, being careful and anxious for himself, ceases not to consider secretly with himself, with what strictness the eternal Judge is coming, and he daily looks forward to his own end, and before the approach of such severity of justice, considers what account he will



have to render for his conduct. For though he has avoided all evil deeds, which he could tell to be such, yet as having to come before a strict Judge, he is the more afraid of those faults, of which he is not conscious in himself. For who can understand how many evils we commit every instant, by the irregular motions of our thoughts? For it is easy enough to avoid deeds of wickedness, but very difficult to cleanse the heart from unlawful thoughts. And yet it is written, *Woe to you who think on that which is unprofitable*. [Mic. 2, 1] And again, *In the day when the Lord shall Judge the secrets of men*, [Rom. 2, 16] after having said before, *Their thoughts mutually accusing or excusing one another*. [ib. 15] And again, *Crafty lips in heart, and in heart they have spoken evil*. [Ps. 12, 2] And again, *For in your heart ye work iniquity on the earth*. [Ps. 58, 2] But when the soul has once forsaken the stability of eternity, and has sunk down to the instability of temporal things, it is obliged against its will to endure, in endeavouring to rise, that fluctuation of alternating emotions, which it sought of its own accord when willing to fall. And thus it is punished by its former pleasures, because it endures, as converted, the labour of the contest, in the very same things in which it sought while perverted the delight of pleasure. And frequently that very sin, which they skilfully detect in themselves, and of whose grievous guilt they are conscious in the sight of God, steals into the thoughts of the Elect against their will. And though they are ever afraid of a strict judgment for all these things, they then especially dread it, when on coming to pay the debt of nature, they see that they are drawing near the severe Judge. And their fear is the more acute, the nearer their eternal retribution approaches. But no empty imagination from the fancy of the thought flits at that time before the eyes of the heart: because when every thing else has been removed, they think of themselves only, and of Him, Whom they are approaching. Their fear increases, as the retribution of righteousness approaches nearer. And as the dissolution of the flesh is hastening on, the more the strict judgment comes, as it were, within their reach, the more mightily is it dreaded by them. And though they never remember to have passed over the things they know, they are yet afraid of those sins of which they are ignorant. Because, namely, they are unable fully to understand, and pass sentence on themselves, and, as their end draws nigh, they are harassed by more subtle fear. Whence our Redeemer, approaching His dissolution, and maintaining a resemblance to His members, fell into an agony, and began to pray at greater length. For what could He be asking for Himself when in agony, Who used, when on earth, to confer heavenly gifts with power? But on the approach of death, He represented in His own person the struggle which exists in our minds; who suffer a violent fear and dread, on approaching, through the dissolution of the flesh, to the eternal judgment. Nor is a man's mind at that time unseasonably alarmed, when it finds, after this brief state of being, that it must remain unchanged for ever.

33. For we consider, that we have by no means been able to pass through the course of this present life without guilt. We consider also, that even what we have done creditably, is not exempt from a degree of guilt, if we are judged without mercy. For who of us can surpass or even equal the doings ['pietate'] of the fathers who have gone before us? And yet David says, *Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified*. [Ps. 143, 2] Paul when saying, *I am conscious of nothing to myself*, cautiously added, *Yet am I not hereby justified*. [1 Cor. 4, 4] James says, *For in many things we offend all*. [James 3, 2] John says, *If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*. [1 John 1, 8] What will then the planks do, when the columns tremble? Or how will the shrubs remain unmoved, if even the cedars are shaken with the whirlwind of this fear? The soul then even of the righteous is frequently disturbed with the dread of punishment, as it approaches the dissolution of the flesh. And though it may have lasted some tranquillity in this life, it is staggered when the instant of its death comes on; so that it may be

rightly said of him, *His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired.* Or certainly, on account of the punishment of fear, that which is there subjoined, *His soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.*

34. But because the souls of the righteous are frequently purified, through the mere fear of death, from every trifling pollution, and enjoy the pleasures of eternal recompense from the very moment of the dissolution of the flesh; nay very often they rejoice at the sight of the inward recompense, even before they are stripped of the flesh; and because even while paying the debt of their old nature, they enjoy the satisfaction of the new gift, it is therefore rightly said, *He shall see His face with joy.* Or certainly, *He hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live and see the light.* The soul of the righteous beholds the face of God with joy, because it feels so much of inward happiness, as it can scarce contain even when taken up to God. It therefore lives there and beholds the light, because it fixes its spiritual gaze on the rays of the eternal sun. It lives there and beholds the light, because having trampled under foot all the vicissitudes and shadows of mutability, it clings to the reality of eternity. And by clinging thus to Him Whom it beholds, it attains to a resemblance of His unchangeableness, and as it gazes at the unalterable nature of Him Who made it, it assumes it to itself. For that which has fallen through its own act into a state of change, is transformed to an unchangeable condition by beholding the Unchangeable. Eliu therefore, because he first spoke of the bitterness of sorrow, and afterwards of the joy of consolation, fitly added of this man thus afflicted and thus delivered, *All these things God worketh three times in every man*, that is to say, in conversion, in probation, and in death. For in these three states, a man first suffers under sharp pangs of sorrow, and is afterwards comforted by great pleasures of security. But because the mind of each of the Elect suffers in each of these three stages, that is, in the pain of conversion, the trial of probation, or the dread of dissolution, and is purified and set free by this very suffering, it is appropriately added, Ver. 30. *That he may recal their souls from corruption, and enlighten them with the light of the living.*

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35. For that is the light of the dying which we behold with our bodily eyes. But they who still live for this world, are in darkness in the light of the dying. But they are enlightened with the light of the living, who despising the light of the world, return to the splendor of the inward brightness, that they may live in that place where they may see, by feeling it, the true light, where light and life are not different from each other, but where the light itself is life also; where the light so encircles us from without as to fill us within; and so fills us within, as, being itself uncircumscribed, to circumscribe us without. They are enlightened therefore with this light of the living, which they behold at that time the more clearly, the more purely they now live by its aid.

36. Eliu has uttered great and very powerful words. But it is a characteristic of every boastful person, that, while giving utterance to truths and mysteries, he suddenly blends with them, through pride of heart, some foolish and proud expressions. For he endeavours to please the world without, in that which he thinks with truth; and is soon despoiled of the truth, just as through haughtiness of pride he goes back from what is inward. For, because he seeks to be approved of outwardly as a man of learning, he loses inwardly the fulness of wisdom, in which he was instructed. Whence also Eliu, (who, as we have often said, represents the arrogant,) having put forth many profound and

wise sayings, as soon as he has uttered these sentiments of truth and mystery, is elated by being puffed up with pride at his wisdom. And as his pride rightly deserved, his feeling soon vents itself in empty words. For he subjoined, saying,

Ver. 31—33. *Attend, O Job, and hearken unto me, and hold thy peace while I speak. But if thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak: for I wish thee to appear just. But if thou hast not, hearken unto me; hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.*

[xiii]

37. He shews what opinion he has of himself by this expression in which he says, *Attend, O Job, and hearken unto me, and hold thy peace while I speak*. For it is enormous pride to exact respect from one's elder, and to impose silence on one better than one's self. But because holy preachers, when reproving others, frequently turn back to their own inmost thoughts, through the grace of humility, and seek to ascertain if perchance they are mistaken, in the very thing which they reprove, and give those, whom they reprove, the liberty of stating, in their own behalf, whatever they think more just, haughty men also sometimes wish to imitate this plan. For putting aside, for a while, their pride in words, they seek for a justification of those whom they reprove, if perchance they are able to find one. Not because it is their real feeling, but they wish to set themselves off by a show of humility. For they are afraid of appearing to be proud and haughty, because they are so. Whence Eliu immediately subjoined, saying, *But if thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak, for I wish thee to appear just*. But because he did not say this sincerely, he did not wait to hear that which he had asked for. For he added immediately, *But if thou hast not, hear me; hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom*. For those who sincerely seek to hear what is just, patiently wait to hear what they seek for. But Eliu, because he did not sincerely put forth the words of request, did not allow his question to be answered, but immediately burst forth with that, of which he was full within, and shewed how he stood in his own eyes, by saying, *Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom*. For when proud men say any thing which has a humble sound, they do not long remain in the semblance of this same humility. If they perchance ask to have an answer, they immediately avoid being instructed, by beginning to speak; because the desire of display which springs up from its root in the heart soon checks the words which they had spoken superficially. And they soon prove that this form of humility, which they have assumed in appearance only, is foreign to their character, by being unable any longer to maintain it. Behold how Eliu, when he seeks to learn righteousness, offers to teach it. Behold how his tongue, in seeming to enquire for what is just, had spoken in humble strain. But it was soon unable to restrain his swelling consciousness of pride. For he added immediately, *Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom*. But because haughty men are puffed up by swelling pride in what they say, and placed, as it were, on high, assume the appearance of learned men, just as if their words were poured forth from heaven by a kind of condescension, over undeserving persons, a verse is rightly inserted by the writer of this history, in order to observe,

Chap, xxxiv. 1. *Eliu also pronounced and said these things likewise.*

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38. For what is meant by this word “pronounced” but the puffing up of pride? in order that his words, which spring from the deep root of pride, might come forth as it were with a degree of majesty and distinction. It is thus in truth that all men of arrogance are wont to speak. For they

bring forth with a kind of assumption that which they believe they have gained a special understanding; and perhaps are preaching humility at the very time, when they are giving an example of haughtiness by being puffed up with pride. And hence it is that their preaching cannot remain consistent with itself; for by their perverse pride they impugn that truth, which they disseminate when they speak properly. For they impart their words to their humble auditors, not as if entering into their feelings, but as if barely condescending to them. For they consider that they are exalted on high, and, as if they were far superior, they hardly deign to turn towards their hearers, from their high eminence, a glance of doctrine. But the words of the just spring, on the other hand, from the root of humility, in order to be able to bear the fruit of piety: and they impart whatever sound advice they can, not by boasting, but by sympathising with others. For, by words of love, they so put either themselves into the place of their hearers, or their hearers into theirs, as if their hearers were teaching by their aid that, which they are being taught, and they were learning from their hearers that, which they are putting forth and teaching themselves. Let us hear then what Eliu says, representing as he does the boastful, and commencing with the display of pronouncement. It follows,

Ver. 2, 3. *Hear my words, O ye wise men, and listen to me, ye learned. For the ear trieth words, and the throat discerneth meats by the taste.*

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39. As if he were to say, as the ear does not discern meats, nor the throat words, so a fool does not understand the sentence of the wise. Hear therefore what I say, ye wise and learned, who can understand the meaning of what has been said. Let us see then how great is his pride, who imagines that his words can be fitly heard only by the wise. But the true preacher of wisdom says, *I am a debtor both to the wise, and to the unwise.* [Rom. 1, 14] But the arrogant, on the other hand, in his preaching looks only for the ears of the wise. And this not because he preaches for the purpose of making men wise, but he seeks for wise men, in order that he may proudly display his sentiments. For, as was said before, he does not seek to instruct them, but to display himself. Nor does he consider how righteous those that hear him become, but how learned he appears, when listened to by the learned. But since no one would listen to the preaching of the proud, if they did not throw in some semblance of humility; Eliu, after having extolled himself with swelling words, again condescends, as it were, to put himself on a level of equality; saying,

Ver. 4. *Let us choose to us judgment, and let us see among ourselves what is the best.*

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40. But we easily learn, by considering the words which follow, whether he sought for this judgment from humility of heart. It follows,

Ver. 5, 6. *For Job hath said, I am just, and God hath subverted my judgment. For in judging me there is falsehood: and mine arrow is violent without any sin.*

He complains that Job had spoken these things, [See chap. 27, 2] which the words of the sacred history prove on examination that he had never said. But he, who had sought for a judgment on equal terms, proceeds to promulgate a sentence from a fault of his own invention. For it follows, Ver. 7, 8. *What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water, who goeth with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men?*

Behold, in seeking a judgment, he has pronounced a judgment; and after his own allegation, without waiting for any statement of blessed Job, he condemned him as deserving of condemnation from his intercourse with the wicked. For he says, *What man is like Job?* That we may be sure to understand, No one. And he subjoins, *Who drinketh up scorning like water.* For water, when drunk, is so liquid a draught, that it is not kept from being swallowed by any clamminess that it has. But to drink up scorning as water, is to mock God without any impediment in one's thoughts, so that no fear opposes the pride, which the tongue or the mind displays. But how far this judgment of his upon blessed Job errs from the roadway of truth, we learn from that solemn declaration of God, in which He says to the devil, *Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth?* [Job 1, 8] Behold how Eliu declares him to be a sinner beyond comparison, whom the Truth pronounces to be righteous beyond comparison. But it is the peculiar way with haughty preachers, that they are more desirous of strictly reproving their hearers even when distressed, than to cherish them in a kindly manner. For they study more to chide and reprove faults, than to encourage goodness with praise. For they are anxious to appear superior to other people, and they are better pleased when anger raises their feelings than when charity brings them down. They ever wish to find something, to smite sharply with reproof. Whence it is written, *In the mouth of the, foolish is a rod of pride,* [Prov. 14, 3] because in truth he knows how to smite sharply, but not to sympathize with humility.

41. Holy preachers are also accustomed to reprove their hearers with sharp words, and to rage with strict severity against their sins: as it is written, *The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened deep.* [Eccles. 12, 11] But their words are rightly called nails, since they do not know how to handle gently the sins of offenders, but how to pierce them through. Were not the words of John nails, when he said, *O generation of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come?* [Matt. 3, 7] Were not the words of Stephen nails, when he said, *Ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost?* [Acts 7, 51] Were not the words of Paul, when he said, *O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you?* [Gal 3, 1] and again when saying to the Corinthians, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] But it is necessary for us to look carefully: for when righteous preachers observe on the other hand any good deeds in those whom they reprove, with what just consideration do they proceed to use these same words of reproof. Behold! Paul, when instructing the Corinthians, and seeing them guilty of the sin of schism, began by saying, *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God, which is given you in Christ Jesus, that in every thing ye are enriched by Him.* [1 Cor. 1, 4, 5] He praised them much in saying, that they were enriched in Christ in all things. And, lo! he again multiplies his soothing expressions, by saying, *In all utterance, and in all knowledge, as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you.* [1 Cor. 5, 6] He said, the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, as though they had carried out in their conduct, what they had learned from his teaching. And he subjoined just after, in summing up their praises, *So that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.* [1 Cor. 1, 7] I pray thee, O Paul, inform us what art thou aiming at by these numerous words of favour? And, lo! it follows shortly after, *But I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you. For it hath been signified unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.* [1 Cor. 1, 10. 11.] Of which contentions he afterwards added, saying, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] See with what praises he comes down to plain

words of reproof; see with how gentle a hand of kindness he has opened the way for strict rebuke in the hearts of his hearers. For he first endeavoured to bind the arms of the proud by the bands of blandishments, in order to cut afterwards into the sore of their pride with the knife of correction. The Corinthians in truth possessed qualities which deserved praise, and such also as deserved reproof. The skilful physician then first caressed with praises the sound limbs about the wound, and afterwards pierced with a blow the putrid cavity of the wound. This rule of teaching has its weight with holy preachers on either side, so that they favour and cherish what is right, and cut off with punishment what is wrong.

42. But frequently holy preachers too strike severely. But it is one thing when justice urges on, another when pride puffs up. The righteous, when severely correcting, do not lose the grace of inward sweetness. For they frequently adopt the harshness of strict vigour, in order to keep in check the disorderly passions of the wicked, but they melt within with the fire of charity, and glow with affection towards those, against whom they are raging with severe reproof. And they humble themselves moreover beneath them in the secret of their heart within, while they seem to scorn and chasten them in the sight of men with the sharp stings of punishment. But they frequently both despise by not despising them, and despair by not despairing, in order that they may lead them to fear, and to shrink back the more speedily from sin, the more they point out to them that the pit of destruction is, as it were, nearer to them. But they frequently also point out their own faults to their disciples, in a kind of graceful temperament, in order that they may hear and learn, how strictly they censure themselves for their own conduct. But they regulate themselves with such judgment, as not to be severe within, even when they exalt themselves; nor again, when humbling themselves, outwardly remiss: for they keep up humility in their discipline, and discipline in their humility. Paul maintained discipline, when saying to the Corinthians, *For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man?* [1 Cor. 3, 3] But even when maintaining discipline he lost not his humility; because he began by deprecation, saying, *I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of God, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you.* [1 Cor. 1, 10] Again he maintained humility, when, on speaking somewhat more at length than perhaps he had wished to the same Corinthians, he reproves himself, saying, *I am become a fool.* [2 Cor. 12, 11] Yet in this humility he did not give up discipline, since he immediately ‘added, *Ye have compelled me.* He exhibited an instance of great humility, when he said to his disciples, *For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord; and ourselves your servants through Christ.* [2 Cor. 4, 5] But he lost not in this humility the justness of discipline, for he says to the same, offending, *What will ye? shall I come to you with a rod?* [1 Cor. 4, 21] and so on. Holy preachers therefore well know how to regulate their skill in teaching by moderation on either side, and when they detect the faults of offenders, they have the art to reprove severely at one time, and humbly to deprecate at another. But when haughty men seek to imitate them, they adopt from them their sharp words of reproof, but know not how to adopt from them with sincerity the entreaties of humility. For they are better able to be terrific, than gentle; and they learn accordingly reasons for setting themselves up, though they neglect to learn humility. And since they do not know how to admonish offenders with gentleness, from their habit of being over severe in angry invective, they let themselves loose even against good doers. And this Eliu, as representing such persons, does not comfort Job, but reproves him, saying, *What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning as water, who goeth with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.* And because pride is ever a stranger to truth, he presently launches out even in falsehood, saying, Ver. 9. *For he hath said, A man will not please God, even though he run with Him.*

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43. But that he never said so, every one acknowledges who reads the words of blessed Job. But yet what wonder, that he who speaks for the sole purpose of proudly setting himself off, invents something to find fault with in another person? For how can he adhere to “truth in his words of reproof, whom pride of mind within removes far away from the same truth? It follows, Ver. 10. *Therefore hearken unto me, Ye men of understanding.*

Behold again that, puffed up by pride and haughtiness, he seeks for those only who are able to follow him, by understanding him properly; and thus bursts out with what he was thinking of, saying,

Ver. 10, 11. *Let unmercifulness [‘impietas’] be far from God, and iniquity from the Almighty: for the work of a man shall He render unto him, and will restore to them according to the ways of every man.*

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44. He well said, that iniquity or unmercifulness is not in Almighty God. But that which he added is by no means always the case in this life, namely, that He renders to each man according to his work, and according to his own ways. [see Rev. 22, 12. 2 Cor. 5, 10.] For both many who commit unlawful and wicked deeds He prevents of His free grace, and converts to works of holiness: and some who are devoted to good deeds He reproves by means of the scourge, and so afflicts those who please Him, as though they were displeasing to Him. As Solomon bears witness, saying, *There are just men to whom many things happen, as though they had done the deeds of the wicked; and there are wicked, who are as secure as though they had the deeds of the just.* [Eccles. 8, 14] God doubtless so ordains it of His inestimable mercy, that both scourges should torture the just, lest their doings should elate them, and that the unjust should pass this life at least without punishment, because by their evil doings they are hastening onwards to those torments, which are without end. For that the just are sometimes scourged in no way according to their deserts, is shewn by this very history which we are considering. For the same blessed Job had not been scourged for any fault, who was praised by the attestation of the Judge Himself before the smarting of the scourge. Eliu therefore would speak more truly, if he had said, That there is not unmercifulness and iniquity in God, even when He seems not to render to men according to their own ways. For even that which we do not understand, is brought forth from the righteous balance of secret judgment. But because haughty preachers, when they scatter abroad many follies, also frequently utter many things that are true and solid, Eliu rightly subjoins,

Ver. 12. *For truly God will not condemn without cause, nor will the Almighty subvert judgment.*

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45. The Lord said to the devil, *Thou hast moved Me against him to afflict him without cause.* [Job 2, 3] But Eliu says, *That the Lord will not condemn without cause.* A statement which is believed to be at variance with the words of Truth, unless weighed with careful consideration. For to condemn is one thing, to afflict another. He afflicts therefore in some respect without cause, but does not condemn without cause. Had He not afflicted Job in some respect without cause, since sin was not

blotted out, but merit increased thereby? For He cannot condemn without reason, inasmuch as condemnation cannot take place partly for a certain purpose: since it punishes at the end all the ungodliness which any one has here committed. Nor does Almighty God subvert judgment: because, although our sufferings seem to be unjust, yet they are rightly inflicted in His secret judgment. It follows,

Ver. 13. *Whom else hath He appointed over the earth, or whom hath He placed over the world which He hath made?*

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46. In order, namely, that thou mayest understand, No one. For He governs indeed by Himself the world which He created by Himself: nor does He need the aid of others in governing, Who needed it not for creating. But these points are brought together, in order that he might plainly point out, that if Almighty God does not neglect to govern by Himself the world which He created, He most certainly governs aright that which He created aright; that He does not order in unmercifulness that which He fashioned in mercy; and that He Who provided for their being before they were made, does not forsake them after their creation. Because then He is present to rule, Who was the First Cause at their creation, He therefore does not omit to take care of us. Whence also he fitly subjoins, Ver. 14. *If he hath directed his heart towards Him, He will gather to Himself his spirit, and his breath.*

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47. The heart is crooked, when it seeks for things below. It is made straight when it is raised to things above. If a man therefore direct his heart to the Lord, the Lord draws to Himself his spirit and his breath. He uses, namely, spirit for inward thoughts, but breath, which is drawn through the body, for outward actions. For God, then, to draw the spirit and breath of man to Himself, is for Him so to change us both within and without, to turn towards Him in our desires, that nothing outward may any longer please the mind, and that the flesh (even if it wishes it) may not endeavour to attain any inferior object; but that the whole man may have its inward desires kindled towards Him from Whom it springs, and may bind itself closer to Him without, by self-control. Whence also he fitly subjoins,

Ver. 15. *All flesh shall fail together, and man shall return to ashes.*

[xxii]

48. For all flesh fails together, when it is no longer a slave to its own emotions; because the spirit presiding therein restrains all its waverings, and destroys as it were with the sword of Its severity all evil which lived therein. Jeremiah had, in truth, slain himself with this sword of discipline, when he said, *After Thou hadst converted me, I did penance, and after Thou hadst shewed to me, I smote my thigh.* [Jer. 31, 19] For what is understood by the thigh, but carnal pleasure? And what his saying, *After Thou hadst shewed unto me, I smote my thigh,* except that after he spiritually beheld heavenly things, he extinguished every infirm carnal desire which used to live in him: that as heavenly objects opened upon him, he might feel less pleasure in those inferior things which he had possessed? For the more a man begins to live to things above, does he begin to die to things below. For as far as concerns the love of carnal doings, the whole flesh of Paul had perished together,



when he said, *I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me.* [Gal. 2, 20]

49. Eliu also properly subjoined in this place, *And man shall return to ashes.* For every one who is involved in sin, forgets his mortal condition, and while he is still puffed up with pride, remembers not that he is earth. But when, after the grace of his conversion, he is touched with the spirit of humility, what does he call to mind that he is, but ashes? David had already returned to ashes, when he said, *Remember, Lord, that we are dust.* [Ps. 103, 14] And Abraham had returned to ashes, saying, *I will speak to my Lord, though I am dust and ashes.* [Gen. 18, 27] And though death had not yet dissolved their living flesh unto earth, yet in their own opinion they were that, which they foresaw without doubt they were about to be. Hence it is said in another place, *Thou wilt take away their breath, and they will fail, and will return to their dust.* [Ps. 104, 29] But what is meant by their breath, but the breath of pride? Let their breath then be taken away, that they may fail; that is, feel themselves to be nothing in themselves, when the breath of pride is withdrawn. And let them return to dust, that is, let them be humbled by their infirm condition. It is on account of this very dust, to the recollection of which those are recalled who consider themselves, that it is said by Wisdom, *The righteous shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds.* [Wisd. 3, 7] For holy men while they mix with sinners, kindle them by the fire of their example, and reduce to ashes all their brilliancy. For consumed by the flame of holiness, they discern themselves, on looking at the infirmity of their condition, to be nought but ashes. So that when loosened from the hardness of their pride they may use the words before quoted, *Remember, O Lord, that we are dust.* It is well said then that when God draws the breath of a man to Himself, all flesh will fail together, and man will return to ashes. These words of Eliu are true and important. But he betrays in the words which follow that he was soon wickedly puffed up by that which he thought rightly, saying, Ver. 16. *If then thou hast understanding, hear what is said, and listen to the voice of my words.*

[xxiii]

50. All haughty men have this peculiarity, that when they perchance entertain any acute sentiment, they soon launch out in consequence into the sin of pride, that they despise the opinion of every one else in comparison with their own, and prefer themselves in their own judgment to the merits of others. It is the fate of these wretched men, to be more in the dark the more they see; for while they look at subtleties, they overlook themselves; and the more acutely they perceive their wisdom, the more fatally do they fall through pride. But they would look into subtleties to some use, if in what they bring forward they were to see themselves. For Eliu said above, *If thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak, for I wish thee to appear just.* [Job 33, 32] But now he says, *If thou hast understanding, hear what is said.* See how his pride gradually advances in increase of expression. He doubted above whether blessed Job could bring forward what was just. He now makes it a question if he can even hear what is said. He said there, *If thou hast any thing to say, answer me.* As though he were to say, Say something, if at least thou wilt be able to speak worthily. But here he says, *If thou hast understanding, hear what is said.* As though he said plainly, Hear me, if thou wilt be able to hear worthily. These are the daily declensions which take place in the heart of the wicked, by which they are unceasingly sinking to worse; because while they carelessly neglect smaller faults, they break out wickedly into greater. It had already resulted from his pride that he doubted whether blessed Job could say what was just. But through neglecting to watch this fault in himself, he arrived at greater wickedness: so as not only to doubt that he could possibly say what was just, but even to despair of his understanding himself when speaking what was just. Wherefore

the sin of pride must be cut up at once by the very roots, that when it springs up secretly it may be cut off vigilantly, so that it may not gain vigour by growth, or strength by habit. For it is a hard matter for a man to detect in himself inveterate pride, because in truth, the more we suffer under this sin, the less do we see of it. For pride is generated in the mind exactly as darkness in the eyes. For the wider it spreads itself, the more does it contract the light. Pride then grows up gradually in the heart, and when it has extended itself wider and wider, it closes entirely the sight of the mind which suffers from it, so that the captive mind can both suffer from the haughtiness of pride, and yet be unable to behold that under which it suffers. But because haughty men, as we have said, sometimes hold sound views in an unsound way, and know how to invent good arguments, but scorn to state them aright; Eliu, after the haughty pride with which he had said, *If thou hast understanding, hear what is said*, subjoins, saying,

Ver. 17. *Can he be healed that loveth not judgment? How dost thou so much condemn him that is just?*

[xxiv]

51. He uttered a proper sentiment, but it ought not to have been uttered to blessed Job. For in every thing which is said we must by all means consider, what is said, to whom it is said, where it is said, how it is said. But Eliu considered only what he was saying, but did not consider to whom he was saying it. For blessed Job loved judgment, since he knew how to weigh his causes carefully with the Lord. Nor had he condemned Him that is just: but humbly enquired, when involved in grief, why he had been smitten when without sin. He loves judgment, whoever examines his own ways minutely, and enters into the secret chambers of his heart, and there considers what the Lord bestows on him, and what he owes to the Lord. But how had blessed Job not acted thus, who used to offer such frequent sacrifices in expiation for his sons, even on account of their thoughts? Because then Eliu said, that he that loveth not judgment cannot be healed, accusing blessed Job of not loving judgment, and of having condemned Him who is just, he immediately subjoins the righteousness of that same righteous One, that is, the Lord, saying,

Ver. 18. *Who saith to a king, Apostate: who calleth leaders ungodly.*

[xxv]

52. We know often that most of those who rule exact an inordinate degree of dread from their subjects, and that they wish them to venerate them not so much for the Lord's sake, as in the Lord's place. For they exalt themselves with pride of heart within, and despise all under them in comparison with themselves, nor do they advise them with condescension, but oppress them with authority: because, in truth, they set themselves up with lofty thoughts, and do not acknowledge themselves to be equal with those over whom they happen to rule. Against this pride it is said in the Book Ecclesiasticus, *Have they appointed thee a ruler? Be not lifted up, but be among them as one of them.* [Ecclus. 32, 1] This pride the Lord also reproving by the Prophet in shepherds, saith, *But ye ruled over them with austerity and with power.* [Ez. 34, 4] For the good advice which they offer to their subjects, they bring out as ordering, rather than as advising with them: for the very reason, that to say any thing to them as if they were on equal terms, they consider a degradation. For they rejoice in their singular preeminence, and not in the equality of their creation. But because the Lord carefully considers those swelling hearts of rulers, it is well said against them, *Who saith to a king, Apostate.* For every haughty ruler falls into the sin of apostasy, as often as, through pleasure at his

ruling over men, he rejoices in his peculiar distinction. For he considers not under Whom he himself is, and exults over his equals, for that he is as it were not their equal. But whence is it that this root of evil springs up in the heart of rulers, unless it be in imitation of him, who, having scorned the society of angels, said, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, and will be like the Most High?* Since then every ruler, as often as he prides himself on ruling over others, is cut off, by falling into pride, from dependence on the Chief Ruler of all: and, because when he despises his equals who are subject to him, he does not acknowledge the supreme dominion of Him under Whom all are equal; it is rightly said, *Who saith to a king, Apostate.*

53. But since by domineering over others they lead their subjects to impiety by the example of their pride, it is fitly subjoined, *Who calleth leaders ungodly.* For they would lead them into the way of piety, if they did but present a pattern of humility to the eyes of their subjects. But he is an ungodly leader, who diverges from the path of truth, and who, when falling headlong himself, invites his followers to the precipice. He is an ungodly leader who points out the way of error by setting examples of pride. Paul was afraid of being an ungodly leader, when he brought down the loftiness of his power, saying, *Not seeking glory of men, neither of you nor yet of others, when we might have been a burden as the Apostles of Christ, but we became as children in the midst of you.* [1 Thess. 2, 6] He had become as a child in the midst of them, because he was afraid lest he should set example of pride, if he claimed, among his disciples, the honour due to his high station. He was afraid, in truth, lest if he were to seek for himself the power of pastoral authority, the flock committed to him should follow him along precipitous places, and lest he, who had undertaken an office of piety, should be leading to ungodliness those who followed him.

54. It is therefore necessary for a person in high place to take special care what example he sets his subjects, and to know that he is living for all those, over whom he knows he is placed. He should be especially watchful not to pride himself on his being set above others, lest he should exact too immoderately the privileges of rightful authority, lest the rule of discipline should be converted into the severity of pride, and lest by the power he possessed of restraining his subjects from wickedness, he should pervert the more the hearts of those who behold him; and lest (as was before observed) he should become a leader of impiety by means of his pious office. A man, however, ought not to undertake to guide others, who does not know how to lead them in holy living; lest he, who has been appointed to reprove others' faults, shall himself commit the sin which it was his duty to cut off. Let rulers therefore take special care to live for themselves and those under them: to hide in the bosom of their mind the good which they do, and yet furnish thereby an example of good behaviour for the benefit of those who follow them; to correct the faults of their subjects by doing judgment, and yet not pride themselves at the severity of this same punishment; to be content with slightly reproving certain faults, and yet not to relax the bonds of discipline by this lenity; to overlook, and bear with other evils, and yet not to suffer them to make head by their overlooking them. These things are laborious, and, unless Divine grace support, hard to keep. But it is rightly said by the Book of Wisdom of the coming of the strict Judge, *Horribly and speedily will He appear, for a very sharp judgment shall be to them who are in high places.* [Wisd. 6, 5] Since therefore people too commonly launch out into pride from the power of rule, and pride itself is counted as an impiety by the strict Judge, it is well said by Eliu of the Lord, *Who calleth leaders ungodly.* For when they are proud of their authority, they lead by their example those under them to impiety.

55. A person then who is appointed to rule over men, must be especially careful, within the secret chambers of his mind, to preside in the seat of humility. And when others stand before him without, as he gives his sentence, he should with watchful eye behold Him, before Whom he is hereafter to stand to be judged for these very matters: that so he may behold Him with greater confidence, when he has seen Him, the more anxiously he trembles now before Him, Whom he does not behold. Let him consider then, that he who is hardly able perhaps to satisfy so strict a Judge for his own soul, has, from his ruling over so many subjects, so many souls (so to speak) singly to answer for to Him, at the time for rendering his account. And if this thought continually penetrates the mind, it crushes all the swelling of pride. And a careful ruler will be called neither an apostate king, nor an ungodly ruler, the more anxiously he regards the power he has received not as an honour, but as a burden. For he that is well pleased at being a judge now, feels no pleasure at beholding the Judge then. For the faults which are committed from the desire of obtaining power, cannot be numbered. But authority is then alone properly exercised, when it is held not in love of it, but in fear. And in order that it may be properly administered, necessity, and not our own desire, should, in the first place, impose it on us. But it neither ought to be abandoned through fear when once undertaken, nor, again, embraced as an object of desire; for fear a person should, as if by reason of humility, be guilty of greater pride, in contemning and shrinking from the course of the Divine dispensation: or should cast off the yoke of his Heavenly Ruler, the more his own private authority over others gives him pleasure. When power then is possessed it must not be greedily loved, but patiently endured; in order that then, at the judgment, it may be a light burden to our comfort, as we know it now for a service which is heavy to be borne.

## BOOK XXV.

In explanation of the thirty-fourth chapter from the nineteenth to the thirtieth verse, the punishments of the reprobate, and the secret judgments of God are discussed.

[i]

1. The very mode of man's creation shews, how far he surpasses all things beside. For the reason which has been conferred on man proclaims how far a rational nature surpasses all things which are deficient in either life, or sense, or reason. And yet, because we close our eyes to inward and invisible objects, and feast them on those which are seen, we most commonly esteem a man, not for what he is in himself, but from what is accidental to him. And since we do not look at what a man is in himself, but what he can do, in our acceptance of persons we are influenced, not by the persons themselves, but by what accidentally belongs to them. And thus it comes to pass, that even that person is inwardly despised by us, who is outwardly held in honour; for whilst he is honoured for that which is about him, he is, from his own doings, placed low in our judgment. But Almighty God examines the conduct of men, solely on the nature of their deserts, and frequently inflicts severer punishment, from the very fact, that He has here given greater opportunities of serving Him. As the Truth Itself bears witness, saying, *To whom much is given, of him much will be required.* [Luke 12, 48] Whence it is now well said by Eliu, (ver. 19.) *Who accepteth not the person of princes, and hath not regarded a tyrant, when disputing against the poor.*

[ii]

2. But by prince, or tyrant, may be understood every proud person; but the humble may be designated by the poor. He does not regard then a tyrant, when disputing against the poor, because He declares that He knows not, in the judgment, any proud men who now oppress the life of the humble, saying, *I know you not, whence ye are.* [Luke 13, 25] And because He thus destroys him, when He wills, by His power, as He created him, when He willed, by His power, is fitly added in argument,

*For they are all the work of His hands.*

And it is immediately added,

Ver. 20. *Suddenly shall they die, and the people shall bow down at midnight, and pass away.*

[iii]

3. However long it be before the ungodly are taken out of this life, they are taken away suddenly, and at an instant, since they know not how to foresee their end by thinking on it. That is sudden to any one, which he has not been able to think of beforehand. That rich man was taken away suddenly, who left the barns which he was preparing, and found the place of hell, which he was not looking for. He was employing his soul in thinking in one direction, he parted with it in another by his sentence. He fixed his thoughts on one object when alive, he experienced another when he was dying. For he left those temporal things, which he had long engaged in, and he found eternal things which he did not look for. Whence, in consequence of this his blind ignorance, it is well said to him by the Divine sentence, *This night do they require thy soul of thee.* [Luke 12, 20] For that soul was taken away by night, which was lost in blindness of heart. That was taken away by night, which refused to enjoy the light of consideration, in order to foresee what it would suffer. Whence the Apostle Paul rightly says to his disciples who are thinking on future things, *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and children of day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.* [1 Thess. 5, 4. 5.] For the day of death seizes as a thief in the night, when it casts out the souls of foolish men, which do not look onward to the future. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined, *And the people shall bow down at midnight, and pass away.* They bow down and pass away at midnight, who are brought low and swept away by the darkness of their negligence. They will then be bowed down by the sentence of the Judge, who now refuse to bend with humility of heart. But the Elect bow themselves of their own accord in humility, that they may not be bowed down against their will in death. Whence is it said to Holy Church, of the converted children of her persecutors, *The sons of them who humbled thee, shall come bending to thee.* [Is. 60, 14]

4. And he says properly of dying peoples, not that “they will pass along,” but *pass away*, because simply by living in the world we are daily coming to an end, and we pass along this present life, as though wearing a track in a road. But that men live subject to death, is a kind of journeying deathwards. And every day we pass of our life, we are approaching as it were on our journey by as many steps to the appointed spot. But the very increase of our years, is a wearing them away; for the length of our life begins to be not so much as it was at first. But the first man was so fashioned, that, as time passed on, he remained stationary, so as not to journey on together with it. For he remained still, as the moments hasted away; since he did not approach to the end of his life, through the increase of his days. And he stood the firmer, the closer he clung to Him who is ever stationary. But after he touched the forbidden thing, having offended his Creator, he began to pass onward

together with time. Having lost, namely, the stability of an immortal condition, the stream of mortal being engulfed him. And, while borne along by youth to age, and by age to death, he learned, as he journeyed on, what he was when he remained stationary. And because we are sprung from his stock, we retain, like shoots, the bitterness of our root. For because we derive our origin from him, we inherit his course of life, at our birth, so that every moment of every day that we live, we are constantly passing away from life, and the length of our life decreases by the very means by which it is believed to increase. Since then we are daily proceeding, as our years increase, to the issue of death, it is well said of the dying, not that they pass along, but pass away. For they pass along, even while they live, but pass away, as they die. It follows,  
*And they will take away the violent without hand.*

[iv]

5. Thou understandest, 'The divine judgments.' But they will take him away without hand, who was violent with his hand. They will take him away without hand, because, namely, he is snatched away, by the violence of a sudden death, invisibly, who used visibly to spoil others. He beheld those whom he spoiled, but beholds not him who hurries him away in death. The violent therefore is taken away without hand, because he both beholds not his spoiler, and yet is hurried along. And there follows him a severer sentence, the longer great forbearance is extended [al. 'was first granted.'] to him when sinning: because the severity of God punishes a sinner the more strictly, the longer it has borne with him. But it is frequently the case, that while the Divine mercy is waiting for sinners, they plunge into greater blindness of heart. Whence it is written, *Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up for thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?* [Rom. 2, 4. 5.] Observe, then, that while the man of violence is spoiling those whom he is able, is oppressing the weak, and indulging a long time all his sinful desires; because he is not smitten at once, and because his punishment is deferred to the end, his most wicked conduct is believed not to be observed by God. After then he had spoken of his death, he immediately rightly added concerning the Lord,  
Ver. 21. *For His eyes are over the ways of men, and He considers all their steps.*

[v]

6. For He was then believed not to observe them, while this man of violence was committing, unpunished, all the wickedness he could. God was supposed not to behold the deeds of the ungodly, because He was delaying to condemn them justly; and His great forbearance was regarded as a kind of carelessness. The wicked also himself believed that he was not observed by God in the commission of sin, as often as he sinned without being punished. To whom it is said by a certain wise man, *Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath happened to me?* [Ecclus. 5, 4] He does not wish to correct the wickedness, for which he has not suffered the punishment it deserved: and the more mercifully he is spared, the more sinfully is he urged on to wickedness: and, despising the long-suffering of the Divine forbearance, he has added to his faults, from the very circumstance that should have led him to correct them. As is said by this very Job, *God gave him a place for repentance, but he misuses it in his pride.* [Job 24, 23] Frequently, also, because he does not suffer immediately the punishment he deserves, he considers that his conduct is not displeasing to God. Let him go then now, and launch forth presumptuously into every kind of blasphemy. Let him take

his fill of his sinful pleasures; let him spoil others' goods, and satiate himself with the oppression of the innocent. And, because he is not yet smitten, let him consider that his ways are not observed by God, or, what is worse, that they are approved of by Him. There will fall on him, full surely, there will fall on him, a sudden and everlasting blow. And he will then acknowledge, that every thing is observed by God, when he sees himself condemned, by an unexpected death, in retribution for all his guilt. He will then open, in his torment, the eyes which he long kept closed in sin. He will then perceive, that the righteous Judge has observed every thing, when he is now unable, by perceiving it, to escape the due deserts of his sins. The ungodly, then, who is long spared, is swept away suddenly, because *the eyes of the Lord are over all the ways of men, and He considereth all their steps*. As though he were to say, Because He does not at last leave those sins unpunished, which He long looks on with forbearance. For, behold! He has suddenly swept away the violent man, and his sins which He endured with patience, He has cut off with punishment. Let no one say then, when he beholds any ungodly man heaping up sin without restraint, that God does not notice the conduct of men. For he who is long tolerated, is swept away suddenly.

7. But he calls the steps of men, either our separate actions on which we are engaged, or the alternating motives of our inmost thoughts, by which, as if by steps, we either depart far from the Lord, or approach near to Him by holiness. For the mind approaches by so many steps nearer to God, as it makes progress in so many holy emotions. And, again, it departs so many steps further from Him, as it becomes depraved by so many evil thoughts. Whence it is frequently the case that, though the emotion of the mind does not come forth in action, yet the sin is already perfected, by reason of the guilt itself of the thought. As it is written, *Hand in hand, the wicked shall not be innocent*. [Prov. 11, 21] For hand is wont to be joined with hand, when it rests at ease, and no laborious employment exercises it. *Hand therefore in hand, the wicked shall not be innocent*. As though he were saying, Even when the hand rests from sinful deeds, yet the wicked, by reason of his thoughts, is not innocent. Because then we know that not merely our actions, but even our thoughts, are strictly weighed, what will befall us for our walking in wicked action, if God judges so minutely the steps of the heart? Behold, no man witnesses the secret courses of our mind, and yet, in the sight of God, we are making as many steps, as many affections as we put in motion. We fall before Him, as often as we stumble away from the straight path by the foot of unstable thought. For unless this frequent stumbling of our minds increased in His sight, He would not in truth exclaim by the Prophet, *Put away the evil of your thoughts from before Mine eyes*. [Is. 1, 16] But speaking thus, He witnesses that He cannot endure, as it were, the intensity of our secret wickedness. But it cannot be hidden from Him, because, namely, every unlawful thought which is conceived in secret by us, is thrust offensively before His sight. For, as it is written, *all things are naked and open to His eyes*. [Heb. 4, 13] Whence it is here also properly subjoined, Ver. 22. *There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they who work iniquity may be hid*.

[vi]

8. What did he intend to designate by darkness but ignorance, and what by the shadow of death, except oblivion? For it is said of the ignorance of certain persons, *Having their mind obscured with darkness*. [Eph. 4, 13] And it is written again of the oblivion which comes on us at death, *In that day all their thoughts shall perish*. [Ps. 146, 4] Since then whatever is thought of during life is utterly consigned to oblivion by death, oblivion is a kind of shadow of death. For as intervening

death puts an end to the doings of life, so does intervening forgetfulness destroy that which existed in the memory. It is rightly, therefore, called its shadow, inasmuch as it is modelled upon it, as it were, while it imitates its power in lulling the senses to rest. But, since God is neither unacquainted with men's evil thoughts, nor forgetful of their evil deeds, (except indeed they are blotted out of His sight by penitence,) it is appropriately observed, *There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they who work iniquity may be hid*. As though he were to say, No one is hidden from His judgment, for this reason, that it is impossible for Him either not to behold what we do, or to forget what He beholds.

9. Although 'darkness,' or 'the shadow of death,' can be understood likewise in another sense. For every change is a kind of resemblance of death. For that which changes any thing, cuts it off, as it were, from what it was before: that so it ceases to be what it was, and begins to be what it was not. Because then the true Light, our Creator, I mean, is obscured by no vicissitude of change, and overshadowed by no defects in His own nature; but it is His nature to shine forth unchangeably, darkness and the shadow of death are said not to exist in Him. Wherefore it is written elsewhere, *With Whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning*. [James 1, 17] And hence again, Paul the Apostle says, *Who only hath immortality, and dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto*. [1 Tim. 6, 16] But since we all know that both the soul of man and angelic spirits were created immortal, why is God alone said by the Apostle to have immortality, unless it be that God alone truly dies not, since He alone is never changed?

10. For the soul of man would not fall, if it had not been changeable. And, banished also from the joys of Paradise, if it were not capable of change, it would never return to life. But, in endeavouring to return to life, it is compelled to bear with its defects, from its alternation and change. Because then it was fashioned out of nothing, it is of itself ever sinking beneath itself, unless kept up by the hand of its Maker to a condition of holy desire. Since then it is a creature, it has a downward tendency. For it considers, that of its own strength, it is able only to fall headlong; but it holds firmly to its Creator, with the hand of love, lest it should fall, until it passes over to unchangeableness, and lives really immortally, because unchangeably.

11. The Angelic spirits also were made changeable by nature, so as to fall of their own accord, or to stand from their own will. But, because they humbly chose to cling to Him, by Whom they were created,\* they overcame the changeableness which was in them, by remaining immutably at the firm, so that they deservedly rose above the liability to change, to which they would have been subject in the order of their nature.

[\*Note: Ben. here notes that after the words 'they were created,' one Vatican Ms. is quoted as adding, 'They received from the vision of their Ruler that they should abide in themselves without falling. Hereby, however, their wonderful method of standing is formed, in that while they know what they can do of their own steadfastness, they consider what they owe to the government of their Ruler. And the more easily they see that they, as changeable, can fall, the more close do they draw themselves, that they may not fall, to the love of their Ruler. Of their own steadfastness, they know they may still tumble down headlong, but they hold them fast by their Creator with the hand of love, that they may not fall.']

Since then it is the property of the Divine Nature alone, not to suffer the shades of ignorance and change, let it be justly said, *There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they, who work iniquity, may be hid*. For the more unchangeably that eternal light shines, which is God Himself, the more piercingly does It see, and It is neither ignorant of what is hid, since It penetrates all things, nor does It forget the things It has penetrated, because It lasts on without change. And consequently, as often as we conceive in our mind any unworthy thought, so often do we sin in the



light. Because It is present to us though not present to It; and when we walk wickedly we offend against It, from which we are deservedly far away. But, when we believe that we are not seen, we keep our eyes closed in the sun light: that is to say, we conceal Him from ourselves, not ourselves from Him. Let us then, now while we are able, blot out our evil thoughts, and more evil deeds, from the sight of the eternal Judge. Let us recal to the eyes of our heart whatever evil we have committed through the sin of presumption. Let not our weakness flatter itself, and handle itself delicately in those sins, which it calls to mind. But the more it is conscious to itself of evil, let it be the more kindly severe against itself. Let it set before itself the future judgment, and whatever sins it is conscious must be severely smitten by the sentence of the Judge, let it mercifully smite in itself by the penitence of conversion. Whence, after the punishment of this man of violence has been described, it fitly follows,

Ver. 23. *For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment.*

[vii]

12. This verse requires the greater discussion, the more painful is that which it speaks of, if it is neglected. Here doubtless that judgment is not designated which punishes by eternal retribution, but that which, conceived by the mind, cleanses through our conversation [al. 'conversion.']. For whoever is afraid of being condemned by the first of these does not desire to approach near it. By its being said then, *For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment*, it is pointed out at once that there is a kind of judgment, which is at last desired even by the damned and reprobate. And what is that, but this of which Paul the Apostle speaks, *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged?* [1 Cor. 11, 31] and of which it is said by the Prophet, *There is no judgment in their goings*, [Is. 59, 8] and of which David says, *The honour of a king loveth judgment*, [Ps 99, 4] namely, that he who now knows God by Faith, should carefully judge what he owes Him in his works. Whence it is written again, *Be judged before the Lord, and wait for Him*. [Job 35, 14] He in truth is judged before the Lord, who beholds the Lord in his heart, and examines into his conduct with anxious enquiry, beneath His presence. For a man waits for Him the more confidently, the more he daily examines his life with suspicion. For he, who comes to His final judgment, is no longer judged before Him, but by Him. Of this judgment also the Lord speaks by the Prophet to the forgetful soul, *Put Me in remembrance, that we may plead together; tell me, if thou hast any thing, that thou mayest be justified*. [Is. 43, 26]

13. For the mind of every one ought anxiously to enquire into its pleas before God, and the pleas of God against itself. It should weigh carefully either what good things it has received from Him, or what an ill return it has made for His goodness by wicked living. And this the Elect never cease to do day by day. Whence Solomon well says, *The thoughts of the righteous are judgments*. [Prov. 12, 5] For they, approach the secret chambers of the Judge, in the recesses of their own heart; they consider how sharply He smites at last, Who long patiently bears with them. They are afraid for the sins which they remember they have committed; and they punish by their tears the faults which they know they have perpetrated. They dread the searching judgments of God, even in those sins, which they perchance cannot discover in themselves. For they see that that is observed by Divine Power, which they, through human weakness, do not see in themselves. They behold the severe Judge, Who strikes a heavier blow the slower He is in coming. They contemplate also the assembly of the holy Fathers seated with Him in judgment, and blame themselves for having slighted either their words or their examples. [2 Cor. 6, 2] And, in this secret chamber of inward judgment,

constrained by the sentence of their own conscience, they chasten with penitence, that which they have committed through pride. For they there count over whatever comes against, and assails them. There do they crowd before their eyes every thing they should weep for. There do they behold whatever can be searched out by the wrath of the severe Judge. There do they suffer as many punishments as they are afraid of suffering. And, in the sentence thus conceived in the mind there is present every agency which is needed for the fuller punishment of those convicted by it. For the conscience accuses, reason judges, fear binds, and pain tortures. And this judgment punishes the more certainly, the more inward is its rage; because it does not come to us from any thing without. For when any one has begun to enter on this business of examination against himself, he is himself the prosecutor who arraigns, he is himself the accused who is arraigned. He hates himself, as he remembers himself to have been: and in the person of his present self persecutes his former self. And a contest is raised by a man in his mind against himself, bringing forth peace with God. This struggle of the heart the Lord required, when He said, by the Prophet, *I attended and hearkened: no man speaketh what is good, there is no one that doth penance for his sin, saying, What have I done?* [Jer. 8, 6] He was appeased by this struggle of the heart, when He spake to His Prophet, of King Ahab, reproving himself, saying, *Hast thou seen Ahab humbled before Me? therefore because he hath humbled himself for My sake, I will not bring the evil in his days.* [1 Kings 21, 29]

14. Since then it is now in our power to undergo an inward judgment of our mind against ourselves, let us examine and accuse our own selves, and torture our former selves by penitence. Let us not cease to judge ourselves, while it is in our power. Let us carefully attend to what is said, *For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment.* For it is a property of reprobates to be ever doing wrong, and never to repent of what they have done. For they pass over, with blinded mind, every thing that they do, and do not acknowledge what they have done, except when they have been punished. But it is the custom of the Elect, on the other hand, to examine daily into their conduct from the very first springs of their thoughts, and to drain to the bottom, whatever impurity flows forth from thence. For as we do not notice how our limbs grow, our body increases, our appearance changes, our hair turns from black to white, (for all these things take place in us, without our knowing it,) in like manner is our mind changed from itself, by the very habit of anxiety every moment of our life; and we do not perceive it, unless we sit down to carefully watch our inmost condition, and weigh our advances and failures day by day. For in this life, to stand still, is, in itself, to go back, as it were, to our old state, and when the mind is left undisturbed, it is overpowered by an old age, as it were, of torpor: because by neglecting itself, and by losing insensibly its proper strength, it wastes away, unknown to itself, from the appearance of its former power. Whence it is said by the Prophet, under the character of Ephraim, *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knew it not, but even gray hairs are sprinkled on him, and he himself was ignorant of it.* [Hos. 7, 9] But when the mind enquires into itself, and examines itself carefully with penitence, it is renewed from this its old nature, by being bathed with tears, and kindled with grief; and, though it had been well nigh frozen with the chill of age, it glows afresh by a supply of the zeal of inward love. Whence the Apostle Paul warns his disciples, who were growing old by contact with this mortal life, saying, *Be renewed in the spirit of your mind.* [Eph. 4, 23]

15. But both the examples of the Fathers, and the precepts of holy Scripture, assist us much in acting thus. For if we look at the doings of the Saints, and lend an ear to the Divine commands, the sight of the one and the hearing of the other inflames us. And our heart is not benumbed with torpor, when it is urged on by imitation of them. Whence it is well said to Moses, *The fire on the*

*altar shall always burn, which the priest shall feed, putting wood on it every day in the morning.* [Lev. 6, 12] For the altar of God is our heart, in which the fire is ordered always to burn: because it is necessary that the flame of love should constantly ascend therefrom to God. And the priest should put wood thereon every day, lest it should go out. For every one who is endowed with faith in Christ, is made specially a member of the Great High Priest, as Peter the Apostle says to all the faithful, *But ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood.* [1 Pet. 2, 9] And as the Apostle John says, *Thou hast made us a kingdom and priests to our God.* [Rev. 1, 6] The Priest therefore feeding the fire on the altar, must place fuel on it every day; that is, every faithful person must never cease to collect together in his heart as well the examples of those who have gone before, as also the testimonies of Holy Scripture, that the flame of love may not be extinguished within it. For to make use of, either the examples of the Fathers, or the precepts of the Lord, in exciting our love, is, as it were, to supply fuel to the fire. For since our new life within daily grows old, by its very converse with this world, fire must be fed by a supply of wood, so that while it wastes itself away by the habits of our own condition, it may revive by means of the examples and testimonies of the Fathers. And it is there rightly ordered, that wood should be thrown on every day in the morning. For these things are not done, unless when the night of blindness is extinguished. Or certainly, because the morning is the first part of the day, every one of the faithful must put aside the thoughts of this life, and consider in the first place, that he must enkindle by every means in his power, that zeal which is even now as it were failing within him. For this fire on the altar of the Lord, that is, on our heart, is speedily extinguished, if it is not carefully renewed by an application of the examples of the Fathers, and the testimonies of the Lord.

16. But it is rightly subjoined in this place, *And when the burnt offering is placed upon it he shall burn the fat of the peace offerings.* [Lev. 6, 12] For whoever kindles within himself this fire of love, places himself upon it as a burnt offering, because he burns out every fault, which wickedly lived within him. For when he examines the secrets of his own thoughts, and sacrifices his wicked life, by the sword of conversion, he has placed himself on the altar of his own heart, and kindled himself with the fire of love. And the fat of the peace offerings smells sweetly from this victim: because the inward fatness of new love, making peace between ourselves and God, emits from us the sweetest odour. But since this self-same love continues inextinguishable in the heart of the Elect, it is there fitly subjoined, *This is that perpetual fire, which shall never go out on the altar.* [Lev. 6, 13] This fire in truth will never go out on the altar, because the glow of love increases in their minds even after this life. For it is the effect of eternal contemplation, that Almighty God is loved the more deeply, the more He is seen.

17. But that we are delivered from the depths of this life, when aided by the Divine warning, and the examples of those who have gone before, is also well signified by Jeremiah the Prophet being lowered into a well; [Jer. 38, 11] for ropes and old rags are let down, in order to raise him out of it. For what is typified by the ropes but the precepts of the Lord? For since they both bind us fast, and snatch us away when involved in evil doings, they tie, as it were, and draw us, they confine and raise us up. But for fear he should be cut, when bound, and dragged by the ropes, old rags are at the same time lowered down: because the examples of the old fathers strengthen, that the Divine commands may not alarm us. And, by comparing ourselves with them, we presume that we are able to do that, which we shrink from, through our own weakness. If then we are anxious to be raised from the depth, let us be fastened with ropes, that is, let us be bound by the precepts of the Lord. But let old rags also be placed between, for the ropes to be held better by their means: that is, let us

be supported by the examples of those of old times, that the subtle precepts may not, as they raise up, wound us who are infirm and timid. The Apostle Paul used to apply, as it were, some old rags, when he adapted the examples of the ancients to his spiritual precepts, in order to raise up his disciples, saying, *The righteous had trial of mockings and scourging, moreover also of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword.* [Heb. 11, 36, 37] And shortly after, *Having therefore so great a cloud of witnesses placed over us, laying aside every weight, and the sin which surrounds us, let us run with patience to the contest set before us;* [Heb. 12, 1] and again, *Remember those who are placed over you, who have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith imitate, looking to the end of their conversation.* [Heb. 13, 7] He had, namely, in a former passage, lowered ropes, as it were, while announcing spiritual precepts. But afterwards he applied old rags, as it were, when mentioning the examples of ancestors.

18. Roused then by the voices of so many precepts, and aided by the comparison of so many examples, let us turn back to our hearts, and examine carefully all our doings. And let us blame whatever within us offends against the will of Divine rectitude, in order that this very accusation may excuse us with our strict Judge. For we are the more quickly acquitted in this judgment of our conscience, the more strictly we regard ourselves as guilty. And we must not omit the opportunities which are afforded us for this purpose, because, after the season of this life, there is no time for so doing. For it is not, indeed, said without reason, *For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment.* For we are reminded of what we cannot do then, in order that we may not neglect, now, what we can do. But behold, engagements occupy our minds, and, from their constant contact with us, turn away the eye of our mind from self consideration. For our mind is distracted by those visible things, which it beholds, and when it is employed outwardly, it forgets what is going on in itself within. But the Divine voice pierces it with its terrible sentences, like so many nails, to keep it vigilant; that man may, at least when startled with fear, tremble at the secret judgments hanging over him, which he pretends not to see, when overwhelmed by torpor. For, as we said above, the mind is weighed down, by being fatally accustomed to the habits of the old life, and is lulled as in sleep on these outward objects which it beholds; and after having once wasted its strength in seeking after visible things without, it has lost all its power for contemplating invisible things within. Whence it is now necessary that the mind which is detached by visible objects, should be smitten with invisible judgments, and that, since it has laid itself low by its evil indulgence in these outward objects, it should seek, at least when smitten, that which it has forsaken. But behold, Holy Scripture transfixes drowsy hearts with a kind of dread, in order that they may not cling to those things which come to nothing without, but which have eternally ruined them within. It points out to us what is decreed by the secret sentence, in order that these outward things may not be too much thought of. It informs us what is doing above us with regard to us, in order that we may turn the eyes of our heart from these outward and temporal objects, to the secret of the inward disposal. For after much had been said, concerning the punishment of the wicked, there is suddenly introduced the secret judgment, mercifully and justly passed upon us: how some lose that which they appeared to hold fast, and some receive that which others deservedly lose. For he says,

Ver. 24. *He shall break in pieces many and without number, and shall make others to stand in their stead.*

19. This is daily occurring. But because the end of both parties is not seen as yet, it is less dreaded. For the reprobate never acknowledge their fault, excepting when under punishment. And because punishment is deferred, the fault is made light of. But they fall from a state of righteousness, and others, on their fall, obtain the place of life. But they think not of their fall, since they do not consider the death which awaits them for ever. For did they but turn their eyes to what they are about to suffer there, they would tremble at what they are doing here. But it is plain to all that Almighty God will make a public enquiry at that final ordeal, so as to give up some to torments, and admit others to a participation of the heavenly kingdom. But that is now daily taking place by a secret, which is then made manifest by a public judgment. For either searching, or ordering, the hearts of men, one by one, with justice and mercy, He casts forth some of them to outward pursuits, and leads others on to those which are within. He inspires these to seek for inward joys, and leaves those to think, for their pleasure, on outward things. He raises the mind of these to heavenly objects, and immerses the pride of the others in the basest desires. But the hearts of other men are shut up from human sight, and it is not known who is rejected; since the thoughts of each man cannot be penetrated. For oft times, though the heart be evilly disposed, the deliberation of thought has not been carried into effect, and a man is perhaps still constrained within by habit, who already wanders abroad in his mind. But such an one, whoever he be, fell in the sight of the inward Judge, as soon as he departed in desire from seeking for things within. But others, sometimes, after a course of evil living, revive, with sudden affection, to a hope of heaven, and they who had dissipated themselves by sinful conduct, bring themselves back, by self reproof, to the bosom of inward repentance. And men still looking back to this conduct, think them still to be such, as they knew them to be in behaviour. But they themselves, on the other hand, by the examination of strict consideration, attack their former life as they remember it to have been; and it is known what they were, but what they have now begun to be is not known. In both then of these classes it is frequently the case, that both they who in the judgment of men seem to stand, are already fallen in the sight of the Eternal Judge: and that those who are still fallen before men, already stand firm in the sight of the Eternal Judge. For what man could suppose that Judas, even after the ministry of the apostleship, would lose his portion in life? And who would believe, on the other hand, that the thief would find a means of life even at the very instant of his death? But the Judge secretly presiding, and discerning the hearts of these two persons, mercifully established the one, and justly crushed the other. He cast forth the one with severity, He drew the other within of His mercy. And hence in announcing even by His Prophet, that some would fall and others be raised up at the time of His passion, He well says, *I mingled My drink with weeping*. [Ps. 102, 9] For drink is drawn in from without, but weeping pours out from within. For the Lord then to mingle drink with weeping, is for Him to draw some within, from outward things, and to cast off others from an inward to an outward condition. *He shall break in pieces, then, many and without number, and shall make others to stand in their stead.*

20. But, as was said before, this breaking is first wrought within, in order to its being afterwards displayed without. By this breaking the outward parts of some sometimes appear to be still sound, while the inward parts have already rotted away. For it is written, *Before ruin the heart is exalted*. [Prov. 16, 18] They are smitten then on the very point in which they are proud. Whence it is written, *I have broken their heart which committeth fornication, and which departeth from Me*. [Ez. 6, 9] For to delight outwardly in forbidden objects, is to commit fornication within. But this very pride of the haughty man is a great crushing of his heart. For he falls from the integrity of sound health, just

as he is puffed up with pride, on account of any virtue. For proud men despise God, and, forsaking the glory of the Creator, seek their own. And, for them to have lost the support of their superior, and to have sunk back on themselves, is for them to have already fallen. They are crushed too because, having abandoned the things of heaven, they seek the earth. For what greater crushing can there be, than, having forsaken the Creator, to seek the creature, having forsaken the joys above, to be eager only for things below? Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *But He humbles sinners even to the earth.* [Ps. 147, 6] For when they have lost heavenly things, every thing which they thirst after is earthly, and while they endeavour to seem greater, that which they seek after is of less value. Of whom it is well said by Jeremiah, *Departing from Thee they shall be written in the earth.* [Jer. 17, 13] But it is said on the other hand of the Elect, *Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* [Luke 10, 20] This crushing, then, first steals on in the mind, in order that it may afterwards advance in outward act. It shakes first the foundation of the thoughts, in order to smite afterwards the fabric of conduct. We must labour therefore with the greatest care, in order that it may be avoided in the place where it takes its rise. For it is written, *Keep thy heart with all watchfulness, because life proceedeth from it.* [Prov. 4, 23] And it is written again, *From the heart proceed evil thoughts.* [Matt. 15, 19] We must watch, therefore, within, lest the mind should fall, when it is exalted. Let us guard within all that we do without. For, if once the rottenness of pride has eaten into the marrow of the heart, the empty husk of outward appearance speedily falls. But we must observe, that, while some are said to receive strength to stand firm, when others fall, the number of the Elect is shewn to be fixed and definite. Whence it is said also, to the Church of Philadelphia, through its Angel, *Hold fast that which thou hast, that another take not thy crown.* [Rev. 3, 11]

21. By this announcement then, in which it is said, that the life of some is exalted, and that of others is crushed, both the hope of the humble is cherished, and the pride of the haughty brought low: since those can forfeit the good qualities of which they are proud, and these enjoy the good things, which they were despised for not possessing. Let us tremble, then, at the blessings we have received, and not despair of those who have not yet obtained them. For we know what we are to-day; but we know not what we may become after a little while. But these persons whom, perchance, we despise, can begin late, and yet surpass our conduct, by their more fervent zeal. We must fear, therefore, lest he should rise, even on our fall, who is now derided by us, who are standing firm: although, indeed, he knows not how to stand firm himself, who has learned to ridicule him, who is yet unsteady. But the Apostle Paul, enforcing this dread of heavenly judgments, into the hearts of his disciples, says, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* [1 Cor. 10, 12] But by saying, *He breaketh in pieces,* and by adding immediately, *without number,* he desired either to express the number of the reprobate, which surpasses the amount of human calculation; or he, certainly, wished to point out, that all who perish are not reckoned in the number of the Elect, and that they are therefore innumerable, as running beyond the number. Whence the Prophet, on beholding that as many, at this period of the Church, believe only in appearance, as it is doubtless certain exceed the number and amount of the Elect, declares, *They are multiplied above number.* As though he were saying to many who are entering the Church, Even those come to the faith in appearance only, who are excluded from the number of the kingdom, because in truth they surpass by their multiplicity the number of the Elect. Whence also it is said by the Prophet Jeremiah, *The city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Ananehel, even to the gate of the corner, and it will go forth beyond the standard of measure.* [Jer. 31, 38] For no one in truth is ignorant that Holy Church is the city of the Lord. But Ananehel is interpreted the grace of

God, and two walls meet together in a corner. The city of the Lord is said therefore to be built from the tower of Ananehel, even to the gate of the corner: because Holy Church, beginning from the loftiness of Divine grace, is built up, as far as to the entrance of both peoples, namely, Jew and Gentile. But because, as its members increase, reprobates also are included therein, it is fitly added, *And it will go forth beyond the standard of measure*: because it is extended even to those who, transgressing the standard of justice, are not within the number of the heavenly measure. Whence it is said also to the same Church by Isaiah, *For thou shall spread forth on the right hand, and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles*. [Is. 54, 3] For it is extended in so great a multitude of Gentiles, to the right hand, when it admits some to be justified. And it is extended to the left also, when it admits into itself some who will even remain in sin. On account of this multitude, which lies beyond the number of the Elect, the Lord says in the Gospel, *Many are called but few are chosen*. [Matt. 20, 16] But, because some are crushed, while others are chosen, in consequence of the deserts of the sufferer, and not from the injustice of Him who punishes, (for *God is not unjust, Who inflicteth wrath* [Rom. 3, 5]) it is fitly subjoined, Ver. 25. *For He knoweth their works, and therefore will He bring night on them, and they shall be crushed*.

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22. It is specially to be understood, that every sinner is, in two ways, crushed in the night; either when he is struck by the suffering of punishment from without, or when he is blinded by a secret sentence within. He falls at night, when he loses for ever the light of life, by the last judgment. Whence it is written, *Bind him hands and feet, and send him into outer darkness*. [Matt. 22, 13] For he is then sent of force into outer darkness; because he is now blinded of his own will with darkness within. But, again, the sinner is crushed at night, when, condemned by the overthrow of former sinners, he finds not the light of truth, and knows not what he ought to do for the future. For every sin, which is not speedily wiped out by penitence, is either a sin, and a cause of sin, or else a sin, and the punishment of sin. For a sin which penitence does not wash away, soon leads on, by its very weight, to another. Whence it is not only a sin, but a sin, and a cause of sin. For, from that sin, a succeeding fault takes its rise, by which the blinded mind is led on to endure greater bondage from another. But a sin which arises from a sin, is no longer merely a sin, but a sin, and a punishment of sin. Because Almighty God obscures, by a just judgment, the heart of a sinner, that he may fall into other sins also, through desert of his former sin. For the man whom He willed not to set free, He has smitten by forsaking him. That, then, is not improperly called the punishment of sin, which, in consequence of a just blindness having been inflicted from above, is committed by way of punishment for former offences. And it is the result of a system, ordained indeed above, but thrown into confusion by men's wickedness below, that a preceding sin is the cause of that which follows, and, again, a subsequent sin the punishment of that which precedes it. This seed, as it were, of error, Paul had clearly observed in the unbelieving and unstable, when saying, *Who when they had known God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their thoughts*. [Rom. 1, 21] But he immediately added that which sprang up from this seed of error, saying, *Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their own heart unto uncleanness, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves*. [Rom. 1, 24] For because, though knowing God, they wittingly committed the sin of pride, they are also so blinded as not to be aware of the sin they are committing. And they who are unwilling to follow their own understanding in sin, that is the cause of sin, are deprived of the light of understanding in sin, that is the punishment of sin. The

pitfall of subsequent sins is covered over by the demerits of former sins, in order that he, who knowingly commits sin, may afterwards fall, even unwittingly, in other sins.

23. It is provided, in fact, that some faults are smitten with other faults, in order that their very growth in sin may be the punishment of sinners. For because Almighty God grants time for repentance, which human wickedness perverts, nevertheless, to the practice of its own iniquity, our guilt is doubtless permitted to increase by the just judgment of God, in order that it may be heaped up, for Him to strike it at last a heavier blow. For hence the Apostle Paul says again of certain persons, *To fill up their sins alway*. [1 Thess. 2, 16] Hence it is to John by the voice of the angel, *He that hurteth let him hurt still, he that is filthy let him be filthy still*. [Rev. 22, 11] Hence David says, *Add iniquity unto their iniquity, that they may not enter into Thy righteousness*. [Ps. 69, 27] Hence again it is said of the Lord by the same Psalmist, *Suggestions* ['Immissiones'] *by evil angels He made a way for the path of His anger*. [Ps. 78, 49. 50.] For the Lord justly permits the heart which has been weighed down by former demerits, to be deceived also by the subsequent persuasions of malignant spirits, for, when it is deservedly led into sin, its guilt is increased in its punishment. Whence also the Lord is said to have made a way for His wrath out of a path. For a way is broader than a path. But to make out of a path a way for His wrath, is, by strictly judging to extend the causes of His wrath, that they who refused, when enlightened, to act rightly, may, when justly blinded, still so act as to deserve a greater punishment. Hence it is said by Moses, *The sins of the Amorites are not yet full*. [Gen. 15, 16] Hence the Lord says by the same Moses, *For their vine is of the vineyard of Sodom, and their stock is of Gomorrah. Their grape is a grape of gall, and the cluster of bitterness is in them. Their wine is the fury of dragons and the rage of asps, which cannot be healed. Are not all these things stored up with Me, and sealed up in My treasures? In the day of vengeance I will repay them*. [Deut. 32, 32-35] How many of their sins has He revealed, and yet He immediately subjoins, *In the time when their foot shall have stumbled*. Behold, their most abominable misdeeds are described, and yet for the day of vengeance, their subsequent fall is looked forward to, whereby their faults are to be heaped up to the full. They already have enough to deserve punishment; but their sin is still suffered to increase, in order that, sinning, a heavier punishment may torture them. Sin, the cause of sin, already deserves punishment; but it is still deferred, in order that sin, the punishment of sin, may supply an increase of suffering.

24. But frequently one and the same sin is also a sin such as is both a punishment, and a cause of sin. We shall make this more plain, by bringing forward some instances. For unrestrained gluttony excites the fulness of the flesh to the heat of lust. But lust, when committed, is frequently concealed either by perjury or murder, for fear it should be punished by the vengeance of human laws. Let us suppose to ourselves then, that a man has given the reins to his gluttony, that, being overcome by his gluttony, he has committed the sin of adultery, that being detected in adultery, he has secretly murdered the husband of the adulteress, lest he should be brought to judgment. This adultery then, standing between gluttony and murder, springing from the one, and giving being to the other, is a sin, and both the punishment, and the cause of sin also. It is in truth a sin of itself, but the punishment of sin, because it has increased the guilt of gluttony; but it is the cause of sin, because it also gave birth to the subsequent murder. One and the same sin, then, is both the punishment of the preceding, and the cause of the subsequent, sin: because it both condemns past sins, while it adds to their amount, and sows the seeds of future sins, to deserve condemnation. Because then the eye of the heart is blinded by previous sins, that blindness which confuses the mind of the sinner, by condemning him for his former offence, is properly designated 'night:' because by this the light of



truth is concealed from the eye of the sinner. It is therefore well said, *For He knoweth their works, and therefore will He bring night on them, and they shall be crushed.* Because, as has been often observed, they doubtless commit previous offences, in order that they should be involved again in sin by the darkness which follows, so that they are now as unable to behold the light of righteousness, as they were unwilling to behold it when they were able. But the Lord is said to bring night on them, not because He Himself brings on the darkness, but because He does not enlighten in His mercy the darkened hearts of sinners. So that His having blinded men in the night is His not having willed to deliver them from the gloom of blindness. It follows, Ver. 26. *He hath smitten them as ungodly men, in the place of beholders.*

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25. In holy Scripture the word 'as,' is wont to be used, sometimes for resemblance, sometimes for reality. For it is for resemblance, as when the Apostle says, *As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing:* [2 Cor. 6 10] but for the reality, as John says, *We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father.* [John 1, 14] But in this passage it makes no difference, whether it is put for resemblance, or reality: for, in whatever way it is taken, the evil life of the wicked is plainly signified. But holy Scripture specially calls unbelievers 'ungodly.' For sinners are distinguished from ungodly by this difference, that though every ungodly man is a sinner, yet every sinner is not ungodly. For even a man who is godly in the Faith can be called a sinner. Whence John says, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.* [1 John 1, 8] But a man is properly called 'ungodly' who is estranged from the holiness of religion. For of such the Prophet says, *The ungodly shall not rise up in the judgment.* [Ps. 1, 5] But Holy Church is called *the place of beholders.* For people rightly assemble therein, in order that the True Light, which is God Himself, may be seen. Whence it is said to Moses, *There is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock, when My Majesty passeth by.* [Ex. 33, 21. 22.] And shortly afterwards, *I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts.* [ib. 23.] For, by the place, is typified the Church, but by the rock, the Lord, but by Moses, the multitude of the people of Israel, which did not believe, when the Lord was preaching upon earth. It stood, therefore, on the rock, beholding the back of the Lord, as He was passing by: because in truth having been brought into Holy Church, after the Passion and Ascension of the Lord, it obtained a knowledge of the faith in Christ, and beheld the back parts of Him, Whose presence it had not seen. Let it be said, then, of those whom Divine Vengeance finds within Holy Church, still persisting in their iniquities; let it be said of these, whose conduct Paul describes thus, *Who confess that they know God, but in words they deny Him:* [Tit. 1, 16] let it be said of these, *He hath smitten them as ungodly in the place of beholders.* For they were standing in that place, where they seemed to see God. They loved darkness in that very place, where the light of truth is beheld. And although they had had their eyes opened in faith, yet they kept them closed in their works. Whence it is also well said of Judaea, *Her watchmen are blind,* because, namely, they did not behold in works that which they saw in profession. Whence it is written also of Balaam, *Who falling hath his eyes open.* [Num. 24, 16] For, falling in works, he kept his eyes open in contemplation. In like manner these also, who open their eyes in faith, and who see not in works, who are placed, from their appearance of piety, within the Church, are found, by their ungodly conversation, without the Church. Of whom it is well written in another place, *I saw the ungodly buried, who when they were alive, were in the holy place, and were praised in the city, as men of just works.* [Eccles. 8, 10]

26. But the very tranquillity of the peace of the Church conceals many under the Christian name, who are beset with the plague of their own wickedness. But if a light breath of persecution strikes them, it sweeps them away at once as chaff from the threshing floor. But some persons wish to bear the mark of Christian calling, because, since the name of Christ has been exalted on high, nearly all persons now look to appear faithful, and from seeing others called thus, they are ashamed not to seem faithful themselves; but they neglect to be that which they boast of being called. For they assume the reality of inward excellence, to adorn their outward appearance: and they who stand before the heavenly Judge, naked from the unbelief of their heart, are clothed, in the sight of men, with a holy profession, at least in words.

27. But some persons maintain the faith in their inmost heart, but are not careful to live faithfully. For they assail in their conduct that which they reverence in profession. And it frequently happens that they lose, by Divine judgment, even that which they wholesomely believe, through the wickedness of their lives. For they unceasingly pollute themselves by wicked deeds, and do not believe that the vengeance of just judgment can fall in retribution upon this conduct. And frequently, when they neglect to live strictly, they fall into unbelief, even when no one persecutes them. For they who do not believe that a strict judgment is hanging over them, who imagine that they can sin, without being punished for it; how can they either be, or be called, faithful? For to believe that due punishment cannot be inflicted on their unrepented wickedness, is to have lost their faith. Because then they scorn to maintain works worthy of faith, they lose even the faith which they seemed to possess. And the language of destroying enemies over these is fitly mentioned by the Prophet, under the character of Jerusalem. For it is said by them, *Make her void, make her void, even to the foundation thereof.* [Ps. 137, 7] For Paul says, *Other foundation can no man lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.* [1 Cor. 3, 11] Destroying enemies, then, make Jerusalem bare, even to the foundation, when evil spirits, having first destroyed the edifice of good works, draw away also the firm foundation of religion from the hearts of the faithful. For works are built on faith, as a building on a foundation. To have laid bare then even to the foundation, is, after having overthrown good works, to have scattered the strength of faith. Hence also it is said to Judaea by Jeremiah, *The sons also of Memphis and Taphnis have polluted thee even to the head.* [Jer. 2, 16] For to be polluted even to the head, is, after a habit of evil deeds, to be corrupted in the very sublimity of the faith. For when abandoned spirits involve the soul of any one in wicked works, but cannot pollute the integrity of his faith, they pollute, as yet, the inferior members, as it were, but reach not to the head. But whoever is corrupted in the faith, is at once defiled even to the head. For a malignant spirit reaches, as it were, from the inferior even to the higher members, when, defiling the outward conduct, it corrupts with the disease of unbelief the pure loftiness of the faith. Because then all these things are hidden from the eyes of men, but are open to the sight of God, and many die, without faith, in this abode of faith itself, let it be rightly said, *He hath smitten them as ungodly men, in the place of beholders.* For they exhibit themselves, before men in the Church, as godly persons, but because they cannot escape the Divine judgments, they are smitten as ungodly. And it tends to increase their punishment, that each of them, having been thrown together with the faithful in the Church, wittingly despised the verity of the faith. And a heavier punishment follows them, as the knowledge of good living also attends them in the examples of righteous men. For the righteous and faithful brethren who are now set before them, are so many witnesses to assail them in the coming judgment. They know, therefore, that which they neglect to follow. Whence it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 27. *Who departed from Him, as it were on purpose.*

[xi]

28. For we must understand that a sin is committed in three ways. For it is perpetrated either through ignorance, or infirmity, or of set purpose. And we sin more grievously from infirmity than through ignorance, but much more grievously of set purpose than from infirmity. Paul had sinned from ignorance, when he said, *Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* [1 Tim. 1, 13] But Peter sinned through infirmity, when the single word of a damsel shook in him all that strength of faith, which he had spoken of to the Lord, and when he denied, with his voice, the Lord Whom he held firm in his heart. [Matt. 26, 69. and 33.] But because a sin of infirmity or ignorance is wiped away the more easily, as it is not wilfully committed, Paul amended by knowledge the points on which he was ignorant: and Peter strengthened the root of faith which was moved, and, as it were, withering away, by watering it with his tears. [Ib. 75.] But those persons sinned intentionally, of whom the Master Himself said, *If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.* [John 15, 22] And a little after, *They have both seen, and hated, both Me and My Father.* [Ib. 24] For not to do good is one thing, to hate a teacher of goodness another: as it is one thing to sin from precipitancy, and another thing to sin deliberately. For a sin is often committed from precipitation, which yet is condemned on thought and deliberation. For it frequently happens that a man through infirmity loves what is right, and cannot perform it. But to sin deliberately is neither to love nor to do what is good. As it is therefore sometimes a heavier offence to love sin than to commit it, it is, in like manner, more sinful to hate righteousness, than not to have performed it. There are some then in the Church, who so far from doing good, even persecute it, and who even detest in others, what they neglect to do themselves. The sin of these persons is in truth not committed from infirmity or ignorance, but of intention alone: because, namely, if they wished to do what is right, and were unable, they would at least love in others, what they neglect in themselves. For were they but only to wish for it themselves, they would not hate it when done by others. But because they despise in their lives, and persecute with severity the very same good qualities which they know and hear of, it is rightly said, *Who departed from Him of purpose.* Whence also it is rightly subjoined, *And would not understand any of His ways.*

[xii]

29. For he says not, they understand not through infirmity, but they would not understand; because men frequently also despise the knowledge of those things, which they are too proud to do. For since it is written, *The servant that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes, and the servant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes,* [Luke 12, 47. 48.] they consider that their ignorance secures impunity for their sin. But they are doubtless overwhelmed with the darkness of pride alone, and therefore discern not, because it is one thing to have been ignorant, another to have refused to learn. For not to know is only ignorance, to refuse to learn is pride. And they are the less able to plead ignorance in excuse, the more that knowledge is set before them even against their will. Whence it is said by Solomon, *Doth not wisdom cry, and prudence put forth her voice, standing on the top of lofty places, above the way, in the middle of the paths?* [Prov. 8, 1. 2.] We might perhaps be able to pass along the way of this present life, in ignorance of this Wisdom, if She

had not Herself stood in the corners of the way.

30. If It had wished to be concealed, it would have been necessary to search after It. But after It has publicly displayed the mysteries of the Incarnation, after It has exhibited to the proud a pattern of humility, It placed Itself, as it were, in the middle of the way as we were passing along it; in order, namely, that we might strike against that which we are unwilling to look for, and touch and stumble over that which we neglect to observe as we are passing by it. Let it be said then, *And they would not understand any of His ways*. For the way of Incarnate Wisdom is every action which He did in time. His ways are the courses of life, which He has laid down for those who are coming to Him. He has marked out as many ways for those who come to Him, as many patterns as He has set forth of holy living. The Prophet had beheld His ways of humility, when he sighed, saying, *I will exercise myself in Thy commands, and I will consider Thy ways*. [Ps. 119, 15] Hence again it is said of every righteous man who takes care to walk after the pattern of the Lord. *The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and he desireth greatly His way*. [Ps. 37, 23] Because then all haughty men despise the doings of the Lord's humility, it is rightly said, *They would not understand His ways*. For these ways are mean in appearance, but are to be revered in understanding; since that which is seen in them is one thing, that which is looked for is another. For what else does it present in this life to the eyes of beholders, but degradation, spitting, insults, and death? But we pass through this lowliness to the highest glory. By these disgraces, which precede, eternal and glorious things are promised to us. Haughty men then have seen the ways of the Lord, but have refused to understand them, because by despising the mean appearance they present in themselves, they have lost the sublime promises which they offer. To understand, then, the ways of the Lord, is both to endure humbly what is transitory, and steadily to wait for that which is to abide; in order that, after the pattern of the Lord, coeternal glory, which is purchased by temporal disgrace, may be sought for, and that a person may not fix his mind on that which he suffers here, but on that which he looks for. Haughty men, then, have kept their eyes closed to these things, because while they pride themselves on the glory of this present life, they have not seen the loftiness of the Lord's humility. For humility discloses to us the light of understanding, pride conceals it. For it is a kind of secret blessing of a holy life: and the mind attains to it the less, the more it is puffed up: because it is driven away from it, the more madly it is inspired. It follows,  
Ver. 28. *That they might cause the cry of the needy to come to Him, and that He might hear the voice of the poor*.

[xiii]

31. For when these men are proud, they who are oppressed by their pride, cry aloud to God. Or certainly, it is said that they have caused the cry of the poor to come to God, because, on their fall, the poor, that is, the humble in spirit, are appointed in their room. And because this has taken place on their fall, they are said to have done it themselves: by the very same mode of expression with which we say that a camp fights, because men fight out of it. Or certainly, because every thing which has been stated above, can also be referred to the rulers of the Church, who give up the office of preaching, and are involved in worldly business, on occasion of exercising authority, it is fitly subjoined, *That they might cause the cry of the needy to come to Him, and that He might hear the voice of the poor*. For certainly while, from being engaged in worldly cares, they abandon the duty of preaching, they compel the flock which is under them to burst out into clamorous complaint. So that each of those under them complains, as if justly, of the conduct of the pretended

pastor, why doth he hold the place of a teacher, who doth not exercise the office? Although, by ‘the pride of mighty men,’ the haughtiness of the Jews, and by ‘the cry of the poor,’ the longings of the Gentiles, are perhaps more appropriately typified. Just as by the rich man feasting sumptuously, [Luke 16, 19-31] as the Truth Itself witnesses, the Jewish people is designated, which makes use of the fulness of the Law, not for the needful purpose of salvation, but for the pomp of pride, and which does not refresh itself moderately with the teaching of the commandments, but makes a boastful display of them. And by the wounded Lazarus, (which is by interpretation, ‘Assisted,’) is set forth the condition of the Gentile people, whom the Divine assistance exalts the more, the less it relies on the resources of its own strength. And he is described as poor and full of wounds, because the Gentile world has, with humble heart, laid open the confession of its sins. For as in a wound the venom is drawn towards the skin from within, so, in like manner, while secrets are disclosed by the confession of sin, evil humours, as it were, break forth from the inmost parts of the body. When they sin then, the cry of the poor is heard; because, while the Jews are proud against God, the prayers of the Gentiles are come up to God. Whence also, from his awe at those boundless and unfathomable judgments, he does not care to discuss them with reasoning, but to venerate them with admiration, and says,

*Ver. 29. For when He giveth peace, who is there to condemn? since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him?*

[xiv]

32. Let no one then discuss, why the Gentile world lay so long in unbelief, while the Jewish people was yet standing, and why the sin of unbelief overthrew the Jewish people, as the Gentile world rose to belief. [Rom. 11, 20] Let no one discuss, why one is drawn on, as of a free gift, and the other repelled according to its deserts. For if thou art surprised at the adoption of the Gentiles, *When He giveth peace, who is there to condemn?* If thou art startled at the loss of the Jews, *Since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him?* So the counsel of supreme and hidden power becomes the satisfaction of evident reason. Whence also the Lord in the Gospel says, when speaking on the subject of this matter, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father.* [Matt. 11, 25] And He immediately adds, as a kind of reason for this concealment and revealing, *For so it hath seemed good before Thee.* [Matt. 11, 26] In which words, in truth, we learn a pattern of humility, that we may not rashly presume to discuss the Divine counsels concerning the call of the one and the rejection of the others. For after He had mentioned both points, He did not at once give a reason, but said that it was thus well pleasing to God; pointing out, namely, this very point, that that cannot be unjust, which has seemed good to the Just One. Whence also He says, when paying the labourers in the vineyard, on equalling in compensation those who were unequal in work, and when he who had toiled longest asked for greater pay, *Didst thou not agree with Me for a penny? I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own?* [Matt. 20, 13-15] In all things then which are outwardly disposed by Him, the righteousness of His secret will is an evident cause of reason. Let it be said therefore. *For when He giveth peace, who is there to condemn? since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him?* And because God judges the least, in the same way as the greatest, things, and the doings of individuals, as those of all men, it is fitly subjoined, *Both over a nation, and over all men.*

[xv]

33. As if we were plainly directed to observe, that this judgment which is spoken of over a single nation, is also exercised over all men, by an invisible examination; so that one man is secretly elected, and another rejected, but no one unjustly. This then which we see happening in the greatest cases, let us also anxiously fear in ourselves separately. For the Divine judgments are displayed in the same manner over a single soul as over a single city; and again in the same way over a single city, as over a single nation: and over a single nation, as over the whole multitude of the human race. Because the Lord is as attentive to particular persons, as though unconcerned with the world at large; and again so directs His attention to all at once, as though unconcerned with individuals. For He Who fills all things with His dispensation, rules by filling them, and when ordering one single thing, is still present in all, and again, when ordering the world at large, is present with each individual; in fact, works all things without moving, by the power of His own nature. What marvel, then, that He, when intent on any thing, is not confined to it, Who works still at rest? Let it be said then that He exercises this searching judgment both over a nation, and over all men. Because he has passed then from species to genus, he now turns himself from genus to species, and shews what Judaea properly deserves, saying,

Ver. 30. *Who maketh a man that is a hypocrite to reign for the sins of the people.*

[xvi]

34. For Judaea was unwilling that the true King should reign over it, and therefore obtained a hypocrite, as its merits demanded. As the Truth Itself says in the Gospel, *I have come in My Fathers name, and ye received Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.* [John 5, 43] And as Paul says, *Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, therefore God shall send them the operation of error, that they should believe a lie.* [2 Thess. 2, 10. 11.] In that, then, which is said, *Who maketh a man that is a hypocrite to reign for the sins of the people*, may be designated Antichrist, the very chief of all hypocrites. For that seducer then pretends to sanctity, that he may draw men away to iniquity. But he is permitted to reign for the sins of the people, because, in truth, they are preordained to be under his rule, who are foreseen before all ages to be worthy of being his subjects, who by their subsequent sins, claim to be placed under him by antecedent judgments. That Antichrist then reigns over the ungodly arises not from the injustice of the Judge, but from the sin of the sufferer. Although most of them have not beheld his sovereign power, and yet are enslaved to it, by the condition in which their sins have placed them. Because they, doubtless, reverence even him by their evil lives, whom they do not see tyrannizing over them. Are not they his very members, who seek by a shew of affected sanctity to seem what they are not? For he in a special manner assumes a false guise, who though a lost man, and an evil spirit, falsely announces himself to be God. [2 Thess. 2, 4] But they unquestionably now come forth from his body, who conceal their iniquities under the cloak of sacred honour, in order to seek to seem to be that in profession, which they refuse to be in their doings. For since it is written, that *whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*, [John 8, 34] the more freely they now commit the sins which they desire, the more strictly are they bound down to his service. But let no one who suffers such a ruler, blame him whom he suffers: because his being subject to the power of a wicked ruler was doubtless of his own desert. Let him therefore rather blame the fault of his own evil doings, than the injustice of his ruler. For it is written, *I will give thee kings in Mine anger.* [Hos. 13, 11] Why then do we scorn their being set over us, whose authority over us we endure from the anger of the Lord? If then we receive rulers, according to our deserts, from the wrath of

God, we infer from their conduct, what to think in our estimate of ourselves. Although even the Elect are frequently placed under the reprobate. Whence also David for a long time endured Saul. But it is proved by the subsequent sin of adultery, that he then deserved to be thus heavily oppressed by the cruelty of him who was set over him. [2 Sam. 12, 11]

35. The characters, then, of rulers are so assigned according to the deserts of their subjects, that frequently they who seem to be good are soon changed by the acceptance of power. As holy Scripture observed of the same Saul that he changed his heart with his dignity. Whence it is written, *When thou wast little in thine own eyes, I made thee the head among the tribes of Israel.* [1 Sam. 15, 17] The conduct of rulers is so ordered with reference to the characters of their subjects, that frequently the conduct of even a truly good shepherd becomes sinful, in consequence of the wickedness of his flock. For that Prophet David, who had been praised by the witness of God Himself, who had been made acquainted with heavenly mysteries, being puffed up by the swelling of sudden pride, sinned in numbering the people. And yet, though David sinned, the people endured the punishment. [2 Sam. 24, 1-17] Why was this? Because in truth the hearts of rulers are disposed according to the deserts of their people. But the righteous Judge reproveth the fault of the sinner, by the punishment of those very persons, on whose account he sinned. But because he was not exempt from guilt, as displaying pride of his own free will, he himself endured also the punishment of his sin. For that furious wrath which smote the people in their bodies, prostrated the ruler of the people by the pain of his inmost heart. But it is certain that the deserts of rulers and people are so mutually connected, that frequently the conduct of the people is made worse from the fault of their pastors, and the conduct of pastors is changed according to the deserts of their people.

36. But because rulers have their own Judge, subjects must be very careful not to judge rashly the conduct of their rulers. For the Lord Himself did not without a reason scatter the money of the changers, and overthrow the seats of them that were selling doves, [Matt. 21, 12] signifying doubtless that He judges the conduct of people by their rulers, but that He examines into the doings of rulers in His own person. And yet even those sins of subjects, which are put off from being judged, or which cannot be judged by rulers, are doubtless reserved for His judgment. Therefore whilst all is done in good faith, it is a worthy part of virtue, if whatever is in a superior is tolerated. Yet it ought to be humbly suggested whether any thing which displeases can be amended. But great care must be taken that an inordinate maintenance of justice does not degenerate into pride: lest humility, the mistress of what is right, should be lost, while what is right itself is loved without due caution; lest a man should slight him as his superior, whom he may perhaps happen to blame in some part of his conduct. But the mind of subjects is trained to guard its humility against this swelling pride, if its own weakness is constantly watched. For we neglect to examine honestly our own strength, and because we believe ourselves stronger than we really are, we consequently judge those severely who are set over us. For the more we neglect to know ourselves, the more clearly do we see those whom we endeavour to blame. These are the several evils which are often committed by subjects against their rulers, and by rulers against their subjects. Because both rulers consider all their subjects to be less wise than themselves, and subjects, again, judge the conduct of their rulers, and think that they could do better, if they perchance possessed the power. Since it is frequently the case that rulers see less judiciously what is to be done, because the mist of pride obscures their sight, and that a subject, when raised to high power, sometimes does the very same thing, which he used to complain of when a subject; and that, having committed the very faults which he has condemned, he is ashamed at all events that he condemned them. As rulers then must take care that

their higher position does not puff up their minds, with a notion of their singular wisdom, so must subjects be careful not to be offended at the conduct of their rulers.

37. But even if the conduct of rulers is justly blamed, yet it is the duty of subjects to pay them respect, even when they displease them. But thou must carefully observe not to be anxious to imitate a person whom it is necessary for thee to reverence, and not to scorn to reverence him whom thou despisest to imitate. For the narrow path of rectitude and humility must be so maintained, that, though offended with the reprehensible conduct of their rulers, the mind of subjects may not depart from observing respect for their office. Which is well set forth in Noah when drunk, the nakedness of whose secret parts his sons came and covered with averted looks. For we are said to be averse from that which we reprobate. What is meant then by his sons' coming with averted looks, and covering the shame of their father with a cloak thrown over their backs, except that good subjects, while offended with the misdeeds of their rulers, nevertheless conceal them from others? They bring a covering with averted looks, because judging the deeds, and reverencing the office, they do not wish to behold the sin which they conceal.

38. But there are some, who if they have made ever so small a beginning in spiritual conversation, on observing that their rulers fix their thoughts only on worldly and temporal objects, begin to blame the disposition of supreme Providence as if they were improperly appointed to rule, since they set an example of worldly conversation. But these persons, from not being careful to keep themselves from censure of their rulers, (as their fault justly demands,) proceed to blame even the Creator. For His dispensation is understood to be more right by the humble, for the very same reason that it is not judged to be right by the proud. For because the power of office cannot be exercised without our engaging in worldly cares, therefore Almighty God, in His marvellous dispensation of mercy, frequently imposes the burden of rule on hard and laborious hearts; in order that the tender minds of spiritual men may be released from worldly cares: in order that the one may be more safely concealed from the bustle of the world, the more willingly the others employ themselves in worldly anxieties. For hard are the ways of worldly slavery, in the discharge of a burden that has been undertaken even for the good of others.

39. And frequently, as has been said, as the Merciful God tenderly loves His own, so does He anxiously conceal them from outward employments. For often the father of a family appoints his servants to that work, from which he releases his delicate ['subtiles.'] sons; and his sons are comely and free from annoyance, from the fact that the servants are defiled with dust. And how properly this is ordered in the Church by Divine appointment is signified by the very construction of the tabernacle. For Moses is commanded by the voice of God to weave curtains of fine linen, and scarlet, and blue, for the covering of the Holy of Holies within. And he was ordered to spread, for the covering of the tabernacle, curtains of goats' hair, and skins, to sustain the rain, and wind, and dust. What then do we understand by the skins and goats' hair, with which the tabernacle is covered, but the gross minds of men, which are sometimes, hard though they be, placed on high in the Church by the secret judgment of God? And because they are not afraid of being employed in worldly concerns, they must needs bear the winds and storms of temptation which arise from the opposition of this world. But what is signified by the blue, scarlet, and fine linen, but the life of holy men, delicate, but brilliant? And while it is carefully concealed in the tabernacle under goats' hair and skins, its beauty is preserved entire. For in order that the fine linen may shine, the scarlet glitter, and the blue be resplendent with azure brilliance, the skins and the goats' hair endure the



rains, the winds, and the dust from above. They then who advance in great excellence within the bosom of holy Church, ought not to despise the doings of their rulers, when they see that they are engaged in the business of the world. For that they penetrate in safety into secret mysteries, is owing to the help of those who buffet with the storms of this world from without. For how would the fine linen retain the grace of its brightness, if the rain were to touch it? Or what splendour and brightness would the scarlet or blue display, should the dust light on, and defile them? Let the strong texture of the goats' hair, then, be placed above, to resist dust; the brightness of the blue, fitted for ornament, be placed beneath. Let those who are engaged in spiritual pursuits alone, adorn the Church. Let those guard her, who are not wearied even with the labours of the world. But let not him who now gleams with spiritual brightness within Holy Church, murmur against his superior, who is employed in worldly business. For if thou glitterest securely within, like scarlet, why dost thou blame the goats' hair with which thou art protected?

40. But some persons enquire, why it is that [perhaps 'complain because.'], while rulers are engrossed in worldly concerns, solely for the benefit of those under them, many in the Church are made worse by their example. For who can deny that this is very true, when he sees worldly concerns more anxiously attended to by pastors, than heavenly objects? But this is not unjust, if, as we said before, the circumstances of rulers are ordered in accordance with the deserts of those under them. For the sins, which they commit secretly and wilfully, demand a bad example to be set them by their pastors: in order that by a righteous judgment the haughty man, who departs from the way of God, may stumble, through the guidance of his pastor, in the way in which he is walking. Whence it is said by the Prophet also, with the zeal of one who is announcing, not with the wish of one who is cursing, *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not, and ever bow Thou down their back.* [Ps. 69, 23] As if he were to say, Let those who are appointed to mark out, as it were, the courses of human actions, not enjoy the light of truth, in order that their subjects, who follow them, may be bent down by the burden of their sins, and lose entirely their state of uprightness. And this we know was unquestionably the case in Judaea, when, at the coming of our Redeemer, the multitude of the Pharisees and Priests closed the eyes of their mind against the True Light, and the people, walking after the example of its rulers, wandered in the darkness of unbelief.

41. But it can be reasonably asked, How it is said in this place that the Lord makes the hypocrite to reign, when by the Prophet He complains especially of this thing, saying, *They have reigned, but not of Me: they have become princes, and I know them not?* [Hos. 8, 4] For, who that thinks rightly, can say that the Lord does that of which He knows nothing? But, because God's knowledge is approval, His ignorance is disapproval. Whence He says to some whom He rejects, *I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [Luke 13, 27] And sometimes God's doing a thing, is His allowing in His anger that which He forbids to be done. Hence He asserted that He hardened the heart of the king of Egypt, because He, in truth, allowed it to be hardened. In a marvellous manner then does God make hypocrites to reign, and knows them not. He makes them, by suffering; He knows them not, by rejecting them. Whence it is necessary, with reference to every thing, which is desired in this life, that the Inner [i.e. the Divine] Will should be first enquired into. And when the ear of the heart is anxious to catch Its sound, let it know that It speaks, not in words, but in deeds. When then a post of authority is offered, it is necessary for a man first to question with himself, whether his conduct is suited to the place, whether his doings are at variance with the distinction it confers; lest, perchance, the just Ruler of all should, afterwards, not regard his prayers in tribulation, because He knows not his very entering on that high office, which is the

source of all his tribulation.

## BOOK XXVI.

The holy Doctor expounds the seven last verses of the thirty-fourth chapter, the whole of the thirty-fifth, with the first twenty-one verses of the thirty-sixth chapter; and launches out, at very great length, into both allegorical and moral meanings.

[i]

1. Haughty men are wont to display this peculiarity in what they say, that, when they know that they have said any thing in a praiseworthy manner, they then enquire of their hearers, whether they have by chance said any thing out of the way. And this they do, not because they doubt of what they say, but because, namely, they seek for approval, in the judgment of their hearers. For the object of their enquiry will be easily discovered, if when any one praises their good qualities, he also blames their faults. For it is certain, that as they are puffed up by praises, so are they inflamed by reproofs; and when they see that they are blamed, even justly, by any one, they seek at once in their faults for materials of self-defence. How then do they humbly doubt of their own good qualities, who even perversely endeavour to defend their bad ones? For he is really humble in his good doings, who does not defend himself in his evil ones. For he who is reproved for his faults, and fires up against the words of his reprover, when he hesitates, as if humbly, in speaking of his good qualities, seeks, by his words of humility, for compliments, and not for instruction. Eliu therefore, as representing the conduct of the haughty, after having stated many spiritual and sublime sentiments, behold, assumes in words an appearance of humility, and under a kind of show of being his disciple, addresses blessed Job with a fair proposal, saying, Ver. 31, 32. *Because I have spoken to God, I will not hinder thee also. If I have sinned, teach thou me; if I have spoken iniquity, I will add no more.*

[ii]

2. As it is frequently the case, that even wicked men say what is right, Eliu called to mind that he had made a little before many noble statements, and therefore confidently enquired of him if perchance he had erred. For he would not have thus asked, if he had believed that he had erred. For, as I said, it is a craft peculiar to the boastful to be eager to enquire about their erring, when they know that they have not erred. And, again, they disdain to make this enquiry, and to be convicted of error, whenever they plainly foresee that they have done wrong. For they seek not to be, but to appear, humble, and they assume an appearance of humility, by then making the enquiry, when they are praised the more from the very enquiry itself. But, because it is very difficult for the pride, which reigns in the heart, not to break out in the voice, if the hearers of these haughty men wait for a while, and consider their sayings in silence, the words, which follow, too soon make manifest their hearts. For they cannot continue long in that guise of humility, which they assume in appearance only. For to haughty minds humility is lofty; and when they endeavour to climb up to its beauty they stumble, as if from abrupt and rugged paths, with the weary steps of their mind. For that which they wish to appear is foreign to them: and they cannot therefore long cling close to its resemblance. They count it a heavy burden, when they bear it only in appearance, and they suffer a

kind of constraint in their heart, till they cast it aside. Because in truth they are slaves to the habit of pride, which fatally rules over them, and are compelled by its authority to shew what they are, so that they cannot appear, for any time, that which they are not. Whence Eliu also, after he requested to be informed of his error, after he promised that he would no longer speak iniquity, suddenly broke out, from an appearance of humility, into words of proud arguing. For he added, saying, Ver. 33. *Doth God require it of thee, because it hath displeased thee?*

[iii]

3. As though he were saying, I am about to give reasons, in the sight of God, why my iniquity is now blamed by thee, though it is plain that it is not required of thee in judgment. When good men are unrighteously assailed by the world, they appeal to the judgment of heaven. Whence also it is said by the same blessed Job, *Behold, my witness is in heaven, and He Who knoweth me is on high.* [Job 16, 19] And because they especially desire to please Him, they seek for the witness of Him only. Wicked men also, because they forsake the life of the just, but sometimes imitate their words, when reproved for their misdeeds adopt that, as a ground of defence, which the righteous urge, as an evidence of their purity. Whence it has become already a custom with them, when any one blames them for their doings, to seek the judgment of God rather than of men. For, even when they know that they will be condemned by God, they are not afraid of being judged by Him, and are ashamed of being judged by men. They prefer, therefore, the greater, which they fear not, in order to be able to avoid the less, of which they are ashamed. For it is written, *Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* [Rom. 14, 12] Because then the condemnation of every one is then manifest, the ungodly now gather from it, that, even the wicked conduct of every one is out of danger, that the righteous should now refute and expose that conduct, with which, it is plain, he has no concern in the judgment. But the consciences of the holy consider on the other hand, that a great reward is conferred on them, when they are now convicted of some of their unlawful deeds. For, they set it before the eyes of their heart, that the strict judgment of God will then be more surely mitigated towards them, the more severely it is now anticipated by the reproofs of man. And they consider as a gain the temporal wrath upon them, by which they know well that they can escape the wrath eternal. Let Eliu, therefore, (as representing all haughty men, and choosing rather to be smitten with eternal severity, than to be reproved in this life,) say, *Doth God require it of thee, because it hath displeased thee?* But since those who speak first in a dispute are usually more to blame than those who reply, he subjoins, *For thou didst begin to speak, not I.*

[iv]

4. He believed himself to be so far innocent, in as much as he burst forth only on being struck, being doubtless ignorant that innocence is not defended on the score of time, but on that of reason. For what support does it give to his defence, that, though he did not revile him when silent, when he began properly, he replied to him revilingly? But after he displays himself in words of pride, lo, he again conceals himself under the pretext of a demand, and proceeds to say, *But if thou knowest any thing better, say on.*

Although, while he does not say, because thou knowest better, but, *If thou knowest any thing better, say on*, it was itself too proud of him, that he had doubted of the knowledge of his superior. But he

signified that he had exhibited his humility, in having given blessed Job an opportunity of speaking. But, as was before stated, that every thing in the doings of the proud, which is concealed by a covering of words, is brought to light, when the boastful purpose again breaks forth, Eliu speedily made known, with what purpose he required blessed Job to speak. For it follows, Ver. 34, 35. *Let men of understanding speak to me, and let a wise man hear me. But Job hath spoken foolishly, and his words sound not of discipline.*

[v]

5. Lo, how he lays open that, which he was cherishing within, when, as if humbly, he allows blessed Job to speak; saying, *Let men of understanding speak to me.* For if blessed Job were to presume to speak, he would have disdained him, as though he could not understand his words. And, because he considered that blessed Job was unworthy not only to speak with, but even to hear, him, he immediately added, *Let a wise man hear me.* As if he were to say, This man is unfairly permitted to speak, who is not worthy even to hear the words of wise men. And he presently shews plainly, how contemptibly he thinks of him, saying, *But Job hath spoken foolishly, and his words sound not of discipline.* He believed that blessed Job had spoken without discipline, because he said, that he had been just in his doings. Eliu would perhaps be speaking truly, if the Author of discipline had not Himself agreed with what blessed Job had said of himself. For Job asserted that he had been scourged undeservedly, whom God declared also to have been smitten without reason. What haughtiness then did the voice of the sufferer utter, which did not at all differ from the sentence of the Smiter? Those persons are inconsiderately humble, who, whilst they avoid pride, ensnare themselves in falsehood. Nay rather, they shew pride in their falsehood; because they set themselves up against the truth, which they abandon. For he, who states of himself good qualities, which are true, when necessity compels, the more closely is united to humility, the more he adheres also to truth. Was not Paul humble, when from zeal for the truth against false Apostles, he related to his disciples so many bold deeds concerning himself? For he would doubtless be an enemy of truth, if, by concealing his own good qualities, he had allowed the preachers of errors to gain strength.

But because proud men, in that they haughtily examine the sayings of the righteous, consider rather the surface of the words, than the order of the matters, Eliu believed that the sentiments of blessed Job had not sounded of discipline. But since the asperity of haughty men extends sometimes as far as to the severity of cursing, he immediately, as if speaking to God, subjoins against blessed Job, Ver. 36. *My Father, let Job be tried even to the end.*

[vi]

6. Lo! how he lifts up even in words of cursing, that which he had before conceived of the swellings of arrogance. But he would perhaps wish for the force of a merciful probation, if he had believed that he had stood firm in probation. In order then that the malice of his cruelty may openly appear, he prays, that he may still be tried by scourges, who he complains had already fallen during his scourges. He first stated what he thought, in order that what he wished might be more plainly understood. He requires him to be still smitten, whom he accuses of having sinned already under the hand of the Smiter. These are wishes peculiar to the haughty, to pray that the lives of those who are suffering may be more severely examined, because the more just they are in their own eyes, the

more hardened are they in others' sufferings. For they know not how to take to them the feeling of the other's infirmity, and to feel pity for their neighbour's weakness, as they do for their own. For since they think highly of themselves, they do not at all condescend to the humble. Eliu believed that blessed Job had been smitten for his sin, and therefore believed that no bowels of compassion were to be shewn to him, even in the midst of so many sorrows. But when men, who are truly holy, behold any one smitten, even for his faults, though they reprove some of his inordinate doings, yet they sympathize with some of his sufferings; and they are so skilled in keeping down swellings, as yet to know how to relieve wounds, in order that when their hardnesses are softened, their infirmities may be strengthened. But because, on the other hand, haughty men have no bowels of love, they not only do not sympathize with the righteous when suffering, but moreover afflict them, under pretence of proper reproof, and they either exaggerate trifling faults, if there are any in them, or pervert by wrong construction those points which are really good.

7. Although even holy teachers are frequently wont to exaggerate the vices of offenders, and from some outward signs to dive into secret faults, in order from the smallest defects to discover greater. Whence it is said to Ezekiel, *Son of man, dig in the wall*. Where he presently subjoined, *And when I had digged in the wall, there appeared a door; and He said unto me, Go in, and see the most wicked abominations that they do here. And I went in and saw, and behold every likeness of creeping things, and the abominations of animals, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were painted on the wall*. [Ez. 8, 8-10] For by Ezekiel is represented the person of rulers; by the wall the hardness of subjects. And what is the digging into the wall, except laying bare hardness of heart by sharp reproofs? For when he had dug into it, there appeared a door; because when hardness of heart is opened by sharp reproofs, a kind of door appears, through which all the secret thoughts of the person, who is reproved, can be seen. Whence it also well follows in that place, *And He said to me, Go in, and see the most wicked abominations which they do here*. A person enters as it were to behold abominations, who on examining certain signs which appear outwardly, so penetrates the hearts of those under him, that all their unlawful thoughts are made plain to him. Whence he added, *And I went in and saw; and behold every likeness of creeping things, and the abomination of animals*. By reptiles are especially understood worldly thoughts: but by animals, those which rise a little above the earth, but still seek for the rewards of an earthly recompense. For reptiles cling to the earth with the whole of their body, but though animals are in their belly suspended from the earth, yet they are by the appetite of gluttony ever bending to the earth. Reptiles therefore are within the wall, when thoughts which are never elevated from worldly desires, are revolved in the mind. Animals also are within the wall, when if any just and becoming thoughts are conceived, they subserve the pursuit of worldly gains and honours, and of themselves indeed they are already suspended, as it were, from the earth, but by their ambition, they still bring themselves down to the basest objects, as by gluttonous desire. Whence it is also well subjoined, *And all the idols of the house of Israel were painted on the wall*. For it is written, *And covetousness which is idolatry*. [Col. 3, 5] After the animals, therefore, the idols are properly described, because, though they arise themselves, as it were, from the earth by becoming conduct, yet they bring themselves down to the earth again by dishonourable ambition. But it is well said, *Were painted*; because while the appearances of outward objects are drawn inward, whatever is thought in imagination is painted, as it were, on the heart.

8. We must therefore observe, that first a hole, and afterwards a door, is seen in the wall: and that then at last the secret abomination is laid open: because, doubtless, the signs of every sin are first

observed without, next the door of detected iniquity is laid open; and then at last all the evil is disclosed, which is lurking within. Therefore even holy teachers are wont to examine severely into minute points, in order to arrive at greater hidden faults, from outer faults at the very surface. They utter words of sharp reproof, in order to root out the thorns of deadly thought, and when they act thus, they rage with the love of charity, and are not puffed up with the swelling of pride. For they are ready to die for those, whom they afflict as if raging even to the death. In their thoughts they retain this affection, while they assume persecution in appearance. They insinuate sound truths in their preaching, they announce and warn against evils, and do not as Eliu pray for, and desire them. They are sometimes so prompt in reproof against those committed to their care, as though they had nothing of calmness: but are so tranquil in affection, as though no warmth could kindle them. For they greatly fear, that if they should cease to reprove the wicked, they would be punished themselves for their damnation. And when warmed into words of reproof, they unwillingly have recourse to them, but yet prepare them, as a defence for themselves, before their strict Judge.

9. Whence it is said again also to the same Ezekiel, *Son of man, take thee a brick, and thou shalt place it before thee, and thou shalt describe on it the city Jerusalem, and thou shalt build munitions, and heap up a mound, and set a camp against it, and place battering rams around it. And take thou an iron pan, and thou shalt place it as an iron wall between thee and the city.* [Ezek. 4, 1-3] For whom does Ezekiel represent, but rulers? And to him it is said, *Take thee a brick, and thou shalt place it before thee, and thou shalt describe on it the city Jerusalem.* For holy teachers take to themselves a brick, when they lay hold of the earthly heart of hearers, in order to instruct it. And they place this brick before them, because they guard it with the entire attention of their anxiety. And they are ordered also to describe the city Jerusalem thereon, because they earnestly endeavour in their preaching to shew to earthly hearts, how great is the vision of heavenly peace. And it is well said to him also, *And thou shalt set in array the siege against it, and thou shalt build munitions.* For holy teachers set the siege in array against the brick, on which the city Jerusalem is described, when they shew to an earthly mind, now seeking after its heavenly country, what an opposition of sins assails it in the season of this life. For when it is pointed out, how each separate sin lays ambush against the mind, the siege is set, as it were, against Jerusalem by the voice of the preacher. But because they suggest not only how sins lay wait and assault the mind, but also how virtues, when guarded, strengthen it, it is rightly subjoined, *And thou shalt build munitions.* For a holy preacher builds munitions, when he ceases not to teach what virtues oppose what vices. And because the contests of temptation frequently become stronger as virtues increase, it is still rightly added, *And thou shalt heap up a mound, and set a camp against it, and place battering rams around it.* For every preacher raises up a mound, when he points out the mass of increasing temptation. And he raises a camp against Jerusalem, when he points out to the right disposition of his hearers the circumventions of the crafty enemy, as snares which are beyond their understanding. And he places battering rams around, when he makes known the stings of temptations which surround us on every side in this life, and pierce through the wall of virtues.

10. Where it is well added, *And take thee an iron pan, and thou shalt place it as an iron wall between thee and the city.* For, by the pan is set forth parching, and by the iron, strength. But what so parches and tortures the mind of a ruler and teacher as zeal for the Lord? Whence also Paul was burned by the parching of this pan, when saying, *Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* [2 Cor. 11, 29] And because whoever is kindled with a zeal for God against sinners, is constantly protected by a strong guard within, in order that he may not be condemned for

neglecting his charge of preaching and ruling, it is well said, *Thou shalt place it as an iron wall between thee and the city*. For the iron pan is placed as an iron wall between the Prophet and the city, because when teachers now display a resolute zeal, they hold afterwards the same zeal, as a strong bulwark, between themselves and their hearers; that they may not then be given up to punishment, if they have been now negligent in reproof. The same Prophet heard that he was to hold this pan between himself and his hearers, when the voice of God addressed him before, saying, *If thou hast announced to the wicked, and he have turned not from his wickedness, and from his evil way, he himself shall die in his wickedness, but thou hast delivered thy soul*. [Ez. 3, 19] Paul had placed this pan, as a wall between himself and his disciples, when saying, *I am pure from the blood of all of you: for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God*. It is, therefore, necessary that teachers should seek to be burned up now with ardent zeal, that they may not be compelled to suffer torments in the fire of hell for the sloth of negligence.

11. But we owe one duty to those who are unrighteous and subject to us, and another to those who are righteous and not subject to us. For fear should enkindle us to reprove those, and to take good care of the accounts we have to render. But the thought of equity should incline us to reverence these. But haughty men, because they know not this kind of discretion, exhibit the same conduct to those who are righteous, and not subject to them, as they see good preachers display towards those who are unrighteous, and subject to them. And when they unjustly launch out into warmth of invective, they venture even on words of malediction. For, because they do not love their neighbours as themselves, they cease not to wish for their neighbours that, which they are afraid of befalling themselves. Whence Eliu, venting his secret hatred in open malediction, exclaims, *O my Father, let Job be tried even to the end, cease not from the man of iniquity*. He calls him a man of iniquity, whom God, by a testimony from on high, pronounces righteous above all men. And because many things are still subjoined, from this want of discrimination, I think that they must be run through briefly. For sayings, which are wanting in weight, do not require any careful exposition. It follows,

Ver. 37. *Who hath added blasphemy upon his sins*.

[vii]

12. He accuses him of having deserved scourges for his sins, and of having sinned after the scourges. But the Lord judges far otherwise, Who both asserts that he was scourged without reason, and conferred on him double goods, after his scourges. Blessed Job, then, is proved to have spoken without sin, whom rewards follow after his speech. Because, therefore, Eliu, when speaking in the Lord's defence, thinks of blessed Job differently from the Lord, he is at variance with the truth, while multiplying, as it were, his words in behalf of the truth. It follows,

*Let him be bound meanwhile amongst us, and then let him provoke God to judgment with his words*.

[viii]

13. As though he were saying, Let him know from our assertion, that he is by no means able to bear the examination of God. And, because haughty men strive to say not only foolish, but also many, things, the verse which follows is frequently well introduced respecting him.

Chap. xxxv. Ver. 1. *Eliu therefore spake these words again*.

[ix]

14. Every one, who says many things, is anxious to be always beginning, in his speech, in order, by this very beginning, to keep his hearers in suspense, so that they may be the more attentively silent, the more they expect, as it were, to hear some new thing. But Eliu, finishing one subject, begins another without delay, in order that his loquacity may be continued without limit, by beginnings being constantly joined on. It follows,

Ver. 2. *Doth thy thought seem right to thee, that thou saidst, I am more righteous than God.*

[x]

15. Every one observes, who reads the text of the history, that blessed Job did not say that he was more righteous than God. But he says, *Let Him put forth equity against me, and my judgment shall come to victory.* [Job 23, 7. Vulg.] Examining namely his life, and not knowing the reasons of his smiting, as has been often observed, he believed that he was scourged for the sake of washing away his sins, and not of increasing his merits. And he was therefore confident, that his judgment would come to victory, because he found in himself no fault, for which he deserved to be smitten. Which thing indeed the Lord also said of him to the devil; *Thou hast moved Me against him, to afflict him without cause.* [Job 2, 3] What had he sinned then, by speaking thus, who, unknowingly, agreed, in these words, with the divine and secret sentence upon himself? Or what harm is there, if, in the judgment of men, our words differ, on the surface, from the exactness of truth, when, in that on which they turn in the heart, they are closely joined to, and agree with, it. [*‘cordis cardine’*] The ears of men consider our words to be such as they sound outwardly, but the divine judgments hear them as they are uttered from our inmost heart. Among men, our heart is judged of from our words, but with God, our words are judged of from our heart. Whilst blessed Job, then said without, that, which God said within, he justly uttered every thing which he said, inasmuch as he, piously, did not differ from the Inner sentence. Although in that which he said, filled by the spirit of Prophecy, *Let Him put forth Equity against me, and my judgment shall come to victory*, he might be looking for the presence of our Redeemer. For He, Who is the Virtue and the Wisdom of the Father, may be, not improperly, considered as His Equity. Whence it is written, *Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification.* [1 Cor. 1, 30] And because, namely, God has placed this Equity against sinners who fly from Him, by exhibiting It Incarnate, He recalled them at once from their iniquity; and, in that judgment in which it found the Equity of God opposing its ways, mankind has overcome its ancient opponent. It follows,

Ver. 3. *For thou saidst, that which is right doth not please thee, or what will it profit thee, if I shall have sinned.*

[xi]

16. If the whole course of the book is attended to, blessed Job is proved to have said none of these things. But haughty men, as we have also said before, are wont to have this peculiarity, that while they go on in violent invective, they also speak falsely in their inveighing, and that, when they cannot justly blame the things which exist, they reprehend, in their falsehood, those which do not exist. It follows,

Ver. 4. *I will therefore answer thy words, and thy friends with thee.*



In his former saying, he mentioned culpable words, as if those of blessed Job, and derived from them matter for his remarks. But, in the words which follow, he examines, with great acuteness, that, which he craftily invented as matter to speak upon. And the sentiments which follow are powerful, but are not applicable to the character of blessed Job; and the shafts of this reproof strike him the less, the more unjustly they are launched against him. It follows,

Ver. 5—7. *Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou. If thou hast sinned, what wilt thou hurt Him? If thine iniquities have been multiplied, what wilt thou do against Him? If, moreover, thou hast acted justly, what wilt thou give Him, or what will He receive of thy hand?*

[xii]

17. Although these words ought not to have been said to blessed Job, who knew greater truths, yet the things, which are said, are true, namely, that neither do our sins hurt God, nor our good deeds assist Him. Whence he followed, and added, (ver. 8.) *Thine iniquity will hurt a man that is like thee, and thy righteousness will profit the son of man.* But amongst these things we must carefully notice that which he says, *Look into the heavens, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou.* For from speaking in this way he doubtless signifies, that Job should consider, how much less he could either benefit, or injure, God by his conduct, since he could neither benefit, nor injure, the loftiness of the heaven, or of the sky. For although we can understand by the heaven, or the sky, the heavenly powers, who are ever steadily gazing on the sight of the Godhead, (in order that, when we behold that the angelic spirits are still far distant from us, we may acknowledge how far we are distant below, from the Creator and Lord of spirits Himself,) yet nothing prevents our understanding by them in this place the material substance of heaven and sky. For if we look attentively at outward things, we are recalled by their very means to inward things. For the wonderful works of the visible creation, are the footsteps of our Creator. For we cannot as yet behold Him Himself; but we are yet tending to a sight of Him, if we admire Him in these things which He has made. We call, therefore, the creation His footsteps, because we journey onwards towards Him by-following up those things which proceed from Him. Whence Paul says, *The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead.* [Rom. 1, 20] Whence also it is written in the Book of Wisdom, *For by the greatness and beauty of the creatures the Maker of them can be intelligently seen.* [Wisd. 13, 5] For to our mind, which is through sin scattered abroad, God is not as yet made known within, as He really is. But while He sets before us from without the beauty of His creation, He gives us, as it were, certain hints, and shews what to follow within. He leads us on wonderfully by these same outward forms to inward things, He intimates with boundless admiration what He is, by shewing us these marvels without, which are not Himself. For hence it is written of Wisdom, *She sheweth herself cheerfully unto them in the ways, and meeteth them in all forethought.* [Wisd. 6, 16]

18. For the works of the creation are, when considered, ways to the Creator. For when we see these things, which are made, we admire the power of their Maker. In these ways we are met by Wisdom, with all forethought, because the power of our Maker is set before us, to be enquired into, in every thing, which appears to have been wonderfully wrought. And wherever the soul turns itself, if it looks attentively, it finds God in the very same objects, through which it forsook Him; and again acknowledges His power, from a consideration of those objects, for the love of which it abandoned

Him. And it is recalled, when converted, by those things, by which, when perverted, it fell. For we make efforts to rise on the very spot where we fell, and in rising, we place, as it were, the hand of consideration on the spot, where, falling with the foot of slippery love, we were lying prostrate through neglect. But because we have, by visible things, fallen from invisible, it is right that we should again strive, by visible things, to reach invisible; in order that what was to the soul a fall to the bottom, may be a step in turn to the summit, and that it may rise by the same paces by which it fell: while, as was before said, those objects, rightly considered, recal us to God, which, when improperly chosen, separated us from Him. Eliu, therefore, in order to apply the force of consideration, and to shew from bodily objects, how far higher is God than man, well observed, *Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou.* For we learn from these created and corporeal objects, how far we are distant from the loftiness of our Creator: because, by every thing which we behold, we are warned to be humble; in order that the beauty of the creature, when considered, may be, as it were, a kind of lesson to our mind. Let him say then, *Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou. If thou hast sinned, in what wilt thou hurt Him? If thine iniquities have been multiplied, what wilt thou do against Him? If, moreover, thou hast acted justly, what wilt thou give Him, or what will He receive of thy hand?* As if he were saying, Understand from the very creatures, which thou seest by thy bodily senses, to be higher than thyself, how far thou art removed from the loftiness of the Divine Power, and conclude, from this thy consideration, that thou canst neither benefit God by thy good living, nor, again, injure Him by thy evil deeds.

19. But if, as we before said, we understand the superior Powers by ‘heaven,’ or the ‘sky,’ Eliu, in these words, warns us to consider, that, because the angelic spirits themselves cannot fully contemplate the power of our Creator, (though it is certain that they are higher than ourselves, as not having fallen into the lowest depths,) we should hence infer, how far we are inferior to God, who are beneath even those sublime creatures, who are yet far His inferiors. As if he were to say, Lo ! how widely thou art separated from the loftiness of the Godhead, from Whose might even those powers shrink in their humility, who surpass thee with immeasurable loftiness; and how far inferior thou art to the Most High, who discernest that thou art inferior to those, who are inferior to Him. But, by pointing out the highest objects, he brings to an equality, and says, *Ver. 8. Thine iniquity will hurt a man, who is like thee, and thy righteousness will profit the son of man.*

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20. The iniquity of man hurts him, whom it pollutes by perversion. And, again, our righteousness profits him, whom it converts from his wickedness. For those things cannot either hurt, or profit, which cannot either corrupt from what is good, or change from what is evil. The powers above, then, cannot be either hurt, or profited, because they have already received to be free from change. But they who are involved in earthly desires, cannot consider these things. For it is difficult for minds, which are scattered abroad, to return to themselves; because evil ways detain them, more pleasurably, when once ensnared, the more every thing, which pleases them, is therein permitted. For no wall of discipline stands in the way to confine them, no punishment of retribution is looked forward to, to frighten them. But, when the eyes of the heart are closed, the soul is plunged the more surely into the lowest abyss, as it is shut out from the highest objects, and commits temporal sins more fearlessly, the more obstinately it despairs of eternal blessings.

21. But that wickedness of the reprobate, separating the life of the Elect, as corn from the chaff in threshing, oppresses, that it may purify. For the wicked, whilst they afflict the good, release them the more from the desires of this world; because, while they heap on them many cruelties here, they compel them to hasten heavenwards. Which is well signified by the Jewish people, when Moses was summoning, and king Pharaoh raging against, them. For Moses was then sent to call them, when Pharaoh had been already urged to oppress them by hard labours: in order that the one, while summoning, might draw away, as it were, the minds of the Israelites disgracefully clinging to Egypt, and the other might urge them on, as it were, while raging: and that the people, which was disgracefully held in bondage, might be moved, either by being invited by blessings, or driven by sufferings. [Ex.16, 3] This occurs daily, while the reprobate are allowed to rage against the Elect, when heavenly rewards have been announced to them; in order, that, if we neglect to go forth, when called, to the land of promise, we may be compelled at least by raging oppressions; and, that this Egypt, that is, our present life, which oppressed us, when flattering, may aid, when pressing, us: and that, that which, when cherishing, crushed us with the yoke of bondage, may shew the way of liberty, while it tortures. This is the special reason, why the righteous are allowed to be afflicted by the wicked, in order, namely, that while they hear of future blessings to desire, they may also suffer present evils to shudder at; and that, while love invites, torture may drive them to an easier escape. Whence Eliu, going on to speak of the same sufferings of the Elect, under the oppressions of the reprobate, says,

Ver. 9. *They will cry out, by reason of the multitude of oppressors* [‘*calumniatores.*’ ‘*wrongful clamants.*’], *and will wail on account of the force of the arm of tyrants.*

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22. We can rightly term all the ungodly ‘oppressors,’ not those only, who spoil our outward goods, but those, also, who endeavour by their wicked habits, and by the example of their reprobate life, to scatter our inward treasures. For those go about to attack the things, which are without us, but these seek to prey on us within. The one cease not to rage with love for our goods, the other with hatred of our virtues. The one envy what we possess, the others the way we live. The one desire to spoil our outward goods, because they like them, the others are busy in squandering our inward goods, because they dislike them. As the life, then, of our habits is superior to the substance of our goods, he is the greater oppressor, who assaults our virtues, by wicked conduct, than he who injures our goods, by violently oppressing us. For though he has withdrawn nothing from our support, yet he has set before us examples of perdition. He has inflicted on us, therefore, a heavier oppression, since he has roused our heart, when quiet, by temptation. And though he has not persuaded us to the works of his conduct, he has yet imposed on us a contest of temptation. We suffer therefore a heavy oppression from his life, because, doubtless, we suffer that within, which we must overcome with difficulty. And because the life of the wicked abounds in this world, to torture us, it is well said, *They will cry out by reason of the multitude of the oppressors.*

23. But because they sometimes endeavour to extort even by unrestrained violence, that which they cannot persuade by words, it is rightly subjoined, *And will wail on account of the force of the arm of tyrants.* For whoever compels us, by his example, to live wickedly, uses in our case, as yet, the voice of the oppressor. But whoever desires to frighten us also, when persuading us to sin, now rages against us with the arm of tyranny. For, to recommend vices by one’s conduct, is one thing, to

enforce it by terrors, is another. When we look then at patterns of evil doing, we hear, thus far, as it were, the noise of the oppressor; but when we are by force compelled to sin, we endure at once a tyrant in our heart. [‘vi cogimur’]

24. But the minds of the strong, which are stedfastly fixed in God, despise all these assaults, the more they discern that they rise up against the commands of their Creator. For waiting for the rewards of eternity, they gain strength from their adversities, because, as the fight grows strong, they doubt not that a more glorious victory awaits them. Thus while the desires of the Elect are kept down, they make progress by adversity, just as the fire is blown back by the blast, in order to increase, and gains strength by the means, by which it appears to be extinguished. For we shew in this way, with what great desire for God we are inflamed, if we pass over to Him, not merely by tranquil and smooth, but even through rugged and hard paths. For hence the Prophet says, *Who hath made my feet like harts' feet*. [Ps. 18, 33] For, when a hart climbs mountain ridges, it passes over, with a bound, whatever rugged places it beholds, whatever spots, entangled with briars, oppose themselves, and rises up to higher ground, without any obstacle to its course. So also the minds of the Elect leap over, with the bound of contemplation, whatever they see obstructing, or opposing them in this world, and, despising the thorns of worldly anxieties, raise themselves, like hinds, to things above. Hence he says again, *And by my God, I shall pass over a wall*. [Ps. 18, 29] For ‘a wall’ is every thing thrown in our way, ‘that we pass not over to Him, Whom we love. But we pass over a wall, when we trample down, for love of our heavenly country, whatever things have, in this world, been placed in our way. Hence the Lord says, by the same Prophet, to a struggling soul; *I heard thee in the hidden place of the tempest, I proved thee at the waters of contradiction*. [Ps. 81, 7] For it is ‘the hidden place of the tempest,’ when the waves of tempting thoughts swell up in the contrite heart, when the tumults of worldly cares dash themselves against the zeal of holy love. He is heard, then, in the hidden place of the tempest, because this very agitation of tribulation, is the cry of suppliants. But, because there are never entirely wanting such, as endeavour to advise evil to those who are seeking for good, the waters of contradiction are opposing people. And because our desire is then proved, when it is opposed by any adversity, it is rightly said, *I have proved thee at the waters of contradiction*. By these efforts of virtues, then, the strong make progress, from adversity: but the weak, if any obstacles have been placed against them, often languish in their desires, and, when assaulted by mighty tribulation, fail from cowardice. Whence Eliu, inflicting on blessed Job reproaches for his cowardice, having first mentioned the oppressions of the wicked, proceeds immediately to speak of the cowardice of the weak, saying, Ver. 10. *And He said not, Where is God, Who made me?*

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25. It is the practice of Holy Scripture, to pass suddenly from the singular to the plural, and to turn itself from the plural to the singular. Whence Eliu, when saying, *They will cry and wail*, did not subjoin, *They said not, Where is God?* but, *He said not, Where is God?* For, coming from the plural to the singular, he suddenly passed over to the person of each of the weak. Perhaps because that is better discerned by individuals, which is heard spoken of them individually: so that each of them returns to his own heart, and blames in himself that, which is stated of each man one by one. He, therefore, retained the singular number, saying, *He said not, Where is God, Who hath made me?* For, whoever is crushed by the tribulation of adversities, does not look at Him, by Whom He was made. For He, Who made that, which was not, leaves it not, when made, without guidance: and He

Who made man mercifully, does not permit him to be tormented unjustly. Nor does He carelessly suffer that, which is, to perish, Who also created that which was not, that it might be. When we ask, then, the cause of our tribulation, and perhaps too slowly discover it; there is this consideration, we can suffer nothing unjustly, because if, God being our Creator, we exist, who before were not, God being our Ruler, we, who are, are not unjustly afflicted. It follows,  
*Who hath given songs in the night.*

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26. A 'song in the night' is joy in tribulation; because, though afflicted with worldly oppressions, we yet now rejoice in the hope of eternity. Paul was announcing songs in the night, saying, *Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation.* [Rom. 12, 12] David had taken up his song in the night, who was saying, *Thou art my hope from the oppression which hath surrounded me, my Exultation, deliver me from those who surround me.* [Ps. 32, 7] Lo! he calls oppression 'night,' and yet amidst his straitnesses, he calls his Deliverer, his Exultation. There was 'night' indeed without, in the encompassing of oppressions, but 'songs' were resounding within, from the consolation of joy. For, because we cannot return to eternal joys, except through temporal losses, it is the whole object of Scripture, that the hope of the joys, which will abide, should strengthen us, amid these passing adversities. Whence also the Prophet Ezekiel witnesses, that he had received a book, in which were written, *lamentations, a song, and woe.* [Ezek. 2, 10] For what is signified by this 'book,' except the words of God? For since they enjoin on us tears and sorrow, lamentations are said to be written therein. They contain also a song and woe; for they so set forth joy from hope, as yet to announce oppression and difficulties in this present life. They contain a song and woe, because though we seek for what is sweet there, it is yet first necessary for us to endure bitternesses here. The Lord was preaching a song and woe to His disciples, when He was saying, *These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation.* [John 16, 33] As though He were plainly saying, May you have an inward refreshment and consolation from Me, because cruel and heavy oppression will befall you from the world without. Because then, every feeble person, when oppressed, has, by reason of his great weakness of heart, but faint hope of joy, and, when suffering adversities without, forgets that, in which he used to rejoice within, it is well said, *He said not, Where is God Who made me, Who hath given songs in the night?* For, were he to say these words, he would moderate the violence which he suffers, and, by the lasting good he was seeking within, would consider, that the transitory pain he endures, is not intolerable. It follows, Ver. 11. *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven.*

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27. The beasts of the earth are they, who seek the lowest things, from the habit of a carnal life. But the fowls of the heaven are they, who search into lofty things, with the eagerness of a proud curiosity. These degrade themselves, by their conduct, below what they are in themselves; these exalt themselves, by their enquiries, beyond what they are able. The pleasure of the flesh casts down those to the very bottom, the lust of curiosity exalts these, as it were, in things above them. To those it is said by holy Scripture, *Be ye not as the horse, and the mule, which have no understanding.* [Ps. 32, 9] The proud labour of these is blamed, when it is said, *Seek not out the things that are higher than thou, neither search the things that are above thy strength.* [Ecclus. 3,

21] To those it is said, *Mortify your members which are upon the earth, fornication, lust, evil concupiscence*. [Col. 3, 5] To these it is said, *Let no man deceive you through philosophy and vain deceit*. [Col. 2, 8] God teaches us, therefore, more than the beasts and the fowls of the air, because, while we understand what we are, neither does the infirmity of the flesh cast us down, nor does the spirit of pride raise us up. We do not, by sinking down, fall beneath the lowest things, nor are we puffed up, by pride, as to those above us. For he, who falls in the flesh, is overcome by the appetite of beasts, but he, who is exalted in mind, is raised up, like the fowls, as if with the wing of lightness.

28. But if we keep strict watch, that both humility of mind and chastity of body be preserved, we soon know that the one is preserved by the other. For pride has often been to many a seed-plot of lust; for, whilst their spirit raised them, as it were, on high, their flesh plunged them in the lowest depths. For they are first secretly raised up, but afterwards they fall openly; for while they swell in the secret motions of the heart, they fall with open lapses of the body. Thus, thus, elated, they required to be smitten with righteous retribution; in order that, since they set themselves above men by pride, they might be brought down, by their lust, even to a resemblance of beasts. For, *man when he was in honour, understood not, he hath been compared to the senseless beasts, and made like them*. [Ps. 49, 20] For the wing of knowledge had raised them, as it were, on high, of whom Paul said that which we before mentioned; *Because, when they had known God, they glorified Him not as God, or gave Him thanks, but became vain in their thoughts*. [Rom. 1, 21] But how they fell into bestial and more than bestial pleasure, he added, saying, *God gave them up to the desires of their hearts, unto uncleanness*. [ib. 24.] Lo! the flesh overwhelmed those, whom boastful learning had raised up, and, from the flying of birds, they fell beyond the appetite of beasts, and sank beneath themselves, by the very means by which they appeared to rise above themselves. We must take heed then, and the mind must be kept, with all care, from the swelling of pride. For our thoughts fly not in vain, before the eyes of God; and no moments of time pass in thought, without an abiding of retribution. God then beholds what elates the mind within; and therefore permits that which is to bring it down to gain strength without. That which is afterwards to be struck down without by the pollution of lust, is first raised up within us. Open punishment, namely, follows a secret fault, in order that our inward evils may be punished, by those from without, and that the heart, which was secretly pulled up, may fall openly. For hence it is said by Hosea, against the Israelites, *The spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord*. [Hos. 5, 4] Who, in order to shew that the cause of lust sprung from the sin of pride, proceeded to say, *And the pride of Israel will answer to his face*. [ib. 5] As if he were saying, The sin, which through pride of mind lurked in secret, openly replied by the lust of the flesh. Wherefore the cleanness of chastity is to be preserved, by guarding humility. For, if the spirit is piously humbled before God, the flesh is not raised unlawfully above the spirit. For, the spirit holds the dominion over the flesh, committed to it, if it acknowledges the claims of lawful servitude to the Lord. For if, through pride, it despises its Author, it justly takes on itself a contest with its subject flesh. Whence also that first disobedient one, as soon as he had sinned through pride, covered his shameful parts. [Gen. 3, 7] For, because his spirit had put an insult on God, it soon experienced the insult of the flesh. And, because it refused to submit to its Creator, it lost its right over the subject flesh, which it used to rule: in order, namely, that the confusion of its own disobedience might redound upon itself, and that it might learn, when vanquished, what it had lost through pride.

29. Let no one, then, after he has begun to aim at things above him, consider, if overcome by carnal

pleasure, that he is only then defeated, when he is openly overpowered. For, if the poison of lust frequently springs from the root of pride, the flesh then triumphed, when the spirit was secretly proud. The soul then fell, as to the beginning of its fault, into the wantonness of beasts, when, by raising itself, like the fowls, it soared higher than it ought. For it is hence, that long-maintained continence is suddenly broken through, hence, that virginity, though preserved even to old age, is frequently violated. For, since humility of heart is neglected, the righteous Judge despises even chastity of body, and at last proclaims, by an open sin, those to be reprobates, whom He endured in secret, though long ago rejected. For he, who has suddenly lost a long-treasured good, has retained, in himself within, another evil, from which a further evil has suddenly burst forth, by which he was, even then, estranged from God, though he shewed that he cleaved to Him by cleanness of body. Because, therefore, pride of mind leads to the pollution of the flesh, the heart of the reprobate is, from the flight of birds, plunged into the wantonness of beasts. But holy men, that they may not be carried down into the whirlpool of lust, through bestial appetite, carefully guard the thoughts of their mind from the flight of pride; and, that they may not sink, through folly, into the lowest depths, humbly keep down all their high notions. It is therefore rightly said, *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven.* Thou understandest, 'this he also said not.'

30. He says, therefore, that he does not remember in tribulation, that he is superior to the beasts, and to the fowls. As if he were to say, Every one who is weak, does not strengthen himself when in perturbation, because he does not moderate himself, when in tranquillity; and he therefore knows not how to endure adversities, because, when prosperous, he knew not how to keep himself down in thought from the flight of birds, nor to raise up the motions of his flesh from the gluttony of beasts. But this was the more unfitly said to blessed Job, as his life is wonderfully kept in the mean, between things high and low. But it can also be understood in another way; *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven.* For as the life of men, still subject to the motions of the flesh, is signified by the word 'beasts;' so is the pride of haughty spirits set forth by the appellation 'fowls;' in order that earthly men may be designated by 'beasts,' but the devils by 'fowls.' Whence, when the Lord said that the seeds had fallen by the way side, He adds, *The fowls of the air came and devoured them up;* [Matt. 13, 4] signifying doubtless by fowls, the powers of the air.

31. But because holy persons neither follow the lowest examples of men, nor, again, are deceived by the subtlety of devils, they rise, by the virtue of their instruction, both above the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven. For they are taught more than the beasts of the earth, because they despise whatever can be desired below: and they are instructed more than the fowls of the air, because they understand all the stratagems of unclean spirits. They are taught above the beasts of the earth, because they seek not any thing, which passes away in this life. They are instructed more than the fowls of the air, because they trample down even now, by the merits of their life, the powers of the air, which they still tolerate through the infirmity of the flesh. Paul had been already taught above the beasts of the earth, when saying, *For many walk;* and shortly afterwards, *Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, who savour of earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven.* [Phil. 3, 18-20] And again he knew that he was instructed above the fowls of the air, when he said, *Know ye not that we shall Judge angels?* [1 Cor. 6, 3] He perceived that the beasts were beneath him, because, namely, though still dwelling on earth, he was trampling down the habits of men, who engage in grovelling pursuits. And again he had surpassed the flying of fowls, by the

dignity of his merits, because, when now about to enter heaven, he was not ignorant that we would judge Angels. In the one he was treading under the basenesses of the impure, in the other the loftinesses of the proud. For the minds of holy men despise all transitory objects, and behold every thing that is proud, and every thing that passes away, sink beneath them. And placed on a lofty eminence, they see all things the more subject to them, the more truly they submit themselves to the Author of all; and they transcend all things, just as they prostrate themselves in true humility before the Creator of all things. Let him say then, *Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of the heaven.* As if he were saying, The weak man, overcome by his cowardice, said not thus, and therefore the adversity of temptation smote him: because in the season of tranquillity he did not overcome all these transitory objects, by any perfection. For he would not dread the adversities of this life, if he had trampled even its prosperity under foot, by the merit of his perfection. It follows,

Ver. 12. *There they will cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of evil men.*

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32. There; namely, in tribulation: as it is written on the other hand of joy, *The children of thy servants shall inhabit there.* [Ps. 102, 28] But it seems doubtful whether he says, Because of the pride of evil men He will not hear, or, they will cry because of the pride of evil men. But it can be better understood, if they are rather said not to be heard, than to cry out, because of the pride of evil men. For, that they cry out, because of the pride of evil men, is already stated, in the verse in which it is said, *They will cry out by reason of the multitude of the violent.* [ver. 9] Something is therefore suggested to us in this verse, to be attended to a little more minutely. Because often, when the oppressed have cried out, they deserve indeed to be heard, for their own sake; but yet their desires are deferred, on account of the pride of their oppressors. For the Just God allows His own people to be oppressed in their worldly goods, and the malice of the violent sinfully to increase; in order that, while the life of these is wasted away in purification, the wickedness of those may be consummated. But it frequently happens, that the righteous, when involved in tribulation, enjoy, even in this life, heavenly consolation, which they do not ask for in this life. For they wish to be saved not for their own sakes, but for the salvation of their adversaries; in order that, while Almighty God delivers them, by working a kind of miracle, from their boundless dangers, He may manifest His might, even to their persecutors; and may deliver the adversaries for eternity, by the same means, as He rescues His own people in this world. As the Prophet also, taking up the language of martyrs, says, *Deliver me, because of mine enemies.* [Ps. 69, 18] As if he were saying; For myself indeed, I seek not to be delivered from temporal tribulation; but yet I wish to be delivered, on account of my adversaries; in order that, while my life is seen to be miraculously preserved, the hardness of my enemies may be converted at the very sight of the miracles. As the Lord then frequently rescues the life of His own people, in this world, for the conversion of His enemies, so does He frequently not listen to the cry of His own people, for the sake of the condemnation of their persecutors; in order, namely, that they may add to their guilt, from the fact that they wickedly rejoice that they have prevailed. For they, who despise invisible things, can sometimes be moved by visible miracles. But frequently no visible miracle is worked in behalf of the righteous, because their adversaries do not deserve to be invisibly enlightened. Let it be said then, *There will they cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of evil men.* As if he were saying, The guilt of the oppressors prevents His hearing the voice of the oppressed: and the righteous are not visibly rescued, because the unrighteous do not deserve to be invisibly saved.



Hence it is again said by the Prophet, *When he shall see the wise dying, the simple and the foolish shall perish together.* [Ps. 49, 10] For those, whom they behold dying visibly, they do not believe can live invisibly, and they add to the guilt of their unbelief, as they despair of eternity, when they behold the death of the faithful. The violent, then, fail the more fatally, from the very fact, that they outwardly prevail against the life of the innocent. And the inmost Truth drives them forth the more from Itself, the more It suffers them to work their will, in this world, against those who are Its own.

33. Whoever, then, persecutes the life of the good, is then condemned with more fearful vengeance, when he is opposed by no adversity; and he is then exposed to the risk of more fearful wrath, when he prosecutes successfully his sinful desires. Because, namely, the vengeance of the Divine Judgment has given up, by reserving for future punishment, him, whom It has here not cared to oppose in his wickedness. For hence the Lord says by the Prophet, *I gave them up according to the desires of their heart, and they will go on in their own wills.* [Ps. 81, 12] Hence it is said again, *The rod of God is not upon them.* [Job 21, 9] Hence also it is written of their chief himself, *He will do, and prosper.* [Dan. 8, 12] Hence again it is said of the same person, *And craft shall be guided aright in his hand.* [ib. 25] For craft is guided aright, in the hand of Antichrist, because he is not hindered by any adversity, in this world, from fulfilling that, which he has purposed against the good. Hence again it is said by Solomon, *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* [Prov. 1, 32] It is, then, a manifest token of perdition, when subsequent success favours much-wished for iniquities, and when no obstacle hinders that, which a perverse mind has conceived. For frequently, while the wishes of sinful men are delayed, they are changed, and, while they feel the difficulty of performing an evil action, they learn its guilt; and they, who are thwarted at first against their will, shrink afterwards, of their own accord, from that which they had conceived. Because then the Lord, when He forsakes the wicked, allows them to prevail, and, because the wickedness of the proud is perfected, by the same means, as the long-suffering of the humble is consummated, let it be rightly said, *There will they cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of wicked men.* It follows, Ver. 13. *For God will not hear without reason, and the Almighty will behold the causes of men one by one.*

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34. We must observe that two points are stated: both that He does not hear without reason [or, 'in vain,' (with different punctuation.)] him, who cries to Him, and yet regards his sufferings; and pretends not to hear his cry, and still is not ignorant what each one suffers. Let no one, then, who is not speedily heard, believe that he is not cared for by God's providence. For our desires are often heard, because they are not speedily granted: and that, which we wish to be soon fulfilled, is the better prospered by the very delay. Our prayer is frequently made good, the more it is deferred; and when our request is, in appearance, neglected, our wishes are more fully carried out in the depth of our thoughts. As the seeds of harvest are firmly compressed by frost, and spring up in greater number, to bear produce, the slower they come forth to the surface. Our desires, therefore, are deferred, in order that they may make progress; they make progress, in order to gain strength for that which they are about to enjoy: they are exercised in the contest, in order that greater rewards may be heaped on them, in recompense. The labour of the contest is protracted, in order that the crown of victory may become greater. When the Lord, then, does not speedily hear His own people, He draws them to Himself, just as He is believed to repel them. For He is, in truth, our spiritual Physician, and cuts out the infection of vices, whose existence within us He utterly reprobates. He

extracts the poison of corruption with the knife of tribulation; and the more He pretends not to hear the cries of His patient, the more is He providing for the ending of his sickness. For hence the Prophet exclaims, *O my God, I will cry through the day, and Thou wilt not hear; and in the night, and not to my folly.* [Ps. 22, 2] As if He were saying, It tends not to my folly, that Thou dost not hear me, when I cry to Thee, day and night, without ceasing; because Thou trainest me the more in heavenly wisdom, by seeming, as it were, to desert me in my temporal affliction. Hence also he says, *A helper opportunities, in tribulation.* [Ps. 9, 9] Intending to speak of tribulations, he first mentioned opportunities; because we are frequently bruised by tribulation, and yet it is not a fit season for our being assisted according to our desire for deliverance. Let it be said then, *For God will not hear without reason, and the Almighty will behold the causes of men one by one.* But because some persons are frequently broken down by this very delay of assistance, he fitly subjoins,

*Ver. 14. Even when thou shall say, He doth not consider, judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him.*

[xx]

35. For perhaps when our cry seems to be disregarded, the hope, which was in our heart, is weakened, and we believe that assistance from above will fail us, because we are too slow in asking: and we lament that the unavenged wrongs we are enduring are almost disregarded by God. But when this storm of despair agitates us, our disordered mind sooner takes shelter in the harbour of hope, if it weighs accurately its causes with the Lord; if it recalls to its memory His favours, if it does not artfully excuse in itself the evils it has returned for His goodness; if it balances what it has justly deserved, and what it has received of His mercy; if it actively [*‘vivaciter’*] searches its own conduct; if, examining all its doings in God’s sight, it conceals not itself from itself; if it remembers that it was brought into being, which before was not; if it reflects that though it was lying in darkness, it was illumined, and raised up. Bringing then all these points together in itself, while it considers the blessings it has received, it blames not the ills it is suffering; and, strengthened with the consolation of so many gifts, it is not crushed with despair. Because, when it calls to mind past mercies, it derives hope for the future. Let him say therefore, *Even when thou shall say, He doth not consider, judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him.* As though he were to say, When God is believed not to regard, because He is slow in shewing compassion, enter into thy most secret thoughts, and there undertake the judgment of thy cause before His eyes, and discern both what thou hast conferred on Him, by thy conduct, or what thou hast mercifully received. And then thou returnest to the confidence of hope, when thou art ashamed at the mercies of such great goodness: so that thou mayest confidently look for Him in adversities, Whom thou rememberest to have been gracious to thee, even after thine offences. For thou hadst reason to hope for assistance from above, even though no favours had preceded. And thou must feel sure that God does not unjustly reject man, whom He mercifully created.

36. We must consider, therefore, how dangerous it is to behold past gifts, and to despair of future: how dangerous, if in this storm of tribulations, we suffer shipwreck from despair, bound as we are to the harbour of hope by the boundless ties of past favours. Let it then be said rightly, *Judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him.* For he who judges not himself before God, does not wait for Him when afflicted. For he despairs that assistance can hereafter come from Him, Whose preceding kindnesses He does not admit: and when he forgets those that are past, he is deprived also of a

bounteous supply of subsequent blessings. But behold, while we are afflicted, while we patiently wait for the grace of consolation, the wicked break out into greater wickedness, and proceed the more in adding to their iniquities, as they are left unpunished. And yet the Almighty mercifully bears with sinners, and grants them time for repentance, which He converts, if they are not converted, into an evidence of greater guilt; He patiently restrains the wrath, which at length He pours out irrevocably.

Whence it is fitly subjoined,:

Ver. 15. *For He doth not now bring on His fury, nor severely punish wickedness.*

[xxi]

37. For God in truth bears a long while with him, whom He condemns for ever; and forbears now to bring on His wrath, because He reserves it to be poured forth, hereafter, without end. For suffering is here the portion of the Elect, in order to their being trained for the rewards of their heavenly inheritance. It is our portion to receive stripes here, for whom an eternity of joy is reserved. For hence it is written, *He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth*. [Heb. 12, 6] Hence it is said to John, *I rebuke and chasten those whom I love*. [Rev. 3, 19] Hence Peter says, *It is time, that judgment must begin at the house of God*. [1 Pet. 4, 17] Where he immediately adds with astonishment, *But if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that believe not the Gospel of God?* For the severity of God permits not sins to remain unpunished; but the wrath of judgment commences with our punishment here, in order that it may cease to rage at the damnation of the reprobate. Let the reprobate proceed then, and accomplish the desires of their pleasures, with unpunished iniquity: and let them feel no temporal scourges, since eternal punishments await them. But their unpunished wickedness, is well signified by the sin of Ham: to whom it was said by his father, *Cursed be thy son Canaan, a servant shall he be to his brethren*. [Gen. 9, 25] For Canaan was the son of Ham. And what is signified by his son Canaan receiving the sentence of punishment, when Ham offended? What is meant by his being smitten, not in himself, but in his posterity, except that the sins of the reprobate go on unpunished in this world, but are smitten hereafter? Let it be said then, *For He doth not now bring on His fury, nor severely punish wickedness*.

38. But it must be noticed, that he inserted the word “severely;” for, although He patiently endures some wickednesses, yet some He punishes even in this life: and He sometimes begins to smite even here, what He intends to destroy with eternal damnation. Therefore He smites some sins, and leaves some unpunished: for, if He were to be severe with none, who would believe that God regarded the doings of men? And again, if He were to smite all of them here, for what reason would the last judgment still remain? Some are, therefore, smitten, in order that we may tremble at the attentive care of our Ruler over us. But some are still left unpunished, in order that we may feel that judgment still remains. It is well said then, *He doth not severely punish sin*: because while some small portion of iniquity is punished, the sentence of eternal judgment is even now foretasted by unconverted souls.

39. All this then that Eliu says is right, if it were said rightly. For he knows what he ought to say, but knows not to whom he is speaking. For the things which he said are true, but are out of place, in reproving blessed Job; because he the less needed this reproof, as he had not sinned, even from any cowardice. But, because the pride of haughty men is often an occasion of virtues for the righteous, blessed Job is so dealt with in the secret judgment, in order that, after the scourges of punishments,

he may gain strength also, by the words of the arrogant. For, lo! the more he is despised by the minister of pride, the more is he comforted by the truth teaching him within. For, after Eliu knew that he had said so many powerful words, he disclosed what pride he bore within, and despised blessed Job, by thinking highly of himself, saying;

Ver. 16. *Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain, he multiplieth words without knowledge.*

[xxii]

40. By introducing these words, he doubtless asserts, that blessed Job both knew nothing, and had said much; and, though he introduces his own opinions loquaciously, he accuses him of the fault of loquacity. But this seems also to be a peculiar fault of the arrogant, that they believe the much, which they have said, to be little, and the little, which is said to them, to be much. For, because they always wish to speak their own words, they cannot hear the words of others; they think that they suffer violence, if they do not pour forth their own immoderate opinions more immoderately. And, although blessed Job was silent at his words, yet Eliu finds cause for invective, in the speech, in which he had replied to his friends; in order to get himself larger space of his silence, and that he himself might answer many things, he asserts that he had multiplied words. For he immediately begins the commencement of a tedious speech, and endeavours to commence, as though he had as yet said nothing at all. Whence it is subjoined,

Chap. xxxvi. Ver. 1, 2. *Eliu also added, and spake thus; Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee.*

[xxiii]

41. He had already said much, and hopes that he will be borne with yet a little longer; because, namely, haughty men consider that they suffer a heavy loss, if they confine their skill by speaking within brief limits. For they believe, that they shew themselves to be more learned, the more they have been able to lay open their minds in multiplicity of much speaking. But, because they frequently perceive that the respect of silence is not paid to them, they mention, at times, the power of the Lord, from Whom they seem to be speaking; and, under pretence of Him, they exact that silence for themselves, which they by no means deserve; and, while in appearance they bring God forward, when exacting a hearing for themselves from reverence for Him, they strive more to display themselves, than to set forth His doings. Whence also Eliu subjoins, saying,

Ver. 2. *For I have yet somewhat to speak on God's behalf.*

Because holy teachers sometimes frequently repeat any things they state rather obscurely, in order to instil these hidden sayings into the hearts of their hearers, by the language of repetition; haughty men also wish to imitate this practice, and the things they have said they repeat in an insolent manner, not because they seek to insinuate the subjects into the hearts of their hearers, but because they wish to appear eloquent in their judgment. Whence Eliu subjoining, says,

Ver. 3. *I will repeat my knowledge from the beginning.*

But because, on the mention of knowledge, his pride of heart hath displayed itself in his voice, he is plainly discovered to be a haughty person, if he does not quickly conceal himself by some disguise. Whence in concealing his own arrogance, he immediately introduces the righteousness of the Lord, and says,

*And I will prove my Maker just.*

In order that, while he speaks as if in behalf of God's righteousness, whatever escapes from him arrogantly, may be excused in the judgment of man. It follows,

Ver. 4. *For truly my words are without falsehood.*

[xxiv]

42. Even righteous men, when they see that they cannot be understood by their feeble hearers, are frequently wont to praise the things they say. Not because they are eager for their own praise, but to inflame their hearers with an anxious desire of listening to them; in order that, while they are uttered by their voice, they may be embraced, with more ardent affection, by the hearts of their hearers. Whence Paul, when he had spoken to the Corinthians things wonderful and many, says, *Our mouth is opened unto you, O ye Corinthians, our heart is enlarged.* [2 Cor. 6, 11] But haughty men, while they know not the heart of the good, and imitate only their words, from time to time, are hurried forward in praising what they say, not because the listlessness of their hearers displeases them, but because they eagerly please themselves. They imitate and feign the voice of the righteous, but know not the power of their voice. They see what the righteous put forward, but know not what they seek for. For, when holy teachers set forth the praise of their preaching, they raise, as it were, the hearts of their hearers from grovelling thoughts, by the hand of their voice; in order that, having been suddenly roused, they may run, as if to meet the words which follow, and may hold them the more firmly in the embrace of their understanding, the more they had loved them, by the voice of their praiser, even before they beheld them. But, as I said, haughty men know not these things. For since that, which they seek for, is without, they cannot feel what is desirable within. For it is written of the Church of the Elect, *All the glory of her, the daughter of kings, is from within.* [Ps. 45, 13] And the wise virgins are said to carry oil in their lamps. [Matt. 25, 4] Whence it is said by the voice of the Saints, *Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience.* [2 Cor. 1, 12] But haughty men, because they have no testimony of their conscience before God, seek the testimony of another's voice before men; and, when they slowly obtain it, they burst forth into shameless praise of themselves. For if they find not the applause of men, which they eagerly look for, they themselves speak in praise of their own wisdom. Whence also Eliu adds, saying, *And perfect knowledge shall be proved to thee.*

[xxv]

43. He doubtless felt that he was about to utter great things, but he could not conceal his lofty estimate of himself, in his swelling heart; and therefore preceded by his praises his sound opinions; because he would be already indeed guilty in God's judgment, if he had merely felt in silence great things of himself. For we are by no means safe, before the searching examination of the Truth, even though we have nothing in ourselves which deserves blame, in the judgment of men. For, frequently, when careless in our thoughts, we are assaulted by the pride, which yet we suppress in silence. But unless our secret pride is extinguished, by awakened repentance, in the chamber of the heart, in which it takes its rise; all the merit of our conduct is extinguished before our strict Judge. We must, therefore, hence consider, with what great punishment that pride will be condemned, which is cherished till it is boldly uttered, if even that is inexcusable which springs up secretly in the heart. We must consider also with what power that pride reigns within, which is so far encouraged, as not to be ashamed even to break forth without. Because then Eliu felt great things,

he could not humbly control himself, he maintained the loftiness of knowledge, he spurned the grace of humility. And while following after the gift by which he desired to speak well, he lost the grace by which he might have lived well. *For knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.* [1 Cor. 8, 1] But let him now state that right thing, which he still knows not how to speak rightly. For, after he had breathed forth the proud thoughts of his mind, in words of pride, he added a noble sentiment, saying,

Ver. 5. *God rejecteth not the mighty, though He Himself is mighty.*

[xxvi]

44. Some things in the course of this mortal life are hurtful in themselves, some are such from circumstances. Some are hurtful of themselves; as sins and wickednesses. But some things are, now and then, hurtful from circumstances, as temporal power, or the bond of wedlock. For marriage is good, but those things which grow up around it, through the care of this world, are evil. Whence Paul says, *He that is with a wife, thinketh of the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.* [1 Cor. 7, 33] Whence also, recommending to certain persons a better course, he dissuades them from marriage, and says, *But this I say, not that I may cast a snare on you, but for that which is comely, and which may give you power to pray to the Lord without impediment.* [ib. v. 35] While that then which is not hurtful is retained, something hurtful is commonly committed from attendant circumstances: as frequently we journey along a straight and clear road, and yet we are entangled by our clothes in briars which grow by its side. We do not stumble in a clear road, but something grows by the side to wound us. For great is that temporal power, which, from being well administered, has its special reward from God: and yet sometimes from being preeminent over others, it swells with pride of thought. And while all things for its use are at its service, while its commands are speedily fulfilled, according to its wish, while all its subjects praise its good deeds, if there are any, but do not oppose its evil doings with any authority, while they too commonly praise, even that which they ought to blame; the mind, being led astray by those things that are beneath it, is raised above itself, and while it is encircled with unbounded applause without, is bereft of truth within. And, forgetting itself, it scatters itself after others' speech, and believes itself to be really such, as it is spoken of without, and not such as it ought to see itself to be within. It despises those beneath it, and does not acknowledge them to be its equals in order of nature, and believes that it has exceeded those also in the merits of its life, whom it has surpassed by the accident of rank. It considers that it is far wiser than all those, than whom it sees itself greater in power. For it places itself in truth on a lofty eminence, in its own opinion, and, he that is confined within the same natural condition as others, scorns to look on them as his equals, and is in this way led even to resemble him, of whom it is written, *He beholdeth every high thing, and is a king over all the children of pride;* [Job 41, 34] and of whose body it is said, *A generation, whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids are raised up on high.* [Prov. 30, 13] It is led to a resemblance of him, who aiming at singular loftiness, and scorning a life in company with angels, says, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* By a marvellous judgment, then, it finds the depth of downfall within, whilst it raises itself without, in loftiness of power. For a man is in truth made like an apostate angel, when he disdains to be like his fellow men. Thus Saul grew up, from meritorious humility, into swelling pride, by his height of power. He was in truth raised up in consequence of his humility, and rejected through his pride: as the Lord bears witness, Who says, *When thou wast little in thine own eyes, did not I make thee the head of the tribes of Israel?* [1 Sam. 15, 17] Before he attained to power he had seen that he was little, but supported by temporal

authority he no longer saw himself to be so. For preferring himself, in comparison with others, he counted himself great in his own judgment. But marvellously, when little in his own sight, he was great in the sight of the Lord, and when great in his own sight, in the Lord's sight he was little. The Lord forbids us, by His Prophet, to be great in our own sight, saying, *Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight.* [Is. 5, 21] And Paul admonishes us not to be great in our own opinions, saying, *Be not wise in your own conceits.* [Rom. 12, 16] While the mind then is puffed up, through the number of those that are subject to it, it falls into the lust of pride, the very height of its power pandering to it.

45. But for this and that not to be good is one thing, for any not to know how to use the good aright is another. For power is good in its proper place, but it requires careful conduct in a ruler. He therefore exercises it aright, who has learned both how to retain, and how to overcome it. He exercises it aright, who knows how to raise himself, by its means, above his faults, and, with it, to keep himself down on a level with others. For the mind of man is frequently elated, even when not supported by any power. How much more then does it exalt itself, when power joins itself unto it? And yet it is prepared to correct the faults of others with due punishment. Whence also it is said by Paul, *For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.* When then the administration of temporal power is undertaken, a person must watch with the greatest care, in order to learn how to select from it what is of use, and to withstand its temptations, and to feel himself, even with it, on an equality with others, and yet, by his zeal for revenge, to set himself above those who do wrong. We gain a fuller knowledge of this discretion, if we look also at some instances of ecclesiastical power. Peter then, though holding the Chief power ['principatum'] in the Church by Divine authority, refused to be revered unduly by Cornelius, who was a righteous man, and was prostrating himself before him, and acknowledged himself to be but his equal, saying, *Arise, do it not, I myself am also a man.* [Acts 10, 26] But on discovering the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, he soon displayed with what great power he had risen above others. [Acts 5, 1-11] For by a word he smote their life, which he detected by the searching of the Spirit; and called to mind that he held within the Church the chief power against sinners, which, when the honour had been violently thrust on him, he refused to acknowledge before his righteous brethren. In the one case holiness of conduct deserved a communion of equality, in the other his zeal for vengeance displayed his rightful power. Paul did not acknowledge that he was superior to his righteous brethren, when he said, *Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy.* [2 Cor. 1, 24] And he immediately added, *For by faith ye stand.* As if he were saying, We have not dominion over your faith, for this very reason, because ye stand by faith. For we are your equals, in a case where we know that you are standing firm. He seemed not to know that he was superior to his brethren when he said, *We have made ourselves as little ones among you;* [1 Thess. 2, 7] and again, *And ourselves your servants through Jesus Christ.* [2 Cor. 4, 5] But when he discovered a fault, which needed correction, he immediately remembered that he was their master, and said, *What will ye? shall I come to you with a rod?* [1 Cor. 4, 21]

46. A high place is therefore rightly discharged, when a ruler exercises his authority rather over sins, than over his brethren. For nature has made us all equal; but that some are committed to others to rule over them, it is not nature, but their own fault which places them beneath. Rulers, therefore, ought to raise themselves above the vices, on account of which they are placed above others: and, when they correct offenders, they should attend carefully to smite their faults with discipline, by the right of their power, but, by guarding their humility, to acknowledge, that they are equal with those

very brethren, who are corrected. Although it is frequently even right, that we should, in our secret thought, prefer those, whom we correct, to ourselves. For their faults are smitten, through us, with the vigour of discipline, but, in the faults we ourselves commit, we are not wounded by any one, with an attack of even a word. We are, therefore, the more indebted to the Lord, the more we sin without punishment from man. But our discipline the more exempts those under it from Divine punishment, the more it leaves not their faults unpunished here. We must maintain then both humility in our heart, and discipline in our work. And we must, meanwhile, keep careful watch, lest the rights of discipline should be relaxed, while the virtue of humility is unduly guarded, and lest, while a ruler humbles himself more than is becoming, he should be unable to bind beneath the bond of discipline the life of his subjects. Let us outwardly, then, keep up that office, which we undertake for others' benefit. Let us keep, within, the estimate we entertain of ourselves. But yet even those committed to us may properly learn, by some evidences which break forth, that we are such to ourselves within, in order to see what to dread from our authority, and to learn what to imitate from our humility. Having maintained the authority of our office, let us return unceasingly to our heart, and assiduously consider, that we are created on an equality with others, not that we have been temporally placed above others. For the more eminent is our power outwardly, the more ought it to be kept down within, lest it should overpower our thought, lest it should hurry the mind to be delighted with it, and lest the mind should soon be unable to control that power, to which it submits itself from desire of authority.

47. David had well learned to govern his kingly power, who used to overcome, by humbling himself, all pride at this power, saying, *O Lord, my heart is not exalted*. [Ps. 131, 1] And who subjoined, to increase his humility, *Nor mine eyes lofty*. And added, *Neither have I walked in great things*. And examining himself still further, with most searching enquiry, *Nor in wonderful things above me*. And drawing forth also all his thoughts from the bottom of his heart, he subjoins, saying, *If I have thought not humbly, but if I have exalted my soul*. Lo! he frequently repeats the sacrifice of humility, offered from his inmost heart, and, by again and again confessing, ceases not to offer it, and brings it before the eyes of his Judge, by repeatedly speaking of it. What is this? and how had he learned, that this sacrifice was pleasing to God, which he was offering, in His sight, with so great a repetition of words? Except that pride is ever wont to attend on the powerful, and that haughtiness is almost always associated with prosperity; because also abundance of humour often causes the hardness of a tumour.

48. But it is very wonderful, when humility of manners reigns in the hearts of the lofty. Whence we must consider, that whenever powerful persons think humbly, they attain to an eminence of strange, and, as it were, far distant virtue: and they rightly appease the Lord, the more readily, with this virtue, because they humbly offer Him that sacrifice, which the powerful can scarcely meet with. For it is a most difficult art of living, for a man to possess a high place, and to keep down boasting; to be indeed in power, and yet not to know that he is powerful; to know that he is powerful, for conferring favours, not to know all the power he possesses for requiting wrongs. It is therefore rightly said of such, *God rejecteth not the mighty, though He Himself is mighty*. For he, in truth, desires to imitate God, who administers his lofty power with a view to the benefit of others, and is not elated with his own praises; who, when placed above others, desires to serve, and not to rule over, them. [prodesse, præesse] For it is swelling pride, and not position of power, which is to blame. God confers power, but the wickedness of our mind causes haughtiness at our power. Let us take away, then, what we have contributed of our own, and those things, which we possess of



God's bounty, are good. For because not lawful power, but wicked deeds are condemned, it is fitly subjoined.

Ver. 6. *But He saveth not the wicked, and giveth judgment to the poor.*

[xxvii]

49. Holy Scripture is frequently wont to call the humble, 'poor.' Whence they are mentioned in the Gospel, with the addition, 'spirit,' when it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 5, 3] For, because riches visibly manifest the powerful, those are poor in their own sight, who are not puffed up in their own minds. But he calls those 'wicked,' who are either cut off from the piety of the faith, or who else contradict themselves, by their wicked habits, in that which they faithfully believe. Because then Almighty God condemns pride of wickedness, not loftiness of power; after it was said, *God rejecteth not the mighty, though He is Himself mighty;* it is rightly subjoined, *But He saveth not the wicked, and giveth judgment to the poor.* That is, He destroys the proud, but sets free the humble, by His judgment. Or certainly He gives judgment to the poor, because those who are now wickedly oppressed, then come themselves as judges over their oppressors.

50. There are in truth two classes, namely, of the Elect and the reprobate. But two ranks are comprised in each of these classes. For some are judged and perish; others are not judged and perish. Some are judged and reign; others are not judged and reign. They are judged and perish, to whom it is said in our Lord's declaration, *I hungered, and ye gave Me not to eat; I thirsted, and ye gave Me not drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye covered Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not.* [Matt. 25, 42. 43.] To whom it is before said, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* [ib. v. 41] But others are not judged in the last judgment, and yet perish. Of whom the Prophet says, *The ungodly do not rise again in the judgment.* [Ps. 1, 5] And of whom the Lord declares, *But he that believeth not is judged already.* [John 3, 18] And of whom Paul says, *They who have sinned without the Law, shall perish without the Law.* [Rom. 2, 12] Therefore even all unbelievers rise again, but to torment and not to judgment. For their case is not then examined; because they come into the presence of their strict Judge, with the condemnation already of their own unbelief. But those, who retain their profession of faith, but have not works in accordance with it, are convicted of sin, in order to their perishing. But they, who have not enjoyed even the sacraments of the faith, do not hear the reproof of the Judge at the last ordeal; for, condemned already by the darkness of their own unbelief, they do not deserve to be condemned by the open reproof of Him, Whom they had despised. Those hear at least the words of the Judge, because they have retained at least the words of His faith. These hear not in their condemnation the sentence of the eternal Judge: because they would not retain their reverence for Him even in words. Those perish by the Law, because they have sinned under the Law; whilst no mention of the Law is made to these, in their condemnation; because they made no effort to have any thing of the Law. For a prince, who administers an earthly commonwealth, punishes in different ways a citizen, who offends at home, and an enemy who makes war abroad. In the first case, he considers his rights, and condemns him in language of just reproof. But against an enemy he wages war: he wields instruments of destruction, and inflicts the tortures his wickedness deserves. But he does not enquire what the law provides for his offence. For it is not necessary for him to be destroyed by Law, who could never be held by the Law. Thus, therefore, in the last judgment, both a lawful reproof smites him down, who has departed in his conduct from that which

he held in profession; and he is destroyed without a judicial sentence, who is not held by the law of faith.

51. But of the class of the Elect, some are judged and reign. As those, who wipe away with their tears the stains of their life, who, atoning their former misdeeds by their subsequent conduct, conceal from the eyes of their Judge, with the cloak of alms deeds, whatever unlawfulness they may have ever committed. To whom, when placed at His right hand, the Judge says at His coming, *I hungered, and ye gave Me to eat. I thirsted, and ye gave Me to drink. I was a stranger, and ye took Me in, naked, and ye covered Me; sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came to Me.* [Matt. 25, 35. 36.] To whom he speaks before, saying, *Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* [ib. v. 34] But others are not judged, and yet reign; as those, who surpass even the precepts of the Law in the perfection of their virtues; because they are by no means satisfied with fulfilling that which the Divine Law enjoins on all, but with surpassing eagerness desire to perform more, than they would learn from general precepts. To whom it is said by the voice of the Lord; *Ye which have left all and have followed Me, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His Majesty, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* [Matt. 19, 28] And of whom the Prophet says, *The Lord will come to judgment with the elders of His people.* [Is. 3, 14] And of whom Solomon, when speaking of the Bridegroom of holy Church, observed, saying, *Her husband is noble in the gates, when he sitteth with the elders of the land.* [Prov. 31, 23] These, therefore, are not judged in the last judgment, and yet reign, because they come as judges together with their Creator. For, leaving all things, they performed, from ready devotion, more than they heard ordered in general terms. For that, which the rich young man heard, was said by a special command to the more perfect, and not generally to all, *Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me.* [Matt. 19, 21] For if a general command bound all persons under this precept, it would be at once a fault for us to possess any thing of this world. But a general direction to all persons in Holy Scripture is one thing, a command specially to the more perfect is another. These then are rightly not bound by the general judgment, who in their conduct have far surpassed even general precepts. For as they are not judged, and yet perish, who, from the persuasion of unbelief, scorn to be bound by the Law; so, they are judged not, and yet reign, who, from the persuasion of godliness, advance even beyond the general precepts of the Divine Law. Hence is it, that Paul, far surpassing even special precepts given him, performed more in deed, than he received by the appointment of permission. For when he had received, that preaching the Gospel he should live of the Gospel, he both communicated the Gospel to his hearers, and yet refused to be maintained at the expense of the Gospel. [1 Cor. 9, 14. 15.] Why then should he be judged in order to reign, who received a less obligation, but found out a higher mode of life? Let it be said then rightly, *He giveth judgment to the poor:* because, the more they are despised, by this world, for their great humility, the more do they then rise up, with greater height of power, to the seats which have been assigned them. Whence it also follows;

Ver. 7. *He will not withdraw His eyes from the righteous, but establisheth kings on the throne for ever, and there are they exalted.*

52. For God is perhaps believed to have withdrawn His eyes from the righteous, because they are here wounded by the injustice of the unrighteous, and are unavenged. But He then more regards His servants, when the iniquity of their persecutor unjustly afflicts them. For, beholding what they here humbly endure, He doubtless even now looks forward to the recompense He is there mercifully to

bestow on them. He does not therefore withdraw His eyes from the righteous. Behold how the one groans in his humility; the other is proud, and flourishes in his wickedness. The one bruises his heart, the other is exalted with pride at his iniquity. Which then of these is far withdrawn from the sight of God, the one who has suffered injustice, or the one who has inflicted it on the sufferers? The one, who has kept hold of Divine grace, amid the gloom of sorrow, or he who, amidst external pleasure, has lost the light of righteousness within?

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53. But holy men are properly termed ‘kings,’ in the language of Scripture; because having been raised above all the motions of the flesh, at one time they control the appetite of lust; at another, they moderate the heat of avarice; at one time, they bow down the boastfulness of pride; at another, they crush the suggestion of envy; at another, they extinguish the fire of passion. They are ‘kings’ then, because they have learned not to give way to the motions of their temptations, by consenting to them; but to gain the mastery, by ruling over them. Since, therefore, they pass, from this power of authority, to the power of retribution, let it be rightly said, *He establisheth kings on the throne for ever*. For they are wearied for a time, by ruling themselves, but they are placed for ever on the throne of the kingdom of eternal elevation; and they there receive the power of justly judging others, just as they are here unskilled in unjustly sparing themselves. For it is hence said in another place; *Until righteousness be turned into judgment*. [Ps. 94, 15] Paul says of himself and his fellows; *That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*. [2 Cor. 5, 21] Righteousness, then, is turned into judgment, because they, who now live righteously and blamelessly, then obtain the power of judging others. Hence the Lord says to the Church of Laodicea, *To him that hath overcome I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I have overcome, and have sat with My Father on His throne*. [Rev. 3, 21] The Lord asserts, that He had sat as a conqueror with His Father on His throne, because after the struggles of His passion, after the reward of His resurrection, He pointed out more clearly to all, that He was equal to the Power of the Father, and He made it known that He was not inferior to Him by having trampled under foot the sting of death. Hence He says to Mary, who did not as yet believe that He was like His Father, *Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father*. [John 20, 17] For, for us to sit on the throne of the Son, is for us to judge with the authority of the Son Himself. For, because we derive, from His virtue, the power of judgment, we sit, as it were, on His throne. Nor is it inconsistent, that He declares, in another place, that His disciples will come on twelve thrones, and that here He says, that they will sit on His throne. [Matt. 19, 28] For, by twelve thrones is set forth the universal judgment, but by the throne of the Son, the special preeminence of judicial power. One and the same thing then is designated by twelve thrones, and by the single throne of the Son, because, namely, the universal judgment is undertaken, by the intervention of our Mediator. Let it be said then, *He establisheth kings on the throne for ever*.

54. But by suitably subjoining “*for ever*,” he suggests, what he plainly means. For if he were speaking of the throne of an earthly kingdom, he would not have added “*for ever*,” since they who seize hold of that throne, are placed in it, not for ever, but only for a time. But he properly subjoined, *And there they are exalted*. As if he were suggesting to the mind of his hearer, saying, Because they are here brought low, they are there raised up. For to holy men this is a place of humiliation, as that is to be one of exaltation. Whence it is written in another place, *Thou hast humbled them in the place of affliction*. [Ps. 44, 19] For this present life is a place of affliction.

They then, who are journeying to their eternal home, now despise themselves in the place of affliction for a time, that they may then be truly exalted in the place of joy. It follows:  
Ver. 8, 9. *And if they shall be in chains, and bound with the cords of poverty, He will shew them their works, and their wickednesses, because they have been violent.*

[xxix]

55. The chains of bondage, are the very detention of their present pilgrimage. Paul had seen, that he was bound by these chains, when he was saying, *I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] He perceived that he was bound with the cords of poverty, when, beholding the true riches, he entreated them also for his disciples. *That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints.* [Eph. 1, 18]

But after this it is rightly added, *He will shew them their works, and their wickednesses, because they have been violent.* For when, by loving, we learn more of heavenly glory, we then feel the sins we have committed to have been more burdensome. Whence also Paul, after having felt the grace of heavenly things, found that what he had believed to be in him a zeal for virtue, was but wickedness; saying, *Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.* [1 Tim. 1, 13] Or certainly, when saying, *But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.* [Phil. 3, 7] Whence it is also fitly subjoined, Ver. 10. *He will open also their ear, to correct them, and will speak to them that they return from iniquity.*

[xxx]

56. To ‘open the ear from iniquity,’ is to lay open the understanding of knowledge. But a man is reprov'd, and his ear opened, when he feels within him a desire after eternal goods, and acknowledges the sins which he has outwardly committed. But temporal punishment can also be understood by the chains and cords of poverty. For they who hear not the words of their Ruler, are frequently warned by the blows of the Smiter; in order that punishments, at least, may lead them onwards to good desires, whom rewards do not invite. Whence it is said by the prophet, *Bind with bit and bridle the jaws of those who do not draw near to Thee.* But if they despise even scourges, it is plain that they there feel the sufferings of heavier punishments, the more they here trample down the grace of greater consideration. Whence also it follows,  
Ver. 11, 12. *If they shall hear and observe Him, they shall fulfil their days in good, and their years in glory; but if they shall not hear, they shall pass away by the sword, and shall be consumed with folly.*

[xxxi]

57. By ‘good,’ is designated right conduct, but by ‘glory,’ heavenly recompense. They, then, who study to obey the Divine commands, fulfil their days in good, and their years in glory. Because they pass the course of this life in right deeds, and perfect their consummation by a blessed retribution. *But if they shall not hear, they shall pass away by the sword, and shall be consumed in their folly.* For vengeance smites them in tribulation, and the end shuts them up in folly. For there are some, whom not even torments keep back from their abandoned habits. Of whom it is said by the Prophet,

*Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast scourged them, and they have refused to receive correction.* [Jer. 5, 3] And of whom it is said under the figure of Babylon, *We have cured Babylon, and she is not healed.* [Jer. 51, 9] Of whom it is said again, *I have slain and destroyed My people, and yet they have not returned from their ways?* [Jer. 15, 7] These sometimes become worse by the scourge, because, when attacked by pain, they are either more hardened in their contumacious obstinacy, or, what is worse, launch out into even the exasperation of blasphemy. It is well said, then, that they pass away by the sword, and are consumed with folly; for through their scourges, they increase those sins, which they ought, in consequence of them, to correct. And they both feel even here the punishments of the blow, and do not escape there the sufferings of righteous retribution. For it is the infatuation of folly that iniquity so fetters them, that not even punishment keeps them from offending. It follows,  
Ver. 13. *Hypocrites and crafty men provoke the wrath of God.*

[xxxii]

58. When mentioning hypocrites, he appropriately subjoins, ‘and crafty.’ For unless they are crafty in wit, they cannot consistently make pretence of that which they wish to appear. For there are certain faults, which are easily perpetrated even by those of duller sense. For any one even of dull understanding is able to swell, for instance, with pride, to be eager with the desires of avarice, and to yield to the assaults of lust. But a person is unable to carry on the falsity of simulation, unless he is one of more subtle wit. For whoever is such, is distracted in truth by constant observation, in watching two points; so as to skilfully learn, both to conceal what he really is, and to make a show of what he is not; to suppress his real faults, and to display unreal goods; not to boast himself openly of that, which he seems to be; and to pretend often to decline glory, in order to obtain the greater glory. For, because he cannot attain it by pursuing it before the eyes of men, he generally studies to secure it by shrinking from it. These things then do not at all suit the simple; for if they do, they are no longer simple.

59. But when mentioning hypocrites and crafty men, he very properly added, not that they deserve, but that they *provoke the wrath of God*. For to sin even through ignorance, is to deserve the wrath of God. But wilfully to contradict His commands, to know what is good, but to make light of it, to be able and yet unwilling to do good, is to provoke it. For these are darkened within by the commission of iniquity, and are whitened outwardly by their display of righteousness. To whom it is declared by the voice of the Lord, *Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which appear to men beautiful without, but are within full of dead mens bones, and all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.* [Matt. 23, 27-18] They preserve, then, in outward display, that which they assail in their inward conduct. But, by thinking evil within, they increase those sins, which they conceal outwardly, by assuming another character. They cannot therefore now have any excuse, before the strict Judge, from ignorance; because, while they display every kind of sanctity before the eyes of men, they are a witness against themselves, that they are not ignorant how to live aright. Let it be rightly said then, *Hypocrites and crafty men provoke the wrath of God*. But he adds what befalls them at last, saying,  
Ver. 13. *Neither shall they cry, when they are bound.*

[xxxiii]

60. Every wicked person, who, though he is wicked, does not seek to appear holy, when smarting under the infliction of the scourge, is not ashamed to confess that he is wicked. But a wicked person, who intercepts the judgments of men by a shew of sanctity, even when he is smitten with the rod, shrinks from exposing his iniquity, because he has been accustomed to appear holy. But if he is ever hard pressed, he scarcely confesses, even superficially, that he is wicked; because he is confounded at disclosing his inward character by sincere confession. But we are, as it were, free, when we are not chastened by any reproofs; but we are 'bound,' when we are constrained by the blows of the rod. We cry, then, the more loudly when bound, the more sincerely we confess our sins, when placed beneath the blow. For devout confession is a loud cry in the ears of God. Because then the blows of the rod, even when they chastise hypocrites, do not bring them to honest confession; (for they shrink from being discovered to be sinners, because they were counted holy in the opinion of all men;) though the scourges now smite them to the utmost, though they are aware that they are being led on to eternal punishments, they yet wish to remain the same in the opinion of men, as they had always studied to display themselves. Though smarting, then, even under the blow of the extremest suffering, because they neglect to put forth an honest confession, even when afflicted, they scorn, as it were, to cry out, even when bound. It is well said then, *Neither shall they cry, when they are bound.*

61. Although it can be understood in another way also. For every one, who, although he is wicked, fears not to be called holy by men, though he blames himself as wicked, in his secret thought, yet when he begins to hear of himself frequently as righteous, loses that which he used to hold of himself within. For he pours forth his heart without; and because he willingly receives a false testimony of himself without, he does not enquire what he should think of himself within. Whence it comes to pass, that he seeks even for the solaces of empty praise, if they are wanting, and that, forgetting what he is, he seeks to appear what he is not. While they who are such, then, pretend to be righteous in the judgment of men, and display their praiseworthy actions to the eyes of beholders, they are dealt with justly in secret, so that, the more they endeavour to deceive others, the more are they even themselves deceived as to themselves within. For they lose all eye for anxiously searching into their own state. For they excuse themselves from searching into, and examining their own conduct, but believe themselves to be the persons they are said to be; and they consider themselves to be holy, not because they so live, but because they are so called. But they neglect God's searching judgment, and to look into themselves; for they rest their belief in their merit on the testimony of another's mouth. But when they are smitten by a sudden blow, they are unable either to confess that they are wicked, or to discover themselves as they really are: because, namely, they believed themselves to be holy from the profession of men. It is well said, then, *Neither shall they cry, when they are bound.* For they trust, with vain hope, that they are coming before their heavenly Judge, such as they know they appeared in the sight of men. And the wretched men do not find themselves out, even in the midst of torments; and, while they look for the testimony of untrue praise, they lose the remedy of true confession. They are said even to be bound, and yet to cry not; for, overcome by the importunity of human applause, the wretched men consider themselves holy, even when they are dying in sins. To whom it is well said by the Prophet, *Return ye transgressors to your heart.* [Is. 46, 8] For were they to return to their heart, they would pour out themselves in words of outward profession. For what is nearer to us than our heart? What is nearer to us, than that thing which is within us? And yet, when it is distracted with wicked thoughts, our heart wanders far away from us. The prophet then sends the transgressor a long way,

when he compels him to return to his heart: for the more he has distracted himself with outward things, the more does he hardly find out the means of returning to himself. But since, because the mind of hypocrites is diverted from the single consideration of eternity, it is ravaged by the inundation of manifold thoughts, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 14. *Their soul shall die in a tempest.*

[xxxiv]

62. For they were seeming to live as if in calm, when they were taking care to rejoice in the credit of holiness. But their soul, which used to rejoice in the fatal tranquillity of human praise, dies by a sudden tempest. For most commonly an unexpected tempest suddenly produces a change in all the calm blandishment of the air, and danger cannot be avoided, inasmuch as it could not be foreseen. Whence hypocrites, who neglect to watch over their conduct, are said to die in a tempest. For the sudden whirlwind of an inward shock casts them forth hence, whom the pride of outward applause exalts on high; and, while they embrace in their praise that which they are not, they suddenly find in vengeance what they are. But it is well said by Solomon, *As silver is proved in the fining-pot, and gold in the furnace, so is a man proved by the mouth of him that praiseth him.* [Prov. 17, 3] For praise of one's self tortures the just, but elates the wicked. But while it tortures, it purifies the just; and while it pleases the wicked, it proves them to be reprobate. For these revel in their own praise, because they seek not the glory of their Maker. But they who seek the glory of their Maker, are tortured with their own praise, lest that which is spoken of without, should not exist within them; lest, if that, which is said, really exist, it should be made void in the sight of God by these very honours; lest the praise of men should soften the firmness of their heart, and should lay it low in self-satisfaction; and lest that, which ought to aid them to increase their exertions, should be, even now, the recompense of their labour. But when they see that their own praises tend to the glory of God, they even long for and welcome them. For it is written, *They may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* [Matt. 5, 16] They make themselves, therefore, a path for men to follow, as often as they manifest any thing in themselves, by which God can be recognised; because they seek not to attract the praises of men to themselves, but wish they should pass on, through their means, to the glory of their Maker. But haughty men prostitute their effeminate hearts to human praise, because they are corrupted by self-love. Of whom it is said in another place, *Men shall be lovers of their own selves.* [2 Tim. 3, 2] But of this very corruption of theirs it is here fitly subjoined,

*And their life among the effeminate.*

[xxxv]

63. For, if they were living as men, transitory praise would not infect them with any corruption. Whence the Prophet persuades the Elect, saying, *Do manfully; and let your heart be strengthened.* For when saying, *Do manfully*, he immediately subjoined, *and let your heart be strengthened.* As if he desired to secure the sex of the heart. For the mind of a luxurious man is corrupted, if it is delighted with transitory objects. The life of hypocrites then perishes among the effeminate, because it is found to be corrupted with the luxury of praise. But in another translation, [LXX.] it is not rendered, *Their life among the effeminate*, but, *Let their life be wounded by angels.* But though these expressions differ in words, they agree in sense; for angels wound the life of the effeminate, when the messengers of truth assail it with the shafts of holy preaching. Because we have heard

then what occurs in the damnation of the reprobates, let us hear what follows, respecting the deliverance of the humble.

Ver. 15. *He will deliver the poor from his straitness.*

64. The poor is delivered from his straitness, when any humble person is set free from this affliction of his pilgrimage. For he is here oppressed with even continual tribulations, in order that he may be excited to seek for the joy of real consolation. Whence it follows also, *And will open his ear in tribulation.*

To open the ear in tribulation, is to open the hearing of the heart, by the affliction of blows. For when we despise commands, we are treated with a merciful severity, in order that we may fear the rod. Tribulation then opens the ear of the heart, which this world's prosperity often closes. For it is said by Solomon, *The turning away of the little ones shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* [Prov. 1, 32] It follows,

Ver. 16. *He will therefore bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place.*

[xxxvi]

65. Every one who forsakes the way of life, and casts himself down into the darkness of sins, plunges himself, as it were, into a well or pitfall. But if, through long commission he is also so weighed down by a habit of sin, as to be unable to rise upward, he is pent in, as it were, in the narrow opening of a well. Whence David the Prophet entreats in the person of sinners, saying, *Let not the tempest of water drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the well press its mouth upon me.* [Ps. 69, 15] For a tempest of water has, as it were, hurried away him, whom the iniquity of evil doing has moved from stability in goodness. But if it has not yet prevailed by long custom, it has not overwhelmed. He has already fallen into a well, who has done that, which the law of God forbids. But if long custom does not yet weigh him down, the well has not contracted its mouth. He escapes therefore with greater ease, the less closely he is pent in by habit. Whence the prophet Jeremiah, when beholding that Judaea had been overwhelmed, through long habit, by iniquities, bewails himself in his lamentations, under her person, and says, *My life is fallen into a well, and they have placed a stone over me.* [Lam. 3, 53] For one's life falls into a pit, when it is denied with the pollution of iniquity. But a stone is placed over, when the mind is also consumed by sin, through long habit, so that, though willing to rise, it is quite unable to do so, because the weight of evil habit presses on it from above. But because it submits to the power of God, and is brought back to the large room of good deeds, after the confinement of evil habit, it is said, *He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place.* For he is safely brought from a narrow opening into a broad place, who, after having borne the yoke of iniquity, is brought back by penitence to the liberty of good works.

66. For it is, as it were, the narrowness of a confined opening, to wish, and yet to be unable to rise from an overpowering evil habit; to tend, in desire, to things above, but yet still to remain in deed in things below, to advance in heart, but not to follow in act, and to endure one's self as a kind of self-contradiction within one's self. But when a soul, proceeding thus, is assisted by the hand of grace to raise it up, it arrives from a narrow opening to a broad place: because, having overcome its difficulties, it performs the good works which it desires. The prophet David had beheld the enclosure of a narrow opening, when he said, *Thou hast delivered my soul from necessities, and*



*hast not shut me up into the hands of the enemy.* [Ps. 31, 7. 8.] But he found that he had been brought safely into a broad place, when he added, *Thou hast set my feet in a large room.* [ibid.] For our feet are firmly placed in a large room, when we journey to those good things which are fitted for us, and are not impeded by any difficulty. For we are proceeding, as it were, through a wide place whither we please, because we are not hard pressed by any difficulties placed in our way.

67. But Eliu would say this rightly, if his opinion were but suitable to blessed Job. For he believed, that he had been scourged for his faults, and therefore decided that he had fallen into a narrow opening. For with the heavier blows he beheld him afflicted, with the more abominable iniquities he believed him to be weighed down; being surely ignorant that his scourges were an increase of his merits, not a punishment for his sin. But when he declares that he had fallen into a narrow opening, he proceeds, as it were, to speak more fully of the profound depth in which Job is plunged: and says,  
*And which hath no foundation beneath it.*

[xxxvii]

68. Every sin has no foundation; because it has no subsistence in its own proper nature. For evil has no substance. But that which any how exists, unites with the nature of good. The narrow opening is said, then, to have no foundation beneath it, because the pollution of sin has no power of subsisting by itself. But since foundation is derived from *fundum*, (bottom,) we may without impropriety understand that 'foundation' is put for bottom, as hearing is derived from ear, and yet the ear itself is frequently designated by the word hearing. When speaking then of a narrow opening, he added, as wishing fully to describe the profound abyss, *And which hath no foundation* (or bottom) *beneath it.* For the infernal pit swallows up him, whom iniquity hurries away. But the infernal pit is rightly believed not to have a bottom; because every one who is swept away by it, is devoured by the boundless profound. For the Prophet, wishing to describe fully its boundless immensity, says, *The infernal pit hath enlarged its soul, and hath opened its mouth without measure.* [Is. 5, 14] As therefore that is said to be enlarged without measure which attracts very many to itself, so it is not improperly believed to be deep, and without a bottom, because it absorbs, as it were, into the boundless abyss of its immensity those, whom it receives into itself. And therefore when saying, *He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place,* he fitly subjoined, *And which hath no foundation beneath it.* As if he were saying, He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening, which has no bottom under it. For since it is through sin that we tend to the pit, He brings safely from a narrow opening him whom He delivers from sin. But him whom He rescues from the narrow opening, He withdraws from the depths of hell.

69. Though it can also be understood in another sense. For as he who is plunged into a well, is confined in the bottom of it; so would the mind fall in, and remain, as it were, at the bottom, if, after having once fallen, it were to confine itself within any measure of sin. But when it cannot be contented with the sin into which it has fallen, while it is daily plunging into worse offences, it finds, as it were, no bottom to the well into which it has fallen, on which to rest. For there would be a bottom to the well, if there were any bounds to his sin. Whence it is well said in another place, *When a sinner hath come into the lowest depth of sins, he contemneth.* [Prov. 18, 3] For he puts by returning, because he has no hope that he can be forgiven. But when he sins still more through despair, he withdraws, as it were, the bottom from the well, so as to find therein no resting place. It

follows,

*But the rest of thy table shall be full of fatness.*

[xxxviii]

70. The rest of the table, is the refreshment of inward satiety: which is said to be full of fatness, because it is set forth with the delight of eternal pleasure. The Prophet was hungering after the feasts of this table, when saying, *I shall be satisfied, when Thy glory shall be manifested.* [Ps. 17, 15] He was thirsting for the cups of this table, when saying, *My soul thirsted for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?* [Ps. 42, 2] Eliu, therefore, wishing to console the temporal sufferings of blessed Job, by an eternal compensation, promises him, as if freely, from himself, that which was justly due to him as his desert, saying, *But the rest of thy table shall be full of fatness.* It follows,

Ver. 17. *But thy cause hath been judged as the cause of the ungodly, thou shall receive thy cause and judgment.*

[xxxix]

71. The cause of the good, is righteousness. And their cause is judged, as the cause of the ungodly, because their righteousness is here smitten with fatherly correction, that they may be taught to exercise greater vigilance, not only by the injunction of commands, but by the infliction of blows. But they receive their cause and justice, because from that righteousness, with which they now live, they hereafter ['tune'] shine forth in the height of judicial power; so that they are then able to judge all things the more powerfully, the more strictly all their conduct is now judged. But these points, which blessed Job ever maintained with stedfast faith, Eliu mentioned, as if he were making some new promise. For haughty men have these peculiarities: they falsely exaggerate what is wrong, and if ever they state that which is good, they bring it forward as something unknown. Whence it comes to pass that they venture to teach those who are wiser than themselves, because, namely, they believe that they alone are acquainted with such subjects. But when they condescend to any words of consolation, they consider that they have been at once degraded, and by the harshness of proud reproof, they reestablish, as it were, their ability; in order that they who seemed to have condescended in soothing speech ['blandientes testes' Ben. 'testes' seems a misprint.], may be dreaded when reproof has suddenly sprung up. Whence also Eliu immediately added, saying, Ver. 18-21. *Let not then anger overcome thee, to oppress any one, neither let the multitude of places bow thee down. Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all the mighty in strength. Prolong not the night, that people may go up for them. Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery.*

[xl]

72. In most manuscripts we find 'gifts;' ['donorum'] in a few, however, but more ancient, we find 'places.' ['locorum'] But since the expression, *Let not the multitude of gifts turn thee aside*, needs no explanation, we have thought good that that expression should be rather expounded, which seems to be explained with some slight difficulty. But the pride, which uttered these words, proves of how great haughtiness they are. But, because we have said that Eliu is a type of the arrogant, and blessed Job of the Elect, if we examine them more accurately, we demonstrate how appropriate

they are even now to haughty men within the Church. Holy men wonder at the doings of others, even when trifling, but make light of their own doings, even when great. But haughty men, on the other hand, make light of other persons' doings, even when great, and wonder at their own even when trifling, and generally think well of their own misdeeds, but cease not to think ill of the good qualities of others. For while they seek their own glory, they are mischievously desirous, that whatever virtue is performed by others, should be scarred with the brand of iniquity, and a weighty deed of goodness they pervert into a taint of guilt. For frequently, when they behold the wicked severely punished by the Church, they unjustly make a kind of complaint that the innocent are afflicted, and they miscall the splendour of its discipline by the appellation of iniquity. Whence Eliu, representing the arrogant, as if admonishing Job, says, *Let not anger overcome thee, to oppress any one*. For whatever is done by Holy Church with the censure of discipline, haughty men consider as an emotion of anger. And because, from their desire of human praise, they are ever anxious to appear kind, they consider that none should be corrected with strictness and severity. Whence also, as was before observed, they consider that those are oppressed, whom they see restrained from sin, against their will, even by righteous rulers.

73. But the Lord having been the cause that Holy Church has grown up with a height of religious power in all parts of the world; they assail, and ascribe to sinful pride this very temporal power, which it exercises rightly. Whence Eliu subjoins, saying, *And let not the multitude of places bow thee down*. As if it were said by the tongue of haughty men to Holy Church herself, preserving her humility more in prosperity. Because thou art every where regarded with the reverence of faith, beware that thou art not elated with the power ['fascibus,' al. 'fastibus'] this reverence bestows. For they behold certain persons, who under the guise of religion, are puffed up with the sin of pride: and the fault which they justly blame in these, they unjustly bring forward as a charge against all. Not at all considering, namely, that there are those within her, who know how to exercise temporal power aright, though yet despising it, and to love and look forward to eternal objects with full desire; who can discharge the high office which has been committed to them, and carefully fulfil their duty of inward humility; so that neither do they neglect all care for the office they have undertaken, on account of their humility; nor, again, does their humility swell into pride by reason of their office. And if there are perhaps some within her, who serve not God, but their own glory, under pretext of religion, yet she endeavours either severely to correct them, if possible; or, if otherwise, to endure them with patience. And she either, in correcting them, embraces them as her children, or, through tolerating, is harassed by them as her enemies. For she knows that the life of the just is wounded by their pride; she knows that whatever sin is committed through the wickedness of such persons is brought forward as a charge against her. But she is the less afraid of bearing the blame of others' sins, since she is aware that even her Head endured such wrongs as this. For it is written of Him, *And He was numbered with the wicked*. [Is. 53, 12] Of Him it is said again, *He Himself hath borne our weaknesses, and He Himself hath carried our sorrows*. [Mark 15, 28; Is. 53, 4] Let haughty men then pursue their course, and by their estimate of the wicked, vex the life of the innocent. The Church of the Elect knows how to tolerate the deeds of the one, and the words of the others: and to convert the minds of the wicked by bearing with them. And even though they are not able to be converted, yet she patiently endures their disgrace. For she considers that it tends to secure her a twofold reward, that she is scorned without for the merits of those, by whose life she is wounded even within.

74. But it must be observed that he does not say, *Let not the multitude of places elate thee*, but, *Let*

*not the multitude of places bow thee down.* For every one who is raised up in this world, is turned aside by his very exaltation; because when he exalts himself outwardly, he falls within. Eliu, therefore, beholding the fall of a heart in its pride, says, *And let not the multitude of places bow thee down.* As if it were said to Holy Church, by the voice of haughty men, Take heed, thou art not diverted from thy inward intention, if thou art exalted by the veneration of the whole world. It follows,

Ver. 19. *Lay down thy greatness without sorrow, and all the mighty in strength.*

[xli]

75. Whom else do we understand by the mighty of Holy Church, except those, who both by their lofty attempts, and by successful designs have strength to overcome the desires of this world? Its greatness therefore consists in the life of its mighty ones; because it is then rendered more glorious, when its Elect contend, even to the death, with constant resolution, in defence of the Faith. Haughty men, therefore, when Apostles have been withdrawn from this world, and Martyrs withdrawn also to heavenly places, because they perhaps perceive that more learned and powerful rulers are greatly wanting, suspect that they have remained the only ones within the Church. And hence, while they prefer themselves, they insult, under pretence of advising, her, and say, *Lay down thy greatness without sorrow, and all the mighty in strength.* As if they said in open reproaches, "Be not confident, that thou possessest greatness, for, since the old fathers have been taken away, thou hast no longer any in whose life thou canst boast." They say these things in truth, as not knowing that Almighty God does not leave His Church without proper government. For when He summons the strong to their reward, He strengthens, in their place, the weak for the contest: when He rewards the one by bearing them away, He supplies to the others strength for their labours, for Him to recompense. Of whom it is said to the same Holy Church, *Instead of thy fathers, children are born to thee; thou shall make them princes over all the earth.* [Ps. 45, 16] For those who are afterwards preferred, are appointed to supply the virtue of the old fathers, because also when aged trees are felled, tender shoots grow up in the place of their strength. But haughty men believe not that they are strong, whom they knew at one time to be weak: and they disdain to reverence those when changed, whom they remember to have been contemptible.

76. But since they see that the more righteous are few, and the ungodly the largest body therein, just as in threshing the fruits, the quantity of the chaff is greater; they despise even the life of the righteous from their estimate of the wicked. They see in truth that some of its rulers, supported by temporal power, revel in the pride of that power. They see that that reverence for religion, which their fathers preserved [so old Mss. al. 'sowed'] to this world by dying, these sweep away, by exulting in worldly joys; and consider that they are mighty, but not with strength. For while they are supported by temporal power, they are strengthened, as it were, by a kind of weakness. For the stronger they are without, the more are they bereft of all the might of strength within. And therefore it is said to her by haughty men, *Lay down the mighty in strength.* As if it were plainly said, They once clung to thee, truly strong, who maintained, in their lives, that which they taught in words. But now they who are thy rulers, are mighty in appearance, not in strength. For they cease not to set themselves forth as worthy of honour, but are the more weak and contemptible, the more they are afraid that respect for their honour is set aside, in comparison with the truth. Haughty men rightly think thus of most persons, but plunge headlong into the sin of pride, the more they suppose all persons whom they behold above them, to be such. For the evil conduct of the many ought not to

lead them to form an opinion of all. For although those whom they know, and decide upon, are wicked; yet some, whom they know not, are holy. For now is the season of threshing, and the grains are, as yet, concealed beneath the chaff. No fruit then will be expected from the threshing floor, if that alone, which is seen on the surface, is supposed to be therein. Because, therefore, they despise those whom they behold, and sneer at those, whom they know, being put in the place of the old fathers, it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 20. *Prolong not the night, that people may go up for them.*

[xlii]

77. As if the arrogant openly said; Act not so in the darkness of thy ignorance, as to substitute a host of infirm persons in the place of the strong. For by the name ‘people’ [Lat. ‘peoples’] are designated those, who, given up to the common practice, live without restraint in all that they desire. But to ‘prolong the night, that people should go up in the place of the strong,’ is, if it is caused by negligence, that the unlearned and weak occupy the place of the learned and strong. People go up in the place of the strong, when they who have learned to live wickedly, obtain the place of pastors. And this would be rightly said, if it were spoken humbly. For haughty men, even when they give good advice, exercise their wicked over-bearingness [‘superstitionis.’ vide Ducange]. For, as was before stated, they more desire to smite with reproof, than to cherish with consolation. Whence it is presently subjoined,

Ver. 21. *Decline not to iniquity; for thou hast begun to follow this after misery.*

Haughty men in truth call this the misery of the Church, because they suspect that its main body is despised by God: and they scorn it with loftier pride, the more they suspect that it is utterly despised by God.

Having given rapidly a figurative exposition of these words, we must now gather their moral meaning; that, having learned the figure of the Church, which we believe to be generally described, we may learn what we may specially gather from these words in each single case. He says therefore,

Ver. 18. *Let not, therefore, anger overcome thee, to oppress any one.*

[xliii]

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

78. Every one, who is required to correct the vices of others, ought first of all to look carefully into himself; lest, while punishing others’ faults, he himself should be overcome by his zeal for punishment. For furious anger, under the guise of justice, frequently ravages the mind; and while it seems to rage with zeal for righteousness, it gratifies the fury of its wrath, and considers that it justly performs, whatever its anger wickedly dictates. Whence also it frequently transgresses the due limits of punishment, because it is not restrained by the measure of justice. For it is right, that when we correct others’ faults, we should first measure our own; that the mind should first cease to glow with its own warmth, should first control within itself the impulse of its zeal with calm moderation [‘æquitate’]; lest we should sin ourselves, in the correction of sin, if we are hurried on with headlong fury to punish offences, and lest we, who are deciding on, and punishing, a fault,

should commit one by punishing it immoderately. For there follows not the correction, but rather the oppression of the delinquent, if, in punishment, our anger extends further than the offence deserves. For, in the correction of faults, anger ought to be under the control of the mind and not its master, so as not to take the lead in the execution of justice, as though imposing a command, but to follow after, as though obeying directions, and to carry out, as if employed, the sentence which has been made known to it, and not go first as if an employer. It is well said therefore, *Let not anger overcome thee, to oppress any one*. Because, namely, if he, who is endeavouring to correct, is overcome by anger, he oppresses before he corrects. For, whilst he is more inflamed than he ought to be, he rushes unchecked into enormous cruelty, under the pretence of just punishment. And this is frequently the case, for this reason, because the hearts of rulers are too little intent on the love of their Creator alone. For whilst they desire many things in this life, they are distracted with countless thoughts. And when they suddenly discover the faults of their subjects, they are unable to judge them aright, in agreement with God; because they cannot suddenly bring back to the height of severity, their hearts which have been scattered abroad in transitory cares. They therefore discover less readily, when excited, the balance of moderation for the punishment of sins, the less they seek for it in their season of tranquillity. Whence, when Eliu was saying, *Let not anger overcome thee to oppress any*, in order to express that the causes of injustice and of overpowering anger were the same, he immediately added,  
*And let not the multitude of places bow thee down.*

[xliv]

79. We are turned aside into as many places, as are the cares with which we are distracted. For as the space of the body is the place of the body, so is each intention of thought the place of the mind. And if, while it is impelled hither and thither, it is pleasingly occupied with any delightful thought of its own, it is, as it were, put to rest in a certain place. For as often as, overcome by weariness, we are led from thought to thought, we migrate, as it were, with weary mind from place to place. As many thoughts then as spring up and dissipate the unity of good intention, so do as many places bend down the loftiness of the mind. For the mind would stand upright, if it always clung close to that one thought to which it ought. The mind would stand upright, if it did not, by its countless motions, prostrate itself in fluctuating change. But when it now takes up these things, and now passes off to others, it is turned aside, as it were, from its state of uprightness through a multitude of places; and while it extends itself through many things, it detaches itself from that one intention, to which it ought to adhere. But yet this habit of change has become a nature to us ever since the guilt of the first sin. For when the mind endeavours to stand in itself, it is somehow or other drawn away from itself, without knowing it. For the soul of man is diverted by an impulse of disgust, from every object to which it directs its thoughts. But whilst it eagerly seeks for subjects to think upon, and suddenly loathes those it has thought upon, it teaches us, that that which does not continue at rest, wherever placed, depends on something elsewhere. For it does, in truth, depend on Him, by Whom it was created. And because it was made to seek after God alone, and since every thing which it seeks beneath Him, is less than He; that which is not God, justly does not satisfy it. Hence it is that it is scattered hither and thither, and turns away, as we said, under the impulse of loathing, from every object. For being eagerly desirous of satisfaction, it seeks a place wherein to rest; but it has lost that One, Whom it might have had to its satisfaction. Whence it is now led through many objects, that it may be satisfied with their variety at least, since it cannot be satisfied with their quality.

80. But holy men watch themselves with careful observation, so as not to be separated, through changeableness, from the object of their thoughts; and, because they desire to be ever the same, they carefully confine themselves to the thought with which they love God. For, in the contemplation of their Creator, they are about to obtain this, that they enjoy always the same stability of mind. No changeableness then dissipates them; because, namely, their thought ever continues without any difference in itself. They endeavour, therefore, now to imitate that, with labour, which, afterwards, they receive with joy as a gift. To this unchangeable state had the Prophet attached himself by the virtue of love, when saying, *One thing I have asked of the Lord, this I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord.* [Ps. 27, 4] To this unity Paul had adhered in his intention, when saying, *But one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I follow after for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ.* [Phil. 3, 13, 14] For, if there is any human weakness in their hearts, a severe examination speedily checks it, and when their thought wanders as if childishly, they are soon kept in restraint by manly correction. Whence it is, that they collect at once their distracted mind; and fix it, as far as they are able, in one single thought. Because then the position of the mind is bent down by the changeableness of thoughts, it is rightly said by Eliu, *Let not the multitude of places turn thee aside.*

81. But frequently, while the mind of a righteous man stands firm in the stronghold of its resolution, while it recovers itself from every dispersion of change, and keeps down whatever superfluously arises within; it is smitten by the very glory of its own rectitude, and is raised up with the pride of presuming on itself. For he who performs great deeds, though he may think humbly of himself, yet knows that his doings are great. For, if he knows not that they are great, he doubtless keeps but little watch over them. And while he neglects to watch them, he either makes less progress in them, or loses them altogether. Whilst then it is necessary to know our good deeds, in order to guard them; from the very knowledge of them, a way is opened to our pride, and the hand of sin, by whose ravages they are to be snatched away, is admitted to the heart of him who does them. But it is brought about by a marvellous dispensation, that our Creator suffers a mind which is elated by prosperity, to be smitten with sudden temptation; in order that it may, in infirmity, behold itself more truly, and may descend, already improved, from that haughtiness of pride, which it had assumed from its virtues. Whence it is now rightly subjoined;  
Ver. 19. *Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all the mighty in strength.*

[xlv]

82. For the motions of the heart are mighty, when they feel only those things which are virtuous. But we lay down our greatness and our mighty motions, when we are compelled, by the assaults of sin, to consider what we are. We lay aside our mighty motions, when we are no longer raised up by our virtue, but when, by consenting to sin, we are fearful of being overwhelmed by that infirmity, with which we are assaulted. For the mind has great confidence in itself, when it sees that its strength is adequate to its wishes. It arrogates at once to itself the assurance of sanctity, and thinks that it is now equal even to all the heights of virtues, which it has conceived in thought only. But when a temptation suddenly arises and pierces it through, it utterly confounds those lofty thoughts, which had sprung up from its virtues. For an unexpected enemy enters, as it were, an unsuspecting city; and the necks of haughty citizens are smitten with a sudden stroke. There is nothing then at

that time but continual lamentation, whilst the captured city of the mind is, by means of slaughter, bereft of the glory of its great ones. Whence it is now said, *Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all who are mighty in strength*. As if it were plainly said, Repress all the pride thou hadst conceived within, at thy good deeds, and lay down those mighty motions of the heart, which thou hadst from thy just doings; because thou now considerest, in the assault of adversity, how vainly thou before entertainedst high thoughts of thyself in thy pride. Which greatness, it is said, must be laid aside without tribulation, doubtless, because when humility makes progress through temptation, that very adversity, which secures the mind from pride, is itself prosperous. But yet this is not effected without great tribulation, when the tranquil mind is assailed by the inroads of temptations, as if by a sudden enemy. For, when the adversity of temptation forces itself into the mind, it produces therein a kind of darkness, and confounds, with the gloom of its bitterness, that soul which had long been enlightened, within itself, by the radiant sweetness of its virtues. Whence it is also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 20. *Prolong not the night, that people should go up for them.*

[xlvi]

83. For the night is indeed prolonged, when the sorrow, that springs from temptation, is not ended by the rising up of consolation. The night is protracted, because the sorrow of the mind is prolonged by confused thoughts. For whilst the mind, placed in temptation, considers that it is driven away from the former solidity of its virtue, it is blinded by superinduced sorrows, as by a kind of gloom. And its eye is closed to every ray of joy, whilst it anxiously trembles, lest it should entirely lose that which it had before begun to be. Whence it is also well said, that, in this night, people go up in the place of the strong; because, namely, in this sorrow of temptation, instead of bold emotions, unworthy and manifold thoughts spring up in the heart. For whilst it sees, in this perturbation, that it has already almost lost that which it had been, it heaps up in itself countless waves and tumults. At one time it sorrows that it has lost its tranquillity; at another, it is afraid lest it should fall into evil deeds. At one time it calls to mind on what a height it had stood, at another, it observes in what a depth of vices it is lying, by means of its pleasure. At one time it prepares itself to recover its strength, at another, as though already defeated and crushed, it despairs that it can recover it.

84. When such manifold thoughts then come forth over the convicted mind, people, as it were, rise and press it down in the night. Which people the Prophet had doubtless presumed he could overcome, not by himself, but by the aid of the Divine protection, when he was saying. *My Protector, and in Him will I hope, subduing people under me*. [Ps. 144, 2] For people are subjected to holy minds, when foolish thoughts start away from them, at the presence of strict severity; so as not to hurry them through headlong fancies, but, subjected to reason, humbly to cease from the heart. Hence, therefore, the mind which used, in prosperity, to presume greater things of itself, endures, when placed in temptation, the tumults of hope and despair, it is now well said, *Prolong not the night, that people should go up for them*. As if it were openly said, Disperse at once the darkness of sorrow, when involved in temptation, lest thou, who hadst thought highly of thyself in tranquillity, shouldst overwhelm thyself more fatally in trouble also, with the gloom of thy thoughts. Which Eliu would properly say, if, however, he knew to whom he was saying it. For these sayings are the less suited to blessed Job, the more deeply all things are known by him. But because, as we have often said, haughty men fall even into insulting words of reproaches, while



they presume to teach those, whom they ought not, it is added;

Ver. 21. *Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery.*

[xlvii]

85. He follows iniquity after misery, who, after the evils which he endures for his correction, inflames himself, in his glowing heart, with the torches of impatience. Which Eliu believed that blessed Job had done, having heard him speak in bold words, when in the midst of scourges: being ignorant, namely, that every thing which he said, he uttered not from the sin of impatience, but from the virtue of truth, who did not, even when justifying himself, differ from the sentence of the inward Judge. But we must greatly consider how, when saying, *Decline not to iniquity*, he immediately subjoined of this very iniquity; *For thou hast begun to follow this after misery.*

86. What is this, that, while he forbids him to decline to it, he condemns him for it, at once, as if he had already declined to it; except that arrogant men wish rather to appear judges, than consolers? Whence also, they sometimes smite, with severe sentences, those faults, which they suspect have arisen in the heart. And, before the fault of the offenders is certain, severe invective of words is brought forward; and a person is struck by their sentence, before any thing appears, to be smitten.

87. Although even just men commonly oppose, by reproof, wicked and secret thoughts; but, when any preceding doings make plain these thoughts, they frequently root out from the hearts of their hearers, by the hand of reproof, those sins which have not shewn themselves. But then they perceive that they are already following from others, which precede. For as physicians of the body discern that some diseases have already appeared, but heal others, that they may not appear; so do holy teachers sometimes restore to health the wounds they have discovered, and sometimes so deal with men's minds that they are not wounded. In whom we must carefully observe, that as they generally reprove known faults with severity, so do they speak against doubtful thoughts, even with calmness. The undoubted they chastise with blows: the doubtful they ward off by taking precautions. But because arrogant men know not their rule of discrimination, they wound, with the shafts of their sentences, known and unknown, certain and uncertain faults alike. Whence it is now said by Eliu, *Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery.* But because the remarks which follow are drawn out with longer allegation, we conclude this book with this close, that it may not be too immoderately extended.

## BOOK XXVII.

The last twelve verses of the thirty-sixth chapter are expounded, with the whole of the thirty-seventh, and their meanings ingeniously examined, for the sake of establishing a system of Christian doctrine, and ethics.

[i]

1. Whoever is endeavouring to gain knowledge from the mighty words of the arrogant, ought carefully to secure himself from imitating their pride of learning, lest, with the words of virtue, he

should acquire the vices of their habits, and in attaining to skill in speaking, should wound himself through unskilfulness in living. For when we hear these persons speaking powerful words, and yet observe them proud of their powerful words, we enter, as it were, the garden of learning, and pluck roses from thorns. We need, therefore, careful discrimination, to cull that which is sweet scented, and to avoid that which pricks us: lest the incautious hand of the gatherer should be wounded with the thorn of their habits, if the flower of their words happens to be carelessly gathered. Eliu, therefore, being both learned and arrogant, produces at one while something to give a sweet scent, and at another, something to wound. We must then so gather what is fragrant from his teaching, as yet to carefully guard against the wounds of his pride. He introduced, indeed, many remarks above with a moral object, and yet in the words which follow he raised himself solely to the mysteries of prophecy. For he abandons the low ground of morality, and rises to the heights of prophecy.

2. Nor is it to be wondered at, that a haughty man could be filled with the prophetic spirit, when Saul also was in the number of the prophets. [1 Sam. 10, 11] But why do we say this of Saul, when we know that even a she ass learned rational words from the sight of an Angel? [Num. 22, 28; 2 Pet. 2, 16] But as the irrational animal uttered rational words, and yet went not so far as to take a rational nature in exchange; thus does an unworthy person often receive holy words by the spirit of prophecy, but yet does not attain to deserve the glory of sanctity; so as to rise above himself in his words, and listlessly to sink beneath himself in his life. Whence Eliu, though not now humble, beholds the humble advent of our Redeemer: and announces, in prophecy, Him, Whom he assails with his haughty manners, saying,

Ver. 22. *Behold, God is lofty in His strength, and none is like Him among lawgivers.*

[ii]

3. As if he said plainly, He, Who will appear humble in weakness, remains lofty in strength, Paul also witnessing this, who says, *For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.* [2 Cor. 13, 4] Of Whom it is rightly subjoined, *None is like Him among lawgivers.* Moses was a lawgiver, Joshua a lawgiver, the Prophets lawgivers also. We can term all lawgivers, who, we know, admonish the people rightly from the Law. But there is no one like to this Mediator among lawgivers. For they, having been called by grace from their sins, return to innocence, and, from what they have experienced in themselves, bring back others by their preaching. But our Redeemer is Man without sin, a Son without adoption, and has never committed any thing which He has disapproved. And He so speaks to the world by His Manhood, as yet to be still the Lord of the same world before all ages by His Godhead. Hence certain persons believed that the Mediator between God and men was like the lawgivers. For when He asked, *Whom do men say that the Son of Man is,* the disciples answered and said, *Some say that He is John the Baptist, others Elias, others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.* [Matt. 16, 13. 14.] But He doubtless disclosed to Peter how lofty He was in strength; for looking on Him truly, he separated Him from an equality with lawgivers, saying, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.* [ib. 16] Whence the Bride rightly says of Him in the Song of Songs, *By night on my bed I sought Him Whom my soul loveth, I sought Him, and I found Him not.* [Cant. 3, 1] And a little after, *The watchmen who guard the city found me.* [ib. 3] Of Whom she says again, *They wounded me, they took my cloak.* [ib. 5, 7] And she asks them again, saying, *Saw ye Him Whom my soul loveth? When I had passed by them but a little, I found Him Whom my soul loveth.* [ib. 3, 4]

4. For the Beloved is sought for by night on the bed; because He is longed for in tribulation of spirit, in the secret chambers of the heart. Whom yet the Bride, though seeking, finds not; because every Elect soul is already kindled with the torches of His love, but the sight of Him, which is sought for, is still denied, that the longing of the lover may increase; and water is, as it were, withdrawn in thirst, that the heat of the thirst may be augmented, and that the longer a person thirsts, and longs for it, the more eagerly may he seize it at last when he has found it. But the watchers find her when seeking for Him; and wound her, and take away her cloak: because when anxious teachers meet with any soul, already seeking for a sight of its Redeemer, they wound it, by the word of preaching, with the darts of heavenly love: and if it has any covering of its former conversation, they take it away; in order that the more it is stripped of the burden of this world, the more quickly may He, Who is sought for, be found by her. But it is well added, *When I had passed by them but a little, I found Him Whom my soul loveth?* because the mind, eager for the sight of Him, would not find Him, Who is above man, unless it were to go beyond the estimate of the Prophets, the loftiness of the Patriarchs, and the standard of all men. To pass by the watchers, then, is to postpone, in comparison of Him, those even whom the soul admires. And He, Who was sought for, is then beheld, if He is believed to be a Man, but yet above the measures of men. Whence it is now well said, *None is like Him among lawgivers.* But He in truth, appearing to our sight through the infirmity of the flesh, as He rejects some, and calls others, has displayed marvellous judgments, which can be thought upon, and yet not be comprehended by us. For He says, *For judgment have I come into this world, that they which see not, might see, and that they which see might be made blind.* [John 9, 39] And again, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* [Matt. 11, 25] In which judgments the Jews are doubtless rejected, the Gentiles gathered. Which fact in truth we can certainly wonder at, but are not at all able to search into. Whence it is now also well subjoined by Eliu,

Ver. 23. *Who will be able to search out His ways? Or who dareth to say to Him, Thou hast wrought iniquity?*

[iii]

5. As if he said; 'How can He be blamed, Whose doing cannot be searched into? For no one judges properly of that, which he knows not. We ought, therefore, to rest the more silent under His judgments, the more we see that we perceive not the reason of His judgments. Whence it is also well subjoined.

Ver. 24. *Remember that thou knowest not His work, of Whom men have sung.*

[iv]

6. In Holy Scripture sometimes Angels, and sometimes persons ['homines'] of perfect life, are called 'men.' ['viri.'] For that an Angel is sometimes called a man, the Prophet Daniel bears witness, saying, *Behold, the man Gabriel.* [Dan. 9, 21] And again, that persons of perfect life are called by the name of 'men,' Wisdom declares in the Proverbs, saying, *Unto you, O men, I call.* [Prov. 8, 4] Men then sing of the Lord, when either spirits from above, or perfect teachers, make known to us His power. But yet His work is not known; because doubtless even they who preach Him, venerate His unpenetrated judgments. They, therefore, both know Him, Whom they preach, and yet know not His works: because they know, by grace, Him, by Whom they were made, but yet

cannot understand His judgments, which are wrought by Him even above their understanding. For that Almighty God is not clearly seen in His doings the Psalmist bears witness, saying, *Who hath made darkness His secret place.* [Ps. 18, 11] And again, *Thy judgments are a great deep.* [Ps. 36, 6] And again, *The deep like a garment is His clothing.* [Ps. 104, 6] Whence also it is well said by Solomon, *As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones grow together in the belly of her that is with child, so thou knowest not the works of God, Who is the Maker of all things.* [Eccles. 11, 5]

7. For to state one thing out of many, two little ones come to this light: but to one it is granted to return to redemption by Baptism; the other is taken away before the regenerating water bedews it. And the son of faithful parents is often taken off without faith, while that of unbelievers is renewed by the grant of the Sacrament of faith. But some one may perhaps say, that God knew that he would act wickedly even after Baptism, and that He did not, on that account, bring him to the grace of Baptism. But if this is the case, the sins of some persons are without doubt punished even before they are committed. And who, that thinks rightly, would say this, that Almighty God, Who releases some from the sins they have committed, condemns, in others, these very sins, even when not committed? His judgments are, therefore, hidden; and they ought to be revered with an humility, as great as the obscurity by which they cannot be seen. Let him say then, *Remember that thou knowest not His work, of Whom men have sung.* As if he were to say plainly, The works of Him, of Whom mighty men have spoken, are concealed from the eyes of thy mind; because they surpass the measure of thy knowledge, inasmuch as thou art circumscribed by thy humanity. It follows,

Ver. 25. *All men see Him, every one beholdeth afar off.*

[v]

8. Every man from the fact that he is created rational, ought to conclude from reason that He Who made him is God. And to see Him at this time, is doubtless to behold, through reason, His sovereign power. But when it is said, *All men see Him*, it is rightly subjoined, *Every one beholdeth afar off.* For, to behold Him afar off, is to behold Him at present not in Person, but to think of Him as yet, solely from admiration of His works. Even the Elect behold Him here afar off; because they do not as yet discern His brightness with the keenness of inmost vision. For although they are near Him now by love, yet they are separated from Him by the burden of their earthly habitation; and although they cling close to Him by good living, yet they sigh that they are far removed from the sight of His contemplation. And when the reprobate also see Him coming to judgment, they doubtless behold Him afar off, because they behold Him not in the form of His Godhead, but in His Manhood only, in which alone He could even be comprehended. Because, namely, their own evil deeds, being then brought back to their memory, strike against their sight: and while they behold the Manhood of Him, Whose Godhead they see not, they are, in a wonderful manner, far away from the sight of Him Whom they behold. But when it is said, *Remember that thou knowest not His work*, and it is then subjoined, *All men see Him*, (and to behold Him, is, as we before said, to infer from reason His all-transcendent essence,) it is a great marvel that we behold God Himself, and yet know not His work. For we cannot doubt of His essence, and yet we remain uncertain of His judgments. That which is highest is plain to us, that which is least is concealed. For His works are surely less than Himself; and yet we behold the Doer, but are in darkness as to His doing: from the very fact, that the reason why any thing is done is uncertain, but Who it is that acts thus uncertainly,

is not uncertain. Let him say then, *Remember that thou knowest not His work, of Whom men have sung; all men see Him, every one beholdeth afar off.* Because we see by reason that He exists, Whose judgments we by no means comprehend. But yet, at present, we behold Him afar off, because we are separated from His strength by the mist of our own infirmity. It follows, Ver. 26. *Behold, God is great, surpassing our knowledge.*

[vi]

9. He had said above, *Behold, God is lofty.* [ver. 22] He now says again, *Behold, God is great.* Why is it, that when speaking of God he says, 'Behold,' and again repeats, 'Behold,' if it be not that we say, 'Behold' of that thing, which we point out as present? And since God is every where present, when 'Behold' is said of Him, He is said to be present even to those who see Him not. But he well says, that He surpasses our knowledge, Who he had said before was seen by all men. Because, though He is beheld by reason, yet His greatness is not penetrated by any subtlety of our senses. For whatever we know of the brightness of His greatness, is beneath Him; and the more we suspect that we comprehend His power, the more are we driven far away from the knowledge of Him. For though our mind is caught up on high, yet it is transcended by the immensity of His greatness. Of Whom we know as it were something in part, when we feel that we are not able to know Him worthily. It follows, *The number of His years cannot be reckoned.*

[vii]

10. He wished, in some way or another, to speak of eternity, and he called the very length of eternity, 'years.' For when we wish to expand the briefness of time, we extend our moments through hours, our hours through days, our days through months, and our months through years. Since then he wished to speak of something very large, but did not find what wider thing to speak of, he multiplied years in God without reckoning their number, saying, *The number of His years cannot be reckoned;* in order that while he multiplies those things which are long in themselves, human weakness may learn that it cannot measure the length of eternity. Stretch therefore thine eye into eternity, that thou mayest see God, either when He is from the beginning, or how far He extends. And there is no boundary any where above, because He begins not to be; no boundary any where below, because He ceases not to be. All things are bounded together within Him; but He is extended around all things without space, is spread abroad without place. Behold all things which are made, by the very circumscription of their creation, are encircled by a boundary both above and below. For by their own law, because they begin from not being, they are hastening not to be.

11. But some things have marvellously received this, that, though a boundary commences them above, yet no boundary confines them below; and that though they begin to be, yet that they do not cease to be for ever. But their eternity is unlike the highest eternity, because they began to be eternal. When we look at their extremes, we do not comprehend that end of theirs which is altogether wanting; but when we carry our mind back, we behold their commencement. And while we turn our thoughts below and above in them, we do not at all understand how far they extend, but we see from whence they begin. But since God has a kind of length of being through eternity, which neither commences with a beginning, nor is terminated by an end, and which does not admit in itself the from whence, nor until when; let it be said then, *The number of His years cannot be*

*reckoned.* By the number of His years being mentioned, His Being is shewn to be of long duration. But by its being said to be beyond number, this same Being is pointed out as infinite and incomprehensible. But we have learned, that He is known to the minds of men, when all men see Him; and that we behold and admire His greatness, when the number of His years is considered beyond number; it now remains for us to hear, what are His doings. It follows,  
Ver. 27. *Who taketh away the stars of rain, and poureth forth showers like whirlpools.*

[viii]

12. There are two kinds of just persons in this life; one, namely, of those who live uprightly, but teach nothing; another, of those who live uprightly, and teach accordingly. As in the face of heaven some stars come forth, which no storms succeed: and others come forth, which water the thirsty earth with great showers. As often then as persons live uprightly in Holy Church, but yet know not how to preach this same uprightness, they are stars indeed, but produced in the dryness of the air: because they can give light to others by their example of good living, but cannot rain by their word of preaching. But when certain persons both live uprightly therein, and distil this uprightness into others by their word of preaching, stars appear, as it were, in heaven, to bring on rain, which are so to enlighten others by the merits of their life, as also to rain with the word of preaching. Did not Moses appear in this heaven, as a star of rain; who, when he shone forth from above, watered also the hearts of sinners with the rain of holy exhortation as the thirsty ground beneath, to make it bring forth grass abundantly? Did not Isaiah appear as a star of rain, who in foreseeing and holding up the light of truth, watered the drought of the unbelieving by announcing the words of prophecy? Were not Jeremiah, and the other Prophets, placed as it were in heaven, like stars of rain, who, when exalted on the high eminence of preaching, while they dared boldly to reprove the depravity of sinners, kept down as it were the dust of human blindness, by watering it with the drops of their words? But since, namely, the judgments of heaven take away from this present life the souls of these persons, enclosed in this corruptible flesh, the stars of rain are withdrawn as it were from the face of heaven. And the stars return into their hidden places, when the souls of the Saints, having completed their courses, are laid up in the treasures of the Inner Disposal.

13. But since the earth would be dried up, if the streams of rain from above were to cease entirely, when the stars were withdrawn, it is rightly said, *Who taketh away the stars of rain, and poureth forth the showers like whirlpools.* For, when the Lord had taken away the Prophets, He sent the Apostles in their place; to rain like whirlpools, after the external preaching of the Law had ceased, when the old fathers had been withdrawn. He conceals therefore the stars of rain, and pours out showers like whirlpools, because after He withdrew the preachers of the Law to His inmost and secret mansions, a more exuberant power of preaching poured forth, by the words of those who came after.

14. By stars of rain can be designated also the holy Apostles, of whom it is said by Jeremiah to rejected Judaea, *The stars of rain have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain.* [Jer. 3, 3] The Lord, therefore, has withdrawn the stars of rain, and has poured forth showers like whirlpools; because, when He took away from Judaea the Apostles who were preaching, He watered the world with the doctrine of new grace. Both of which things can be understood, not improperly, to have been done in the Church. For when He withdrew the souls of the Apostles to the secret recesses of the regions above, on the dissolution of their bodies, He hid, as it were, from

the face of heaven the stars of rain. But, when the stars of rain had been taken away, He gave showers like whirlpools; for, when the Apostles had been withdrawn to the regions above, He disclosed, in more abundant profusion, by the tongues of subsequent expositors, the streams of Divine knowledge which had been long concealed. For that which they stated briefly, they manifoldly increased by expounding it. Whence this very preaching of expositors is not improperly compared to whirlpools, since, while they collect the sayings of many who precede them, they spread themselves out to a greater depth in what they accumulate. For whilst they unite testimonies to testimonies, they make, as it were, whirlpools from drops. And whilst the Gentile world is daily taught by their words, because the mind of sinners receives heavenly wisdom, the water standing on the earth exhibits, as it were, whirlpools. But let not these expositors prefer themselves in any way to the same Apostles in wisdom, when they speak at greater length in exposition. For they ought constantly to remember through whom they have received the discoveries of this very wisdom. Whence it is also fitly subjoined,  
*Ver. 28. Which flow from the clouds.*

[ix]

15. For these whirlpools do indeed flow from the clouds; because, if the power of understanding did not begin with the holy Apostles, it would not flow more fully through the mouths of teachers. For by 'clouds' in Holy Scripture, sometimes fickle men, sometimes Prophets, sometimes Apostles, are designated. By clouds the fickleness of the human mind is expressed; as Solomon says, *He that observeth the wind, doth not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds, doth never reap.* [Eccles. 11, 4] He doubtless calls the unclean spirit, 'wind,' but men who are subjected to him, 'clouds;' whom he impels backwards and forward, hither and thither, as often as his temptations alternate in their hearts from the blasts of suggestions. He, therefore, who observes the wind, does not sow; since he who dreads coming temptations, does not direct his heart to good works. And he who regards the clouds, does not reap, since he who trembles from the dread of human fickleness, deprives himself of the recompense of an eternal reward. By 'clouds' are Prophets set forth, as is said by the Psalmist; *Dark water in the clouds of the air;* [Ps. 18, 11] that is, hidden wisdom in the Prophets. By 'clouds' also Apostles are designated, as is said by Isaiah, *I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.* [Is. 5, 6] They are 'stars' then, because they shine with the merits of their life; they are 'clouds,' because they water the parched ground of our heart with the streams of heavenly knowledge. For if they were not 'clouds,' the Prophet would not have said, when looking on them, *Who are these that fly as clouds?* [Is. 60, 8] The whirlpools of showers pour then from the clouds, because the profound instructions of those that follow derived the origin of their wisdom from the holy Apostles. Of which clouds it is still further fitly subjoined,  
*Which cover all things above.*

[x]

16. When the clouds cover the air above, if we lift up our eyes to the heaven, we behold not the heaven, but them; nor does our sight penetrate the ethereal regions, because its own infirmity conceals them from it. And when the sun shines forth from the heaven, it first feeds itself on the air which is poured between, that so it may afterwards contemplate the rays of the sun in the sky. Because, therefore, we are carnal men, when we endeavour to attain to heavenly things, we raise, as it were, our eyes to heaven, and direct our gaze thither; for oppressed by our connection with bodily

things, we wish to teach it spiritual things. But because our intellect is not permitted to pass over to Divine objects, unless it be first fashioned by the examples of preceding Saints, our eye, as it were, now looks up to heaven, but beholds clouds; because it seeks to comprehend those things which are of God, but is barely able to admire those things which have been given to men. Whence it is said in another place, *Thou enlightenest wonderfully from the eternal mountains.*

[*φωτίζεις συ θαυμαστώως απο ορεων αιωνιων.* Vers. LXX. Ps. 76, 4] For he, who cannot behold the rising sun, looks at the mountains tinged with his rays, and discovers that the sun has risen. God enlightens us, therefore, from the eternal mountains, because He illuminates us with the ray of His brightness, by our admiring the doings of former fathers. Behold we are kindled with zeal of devotion and love for the Lord; but we are the better moulded in this devotion and love by our contemplation of these clouds. For what was more devoted than Peter? What more full of love than John? The one through his devotion feared not to tread the watery ridges of the sea. [Matt. 14, 28. 29.] The other rested through love on the very breast of our Maker: and he who had come to the refreshment of a bodily feast, derived spiritual food from the bosom of the Redeemer. [John 13, 23-25]

17. But because we have said, that Prophets also are signified by 'clouds,' it is necessary for us still to bring forward the examples of the ancient fathers. Behold when we are wishing to submit, through obedience, to heavenly precepts, we are assisted by considering the footsteps of the old fathers. For what was more obedient than Abraham, who at one word from the Lord, forsakes his kindred, and his country; [Gen 12, 1-4] and for the sake of obtaining his eternal inheritance, fears not to smite him, whom he had received as his heir, when now old and almost ready to die? When we are endeavouring to gain hold of the virtue of patience, we look at the examples of those who precede us. For what is more patient than Isaac, who carries the wood, asks about the burnt offering, and is, shortly afterwards, bound, and speaks not: is placed upon the altar, and resists not? [Gen. 22, 6-9] What then can be spoken of, more patient than this man? who is led, as if for consolation, and makes an enquiry; who is bound ready for the blow, and is silent; who speaks when about to offer a burnt offering, but when about to be offered as a burnt offering speaks not? When we are endeavouring to gird ourselves for endurance of toils, we are supported by preceding examples. For what is more laborious than Jacob, who though near to Laban by the rights of kindred, discharged for so long a time servile offices in his family, and obeyed him in the place of a servant, that he might enjoy the rewards of the heir? [Gen. 29, 15-30] When we are striving to ascend the citadel of continence and chastity, we are supported by the examples of those who precede us. For what is more chaste than Joseph, who could not, even though a captive, be brought under the yoke of lust at the desire of his wanton mistress? [Gen. 39, 7. 8.] And he was indeed a slave to men, but was, even in slavery, free from the power of dominant wickedness. When we are wishing to be filled with gentleness, we are assisted with the examples of those who precede us. For what was more gentle than Moses, who bears with the sedition of the people committed to his care, and yet entreats the Lord when angry, in behalf of these his persecutors, and exposes himself in their stead to the Divine wrath; because love glows in his holy breast even from persecution? [Numb. 16, 20-22] When we are endeavouring to fashion the constancy of our mind against the adversities of the world, we are supported by the consideration of those who precede us. For what is more constant than Joshua, who, when sent to search out the nature of the nations, feared not either the hugeness of their height, nor the multitude of their numbers? [Numb. 14, 6-9] Whence he subdued in battle those very same nations which he feared not in searching them out. When we are endeavouring to reach the height of kindness, we are instructed by the examples of those who go



before us. For what is more kind than Samuel, who when deposed from his office of governing the people, humbly seeks for his successor; and anoints him when found to be king, and soon endures him when anointed as his persecutor? He is afraid of dying by his hands, and yet entreats the Lord not to be angry with him. For he himself says when he was sent, *Saul will hear, and will kill me.* [1 Sam. 16, 2] And the Truth says to him by Itself; *How long dost thou mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him.* [ib. 1] What then can be mentioned more kind than that man, who wishes not that even he should be smitten by God, by whom he is afraid of being killed? When we are advancing to the height of mercifulness and humility, we are supported by the examples of those who go before us. For what can be mentioned more merciful than David, what more humble, who received from the reprobate king insults for his victories, who by his strength rescued the nation of the Israelites from the hand of their enemies, and yet fled away himself lest he should die, as one of no strength? He knows that he himself was elected by the Divine sentence, and that his persecutor was rejected; and yet he submits himself to this very same persecutor of his, with the humility of frequent satisfaction, who takes away the spear of his persecutor, cuts off the border of his cloak, [1 Sam. 24, 4] and hastens at once to the top of the mountain, and at one and the same time shews that he has had the power of slaying, and prays that he might not be slain. [ib. 26, 12-16]

18. Because then we are instructed by preceding examples, in all things which we spiritually desire, it is well said of these clouds, *Which cover all things above.* For we are covered by the life of the fathers spread over us, like clouds, in order that we may be watered, to bear the produce of a fruitful growth. And we behold, as it were, the clouds first, when looking up to heaven; because we first behold, with admiration, the doings of the good, and we afterwards penetrate, by our experience, those things which are heavenly. But because the life and the virtue of these clouds, that is, of these ancient fathers, would not be open to us, unless other clouds, that is the Apostles, disclosed it with the light of their preaching, let our discourse turn back to those clouds, which go about the world with their preaching; and let it shew what the Lord has done by their means in the world. It follows,

Ver. 29, 30. *If He will spread out clouds as His tent, and lighten with His light from above, He will cover also the ends of the sea.*

[xi]

19. The Lord ‘spreads out the clouds,’ when, opening the way of preaching to His ministers, He disperses them in every direction, through the breadth of the world. But it is well said, *As His tent.* For a tent is wont to be pitched, on a journey. And, when holy preachers are sent into the world, they make a way for God. Whence it is written, *Behold, I send My Messenger before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee.* [Mal. 3, 1] And hence also it is said by the Psalmist, *Make a way for Him Who ascendeth over the west.* [Ps. 68, 4] And again, *O God, when Thou wentest forth before Thy people, when Thou passedst through the desert, the earth was moved.* [ib. 7] For God, Who of Himself is, not locally, in every place, walks locally into the regions of the world, by means of His preachers. Whence also it is said by the Prophet, *And I will walk in them.* [Lev. 26, 12] For He does in truth walk through them, whilst He pours Himself into the hearts of men by their teaching. And in this journey the tents of God are these self-same hearts of the Saints, by which He is covered, as it were, in resting on the way. Whilst coming through them to the minds of men, He effects what He has ordained, and is not beheld. Hence it is that all the synagogue together is called a ‘tent,’ when the Lord complains by Jeremiah that the priests had ceased from preaching, saying,

*There is none to stretch forth My tent any more, and to set up My curtains.* [Jer. 10, 20] Hence again it is said of its extermination, *He hath destroyed His tent, as a garden, He hath thrown down His tabernacle.* [Lam. 2, 6] For since the Lord at that time dwelt secretly among men in the worship of a single people, He called that self-same people His tent. Whence also these clouds are now rightly called His tent, because God, when coming to us by His grace, is concealed within the hearts of His preachers. Was not Paul His tent, when coming to the hearts of men, from Jerusalem round about into Illyricum, the Lord was resting in his mind? [Rom. 15, 19] For he was a cloud for men, but a tent for God; because he was invisibly retaining Him in his heart, Whom he was by his preaching pouring into the hearts of his hearers. When the same Paul was proceeding towards Rome, bound in chains, to take possession of the world, God, concealed in his breast, was journeying as if in a tent. [Acts 27, 28] Because He could not be seen, from being concealed, and yet, disclosed by the words of preaching, He was prosecuting without ceasing the course of grace which He had begun. Moses appeared as His cloud, when, before he undertook the leadership of the Jewish people, he was dwelling for forty years in the wilderness, and aiming at lofty things, lived separated from the converse of the people. [Ex. 3] But he was made the tent of God, when, on being sent into Egypt, to bring back the people, he was going on, bearing in his heart the invisible truth; and when Almighty God, Who was manifested in his work, was lying concealed in his heart. And He who is ever present, and containing all things, coming into Egypt was journeying thither in His servant. Whence it is written, *God went into Egypt, that He might ransom His people.* [2 Sam. 7, 23] Behold He is said to journey, by Whose uncircumscribed presence all things are contained, because He, Who is every where by His Majesty, places, as it were, His steps in the way, by preaching.

20. But words only are by no means sufficient for these same holy preachers, for persuasion, unless miracles are also added. Whence it is said, *When He will spread out the clouds as His tent,* it is rightly subjoined, *And lighten with His light from above.* For what else but miracles ought we to suppose lightnings to mean? Of which it is said by the Psalmist, *Thou wilt multiply Thy lightnings, and confound them.* [Ps. 144, 6. LXX] By these clouds then He lightens from above with His light; because by holy preachers He illumines the gloom of our insensibility even by miracles.

21. And when these clouds rain down with words, and when they disclose, by miracles, the power of their glittering light, they convert to divine love even the farthest boundaries of the world. Whence it is rightly subjoined, *He will cover also the ends of the sea.* A thing which we heard by the voice of Eliu was to take place, but which we at this time see performed by the power of God. For the Almighty Lord has covered, with His lightening clouds, the ends of the sea; because, by the brilliant miracles of preachers, He has brought even the ends of the world to the faith. For, lo! He has now penetrated the hearts of almost all nations; lo! He has joined together in one faith the boundaries of the East and of the West; lo! the tongue of Britain,

[This special mention of Britain was probably added after the publication of the work, as the Saxons were not converted till St. Gregory had been some years Pope. See his Eps. to St. Augustine, Bertha, and Edilberthus. Lib. xi. Ind. iv. 28. 29. 64. 65. 66. *Ben.* (St. Gregory was not, however, unaware of the existence of the *British Church*, and may have referred to it. *Ed.*)]

which knew only how to grate barbarian sounds, has begun long since to resound in the Divine praises the Hebrew Alleluia. Behold the ocean, which before was swelling, is now calmed beneath, and subject to, the feet of the saints: and its barbarous motions, which the princes of the earth had been unable to control with the sword, do the mouths of priests bind with simple words through fear of God: and he who, when unbelieving, had not dreaded the bands of combatants, now fears,

when faithful, the tongues of the humble. For because the virtue of Divine knowledge is poured into him, by the heavenly words which he hears, and by the brightness also of miracles, he is so restrained by his dread of this same Divine power, as to fear to do wrong, and to long with all his desires to attain to the grace of eternity. Whence it is here also appropriately added, Ver. 31. *For by these things judgeth He the people, and giveth food to many mortals.*

[xii]

22. By these words of preachers, that is drops of the clouds, by these lightnings of miracles, God doubtless judges the peoples; because He invites their terrified hearts to repentance. For when they hear heavenly things, when they attend to marvellous works, they soon return into their own hearts, and afflicting themselves for their former wickednesses, dread eternal torments. But food is given too by these same clouds by which terror is inflicted: since mighty is the trust committed to preachers to know how so to afflict the minds of the haughty, as yet to be skilful in cherishing them when afflicted, with words of consolation; so as to alarm sinners with eternal punishments, and support penitents with the joys of the kingdom of heaven. Whence the very course of this dispensation is well observed, so that Eliu said, in proper order, that God first judges the people by these, clouds, and afterwards gives them food. Because, in truth Almighty God first reproves and rouses us from our evil deeds, by means of His preachers, and afterwards cherishes and consoles us by hope. For if the Divine dispensation did not act the part of a judge, by these clouds, He never would have said to these same clouds, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* [John 20, 22. 23.] And again, if He did not feed by them our famished hearts, the Lord would never say to His disciples, of the hungry people, *Give ye them to eat.* But we believe that that was then done thus by their hands, that we may see that this is daily taking place without ceasing by their words. [Mat. 14, 16] For what does Peter effect, when he speaks by his Epistles, unless it be, that our miserably hungry hearts may be fed with the food of the word? What are Paul and John labouring at, when speaking by their Epistles, except that our minds may enjoy heavenly food, and overcome that loathing of hunger with which they were dying? Let it be said then, *When He will spread out the clouds as His tent, and lighten with His light from above, He will cover also the ends of the sea; for by these things He judgeth the people, and giveth food to many mortals.* As if he were plainly saying, If He sends forth His Saints for the ministry of preaching, and aids their words by miracles, He summons the boundaries of all the world to the faith; and by these means He first judges the proud, and afterwards cherishes with hope, and strengthens the humble by the word of consolation.

23. But when he was saying, that He gives food to mortals, we must observe that he does not say to all, but 'to many.' Because, namely, it is written, *All men have not faith.* [2 Thess. 3, 2] And to certain persons it is said, *Ye therefore hear not, because ye are not of God.* [John 8, 47] And again, *No man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him.* [John 6, 44] And again, *The Lord knoweth them that are His.* [2 Tim. 2, 19] Whence most persons, even in Holy Church herself, retain faith, and yet retain not the life of faith: they partake of the Sacraments of the Lord's humility, but scorn to be humbled in imitation of the Lord. They partake the gentle preaching of the Divine Word, but continue, in themselves, mighty in pride. Whence here also, after the breadth of the whole collected Church has been signified by the ends of the sea, it is fitly subjoined; Ver. 32. *He hideth the light from the mighty.*

[xiii]

24. For those in truth are ‘mighty,’ who exalt themselves with lofty thoughts. Against whom it is said by Isaiah; *Woe unto you, who are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight.* [Is. 5, 21] Against whom also Paul says, *Be not wise in your own conceit.* [Rom. 12, 16] But the light is hidden from these mighty ones, because, doubtless, the knowledge of the truth is denied to haughty men. Whence the Truth says by Its own self, *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.* [Matt. 11, 25] Calling, namely, the haughty, wise and prudent. For He, Who did not subjoin, ‘Thou hast revealed them to fools,’ but, ‘to little ones,’ made it plain that he condemned their pride, and not their wisdom. Whence it is said in another place, *The Lord guarding the little ones.* [Ps. 116, 6] And in order to shew what is meant by this littleness [‘parvitas’], it is added, *I was brought low, and He set me free.* Because then there are many in the Church, who scorn to be little ones, they cease not to be great in their own sight, even in the place of humility. You may frequently see them raised high in honours, enjoying pleasures, and spreading abroad with the multiplicity of their goods. These often specially desire nothing, except to rule over others, are pleased at being feared by many; neglect to live uprightly, and wish to have the credit of an upright life; court flattery, and are puffed up by applause. And since they are abundantly supplied with goods ready at hand, they do not seek for the joys which are to come. And, because manifold employments engage them, they prove them to be strangers even to themselves. And yet if any trial of their faith arise, because they are contained therein though but in appearance, they defend it by words, they defend it by their exertions, and claim their heavenly country, and yet love it not.

25. And these do the sons of Reuben, and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, well represent in Moses; who possessing many flocks and herds, whilst they desire that plain country which they had seen beyond Jordan, refused to receive an inheritance in the land of promise, saying, *The country which the Lord smote before the sight of the children of Israel, is of a region most fertile for the pasture of animals, and we thy servants have many blasts; and we pray thee, if we have found grace in thy sight, to give it unto us thy servants for a possession, and make us not to pass over Jordan.* [Numb. 32, 4. 5.] They therefore who possess very many beasts of burden, avoid passing over Jordan, because they, whom many worldly engagements occupy, do not seek for the abode of their heavenly country. But that faith, which they hold in appearance, urges them on; lest they should become inactive from the delight of ease, and should deter others, by their example, from the endurance of toil, and from studying to be patient. Whence it is said to them by Moses, *Shall your brethren go to battle? and shall ye sit here? Why do ye subvert the minds of the children of Israel.* [Numb. 32, 7] But because they are ashamed not to defend that which they confess, they hasten to contend for that faith which they have professed; and secure it, not for themselves, but for their neighbours. Whence they say to Moses, *We will build sheepfolds, and stalls for our beasts, and fortified cities for our little ones; but we ourselves will go armed and ready for battle before the children of Israel.* [Numb. 32, 16. 17.] And they go boldly forth at once in behalf of others, and free the land of promise from their enemies, and leave it, and return to feed their herds beyond Jordan. For many persons, although faithful, being engaged in present cares, feed, as it were, their herds beyond Jordan; because, contrary to the faith of Baptism, they are enslaved with all their heart, and with every desire, to perishing objects. But yet, as we have said, when a trial of their faith arises, they gird themselves with the arms of defence. They overcome and slaughter the enemies of the faith, and love not the inheritance of the land of promise, that is, the fruit of faith.

And they so fight in its behalf, as yet to deposit their pledges outside of it. For because they have their children without, they do not place their affection in dwelling therein. Whence they return to the plain country, because they descend from the lofty summits of the mountains, as if from the hope of heavenly things, to rear brute animals without the land of promise. Because they labour diligently to supply the irrational motions of their mind with various objects of desire: because they, who are blinded with transient pursuits, know not how great is the brightness of the eternal light; and whilst they are proud of worldly things, they close up for themselves the access of the light of heaven. Whence it is now rightly said, *He hideth His light from the mighty*. But yet grace from above sometimes looks upon these mighty men, and afflicts them by the very employments caused by their abundant goods, and intersperses with their prosperity, adverse, but profitable, tribulations: in order that, when sorrowful, they may turn to their heart, and learn how vainly they are engaged in perishable pursuits. Whence here also, after the light is said to have been withdrawn, it is fitly subjoined,  
*And ordereth it to return again.*

[xiv]

26. Because the light of truth, which is concealed from proud and overbusied minds, is revealed to the afflicted and humbled. For light approaches, when the afflicted mind discerns the gloom of tribulation which it is enduring from perishable pursuits: for, if it had not some perception of the light within, it would not even see that it had lost the light. But this can be specially understood also of the Jews, who dared for this reason to speak against our Redeemer, coming in the flesh, because they were mighty in their own thoughts. But the light was hid from these mighty men; because, while they are persecuting in their pride the light of truth, they lost it. But because they are to be admitted to the faith at the end of the world, it is rightly subjoined, *And ordereth it to return again*. Whence also it is said by Isaiah, *If the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved*. [Is. 10, 22] For the light then returns to them when they themselves return to confess the power of our Redeemer.

27. But if we take '*in manibus*,' not as one noun, in the dative case, but as two parts of speech [That is, not *inmanibus*, but *in manibus*, as Heb.]; it can be understood that the light is concealed *in the hands*, when the unjust are blinded in their own works in the presence of the righteous Judge. But yet it is ordered to return again. Because, when sinners have learned that they cannot be saved by their own strength, they receive the light of grace, and are enlightened with the rays of inward protection, so that they afterwards love their heavenly country with greater zeal, than they used before to glow with in earthly pleasure. But when we are speaking thus of our heavenly country, (in which we hear that there are hosts of Angels endowed with wondrous brightness; over which the Maker of all things presides, which He refreshes and fills with the sight of Himself, of which light is the true inheritance, and there is no failure in its brightness;) we turn our thoughts back to ourselves, and reflect that we bear about us earthly members; we consider that born in darkness, and estranged from the rays of the light within, we have lived the more sinfully, the more we were given up to bodily pursuits, and dwelt far away from spiritual objects. But a heart affected with this thought, and conscious to itself of sin, is alarmed, and despairs of becoming a citizen of that mighty country, of which it hears. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined, how the fearful mind is restored to confidence. For of this light it is immediately added,  
Ver. 38. *He declares of it to His friend, that it is his possession, and that he may come up to it.*

[xv]

28. The friend of truth is a lover of upright conduct. Whence the Truth Itself says to Its disciples, *Ye are My friends, if ye have done what I command you.* [John 15, 14] For a friend is named as 'the keeper of the soul;' ['amicus, quasi animi custos.' Isid. Etym. x. 14] and hence he who endeavours to guard the will of God in His precepts is, not undeservedly, called His friend. Hence is it that the Truth again says to the same disciples, *But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you.* [John 15, 15] Of this light then of the eternal country, God announces to His friend, that it is his possession, that he should not despair of himself from the frailness of his own infirmity; that he should not think what he was made, but what he was new made; but should know more certainly that he possesses this light, the more truly he is now trampling down the gloom of assailing sins. But it is well subjoined in promise, *And that he may come up to it.* For what is more difficult than for a man born on the earth, and bearing about earthly and fragile members, to ascend the heights of heaven, and to penetrate the secrets of the spirits above?

29. But the Maker of these very spirits has come to us, and exhibited Himself as a man, even beneath them, as is said of Him to the Father by the Prophet, *Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels.* [Ps. 8, 5] And because He found between these selfsame spirits and ourselves the stumbling-block of a discordant life, with wonderful power, and with still more wonderful kindness, creating the higher, and taking on Him the lower nature, He united the highest and lowest together. Hence is it that, on the birth of this selfsame King, the bands of Angels come forth to announce Him, sing a hymn, and, the discordance of their evil conduct being overcome, acknowledge those, as citizens, of whom they before despaired: proclaiming with harmonious voice, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.* [Luke 2, 14] As if they said plainly; Those whom wickedness had separated, let the Goodness now born on earth unite to us. Hence is it, that before His Incarnation we read in the Old Testament, that a man adored an Angel,

[Hom. 8. in Evang. he names Lot and Joshua. The former, perhaps, only bowed as to guests. In judging of the latter instance Deut. 34, 10. must not be forgotten. See also Dan. 12, 1]

and was not forbidden to adore him. [Gen. 19, 13-16] But when after the coming of the Redeemer, John had prostrated himself to adore the Angel, he heard, *See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren.* [Rev. 19, 10] For what is meant by the Angels first patiently allowing themselves to be adored by man, and afterwards refusing it; except, that at first the more abject they knew man to be, who had been given up to carnal corruptions, and was not yet delivered from this condition, the more justly did they despise Him, but that afterwards they could not keep human nature in subjection under them, inasmuch as they beheld it, in their Maker, exalted even above themselves? For that nature ought no longer to be despised, and degraded in the members, which, exalted in the head of the members, deserved to be venerated. He then, Who became lower than the Angels for our sake, made us equal to the Angels by the virtue of His humiliation. [Heb. 2, 7] Whence He also taught us by dying, that death is not to be dreaded, by His rising again, to be confident of life, by His ascension, to exult in our inheritance of the heavenly country. That so the members also may rejoice, that they are following to the same place, where they see that their Head has gone before. Whence it is well said by this our Head Himself, *Wheresoever the carcase is, there will also the eagles be gathered together.* [Matt. 24, 28] Whence Peter says, *To an*

*inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens.* [1 Pet. 1, 4] Whence Paul says, *We know that if our earthly house this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2 Cor. 5, 1]

30. But if we also, who are born on the earth, ascend into heaven, where is that which the Truth again says, *No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man Which is in heaven?* [John 3, 13] For to this sentence, that which the same Truth says is directly opposed, *Father, I will that where I am, they may be with Me also.* [John 17, 24] But yet It is not at variance with Itself in Its words, but It inflames the zeal of our mind to enquire into these things, which seem at variance. For all we, who are born in His faith, are doubtless His body. Because then the Lord has, by a marvellous dispensation of condescension, been made the Head of His own members, He is alone, even when with us, the multitude of the reprobate having been cast off. *No man, therefore, ascends into heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man Who is in heaven.* For, since we have been already made one with Him, He returns alone, even in us, to that place, from whence He came alone in Himself; and He Who ever is in heaven, ascends daily to heaven; because He Who remains in His Godhead above all things, draws Himself up daily to heaven, in the body of His Manhood. Let not then human weakness despair of itself; let it consider the Blood of the Only-begotten, and in its own price behold how great that is, which costs so much. Let it consider anxiously, whither its Head has gone before; and let that which is bound by His precept to good living, be strengthened to hope by His example. Let it feel sure of heaven; let it hope for the heavenly country; let it know that it is the companion of Angels, and rejoice that in its Head it has been preferred even to Angels. Let it be rightly said then of this light of the eternal country, *He declares of it to His friend that it is his possession, and that He may come up to it.* But these things are very marvellous, and very awful, that a man, born on the earth, and condemned, as his deserts demand, to separation from his heavenly country, is not only brought back to the state of his creation, but is even exalted to a more glorious condition; that he who has lost paradise obtains heaven, and that so far from the guilt of his debt being binding on him, gifts are heaped upon him more abundantly even after his sin; and that that despiser of God, and imitator of the devil, if he returns to fruitful penitence, ascends even to the loftiness of contemplating the inward light. Whose heart then would not leap in admiration of such graciousness? Whose sloth would not be startled at the elevation of so high a thought? Whence it is filly subjoined, Chap. xxxvii. ver. 1. *At this my heart trembled, and was moved from its place.*

[xvi]

31. Because, while fear strikes the mind, it estranges it from itself, the Latin translations sometimes call an ecstasy fear, as is said by the Psalmist, *I said in my fear, I am cast out from the sight of Thine eyes;* [Ps. 31, 22] Where, namely, it could have been called not fear, but a transport ['excessus']. But fear is in that place used for transport, because the mind is estranged from itself in fear, as it is a transport. Whence also, in this place, after considering the light of the eternal country, it is rightly subjoined, *At this my heart trembled.* As if he said, It went beyond itself in transport of admiration, and because the mind is inspired with the spirit of new hope, it has deserted itself as it used to be in its old thought.

32. But it is well said, *And was moved from its place.* For the pleasure of this present life is the 'place' of the human heart. But when the place of our heart is touched with a divine aspiration,

there comes a love of eternity. The mind, therefore, is moved from its place by a consideration of its eternal home, because it leaves those things which are below, and fixes itself in thoughts of things above. For before it knew not what things were eternal, it had become stupified by the delight of present things, and, transient itself, used to embrace with love transitory things. But after it knew what things were eternal, after it reached the rays of the heavenly light, by a hasty glance, being roused by its admiration of the highest objects, it raised itself from things below; so that it now feels no pleasure except in the things of eternity, and despising transitory objects, it seeks only for those which endure. It is well said then, *At this my heart trembled, and was moved from its place*. For when the sluggish heart, which has been long given up to earthly thoughts, suddenly, by going beyond itself, attaches itself to the highest objects, it has left the place of lowest thoughts. But because the mind slumbers of itself, overcome by the love of this present world, and sleeps, in its delights, cold and insensible, unless it is aroused by the breath of Divine grace, it is necessary for him to add, how it is affected by its inward thoughts, or rather how it is restored to a sense of spiritual truths. It follows,

Ver. 2. *It will hear a hearing in the terror of His voice, and a sound going out of His mouth.*

[xvii]

33. It is the habit of Holy Scripture, that, when it informs us that any thing is heard with the hearing [‘read ‘*audivi*.’], it says that this hearing is heard. As Habakkuk says, *O Lord, I have heard Thy hearing, and was afraid*. [Hab. 3, 1] Whence it is said here also, *It will hear a hearing in the terror of His voice*. But we must observe that the voice of God is said to be heard, not in joy, but in terror. Because, doubtless, while every sinner thinks of earthly things alone, and bears a heart overwhelmed with degrading thoughts, if he is suddenly touched by the aspiration of Divine grace, he understands this, above all things, that all his doings are punished by the judgment of the eternal Judge. The hearing, therefore, of the voice of the Lord, first takes place in terror, that it may afterwards be changed into sweetness. Because it first chastises us with the dread of the strict judgment, in order that it may refresh us, when chastised, with the consolation of heavenly sweetness. For when the overpowering delight of temporal objects possesses our minds, and oppresses the eyes of our mind with the sleep of sloth, if we are roused suddenly by the hand of the Divine favour, we open at once those eyes, which have been long closed, to the light of truth: we call to mind the sins we have committed, we see how strictly the Judge is coming against them; it is considered within, how great is the coming of so mighty a Judge; how great is that assembly then of men and angels: how mightily even the burning elements contend against the reprobate; how terribly that eternal sentence comes forth from the mouth of the strict Judge, with which it is said to the reprobate, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels*. [Matt. 25, 41] The punishment of these reprobates is presented to the eyes, and the thought occurs with a heavy gloom of bitterness, what is the darkness of hell? Because then the proud heart is first shaken with terror, in order that, when shaken, it may be established in love, it is now rightly said, *It will hear a hearing in the terror of His voice*. Where it is also well subjoined, *And a sound going forth from His mouth*.

34. The sound from the mouth of God, is the power of fear, rushing into us from heavenly inspiration. Because when God, by breathing on us, fills us with thoughts of the future, He doubtless alarms us, for our past misdeeds. But by the ‘mouth of God’ can be designated, the Only-Begotten Son, Who, as He is said to be His arm, because God works all things by Him, (of whom



the Prophet says, *To Whom is the arm of the Lord is revealed?* [Is. 53, 1] of whom John says, *All things were made by Him*; [John 1, 3]) so is He also called His mouth. For hence is that which the Prophet says, *For the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken these things*. [Is. 1, 20] By Whom He speaks all things to us. As if the Word was plainly spoken of under the name of “mouth;” as we also are accustomed to say “tongue” instead of “words,” as when we speak of the Greek or Latin “tongue” we indicate Latin or Greek words. We therefore rightly understand Him, by the ‘Mouth of the Lord.’ Whence the Bride says to Him in the Song of Songs, *Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His Mouth*. [Cant. 1, 1] As if She said; Let Him touch me with the presence of the Only Begotten Son my Redeemer. But, by the sound of His Mouth, can be designated the Holy Spirit of the same Lord. Whence it is written in another place also, as signifying the same Spirit, *Suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind approaching*. [Acts 2, 2] A sound, therefore, proceeds from the Mouth of the Lord, when His Consubstantial Spirit, coming to us through His Son, breaks through the deafness of our insensibility. As the Mouth of the Lord speaks of this same uncircumscribed and incorporeal sound, and says, *He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you*. [John 16, 14] By the terror of His voice, then, can be understood the power of fear, and by the sound of His mouth the sweetness of consolation; for those, whom the Holy Spirit fills, He first alarms at their earthly doings, and afterwards consoles with the hope of heavenly objects; in order that they may afterwards rejoice the more in confidence of their rewards, the more they were before afraid on beholding only the punishments. Hence is it that Paul speaks of this Spirit of the Only Begotten, as of this sound of His mouth. *For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of the adoption of sons, whereby we cry Abba, Father*. [Rom. 8, 15] Hence the Truth says by His own mouth, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever ye retain, they are retained*. [John 20, 22. 23.] Lo! the terror of the converted is turned into power; because while they punish their sins by penance, they ascend up even to the exercise of judgment; so as to receive this power from God, which before they used themselves to fear at His hands. For they in truth become judges, who feared greatly the judgment of heaven; and they now begin to remit the sins of others, who had before been afraid that their own would be retained. But because this very judgment, which takes place spiritually, is not now seen by the carnal; there are some who consider that God is not concerned about human affairs, and think that they are carried on by accidental movements. Against whom it is rightly subjoined,  
Ver. 3. *He himself considereth under all the heavens, and His light is over the ends of the earth*.

[xviii]

35. As if it were plainly said; He who rules over the highest things, forsakes not even the most remote. Because His watchful rule is so directed towards the greatest concerns, as not to be kept from those which are little. For He Who is every where present, and every where equal, is not unlike Himself, even in unlike circumstances. He therefore equally regards all things, equally disposes all things, Who, though present in all places, is not locally confined, nor varied by attending to various concerns. But if we understand by the heavens, holy preachers, (as the Prophet attests who says, *The heavens declare the glory of God*;) [Ps. 19, 1] after the coming of the Holy Spirit is designated by the sound of the mouth, it is rightly subjoined, *He Himself considereth under all the heavens, and His light is over the ends of the earth*.

36. For there are some, who, when they hear the wonderful works of the Apostles, (that they raised

the dead by the Holy Spirit which they had received, cast out devils from the possessed, removed infirmities by their shadow, foretold future events by prophecy, and, speaking in the tongue of all nations, preached the Only Begotten Word of God;) because they do not see these powers now in the Church, suspect that the grace of heaven has been already withdrawn from the Church, forgetting to consider that it is written, *An assister in needful times, in tribulation*. [Ps. 9, 9] For Holy Church required then the assistance of miracles, when the tribulation of persecution oppressed her. For after she has overcome the pride of unbelief, she requires no longer the signs of miracles, but the merits of deeds alone, though she displays even them by many persons, when opportunity demands. For it is written, *Tongues are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not*. [1 Cor. 14, 22] Where then all are faithful, what cause demands signs to be displayed? On which head perhaps we the more readily give satisfaction, if we make some mention of the Apostolic dispensation.

37. For Paul, the illustrious preacher, coming to Melite, and knowing the island to be full of unbelievers, healed by his prayers the father of Publius, afflicted with dysentery and fevers; [Acts 28, 8] and yet advised Timothy when sick, saying, *Use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities*. [1 Tim. 5, 23] Why is it, O Paul, that thou restorest the sick unbeliever to health by thy prayers, and yet healest so great a defender of the Gospel by food, like a physician? except that outward miracles are wrought, in order that the minds of men may be brought to inward truths; that so by the wonder which is visibly displayed, those invisible truths, which are more wonderful, may be believed? For the father of Publius required to be healed by a sign of power, in order that he might revive in mind, while returning to health by a miracle. But no miracle needed to be manifested outwardly to Timothy, because he was already full of life within. What wonder is it then, that miracles are not frequently displayed, when the faith has been spread abroad, when even the Apostles themselves performed them not in the case of some who already believed? The heavens, then, having been raised up, the Lord considers inferior objects; because, when the greatest preachers have been taken away, He constantly regards even the lowliness of our infirmity. And His light beholds, as it were, the ends of the earth, under the heavens; because, after the sublime doings of those who have gone before, He embraces the ways and doings even of sinners by the illumination of His grace. And though He does not now frequently manifest miraculous signs, by the life of believers, He yet departs not from these same believers by the virtue of works. But His light over the ends of the earth can also be thus understood; that whilst the preaching of heavenly Grace gathers the nations to the faith, it has embraced within itself the boundaries of the world.

38. Or, certainly, the ends of the earth are the ends of sinful men. And it is often the case, that many forsake God, and waste the seasons of their life in carnal desires. But yet, when looked down upon by Divine Grace, they turn to God at their latter end, they learn what are the eternal judgments, and punish with tears all the evil deeds they remember to have committed; and prove by their upright conduct that they are sincerely prosecuting these. And when righteousness succeeds, their former sin is surely entirely forgiven. For hence Hannah says by the spirit of prophecy, *The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth*; [1 Sam. 2, 10] because doubtless God does not judge the former life of sinners, when, by a look of affection from above, He enlightens their latter end. Hence Moses says, *The firstling of an ass thou shall exchange for a sheep*. [Ex. 13, 13] For, by an ass is designated uncleanness, but by a sheep, innocence. To exchange then the firstling of an ass for a sheep, is to convert the beginnings of an impure life into the simplicity of innocence; in order that a sinner,

after having committed those deeds which the Lord rejects as unclean, may now display such conduct, as He can offer to God as a sacrifice. Because then a sinner is converted after his sins, and is brought back at last from the darkness of his misdeeds, at the end of his life, it is now rightly said, *And His light is over the ends of the earth*. But that very grace, which fills the mind after sins, affects it with great grief. For it recalls evil deeds to the memory, and shews a man how justly he is to be condemned. Whence it comes to pass, that he bewails with daily floods of tears every sin which he remembers to have committed, and the more he is now able to discern what is righteous, the more ardently does he desire to punish his own wicked self with groans. Whence it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 4. *After Him a sound will roar.*

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39. For the Lord doubtless turns into sorrow the life of him whom He has filled with His illumination; and the more He suggests to the enlightened mind eternal punishments, the more cruelly does He weary it with sorrow for its past wickedness; and a man grieves at what he was, because he now begins to discern the good which he was not. He hates himself, as he remembers himself to have been. He loves himself as he discerns he ought to have been; and now loves only the bitterness of penitence; because he carefully considers in what great pleasures he has sinned through self-indulgence. It is well said then, *After Him a sound will roar*. Because when God enters the mind, it is doubtless plain, that the sorrow of repentance immediately follows, in order that that soul may now delight in wholesome sorrow, which used to rejoice in its iniquity with a lamentable mirth. But the more abundantly a sin is lamented, the higher is the knowledge of the truth attained. Because the conscience, before polluted, is renewed by a baptism of tears, to behold the light within. Whence after the roaring of repentance, it is fitly subjoined, *He will thunder with the voice of His greatness*.

[xx]

40. For God thunders with the voice of His greatness, when, to us who have been now well prepared by sorrow, He makes known, how great He is in His doings above. For thunder proceeds, as it were, from heaven, when the look of grace strikes us slumbering in carelessness and neglect, with sudden fear; and when lying on the ground we hear a sound from above: for thinking of things of earth, we are suddenly alarmed at the sentence of terror from above; and our mind, which used to slumber with evil security in things below, is now properly alarmed and anxious for things above. But we know not, in what way the terror of this secret visitation enters into us: nor is it discerned by the eye of the very mind, whose purpose is changed for the better. Whence it is fitly subjoined, *And He will not be enquired into, when His Voice hath been heard*.

[xxi]

41. The voice of the Lord is heard, when the breathing of His grace is conceived within the mind; when the insensibility of our inward deafness is broken through, and the heart, excited to zeal for the noblest love, is pierced by the voice of inward power. But even the mind, which has been enlightened by the voice of the supervenient Spirit, which insinuates Itself into the ears of the heart, does not trace it out. For it is unable to consider by what openings this invisible power flows into it,

in what ways it comes to, or recedes from, it. Whence it is well said by John, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth.* [John 3, 8] For to hear the voice of the Spirit, is to rise up to the love of the invisible Creator, by the power of inward compunction. But no man knows whence it cometh; because we are not told on what occasions it pours itself forth on us by the mouths of preachers. And no man knows whither it goeth; because when many hear one and the same preaching, it doubtless cannot be understood, whom It forsakes and casts off, or into whose heart It enters and takes its rest. For but one thing is taking place without, but the hearts of those who behold are not penetrated by it in one way: because He who invisibly modifies visible things, plants incomprehensibly the seeds of events in the hearts of men. Hence is it that some believed, when Lazarus was raised from the dead: while yet the greater number of the Jews were roused to zeal in persecution by this very resurrection. [John 12, 10. 11.] That one and the same miracle, then, which conferred on some the light of Faith, deprived others of the light of the mind, by the darkness of envy. Hence is it that each of the thieves beheld that same death of our Redeemer, which was like his own; but the one feared not in his pride to assail Him with contumely, Whom the other honoured by fearing Him. In the same circumstance the thoughts of each was not the same; because the inward Arbiter, by invisibly modifying, made it to differ. But as these secret modes of breathing on us cannot be comprehended by our thoughts, the traces of the Divine voice are doubtless unknown to us. Whence it is still further subjoined, Ver. 5. *God will thunder marvellously with His voice.*

[xxii]

42. God thunders marvellously with His voice, because He penetrates our hearts incomprehensibly with His secret might. For while with its secret motions it overpowers us with fear, and fashions us in love, it proclaims in some silent manner how eagerly He is to be followed, and a violent impulse arises in the mind, though nothing sounds in the voice. And it sounds the more loudly within us, the more completely it deadens the ear of our heart to every outward sound. Whence also the soul, as soon as it is brought back to itself by this inward call, wonders at what it hears, because it feels the force of unknown compunction. And this its admiration is well signified in Moses by the manna coming from above. For the sweet food which is received from above is called ‘manhu.’ For manhu means, *What is this?* [Ex. 16, 15] And we say, ‘what is this,’ when we ignorantly wonder at that which we behold. The soul then perceives the manna from above, when, roused by the voice of compunction, it is surprised at this unusual kind of inward refreshment; so that filled with Divine sweetness, it rightly responds, *What is this?* For while it is kept from the thought of lower objects, it feels unusual wonder at what it beholds from above. But because the habit of our former life is immediately changed, when the deafness of our slumber is burst through, by this voice; so that the soul, inspired by the Spirit from above, desires as highest the things which it had despised, and contemns as lowest what it used to desire, it is rightly subjoined, *Who doeth great things and inscrutable.*

[xxiii]

43. For that a man who was given up to earthly objects, and overpowered by sinful desires, becomes suddenly ardent for new pursuits, and cold to his former habits, that he renounces outward cares, and is eager for inward contemplation; who can be sufficient to consider this power of the voice from above? who can comprehend it on consideration? Great are the things which God

effects by His voice; but they would be less great, if they could have been searched out. *He doeth*, therefore, *great things and inscrutable*: because He exhibits outwardly the result of His work, but the nature of the work is itself concealed within. He sounds abroad with His voice, even by Apostles, but He illumines the hearts of the hearers within, by Himself: as Paul bears witness, who says, *I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. For neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.* [1 Cor. 3, 6. 7.] But though they do not themselves confer on our minds the hearing of the Divine voice, they are yet sent to condescend to us by words from without. Whence it is fitly subjoined,

*Ver. 6. Who ordereth the snow to descend on the earth, and the rains of the winter, and the showers of His strength.*

[xxiv]

44. Because the Psalmist says, *Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*; [Ps. 51, 7] what do we understand by snow in this place, but the hearts of the Saints made white by the light of righteousness? But waters are taken up, and congealed above, in order to become snow. But when this snow descends to the earth, it is changed again into liquid waters. Waters therefore are the minds of preachers; which are confirmed in a higher sense of things, when they raise themselves to contemplate heavenly objects. And when they are hurried along in the consideration of lofty things, they receive the strength of confirmation. But because they are still retained on earth by love of the brethren, they bring themselves down from their lofty understanding, and preaching humbly to the weak, they melt like snow, and water their thirsty hearts. Snow then descends to the earth, when the lofty hearts of the Saints, which already feast on solid contemplation, condescend to humble words of preaching through love of the brethren. For as snow covers the ground, when it lies on it, but waters it, when it melts; so the virtue of the Saints protects the life of sinners by its strength with God, and by its condescension melts, as it were, and waters the thirsty earth, to bear fruits. And because water is first brought up from below, that it may afterwards be returned in showers from above; so do holy men, when placed on the lofty eminence of their virtues, consider from whence they are elevated, for fear of despising the meanness of others' infirmity. Waters, then, return, as it were, to the earth from which they have been raised, when righteous men, condescending to sinners, cease not to remember what once they were. Paul had certainly been hitherto but water on the earth, when he knew the Law carnally. But when raised up to heavenly knowledge, he was converted into snow; because he changed his former feeble knowledge into the solidity of true wisdom; and yet, condescending to his brethren, he returned as snow to the earth. For even after his heights of virtue, he acknowledges how unworthy he was, saying, *Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, &c.* [1 Tim. 1, 13] Behold how considerately he calls to mind his own weakness, so as to bear with equanimity the weaknesses of others. For Paul returned, as water, after being in heaven, to the earth from which it had been taken, when, after the great secrets of his contemplation, he called to mind that he was a sinner, in order that he might benefit sinners by his humility. Let us see therefore how this water, which is to be turned into solid snow, is drawn up to its highest level. He says, *Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God.* [2 Cor. 5, 13] Let us see how the snow returns to the ground, to water it, while melting. He says, *Or whether ice be sober, it is for your cause.* [ibid.] Let us see with what hand it is guided, and can be raised up, when low, and be brought back again when raised up. He says, *For the love of Christ constraineth us.* [ibid. 14] Because therefore the love of Christ, which raises the minds of Saints to heavenly things, shapes them by its considerate control even to humble condescension, for the love of the brethren,

it is rightly said, *Who ordereth the snow to descend on the earth.* Where it is also fitly subjoined, *And the rains of the winter, and the shower of His strength.*

45. For this present life is indeed winter: in which though hope even now raises us up to things above, yet the cold torpor of our mortality still binds us. Because it is written, *The corruptible body weigheth down the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the sense that museth on many things.* [Wisd. 9, 15] But this winter has rains, which are doubtless the preachings of rulers. Of which rains it is in truth said by Moses, *Let my speech be expected as the rain, and my words descend as the dew.* [Deut. 32, 2] These rains doubtless are suited to the winter, and will cease in the summer; because now that the heavenly life is hidden from the eyes of the carnal, it is necessary for dew to be poured on us by the preachings of holy men. But when the heat of eternal judgment has glowed, no one will then find the words of preachers necessary. Because every one is brought back to his own conscience, on the coming of the Judge, so as to understand what is holy, when he cannot any longer perform it, and to learn from the punishment of his perverseness the right which he ought to have pursued. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Gather them together as a flock for a sacrifice, and sanctify them in the day of slaughter.* [Jer. 12, 3] For the reprobate are sanctified in the day of slaughter: for they then perceive the holiness, which they ought to have pursued, when they cannot now avoid the punishments which their depravity deserves. But since holy preaching will cease with this present life, that is the rains with the winter; to the soul which is departing, and hastening to the summer regions of eternal happiness, it is rightly said by the voice of the Bridegroom persuading it; *Arise, haste, my beloved, my fair one, and come: for the winter hath past, the rain hath passed and is gone.* [Cant. 2, 10. 11.] For as the winter passes away, the rain departs: because when the present life is over, in which the torpor of the corruptible flesh had surrounded us with a mist of ignorance, all the ministry of preaching ceases. For we shall then behold that more clearly with our own eyes, which we now hear more obscurely by the voices of the Saints. The Lord therefore orders the snow, and the rains of the winter, to descend on the earth, while He humbles the hearts of the Saints to the ministry of preaching, for the correction of sinners, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Where it is rightly added, *And the shower of His strength.*

46. For the shower of the strength of God, is the preaching His Godhead; for the shower of His weakness is the preaching His Manhood, of which it is said by Paul, *The weakness of God is stronger than men.* [1 Cor. 1, 25] And again, *Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God.* [2 Cor. 13, 4] But holy men so preach the weakness of His Manhood, as to pour also into the hearts of their hearers the strength of His Godhead. Let us hear, through the thunder of the cloud, the shower of His strength; *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* [John 1, 1] Let us hear also the shower of His weakness; *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.* [ibid. 14] Let us hear the shower of His strength; *All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made. What was made in Him was life.* [ibid. 3] Let us hear also the shower of His weakness; *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.* [ibid. 11] He commands therefore the shower of His strength to descend on the earth, because He so preaches to us the weaknesses of His Manhood by the voices of His Saints, as to make known to us also the wonders and the strength of His Godhead. But when we hear the power of our Maker, we are immediately brought back to our own hearts by the compulsion of fear, and, considering that so great a Judge is over us, we examine what we have done (worthily, and what) [Mss. vary.] unworthily. Whence it is well subjoined, Ver. 7. *Who sealeth the hand of all men, that every one may know his works.*

[xxv]

47. For men scorn to think of the sins they commit. But when they hear the power of heavenly severity, they discern this burden of misdeeds which weighs them down. For being roused by the words of preaching, they keep on the watch, in order to consider to what punishments the merit of their former doings is leading them. When, then, the shower of His strength descends on the earth, a seal is made in the hand of each one, for him to know his works; because when the Virtue of His Incomprehensible Majesty is acknowledged, his own life is weighed more carefully by each person.

48. But this can also be understood in another sense. For the Almighty Creator has made man a rational creature, distinguished from all which are void of sense and reason; in order that he should not be ignorant of what he has done. For he is compelled by the law of nature to know whether what he is doing is right or wrong. For why is he brought to judgment for his conduct, if he could be ignorant of what he has done? And therefore even they, who scorn to be instructed by the precepts of the Lord, know whether the things they are doing are good or evil. For if they do not know they are doing good, why do they ostentatiously boast of some of their doings? Again, if they know not that they are doing wrong, why do they shrink from the eyes of others in these very doings? For they are witnesses to themselves, that they know what they are doing is wrong, because they are ashamed of being seen by others. For if they did not really believe it to be wrong, they would not be afraid of its being seen by others. Whence it is well said by a certain wise man; *When wickedness is fearful, it beareth testimony to its own condemnation.* [Wisd. 17, 11] For when fear assails and convicts the conscience of what it has done, it furnishes testimony against itself, that its conduct is deserving of condemnation. The contrary to which is said by John, *If our heart condemn us not, we have confidence toward God.* [1 John 3, 21] Let the wicked fly then from the eyes of men; they certainly cannot fly from themselves. For that they know the sin which they commit, they have their conscience as a witness, they have their reason as a judge. In the sin therefore which they commit, they first find the judgment of their reason against them, and they are afterwards brought to the strictness of the eternal judgment. And this is perhaps that which is said by the Psalmist, *Deep calleth unto deep with the voice of Thy water-spouts.* [Ps. 42, 7] Because, when by a wondrous course of secret dispensation, the evil which is committed is not suffered to be unknown, a sinner both condemns himself at once in his conscience by his own sentence, and after his own condemnation hastens to the sentence of the eternal Judge. For deep then to call on deep, is to pass from one judgment to another. Let holy preachers proceed then to reprove the conduct of sinners, but let wicked hearers despise the words of the righteous. Let them defend their wickedness as much as they please, and multiply their shameless deeds by a more shameless defence. They are certainly witnesses to themselves in their conscience that they are without excuse. For by the very fact that God has created man a rational being, He puts a seal in the hand of all men, that every one may know his own works. But because Eliu has stated his opinion of the wickedness of men one by one, he turns at once the eyes of his mind to the author of wickedness himself, by whose means each separate wickedness takes its rise; that, because he had assailed in this one verse the members of a wicked head, he might also briefly describe the head himself of these members. Or certainly, because he had mentioned above the virtues of the clouds of God, he now proceeds to set forth also the assaults of the adversary against the life of the righteous. For it follows,  
Ver. 8. *The beast will enter his covert, and will abide in his den.*

[xxvi]

49. Who else is understood by the name of the beast, except our ancient enemy, who cruelly aimed at the deception of the first man, and mangled by his wicked advice the integrity of his life? against whom it is promised by the words of the Prophet, concerning the restoration of the Church of the Elect to its ancient condition, *And no evil beast shall pass through it*. But when after the coming of the Redeemer, after the voices of preachers, after the thunder, as it were, of the clouds, this beast has seized that accursed person, Antichrist, what else does he do but enter his covert, in order to abide in his own den? For that vessel of the devil is the den and covert of the beast, so that, when lying in ambush against men who are journeying through this life, he both escapes their notice by his wonders, and kills them by his malice, in his person. But yet he possesses even now the hearts of all reprobates, before he manifests himself openly; and occupies them by his secret wickedness, as though they were his own den; and conceals himself in their gloomy minds, in order to effect all the hurt he desires against the good. Were not the hearts of the persecuting Jews, the den of this beast; in whose designs he long lurked secretly, but suddenly burst forth with the voices of those who cried, *Crucify, Crucify?* [John 19, 6] And because he could not reach so far in his temptation, as to wound the mind of our Redeemer, he was eager for His death in the flesh. This beast doubtless possessed the hearts of many of the Elect, but the Lamb has, by His death, expelled him from them. Whence also He says in the Gospel, *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out*. [John 12, 31] For while He has, by a wonderful and righteous judgment, enlightened and accepted the confessions of the humble, He has forsaken and closed the eyes of the proud. Whence it is said to Him by the Psalmist, *Thou hast appointed darkness, and it became night, in it all the beasts of the woods will pass through: the young of lions roaring to seize their prey, and to seek their food from God*. [Ps. 104, 20. 21.] For God in truth appoints darkness, when, in inflicting judgment in requital for sins, He withdraws the light of His wisdom. And it is made night, because the mind of wicked men is blinded with the errors of their own ignorance. In which all the beasts of the field pass through, when malignant spirits, lurking under the gloom of deceit, pass through into the hearts of the reprobates, by fulfilling their evil purposes. In which also the young of lions roar, because spirits rise up with importunate temptations, as the ministers of most wicked, but yet preeminent, powers. But yet they seek their food from God; because doubtless they are unable to catch souls, unless by a just judgment they are permitted by God to prevail. Where it is also fitly subjoined, *The sun hath arisen, and they are gathered together, and have laid them down in their dens*. [ibid. 22] Because, when expelled from the minds of the faithful, by the Light of the Truth manifested in the flesh, they returned, as it were, to their dens, when they held the hearts of unbelievers only. That then which is there called the den of lions, is here termed the den of the beast.

50. But I think it ought to be specially observed, that this beast is said, not only to enter his den, but to abide therein. For he sometimes enters even the minds of the good, he suggests unlawful thoughts, he wearies them with temptations, he endeavours to turn aside the uprightness of the spirit to the pleasure of the flesh; he also strives to carry out delight as far as to consent: but yet he is kept from prevailing by the opposition of aid from on high. He can enter therefore into the minds of the good, but cannot abide therein, because the heart of the righteous is not the den of this beast. For he doubtless abides in and occupies the minds of those, whom he possesses as his own den: because he first leads on their thoughts to wicked desires, and afterwards leads their wicked desires even to the commission of most sinful deeds. For the reprobate do not endeavour to repel, with the



upright hand of judgment, the suggestions of him, to whose wishes they desire to yield, by submissive delight. And when any evil thought arises in their hearts, it is cherished at once by the eagerness of delight; and when no resistance is made to him, he is strengthened immediately by consent, and consent is instantly carried into outward act, but outward act is also made worse by habit. This beast then is well said to abide in his cave; which keeps hold of the thoughts of the reprobate, till it also pierces their life with the sting of evil deeds. Whence the Lord well says to Judaea by the Prophet, *How long shall hurtful thoughts abide in thee?* [Jer. 4, 14] For He does not blame for their coming, but for their remaining there. And unlawful thoughts come even unto good hearts, but they are forbidden to remain; because the righteous, in order to keep the house of conscience from being taken, drive away the enemy from the very threshold of the heart. And if he has ever secretly crept [Oxf. Mss. 'subreptit'] by sudden suggestions in front of the entrance, yet he does not reach to the gate of consent. It was to this beast doubtless that Peter, overcome by the impulse of sudden fear, opened the gate of his heart, by denial, but he withstood it by a speedy discovery, he closed it by his tears. [Luke 22, 57-62] But because the ancient enemy has not only entered and occupied the hearts of persecutors, but has also occupied and possessed them, let it be rightly said, *The beast will enter his covert, and will abide in his den.* For we learn how much he dwelt in the minds of the Jews, when we hear their plans, on the evidence of the Gospel narrative. For therein it is described, with what eager cruelty they raged for His death, when they beheld our Lord quickening the dead; how many evil designs they ardently wished to carry out against Him, but yet feared the people; how many opportunities they sought of killing Him, and could not find them; how many hands of aliens they used to carry out their cruel wishes; because they gave Him up to the Gentiles to be killed, Whom they themselves were not able legally to put to death; in order that the Roman governor might perform that by his mere power, which they eagerly insisted ought to be done, merely from their malice. Whence it is also fitly subjoined,  
Ver. 9. *A tempest will come forth from the inner parts, and cold from Arcturus.*

[xxvii]

51. When Holy Scripture mentions the inner parts, in opposition to Arcturus, it designates the quarter of the South, opposite to the parts of the North. Whence it is written in this same book; *Who maketh Arcturus, and the Orions, and the inner parts of the South.* [Job 9, 9] Because then the sun pervades with greater warmth the inner parts of the South, but does not pursue its course at all in the North ['in Arcturo.'], by the word 'inner parts' in this place is expressed the Jewish people, but by the term 'Arcturus' the Gentile people. For they who had known the One and Invisible God, and obeyed His Law, at least carnally, were kept, as it were, in the warmth of faith, under the glow of the midday sun. But because the Gentiles had not attained to any knowledge of heavenly wisdom, they were remaining, as it were, in the cold, without the sun, under the North. But because a tempest impels, but cold oppresses with torpor; it is now rightly said, *A tempest will come forth from the inner parts, and cold from Arcturus.* As if it were plainly said; From the Jews there arises persecuting malice, and from the Gentiles oppressing power. For the precepts of the Law had not forbidden the performance of miracles, and yet the Jews sought to kill the Redeemer of the human race on account of these very miracles. And hence when unable to fulfil what they had begun, they flocked to the hall of Pilate, in order that he, whom no law could restrain when murdering unjustly, might himself put Him to death. A tempest therefore came forth from the inner parts, and cold from Arcturus, whilst the Gentile judge perpetrated with the authority of Rome, that which the Jews requested through envy. Whence it is well subjoined still further against this same envy,

Ver. 10. *When God bloweth, the ice congeals.*

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52. Because, as the Holy Spirit breathed on the hearts of the faithful, and conferred greater miracles of power, benumbing envy grew up the more in the sluggish hearts of the faithless; and the unbelieving multitude became hardened against God, from the same causes, as the humble people softened the obduracy, with which it had bound itself. For when God blew on them, they were turned into ice, who said, through envy of the miracles they had witnessed; *Behold, the whole world hath gone after Him.* [John 12, 19] They were beholding the signs, perceiving the miracles performed by His ministers, and foreseeing, that the whole world was now about to follow the preaching of the faith; and yet, the more the Holy Spirit had filled the world, the more firmly was the malice of envy binding their minds. The water therefore had been turned into ice, when sluggish Judaea was still remaining in envy, as the whole world was going after God. But because Divine Power was sufficient to soften the hardness even of such great cruelty, and to melt the hearts of unbelievers to love Him, after this ice it is immediately well subjoined; *And the waters are again poured forth abundantly.*

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53. For the Lord has in truth poured forth the waters abundantly, after this ice; for after He had endured the hardness of the Jews, even unto death, He immediately melted their hearts from the hardness of unbelief, by breathing on them the love of Himself; in order that they might afterwards run the more eagerly to obey Him, the more obstinately they had before resisted His commands. Whence it is well said by a certain wise man, *As ice in fair weather, so shall thy sins be melted away.* [Ecclus. 3, 15] The Prophet had desired to be freed from the ice of this torpor, when saying, *Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the stream in the South.* [Ps. 126, 4] Of these waters, that is, of people flocking together to the Lord, it is said again, *He will send forth His word, and will melt them: His breath will blow, and the waters will flow.* [Ps. 147, 18] Waters run from ice, because many great preachers are made out of hard persecutors. Ice therefore melts in water, when the numbness of inward cold is changed into the irrigation of preaching. Was not Paul ice, who when going to Damascus, after he had received letters, was seeking to check the seeds of the word of God, which had been scattered in the heart of the faithful, as if in the earth that they might not spring up to the perfection of good deeds? [Acts 9, 2] But this ice returned in water; because he afterwards watered with the streams of holy exhortation those whom he before endeavoured to oppress with persecution, in order that there might arise a more abundant harvest of the Elect, in so much as the shower of God was watering it from the mouth even of a persecutor. Whence it is well subjoined; Ver. 11. *The corn desireth clouds.*

[xxx]

54. For what are all the Elect, but the corn of God, to be treasured up in the heavenly garners? Which now bear with the chaff in the threshing of the floor; because in this purification of Holy Church, they endure the contrary habits of the reprobate, till the inward Husbandman separates them with His fan of judgment, and taking His Elect, as grains now cleaned, into the heavenly habitations, consigns the chaff to eternal fires. Whence it is well said by John, *Whose fan is in His*

*hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* [Matt. 3, 12] But this corn, till it attain to the perfection of its fruits, looks for the rains of the clouds, in order to its growth. Because the mind of good men is watered with the words of preachers, lest it should be drained of the moisture of charity by the sun of carnal desires. The heavenly Husbandman had beheld this corn growing up in the world, and desiring the clouds, when He was saying, *The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the labourers are few. But pray ye the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into His harvest.* [Matt. 9, 37. 38] Those therefore which here are called ‘corn,’ are there called ‘harvest,’ but they who are here called ‘clouds,’ are there called ‘labourers,’ because holy preachers are both clouds and labourers; clouds, namely, by their doctrine, labourers by their life; clouds because they flow into us by their words, labourers, because they cease not to do what they speak. Whence it is subjoined;  
*And the clouds scatter their light.*

[xxxix]

55. For, for clouds to scatter their light, is for holy preachers to spread abroad examples of conduct, both by their words and actions. But though they scatter the light of their inward message, yet they do not attain to the conversion of all the hearts which they desire. For it follows;  
Ver. 12. *Which traverse all things in a circuit, whithersoever the will of their Ruler shall lead them.*

[xxxix]

56. For holy preachers often wish to exhort some persons, but cannot do so. Some they often wish to avoid, but are yet most urgently compelled, by the impulse of inward instigation, to exhort them. Let us behold the cloud of God, how it is led by the hand of Him Who guides it, even to those things which it does not seek after: and is, again, kept from following its own impulse, by the hand of Him who governs it. When Paul was shaking his raiment, and was wishing to depart from the Corinthians, he surely heard, *Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city.* [Acts 18, 9, 10] Again, when he had wished to go to the Thessalonians, he was kept back, and said, *I wished to come unto you, even I Paul, both once and again, but satan hindered me.* [1 Thess. 2, 18] For satan could not of himself hinder the journeys of so mighty an Apostle; but, while opposing, he ignorantly subserved the design of the secret dispensation; in order that Paul, while he wished to visit other persons, and was unable, might more suitably benefit those, from whom he could not depart. The clouds of God, therefore, traverse all things in a circuit, because they illuminate the ends of the world with the light of preaching. But, because being subject to the Divine will, they cannot fulfil their own wishes, they cannot go any where, except where the will of their Ruler shall lead them. Whence it is still further subjoined;  
*To every thing which He shall command them upon the face of the earth.*

[xxxix]

57. For often when they are led by the will of their Ruler, they seek to do one thing, but are disposed otherwise. For they frequently desire to correct some of their hearers in a gentle way, and yet their speech is turned into sharpness. They frequently seek to be severe with others, but yet their vigour is restrained by the spirit of gentleness. As, therefore, they cannot go whither they will, so

also they cannot act as they will. For because the inward Judge keeps hold of them, when He sends them, so also does He modify and take them up, when He leads them on, so that sometimes they arrange one thing in their thought, but carry another into effect; they sometimes begin in one way, but end in another. Because then they serve according to that which is commanded them, let it be rightly said, *Whithersoever the will of their Ruler shall lead them, to every thing which He shall command them upon the face of the earth.* For they find the way of their preaching the more open, in that they are guided to it, not by their own will, but that of their Teacher. Whence it is still further subjoined;

Ver. 13. *Whether in one tribe, or in His own land, or in whatsoever place of His mercy He shall order them to be found.*

[xxxiv]

58. The one tribe of Judah is certainly meant, which is mentioned in Holy Scripture plainly and repeatedly above the rest. For it received a special gift above them all, in that it brought forth from itself the flesh of our Redeemer. But all Judaea together is called the land of the Lord. [Deut. 32, 42] Because it then produced to Him the fruit of faith, when the whole world was in error, the Gentiles having fallen under the worship of idols. But the place of the mercy of God is the Gentile world itself, for if the strict Judge were justly to punish its faults, it would never come to the reconciliation of grace. For, when it had no merits before God, it yet received the grace of reconciliation of His sole mercy. Whence it is well said by Paul, *And that the Gentiles should glorify God for His mercy.* [Rom. 15, 9] Whence it is written again, *Which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.* [1 Pet. 2, 10] God therefore leads His clouds, either in one tribe, or in His own land, or in whatsoever place of His mercy He shall order them to be found; because at one time He conferred preachers of the Old and New Testament on the tribe of Judah only, and rejected nearly the whole of Israel by the wicked governing of their kings. At one time, He makes these clouds to rain, even in His own land, because He recalled this same people of Israel to His former favour, after correction in captivity. At another, He wished them to shine forth from the place of His mercy; because He made known by holy preachers even to the Gentiles the miracles of His power, in order by His sole mercy to free those from the yoke of error whom His wrath in their innate unbelief was weighing down. But behold, because Eliu has perceived future events by the spirit of prophecy, because he has uttered many sublime truths; the haughty man, wearied with the weight of his pride, is unable to bear the burden of what he says. For he adds at once in a boastful manner,

Ver. 14. *Hearken unto these things, O Job, stand, and consider the wondrous works of God.*

[xxxv]

59. He saw him to be lying down, as it were, in comparison with himself, whom he directed to stand at the words of so great preaching. Although even by this word, "*Listen*" which he uses, he inflicts a grievous insult upon Job: because, as we have already said of him also before, it is arrogance for an inferior, to wish to extort for himself a hearing from his superior. But although Eliu does not consider to whom he is saying the truths that he utters, yet we, who seek to be instructed by all things, ought carefully to examine the words of his teaching. For perhaps it is said with great skill in virtue, *Stand, and consider the wondrous works of God.* For there are some who consider the wondrous works of God, but lying down; because they do not follow and admire the

power of His doings. For to 'stand,' is to act uprightly. Whence also it is said by Paul, *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* [1 Cor. 10, 12] And they often indeed admire the judgments of heaven, love the announcements of their heavenly country, when they hear them, are astounded at the wondrous operations of His inward ordaining, but yet neglect to attain to these words by their love and their lives. They then lie, and consider the wondrous works of God, who think of God's power in their understanding, but do not love it in their lives. They turn indeed their eyes in consideration, by thinking on them, but yet do not raise themselves from the earth by their intention. Whence it is well said in reproach of Balaam, *Who falling, hath his eyes open.* [Numb. 24, 4] For he had said many things of the coming of the Redeemer, and was foreseeing what things were to come to pass in the last days. But yet he was unwilling to rise up to Him in his life, Whom by foreseeing he announced. He was lying then, and had his eyes open, when prophecy was directing his mind to heavenly things, and covetousness was confining it to earth. He was lying and had his eyes open, because he was able to behold Him from above, Whom, grovelling below, he loved not. Eliu therefore, who did not believe that blessed Job had maintained in his life that, which he professed, says, as if advising him, *Stand, and consider the wondrous works of God.* He still further examines him as to future events, and adds, as if humbling him for his ignorance; Ver. 15. *Dost thou know when God commanded the rains to shew forth the light of His clouds?*

[xxxvi]

60. If 'clouds' are holy preachers, the rains from the clouds are the words of their preaching. But when clouds fly through the air, unless rain descends from above, we know not what an immensity of waters they carry. Unless the glittering sun breaks forth amidst the rain, we cannot understand, what brightness also is concealed within them. Because doubtless if holy preachers are silent, and shew not by their words, how great is the brightness of heavenly hope, which they bear in their hearts, they seem to be like other men, or far more despicable. But when they have begun to lay open by their preaching, what is the reward of the heavenly country, which they possess within; when, oppressed by persecution, they make known in what a height of virtue they have made progress; when, despised in outward appearance, they point out by their words what makes them feared; the rains themselves, which pour from the clouds, shew us the light of these very clouds. For we learn by the words of preachers to reverence in them, with great humility, the brightness of life which they seek after. Paul was doubtless displaying this light to his disciples, when he said, *That ye may know, what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe.* [Eph. 1, 18. 19.] This light the Corinthians had known by the words of his writings, as by drops of rain, when they said, *His letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.* [2 Cor. 10, 10] But holy preachers frequently desire to display themselves, in order to do good, but yet are unable: they frequently desire to be concealed, in order to be quiet, and are not permitted. No one therefore knows when the rains shew the light of the clouds, because no one comprehends when God grants the virtue of preaching, that the glory of the preachers may shine forth. He says therefore, *Dost thou know, when God commanded the rains, to shew forth the light of His clouds?* As if he said plainly, If thou now beholdest preachers about to come to the world, dost thou understand, when God urges them on to preach, by filling them with His Holy Spirit, or in what way He makes known their brightness to the world? Whence it is also fitly subjoined, Ver. 16. *Dost thou know the mighty paths of the clouds, and their perfect knowledge?*

[xxxvii]

61. These clouds have most subtle paths, namely, the ways of holy preaching. For *narrow is the gate, which leadeth unto life*. [Matt. 7, 14] They confine then those by paths, who do not depart from the track of their purpose by wandering through the wide desires of the world. For the strict censure of holy living is not a broad way, but a path, in which each preacher is studiously confined: because he is carefully hemmed in by the defence of precepts. Is it not, as it were, a kind of narrowness of way to live indeed in this world, but to have no desires for this world, not to seek for another's goods, not to retain one's own, to despise the praises of the world, to love reproaches for God's sake, to avoid glory, to court contempt, to despise flatterers, to honour our despisers, to banish from our hearts the wrongs of those who hurt us, and to retain towards them the unchangeable grace of affection in the heart? All which namely are paths, but paths of greatness. For the narrower they are in this life, for guarding our conduct, the more are they enlarged to greater width in eternal retribution. Whence also it is well subjoined, *And their perfect knowledge*.

62. For it is indeed perfect wisdom, for a man to do all these things with anxious care, and to know that he is nothing in his own deserts. Whence even the clouds themselves are instructed in this perfect wisdom, when it is said to them by the voice of Truth; *When ye have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants*. [Luke 17, 10] It is perfect wisdom to know all things, and yet in a certain way to be ignorant of one's knowledge; by which though we already know the precepts of God, though we are now weighing with anxious attention the power of His words, though we are doing those things, which we believe we have understood; yet we still know not with what strictness of examination these deeds will hereafter be enquired into, nor do we as yet behold the face of God, nor see His hidden counsels. How great then is our knowledge; which, as long as it is pressed down with the weight of mortality, is darkened by the very mist of its own uncertainty? Of which it is well said by Paul, *He who thinketh that he knoweth any thing, knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know*. [1 Cor. 8, 2] While we live, therefore, in this world, we then know perfectly what ought to be known, when, as we make progress in wisdom, we learn that we know nothing perfectly. He says therefore, *Dost thou know the mighty paths of the clouds, and their perfect knowledge?* As if he said openly, Dost thou now behold the lofty acts of preachers, who after raising themselves on high by their wisdom, humbly bow themselves down through knowledge of their ignorance? But since it is caused by the gift of the Holy Spirit alone, that the heart of man is perfectly informed not merely of its knowledge, but also of its ignorance; and that it glows with fervent love for things above, while it considers here below that its knowledge is of less worth, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 17. *Are not thy garments warm, when the earth hath been blown upon by the south wind?*

[xxxviii]

63. We have often said already that blessed Job stands for a type of Holy Church. But all they, who are joined to it by the unity of the Faith, are the garments of the Church. Of which the Lord says to the same Church by the Prophet, *As I live, thou shalt be clothed with all these, as with an ornament*. [Is. 49, 18] But by the south wind, which is doubtless warm, is designated, not improperly, the Holy Spirit, for when any one is touched by It, he is freed from the torpor of his iniquity. Whence it is well said in the Song of Songs, *Arise, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden,*

*and let its sweet spices flow out.* [Cant. 4, 16] For the north wind is ordered to arise, in order, doubtless, that the opposing spirit, who binds the hearts of mortals, may fly away. For the south wind comes, and blows through the garden, that its sweet spices may flow abroad; because, while the mind of man is filled by the coming of the Holy Spirit, a notion of their virtues is soon scattered abroad from it, that the tongue of the Saints, like a garden which is blown upon by the south wind, may now justly say, *We are unto God a sweet odour of Christ.* [2 Cor. 2, 15] The garments, therefore, of Holy Church are warm, while the earth is breathed upon by the south wind; because they, who cling to her by faith, glow with fervent zeal of charity, while their mind is streamed through by the breath of the Holy Spirit. But nothing hinders this being understood of this same blessed Job; because we so speak of these things in the Church in general terms, as yet specially to confine them to its separate members.

64. For every one; who lives uprightly, and has been wont also to teach this to others, has, as it were, as many garments, as the hearers who cling to him in agreement. For it is the nature of garments, that they cannot be warm of themselves; but that, when applied to a living body, they cover the exuding pores of the limbs, they keep back the heat which flows forth from within, and from this heat they doubtless become warm: but when they have become warm, by retaining the heat they have received, they return it to the body. What then is signified by garments adhering to the living body, but the life of disciples closely united to teachers who live well? Which receives, as it were, warmth through the pores; because it is kindled with the love of God, both by the example of action, and the impulse of exhortation. Which expels, as it were, its own cold, when it departs from its former iniquity; retains the warmth it has received, because it gains strength in that warmth which it has obtained from preaching. But when holy preachers perceive that their hearers are advancing towards the love of God, they themselves glow the more in power of teaching: and from seeing that they are burning and glowing for the highest objects, they are themselves more mightily kindled to announce the good things of the heavenly country. And if at any time, because they are still passing this corruptible life of human infirmity, they are assaulted by any fault, however slightly, in deed, word, or thought, they look at the progress of their disciples, and are ashamed of being themselves blameable, even in the smallest matters: lest they should by chance set a crooked example to those, whom they are calling to the rule of inward rectitude by the voice of preaching. When hearers then are kindled by the word of their teachers, garments, as it were, become warm from a living body. But when the conduct of the teachers also is improving, from the progress of their hearers, the heat returns, as it were, to the body from the garments which have been warmed. But let not the teachers attribute it to themselves, that they see their hearers advancing to the highest things, through their exhortation: because, if the Holy Spirit fill not their hearts, the voice of teachers sounds in vain to the bodily ears. For teachers can shape their voice without, but cannot impress it within; *For neither is he who planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God Who giveth the increase.* [1 Cor. 3, 7] Let it be said then, *Are not thy garments warm, when the earth hath been blown upon by the south wind?* Because, namely, hearers, who now adhere to teachers who live aright, receive the warmth of heavenly love, when they are roused by the breath of the Holy Spirit. As if he were saying plainly to blessed Job; Thou in vain attributest it to thyself, if thou beholdest that any have made progress in virtue by thy means; because these, whom thou supposest to have become warm through thee, would be still remaining cold, in their own insensibility, if the warmth of the Holy Spirit did not touch them. But after he spake these things forcibly, he immediately subjoins words of derision, being influenced with levity by arrogance, saying,

Ver. 18. *Thou perchance madest with Him the heavens, which are most solid, as if cast in brass.*

[xxxix]

65. By 'heavens,' those who are created in the heavens, the angelic spirits, can be designated. Whence also we are instructed by the voice of Truth to say in our Prayer, *Thy will be done as in heaven, so in earth.* [Matt. 6, 10] That the will of God may be doubtless observed in all things even by human infirmity, as it is done by the higher creation. Of whom it is well said, *They are most solid, as if cast in brass.* For it is of the nature of brass, that it is difficult to be consumed by rust. And the angelic powers, which stood fixed in Divine love, when the proud angels fell, received this, as their reward of retribution, that they are no longer consumed by any rust of sin stealing upon them, that they continue in the contemplation of their Creator, without end to their felicity, and exist with eternal stability, in that which they were created. Which the very words of the history in Moses concerning the origin of the world will attest, when both the heaven is said to have been first made, and this is afterwards called the firmament. [Gen. 1, 17] Because, namely, the nature of Angels was both first fashioned more subtilly, in the regions above, and was afterwards still more wonderfully strengthened, that it might never fall. But, as we have often said, by the 'heavens' can be expressed the minds of the Elect, raised up by inward love from all earthly pollutions. For though, in the body, they dwell below, yet, because they cleave in their heart, even now, to the highest objects, they truly say, *Our conversation is in heaven.* [Phil. 3, 20] *Who are most solid, as if cast in brass,* because they are not wasted away from the integrity of their original strength, by any rust of changeableness. To whom, boldly bearing up against adversities, it is said by the voice of their Maker, *Ye are My friends, which have continued with Me in My temptations.* [John 15, 14; Luke 22, 28] But though this learned and haughty one, when endeavouring to make a jest of this holy man, blends noble sayings with his derision, yet he ever falls back, from those noble sayings, into empty words. For he again subjoins deridingly,  
Ver. 19. *Shew us what to say to Him; for we in truth are involved in darkness.*

66. As if He said; Thou, who enjoyest the great light of wisdom, oughtest to teach us, who are involved in the darkness of ignorance. But soon starting away from his derision, he subjoins contemptuously;

Ver. 20. *Who will tell Him the things which I say?*

As if he plainly said; The unheard truths which I declare to Him, from an acute sense of His praises, who can repeat, even after he has heard them? But because, when learning and arrogance contend together in the habitation of the same mind, there sounds forth from the mouth of the speaker not merely levity of behaviour, but also gravity of sentiment; after Eliu had been puffed up in levity by arrogance, saying, *Who will tell Him the things which I say?* he presently subjoined, through his learning,  
*Even if a man shall speak, he shall he swallowed up.*

[xl]

67. Every thing which devours any thing, draws it inwards, and conceals it from the eyes of beholders, and hurries into the deep an object which could be seen on the surface. A man, therefore, when he is silent about God, seems to be something on account of the reason with which he was



made. But if he begins to speak about God, it is at once shewn how nought he is; because he is devoured by the immensity of His greatness, and is hurried, as it were, into the deep, and is concealed. For wishing to speak of the Ineffable, he is swallowed up by the narrowness of his own ignorance. For flesh speaks of the Spirit, the circumscribed spirit of the Uncircumscribed, the creature of the Creator, the temporal of the Eternal, the mutable of the Immutable, the mortal of the Quickener. And since, being placed in darkness, he knows not the inward light, as it really is, a man wishing to discourse of eternity, speaks as a blind man of the light. *If then a man shall speak, he shall be swallowed up*: because if a man wishes to speak of eternity as it is, he takes away also from himself even the sense he has of it when silent. But, behold! eternity then became truly known to men, when It shewed Itself to them by assuming man's nature. But because this had not yet been revealed, it is rightly subjoined of the same men;

Ver. 21. *But now they see not the light.*

[xli]

68. Of which light doubtless it is said even by the Prophet, *The people which was sitting in darkness, saw a great light.* [Is. 9, 2] But he shews how this light is seen by men, when he immediately adds;

*The air will suddenly be gathered into clouds.*

For the air is so diffused by its own tenuity, as not to be consolidated with any firmness. But clouds are firmer, the denser they are. What then is designated by the 'air,' but the minds of worldly men, which, given up to the countless desires of this life, are, being fluid, scattered hither and thither like the air? But the air is collected into clouds, when unstable minds are, by the grace of the Divine regard, strengthened with the solidity of virtue, in order that, by thinking of what is right, they may gather themselves within the bosom of their heart, and may not melt away in empty thoughts.

69. Peter had been air, when the occupation of fishing for the life of the flesh used, as a transient breeze to agitate him, distracted still with earthly desires. The Apostles had been air, who had already learned exalted truths by the Law, but who as yet savoured not of strength by faith. But the air was suddenly gathered into clouds, because, through the look of divine grace, the unstable hearts of fishermen were turned into the solidity of preachers, in order that their infirm thoughts might become firm, by thinking boldly, that they might hold like clouds the waters of wisdom, and irrigate with the words of their preaching the earth lying beneath; and that, when this ministry was completed, they might return to the secret abodes of heaven, and attain, when their labour was passed, to eternal rest. Whence it is presently well subjoined;

*And the wind passing over will drive them away.*

[xlii]

70. For the wind that passes over is the present life. The wind then passes over, and drives the clouds away; because mortal life, passing along, conceals holy preachers from our bodily eyes. The passing wind drives away the clouds: because the onward course of temporal life withdraws the Apostles from the flesh, and conceals them, from the surface of the earth, in secret rest, as if in the centre of the heavens. But because they cease not to preach even to their death, and pass through the space of this present life, like clouds, with the shower of their words, he adds what is wrought

by their labours in Holy Church, when he immediately subjoins;  
Ver. 22. *Gold will come from the north.*

[xliii]

71. What is designated by the 'north,' but the Gentile world, fast bound in the cold of sin? Which he held under the yoke of his tyranny, who proudly said, *I will sit in the mount of the covenant, in the sides of the north, I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 13. 14.] And what is expressed by 'gold,' but faithful souls? Of which it is said by Jeremiah, *How is the gold become dim? the finest colour is changed?* [Lam. 4, 1] For he lamented that the gold was dimmed, because he beheld in some persons the brightness of innocence changed into the blackness of sin. Gold, therefore, is said to come from the north; because through the favour of the grace of the Redeemer, the life of the faithful, which is precious before God, is increased within Holy Church, from the Gentile world, which had been long frozen in the torpor of unbelief. For gold comes from the north, when the true faith in God shines forth from the very worshippers of idols. But when the Gentiles were converted to the faith, the Jewish people gainsays them; and scorns to admit to the recompense of eternal rewards, those who had been so long worshippers of idols. Whence it is said to Peter, after the conversion of the Gentiles, *Wherefore wentest thou in, to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them?* [Acts 11, 3] In contradiction to which, the Lord rightly says by Isaiah, *I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Keep not back.* [Is. 43, 6] For as the Gentile world is signified by the 'north,' so is the Jewish People signified by the 'south,' which was warmed, as it were, by the mid-day sun, because when our Redeemer appeared in the flesh, it first received the warmth of faith. *Give up*, then, is said to the north, when the Gentile world is ordered to offer to God the gifts of its faith. But the south is commanded *not to keep back*, because the Hebrews who stood firm in the faith were ordered not to condemn and reject the life of the Gentiles. Whence here also, because it was said, *Gold cometh from the north*; it is fitly subjoined;  
*And from God fearful praise.*

[xliv]

72. For fearful praise is said to come from God, as if it were said to come from those who are on the side of God, that is, the faithful. When gold then comes from the north, fearful praise proceeds from God; because, while the Gentiles offered the brightness of their faith, the multitude of the faithful Hebrews praised with fear the Divine judgments. But how gold comes from the north, and how fearful praise bursts forth from those who are under God, the sacred history itself informs us. For it is written, *Cornelius, a centurion of the band, which is called Italian, a religious man, and fearing God with all his house, giving much alms to the people, and praying to God always, saw in a vision manifestly, about the ninth hour of the day, an Angel of God coming in to him, saying unto him, Cornelius. But he looking on him, being seized with fear, said, Who art thou, Lord? But he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms have come up as a memorial in the sight of God.* [Acts 10, 1-4] Gold therefore came from the north, when prayer with alms went up from the Gentiles in the sight of God. But when Peter had related to the brethren, either how Cornelius had seen an Angel, or he himself had seen a linen cloth let down from heaven to him with beasts, and creeping things and birds, or how the Holy Spirit had bedewed the hearts of the Gentiles, even before Baptism, [Acts 11, 5-17] Who had never come into the minds of the Jews, excepting after the water

of Baptism, it is immediately written, *When they heard these things they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, God hath therefore granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life.* [ib. 18.] The multitude therefore of the faithful, which, on the salvation of the Gentiles, restrained itself from its murmurs, by admiring the gifts of heavenly grace offered fearful praise to God. Whence Peter himself also wonders, saying, *I have found in truth, that God is no acceptor of persons.* [Acts 10, 34]

73. But when the Gentiles receive the faith, why is fearful praise said to come from those who are already believers, when it ought to come from them, joyful rather than fearful? But fearful praise came from the Hebrews who already believed, on the conversion of the Gentiles, doubtless, because Judaea was justly rejected, while the Gentiles were called in mercy; and feared the loss of its own rejection, while it beheld the gain of the others' calling. Whence we also, when we suddenly behold the wicked raised up to an unexpected eminence of life, daily rejoice with fear under the secret judgments of God, lest God should desert by His secret judgments some who are counted worthy, Who calls thereby those to Himself who are considered unworthy. It follows, Ver. 23. *We cannot worthily find Him out.*

[xliv]

74. Even if we can now find Him out, yet not worthily. For whatever we perceive in Him, is of faith, and not of sight. But yet he adds that which he considers he has found, saying; *He is great in power, and judgment, and justice, and cannot be spoken of.*

For He is great in power, because He overcomes the powerful adversary, and taking from his house the vessels of dishonour, changes them into vessels of mercy. [Matt. 12, 29] Great in judgment; because, though He here brings down His Elect by adversity, yet He raises them at last in the glory of eternal prosperity. Great in justice: for though He here bears long with the reprobate, yet He at last condemns them for ever. But it is well subjoined; *And cannot be spoken of.* For if He cannot worthily be thought of, how much less can He be spoken of? But we speak of Him far better, in a measure, if we hold our peace with admiration through fear of thinking upon Him. It follows, Ver. 24. *Therefore men will fear Him, and all who seem to themselves to be wise, will not dare to contemplate Him.*

[xlvi]

75. Eliu in this place calls those who are strong of understanding 'men.' ['viro'] And we must note that he says not, 'And wise men will not dare to contemplate Him,' but, *They who seem to themselves to be wise.* By which words, namely, he implies those who are skilful, but arrogant. Eliu, therefore, while he has many forcible sentiments, has touched himself in the close of his speech. For when men, who are learned and arrogant, do not live rightly, but are compelled by the force of doctrine to say right things, they become in a measure the heralds of their own condemnation, because while they enforce in their preaching that which they scorn to do, they proclaim with their own voices that they are condemned. Against whom it is well said by the Psalmist, *They were turned into a crooked bow.* [Ps. 78, 57] For a crooked bow strikes the very person, by whom it is aimed : but the tongues of arrogant men are in their sayings like a crooked bow ; be- cause when they speak against pride, they fix their arrows in their own makers. Whence

we must watch with the utmost care, lest the wisdom we receive should take away the light of humility, when it illuminates the darkness of ignorance, and should not any longer be wisdom. [Acts 10, 1-4] For though it shines forth in might of speech, yet it obscures the heart of the speaker with a covering of pride.

76. For some goods are of the highest, others of a mixed, kind. The highest goods are faith, hope, charity. Which, when they are really possessed, cannot be turned into evil. But prophecy, doctrine, the power of healing, and the rest, are goods of a mixed nature. For they are so placed between each extreme, that at one time the heavenly country only, and at another earthly glory, is sought by their means. We term these, then, virtues of a mixed nature, which we turn to whatever object our mind wishes for; which the mind can use when possessed, just as it does worldly riches. For through earthly riches, some pride themselves in boastful ostentation, others perform offices of mercy upon their indigent neighbours. When outward praise then is sought for by doctrine and prophecy, the height of earthly glory is aimed at, as if by bodily riches. But when doctrine and prophecy are employed for gaining souls, the riches we have received are distributed as it were to our needy brethren. Because then the mind, through want of care, keeps itself aloof from the hand of the Giver, by means of those very gifts which it boasts of possessing, we must with vigilant forethought take care, that our vices are first overcome, and our gifts afterwards secured with circumspection. For if the mind, when amongst them, incautiously forsakes itself, it is not assisted and supported by them, but is rejected, as if already repaid for its former labours. Whence also it happens, that when the virtue we possess is employed in the service of transitory praise, it is no longer virtue, because it takes service with vice. For since humility is the source of virtue, that virtue truly shoots up in us, which remains firm in its proper root, that is, in humility. For if it is torn from it, it doubtless withers away, because it loses the moisture of charity, which quickens it within.

77. But because secret pride of heart is reproved by this, which Eliu says, *All who seem to themselves to be wise will not dare to contemplate Him*; it seems good to observe what great gifts of virtues David had obtained, and in all these with how firm a humility he maintained himself. For whom would it not puff up, to break the mouths of lions; to rend asunder the arms of bears; to be chosen, when his elder brethren had been despised; to be anointed to the government of the kingdom, when the King had been rejected; to slay with a single stone Goliath who was dreaded by all; to bring back, after the destruction of the aliens, the numerous foreskins proposed by the King; to receive at last the promised kingdom, and to possess the whole people of Israel without any contradiction? And yet, when he brings back the Ark of God to Jerusalem, he dances before the Ark, mingled with the people, as though forgetful that he had been preferred to them all. And because, as is believed, it had been the custom of the common people to dance before the Ark, the king wheels round in the dance, in service to God. Behold how he whom the Lord preferred specially above all, contemns himself beneath the Lord, both by equalling himself with the least, and by displaying abject behaviour. The power of his kingdom is not recalled to his memory; he fears not to be vile in the eyes of his people, by dancing; he remembers not, before the Ark of Him Who had given him honour, that he had been preferred in honour above the rest. Before God he performed even the extremest vilenesses, in order to strengthen, by his humility, the bold deeds he had performed in the sight of men. What is thought by others of his doings, I know not; I am more surprised at David dancing, than fighting. For by fighting he subdued his enemies; but by dancing before the Lord he overcame himself. And when Michal, the daughter of Saul, still mad with pride

at her royal descent, despised him when humbled, saying, *How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, uncovering himself before the handmaids of his servants, and made himself naked, as though one of the buffoons were naked*: [2 Sam. 6, 20] she immediately heard, *As the Lord liveth, I will play before Lord, Who hath chosen me rather than thy father*. [ibid. 21] And a little after he says, *And I will play, and I will become more vile than I have been, and I will be humble in mine own eyes*. [ibid. 22] As if he plainly said, I seek to become vile before men, because I seek to keep myself noble before the Lord, through my humility.

78. But there are some who think humbly of themselves; because, when placed in honour, they consider that they are nothing but dust and ashes; but yet they shrink from appearing contemptible before men, and, contrary to what they think of themselves within, they cover themselves, as it were, with a rigid cloak of beauty without. And there are some who seek to appear vile before men, and condemn every thing that they are, by exhibiting themselves as lowly; but they are yet puffed up in themselves within, as if by the very merit of the mean look they have displayed; and they are the more elated in their heart, the more they seemingly suppress pride. But both these warrings of the one sin of pride, David detected with great circumspection, overcame with wonderful virtue. For he teaches that, though thinking humbly of himself within, he seeks not honour from without, saying, *I will play, and I will become more vile*. And since he does not swell with pride within, because he made himself vile without, he adds, *And I will be humble in mine own eyes*. As if he said, Such as in self-contempt I represent myself without, such also do I keep myself within. What then should they do, whom teaching elates, if David knew that our Redeemer was to come from his flesh, and announced His joys in prophecy, and yet kept down in himself the neck of his heart, by the strong heel of discretion, saying, *And I will be humble in mine own eyes*?

79. It is well said therefore by Eliu, *Therefore men will fear Him, and all who seem to themselves to be wise will not dare to contemplate Him*. For they who seem to themselves to be wise, cannot contemplate the wisdom of God; because they are the more removed from His light, the more they are not humble in themselves. Because while the swelling of pride increases in their minds, it closes the eye of contemplation, and by considering that they outshine others, they thence deprive themselves of the light of truth. If, therefore, we seek to be truly wise, and to contemplate Wisdom Itself, let us humbly acknowledge ourselves to be fools. Let us give up hurtful wisdom, let us learn praiseworthy folly. For hence it is written, *God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise*. [1 Cor. 1, 27] Hence again it is said, *If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise*. [ib. 3, 18] Hence the words of the Gospel history attest, that when Zaccheus could see nothing for the crowd, he ascended a sycamore tree, to see the Lord as He passed by. [Luke 19, 4] For the barren [lit. 'foolish'] fig is called a sycamore. Zaccheus therefore, being small of stature, ascended a sycamore, and saw the Lord, because they who humbly choose the foolishness of the world, do themselves minutely contemplate the wisdom of God. For the crowd hinders smallness of stature from beholding the Lord, because the tumult of worldly cares keeps the infirmity of the human mind from looking at the light of truth. But we prudently ascend a sycamore, if we carefully maintain in our mind that foolishness which is commanded by God. For what is more foolish in this world, than not to seek for what we have lost; to give up our possessions to the spoilers, to requite no wrong for the wrongs we have received, nay more, to exhibit patience, when other wrongs have been added? For the Lord commands us, as it were, to ascend a sycamore, when He says, *Of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again*; [ib. 6, 30] and again, *If any man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also*. [Matt. 5,

39] The Lord is seen, as He passes along, by means of the sycamore, because though the wisdom of God is not yet steadily beheld, as it really is, by this wise folly, yet it is seen by the light of contemplation, as though passing by us. But they, who seem to themselves to be wise, according to the words of Eliu, cannot see it; for, hurried away in the haughty crowd of their thoughts, they have not yet found a sycamore, in order to behold the Lord.

## PART VI. BOOK XXVIII.

The first eleven verses of the thirty-eighth chapter are explained, in various senses, but especially in a moral sense.

### PREFACE.

1. After the loss of his goods, the death of his children, the wounds of his body, the words of his wife persuading him to evil, the insulting language of his comforters, and the darts of so many sorrows boldly received, blessed Job ought to have been praised by his Judge for such great power of constancy, if he had been now going to be called out of this present world. But after he is here about to receive back yet two-fold, after he is restored to his former health, to enjoy longer his restored possessions, Almighty God is obliged to reprove with strict justice him, whom He preserves alive, lest his very victory should lay him low with the sword of pride. For what commonly slays a soul more fatally than consciousness of virtue? For while it puffs it up with self-consideration, it deprives it of the fulness of truth; and while it suggests that it is sufficient of itself for the attainment of rewards, it diverts it from the intention of improvement. Job, therefore, was just before his scourges, but he remained more just after his scourges; and, having been praised before by the voice of God, he afterwards increased from the blow. For as a ductile tube is lengthened by being hammered, so was he raised the higher in praise of God, as he was smitten with heavier chastisement. But he who stood thus firm in his virtues, when prostrated by wounds, needed to be humbled. He needed to be humbled, lest the weapons of pride should pierce that most sturdy breast, which it was plain that even the wounds that had been inflicted had not overcome. It was doubtless necessary to find out a person, by comparison with whom he would have been surpassed. But what is this, which is said of him by the voice of the Lord; *Thou hast seen My servant Job, that there is no man like him upon the earth.* [Job 1, 8; 2, 3] By comparison with whom then could he be surpassed, of whom it is said, on the witness of God, that he cannot be equalled, on comparison with any man? What then must be done, except for the Lord Himself to relate to him His own virtues, and to say to him, *Canst thou bring forth the morning star in its season, and canst thou make the evening star to rise over the sons of men?* [Job 38, 32] And again, *Have the gates of death been opened to thee, and hast thou seen the gloomy doors?* [ib. 17] Or certainly; *Hast thou commanded their dawn after thy rising, and hast thou shewn the morning its place?* [ib. 12] But who can do these things, but the Lord? And yet a man is asked, in order that he may learn that he is unable to do these things; in order that a man, who has increased with such boundless virtues, and is surpassed by the example of no man, may, that he should not be elated, be surpassed on comparison with God. But O how mightily is he exalted, who is so sublimely humbled! O how great is the victory of the man, to have been foiled on comparison with God! O how much greater is he than men, who is proved by testimony to be less than God! For he is very

mighty, who is proved by such questioning not to be mighty. But since we are being led to discuss very obscure questions, let us now come to the words of the text.

Chap. xxxviii. ver. 1. *But the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said.*

[i]

1. I see it must be observed, that if the speech were said to have been addressed to one in health and safety, the Lord would not be described as having spoken out of the whirlwind. But because He speaks to one who has been scourged, He is described as having spoken out of the whirlwind. For the Lord speaks to His servants in one way, when He improves them inwardly by compunction, and in another, when He presses on them with severity, lest they be puffed up. For by the gentle address of the Lord, is shewn His affectionate sweetness, but by His terrible, is pointed out His dreadful power. By the one the soul is persuaded to advance, by the other, that which is advancing is checked. In the one it learns what to desire, in the other what to fear. By the one He says, *Be glad and rejoice, O daughter of Sion, for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee.* [Zech. 2, 10] By the other it is said; *The Lord will come in a tempest, and in the whirlwind are His paths.* [Is. 66, 15] For He in truth is gentle, Who comes to dwell in the midst of us. But when He makes His way by the tempest and whirlwind, He doubtless disturbs the hearts which He touches; and puts Himself forth to tame their pride, when He is made known as mighty and terrible.

2. It should also be known, that the Divine mode of speaking is distinguished in two ways. For either the Lord speaks by Himself, or His words are adapted to us by means of an angelic creature. But when He speaks by Himself, He is disclosed to us, solely by the power of His inward inspiration. When He speaks by Himself, the heart is instructed in His word, without words and syllables; because His power is known by a kind of inward elevation. At which the mind when full is raised up, when empty is weighed down. For it is a kind of weight, to raise up every mind which it fills. It is an incorporeal light, to both fill the inner parts, and circumscribe them without, when filled. It is a discourse without noise, which both opens the ears, and yet knows not to utter a sound. For in that which is written concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit; *Suddenly there was made a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind approaching, and it filled the whole house, where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them;* [Acts 2, 2. 3.] the Lord appeared indeed by the fire, but He spake to them by Himself within. And neither that sound nor that fire was God; but by that which He displayed outwardly, He expressed what He performed inwardly. For because He made the Disciples both to glow with zeal, and to be skilful in speech within, He displayed tongues of fire without. The elements, therefore, were applied with significance, that their bodies might feel the fire and the sound, but that their hearts might be instructed by the invisible fire, and the voice without a sound. The fire then which appeared was outward, but that which gave knowledge was inward. And when the eunuch of queen Candace was sitting in his chariot, and journeying, and was holding Isaiah in his hands, without understanding him, the Spirit had doubtless said to Philip in his heart, *Join thyself to the chariot.* [Acts 8, 29] And when Cornelius had sent soldiers who feared God to summon Peter, Peter doubtless heard in his mind by the Spirit, *Behold three men seek thee. Arise therefore, get thee down, and go with them.* [Acts 10, 19] For, for the Spirit of God to say, as it were, certain words to us, is for Him to intimate by His hidden power what is to be done, and to instruct in an instant, without the medium of sound or the slowness of speech, the unlearned heart of man in hidden mysteries. For because the hearing does not comprehend at once all the sayings which are

addressed to it; since it understands reasons by means of words, and words separately by syllables; but our sight apprehends suddenly and at once the whole object, by turning itself towards it; the words of God addressed to us from within are seen, rather than heard; because, while He insinuates Himself, without the delay of words, He illumines by His sudden light the darkness of our ignorance. Whence also when Baruch the son of Neriah was explaining, when demanded, how he had heard the words of Jeremiah prophesying, he said, *He pronounced all these words from his mouth, as if he were reading, and I wrote them.* [Jer 36, 18] For he who speaks when reading, looks in one direction, but utters his words in another; because he speaks that which he sees. The Prophets of God then, because they rather see than hear His words in the heart, speak as if reading.

3. But when God declares His will by an Angel, He points it out sometimes by words, sometimes by things, sometimes by words and things together, sometimes by images presented to the eyes of the heart, sometimes by images taken for the time from the air and presented even before the eyes of the body sometimes by heavenly substances, sometimes by earthly, and sometimes by earthly and heavenly together. But sometimes God so speaks even by an Angel to the hearts of men, that the Angel Himself is presented to the sight of the mind.

4. For God speaks in words by an Angel, when nothing is displayed in outward appearance, but the words of the Heavenly saying are heard; as on the Lord saying, *Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee;* [John 17, 1] it is immediately replied, *I have glorified, and will glorify Him again.* [John 12, 28] For God, Who speaks without time, by the power of inward impulse, uttered not in time that voice by His own Substance, which voice, circumscribed by time, He made plain by human words. But speaking doubtless from “heavenly places, He fashioned, by the ministry of a rational creature, those His words which He wished to be heard by men.

5. But sometimes God speaks through Angels by things, when nothing is said in word, but future events are announced by an object taken from the elements; as Ezekiel, hearing no words, saw the appearance of amber in the midst of the fire; [Ezek. 1, 4] in order, namely, that while he was looking on this single object, he might understand the things which were to come to pass in the last times. For amber [‘electrum’] is a mixture of the metals of gold and silver, by which admixture the silver indeed is rendered more brilliant, but the brightness of the gold is softened down. What then is pointed out by amber, but the Mediator between God and men? For while He presented Himself to us as a union of the Divine and human natures, He both rendered His human nature more glorious by His Godhead, and tempered the Divine Nature to our sight by His Manhood. For since human nature shone forth with so many miracles by the virtue of the Godhead, the silver was improved by the gold; and because God could be recognised through the flesh, and because He endured therein so many adversities, the gold was, as it were, tempered by the silver. And it is well represented also in the midst of the fire, because the flame of the judgment which follows attends the mystery of His Incarnation. For it is written, *The Father judgeth no man, but hath given all judgment to the Son.* [John 5, 22]

6. But sometimes God speaks by Angels in words and deeds at once, when He teaches by certain gestures, that which He declares in words. For neither could Adam, after his sin, hear the Lord in the Substance of His Divinity, but he heard the words of reproof by the Angel, of whom it is written; *When he had heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden at the wind after mid-day, he hid himself among the trees of the garden.* [Gen. 3, 8] For what is it, that God after the sin



of man no longer stands, but walks in the garden, except that He points out that He has been driven from the heart of man, by the inroad of sin? What by His so doing at the wind after mid-day, except that the more glowing light of truth had departed, and the frosts of his sin were congealing his sinful soul? He reproved, therefore, Adam, when walking, that He might make known to benighted souls their wickedness, not by words only, but also by His doings; so that sinful man might both hear by His words what he had done, and perceive, by His walking, the inconstancy of his changeableness, on having lost the stability of eternity, and by the wind might observe his own torpor, when the warmth of charity had been driven away, and learn by the declining of the sun that he was drawing near to darkness.

7. Sometimes God speaks through Angels by images presented to the eyes of the heart; as Jacob when sleeping saw a ladder leaning against heaven. [Gen.28, 12] As Peter caught up in trance saw a linen cloth full of reptiles and quadrupeds; [Acts 10, 10. 11.] for he would not have been in a trance, unless he were beholding these things with other than bodily eyes. As a man of Macedonia appeared to Paul in a vision of the night, who asked him to come over into Macedonia. [ib.16, 9] Sometimes God speaks through Angels by images taken for the time from the air, and presented before the eyes of the body. As Abraham was able not only to behold three men, but also to receive them into an earthly habitation, and not only to receive them, but to supply also food for their use. [Gen. 18, 2] For unless the Angels, when announcing some inward truths, assumed for a time their bodies from the air, they would not, in truth, appear to our outward sight; nor would they take food with Abraham, unless they were bearing for our sake some solid substance from the heavenly element. Nor is it any wonder that they who are there received, are called, at one time ‘Angels,’ and at another ‘the Lord,’ because they, who were ministering outwardly, are designated by the word ‘Angel;’ and He Who was ruling them within, is pointed out by the appellation ‘Lord ;’ that by this the power of Him Who was ruling, and by the latter the office of these who were ministering might be clearly displayed. [Exod. 3, 2. 4.]

8. Sometimes God speaks through Angels by heavenly substances, as it is written, that when the Lord had been baptized, a voice sounded from the cloud, saying, *This is My beloved Son, in Whom I have been well pleased.* [Matt. 3, 17] Sometimes God speaks through Angels by earthly substances, as when He reproved Balaam, He formed human words in the mouth of a she ass. [Numb. 22, 28] Sometimes He speaks through Angels by earthly and heavenly substances together. As when He declared to Moses the words of His command in the Mount, He brought together the fire and the bush, and added one from above, and the other from below. [Exod. 3, 2] But this is done, only when something is signified by this very conjunction. For what else did He point out by addressing Moses, through the burning bush, except that He would become the ruler of that people, which would feel the flame of the Law, and yet would not avoid the thorn of sin? or that there would come forth from that people, He Who would take away by the fire of His Godhead the sins of our flesh, as the thorns of the bush; and would preserve the substance of our manhood unconsumed, even in the very flame of the Godhead?

9. But sometimes God pours the virtue of His inspiration into the hearts of men, through Angels, by their secret presence. Whence also Zechariah says, *And the Angel who was speaking in me, said to me.* [Zech. 1, 14] By saying that the Angel was speaking in him, and yet to him, he clearly proved that he who was speaking to him, was not without him by any bodily appearance. Whence also he added a little after, *And, behold, the Angel that was talking in me was going out.* [ibid. 2, 3] For

often they appear not outwardly, but, as they are angelic spirits, they make known the will of God to the senses of the Prophets, and raise them up to sublime thoughts, and whatever events are still future they set forth as present in their original causes. For the heart of man, burdened with the very weight of corruptible flesh, enduring this its bodily part as an obstacle, penetrates not into inward things, and lies as a heavy burden without; because it has no hand within to raise it up. Whence it results, as has been said, that the subtilty of angelic virtue appears itself, as it really is, to the senses of the Prophets, and that their mind is raised up as it is touched by the subtle spirit, and that it is no longer slothful and sluggish below, but, filled with inspiration within, ascends on high, and thence beholds, as from a lofty eminence, the things which are to come, beneath it. But lest any one should think that, in the aforesaid words of Zechariah, either the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit, is designated by the word 'Angel,' if he considers the text of Holy Scripture, he quickly amends his opinion. For it never calls the Father, or the Holy Spirit, an 'Angel,' nor the Son, except when preaching His Incarnation. Whence it is plainly shewn in the words of the same Zechariah, that an Angel, that is a creature, was really speaking in him, when it is said, *And, behold, the Angel that was talking in me was going out.* And it is immediately subjoined, *And another Angel was going on to meet him, and he said to him, Speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall he inhabited without a wall.* [Zech. 2, 3. 4.] The Angel therefore who is sent, who is ordered by an Angel what words he ought to speak, is not God. But because, in the sight of their Creator, the ordained ministrations of Angels are distinguished by the position of their ranks, (in order that after the common happiness of their blessed state they may rejoice together beholding their Creator, and yet minister to each other according to the position of their dignity,) an Angel sends an Angel to the Prophets, and both teaches and directs him, whom he beholds rejoicing in God in common with himself; because he surpasses him both by his superior wisdom, in power of knowledge, and, by more distinguished grace, in height of power.

10. These points then have been stated, to show in what ways God talks with men. But when the Lord is said to have answered Job from the whirlwind, it is disputed, whether He spoke to him by Himself, or by an Angel. For commotions of the air could have been made by an Angel, and these words, which are subjoined, could have been delivered by him. And again, both an Angel could agitate the air in a whirlwind without, and the Lord could sound into his heart without words the force of His sentence by Himself within; in order that it may be believed that he, who when filled with God, heard these things without words, himself uttered in words the sayings of the Lord which follow. It is therefore said,

Ver. 2. *Who is this that involves sentences in unskilful words?*

[ii]

11. As we have said also in the former part, an interrogative of this kind, in which it is said, *Who is this?* is the beginning of a reproof. For Eliu had spoken arrogantly. And we say not, *Who is this*, excepting expressly of him whom we know not. But knowledge on God's part is approval; His not knowing is rejection. Whence He says to certain whom He rejects, *I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [Luke 13, 27] What then is the enquiring about this haughty man, *Who is this?* except saying openly, I know not the arrogant: that is, I approve not of their life in the loftiness of My wisdom. Because while they are puffed up by human praise, they are deprived of the true glory of eternal retribution. But in that He said *sentences*, and added not of what kind, we certainly understand them to be good. And He asserts that these were involved in

unskilful words, because they had been brought forward with language of boasting. For it is a fault of unskilfulness, to hold what is right in a wrong way, that is, to pervert the heavenly gift to a desire for earthly praise. For as it often happens that good things are stated badly and bad things properly, so the arrogant Eliu brought forward right truths not rightly, because, in defence of God he uttered humble sentiments unhumblly. Whence he deservedly serves as a type of those who within the Catholic Church are studious of vain-glory: for while they believe themselves to be skilful beyond others, they are in the Divine judgment convicted of unskilfulness; because, as the Apostle said, *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* [1 Cor. 8, 2] For since the original folly of the Angel was pride of heart, humility in his own estimation becomes the true wisdom of man. And whoever abandons this by even thinking great things, is the more outrageously foolish, the more he knows not himself. Whence Eliu both uttered sentences, and those involved in unskilful words, because he both knew the truth which he was speaking about God, and yet his silly pride was making foolish the things he said of himself. Having then glanced with contempt on this man, His words are directed to the instruction of Job.

Ver. 3. *Gird up thy loins as a man.*

[iii]

12. Holy Scripture is wont to call those persons ‘men,’ who follow, doubtless, the ways of the Lord with firm and steady steps. Whence it is said by the Psalmist, *Do manfully, and let your heart be strengthened.* [Ps. 31, 24] Whence Paul says, *Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees.* [Heb. 12, 12] Whence also Wisdom in the Proverbs, *Unto you, O men, I call.* [Prov. 8, 4] As if She were saying openly, I do not speak to women, but to men: because they who are of an unstable mind, cannot at all understand My words. But to gird up the loins is to restrain lust either in work, or in thought. For the delight of the flesh is in the loins. Whence it is said to holy Preachers, *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.* [Luke 12, 35] For by the loins is designated lust, but by lights the brightness of good works. They are commanded therefore to gird their loins, and to hold their lights. As if they heard openly; First, restrain lust in yourselves, and then set forth from yourselves examples of good works to others. But since we have known that blessed Job was endowed with such great chastity, why is it said to him after so many scourges, *Gird up thy loins as a man,* (that is, as a bold man restrain thy lust,) except that there is one lust of the flesh, with which we pollute our chastity, but another lust of the heart, by which we boast of our chastity? It is said therefore to him, *Gird up thy loins as a man:* in order that he who had first overcome the lust of corruption, should now restrain the lust of pride; and that he might not, from priding himself on his patience or his chastity, become more fatally lustful before the eyes of God within, the more patient and chaste he appeared before the eyes of men. Whence it is well said by Moses, *Circumcise the foreskins of your heart;* [Deut. 10, 16] that is, after ye have restrained lust in the flesh, lop off also the superfluities of thoughts. It follows,

*I will question thee, and answer thou Me.*

[iv]

13. Our Maker is wont to question us in three ways; when He strikes us with the severity of the rod, and shews what great patience either exists in, or is wanting to, us. Or when He enjoins certain things which we dislike, and lays open our obedience, or disobedience. Or discloses to us some hidden truths, and conceals others, and makes known to us the measure of our humility. For He

questions us by the scourge, when He assails with afflictions the mind which has been properly subject to Him in a time of tranquillity. As the same Job is both praised, on the evidence of his Judge, and yet is given up to the blows of the smiter, in order that his patience might be the more truly manifested, the more severely it had been examined. But He questions us by enjoining hard things, as Abraham is ordered to go out of his own country, and to go whither he knew not; [Gen. 12, 1] to lead his only son to the mountain, and to offer up him, whom he had received, when old, as a consolation. For it is doubtless said to him, when making a good reply to the question, that is when obedient to the command, *Now I know that thou fearest God.* [ib. 22, 12] Or as it is written, *The Lord your God trieth you, to know if ye love Him.* [Deut. 13, 3] For God's trying us, is His questioning us with mighty commands. His knowing also, is His making us know our own obedience. But God questions us by disclosing some things to us, and shutting out others, as is said by the Psalmist, *His eyelids question the sons of men.* [Ps. 11, 4] For, when our eyelids are open, we see; when they are closed, we behold nothing. What do we understand then by the eyelids of God, but His judgments? Which in one respect are closed to men, and in another are opened, in order that men who know not themselves, may become known to themselves; so that, while they comprehend some truths in their understanding, and are not at all able to understand others, their hearts may secretly examine themselves, whether the Divine judgments do not stimulate them, when concealed, or puff them up when laid open. For Paul was proved by this questioning, who after he had tasted inward wisdom, after the barrier of paradise had been opened, after the ascent of the third heaven, after the mysteries of *Heavenly words*, still says, *I count not myself to have apprehended.* [Phil. 3, 13] And again; *I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle.* [1 Cor. 15, 9] And again; *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.* [2 Cor. 3, 5] Paul then, when questioned by the open eyelids of God, answered rightly, for he both reached to heavenly secrets, and yet stood sublimely in humility of heart. And again, when he was discussing the secret judgments of God concerning the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles, and could not attain to them, he was questioned, as it were, by the closed eyelids of God. But he returned a thoroughly right answer, who in his ignorant state, wisely bowed himself down to God, saying, *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how incomprehensible are his judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor?* [Rom. 11, 33. 34.] For, lo! when questioned by mysteries hidden, as with closed eyelids, he gave fitting and right answers. For knocking at the entrance of the mystery, because he could not through his knowledge be admitted to inward things, he stood before the gates in humble confession, and that which he could not comprehend within, he praised with dread without. Whence blessed Job is now also, after the questioning of the rod, examined by the questioning of the word, to make him consider the things which are above; and in order that, when he does not comprehend them, he may turn back to himself, and learn how he is almost nothing, in comparison with heavenly things. Let him hear therefore, *I will question thee, and answer thou Me.* As if it is more plainly said, I rouse thee by My words to consider sublime truths, and whilst thou perceivest that thou knowest not those things that are above thee, I make thee better known to thyself. For then thou answerest Me truly, if thou understandest what things thou knowest not. It follows,  
Ver. 4, 5, 6. *Where wast thou when I was laying the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measure of it, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened.*

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

14. Behold all things are put together in historical narration, as if concerning the origin of the world. But something is immediately subjoined, which seems to be said of the creation, not of the world, but of the Church. For it is said;

*Or who hath laid the corner stone thereof?*

For by this, which was not done at the beginning of the world, it is shewn that that former expression was not used of the creation of the world. For some obscure subjects of a different character are blended with those that are plain and obvious, for this very purpose; that in consequence of that which agrees not with the literal meaning, that also may be examined mystically, which sounds as if spoken literally. For as, by some things which are opened we learn others which are closed; so are we compelled by those which are closed, to knock with a deeper understanding at those which we believed to be open. Let Him say then; *Where wast thou, when I was laying the foundations of the earth?* In Holy Scripture what else do we understand by foundations but holy preachers? For since God had placed them first in the Church, the whole structure of the subsequent fabric has risen up upon them. Whence also the priest is ordered, when he enters the tabernacle, to bear twelve stones on his breast. [Ex. 28, 21] Because, namely, our High Priest, in offering Himself a sacrifice for us, when He set forth mighty preachers at the very beginning, carried twelve stones under His head in the front of His body. The holy Apostles therefore are stones on the breast, to be displayed as an ornament in front, and foundations in the ground for the first firm basis of the edifice. And hence when David the Prophet beheld Holy Church established and built on the lofty minds of the Apostles, he says; *Her foundations are on the holy hills.* [Ps. 87, 1] But when in holy Scripture ‘foundations’ are not spoken of, but ‘a foundation,’ in the singular number, no one is designated, except the Lord Himself, by the power of Whose Divinity the tottering hearts of our infirmity are made strong. Of Whom also Paul says; *Other foundation can no man lay, but that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* For He is in truth the foundation of the foundations, because He is the first commencement of beginners, and the constancy of the strong. Because then they who have borne the freight of our iniquities are our foundations, lest blessed Job should be puffed up with pride by the power of his own virtues, he is, in the very commencement of the Lord’s address, tested by the mention of holy preachers; in order that the more worthy of admiration he beheld them approach, the more vilely he might think of himself in comparison with them. But that is described by the Lord, as if already passed: for the very reason that, whatever is outwardly still future in act, has been already effected within by predestination. It is said therefore to him, *Where wast thou, when I was laying the foundations of the earth?* As if it were openly said; Consider the virtue of the mighty, and think on Me their Maker before all ages: and when thou beholdest those wonderful beings whom I made in time, consider how entirely thou oughtest to be subject to Me, Whom thou acknowledgest as the Author of Wonders without time. It follows;

Ver. 4, 5. *Tell Me, if thou hast understanding, who hath laid the measures of it, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

[vi]

15. Lines of measures are stretched forth in the partition of lands, in order that fairness of

dimension may be observed by their very extension. But the Lord, coming to the Church in the flesh, measured out the measures of the earth with lines, because He marked out the boundaries of the Church with the subtlety of His secret judgment. The secret measures or lines of this earth were being stretched out, when holy preachers were called by the agency of the Spirit to go into some parts of the world, but were kept from approaching other parts. For when Paul the Apostle was neglecting to preach in Macedonia, a man of Macedonia appeared to him in a vision, to say, *Come over into Macedonia and help us*. [Acts 16, 9] But on the other hand, as it is written, *The Apostle essayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not*. [ibid. 7] When holy preachers then are called to Macedonia, and are kept from going into Asia, this line of secret measure is drawn on that side, and removed from this. It is extended there, that Macedonia may be brought within the limits of Holy Church. It is drawn in from hence, that Asia may be left without the bounds of the faith. For there were then some therein who were not to be gathered in: but, when they had been lost according to their desert, Asia has now been embraced within the measures of the Church, by the bounty of God.

16. Within these measures then are all the Elect, without them are all the reprobate, even if they seem to be within the limit of faith. Whence it is written in the Apocalypse; *The court which is without the temple, cast out, and measure it not*. [Rev. 11, 2] For what else does the court signify but the breadth of the present life? And they who are designated by the court are rightly without the temple: and they are therefore not to be measured, because *narrow the gate that leadeth unto life*; [Matt. 7, 14] and the breadth of the life of the wicked is not admitted to the measures and rules of the Elect. These spiritual lines were being stretched in hidden judgment, when to a certain person who said, *Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, [Matt. 8, 19] it was replied by the voice of the same Master, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head*. [ibid. 20] Those measures and lines were being stretched forth, when to a certain person who said, *Lord, suffer me to go and bury my father*, [Luke 9, 59] it was replied by the voice of the same Master, *Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God*. [ibid. 60] Lo! one promises that he will follow Him, and is rejected; another demands to be released, and is retained. Whence is this? Except that the lines of heavenly judgments were being stretched over the hidden spaces of the heart, in order that their incomprehensible measures might enclose the one within, and that the other might, not unjustly, remain without. But since no one is ignorant that God stretches forth these lines of hidden judgments, why is it said to Job, *Tell Me, if thou hast understanding, who hath placed the measures of it, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?* Is the question put to remind him of that which he might know, and yet forget; that he should consider more anxiously the weight of the secrets of God, namely, that the ordering of man depends not on human strength, but on the power [‘manu’] of the Creator, that so, while considering Who is invisibly performing these works, he may attribute nothing to himself, and no longer attempt any thing of himself, when he dreads the secret judgments of God? But that, considering the measures and lines incomprehensibly stretched out from above, he may remain more firm in the humility of fear, the more he sees every thing depending on the power of the Measurer. It follows;  
Ver. 6. *Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened?*

[vii]

17. What else do we understand by the foundations of this earth, but the teachers of Holy Church?

For columns are raised on the bases, but on the columns the weight of the whole fabric is raised. Holy teachers are then not improperly designated by the name of bases. For while they preach what is right, and in life accord with their preaching, they uphold the whole weight of the Church by the fixed gravity of their manners; they endure sharp assaults from unbelievers, and, whatever is dreaded by the faithful as difficult in the precepts of God, they shew to be easy by the examples of their works. Whence also, when the tabernacle was being fixed as the type of the Church, it is well said to Moses, *Thou shalt make four columns, and their bases thou shalt cover with silver.* [Ex. 26, 32] For what else is understood by silver but the brightness of the Divine word? As it is written; *The words of the Lord are pure words, silver tried in the fire, purged from the earth, purified seven times.* [Ps. 12, 6] Bases therefore covered with silver support the four columns of the tabernacle; because preachers of the Church, adorned with the Divine word, in order to set themselves forth as an example to all, bear the words of the four Evangelists in their mouth, and in their works.

18. Prophets also can be signified by bases; for when they first spoke openly of the Incarnation of the Lord, we behold them rising as bases from the foundation, and bearing the weight of the superimposed fabric. Whence also, when the Lord ordered the boards of the tabernacle to be erected, He ordered Moses that their bases should be cast in silver. For what are signified by the boards, but Apostles spread out in their extended preaching to the world, and what by the bases of silver but the Prophets: who being themselves firm and molten sustain the boards placed upon them? Because while the life of the Apostles is instructed by their preaching, it is also strengthened by their authority. Whence also the bases put together in pairs are placed under the separate boards. Because when the holy prophets agree in their words concerning the Incarnation of the Mediator, they edify without doubt the subsequent preachers of the Church: and when they disagree not with themselves, they establish them more firmly on themselves. But it is not improperly ordered that the bases, by which the Prophets are signified, should be cast of silver. For the brightness of silver is preserved by its being used; when not used it is turned into blackness. The sayings also of the Prophets, because they were not held in the use of spiritual knowledge, remained, as it were, in blackness before the coming of the Mediator, because they could not be understood by reason of their obscurity. But after the Mediator, on His coming, wiped them before our eyes with the hand of His Incarnation, whatever light was lurking therein shone forth, and He brought into use the meaning of preceding fathers, because He expounded words by events. Whether He signifies then the prophets, or the teachers who succeed them in the latter times, by the expression 'bases,' let Him say; *Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened?* Thou understandest, except upon Me, Who hold all things marvellously together, and confer at the first an inward existence on things that are good without. For he who attributes what is good to himself, is not a solid basis; for whilst he rests not on the foundation, he is by his own weight precipitated to the bottom. But since many things are now being said concerning the building of Holy Church, the mind seeks to hear, with what virtue hostile nations are united together, that is, with what skill the different buildings of this house are fitted together. It follows;  
*Or who hath laid the corner stone thereof?*

[viii]

19. It is now clear to all by Divine grace, Whom Holy Scripture calls the corner Stone. Him in truth, Who taking into Himself from one side the Jewish, and from the other the Gentile people, unites, as it were, two walls in the one fabric of the Church; Him of Whom it is written, *He hath*

*made both one*; [Eph. 2, 14] Who exhibited Himself as the corner Stone, not only in things below, but in things above; because He united on earth the nations of the Gentiles to the people of Israel, and both together to Angels in heaven. For at His birth the Angels exclaimed, *On earth peace to men of good will*. [Luke 2, 14] For they would not offer their joys to men of peace as a great thing at the birth of the King, if they were not at variance with each other. Of this Stone it is said by the Prophet; *The Stone which the builders rejected, is made the head of the corner*. [Ps. 118, 22] Jechonias the king typified the Stone, whom Matthew when describing fourteen generations, reckoned twice. [Matt. 1, 11. 12.] For him, whom he had inserted as the end of the second generation, he inserted again at the beginning of the third. For he himself was removed into Babylonia with the people of Israel; for while he is led from one to the other, he is not improperly counted twice over for the side of each wall. And by the bending of this migration he designates the corner stone. For where the order is diverted from its right course to go into a different direction, it makes, as it were, a corner. He could therefore rightly be counted twice; for he shewed as it were two sides of himself along either wall. Whence also he properly represented Him, Who born in Judaea, and gathering together the Gentiles, went as it were from Jerusalem to Babylonia, and bound together in His own Person, by the art of charity, that building of faith which before was rent asunder by the animosity of discord.

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

But these things which have been said, as descriptive of Holy Church, it seems good to repeat briefly in a moral sense. For it is right for us to be brought back to our own hearts by those things which we know were said to blessed Job; because the mind then understands more truly the words of God, when it searches for itself therein. For behold it is said,  
Ver. 4. *Where wast thou when I was laying the foundations of the earth?*

[ix]

20. If the mind of a sinner is dust, which is borne on the surface, and is swept away by the breeze of temptation, (whence it is written, *Not so are the ungodly, not so; but as the dust, which the wind driveth away from the face of the earth;*) [Ps. 1,4] nothing prevents the earth being understood to mean the soul of a just man, of which it is written, *For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth the herbs meet for those by whom it is dressed, receiveth a blessing*. [Heb. 6, 7] But the foundation of this earth is faith. The foundation of this earth is laid, when the first cause of firmness, the fear of God, is breathed in the secret places of the heart. This man does not as yet believe the eternal truths which he hears; when faith is given him, a foundation is now laid for the building up of the subsequent work. He now believes eternal truths, but yet fears them not; he despises the terror of the coming judgment: he boldly involves himself in sins of the flesh and of the spirit. But when the fear of future things is suddenly infused into him, in order that the edifice of a good life may rise up, the foundations are now erected. When the foundation then of a wholesome dread has been laid, and the fabric of virtue is being raised on high, it is necessary for every one to measure his strength, as he is making progress. So that though he has already begun to be great by the Divine building, he may without ceasing look back to what he was; in order that humbly remembering what he was found in merit, he may not arrogate to himself what he has been made by grace. Whence also blessed Job is now brought back to himself by the voice from above, and, that he may not dare to boast of his virtues, he is reminded of his past life. And it is said to



him, *Where wast thou when I was laying the foundations of the earth?* As if the Truth openly said to the justified sinner; Attribute not to thyself the virtues which were received from Me. Exalt not thyself against Me by reason of My own gift. Call to mind where I found thee, when I laid the first foundations of virtue in thee, in My fear. Call to mind where I found thee, when I confirmed thee in My fear. In order then that I may not destroy in thee that which I have built up, thou must not cease to consider with thyself, what I found thee. For whom has the Truth not found either in sins or excesses? But after this we can well preserve that which we are, if we never neglect to consider what we were. But pride is yet sometimes wont to steal secretly even into careful hearts, so that the thought of good deeds, though slight and feeble, as it advances to a great height of virtue, forgets its own infirmity, and does not recall to mind what it was in sins. Whence also Almighty God, because He sees that our weakness is increased even by salutary remedies, places limits to our very progress, that we may have some excellencies of virtues, which we have never sought for, and that we may seek after others, and yet be unable to possess them. In order that our mind, when unable to attain these things which it desires, may understand that it possesses not of itself those even which it does possess, and that, from those which are present, those which are wanting may be thought of, and that, by means of those that are profitably wanting, those goods that are present may be humbly preserved. Whence also it is rightly subjoined, concerning His dealings towards this earth, that is, this righteous soul;

*Ver. 4, 5. Declare to Me if thou hast understanding, who hath laid the measure thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

[x]

21. For who, but our Creator, lays the measures of this earth? Who, by the secret ordering of His inward judgment, gives to one the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another perfect faith, to another the grace of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of speeches; in order that one man may by one and the same Spirit be mighty in the word of wisdom, and yet not be strengthened with the speech of knowledge, that is, of doctrine, (for he is able to understand and discover even that truth which he does not attain to by study and learning;) and that another may shine with the word of knowledge, and yet not be strong in the word of wisdom, because he is able fully to understand all that he has learnt, and yet cannot rise by himself to understand any subtle question. One man by faith commands the elements, and yet cures not bodily infirmities by the gift of healing. Another removes diseases by the aid of prayer, and yet restores not by his word the rain to the thirsty earth. This man restores even the dead at once to present life, by the working of miracles, and yet, not possessing the gift of prophecy, knows not what things are to befall him. Another beholds all future events as if present, and yet does not display himself in any working of miracles. One man by the discerning of spirits subtilly discerns the minds of men in their doings, but yet knows not tongues of divers kind; another examines into tongues of divers kind, but yet observes not dissimilar hearts in similar doings. One person skilfully examines by interpretation the value of words in one language which he knows, and yet patiently goes without the other goods which he has not.

22. Thus, therefore, does our Creator and Disposer order all things; that he who might be puffed up by the gift which he has, may be humbled by that virtue which he has not. He so regulates all things, that when He exalts any one by the grace bestowed, He also, by a different gift, makes one

person inferior to another, and makes every one to look on him who is beneath him, as superior to him in some other gift, and though he feels that he is even in some respects superior, to place himself in others below the very person whom he surpasses. He so regulates all things, that while all possess separate gifts, they become, all of them, the property of each person separately, by a connecting bond of charity, and that every one so possesses in another that which he has not himself, that he humbly confers on the other that which he received as his own possession. For it is hence said by Peter, *As every one hath received the gift, ministering, the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* [1 Pet. 4, 10] For the manifold grace of God is then well dispensed, when the gift which has been received is believed to belong even to him who does not possess it, when it is considered to have been given to a man's self on account of him in whose behalf it is exerted. Hence it is said by Paul, *By love serve one another.* [Gal. 5, 13] For charity then sets us free from the yoke of blame, when it engages us through love in mutual service, when we both believe that the goods of others belong to ourselves, and present our goods to others as though offering them their own. Hence it is again said by Paul, *For even the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am therefore not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? And a little after, But if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.* [1 Cor. 12, 14-17. 19. 20.]

23. For what is Holy Church, except the Body of its own heavenly Head? Wherein one is the eye, by beholding lofty things; another a hand, by performing right things; another a foot, by running to and fro at command; another an ear, by understanding the voice of the precepts; another a nose, by discerning the foulness of wicked, and the fragrance of good, deeds. And, while they receive and discharge mutual offices, like the limbs of the body, they make of themselves together one single body, and, while they perform different offices in charity, they keep that from being different, in which they are bound together. But were they all to do one and the same work, they would assuredly not be a body, which is composed of many members; because, namely, it would not exist, as compacted of many parts, if this harmonious diversity of members did not bind it together. Because then the Lord divides to the holy members of His Church the gifts of virtues, He places the measures of the earth. Whence Paul says again, *As God hath divided to every one the measure of faith.* [Rom. 12, 3] And again, *From Whom the whole body compacted and connected by that which every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every member, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.* [Eph. 4, 16]

24. But since our Creator and Disposer with wonderful wisdom confers gifts on one, which He refuses to another, and refuses to one those gifts which He bestows on another; whoever aims at doing more than he has received, endeavours to exceed the limits assigned to him. As if, perchance, he, to whom it has been only given to discuss the secret meanings of precepts, should attempt also to dazzle with miracles; or, as if he, whom the gift of heavenly virtue strengthens only for miracles, should strive, besides, to lay open the mysteries of the Divine Law. For he puts forth his foot on a precipice, who regards not the limits of his own measures. And he who boldly hastes to grasp those subjects which he is unable to reach, commonly loses that power which was his. For we then use aright the services of our limbs, when we distinctly preserve for them their own offices. For with the eyes we behold the light, with the ears we hear a voice. But if any one, having inverted the order, applies his eyes to the voice, and his ears to the light, both are to him open in vain. If any one

wishes to distinguish scents with his mouth, to taste flavours with his nose, he does away with the service of both senses, because he perverts them. For when they are not applied to their proper uses, they both give up their own offices, and do not attain to those which are foreign to them.

25. The Prophet David, then, had rightly confined the foot of his heart within the measure he had received by the Divine bounty, when he said, *I have not walked in great matters, nor in things too wonderful for me.* [Ps. 131, 1] For he would in truth walk in things too wonderful for him, if he sought to appear mighty beyond his power. For a man is raised above himself in wonderful things, if he endeavours to appear capable even in those things, to which he is unequal. Paul also was rightly confining himself within these limits, even in the wide range of his preaching, when he said, *For I do not dare to speak of any of those things, which Christ worketh not by me.* [Rom.15, 18] But the measure which has been received is then rightly preserved, when the life of spiritual men is viewed as set before the eyes. Whence it follows;  
Ver. 5. *Or who hath stretched the line upon it?*

[xi]

26. For a line is stretched over this earth, when the examples of preceding Fathers are pointed out to each Elect soul, as a rule of life to be adopted; in order for it to consider from their life what to maintain in its own doings; that so, by observing the track of the proper path, it may neither, through neglect, fall short of the smallest matters, nor, through pride, stretch forth beyond the greatest; nor endeavour to do less than it is able, nor grasp at more than it has received; lest it should either not attain to the measure which it ought, or should, by forsaking this measure, fall beyond its limit. For narrow in truth is the gate which leadeth to life, [Matt. 7, 14] and he enters therein, who is, on account of it, carefully confined in all his doings, by his subtlety of discernment. For he who with fearless mind spreads himself abroad through his own wishes, condemns himself to exclusion from the narrow gate. In order, then, for the measure of this earth to be preserved, a line is extended over it from heaven; because the discriminating life of the Saints is spread out before us in Holy Scripture, in order that, either our defects may be corrected, or our excesses moderated; and both what, and how much, is to be done, is marked out by their discrimination which is set before us.

27. Behold a person, fearing either the loss of goods, or bodily affliction, dreads the threats of worldly power, and presumes not to maintain the truth against the might of opponents. Because Peter beholds him hard pressed with fear, he brings him back to the wide space of virtue, by putting before him the line of his examples. For when he had been scourged by the chiefs of the people, and perceived that he had been set free, on condition that he should cease from preaching, when he was commanded not to speak for the future, he did not yield even for the time. [Acts 4, 18; 5, 40] For he immediately answered and said, *We ought to obey God rather than men.* [Acts 5, 29] And again, *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* [Acts 4, 20] But he, who before was weak, and fearing present loss, when he contemplates examples of such great courage, now follows the course of Peter, through the authority of the word, now fears not any adversity, and contemns, even with laceration of body, the powers of the world, which oppose God. But yet the more he overcomes the strength of his persecutors by bold endurance, and the more, in the midst of adversities, he yields not to any terms, the more does he in general set himself above others, even in the opinions he has held, when placed among the faithful; the more does he choose his own

schemes, and trust himself, rather than others. He doubtless, while exerting himself in virtue, by not yielding to unrighteous opposition, places his foot beyond the proper limit, by not adopting even the right advice of others. Him does Peter recall within the line of measure, who, after he had overcome the authority of rulers by the freedom of his words, listened, through humility of heart, to Paul's advice about not circumcising the Gentiles. For he desired so to raise himself up against the adversaries by his authority, as yet not to trust himself in those points in which he was wrong; in order that he might overcome haughty powers by the freedom of his boldness, and might exhibit by the humility of his gentleness submission in good counsel even to his younger brethren; and thus at one time oppose himself to others, and at another together with others oppose himself. In the conduct then of Peter a line of authority and humility is extended as it were before our eyes, lest our mind should not attain to the standard through fear, or should exceed the limit through pride.

28. It has been stated, how the line is extended, lest we should fall into a fault in another case, through the boldness of some of our doings. Let it be now stated how we abandon the line of discretion in one and the same virtue, if we know not how to perform it at one time, and how to defer it at another. For a virtue is not always one and the same thing, for the merits of actions are often changed by circumstances. It is hence the case, that when we are properly engaged in any pursuit, we often more properly desist from it; and that the mind more creditably abandons that employment for a time, in which it was creditably employed at its own proper time. For if in consequence of our lesser virtues, (by performing which we make progress, but by intermitting which we are not endangered,) greater evils and trials threaten our neighbours, we necessarily put aside our advance in virtue, lest we should cause losses to the faith in our weaker neighbours; lest what we do should so far not be a virtue, the more it overthrows the foundations of the faith in the hearts of others, for the sake of itself.

29. Which line of sound judgment Paul rightly extended before the eyes of the beholders, who both ordered the Gentiles who were coming to the liberty of the faith not to be circumcised, [Gal. 5, 2] and yet, when at Lystra, and passing through Iconium, himself circumcised Timothy, who had been born of a Gentile father. [Acts 16, 3] For, seeing that he would excite the rage of the Jews even against those who were then present as his companions, if he did not shew that he observed the commands of the letter, he deferred enforcing his assertion, and secured himself and his companions from fierce persecution without loss to the faith. He did that which he ordered not to be done from love to the faith; but he brought back to the service of the faith that which he did as it were unfaithfully. For a virtue is frequently lost, when it is maintained indiscreetly, and when it is discreetly intermitted, it is held the more firmly. And it is no wonder if we understand that that takes place in incorporeal, which we see taking place also in bodily, things. For a bow is intentionally unstrung, in order that at its proper time it may be usefully bent. And if it receives not the rest of being unstrung, it loses its power of striking, from being kept on the stretch. And thus sometimes when a virtue, which is in exercise, is suspended through discretion, it is reserved; in order that it may afterwards strike vices the more powerfully, the more it prudently abstains meanwhile from striking. The subtle line of sound judgment is, therefore, then extended over the earth, when, by setting before each soul the examples of preceding fathers, a virtue is both profitably excited to action, and is sometimes also more profitably restrained.

30. But when boldness of zeal is withdrawn for a while from employment, great consideration is needed, lest we should perchance cease from the exercise of virtue, not from regard to the common

good, but through fear for ourselves, or for the sake of some object of ambition. For when this is the case, a man no longer gives way to dispensation, but to sin. Hence when a person so dispenses the work he has undertaken as to cease from virtuous exertion, he must take anxious care, and examine himself first in the depth of his heart, lest he should by this greedily seek something for himself, by this should spare himself alone through fear; and lest the result of his work should turn out ill, as not produced from a proper intention of thought. Whence the Truth well says in the Gospel, *The light of thy body is thine eye; if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.* [Matt. 6, 22. 23.] For what is expressed by the 'eye,' except the intention of the heart going before its work? which, before it exercises itself in action, already contemplates that which it desires. And what is designated by the expression 'body,' except each single action, which follows its intention as the eye with which it sees? *The light of the body, therefore, is the eye,* because the merits of an action are enlightened by the ray of good intention. *And if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light,* because, if in the singleness of our thought we intend rightly, a good work is produced, even though it seem not good. *And if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness,* because, when even any thing that is right is performed from a wrong intention, though it seem brilliant before men, it is yet obscured by the sentence of the inward Judge. Whence it is rightly subjoined, *Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?* [Luke 11, 35; Matt 6, 23] Because, if we obscure by bad intention that which we believe we are doing rightly, how great are those evils, which we are ignorant are evils even when we are doing them? And, if we see nothing in that case, when we hold, as it were, the light of discernment, how blindly do we stumble against those sins which we commit without discernment? Through all our doings then our intention must be considered with watchful care, that it choose not, in what it does, any thing temporal, but that it fix itself entirely on the solid foundation of eternity; lest the fabric of our deeds, if built out beyond the foundation, should be rent asunder by the yawning earth. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined, Ver. 6. *Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened?*

[xii]

31. For the bases of each single soul are its intentions. For as the fabric rests on columns, but the columns on bases, so is our life based upon its virtues, but our virtues on our inmost intention. And because it is written, *Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;* [1 Cor. 3, 11] the bases are then on the foundation, when our intentions are firmly fixed on Christ. But in vain do the bases raise upon themselves lofty edifices, if they themselves do not stand firm on the solid foundation, because men doubtless perform in vain their deeds, however great, if the intentions of their hearts are turned aside beyond the certainty of eternity, and if they seek not the rewards of the true life, and they raise up upon themselves heavier losses of ruin, the loftier edifices they pile up beyond the foundation. For when they aim not at the rewards of eternal life, the more they raise themselves, as it were, in virtue, the deeper do they fall into the pitfall of vainglory. We must not consider then what the bases support, but where they are supported: because in truth the hearts of men examine, by Divine help, not only what they do, but what they aim at in their doings. Whence, when Paul was describing the strict Judge, and was speaking of the goodness of actions, saying, *Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to these indeed according to their patience in well-doing, glory and incorruption;* [Rom. 2, 6. 7.] because, having spoken of patience in well doing, he had mentioned the whole fabric, as it were, of Elect actions, he immediately

enquired accurately where the bases of this fabric rested, saying, *To those who seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life.* As if he were plainly saying, Although certain persons exhibit patience in well-doing, yet they receive not glory and incorruption, if they place not the intentions of their heart, that is the bases of the fabric, on the foundation. Because, namely, God dwells not in the edifice even of an honest life, which, placed without Himself, He Himself does not support.

32. Because, therefore, the intentions of every Elect soul rest on the hope of eternity, it is rightly said of this earth by the voice of the Lord, *Whereupon are the bases thereof fastened?* As if He were plainly saying, Except upon Me. For while every righteous soul aims at this, every thing it does temporally, it doubtless builds on Me for no temporal purpose. But since we are then more solidly built on the foundation, when we both follow the words of God in their outward precepts, and consider them with deeper understanding in their inmost meanings, it is rightly subjoined, *Or who hath laid the corner stone thereof?*

[xiii]

33. For the 'corner stone' is a twofold understanding of Holy Scripture. And it is laid by Divine power, when it is not, by strict judgment, bound with the darkness of its ignorance, but enjoys a kind of liberty, whereas it knows sufficiently the precepts of God, either to follow their outward commands, or to learn by contemplation their inner meaning. To which our understanding would never attain, if He, our Creator, did not come to take our nature. For He is called in one sense 'a corner stone,' because He united in Himself two peoples, and in another, because He set forth in Himself patterns of both lives, that is, the active and the contemplative, united together. For the contemplative life differs very much from the active. But our Redeemer by coming Incarnate, while He gave a pattern of both, united both in Himself. For when He wrought miracles in the city, and yet continued all night in prayer on the mountain, [Luke 6, 5] He gave His faithful ones an example, not to neglect, through love of contemplation, the care of their neighbours, nor again to abandon contemplative pursuits, from being too immoderately engaged in the care of their neighbours; but so to keep together their mind, in applying it to the two cases, that the love of their neighbour might not interfere with the love of God, nor again the love of God cast out, because it transcends, the love of their neighbour. Because then the Mediator between God and man was manifested to the heart of man, when it knew not what it was doing, in order by His doings to set in order things transitory, and to shew by contemplation whence all things depended, it is rightly said, *Or who hath laid the earner stone thereof?* As if the Lord were openly saying, Except Myself, Who manifested in time for the salvation of men, Him Whom I begat as My only Son without time, that men might learn in His life that even diverse pursuits are not discordant. And it must be observed, that He does not state that He sent Him out, but that He sent Him away [*'non emisisse, sed dimisisse.'*]. Because in truth the Son, in taking human nature, descended from a lofty, to the lowest, estate. But since even the Elect Angels, who are not redeemed by this mystery, yet marvelled at the mystery of this Incarnation, [1 Pet. 1, 12] it is rightly subjoined, *Ver. 7. When the morning stars were praising Me together.*

[xiv]

34. For because the nature of rational spirits is believed to have been created first in time, the

Angels are, not improperly, called ‘morning stars.’ But if this is so, whilst the earth was invisible, and in disorder, whilst darkness was over the abyss, they anticipated in their existence the coming day of the following age through the light of wisdom. Nor must we hear negligently the word ‘together’ which is added; because the morning stars doubtless praise, together with those of the evening, the power of the Redeemer, while the Elect angels glorify even with redeemed men in the end of the world the bounty of heavenly grace. For in order to excite us to praise our Creator, when the Light arose in the flesh, they proclaimed this which we before mentioned; *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.* [Luke 2, 14] They praise then together, because they adapt to our redemption the words of their exultation. They praise together, because when they behold us admitted, they rejoice that their own number is filled up. But they are therefore perhaps also termed ‘morning stars,’ because they are frequently sent to exhort men, and while they announce the coming morn, they drive away from the hearts of men the darkness of the present life. But behold Angels praise the Divine Power, because the very sight of such great brightness expands them. But with what virtue do we, who though ransomed, are yet weighed down by the corruption of the flesh, praise the gift which we receive? For how will our tongue be able to speak of that, which our mind is unable to understand? It follows,  
*And all the sons of God exulting for joy.*

[xv]

35. For it is called ‘exultation,’ when the joy of the heart is not fully expressed by the power of the voice, but when he who rejoices makes known in certain ways the joy which he can neither conceal, nor fully express. Let Angels therefore praise, who now behold above the loftiness of such great brightness. But let men exult, who still suffer here below the straitness of their speech. But because the Lord knew that these things would certainly happen, He does not speak of them as about to occur, but rather relates them as having occurred. But how is it that, when the good exult in the mystery of their redemption, envy inflames the wicked, and that whilst the Elect make progress, the reprobate are roused to furious madness, and persecute their rising virtues, because they do not wish to imitate them? And yet he Who has redeemed, forsakes us not even among these trials. For it is written; *But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* [1 Cor. 10, 13] For our Creator knows when to suffer the storm of temptation to arise, when to restrain it on rising. He knows how to restrain, in order to our protection, that which He allows to come forth against us for our exercise; that the raging storm may wash over, and may not overwhelm us. Whence also it follows;  
Ver. 8. *Who shut up the sea with doors, when it was breaking forth, as if proceeding from the womb?*

[xvi]

#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

36. For what do we understand by the ‘sea,’ but the world, and what by the ‘womb,’ but the corruption of carnal thoughts? For in this place by the word ‘womb’ is designated the secret and evil thought of carnal things. And this womb conceives not a bodily substance in order to produce offspring, but a cause of sorrow, in order to fulfil its wickedness. Of this womb of the heart of the

wicked it is said in another place, *He hath conceived sorrow, and hath brought forth iniquity.* [Ps. 7, 14] By this womb do the wicked conceive when they think evil things. By this womb do they bring forth, when they execute the evils they have thought. The sea then was bursting forth, as if proceeding from the womb, when the waves of worldly threats, conceived in the iniquity of carnal thoughts, were raging for the destruction of Holy Church. But, by God's help, this sea was shut up with doors, because holy men were opposed as a kind of door, against the pride of persecutors, in order that the wrath of persecutors might be crushed by their miracles, and reverence. For when the princes of this world had been brought low, the Lord exalted Holy Church, by their means, above the height of the world, and restrained the assaults of the raging sea, by having raised up the power of the same Church. But let us hear what the Lord did to this raging sea. It follows;

Ver. 9. *When I was making a cloud the garment thereof, and was covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes.*

[xvii]

37. The raging sea is covered with a 'cloud,' because the cruelty of persecutors is covered with the veil of their own folly. For it is unable to behold the clear light of truth, from the interposed darkness of their unbelief; and through the desert of its own blindness, it knows not what it is doing by the impulse of cruelty. *For had they known,* as says the Apostle, *they would never have crucified the Lord of glory.* [1 Cor. 2, 8] This cloud is wont to cover not only the unbelievers who are placed without the Church, but also to obscure those who live in a carnal manner within it. Whence holy men, who sympathize even with others' negligence, and think that they themselves are also suffering that which they perceive others enduring, pray to God, and say, *Thou hast placed a cloud before Thee, that our prayer should not pass through.* [Lam. 3, 44] As if they openly said, To our mind accustomed to worldly pleasures Thou presented, by a righteous judgment, the phantoms of its cares, by which Thou confusest it, in the very earnestness of its prayer; and that which Thou art not ignorant is given up to the most degrading desires, Thou rightly repellst, when blinded, from beholding the brightness of Thy light; so that when it reaches towards Thee, it is turned away from beholding Thee, by the cloud of its own thoughts; and that that which constantly thinks on these worldly subjects, because it wishes for them, may endure them also in its prayer, when it does not wish for them. Because then the very wickedness of persecutors is so restrained by God's ordering, as not to burst forth as much as it wishes against holy men; after He said, *When I was laying the cloud as the garment thereof,* He fitly subjoined, *And was covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes.* For the feet and arms are bound with swaddling clothes, lest they should be thrown about hither and thither with unrestricted liberty. Because, therefore, the persecutors of Holy Church, restless from their instability of heart, and devoted to this world, savour not the things of age, but of childhood; they who are fast bound by darkness and obscurity, (not by a sense of the Divine judgment,) so as to be unable to persecute as much as they wish, are said to be wrapped in swaddling clothes. Because, as has been said, they savour of childish things, and yet, constrained by the Divine dispensation they do not stretch forth their arms wherever they please; and if they desire lightly to perpetrate every kind of sin, yet they are by no means permitted to fulfil all they wish. It follows,

Ver. 10. *I surrounded it with My boundaries.*

The Lord surrounds the sea with His boundaries, because He so restricts the wrath of persecutors by the dispensation of His judgments, that the swelling wave of their mad wrath is broken on the



level shore of His secret dispensation. It follows;

Ver. 10,11. *And I set a bar and doors, and said, Hitherto shall thou come, and thou shalt not proceed further, and here shall thou break thy swelling waves.*

[xviii]

38. What is designated by 'doors,' but holy preachers, and what by the 'bar,' except the Lord Incarnate? For He has in truth opposed these doors as a firmer barrier against the force of the swelling sea, the more He has strengthened them by barring them Himself. For because these doors of Holy Church are strengthened by this bar being placed against them, they could be battered indeed by the waves, but they could not be broken through: so that though the wave of persecution might dash on them from without, yet it could not penetrate to the centre of their heart. And because holy Preachers open themselves by their preaching to their followers, but close themselves by their authority against those who oppose them, they are, not improperly, called 'doors,' that is, open to the conversation [al. 'conversion'] of the humble, and closed to the terrors of the proud. They are, not improperly, called 'doors:' because they both open an entrance for the faithful, and again oppose themselves to the entrance of the unbelieving. Let us consider what a door of the Church was Peter, who admitted Cornelius, when enquiring into the faith, and rejected Simon when seeking miraculous powers for a price; saying to the one, *I have found in truth that God is no respecter of persons*, [Acts 10, 34] he graciously opened the secrets of the kingdom. Declaring to the other, *Thy money perish with thee*, [Acts 8, 20] he closes the entrance of the heavenly court by a sentence of strict condemnation. What are all the Apostles but doors of Holy Church, when they hear by the voice of their Redeemer, *Receive the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained?* [John 20, 22. 23.] As if it were plainly said to them; By you, those to whom ye open yourselves shall come in to Me; and those to whom ye close yourselves, shall be rejected. Whilst then the sea rages, the Lord opposes His bar and doors; because whilst the storm of persecution spreads itself out in the world from bitter and faithless hearts, God exalts the glory of His Only Begotten, and the reverence of His preachers; and while He makes known the mysteries of the Divine strength, He breaks in the ungodly the waves of wrath.

39. But it is well said, *Hitherto shall thou come, and thou shalt not proceed further*. Because there is doubtless a limit of the secret judgment, both when the storm of persecution should burst forth, and when it should cease, lest, if not aroused, it should not discipline the Elect, or, if unrestrained, should overwhelm them. But when the knowledge of the faith reaches as far as to the persecutors, the swelling of the troubled sea is appeased, and there does the sea break its waves, because on coming to the knowledge of the truth, it blushes at every thing it has done wickedly. For the broken wave in truth glides back on itself; because wickedness when overcome is accused even by the thought of its own heart; and suffers, as it were, the very violence which it had inflicted, because it feels the stings of guilt, from the depravity which it had committed. Whence it is said to certain persons by Paul, *What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* [Rom. 6, 21] As if it were said; Why did the waves of 'your wickedness raise themselves aloft, which being now broken in themselves, overwhelm you when converted, by the same means with which they puffed you up when perverted. It is therefore rightly said, *And here shall thou break thy swelling waves*. But that the doors are spoken of a second time, in this shutting up of the sea, after the manner of Holy Scripture, a thing once mentioned is repeated by way of confirmation.

40. But if we ought to understand by the 'sea' in this place, not specially the crowd of persecutors, but the world in general; the Lord set up gates against the sea a second time, because He first gave to the human race the precepts of the law, and afterwards the testament of new grace; He a second time confined the violence of this sea by the gates He set against it, since those, whom He chose to obey His will, He first kept from idols, by giving the law, and afterwards delivered from the carnal understanding of things by the revelation of grace. The sea a second time received gates, because God first prohibited mankind from works of iniquity, but afterwards restrained them from the sin of thought. Let us see how God first imposed gates on the swelling sea. For behold it is said by the law, *Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness.* [Ex. 20, 13-16; Deut 5, 17-20] Let us see how the Lord confines this sea with second gates. Behold He says in the Gospel, *Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* [Matt. 5, 27. 28.] And it is said again, *Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and do good to them that hate you.* [ib. 43. 44.] He therefore Who first prohibits wickednesses of deeds, and afterwards does away with the faults of the heart, doubtless twice imposes gates on the swelling sea, that it pass not over the shores of justice which have been drawn around it.

41. But when He was saying, *Who hath shut up the sea with doors?* He immediately also subjoined the time, *When it was breaking forth, as if proceeding from the womb.* Because, namely, he then opposed mankind by the precepts of the Law, when the world, though little removed from its first beginning, was going forth even from its very birth to make progress in the carnal life. For to proceed from the womb, is to appear in the flesh in the light of present glory. And it is rightly subjoined, *When I was laying the cloud as the garment thereof.* Because, doubtless, God did not then present Himself to men in open sight, but while He rescued them from the error of unbelief, and yet laid not open to them the brightness of His own light, He withdrew them, as it were, from darkness, and yet covered them with a cloud, in order that they might forsake their former deeds of wickedness, and yet see not more clearly at present future blessings. Whence also it is filly subjoined, *And covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes.* For when He taught not ignorant people by the open preaching of the Spirit, but bound them, in figurative language, with the literal precepts, He enveloped them, while yet weak in knowledge, with the darkness of His words, as if with swaddling clothes; in order that they might gain strength by being bound by grosser commands, lest they should perish, through a fatal freedom, in their own pleasures. And since not love, but fear, was confining them to the way of righteousness, the Divine dispensation kept them close, as it were, in order to nourish them. For when the feeble people unwillingly endured the swaddling bands of precepts, it attained to a stronger condition from its very bondage. For because fear first restrained it from sin, it came forth afterwards, in a fitting condition, into the liberty of the Spirit. These swaddling clothes which He gave to beginners, the Lord Himself blames by the Prophet, saying, *I gave them precepts that were not good.* [Ez. 20, 25] For evil things cease, as it were, to be evil, by comparison with worse, and good things are, so to say, not good, in comparison with better. For as it is said of Sodom and Gomorrah, to guiltier Judah, *Thou hast justified thy sisters in all thine abominations which thou hast done,* [Ex. 16, 51] so are the good precepts, which were given to the ignorant, spoken of as not good, by reason of the better precepts of the New Testament which succeed them. For neither would minds which were clinging to the

practice of the carnal life be raised from their low condition, unless they advanced through a gradual course of preaching. For hence is it, that when they were settled in Egypt, their secret love of gain is condescended to by a considerate and righteous forbearance, and they are ordered to depart, after having first taken away the gold and silver vessels of their neighbours. But when brought to Mount Sinai, they hear at once, on receiving the Law, *Thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's*. [Ex. 20, 17] And hence it is, that in the same law they are directed to exact an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, [Exod. 21, 24] and yet at last, on the revelation of grace, they are commanded, when struck, to offer the other cheek. [Matt. 5, 38. 39.] For because anger exacts more in vengeance than it has suffered in wrong; while they learn not to requite their wrongs in a manifold manner, they would learn at last to bear them of their own accord, even when multiplied. Hence it is that He prohibited this same ignorant people certain observances, but preserved others after their original use, though He applied them so as to prefigure a better condition. For they used to sacrifice brute animals to idols in Egypt, and He afterwards retained the sacrifice of animals, for their observance, but forbade the worship of idols; in order that, while losing a portion of their customs, their weakness might be comforted by retaining something of them. But by a marvellous dispensation of wisdom the Lord converted into a mightier figure of the Spirit, that carnal custom which He retained. For what do the sacrifices of those animals designate, except the death of the Only-Begotten? What do the sacrifices of those animals signify, except the extinction of our carnal life? The weakness then of an ignorant people is condescended to, by the same means as the greater strength of the Spirit is announced through the shadowy forms of allegories. It is therefore rightly said, *And I was covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes*; because He bore with the weaknesses of its tenderness, by the same means as He raised a lofty cloud of spiritual significations.

42. But because He kept them by the limits of the precepts from unrestrained wanderings of mind, He rightly subjoins; *I surrounded it with My boundaries*. And because He restrained the motions of this human race by sending the Mediator, He fitly subjoins; *And I set a bar and doors*. For He set in truth a bar and doors; because He confirms the preaching of the new life, by sending our Redeemer to oppose the sins of the guilty. For doors, when closed, are strengthened by a bar being placed against them. God, therefore, placed against them a bar, because against the wanton motives of the human race He sent the Only-Begotten, Who confirmed in His actions the spiritual precepts, which He taught in words. But it is well subjoined; *Hitherto shalt thou come, and thou shalt not proceed further, and here shall thou break thy swelling waves*. For this sea had in truth passed over its former doors, because the wave of human pride used to overleap the barriers of the door opposed to it. But after the world found the Only-Begotten opposed to it, it broke the force of its pride, and could not pass over, because it found the boundary of its fury closed up by His strength. Whence it is rightly said by the Prophet, *The sea saw and fled*. [Ps. 114, 3] By doors, also, His sufferings which were seen can, not unfitly, be understood. And He secretly placed a bar against them, because He strengthened them by the invisible Godhead. Against which the waves of the world come, but they break and are scattered: because haughty men despise them when they see them, but by experience dread their strength. For when the human race first derided, and then trembled at, the sufferings of the Only-Begotten, it came swelling with pride, like the sea which is about to dash against the opposing doors, and was broken and scattered by their power.

But because this is said to blessed Job, in order that the glorying of his heart, at his many virtues, might be kept down, (lest he should perchance attribute to himself what he knows of his lofty

position,) if we consider these words in a moral sense also, we learn how much they were said for his edification. Let Him say therefore,  
Ver. 8. *Who shut up the sea with doors?*

[xix]

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

43. What is this sea, except our heart, agitated by fury, embittered by strife, swelling with the haughtiness of pride, darkened by the deceit of wickedness? And how mightily this sea rages, any one observes, who understands in himself the secret temptations of thoughts. For behold we are now abandoning our perversities, we are adhering to proper desires, we are now cutting off, outwardly, our wicked works. But yet we are secretly harassed within, by that tempest of our former life, with which we have come thus far; and unless the barriers of unbounded fear were confining it, with the thought of the judgment, and dread of eternal torment, all the foundations of the work which has been raised up in us would have utterly fallen. For if that which rages within in suggestion, were to burst forth in deliberate act, the whole fabric of our life would have lain utterly overthrown. For being conceived in iniquity and born in sin, we bring with us into this world a contest, through the plague of innate corruptions, which we must strive hard to overcome. Whence it is rightly said also of the sea; *When it was breaking forth, as if proceeding from the womb.* For youth is the womb of evil thought. Of which the Lord says by Moses, *For the sense and thought of the human heart is prone to evil from its youth.* [Gen. 8, 21] For the evil of corruption which each one of us has acquired from the springing up of his carnal desires, he exercises as he advances in years; and unless the hand of Divine fear speedily repress it, sin quickly swallows up all the goodness of created nature. Let no one then attribute the victory over his thought to himself, since the Truth says, *Who shut up the sea with doors, when it was breaking forth, as if it was proceeding from the womb?* For did not Divine grace restrain the waves of our heart, from the very first beginning of our thoughts, the sea, raging with the storms of temptations, would doubtless have overwhelmed the land of the human heart, so that, washed by the briny waves, it would have become barren; that is, it would have been charmed by the fatal pleasures of the flesh, and have perished. The Lord then alone shuts up the sea with doors, Who opposes to the evil motions of our hearts the barriers of inspired fear. But because we are prohibited following those things which we behold, because we are debarred from the enjoyment of bodily pursuits, we delight to raise the eyes of our mind even to things invisible, and to behold those very things we are ordered to follow. But what do we? These things are not yet open to our feeble sight. Behold we are invited to their love, and yet are restrained from their sight, because even if we ever see them by stealth and partially, we are in darkness from our still too imperfect sight. Whence it is fitly subjoined;  
Ver. 9. *When I was laying the cloud as the garment thereof, and was covering it with darkness as with swaddling clothes.*

[xx]

44. This tumultuous sea, (our heart, namely, agitated by thoughts,) is covered with a cloud; because it is so obscured by the confusion of its own restlessness, as not clearly to behold inward peace. This sea is covered with darkness as with swaddling clothes, because it is still kept from the contemplation of sublime truths, by its weak and tender senses. Let us behold Paul covered as it

were with a kind of darkness, as with swaddling clothes, when he says, *We now see through a glass darkly: but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known.* [1 Cor. 13, 12] For did he not perceive that he was a child in the understanding of heavenly things, he would not have first mentioned, on this point, a comparison of his age, saying, *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child.* [1 Cor. 13, 11] We therefore then attain to the strength of youth, when we behold with strong sight that life to which we are tending. But now, since the keenness of our sight is dazzled, through its infirmity, by the light within, our mind is, as it were, held bound by swaddling clothes. Where it is fitly subjoined;  
Ver. 10. *I surrounded it with my boundaries.*

[xxi]

45. For the Lord surrounds this sea with His boundaries, because He keeps low within the limits of contemplation our heart which is still agitated by the plague and trouble of its corruption; that (though it desires more) it may not ascend higher than the limit assigned to it. Or certainly the Lord surrounds this sea with His boundaries; because He calms by the secret distributions of His gifts our heart swelling with temptations: at one time keeping a wicked suggestion from arriving at pleasure, and at another a wicked pleasure from breaking out into consent. He then, Who watches the unlawful motions of the heart, and in some cases keeps them from coming as far as to consent, but in others restrains them even from delight, doubtless imposes boundaries on the raging sea, that it burst not forth in act, but that the gently murmuring wave of temptation may dash itself within the secret recesses of the mind. But because it is then mightily restrained, when it is opposed by delight in God and by inspired virtues, it is rightly subjoined;  
Ver. 10, 11. *And I set a bar and doors, and said, Hitherto shall thou come, and thou shalt not proceed further, and here shall thou break thy swelling waves.*

[xxii]

46. For what do we understand by 'doors,' in a moral sense, but virtues, and what by a 'bar,' but the strength of charity? These doors, therefore, that is, these virtuous deeds, the raging sea rends asunder, unless charity of mind, secretly placed against them, holds them together. But all the goodness of virtues is easily destroyed by a temptation of the heart rushing upon them, unless it be kept firm by charity rooted within. Whence also when Paul was, in his preaching, opposing certain doors of virtues to the sea of temptation, he immediately added to them, as it were, the strength of a bar, saying, *But above all these things having charity, which is the bond of perfectness.* [Col. 3, 14] For charity is called the bond of perfectness, because every good deed which is done, is doubtless fastened thereby, so as not to perish. For any work is speedily plucked up by the tempter, if it is found free from the bond of charity. But if a mind is constrained by the love of God and of its neighbour, when the motions of temptations have suggested to it any wicked thoughts, this very love opposes itself to their progress, and breaks the waves of sinful persuasion by the gates of virtues, and the bar of inmost love. Because therefore the Lord restrains the sins which spring up in the heart, by the strength of inspired charity, He checks the onset of the rising sea, by barriers barred against it. Anger, it may be, exasperates within, but, that heavenly peace may not be lost, the aid of the tongue is not lent to the agitation of the mind, so that that which sounds tumultuously in the recesses of the heart does not vent itself in words. Lust is kindled in the secret thoughts, but, that it lose not its heavenly purity, thy mind chastens those limbs, which could help to further the

uncleanness conceived within; lest the filthiness of the heart should exhale to the corruption of the body. Avarice excites; but, that it lose not the kingdom of heaven, the mind, contented with its own lot, confines itself within the bounds of parsimony, lest it should break out in wicked deeds, and lest the heat of inward desire should ooze forth into outward acts. Pride puffs up a man; but, that he lose not his true dignity, by considering that he is dust, he brings himself down from the loftiness of his conceived pride; striving, doubtless, that that which he endures in the suggestion of thought, may not burst forth into outward exercise. It is well said, therefore, *I set a bar and doors, and said, Hitherto shall thou come, and thou shall not proceed further, and here shalt thou break thy swelling waves*, because while each of the Elect is both assaulted by sin, and yet refuses to act upon evil suggestions, the sea is kept, as it were, within bounds. And though it lashes the mind within, with the tumultuous waves of thoughts, yet it passes not over the appointed bounds of holy living. This sea indeed swells itself up, but when it is dashed against the firm deliberation of the heart, it is broken and retires. That blessed Job, then, may not ascribe it to himself that he stands firmly against the storms of his heart, let him hear by the voice of God; *Who shut up the sea with doors, when it was breaking forth as if proceeding from the womb?* and the rest: as if it were plainly said to him; In vain thou regardest thyself in thy good deeds without, if thou dost not consider Me within, Who calm in thee the waves of temptation. For that thou art able to withstand the waves in act, is of My might, Who break the waves of temptation in the heart.

## BOOK XXIX.

Twenty-two verses of the thirty-eighth chapter, from the twelfth to the thirty-third inclusive, are explained; and many truths are taught, especially concerning the arts and snares of Satan, grace, predestination, reprobation, and the secret judgments of God.

[i]

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in that He is the Power and Wisdom of God, is born of the Father before all times, or rather, because He neither began, nor ceased to be born, let us say more truly that He was ever born ['natus']. Yet we cannot say, He is ever being born ['nascitur'], lest He should seem imperfect. But in order that He may be designated both eternal and perfect, let us say that He was even ever born, so that 'born' may relate to His perfection, and 'ever' to His eternity. In order that, in some way or another, that Essence which is without time may be able to be described in words of time. Although in calling Him perfect, we deviate much from the expression of His truth, since that which has not been made ['factum'], cannot be called perfect ['perfectum']. And yet the Lord says, condescending to our words of infirmity, *Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect.* [Matt. 5, 48] In that Divine Sonship therefore He could not be discerned by the human race, wherefore He came in human nature, to be seen; He wished to be seen, in order to be imitated. Which birth of the flesh appeared contemptible to the wise ones of the world; for they despised the weaknesses of His humanity, judging them unworthy of God. And man was the more His debtor, the more God took on Himself indignities for his sake. *For since the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.* [1 Cor. 1, 21] As if He were saying, When the world by its wisdom found not God, Who is Wisdom itself, it seemed

good that it should behold God made Man through the foolishness of humanity, in order that His Wisdom might come down to our folly, and that our darkness, when enlightened by means of the clay of its own flesh, might behold the light of heavenly Wisdom. [John 9, 6. 7.] Born therefore of the Father, before all time, He deigned to be born of His Mother in time, in order that by confining His birth between a beginning and an end, He might disclose to eyes of the human mind that birth, which neither rises from a beginning, nor is bounded by an end. Whence it is now well said to blessed Job,

Ver. 12. *Hast thou commanded the morning since thy birth, and hast thou shewn to the day-spring its place?*

[ii]

2. Thou understandest, as I. For the origin of His Divinity has no before and after. And while Its ever being is through all eternity, while It circumscribes every thing which passes away, It bounds within Itself the ebbings and flowings of times. But because the origin of His Humanity began and ended, It received from time a before and after. But because, when He took on Himself the shadows of our temporal being, He shed on us the light of His eternity, after this beginning which the Creator made for Himself in time, the day-spring rightly learned its own place without time. For because the dawn, or day-spring, is turned from darkness into light, the whole Church of the Elect is, not improperly, designated by the name of dawn, or day-spring. For whilst it is brought from the night of unbelief to the light of faith, it is laid open to the splendour of heavenly brightness, as the dawn bursts into day after the darkness. Whence it is also well said in the Song of Songs, *Who is she that cometh forth as the rising dawn?* [Cant. 6, 10] For Holy Church, seeking for the rewards of the heavenly life, is called the dawn, because, while it leaves the darkness of sin, it shines with the light of righteousness.

3. But we have a deeper point to examine, on considering the nature of the dawn, or day-spring. For the day-spring, or dawn, announces that night has already passed, but yet does not present to us the full brightness of day: but whilst they dispel the one, and take up the other, they keep the light intermingled with darkness. What then are all we who follow the truth in this life, but day-spring, or dawn? Because we now both do some things which are of the light, and yet are hitherto not free from some remains of the darkness. For it is said to God by the Prophet, *In Thy sight shall no man living be justified.* [Ps. 143, 2] And it is written again, *In many things we offend all.* [James 3, 2] Paul also says, *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] Where then the law of sin is contending with the law of the mind, there is surely still day-break; because the light, which has already shone forth, has not yet entirely overpowered the passing darkness. It is yet day-break; because while the law of the flesh assails the law of the mind, and the law of the mind that of the flesh, light and darkness are contending one against the other. Whence, when Paul was saying again, *The night is far spent;* [Rom. 13, 12] he did not subjoin, 'The day has come,' but, *The day is at hand.* For he who says, after the departure of night, not that the day 'has arrived,' but that it is 'at hand,' doubtless proves that he is still in twilight before the sun, and after the darkness.

4. But the Church of the Elect will then be fully day, when the shade of sin will be no longer blended with it. It will then be fully day, when it has been brightened with the perfect warmth of the inward light. It will be then fully day, when tolerating no longer the seducing remembrance of

its sins, it will conceal from itself even all the remains of darkness. Whence also this dawn is well pointed out as still only in progress, when it is said, *And hast thou shewn to the day-spring its place?* For that, whose place is pointed out, is certainly being called from one condition to another. For what is the place of dawn but the perfect brightness of the eternal vision? And when it has been conducted and has arrived thither, it has no longer any of the darkness of the past night. But now, when it is still enduring the annoyances of temptations, because the Church is in intention of heart hastening to another condition, the dawn is proceeding to its place. But if it did not behold this spot with its mind, it would still remain in the night of this life. But when it is daily striving to be perfected, and daily to be increased in light, it already beholds its place, and seeks for the sun to shine fully upon it. The dawn considers its place, when a holy soul is burning to contemplate the sight of its Creator. The dawn was busily engaged in reaching its place, when David was saying, *My soul thirsteth for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?* [Ps. 42, 2] The Truth was pointing out its place to the dawn, when It was saying by Solomon, *For what hath the wise more than the fool? and what the poor, except to go thither where there is life?* [Eccles. 6, 8] And this place our Lord after His birth doubtless manifested even to the Patriarchs who preceded His Incarnation; because unless they knew, by the spirit of Prophecy, that the King of their heavenly country was to become Incarnate, they would not see how desirable are the goods of this same country. The Truth made known its place to the dawn, when in the presence of His disciples He asked His Father, saying, *Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am.* [John 17, 24] He pointed out its place to the dawn, when saying, *Wheresoever the carcase is, there will also the eagles be gathered together.* [Matt. 24, 28] The dawn was hastening to arrive at this place, which it had known, when Paul was saying that *he had a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] And again, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* [ib. 21] And again, *We know that if our earthly house of this habitation were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* [2 Cor. 5, 1] But He well says that He shewed its place to the dawn after His birth, because before He Himself made known the blessedness of future retribution by His own Body, He confined it in the knowledge of a few. But when He took the infirmities of a human birth, He extended the knowledge of coming glory in the love of a countless multitude. But because compassion so carries on the mystery of the Divine work, that anger still attends it, in order that the secret Judge may look favourably on and ransom some, and pass over and ruin others, since we have learnt how He enlightens the Elect by His Incarnation, let us now hear how He condemns the reprobate. It follows;  
Ver. 13. *Hast Thou held and shaken the ends of the earth, and hast Thou shaken the wicked out of it?*

[iii]

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

5. The Lord ‘held the ends of the earth,’ because He came in the end of the world to the synagogue which was now forsaken and subject to foreign kings: and He shook the wicked out of it, because He cast out even from the glory of the carnal sacrifice, those who denied the spiritual preaching of the faith. Or He certainly held the ends of the earth, because He chose out of Judaea a few abject and humble men. He held the ends of the earth, because He forsook the doctors of the law, and chose fishermen. And while He holds the ends of the earth, He shakes the wicked out of it, because while He strengthens weak believers, He condemns the sturdy unbelievers therein. But the word ‘shaking,’ He also rightly added: because by His coming He stirred up even the hearts of the



reprobates with immeasurable fear. For they in truth were shaken who were saying, *We prevail nothing, behold, the whole world is gone after Him.* [John 12, 19] But a thing which is shaken is wearied out by being drawn hither and thither. Judaea therefore had been shaken, which was saying of Christ by some, *That He is a good Man*, and was resisting Him by others, saying, *Nay; but He deceiveth the people.* [John 7, 12] It was saying by some, *If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing.* [John 9, 33] And at last it exclaims by others, *If this Man were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto thee.* [John 18, 30] The reprobate were shaken indeed but not prostrated, when at one time they beheld the miracles with wonder, and at another despised and derided the disgraces of His weakness. Had not they been shaken, who were saying, *How long dost Thou hold our soul in suspense? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.* [John 10, 24] Or He certainly shook and held the ends of the earth, because when He terrified the feeble hearts of the humble with pious fear, He did not abandon them to strict judgment. For the multitude of the believers in God stood more firmly, from the same reason that it was alarmed when humbled in itself. For that God holds firm the person whom He shakes, He teaches by the Prophet, saying, *On whom shall My Spirit rest, but on the humble and quiet, and Him who trembleth at My words?* [Is. 66, 2. see LXX.] That He holds the person whom He shakes, is intimated by the testimony of Solomon, who says, *Happy is the man who feareth alway, but he that is of a hard heart shall fall into mischief.* [Prov. 28, 14] Because therefore the Lord held the ends of Judaea in the Apostles, and rejected therefrom the Scribes, and Pharisees, and High Priests, as the merit of their iniquity demanded, let us hear what is still added respecting their condemnation. It follows;  
Ver. 14. *The seal shall be restored as clay, and shall stand as a garment.*

[iv]

6. What else but 'clay' did the Lord find the people of Israel, whom He came unto when given up to the practices of the Gentiles, and toiling at bricks in Egypt? And whilst He led it forth by so many miracles to the land of promise, and filled it, when brought thither, with the knowledge of His wisdom, whilst He conferred on it so many secret mysteries by means of Prophecy, what else did He make it but a 'seal' for preserving His mystery? For Divine Prophecy itself kept secret, whatever the Truth revealed of Itself at the end. But when, after so many Divine secrets, after the many miracles which it witnessed at the coming of our Redeemer, it loved its land, in preference to the truth, (saying by the Priests, *If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation;*) [John 11, 48] it returned, as it were, to those bricks, which it had left in Egypt: and that which had been made the seal of God, turned back again to that which it had abandoned. And, having been a 'seal,' it appeared as 'clay' in the eyes of the Truth, when it lost, through the wickedness of impiety, the mysteries of the word, which it had received, and chose to savour only of the things of earth, which pollute.

7. Where it is fitly subjoined, *And shall stand as a garment.* For because garments which are unfinished and of thicker texture, even when put on, do not adhere, nor are well fitted to the limbs of the wearer, they are said to stand. Judaea therefore, even when it seemed to be labouring in the knowledge of the truth, stood as a garment; because it professed to serve God in external commands, but refused to cling to Him by the understanding of love. While it observed the letter only, in the precepts of God, and did not through the Spirit unite itself to their inmost meanings, it did not cling, so to speak, to Him Who had put it on. Where it is also fitly subjoined,  
Ver. 15. *From the wicked their light shall be taken away.*

[v]

8. Because, while they refuse to believe the truth, they lose for ever the knowledge of the Law, and while they boast of having received the Law, they are, doubtless, blinded by boasting of their knowledge. For it is written, *Let their eyes be darkened that they see not.* [Ps. 69, 23] And again it is written, *Blind the hearts of this people, and make their ears heavy.* [Is 6, 10] And again it is written, *For judgment I have come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.* [John 9, 39] And because they boasted themselves in the works of the Law against the Giver of the Law, it is fitly subjoined;  
*And the high arm shall be broken.*

[vi]

9. For the high arm is broken, when the proud works of the Law are reprov'd, by preaching the grace of faith, when it is said, *By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified.* [Rom. 3, 20]

10. But all these words can be understood in another sense also. For Holy Scripture is wont to call the Church 'earth.' The Lord therefore holds and shakes the ends of the earth, because He allows the ends of His Church to be agitated by most cruel persecution through the coming of Antichrist, and yet forsakes her not, by permitting it. Sometimes the Lord holds this earth, and shakes it not; sometimes He holds and shakes it; because He possesses it at one time with the tranquil peace of faith, at another orders it to be disturbed with the assault of persecution.

11. But when saying, *Hast thou held and shaken the ends of the earth,* He rightly added immediately, *And hast thou shaken the wicked out of it?* For as Paul bears witness, there are many therein, *who profess that they know God, but in works deny Him.* [Tit. 1, 16] The Lord therefore shakes the wicked out of it, because those, whom deep-seated sins possess, will then fall into the gulph of open unbelief, and pass over to the heap of chaff, when moved by the breath of that temptation. And though they now conceal themselves within the bosom of the threshing floor, under the semblance of faith, they will then, doubtless, bound forth from the heap of grain, by the fan of strict judgment.

12. Whence it is also fitly subjoined, *The seal shall be restored, as clay.* As if he were openly saying; They who now appear in the bosom of the Church as a 'seal,' will then in the sight of all men be restored as 'clay:' that is, they deceive not the judgments of men concerning their profession of religion, but it is proved that they savour of earthly things. For Holy Scripture is wont to use the word 'seal' for faith, and 'clay' for iniquity. For the younger son, who returned to his father, having consumed his substance, received a ring as a present. [Luke 15, 22] For the Gentile people, which returns to 'God, by penitence, having lost its immortality, is defended by the seal of faith. Whence also it is said to the Church by its Bridegroom, *Set Me as a seal upon thine heart.* [Cant. 8, 6] For a seal is placed on things for the very purpose that they may not be violated by any boldness of plunderers. The Bridegroom therefore is placed as a seal on the heart, when the mystery of His faith is imprinted for the safe keeping of our thought; in order that that unfaithful servant, namely our adversary, observing our hearts sealed by faith, may not presume to break in upon them with temptation. But by 'clay' worldly infection is set forth, as the Psalmist bears witness, who

says, *He brought me up out of the pit of misery, and the deepest clay.* [Ps. 40, 2] Because many then who are found in worldly infection, are sealed, when brought to the Church, with the sacrament of heavenly faith, and yet depart not from their wicked deeds, and conceal themselves now under the cloke of faith, and yet shew what they really are, when they have found an opportunity, it is rightly said, *The seal shall be restored as clay.* For those whom we now believe to be faithful, we shall then find to be the very enemies of the faith; and though, when not tempted, they appear to be a 'seal,' they will doubtless, when tempted, be 'clay.' Whence also it is rightly said, *Shall be restored:* for their reprobate life proves them afterwards to be such, as their conscience could have done before their faith. Of whom it is fitly subjoined, *And shall stand as a garment.*

13. For Holy Church is now clothed as it were with garments, as many in number as the faithful, by whose veneration she is honoured. Whence also when the Gentiles were shewn to her, it is said by the Lord through the Prophet; *As I live, saith the Lord, thou shall surely be clothed with all these, as with an ornament.* [Is. 49, 18] But she is now arrayed, in appearance only, with many who seem to be faithful, but when the assault of persecution strikes them, she will be stripped of them and laid bare; of whose fate it is said, *And it shall stand as a garment.* But to 'stand' is put in this place for persisting in sin. Whence it is written, *And stood not in the way of sinners.* [Ps. 1, 1] Or certainly every reprobate is said to 'stand as a garment,' to shew that he cannot stand at all. Because, as a garment, when put on, is stretched by the body, in displaying its appearance, but when taken off is bent and folded together; so every one, who has fallen back from the stability of Holy Church, was stretched out, as it were, and beautiful, while being worn, but will lie afterwards, when stripped off, broken down and cast aside. But if by 'standing' we understand 'continuance,' every reprobate person who endures a short time in this life, which he loves, stands as a garment. Whence also it is said by the Prophet, *All shall wax old as a garment, and as a covering shall thou change them, and they shall be changed.* [Ps. 102, 26] These points therefore, which he introduced veiled in a cloud of allegory, he now makes known in plainer words, adding, *From the wicked their light shall be taken away.*

[vii]

14. For neither does the light of God now illumine those, who veil the malice of their iniquity with the name of faith. For while they neglect to live according to the preaching of faith, and yet in appearance reverence it, they seek for the honour of this present life under the name of religion; and they gain this light from faith, as faith cherishes them in the sight of men. But there are some who sincerely believe the eternal truths which they hear, and yet contradict by evil living the very faith which they profess. These also have their light in darkness, for while they act perversely and yet think rightly about God, they are illumined in a measure by the shining of a light, so as not to be quite in darkness. And while they love the things of earth more than those of heaven, those that they see more than those they hear of, when the season of persecution assaults them, they lose that sound belief they seemed to possess. And this is specially the case, in a greater degree, at that time, when the head of the wicked himself arising, in the last persecution, against Holy Church, his boldness attacks it with unrestrained strength. Then is the heart of each one laid open, when whatever lay concealed is exposed, and they who are now holy in words, but unholy in heart, fall headlong, on their wickedness being made public, and lose the light of faith which they had in appearance possessed. But it is necessary, amidst all this, for each of us to return to the hidden

recess of his heart, and to fear at the fatal results of his doings, lest he fall, as his merits demand, into the number of such men, by the strict justice of the judgments of God.

15. But let no one inconsiderately flatter himself, and believe that he therefore is exempt from such a fall, because he thinks that he does not reach to the storm of this tempest. O how many have beheld not the times of that temptation, and yet are involved in the storm of his temptation. Cain saw not the time of Antichrist, and yet was deservedly a limb of Antichrist. Judas knew not the fierceness of that persecution, and yet yielded to the might of his cruelty, by the persuasion of avarice. Simon was far removed from the times of Antichrist, and yet joined himself to his pride, by perversely seeking for the power of miracles. [Acts 8, 19. 20.] Thus a wicked body is united to its head, thus limbs to limbs, when they both know not each other in acquaintance, and yet are joined together by wicked doings. For neither had Pergamos known the books or the words of Balaam, and yet, following his wickedness, it heard in a voice of reproof from above; *Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat and to commit fornication.* [Rev. 2, 14] Both times and places separated the Church of Thyatira from the knowledge of Jezebel; but because equal guilt of life had enthralled it, Jezebel is said to dwell therein, and to persist in perverse doings, as the Angel bears witness, who says; *I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.* [ib. 20] Behold, because they could be found, who followed the conduct of Jezebel in their reprobate deeds, Jezebel is said to have been found there: because an agreement of habits makes a corrupt body one, even if times or places sever it asunder. Whence it is that every wicked person, who has already gone by, survives in his perverse imitators, and that the author of iniquity, who has not yet come, is already visible in those who do his works. Hence John says; *Now are there become many Antichrists,* [1 John 2, 18] because all wicked persons are even now his members, which being in truth born in wickedness, have prevented their head, by evil living. Hence Paul says, *That he might be revealed in his time; for the mystery of iniquity doth already work.* [2 Thess. 2, 6. 7.] As if he were saying; Then Antichrist will be manifestly seen; for he now secretly works his hidden works in the hearts of the unrighteous. For, to say nothing of more open crimes, behold one man secretly envies his brother in his heart, and if he find an opportunity, strives to supplant him. Of what other is he a member, but of him, of whom it is written, *Through envy of the devil came death into the world?* [Wisd. 2, 24] Another, thinking himself a person of great desert, preferring himself to all, through swelling of heart, believes all to be inferior to him. Of what other is he a member, but of him of whom it is written, *He beholdeth every high thing, and is a king over all the children of pride?* [Job 41, 34] Another seeks for the power of this world, not that he may profit others, but that he may not be subject to another. Of what other is he a member, than of him, of whom it is written, *Who said, I will sit in the mount of the testament, the sides of the north: I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High?* [Is. 14, 13. 14.] For the Most High alone so rules over all things, as to be unable to be subject to another. Whom the devil perversely wished to imitate, when seeking dominion of his own, he refused to be subject to Him. Whoever therefore seeks for power of his own, imitates the devil, because he loathes to submit to him who is placed over him by Divine ordinance.

16. There are many things besides, to proclaim certain persons to be faithless, though established in the peace of the Church. For I see that some persons so accept the person of the powerful, as not to hesitate, when requested by him, to deny, for his good will, the truth in the cause of a neighbour.

And who is Truth, but He who said, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*? [John 14, 6] For John the Baptist died not, when questioned about his confession of Christ, but about the truth of justice; but because Christ is the Truth, he therefore went even to death for Christ, because namely for the truth. Let us suppose that a person has, when questioned, accepted the person of the powerful, and has denied the truth, that he might not suffer the wrong even of a word. What, I pray you, would he do in the pain of punishments, who was ashamed of Christ among the scourges of words? Behold, even after this he is still a Christian before the eyes of men, and yet if God resolved to judge him strictly, he is one no longer.

17. But I see others, to whom are assigned, through their position as teachers, the duties of exhorting and reproving, who behold some unlawfulness committed, and who yet, when afraid of losing the good will of certain powerful persons, presume not to reprove it. What else doth he, whoever he be, but see the wolf coming, and flee away? He flies, because he was silent; he was silent, because he despised eternal grace, and preferred temporal glory. Behold he hid himself within the concealments of his silence before the face of a powerful man, and gave way as to open persecution, so also to secret fear. It is well said of such; *They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God*. [John 12, 43] If these things are strictly judged, whoever is such, even though public persecution was wanting, yet denied Christ by his silence. There are not wanting then, even in the peace of the Church, the temptations of Antichrist. Let no one then dread those times of the last persecution, as though the only ones. For the cause of Antichrist is continually promoted among the ungodly, because he is even now secretly working his mystery in their hearts. And even if many, now seemingly established within the Church, pretend to be what they are not, they will yet at the coming of the Judge be exposed, as they are. Of whom Solomon well says, *I saw the wicked buried, who even when they lived here, were in the holy place, and were praised in the city, as men of just works*. [Eccles. 8, 10] After it was said then of the wicked; *The seal shall be restored as clay, and shall stand as a garment, and their light shall be taken away from the wicked*, (which is certainly to take place in that persecution of Antichrist,) he presently, consoling us concerning the destruction of the same Antichrist, says;  
*And the high arm shall be broken*.

[viii]

18. For, for what else is the high arm taken, but the proud loftiness of Antichrist, who is so exalted over the reprobate minds of men with the pride of worldly glory, that though a sinful man, and yet scorning to be counted a man, he pretends falsely that he is God above men? Whence the Apostle Paul says; *So that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself, as if he were God*. [2 Thess. 2, 4] And to shew his pride more fully, he stated before, *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped*. For even a man can sometimes be called God, according to that which is said to Moses, *See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh*. [Exod. 7, 1] But a mere man cannot be worshipped as God. But because Antichrist sets himself up over all holy men, and over the power of the Godhead Itself, he endeavours to surpass that which is called God, and that which is worshipped as God, by demanding for himself the name of glory. But we must observe into what a depth of pride he has fallen, who remained not in that degree of ruin, in which he fell. For both the devil and man fell, by pride, from the state of their own creation, either for him to say, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High*, [Is. 14, 14] or for the other to hear and to believe, *Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods*. [Gen. 3, 5] They fell,

therefore, both of them, because they desired to be like God, not by righteousness, but by power. But man who had fallen, by perversely aiming at the likeness of God, discerning, when freed by grace, that he was very different from God, through the guilt of sin, exclaims, *O Lord, who is like unto Thee?* [Ps. 89, 8] But the devil, having been justly cast aside in his sinful lapse, continued not in his own degree of ruin; but the longer he was deprived of the grace of the Almighty, the more did he add to the guilt of his sins. For he who fell, because he wished, inverting the order of things, to be like God, was brought so far, that entering into Antichrist, he scorned to seem like God, and, when condemned, counts Him as his inferior, Whom he could not in his pride regard as his equal. For when this, which we have stated before, is said of him; *Exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped*; [2 Thess. 2, 4] it is openly shown, that by seeking at first the likeness of God, he wished, as it were, to exalt himself against God, but that increasing in the sin of pride, he now sets himself up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. Because then this his pride will be smitten by the coming of the strict Judge, (as it is written, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming*.) [1 Thess. 2, 8] it is rightly said, *And the high arm shall be broken*.

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

19. But all these expressions, which have been twice discussed, can be still understood in another sense. For the words of God are conserves [‘pigmenta’], as it were, to give us strength. And just as, the more a conserve is ground, the more does its virtue increase in the cup; so the more we bruise the Divine words by expounding them, the more, when we hear them, are we benefited, as if by the draught. Because therefore the merciful God long bears with the sins of men, and frequently converts the minds of sinners, when He sees the end now approaching, He rightly says of Himself, as suggesting the might of so great affection,

Ver. 13. *Hast thou held and shaken the ends of the earth, and hast thou shaken the wicked out of it?*

[ix]

20. For by ‘earth’ is designated man, who savours of things below; to whom it was said in his sin; *Earth thou art, and to earth shall thou go*. [Gen. 3, 19] But because the merciful Creator forsakes not His own work, He both bears with the sins of men, by His wisdom, and at last remits them by their conversion. But, when He beholds hard and insensible minds, He scares them at one time with threats, at another with blows, at another with revelations: in order that those which had become hardened by most fatal security may be softened by wholesome fear, so that they may, though at last, return, and blush at least at this, that they have long been waited for. For thus the Lord, because He judges more severely the ends of our life, therefore purges also His Elect more carefully at the close. For it is written; *God shall judge the ends of the earth*. [1 Sam. 2, 10] He therefore watches more anxiously over our closing deeds, the more He considers that the beginnings of our coming life depend upon them. And because He does this of His mercy; by bringing forward His tenderness, with which He receives even those sinners who have been converted at the last, He instructs the righteousness of blessed Job, saying; *Hast thou held and shaken the ends of the earth, and hast thou shaken the wicked out of it?* Thou understandest, As I, Who frequently arouse sinners by alarming them at their last moments, hold them fast by converting them, and pluck from their hearts the wicked motions of their thoughts. And the Lord rightly teaches blessed Job, how He converts sinners at the end. As if He openly said, Observe the

power of My mercy, and bring down the pride of thy righteousness. But, that that punishment of former sin accompanies these closing hours of a man, through the death of the flesh, even when he is converted, He immediately teaches, saying;

Ver. 14. *The seal shall be restored as clay, and shall stand as a garment.*

[x]

21. For the Lord made man, whom He fashioned after His own likeness, as a kind of seal of His power. But yet it shall be restored as clay; because, though he may by conversion escape eternal sufferings, yet he is condemned by the death of the flesh, in punishment of the pride he has committed. For man, who has been formed from clay, and adorned with the likeness of the Divine image, having received the gift of reason, forgets, when swelling with pride of heart, that he was formed of the basest materials. Whence it hath been ordered by the marvellous justice of the Creator, that, because he became proud in consequence of that reasonable sense which he received, he should again by death become earth, which he was unwilling humbly to regard himself. And because he lost the likeness of God by sin, but returns by death to the substance of his own clay, it is rightly said; *The seal shall be restored as clay.* And because, when the spirit is summoned from the body, it is stripped, as it were, of its kind of covering of flesh, it is fitly subjoined of the same clay; *and shall stand as a garment.* For, for our clay to stand as a garment is for it to remain empty and stripped off, even till the time of the resurrection. But because even they do not escape this punishment of pride, who overcome this very pride by living humbly, He subjoins what is the special punishment of the proud, saying;

Ver. 15. *From the wicked their light shall be taken away, and the high arm shall be broken.*

22. For the death of the flesh, which restores the Elect to their light, takes away their light from the reprobate. For the light of the proud is the glory of this present life. And that light is then withdrawn from it, when it is called by the death of the flesh, to the darkness of its own retributions. For then is the high arm there broken, because loftiness of heart, which has been violently seized on, beyond the order of nature, is scattered by the weight of Divine justice which overwhelms it, in order that how [Oxf. Mss. 'quam'] wickedly it had exalted itself for a while, it may learn when it is crushed forever by the weight of judgment. But none of us would know what was to follow after death, did not the Creator of our life come even to the punishment of our death. For did He not of His own mercy seek the lowest condition, He could not justly bring back to the highest, us, who were lost after we had received His likeness. Whence it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 16. *Hast thou entered into the depth of the sea, and hast thou walked in the lowest parts of the abyss?*

[xii]

23. As if He said, As I, Who not only sought the sea, that, is this world, by assuming the flesh and soul of a man, but also descended by that flesh voluntarily subjected to death, to the bottom of the pit, as if to the depths of the sea. For if the 'sea' must be understood to mean the world after the manner of Scripture language, nothing hinders the 'depths of the sea' from meaning the bars of the pit. But the Lord sought this depth of the sea, when He entered the lowest parts of the pit, in order to rescue the souls of His Elect. Whence also it is said by the Prophet, *Thou hast made the depths of the sea a way, for the ransomed to pass over.* [Is. 51, 10] For this depth of the sea was, before the

coming of the Redeemer, not a way, but a prison, because it confined within it even the souls of the good, though not in places of punishment. But the Lord made this depth a way, because He, by coming thither, granted His Elect to pass over from the bars of the pit to heavenly places. Whence it is there fitly said, *for the ransomed to pass over*. But that which He had called the depths of the sea, repeating in other words He calls the lowest parts of the abyss: because as the abyss of waters is not comprehended by our sight, so are the secrets of the pit not penetrated by us with any sense of our understanding. For we behold who are withdrawn hence, but we see not what retribution of punishments awaits them according to their desert.

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

24. But we must carefully notice, that He says that He had walked in the lowest parts of the abyss. For to walk belongs not to one who is bound, but to one who is free. For fetters impede to a like extent the steps of him whom they bind. Because then the Lord endured no bonds of sin, He walked in the pit. For He came unfettered to those who were bound. Whence it is written, *I am become as a man without help, free among the dead*. [Ps. 88, 4. 5.] For the Lord then to walk in the lowest parts of the abyss is for Him to find nothing to detain Him in the place of damnation, as Peter bears witness, who says, *Having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible for Him to be holden of it*. [Acts 2, 24] Or certainly, (because, when we are led in walking from place to place, we are found present here and there,) the Lord is said to have walked in the pit, in order to shew that He was present to Elect souls in their several places, by the power of His Godhead. Whence also the spirit of wisdom is described as full of motion, [Wisdom 7, 24] that by means of that which is nowhere absent, He might be described as meeting us every where. And this descent of His, our Lord regards as more marvellous the more frequently He makes mention of it to ransomed man. For repeating it again, He subjoins;

Ver. 17. *Have the gates of death been opened unto thee, and hast thou seen the gloomy doors?*

[xiii]

25. For the 'gates of death' are the adverse powers. Which the Lord descended and opened, because by dying He overcame their strength. Which are by another appellation called the 'gloomy doors,' because while they are not seen, by reason of their crafty concealment, they open to deceived minds the way of death. Which gloomy doors the Lord beholds; because He both observes and represses the crafty malice of unclean spirits. And did He not, by beholding, restrain them, while we know them not, our mind would both know nothing of their snares, and would be taken and perish by them. But even we behold these gloomy gates, when we are illumined with rays of heavenly light. Whence also it is said by the Prophet, *The Lord is my helper, and I shall see mine enemies*. [Ps. 118, 7] He therefore Himself beholds our enemies, Who by His gift makes our enemies visible to us. Or certainly, the Lord then beheld the gloomy gates, when penetrating the barriers of the pit, He smote the cruel spirits, and by His death condemned them that presided over death. Which is here spoken of no longer as of a future, but as of a past event; for this reason, because that which He intended to do in deed, He had already done in predestination. But because the Church increased after His death and resurrection, and was extended in all nations, it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 18. *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?*

[xiv]



26. For whilst the Lord sought the narrowness of death, He spread abroad His faith in the nations, and extended Holy Church to numberless hearts of believers. To whom it is said by the Prophet, *Enlarge the place of thy tent, and extend the curtains of thy tabernacles; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes: for thou shalt penetrate to the right hand and to the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles.* [Is. 54, 2. 3.] But this breadth of the earth would surely not exist, had He not first despised, in dying, the life which we know, and pointed out by His rising again, the life which we know not. For He opened by His death the eyes of our minds, and shewed us what was the life which was to follow. Whence also, observing this order in the Gospel, He says to His disciples, *Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name through all nations.* [Luke 24, 46. 47.] For few of the people of Israel believed at His preaching, but numberless peoples of the Gentiles followed the way of life, on His death. For He endured the proud, while He was still living in a suffering condition, but He overthrew them when dead to a life of suffering. Which Samson long before well typified in himself, for he slew but few during his life; but on the destruction of the temple he slew a host of enemies, at his death. [Judges 16, 30] Because the Lord doubtless killed but few from their pride and haughtiness [as we say, ‘dead unto sin.’] when alive, but more, when the Temple of His body was broken in pieces: and the Elect from the Gentiles, whom He endured in His life, He subdued all at once by His death. After then He had taught us that He had penetrated the regions below, He rightly subjoined immediately the breadth of the earth to be considered, *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?* As if He were saying to man when scourged, Think on what I have endured, and consider what I have purchased; and complain not thyself of the rod, when thou art ignorant what rewards await thee, in retribution. In the midst then of these words of the Creator, I think it worth while for us to turn away our eyes for a while from the common and public good, and to observe what He secretly does with each of ourselves. For He says;

Ver. 16. *Hast thou entered the depth of the sea?*

[xv]

#### [MORAL INTEPRETATION]

27. For the ‘sea’ is the mind of man, and God enters its depths, when it is roused from its inmost thoughts to lamentations of penitence through its knowledge of itself, when He calls to its memory the wickednesses of its former life, and rouses the mind which is agitated by its own confusion. God penetrates the depth of the sea, when He changes hearts, which are even despaired of. For He goes into the sea, when He humbles a worldly heart; He enters the depth of the sea, when He disdains not to visit minds which are even overwhelmed with sins. Whence it is rightly added in a question; *And hast thou walked in the lowest parts of the abyss?* For what abyss is there, but the human mind, which while unable to comprehend itself, is like an obscure abyss, hid from itself, in every thing that it is. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *The abyss uttered its voice from the depth of its thought.* [Hab. 3, 10] For whilst the human mind does not dive into itself, it praises more humbly, by comparison with itself, the power of the Divine nature, which it is unable to comprehend.

28. For God then to walk in the lowest parts of the abyss, is for Him to convert the hearts even of

the wickedest men, and, by touching minds which are despaired of, with traces of His visitation, wonderfully to refashion them. For when any one feels compunction after enormous sins, what else is beheld but God walking in the lowest parts of the abyss? For God walks, as it were, in the abyss, when He penetrates the gloomy heart, and tramples down the invisible waves of sins. For we frequently lament some sins past, and are being assaulted by others present; so that we are harassed at one time by pride, at another by anger, at another by lust, and at another by avarice tempting us. But when the Lord suppresses all these in our heart by the fear of His secret visitation, what else doth He but place His steps in the abyss? Which steps we behold with the mind, when we consider how the gifts of His fear stand up to oppose these rebellious sins. For the Prophet had beheld these steps, when He was saying, *Thy goings were seen, O God, the goings of my God, my King, is in His holy place.* [Ps. 68, 24] For He who beholds the inordinate motions of his mind restrained within him by the memory of the Divine judgments, beholds, as it were, the steps of God walking within him. Let it be said, therefore, to blessed Job; *Hast thou entered the depth of the sea, and hast thou walked in the lowest parts of the abyss?* Thou understandest, as I, Who with wondrous pity trample down in the hearts of sinners, at one time anger, at another lust, at another avarice, at another rising pride. As if it were plainly said to him, If thou seest that I alone suppress the lurking vices of the heart, thou wilt cease to be puffed up with self-justification. And because when we are visited by God, we are led to confession concerning even the secret and unlawful motions of our mind, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 17. *Have the gates of death been opened unto thee?*

[xvi]

29. For the gates of death are wicked thoughts: which we open to God, when we confess them with weeping in penitence. For He beholds them even when not confessed; but enters into them, when confessed. For He then in truth opens a way for Himself in the gates of death, when we have put aside evil thoughts, and He comes to us after confession. And they are called the gates of death for this reason, because the way to death is always opened through evil thoughts. Which is again repeated, when it is subjoined;

*And hast thou seen the gloomy doors?*

30. For the gloomy doors are the lurking evils of the mind, which can both exist within, and yet not be observed by another. Which yet the Lord beholds, when He destroys them by the secret look of grace. For it is written, *The King Who sitteth in the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with His sight.* [Prov. 20, 8] And because every vice contracts, and every virtue enlarges the mind, after the destruction of vices it is rightly subjoined, *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?* For did not virtue enlarge the mind, Paul would not say to the Corinthians, *Be ye also enlarged, and be not yoked with unbelievers.* [2 Cor. 6, 13. 14.] But we must observe carefully that which is said;

Ver. 18. *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?*

[xvii]

31. For the extent of the inwardly good is not at all comprehended, unless it is carefully considered. For poverty frequently humbles them outwardly, the torture of punishment straitens them; but yet, in the midst of these things, their inward resolution expands itself ever to hope for heavenly rewards. The Apostles had outwardly been straitened, when they were enduring scourges; but they

were standing at liberty in great width within, who had turned, in themselves, these very scourges into joy. For it is written, *The Apostles departed from the presence of the council; rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus.* [Acts 5, 41] Paul had found this width, in his straits, who said, *But I wish you to know, brethren, that the things which happened unto me, have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel, so that my bonds in Christ were made manifest in all the palace.* [Phil. 1, 12. 13.] David was possessing this width, in the midst of narrowness, when saying, *Thou hast enlarged me in tribulation.* [Ps. 4, 1] This earth, therefore, that is the conscience of holy men, is then enlarged when it is pressed outwardly with the adversities of this world. For when it is driven away from security in this life, it is beaten inwardly on itself, so as to stretch toward the hope of heavenly things. And when it is not allowed to wander abroad, being brought back, as it were, into its own bosom, it is enlarged. We however behold what misfortunes good men endure, but see not how much they rejoice within. We learn, on consideration, the breadth of their mind, sometimes in their words, sometimes in their deeds: but yet we know not how great is the range of that breadth in them. Let human wisdom hear then, *Hast thou considered the breadth of the earth?* and let it learn its own folly. As if he said, As I, Who alone fully consider the secret rejoicing of the holy, when surrounded with scourges, because I alone mercifully fashion them. Or certainly, blessed Job is asked whether he has considered the breadth of the earth, in order that he might be humbled by the example of another's enlargement. As if it were openly said to him, Consider those whom the countless evils of this world cannot confine, and cease to boast, amid thy blows, of the state of thy own heart. It follows;  
Ver. 18—20. *Tell Me, if thou knowest all things, in what path the light dwelleth, and what is the place of darkness? that thou mayest take each of them to the bounds thereof, and understand the paths to the house thereof.*

[xviii]

32. Blessed Job is tried with a weighty question, in that he is examined as to the way of light and the place of darkness, whether he should bring them each to their boundaries, and should understand the paths to the house thereof. For what is understood by the word 'light' but righteousness? and what is designated by 'darkness' but iniquity? Whence it is said to some who had been converted from the wickedness of sins, *Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.* [Eph. 5, 8] And it is stated of some who continue in sin, *They that sleep, sleep in the night.* [1 Thess. 5, 7] It is said therefore to blessed Job, *Tell Me, if thou knowest all things, in what path the light dwelleth, and what is the place of darkness?* As if it were said to him, If thou imaginest that thou hast perfect wisdom, tell Me, either into whose heart that innocency, which is now wanting, is coming, or in whose heart that wickedness, which now exists, remains. *In what path the light dwelleth:* that is, whose mind righteousness comes and fills. *And what is the place of darkness,* that is, in whom does blind iniquity remain. *That thou mayest take each of them to the bounds thereof,* that is, that thou mayest decide whether he who is now seen to be wicked, finishes his life in iniquity, and whether he who is now seen to be righteous, terminates the conclusion of his life with the perfection of righteousness. *And understand the paths to the house thereof:* that is, that thou mayest consider and discern, either for whom perseverance in good deeds secures an eternal mansion in the Kingdom, or whom evil habits, binding to the end, condemn to eternal punishment. For 'house' is put for resting place, and 'path' for conduct. A path therefore leads to a house, because our doings lead on to our resting place. But what man could speak when questioned on these points? who could hear them at least without fear? For we daily see many who shine forth

with the light of righteousness, and who are yet at their close obscured with the darkness of wickedness. And we behold many involved in the darkness of sins, and yet at the end of their life suddenly set free and restored to the light of righteousness. We also know that many have preserved entire, even to the end, the path of righteousness which they have once found, and we have beheld that most men have heaped up without ceasing, even to the end, their wickedness which they have once begun.

33. But who, amid these clouds of secret judgments, can so dart forth the light of his mind, as to distinguish with any discernment, either who continues in sin, or who perseveres in righteousness, or who is converted from the highest to the lowest condition, or who relapses from the highest to the lowest? These points are hid from men's senses, nor is aught known of the end of any one, because the abyss of the divine judgments is not at all penetrated by the eye of the human mind. For we see that that Gentile world which was opposed to God was overspread with the light of righteousness, and that Judaea, long beloved, was darkened with the night of unbelief. We know also that the thief passed from the cross to the kingdom, and that Judas sank into hell from the glory of the Apostleship. And again, because destinies once commenced are sometimes not changed, we know that the other thief arrived at punishment, and that the Apostles enjoyed the appointed kingdom, which they had longed for. Who then can examine in what path light dwells, and what is the place of darkness, to bring each of them to its own bounds, and to understand the paths to the house thereof? I see Paul called from that cruelty of persecution to the grace of Apostleship; and yet he is so alarmed in the midst of secret judgments, as to fear that he be cast away, even after he had been called. For he says, *I chasten my body, and bring it into subjection, lest, perchance, having preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] And again, *I count not myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and stretching forth myself unto those things which are before, I follow the destined mark, to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* [Phil. 3, 13. 14.] *I follow after, if that I may apprehend that, for which also I am apprehended.* [ibid. 12] And it certainly had been already said of him by the voice of the Lord, *He is a chosen vessel to Me;* [Acts. 9, 15] and yet he still chastens his body, and is fearful of being rejected.

34. Alas for our wretched selves, who have known as yet no voice of God concerning our election, and are still slumbering in ease, as if from security. But there ought, there ought doubtless to be not only security in our hope, but also fear in our conversation, that the one may encourage us in the contest, the other sting us when listless. Whence it is rightly said by the Prophet, *Let them that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord.* [Ps. 115, 11] As if he were openly saying; He presumes in vain on his hope, who refuses to fear God in his doings. But why is blessed Job questioned on so mighty an enquiry, which is utterly unknown by men, how he understands the end of the just and of the unjust, except that he should turn to his own end, from being unable to understand that of others; and that from being ignorant of his own end, as well as others', he might be afraid at his ignorance, be humbled through his fear; from being humbled might not be elated at his own doings; and from not being elated, might remain steadfast in the citadel of grace? Let it be said then to him, *Tell Me, if thou hast understanding, in what path the light dwelleth, and what is the place of darkness, that thou mayest take each of them to the bounds thereof.* As if it were said; As thou knowest not who are converted from sin to goodness, nor who turn back from goodness to sin; so also thou dost not understand what is doing towards thyself, as thy merits deserve. And as thou dost not at all comprehend another's end, so art thou also unable to foresee thine own. For thou knowest now

what progress thou hast made thyself, but what I still think of thee in secret, thou knowest not. Thou now thinkest on thy deeds of righteousness; but thou knowest not how strictly they are weighed by Me. Woe even to the praiseworthy life of men, if it be judged without mercy, because when strictly examined, it is overwhelmed in the presence of the Judge, by the very conduct with which it imagines that it pleases Him. Whence it is rightly said to God by the Prophet, *Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.* [Ps. 143, 2] Whence it is well said by Solomon, *There are righteous and wise men, and their works are in the hand of God: and yet no man knoweth whether he is deserving of love, or of hatred; but all things are kept uncertain for the time to come.* [Eccles. 9, 1] Hence again it is said by the same Solomon, *What man will be able to understand his own way?* [Prov. 20, 24] And any one doing good or evil is doubtless known by the testimony of his conscience. But it is said that their own way is not known to men, for this reason, because even if a man understands that he is acting rightly, yet he knows not, under the strict enquiry, whither he is going. After He has alarmed him then with this consideration of his end, He goes back to examine his beginning: and, that he may not complain wherefore knows he not his end, He mentions also that he does not even understand with what beginning he came hither. For it follows;

Ver. 21. *Didst thou know then that thou wast about to be born, and didst thou know the number of thy days?*

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35. As if He were openly saying, What wonder if thou understandest not thine end, since thou dost not comprehend thy beginning? And since thou knowest not with what beginning thou camest hither, what wonder, if thou canst not tell with what end thou art taken away? If therefore it was My work to bring thee forward from secrecy to sight at thy beginning, it will be Mine also to bring thee back from sight to secrecy. Why complainest thou aught of the dispensation of thy life, who, ignorant of thyself, art supported by the hand of thy Creator? Thou oughtest therefore to boast thyself the less in what thou dost, the more thou art confined within the bosom of eternity, and knowest not either in what order thou earnest hither, nor when, or how thou art taken hence.

36. But these words can yet be understood in another sense also; *Didst thou know then that thou wast about to be born, and didst thou know the number of thy days?* Thou understandest, As I, Who knew that I was about to be born, because, even before the birth of My Manhood, I always existed substantially in the Godhead. For men begin then to exist, when they are born in the womb of their mothers. For even the very conception is called nativity, according to that which is written, *That which is born in her is of the Holy Ghost.* [Matt. 1, 20] And they therefore know not that they are about to be born, because they do not exist, before they are created. But God, Who ever existed without beginning, foresaw this of Himself, that He assumed a beginning in the womb of the Virgin; and because He foreknew, He ordained it; and because He ordained, He doubtless endured nothing in human form, except of His own free will. Let man then, who could not foresee his own birth, be reprov'd for complaining of his scourges, if even He, Who foresaw and ordained His own birth, prepared Himself for scourges amongst men. It follows,

Ver. 22, 23. *Hast thou entered into the treasures of snow, or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war?*

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37. What else must be understood by the ‘snow’ or ‘hail,’ but the cold and hard hearts of the wicked? For as charity is designated by warmth, so also in Holy Scripture wickedness is wont to be designated by cold. For it is written, *As a cistern maketh its water cold, so doth its own wickedness make cold the soul.* [Jer. 6, 7] And again, *Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold.* [Matt. 24, 12] What then can be more fitly understood by the cold of snow, or the hardness of hail, than the life of the wicked, which both waxes cold by torpor, and strikes with the malice of hardness? Whose life the Lord yet tolerates, because He keeps them for the probation of His just ones. Whence also He rightly subjoined, *Which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war.* In order that, when our adversary the devil endeavours to tempt us, he may make use of their habits as his weapons against us. For by them he tortures us in his rage, but unwittingly purges us. For they become scourges to our sins, and when we are smitten by their life, which is such, we are freed from eternal death. Whence it is so ordered, that even the abandoned life of the reprobate benefits the life of the Elect, and that whilst their ruin furthers our interest, it is thus marvellously ordained, in order that even every thing which is lost, may not be lost to the Elect of God.

38. This also can be understood in another way, so as not to differ from the exposition of the former verse, since it seems connected with the words that precede it. For because He had pointed out that either the good can be changed to sin, or the wicked to goodness, He immediately proceeded to add, *Hast thou entered into the treasures of snow, or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war?* By either cold, or hard, snow, or hail, we understand, as has been said, the hearts of the wicked. But because Almighty God has chosen His Saints from such, and knows how many of the Elect He has still stored up amongst the life of the wicked, He fitly says, that He has His treasures in snow or hail. For ‘thesaurus’ (treasure) is so called from *θεσις*, that is, from its being placed away. And He beholds many long concealed in a life of coldness, whom He brings out, when He orders it, and exhibits glittering with the brightness of righteousness, through grace from on high. For it is written, *Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* [Ps. 51, 7] And He hides them for a long while beneath the seal of His foreknowledge, prepared against the day of war and of battle, but the moment He brings them out, He strikes the opposing breast of the adversaries, with their words and refutations, as if with hailstones. Whence it is written elsewhere, *Through the brightness in His presence the clouds passed away, hailstones and coals of fire.* [Ps. 18, 12. See S. Aug. ad loc.] For coals pass away through brightness, because holy preachers traverse the whole compass of the world with the brightness of their miracles. And they are called, moreover, hailstones, and coals of fire; because they both strike with their reproof, and kindle with the flame of charity. The bold reproof of the Saints is also fitly represented by the nature of hail. For hail strikes as it falls, and waters when it melts. But holy men both strike the hearts of their hearers with dread, and bedew them with comfort. For the Prophet bears witness how they strike, saying, *They shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts, and they shall tell of Thy greatness.* [Ps. 145, 6] And he has proceeded to subjoin, how they bedew with gentleness; *They shall utter the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness, and shall exult in Thy righteousness.* [ib. 7] Treasures, therefore, are kept in the snow or hail, because many who were frozen in the torpor of iniquity, when taken up unto heavenly grace, shine forth in Holy Church with the light of righteousness, and smite with the blows of their doctrine the evil wisdom of their adversaries. Whence also it is fitly subjoined, *Which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war.* For Saul in truth had

been snow or hail through cold insensibility; but he became snow and hail against the breasts of his adversaries, either by the brightness of righteousness, or by the reproof of his keen eloquence. O what a treasure did the Lord keep him, stored up in snow or hail, when He already secretly beheld him as His own Elect, though placed among the life of the wicked. And to smite how many breasts of His adversaries did He grasp in His hand this hailstone, by which He laid prostrate so many hearts which resisted Him.

39. Let no one then boast himself of his own deeds; let no one despair of those, whom he sees still cold. For he sees not the treasures of God in snow and hail. For who could believe that that very person, who at his death kept the raiment of all those who stoned, could go before the martyred Stephen through the grace of apostleship? [Acts 7, 58] If therefore we refer to these secret gifts, or judgments, while not despairing utterly of any, we do not prefer ourselves in our hearts to those, to whom for a time we have been preferred. For though we now observe how much we have outstripped them, yet we know not how much we may be surpassed ourselves, when they begin the race. It is well, therefore, said to blessed Job, *Hast thou entered the treasures of snow, or hast thou beheld the treasures of the hail, which I have prepared against the time of the enemy, against the day of battle and war?* As if it were openly said, Prefer not thyself to any one, by reason of thy doings; for of these, whom thou beholdest still frozen in sin, thou knowest not what mighty workers of righteousness, and defenders of sound faith I intend to create. But because this is effected by the coming of the Mediator, it is rightly subjoined;  
Ver. 24. *By what way is the light scattered?*

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40. For He in truth is the way, Who says, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* [John 14, 6] The light is, therefore, scattered by this way, because all the Gentile world is enlightened by His presence. But He rightly said, *Is scattered*, because the light of preaching was not contracted or confined, but shone forth with its brightness far and wide by the voices of the Apostles. But because the power of love glows within, when the light of conversion has been received, in order that either our past sins may be anxiously lamented, or future blessings be most ardently sought for, it is suitably added, *The heat is divided over the earth.*

[xxii]

41. For when the light is spread abroad the heat is divided over the earth; because when righteousness is openly preached, the anxious desire of the heart to seek God is spread forth in the practice of virtues; so that one person shines forth in the word of wisdom, another in the word of knowledge; one is mighty in the grace of healing, another in the working of mighty deeds; and that thus, while they severally receive unequally the gifts of the Spirit, they are all necessarily united to each other, and unanimously inflamed. But after the light is said to be spread abroad, it can readily be understood that persecution is designated by 'heat:' because as the light of preaching shone brightly, so the heat of persecution immediately blazed forth from the hearts of the unbelievers. For, that persecution is described by 'heat,' the discourse of the Lord bears witness, speaking of the seeds which had been cast on the rocky ground, *When the sun arose they were all scorched, and because they had not root, they withered away.* [Matt. 13, 6] And when He expounded it a little after, He called 'heat,' persecution. The heat therefore is divided over the earth, when the light is

spread abroad, because, as the life of the faithful became bright, the cruelty of the faithless was kindled. For the heat was divided, when persecution was raging, now at Jerusalem, now at Damascus, and now in other countries far away. For it is written, *At that time there arose a great persecution in the Church, which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria.* [Acts 8, 1] And it is written again; *Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters for him to take to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he had found any of this way, men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.* [Acts 9, 1. 2.] Because then persecution had increased, now here, now there, they who had known the light of truth, were panting, as it were, under the burning of the divided heat.

42. But because we have heard blessed Job questioned in the former words, respecting the secret judgment; it now behoves us to examine more accurately this which is said of the scattered light, or divided heat. For he is still examined with lofty questioning, in order that he may at least learn that he is ignorant, and that it may be said to him, *By what way is the light spread, the heat divided over the earth?* For what is designated by the word 'light' but righteousness? Of which it is written; *The people which was sitting in darkness, saw a great light.* [Is. 9, 2] But every thing which is scattered, is thrown, not continuously, but with a kind of intermission. And light is therefore said to be 'scattered,' because, though we already behold some things as they really are, yet some things we see not, as they are to be seen. For scattered light had possessed the heart of Peter, who had shone forth with such great brightness of faith, and of miracles, and yet, while he was imposing the weight of circumcision on the converted Gentiles, he knew not what to say aright. [Gal. 2, 11-14] Light, therefore, is 'scattered' in this life, because it is not continuously possessed, to the understanding of every thing. For whilst we comprehend one thing as it is, and are ignorant of another, we both see as it were partially in scattered light, and remain partially in darkness. But our light will then no longer be scattered, when our mind, caught up entirely to God, will shine forth.

43. And because it is not known in what ways this light is insinuated into the heart of man, it is rightly said in a question; *By what way is the light scattered?* As if it were openly said; Tell Me, in what order I pour My righteousness into the secret recesses of the hearts, when I am not seen, even in My approach, and yet I invisibly change the visible doings of men, when I irradiate one and the same mind, at one time with this, and at another with that virtue, and yet I permit it, through scattered light, still to remain, in a measure, in the darkness of temptation. Let ignorant man be asked, by what way the light is scattered. As if it were openly said, While I soften the hard hearts, bend the rigid, smooth the rough, warm the cold, strengthen the weak, establish the wandering, confirm the wavering, come, if thou canst, incorporeally, and behold, on what minds I shed this light. For all these things we behold when done; for we know not how they are wrought within. The Truth shews in the Gospel, that this way of light is invisible to us, saying; *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, and knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.* [John 3, 8]

44. But because, when the light is scattered, temptations presently spring up from the hidden adversary against the enlightened mind, it is rightly subjoined; *The heat is divided over the earth.* For the crafty foe strives to inflame with unlawful desires the minds of those whom he sees shining forth with the light of righteousness; so that they frequently feel themselves more assaulted with temptations, than at the time when they beheld not the rays of inward light. Whence also the



Israelites, after they had been called, complain against Moses and Aaron of their increasing labour, saying; *Let the Lord see and judge, because ye have made our savour to stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have given him a sword to slay us.* [Exod. 5, 21] For when they wished to depart from Egypt, Pharaoh had taken away the straw, and yet required works of the same amount. The mind, therefore, secretly murmurs, as it were, against the law, after the knowledge of which it endures sharper stings of temptations, and when it beholds its labours increasing, because it is displeasing to its adversary, it grieves that it stinks, as it were, in the eyes of Pharaoh. Heat, therefore, follows after light; because after the illumination of the heavenly gift, the contest of temptation is increased.

45. But the heat is rightly said also to be ‘divided: doubtless, because separate persons are not assailed by all vices, but by certain ones which are near, and placed close to them. For the ancient enemy first beholds the character [‘conspersionem’] of each person, and then applies the snares of temptations. For one person is of a cheerful, another of a morose, another of a timid, another of a proud disposition. Our secret adversary, in order then to catch us easily, prepares deceptions closely connected with our several characters. For because pleasure borders on mirth, he holds out lust as a bait to cheerful dispositions. And because moroseness easily slides into anger, he offers the cup of discord for the morose. Because the timid dread punishments, he threatens terrors to the fearful. And because he beholds the proud elated with praises, he draws them on to whatever he pleases, by flattering applause. He lays snares therefore against men one by one, by vices adapted to them. For he would not easily lead them captive, if he were either to offer bribes to the lustful, or bodily pleasures to the covetous, or if he were to assail the greedy by the pride of abstinence, or the abstinent by gluttonousness, or if he were to seek to seize the gentle by eagerness for the contest, or the angry by the dread of fear. Because then, when in the heat of temptation, he craftily lurks in ambush against each one by himself, and secretly lays the snares which are akin to their habits, it is rightly said; *The heat is divided over the earth.*

46. But when it is first stated, *By what way the light is scattered:* and is there immediately subjoined, *The heat is divided over the earth,* it is doubtless indicated that the heat is also divided by the same way, by which the light is scattered. For when the lofty and incomprehensible grace of the Holy Spirit irradiates our minds with its light, it also so disposes and modifies the temptations of the adversary, that either they do not come upon us many together, or else that those only which can be endured, assail the mind already illuminated by God; so that they do not burn us with the fire of their full strength, when they torture us with the heat of their touch. As Paul bears witness, who says, *But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* [1 Cor. 10, 13] This heat then our crafty supplanter divides in one way, and our merciful Creator in another. The one divides, in order thereby to slay more speedily; the other, to make it more tolerable. And, because, when we are harassed with temptation, we are not only instructed with the Spirit of God within, but are also assisted with the words of preachers without, after the divided heat, it is rightly added, Ver. 25. *Who hath given a course for the most violent shower?*

[xxiii]

47. But if, as we said before, that persecution in the regions of Judaea is designated by the name of divided heat, because this very fierceness of persecution kept not from their office of preaching,

through any fear, the holy preachers, who were assisted by the gift from on high, He fitly subjoins; *Who hath given a course for the most violent showers?* As if He were saying, Except Myself. For to have given a course to the most violent showers, when the heat was divided, is to have strengthened the force of preaching, amid the very difficulties of persecution, in order that the power of preachers might the more increase, the more the cruelty of persecutors stood in their way, so that they might bedew the thirsty hearts of their hearers with drops of rain, and water more abundantly the drought of unbelief; and that though the heat of cruelty was glowing against them, yet the voice of grace might not through them be silent. Paul was both enduring and watering this heat of persecution, when saying, *I labour even to bonds, as an evil doer, but the word of God is not bound.* [2 Tim. 2, 9] Of this shower it is said elsewhere; *I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.* [Is. 5, 6] Of this course of the shower which is going on in the hearts of the Elect, the Psalmist witnesses, saying; *His word runneth swiftly.* [Ps. 147, 15] But it is generally a shower only, and has no course; because preaching comes to the ears, but inward grace not acting, it passes not through to the hearts of the hearers. And of the words of this preaching it is said, on account of the Elect; *For thine arrows passed through.* [Ps. 77, 17] For the arrows of God pass through, when the words of His preaching descend from the ears to the hearts. And because this is effected solely by Divine grace, the Lord witnesses that He has given a course to the shower.

48. But I see it must be observed, that He calls this same shower not ‘violent,’ but ‘most violent.’ A violent shower is great force; but a most violent one, is the boundless power of preaching. For it was a violent shower, when holy preachers were advising the belief of eternal joy. But ‘most violent,’ when they were advising men that on account of their hope their interest should be abandoned, all visible objects despised on account of invisible, and that the pains and tortures of this present world should be tolerated for the sake of the joys they have heard of. But when so many of the Elect, having learned the faith, abandoned their possessions, when the heat of persecution was raging, forgot their carnal affection, and exposed their limbs to torture for joy of spirit; what else did the Lord do, but make a course for even the most violent shower, which by bodily words so watered the invisible recesses of the heart, that it performed even the highest commands? Where it is also fitly subjoined;  
*And a way for the sounding thunder?*

[xxiv]

49. For what is understood by ‘thunder’ except the preaching of heavenly terror? And when the hearts of men feel this terror, they are shaken. But sometimes by thunder is set forth the Incarnate Lord Himself, Who was brought to our knowledge by the concurrent prophecy of the ancient fathers, as if by the clashing together of clouds; Who, appearing visibly among us, sounded forth awfully those things which were above us. Whence also the Holy Apostles themselves begotten by His grace were called Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder. [Mark 3, 17] But sometimes, as has been said, ‘thunder’ is taken for their preaching, by which the terror of the heavenly judgments is heard. But because any preacher can present words to the ears, but cannot open the hearts, and since, unless Almighty God alone grant the words of preachers a hearing invisibly by inward grace in the hearts of their hearers, that preaching is received in vain by the ear of the hearer, which is prevented by his deaf heart from reaching to his inmost soul; the Lord asserts that He grants a way to the sounding thunder: for when He vouchsafes the words of preaching, He pierces the heart with terror. Paul, the illustrious preacher, when he was awfully sounding forth the heavenly mysteries, seeing

that he could not possess this way by himself, admonished his disciples, saying, *Withal praying also for us that God would open to us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ.* [Col. 4, 3] He therefore who was speaking mysteries, but was praying for a door to be opened by the Lord for these same mysteries in the heart of his hearers, possessed indeed the thunder already, but was seeking for a way to be granted it from above. John, who was saying, *Ye need not that any man teach you, but as His anointing teacheth you of all things,* [1 John 2, 27] knew that he could not give this way. Paul again taught Who could give this way, saying, *For neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.* [1 Cor. 3, 7] Let us hear then what this shower and thunder effect, when the way has been granted them. It follows;  
Ver. 26. *That it should rain upon the earth without man, in the desert, where no mortal dwelleth.*

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50. To rain upon the earth without man in the desert, is to preach the word of God to the Gentile world. For whilst it retained no worship of the Godhead, and shewed in itself no appearance of good works, it was plainly a desert. And because there was therein no lawgiver, nor any one who could seek God in a reasonable way, there was, as it were, 'no man;' and it remained as if occupied by beasts alone, void of men. Of this land of the desert it is said elsewhere, *He made a way in the desert.* [Is. 43, 19] Of this preaching vouchsafed to the Gentiles, the Psalmist witnesses, saying, *He made rivers in the desert.* [Ps. 107, 33] But we must observe, that after the heat was divided over the earth, the most violent shower received its course, that it might rain in the desert. Because after the harshness of persecution became dreadful in Judaea, so as not only not to receive the faith, but even to assail it with the sword, every preacher who had been sent to Israel, turned aside to summon the Gentiles. Whence the holy Apostles say to the persecuting Hebrews whom they abandon, *We ought first to preach the word of God to you, but because ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* [Acts 13, 46] When the heat, then, has been divided, the land which is desert, and without man, is watered; because, when the persecution of the faithful had spread abroad in Judaea, the Gentile world, long since abandoned, and estranged, as it were, from the infusion of reason, is watered by the drops of preaching. But in what state the Gentile world was still found by the preachers, is shewn, when it is added;  
Ver. 27. *That it should fill the pathless and desolate land.*

But what it produced when rained on, is shewn, when it is immediately subjoined, *And should produce green herbs.*

[xxvi]

51. For the Gentile world, to which a way was not open for the word of God, was a long while pathless. For on the coming of our Redeemer it so received the calling of grace, as that there had not been in it before the way of Prophecy. It is also rightly called desolate; namely, as being destitute of either the wisdom of counsel, or of the fruit of good works. The Lord therefore gave a course to the most violent shower, and a way to the sounding thunder, that it should rain in the desert, and fill the pathless and desolate land, and should produce green herbs. That is, He added to outward preaching inward inspiration; that the parched hearts of the Gentiles might become green, the closed might be opened, the empty filled, the unfruitful germinate.

52. For in holy Scripture 'grass' is sometimes taken for the verdure of temporal glory, sometimes for the food of the devil, sometimes for the support of preachers, sometimes for good works, sometimes for the knowledge and doctrine of eternal life. For it is taken for the verdure of temporal glory, as the Prophet says, *Let it pass away in the morning like grass, in the morning let it flourish and pass away*. [Ps. 90, 6] For to flourish and to pass away in the morning like grass, is in the prosperity of this world for the beauty of temporal glory speedily to dry away. Grass is taken for the food of the devil, as it is said of him by the Lord, *For him the mountains bear grass*. [Job 40, 20] As if He were saying, Whilst proud and haughty men exalt themselves in unlawful thoughts and actions, they feed him with their iniquities. Grass is pointed out to be the support of preachers, when it is said, *He produceth grass on the mountains, and herbs for the service of men*. [Ps. 147, 8; Ps. 104, 14] For grass is produced on the mountains, and herbs for the use of men, when the lofty ones of this world, being called to the knowledge of the faith, bestow on holy preachers, in the journey of this life, food for their sojourn. Grass is put for good works, as it is written, *Let the earth bring forth the green grass*. [Gen. 1, 11] And though we hold that it thus took place historically in the creation of the world, yet we suppose, without impropriety, the earth to have been a type of the Church, which brought forth the green grass, in that it produced, at the command of God, fruitful works of mercy. We sometimes take 'grass' for the knowledge and doctrine of eternal verdure; as it is said by Jeremiah, *The wild asses did stand on the rocks, they snuffed up the winds as dragons; their eyes did fail, because there was no grass*. [Jer. 14, 6] By which expression the proud and most wicked persecution of the Jews was prophesied. For they are called in truth wild asses, for their pride of mind, and dragons, for their virulent thoughts. And they stood on the rocks, because they trusted, not in God, but, in the chief powers of this world, saying, *We have no king but Caesar*. [John 19, 15] They snuffed up the winds as dragons, because being puffed up by the spirit of pride they were swollen with malicious haughtiness. Their eyes failed, because in truth their hope fell short of that which it was aiming at. For loving temporal things, it neglected to wait for eternal, and lost earthly goods, because preferred them to God. For they said, *If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come, and take away both our place and nation*. [John 11, 48] They were afraid lest they should lose their place, if the Lord had not been slain, and yet they lost it, when He was slain. But he adds the reason why these things befel the wretched men, *Because there was no grass*: that is, because the knowledge of eternity was wanting in their hearts, and did not refresh them with the food of the verdure of inward doctrine. In this place then what else do we understand by green herbs, but the knowledge of heavenly doctrine, or works in accordance? The desert earth then is watered by the rain, for the green herbs to be produced from it, because when the Gentile world enjoyed the shower of holy preaching, it budded forth with both the works of life, and the herb of doctrine. This verdure is promised to the desert land by the voice of the Prophet, when it is said, *In the dens, in which the dragons dwelt before, shall rise up the verdure of the reed and bulrush*. [Is. 35, 7] For what is designated by the reed but preachers: and what by the bulrush, which always grows by the moisture of water, but weak and tender hearers of the sacred word? The verdure of the reed and bulrush grows up then in the dens of the dragons, because in those peoples, which the malice of the old enemy used to possess, both the knowledge of teachers and the obedience of hearers is collected together.

#### [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

53. But these things which have been stated generally of the Gentile world, we see taking place, if

we carefully examine, in individuals within the bosom of Holy Church. For there are many, grievously insensible to the words of God, who are counted under the name of faith, who hear the words of life with their ears, but suffer them not to pass through to the inward places of the heart. What else are these than desert land? Which land in truth has not a man, because their mind is void of the sense of reason. And no mortal dwells in this land, because if thoughts of reasonable meanings ever spring up in their conscience, they do not remain there. For evil desires find a resting-place in their hearts, but if good desires have ever come there, they pass away, as if urged on. But when the merciful God deigns to give a course to His shower, and a way to the sounding thunder, being stung with grace within, they open the ears of their heart to the words of life. And the pathless land is filled: for while it grants a hearing to the word, it is overwhelmed with mystery. And it brings forth green herbs: because when watered by the grace of compunction, it not only willingly receives the words of preaching, but returns them back with abundant increase; so that it is now eager to speak what it could not hear, and that that which had become dry, even within, through not listening, feeds with its verdure as many as are hungry. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and Thou shall renew the face of the earth.* [Ps. 104, 30] For thus, thus, the face of the earth is changed by the virtue of renewal, when the mind which before was dry, is watered by the coming of grace, and is, after its former barrenness, arrayed with the verdure of knowledge, as though by grass which it had brought forth. Which grace of our Creator is commended still more highly, when it is subjoined; Ver. 28. *Who is the father of the rain? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?*

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#### [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

54. As if He were saying, Except Myself, Who sprinkle, of My free grace, the barren earth of the human heart with drops of knowledge. For of this rain is said elsewhere, *Thou wilt set apart, O God, a voluntary rain for thine inheritance.* [Ps. 68, 9] For God sets apart a voluntary rain for His inheritance, because He grants it to us, not for own deserts, but from the bounty of His own benignity. And He is in this place called the father of this rain, for this reason, because His heavenly preaching is begotten in us, not for our merits, but from His grace. For the drops of dew, are the holy preachers themselves, who water the fields of our breast, (parched amid the evils of the present life, as though amid the gloom of a dry night,) with the grace of bounty from above. Of these drops it is said to obstinate Judah; *Therefore the drops of rains have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain.* [Jer. 3, 3] For the drops of dew are the same as the drops of rains. For when they soften down their preaching by any accommodation, they sprinkle, as it were, the tender dew. But when they say what they think of heavenly things, with the power with which they are strong, they pour forth, as it were, the flowing rain abundantly. Paul was sprinkling the dew, when saying to the Corinthians, *For I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.* [1 Cor. 2, 2] And again he was pouring forth the rain, saying, *O ye Corinthians, our mouth is opened unto you, our heart is enlarged.* [2 Cor. 6, 11] Hence it is, that Moses, who knew that he would say bold things to the strong, and gentle to the weak, observed, *Let my speech be waited for as the rain, and let my words descend as the dew.* [Deut. 32, 2]

But, lo! we have heard with what favour the Gentiles are called, let us now hear with what severity Judah is rejected. We have heard how He cultivates what is desert, and waters what is barren: let us

now hear how He casts forth those which seem to be, as it were, within. For He does not so gather His Elect, as not also to judge the reprobate; nor does He so forgive faults to some persons, as not to punish them in some also. For it is written, *For mercy and wrath come from Him*. Whence here also, after He had introduced so many gifts of grace, He conceals not the judgments of His wrath. For it follows;

Ver. 29. *Out of whose womb came the ice, and the frost from heaven, who hath gendered it?*

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55. For what else do we understand by 'frost' or 'ice,' but the hearts of the Jews frozen and bound with the torpor of unbelief? Who formerly by the receiving of the Law, by the keeping of the commandments, by the ministry of sacrifice, by the mysteries of prophecy, were so kept within the bosom of grace, as if within the womb of the Creator. But because, on the coming of the Lord, being hard bound with the frost of unbelief, they lost the warmth of faith and charity, being cast forth from the secret bosom of grace, they came forth like ice from the womb of the Creator. *And the frost from heaven, who hath gendered it* What else ought 'heaven' to be here understood to mean but the lofty life of the saints? To which heaven it is said, *Give ear, O heaven, and I will speak*. [Deut. 32, 1] Of which abode it is elsewhere written, *The soul of the just is the seat of wisdom* [Perhaps Prov. 12, 23. LXX. where it is read, *A prudent man is the throne of sense*, In the Syriac version, *A cautious man is the seat of wisdom*. Ben. On Hom. 38, in Ev. they suggest Wisd. 7, 7, or 27.]. Because then God is wisdom, if the abode of God is heaven, and the soul of the just is the seat of wisdom, the soul of the just is certainly heaven. Abraham was heaven, Isaac was heaven, Jacob was heaven. But because the persecutors of the Lord, the high priests of the Jews, who were frozen with the torpor of unbelief, sprang from the race of those ancestors, the frost came, as it were, from heaven, because the frozen herd of unbelievers came forth from the lofty offspring of the saints. For when Caiaphas was born from Abraham, what else was it, but that ice came forth from heaven? Yet this frost the Lord says that He had gendered, for this reason, because He permitted the Jews, whom He Himself naturally created good, to go forth from Him, by a just judgment, frozen through their wickedness. For the Lord is the Author of nature, not of sin. He engendered therefore, by naturally creating, those whom He suffered, by patiently enduring, to remain in sin. And because those hearts of the Jews, which before were tender, and easily penetrated by faith, were afterwards hardened in the obstinacy of unbelief, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 30. *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone*.

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56. For I remember that I have often taught already that 'waters' are taken for peoples. But by a 'stone,' by reason of its very hardness, the Gentile peoples are sometimes designated. For they themselves worshipped stones. And of these it is said by the Prophet, *Let them, that make them, become like unto them, and all who trust in them*. [Ps. 115, 8] Whence John, beholding that the Jews boasted themselves in their pedigree, and foreseeing the Gentiles passing over to the stock of Abraham, by the knowledge of the faith, says, *Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up sons to Abraham*. [Matt. 3, 9] Certainly calling 'stones' the Gentiles, who were hardened in unbelief. Because then Judaea first believed in God, while all the Gentile world was remaining in the obstinacy of its unbelief, and because the hearts of the Gentiles were afterwards softened to receive

the faith, and the unbelief of the Jews was hardened, it is well said, *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone*. As if He were saying, Those soft hearts of the Jews, easily penetrated by faith, are converted into the insensibility of the Gentiles. For when God in His mercy drew to Him the Gentiles, He repelled Judaea in His wrath. And it came to pass, that as the Gentiles had been at first hardened against the reception of the faith, so, when the Gentiles were afterwards admitted to the faith, was the people of Judaea hardened in the torpor of unbelief. Whence the Apostle Paul says to these very Gentiles, *As ye in times past have not believed God, yet now have obtained mercy through their unbelief, even so have these not believed, in your mercy, that they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all*. [Rom. 11, 30-32] And accurately considering this his opinion, first concerning the calling of the Jews, and the rejection of the Gentiles, and afterwards concerning the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews, and reflecting that he could not comprehend the secret judgments of God, he subjoined in exclamation, *O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how incomprehensible are His judgments, and His ways unsearchable*. [Rom. 11, 33] Whence here also when the Lord was saying of the unbelief of the Jews, *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone*, to shew that His judgments concerning their rejection were secret, He fitly subjoined; *And the surface of the deep is congealed*.

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57. Because the eye of the human mind does not at all penetrate the incomprehensibleness of the Divine judgment, from a kind of veil of our ignorance having been thrown over it. For it is written, *Thy judgments are a great deep*. [Ps. 36, 6] Let no one then seek to investigate, why, when one is rejected, another is chosen, or, why, when one is chosen, another is rejected, because the surface of the deep is congealed, and as Paul witnesses, *His judgments are inscrutable, and His ways unsearchable*. [Rom. 11, 33]

#### [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

58. But by that which is said, *Out of whose womb came the ice, and the frost from heaven, who hath gendered it?* (ver. 29.) nothing prevents Satan being understood by the frost and ice. For he came forth as if ice from the womb of God, because the teacher of iniquity came forth, frozen with the torpor of sin, from the warmth of His mysteries. He was gendered as frost from heaven, because he was suffered to fall from the highest to the lowest condition, and to go and bind the hearts of the reprobate. And having been fashioned rightly in heaven, when he fell, he bound as frost the hearts of his followers, in the coldness of sin. And what he did amongst men, on coming to the earth, is fully stated, when it is added, *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone*. For by 'waters' peoples are designated, but by a 'stone' the hardness of this very Satan. The waters therefore were hardened after the likeness of a stone, when he came on earth, because men, imitating his wickedness, lost the soft bowels of charity. And because his crafty designs cannot be detected by men who have been led astray, it is rightly subjoined; *And the surface of the deep is congealed*. For one thing lies concealed within him, and another he presents without. For he transforms himself as an angel of light, and with his cunning art of deception frequently proposes laudable objects, in order to lead on to unlawful. The surface of the deep is therefore congealed; for while the fair appearance of his persuasion appears, as it were, like solid ice on the surface, his wickedness, lurking in the depth, is not observed.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

59. But we can understand all these in another sense also, if we enquire into them, in their moral meaning. For whilst Almighty God fashions the minds of men in His fear, He conceives them, as it were, and brings them forth to open virtues, when He advances them onwards. But if they are elated by the virtues they have received, He abandons them. And we often know persons to be smitten by consideration of their sins, to glow with fear of the Divine dread, and, commencing in fear, attain to the highest virtues. But when they are elated by these virtues which they receive, being bound with the snare of vain glory, they return to their former torpor. When God therefore casts off such persons, He rightly says, *Out of whose womb came the ice?* For the ice comes forth, as it were, from the womb of God, when those who had before been warm within, become cold, by reason of the gift of virtue, and, being torpid, seek after outward glory, for the very reason by which they ought to glow with greater warmth to love things within. And whilst one man is powerful in signs, another in knowledge, another in prophecy, and another in mighty works, and seeks by these gifts to please men, he turns all his former inward warmth into torpidity, from loving outward praises. He comes forth therefore as ice from the womb, when, after the favours of gifts, he is separated from the bowels of heavenly compassion. Are not they 'ice,' who in the virtues they receive seek praise from men? And yet they say to the Judge on His coming, when recalling His own gifts to His mind; *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name have done many mighty works?* [Matt. 7, 29] But He shews how the Lord casts out this ice, saying, *I know you not whence ye are. Depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [ib. 23] The Lord now bears this ice in His womb, because He tolerates it within the bosom of the Church. But He then openly casts it out, when He banishes such from the secret abodes of heaven by the last and public judgment. What is then the plain object: of these words, except that Job should be brought down from his lofty virtues, that he should not, in consequence of his former warmth in good living, grow cold through pride, and be repelled and go forth from the womb of the Godhead, by being swollen up within the bosom of his own heart?

60. And because by a righteous judgment He permits haughty minds to go forth to commit sin, from the virtue they have received, it is rightly added, still farther; *And the frost from heaven, who hath gendered it?* For He frequently vouchsafes the knowledge of Holy Scripture, but when he who receives it is elated by this knowledge, he is, by the anger of the strict Judge, so blinded in the Scripture itself, that he no longer sees its inward meaning, from seeking thereby for outward applause; and that, though he could be warm by remaining within, he goes forth and becomes frozen, and that he who before, when easily led to the knowledge of God, remained unfrozen at the top, becomes hardened, and sinks to the bottom. Is not Holy Scripture 'heaven,' which opening to us the day of understanding, illuminates us with the Sun of righteousness, and which, while the night of the present life surrounds us, shines for us with the stars of the commandments. But since there must be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest, [1 Cor. 11, 19] when the proud mind is kept back from a sound understanding of Scripture, frost is generated from heaven by the judgment of the strict Judge; in order that, when Holy Scripture itself glows in the hearts of the Elect, it may cast forth from itself in a frozen condition, those who proudly seek to know it. For they err in the very point, in which they should have corrected their faults; and while they fall away from the heavenly understanding of the resplendent Word, both hardened themselves, and about to deceive others, they sink to the bottom, as ice, and bind others also. But



yet the Lord says that He Himself genders this frost, not because He Himself fashions the minds of the wicked to sin, but because He does not liberate them from sin. As it is written; *I will harden the heart of Pharaoh*. [Exod. 4, 21] For because He refused to soften it in His mercy, He plainly announced that He had hardened it in His severity.

61. But, because the image of virtue is retained for the sake of human praise, when the virtue of Divine fear, which has begun, is itself lost, it is rightly subjoined; *The water are hardened after the likeness of a stone, and the surface of the deep is congealed*. For waters are hardened by ice at the surface, but remain fluid underneath. And what do we understand by waters but the unstable hearts of the reprobate? For when they are deliberately forsaking virtue, they shew themselves forth, in their hypocrisy, as resolute in good works, and whilst they are inwardly gliding down into sins, they outwardly feign themselves imitators of the holy and resolute. *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone, and the surface of the abyss is bound together*, because their weak and unstable conscience is concealed from men, by a superinduced appearance of sanctity. For when they are inwardly foul in their own sight, they are arrayed before the eyes of others with a kind of comeliness of living.

62. But, lest any one should wish these words of the Lord to be understood in a good sense, we ought to add it, for those also who thus look for it, provided we are not [perhaps, 'so as we be not.' ('dummodo')] considered to have neglected points which needed to be examined. For it is said in the former verse, *Who is the father of rain? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?* And it is immediately added, *Out of whose womb came the ice? and the frost from heaven who hath gendered it?* If therefore the following sentence is connected with the preceding words with a similar sense, its meaning is clearly laid open without any obstacle of difficulty even in a good sense. For when the earth is watered by rain, the seeds which have been cast in are pressed down more productively. But again, if the rain waters it too immoderately, it changes the richness and virtue of the corn in the stalk. But if the seed which has been thrown in, is after rain checked by the frost, the more it is kept from appearing too quickly above ground, the more productively does it root itself beneath: and the more it is forbidden to grow, the more it is compelled to multiply: because, when it is kept from too early a growth, being expanded by the slowness of its conception, it is filled more abundantly for fruit. What is meant then by the Lord first speaking of Himself as the father of the rain, but afterwards saying that the ice comes forth from His womb, and declaring that He genders the frost from heaven? Except that He first waters in a wondrous manner the soil of our hearts for the reception of the seeds of the word, by the secret rain of His grace, and that He afterwards keeps it down by the discipline of His secret dispensation, lest it should bring forth too luxuriantly with the virtues it has conceived, in order that the rigor of discipline may likewise bind that which the rain of grace received irrigates, lest it turn its fruit into grass, if it produce its virtues, either before it ought, or more than is necessary. For, frequently, when a good work is displayed before it ought by beginners, it is emptied of the grain of perfection, and while virtues are more exuberant than is necessary, they frequently dry up. Whence the Lord either refuses the desires even of His Elect, before the fit time, or again restrains at the fit time their unlimited progress, lest, if they advance either sooner, or farther, than they ought, they should fall into the defect of pride by the greatness of their proficiency. For when the heart is pricked with compunction after sin, the earth, which had been dry, is watered by the pouring of rain upon it; and when it proposes to abandon its iniquities and to follow after good works, it receives, as it were, seed after the rain. And many persons, when they conceive holy desires, are burning to exercise themselves at once in the

sublimest virtues, so that sin may not only not infect their doings, but may not even assail their thoughts. They are still indeed living in the body, but they wish to suffer no further from their connexion with the present life. They seek to aim at inward stability of mind in their intention, but are driven back by interrupting temptations, in order, namely, that they may remember their own infirmity, and may not be elated at the virtues which they receive. And when this is effected by the wonderful constraint of discipline, what else but frost is gendered from heaven over the watered earth? What but ice is produced from the womb of God, when the dispensation comes forth from its secret place within, and our wills are restrained even in their good desires?

63. Let us see with what ice of discipline Paul (that is, the watered earth) is weighed down, when he says, *To will is present with me, but to perform what is good I find not.* [Rom. 7, 18] For he who asserts that he has the will, makes known what seeds are even now concealed within him by the pouring of grace upon him. But whilst he finds not to do good, he certainly points out how much ice of the heavenly dispensation weighs on him. Had not this ice pressed their hearts, to whom he was saying, *So that ye cannot do the things that ye would?* [Gal. 5, 17] As if he were plainly saying, The secret seeds of your heart are now seeking to break forth into fruit, but they are kept down by the ice of the heavenly dispensation, in order that they may afterwards shoot forth more productively, the more patiently they bear the weight of the Divine judgment pressing on them.

64. And because the hearts of men, since they are unable to break out into those virtues which they desire, are frequently harassed with the stings of temptation, so far as they shrink back from carrying out their intention, but yet repress these same temptations of their thoughts, and fashion themselves, by the habit of discipline in a kind of strictness of living, it is well subjoined; *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone.* Because, though unstable thoughts harass within, yet they do not at all lead to consent in wicked doings. But the mind conceals, under an habitual custom of good living, as if under a kind of exterior hardness, whatever is softened within by the assault of temptation. Whence it is well subjoined; *And the surface of the deep is congealed.* Because, even if an evil thought comes as far as to suggestion, it does not break out into consent, because the superinduced rigour of holy discipline suppresses the fluctuating motions of the mind.

65. But by 'frost' or 'ice' can also be designated the adversity of this present life, which while it keeps down the holy by its asperity, makes them stronger. For while Almighty God permits us to be exercised with annoyances, and carries us on to the condition of a better life by the intervention of sorrow, He genders with wonderful wisdom the frost and ice over the coming fruit; in order that each of the Elect may endure in this present life, as if in winter, the adversities of winds and frosts, and may exhibit afterwards, as in the serenity of summer, the fruits which he has here conceived. Whence it is said by the voice of the Bridegroom to every soul which is hastening after the whirlwind of this life to those joys of eternity, *Arise, hasten, My beloved, My fair one, and come. For the winter has already passed, the shower has departed and gone.* [Cant. 2, 10. 11.] But because we are relaxed, if prosperity alone attends us, but are the better strengthened for virtues by means of adversities, it is rightly subjoined, *The waters are hardened after the likeness of a stone.* For minds, which had softly melted away through prosperities, become firm when hard pressed by adversities. And water is brought to the likeness of a stone, whenever any one who is weak imitates the sufferings of his Redeemer by endurance received from above. For water had, in truth, hardened after the fashion of stone, when Paul, that former impatient persecutor, was saying, *I fill up those things which are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.* [Col. 1, 24]

66. And because persons, when depressed by adversities, guard more carefully their inward gifts, it is rightly added; *And the surface of the deep is congealed*. For joy is wont to lay open the secrets of the mind, and, by laying open, to lose them. But when adversities depress us outwardly, they make us more careful within. After frost then or ice, the surface of the deep is congealed, because our mind is strengthened by adversities, to preserve those deep gifts which it has received. For Isaiah had congealed the surface of his abyss, when he was saying; *My secret to myself, my secret to myself*. [Is. 24, 16. marg.] Paul had congealed the surface of his abyss, who labouring under so many dangers and adversities, under cover of some one else, speaks of himself, saying; *I have heard secret words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter*. [2 Cor. 12, 4] And again, *But I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth in me, or heareth any thing of me*. [ib. 6] What then had he done, who, when enduring adversity without, was afraid to open the secrets of his heart, lest he should perchance vent himself in praises; what, but covered the abyss of his inward secrets by a congealed surface? It follows,  
Ver. 31. *Will thou be able to join together the shining stars, the Pleiades, or wilt thou be able to break up the circuit of Arcturus?*

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[LITERAL INTERPRETATION]

67. The stars Pleiades, are so called from *πλειστος*, that is, from plurality. But they were made so near to each other, and yet so distinct, that they can be near together, and yet cannot possibly be united, since they are united in nearness, but disunited as to contact. But Arcturus so illuminates the seasons of night, as placed in the axis of heaven, to turn itself in divers ways, and yet never to set. For it does not revolve out of its orbit, but placed in its own position, it inclines to all quarters of the world, though it will never set. What then is it, that man, who was formed from the earth, and placed upon the earth, is questioned as to the government of heaven, that he cannot join together the Pleiades, which he sees were made close to each other and almost united, and that he cannot break up the circuit of Arcturus, though he can behold it almost dissipated by its own rapidity of motion? Is it not, that considering in those His servants, the power of their Creator, he should remember his own weakness, and consider how beyond our comprehension is He, in the very government of His heavenly ministers, Whom he cannot as yet behold in His own majesty?

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

68. But why do we say these things, who are urged by the stimulus of reason, to learn the sense of these words pregnant with mystical meaning? For what else do the shining Pleiades, which are also seven in number, indicate, but all the Saints, who amid the darkness of this present life, illumine us with the light of the Spirit of sevenfold grace, who, from the first beginning of the world, even to its end, sent at divers times to prophesy, are in some degree united, and in some degree separate from each other? For the stars the, Pleiades, as was before said, are united to each other in their contiguity, and disunited as to contact. They are situated indeed together, and yet pour forth separately the rays of their light. In like manner all the Saints appearing at different times for the purpose of preaching, are both disunited in our sight of their person, and united in their intention of mind. They shine together, because they preach One; but they touch not each other, because they are divided by different times.

69. At what different times did Abel, Isaiah, and John appear! They were separated indeed in time, but not in the subject of their preaching. For Abel offered up a lamb in sacrifice, typifying the passion of our Redeemer; of Whose passion Isaiah says; *As a lamb before its shearer He will be dumb, and will not open His mouth.* [Is. 53, 7] Of whom John also says; *Behold the Lamb of God; behold, Who taketh away the sins of the world.* [John 1, 29] Behold they were sent at different 'times indeed, and yet agreeing in their thought of the innocence of our Redeemer, they spake of the same Lamb, John by pointing to Him, Isaiah by foreseeing, and Abel by offering; and Him, Whom John set forth by pointing to Him, and Isaiah set forth in his words, Abel held, in signification, in his hands.

70. Because then we have said how the Pleiades accord together concerning the Humanity of our Redeemer, let us now point out how they shine in concord in setting forth the Unity of the Trinity. For David, Isaiah, and Paul appeared at different periods of the world. But yet none of them thought differently from another; because, though they knew not each other in face, yet they had learned one and the same thing by Divine knowledge. For David, in order to set forth God in Trinity as the Creator of all things, said, *Let God bless us, our God, let God bless us.* [Ps. 67, 6. 7.] And for fear he should be considered to have spoken of three Gods, from his mentioning God three times, he immediately added, teaching thereby the Unity of the same Trinity; *And let all the ends of the earth fear Him.* For by adding not 'them,' but 'Him,' He intimated that the Three whom He had named were One. When Isaiah also was uttering praises of the Unity of the Trinity, he says, in describing the words of the Seraphim, *Holy, Holy, Holy.* [Is. 6, 3] But lest he should seem by mentioning 'Holy' thrice, to sever the unity of the Divine Substance, he added, *Lord God of hosts.* Because then he added not 'Lords,' 'Gods,' but 'Lord God,' he pointed out that that Being, Whom he had thrice called Holy, existed as One. Paul also, to set forth the operation of the Holy Trinity, says; *Of Him, and through Him, and in Him are all things.* [Rom. 11, 36] And in order to teach the Unity of this same Trinity, he immediately added; *To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* By adding then not 'to them,' but *to Him*, he made Him known as One in nature, Three in Persons, Whom he had thrice addressed by the same word. The Pleiades therefore are both situated as it were in one place, because they think alike concerning God; and yet they touch not each other, because, as has been said, they are distributed through different periods of this world.

71. Which the Prophet Ezekiel well and briefly describes, who, when saying that he had beheld living creatures of different kinds, added; *Their wings were joined one to another.* [Ez. 1, 9] For the wings of living creatures are joined one to another; because though the things which they do are different, yet the voices and the virtues of the Saints are united together in one and the same sense. And though one may be a man, from doing all things rationally, another, who is bold in suffering, may be a lion, from not fearing the adversities of the world; another, from offering himself through abstinence as a living victim, may be a calf; another, from soaring on high on the wing of contemplation, may be an eagle; yet do they touch each other with their wings, whilst they fly, because they are united to each other by the confession of their words, and the accordance of their virtues. But because it belongs to the power of God alone both to join together in the preaching of the faith those who were sent at different times, and to unite in brightness of intention those that were endued with dissimilar virtues, it is rightly said; *Wilt thou be able to join together the shining stars, the Pleiades?* As if He said, As I, Who alone fill all things, and Who by filling the minds of the Elect join them in a sense of unity.

72. But by Arcturus, which illumines the night season in its orbit, and never sets, is designated, not the doings of the Saints separately manifested, but the whole Church together, which suffers indeed weariness, but yet does not incline to fall from its own proper position, which endures a circle of toils, but hastens not to set together with time. For Arcturus comes not with the night season to the lowest part of the heavens, but even while it is revolving itself, night is brought to a close. Because doubtless, while Holy Church is shaken with numberless tribulations, the shade of the present life comes to an end; and the night passes by, as it continues stationary, because while the Church remains in her own original condition, the life of this mortal state passes away. There is in Arcturus a point for us to observe more carefully. For it revolves with seven stars, and at one time raises three to the highest point, and depresses four to the lowest; at one time raises four on high, and depresses three below. Holy Church also, when she preaches at one time to unbelievers the knowledge of the Trinity, and at another the four virtues, that is, prudence, fortitude, temperance, justice, to believers, changes, as it were, by a kind of rotation in its preaching, the appearance of its position. For when she strips of confidence in their own doings those who boast of their own works, and exalts faith in the Trinity, what else does Arcturus, but elevate three stars, and depress four? And when she forbids some, who have no good works, to presume on their faith, and orders them to work out more earnestly the things which are commanded, what else does Arcturus do, but raise up four stars, and bring down three? Let us see how it elevates three, and depresses four. Behold it is said by Paul to those who were priding themselves on their works in opposition to faith; *If Abraham were justified by works he hath glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* [Rom. 4, 2. 3.] Let us see how it elevates four and depresses three. Behold it is said by James to those that were boasting of faith in opposition to works; *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* [James 2, 26] Arcturus therefore revolves, because Holy Church turns herself on different sides with skill in preaching, according to the minds of her hearers. Arcturus revolves, because she is whirled round in the tribulations of this night. But the Lord breaks up at last this circuit of Arcturus, because He turns the labours of the Church into rest. Then does He also more entirely join the Pleiades, when He destroys the orbit of Arcturus, because all the Saints are then doubtless joined to each other even in outward appearance, when Holy Church at the end of this world is released from those labours which she now endures. Let Him say then; *Wilt thou be able to join together the shining stars the Pleiades, or wilt thou be able to break up the circuit of Arcturus?* Thou understandest As I, Myself, Who then unite the life of the Saints even in outward appearance, when I bodily dissolve the circuit of the Church Universal. And what man is ignorant that this is the act of Divine power alone? But let man, in order that he may know what he is himself, be constantly reminded what it is that God alone can effect.

73. We have still some other meaning to give of the stars the Pleiades, and Arcturus. For the Pleiades rise from the East, but Arcturus on the side of the North. But wherever Arcturus turns itself in its circle, it presents to view the Pleiades; and when the light of the day is now approaching, the order of its stars is extended. By Arcturus, then, which rises in the quarter of the cold, can be designated the Law; but by the Pleiades, which rise from the East, the grace of the New Testament. For the Law had, as it were, come from the North, which used to alarm those subject to it with such asperity of rigor. For while it was ordering some to be stoned for their faults, others to be punished by the death of the sword, it was, like a frozen region, far removed, as it were, from the light of charity, rather nipping the seeds of its precepts with cold, than nourishing

them with warmth. Peter had shuddered at the weight of this oppression, when saying; *Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?* [Acts 15, 10] Nor is it any wonder that the Old Testament is set forth by the seven stars of Arcturus, because both the seventh day was held in veneration under the Law, and the vows of the appointed sacrifice were extended through the whole week. But the Pleiades, which themselves are also seven, as we have before said, point out the more plainly the grace of the New Testament, the more clearly we all see, that by it the Holy Spirit enlightens His faithful ones with the light of the sevenfold gift. Wherever therefore Arcturus turns, it presents the Pleiades to view, because by every thing the Old Testament says, the works of the New Testament are announced. For under the text of the letter it conceals the mystery of prophecy. And Arcturus inclines itself, as it were, and points them out, because while it bends itself to the spiritual sense, the light of sevenfold grace, which is signified thereby, is laid open. And as the light of day approaches, the order of its stars is extended, because after the Truth became known to us by Itself, It released the precepts of the letter from carnal observance.

74. But our Redeemer, coming in the flesh, joined together the Pleiades; because He possessed the operations of the sevenfold Spirit all at once, and abiding in Himself. Of Whom it is said by Isaiah: *There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall grow up from his root, and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of godliness, and the Spirit of the fear of the Lord shall fill Him.* [Is. 11, 1-3] Of Whom Zechariah says; *Upon one stone are seven eyes.* [Zech. 3, 9] And again, *And on the golden candlestick seven lamps.* [ib. 4, 2] But no man ever possessed all the operations of the Holy Spirit at once, except the sole Mediator between God and man, [1 Tim. 2, 5] Whose is the same Spirit, Who proceedeth from the Father [see Note at end of Book XXIX.] before all ages. It is well said, therefore, *Upon one stone are seven eyes.* For, for this Stone to have seven eyes, is to possess at once in operation every virtue of the Spirit of sevenfold grace. For one receives prophecy, another knowledge, another virtues, another kinds of tongues, another the interpretation of tongues, according to the distribution of the Holy Spirit. But no one attains to the possession of all the gifts of the same Spirit. But our Creator, in taking our weakness, because He taught us that by the power of His Godhead He possessed all the virtues of the Holy Spirit at once, doubtless joined together the shining Pleiades. But whilst He joins the Pleiades, He breaks up the circuit of Arcturus. Because, when He made it known that He, having become Man, possessed all the operations of the Holy Spirit, He loosened in the Old Testament the burden of the letter, that each of the faithful may now understand that in the liberty of the Spirit, which he used, amid so many dangers, to serve with fear. Let blessed Job therefore hear; *Wilt thou be able to join together the shining stars the Pleiades?* As if it were openly said, Thou canst indeed possess the light of certain virtues, but art thou able to exercise at once all the operations of the Holy Spirit? Behold Me, therefore, uniting the Pleiades in all virtues, and be kept from boasting thyself of a few only. Hear what is said, *Or wilt thou be able to break the circuit of Arcturus?* As if it were openly said to him; Even if thou thyself now understandest what is right, canst thou do away by thy power, even in the hearts of others, the labour of grosser understanding? Consider Me therefore, who correct the follies of the carnal, whilst I manifest myself in the foolishness of the flesh, that thou mayest the more bring down these, which thou countest the mightinesses of thy virtues, the more thou canst not apprehend even the footsteps of My weakness. But, because, in the very mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, the light of truth is manifested to some, but the hearts of others are darkened by an offence; it is lightly subjoined;

Ver. 32. *Dost thou bring forth the morning star at its time, and dost thou make the evening star to rise over the sons of earth?*

[xxxii]

75. For the Father brought forth the morning star in his season, because, as it is written; *When the fulness of the time was come, God sent His Son born of a woman, made tunder the Law, to redeem them that are under the Law.* [Gal. 4, 4] Who being born of a Virgin, appeared as the morning star, amid the darkness of our night, because, having put to flight the obscurity of sin, He announced to us the eternal morn. But He made Himself known as the morning star, because He arose in the morn from death, and overcame, by the brightness of His light, the hideous darkness of our mortality. Who [Oxf. Mss. 'Qui.'] is well called by John; *The bright and morning star.* [Rev. 22, 16] For, appearing alive after death, He became our morning star; because while He furnished us in His own person an instance of resurrection, He pointed out what light comes after. But the Lord makes the evening star to rise over the sons of earth, because He permits Antichrist to hold sway over the unbelieving hearts of the Jews, as their desert demands. And they are therefore justly subjected by the Lord to this evening star, because they chose of their own accord to be the sons of earth. For by seeking after earthly, and not heavenly things, they were so blinded as not to behold the brightness of our morning star; and while they seek for the evening star to rule over them, they are plunged in the eternal night of subsequent damnation. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, *I came in My Father's name, and ye received Me not; another will come in his own name, and him ye will receive.* [John 5, 43] Hence Paul says; *Because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them the operation of error, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but consented to iniquity.* [2 Thess. 2, 10-12] The evening star therefore would never rise over them, if they had wished to be the sons of heaven. But while they seek after visible things, having lost the light of the heart, they are in darkness under the prince of night.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

76. But if we examine this in a moral sense, we find how it is daily occurring; because both the morning star doubtless rises on the Elect, and the evening star, by God's permission, rules over the reprobate. For there is one and the same word of God in the mouth of the preacher. But while these hear it with joy, and those with envy, they change for themselves the brightness of the morning star into the darkness of the evening. Whilst these humbly receive the voice of holy preaching, they open, as it were, the eyes of the heart to the light of the star. But whilst those feel envy at one who advises them well, and seek not the cause of their salvation, but the glory of boasting, when the evening of their iniquity bursts forth, they close their eyes in the sleep of death. By a secret sentence, therefore, he who is the morning star to elect, is the evening star to reprobate hearers. Because by that holy exhortation, with which the good come back to life, the reprobate perish more fatally in sin. Whence it is well said by Paul; *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish, to the one the savour of death unto death, but to the other the savour of life unto life.* [2 Cor. 2, 15. 16.] He saw then that his word, by which he beheld some roused from their iniquity, and others on the contrary lulled to sleep in their iniquity, was both the morning and the evening star to its hearers. And because this takes place by the secret judgment of God, which cannot be comprehended by men in this life, he rightly there subjoined; *And who is sufficient for these things?* As if he were saying; We are sufficient indeed to consider that these

things occur, but we are not sufficient to investigate why they occur. Whence also, the Lord in this place, because He had said that the morning star is brought forth for some, but that the evening star rises for others, that man might not dare to scan the secret judgments of God, immediately subjoins; Ver. 33. *Knowest thou the course of heaven, and wilt thou set down the reason thereof on the earth?*

[xxxiii]

77. To know the course of heaven, is to see the secret predestinations of the heavenly disposals. But to set down the reason thereof on the earth is to lay open before the hearts of men the causes of such secrets. To set down, namely, the reason of heaven on the earth, is either to examine the mysteries of the heavenly judgments, by consideration, or to make them manifest in words. Which certainly no one can do who is placed in this life. For, to pass from little to greater things, who can understand what is the secret reason, that a just man frequently returns from a trial, not only unavenged, but even punished besides, and that his wicked adversary escapes, not only without punishment, but even victorious? Who can understand why one man, who plots for the deaths of his neighbours, survives, and another, who would be likely to preserve the lives of many, dies? One man, who is only eager to do hurt, attains the height of power, another only desires to defend the injured, and yet he himself is lying under oppression. One man wishes for leisure, and is involved in innumerable occupations, another wishes to be engaged in employments, and is compelled to be disengaged. One beginning badly is drawn on from worse to worse, even to the end of his life; another beginning well, proceeds through a long period of time to the increase of his merits. But, on the other hand, one, who is an evil liver, is spared for a long time, in order that he may improve; but another seems to be living properly, but continues in this life till he breaks out into evil ways. One, who has been born in the error of unbelief, perishes in his error; another, who has been born in the soundness of the Catholic faith, is perfected in the soundness of the Catholic faith. But, on the other hand, one, who has come forth from the womb of a Catholic Mother, is swallowed up, at the close of his life, in the gulph of error, but another terminates his life in Catholic piety, who, born in misbelief, had sucked in the poison of error with his mother's milk. One both wishes, and is able, to aim at the loftiness of holy living; another is neither willing nor able. One wishes, and is not able; another is able, and is not willing. Who then can examine into these secrets of the heavenly judgments? Who can understand the secret balance of hidden equity? For no one attains to understand these recesses of secret judgments. Let this be said then to a man, that he may learn his own ignorance; let him know his own ignorance, that he may fear; let him fear, that he may be humbled; let him be humbled, that he may not trust in himself; let him trust not in himself, that he may seek for the assistance of his Creator, and that he who is dead from trusting in himself, may seek the assistance of his Maker, and live. Let the righteous man, then, who knows himself indeed, but who still knows not those things which are above him, hear the words, *Knowest thou the course of heaven, and wilt thou set down the reason thereof upon the earth?* That is, Dost thou comprehend the secret courses of the heavenly judgments, or art thou able to disclose them to the ears of men? Blessed Job therefore is questioned concerning his investigation of the incomprehensible judgments, as if it were plainly said to him, All things which thou sufferest, thou oughtest to endure the more patiently, the more, in thy ignorance of heavenly secrets, thou knowest not why thou sufferest them.



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Note from §. 74 above:

St. Gregory speaks here of our Lord as Man, and therefore naturally mentions only the Procession from The Father. Elsewhere he uses the same language with the later Latin Church very distinctly, though there is nothing to shew that he does it in any sense which the more candid Greeks would not allow. We have had already in Mor. i. §. 30. p. 48. the expression, "He bestowed the Holy Spirit, Which proceeds from Him- self, upon the hearts of His disciples," and in Mor. xxvii. §. 34. p. 224, an implication to the same effect. In Dial. ii. near the end. Ben. p. 275. Lat. 276, we have, "Whereas it is acknowledged that the Paraclete Spirit ever proceeds from the Father and the Son, why saith the Son, that He will depart, that He may come Who never departs from the Son?" which stands at present in the Greek, "ever proceeds from the Father, and abides in the Son." John Diaconus accuses the Greeks of having falsified Pope Zachary's version. See also p. 375 of this volume. Hom, in Ev. xxvi. p. 1554. B. he has, "Although 'to be sent' may also be understood after the nature of the Godhead. For thereby is the Son said to be sent by the Father, in that He is begotten (generatur) of the Father. For the Holy Spirit also, Who being coequal with the Father and the Son, yet was not Incarnate, the same Son declareth Himself to send, saying: *When the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father.* (John 15, 26.) For if to be sent must be understood merely to be Incarnate, the Holy Spirit doubtless would by no means be said to be sent, who was not at all Incarnate. But His 'being sent' is the very Procession whereby He proceeds from the Father and the Son. As therefore the Spirit is said to be sent because He proceeds; so also is the Son not unfitly said to be sent because He is begotten." Which is quoted by Theodulfus, in the 8th century, and could not have been interpolated by simply adding of 'And the Son,' as the context requires those words.

St. Augustine uses sometimes rather the Greek, sometimes rather the Latin way of speaking; the two, fairly understood, not being contradictory. See Enchiridion, §. 3 Tr. p. 90. (where the reading is doubtful) and note g.

Tertullian, against Praxeas, c. iv. has, 'I consider the Spirit not to be other-whence than from the Father, by the Son:' and c. viii. 'The Spirit is Third from God and (qu. 'of,' *ex* for, *et*?) the Son, as the fruit is of (ex) the tree, third from the root, and the stream, of (ex) the river, third from the Fountain, and the point, of (ex) the ray, third from the sun.' Similarly St. Athanasius explains Ps. 36, 9. *In Thy Light shall we see Light*, because 'the Son in the Father, is the Fountain of the Spirit.' De Inc. et contr. Ar. §. 9. Ben. p. 877. St. Hilary De Trin. viii. 20. allows liberty of language as to whether the Spirit is of the Father or the Son, but says that His very Procession from the Father is 'receiving that which is the Son's,' by which he seems to mean, participation of that essence which is *already* the Son's. This doctrine is what the Greeks would allow, but one which seems also to bear out the Latin form of expression, and to be in fact what is commonly meant by those who make use of it. Thus Petavius De Trin. vii. 3. §. 8, on a passage of St. Cyr. Al. Thes. c. 34. t. v. p. 345. "When therefore the Holy Ghost, become within us, makes us conformed to God, and proceeds from the Father and the Son; it is plain that It is of the Divine Essence (or Substance), Essentially (or substantially) in It and from It proceeding. As in fact is the breath that flows forth from the mouth of man, to use a poor illustration." "This Procession of the Holy Spirit," says Petavius, "can be supposed no other than that Essential, in which He is said to proceed from the Father and the Son, *ἐκ Πατρὸς καὶ Υἱοῦ*, as he presently explains it, 'Essentially from It proceeding,' making it the same to proceed from the Father and the Son, as to proceed from the Essence of the Father and the Son." He cites other passages of St. Cyril. St. Leo seems to imply the same doctrine, Ser. 2 de Pentec. where, in explaining John xvi. 13, he says, "What the Spirit receives, the Father giving, the Son gives."

The doctrine of St. Basil was a subject of dispute in the Council of Florence, the question turning much on the reading of a passage in book 3, against Eunomius, §. 1, in which according to some copies the Spirit is said to 'have His Being of the Son.' The Benedictines argue that this must have been his meaning, at any rate, from the argument at the end of book 2, against Eunomius ascribing the Spirit to the Son *only*, as His creature, whereas He is truly the Spirit of the Father and the Son. He also in other places speaks of the Holy Spirit as related to the Son as the Son is to the Father; not, of course, strictly. De Sp. S. §. 43. t. iii. p. 36.

That the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Son, as well as of the Father, is acknowledged by all, and hence it is very natural that many should never have written so distinctly on the point as to say whether He is of the Son in the sense of *from* the Son. St. Epiphanius, however, Ancorat. 67, has, But if Christ is believed to be of the Father, God of God, and the Spirit of (*ἐκ*) Christ, or from (*παρὰ*) Both; as Christ says, *Which proceedeth from the Father, and He shall take of Mine.* And Haer. Ixxiv. 7. "And the Holy Spirit is from (*παρὰ*) Both, Spirit from (*ἐκ*) Spirit." St. Greg. Nyss. end of

B. 1, against Eunom. says, that the Son is “viewed as prior to the Spirit in order of causation,” which comes to the same point. See Petavius l. c., Leo Allat. Gr. Orthod., Forbes Inst. Hist. Theol. vi. Pearson on the Creed, Art. viii., adds further testimony to the Latin doctrine.

## BOOK XXX.

Contains an exposition of the last eight verses of the thirty-eighth chapter, and of the same number of the thirty-ninth: where the holy Doctor discusses very many questions in a pious and learned manner, especially concerning the preaching of the Gospel.

[i]

1. Blessed Job is asked by God, Who questions him, whether he has done such things as man is surely unable to do; in order that, when he discovers that he cannot do them, he may fly for refuge to Him, Whom he understands to be the only One Who is able to do them, and that he may appear more powerful before the eyes of his Judge, if he learns more truly his own infirmities. Of that then which is well known to be wonderfully wrought by God, Job is questioned by the Divine Voice; and it is said to him;

Ver. 34. *Wilt thou lift up thy voice in the cloud, and shall the force of the waters cover thee?*

2. For God in truth lifts up His voice in the cloud, when He frames His exhortation to the darkened hearts of unbelievers, by the tongues of His preachers. And the force of the waters covers Him, when the crowd of opposing people oppresses His members who are acting rightly. For hence is that which is written, *The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, saying, Stand in the court of the Lord's house, speaking to all the cities of Judah, from which men come to worship in the Lords house, all the words that I have commanded thee.* [Jer. 26, 1. 2.] And a little after, *And the priests, and the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. And when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking, the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, took him, saying, Let him surely die, why hath he prophesied in the name of the Lord?* [ib. 7-9] Behold, the Lord lifted up His voice in a cloud, because He reprov'd the darkened minds of the haughty by sending the Prophet against them. Behold, the face of the waters covered Him immediately; because He Himself, Who commanded the words of reproof, suffered all things in the person of Jeremiah from the people who rose against him, and were provoked by reason of their reproof. The Lord also raised up His voice in a cloud by Himself, when on exhibiting Himself before us in His assumed body, He preached many things to His persecutors, but veiled in enigmatical figures. He raised up His voice in a cloud, because He uttered His truth, as if in darkness, to unbelievers who would not follow Him. Whence also it is well written in the Books of Kings, *The cloud filled the house of the Lord, and the priests were not able to minister because of the cloud.* [1 Kings 8, 10. 11.] For while the proud high priests of the Jews hear the divine mysteries in parables, as their merits demand, the priests were unable, as it were, to minister in the house of the Lord on account of the cloud. For when they scorn to examine, amid the obscure darkness of allegories, the mystical meanings which are covered with the veil of the letter in the Old Testament, they lost on account of the cloud the ministry which they deserved by their faith.

To whom the Lord even now uttered His voice in a cloud, when He spoke even plainly concerning Himself. For what is plainer than, *I and My Father are One*? [John 10, 30] What plainer to utter, than, *Before Abraham was, I am*? [John 8, 58] But because the darkness of unbelief had filled the minds of His hearers, an intervening cloud was concealing, as it were, the ray of the sun which had been shot forth.

3. For the face of the waters immediately covered Him, at this elevation of voice, because the raging crowd of the people at once rose up against Him. For it is written, *Therefore the Jews sought to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God*. [John 5, 18] Of this force of waters He exclaims by the Prophet, *They came round about Me all the day like water, they compassed Me about together*. [Ps. 88, 17] And again, *Saw Me, O God, for the waters have come in even unto My soul*. [Ps. 69, 1] Which waters He surely endured in Himself before His death, but in His own people, even after His Ascension. For hence is that which He exclaims from above, *Said, Saul, why persecutest thou Me*? [Acts 9, 4] Behold, He had already ascended into heaven, and yet Saul, still pursuing Him with the force of unbelieving waters, was touching Him, even as a wave swelling above the rest. For it is He in truth Who speaks right things by the good, He Who is wounded in the sufferings of the godly. In order then to shew, by the wondrous unity of charity, that it is He Who preaches by the mouths of His Saints to unworthy hearers, the Lord says, *Wilt thou lift up thy voice in the cloud*? But to shew that it was He Who was enduring all kinds of adversity in His Saints, He subjoined, *And shall the face of the waters cover thee*? Thou understandest, As Myself, Whom all the wicked neither understand to be speaking by holy men when preaching, nor see to be suffering by them when dying. The Lord relates therefore what He suffers from men, that the pain of the afflicted man may be mitigated, as if He openly said to him, Weigh carefully My sufferings, and temper thine own with patience. For it is much less for thee to bear wounds, than for Me to bear the sufferings of men. ['humans']

4. But we can consider these words still more minutely, if we anxiously examine our hearts, in the midst of heavenly gifts. We are at this time indeed faithful, we now believe the heavenly truths which we hear, we now love the things which we believe. But when we are oppressed by some unnecessary cares, we are darkened by a confusion spread over us; and when God suggests to us, even when such, some wonderful notions respecting Himself, He lifts up, as it were, His voice in a cloud. While He speaks of Himself to our benighted minds, He, Who is not seen, is heard, as it were, in a cloud. For most exalted are the truths which we know of Him, but we do not yet behold Him by that secret inspiration, with which we are instructed. He therefore Who speaks indeed to our hearts, but conceals His shape, forms His voice, as it were, in a cloud. But, lo! we now hear the words of God speaking of Himself within, and we now know with what perseverance and with what zeal we ought to cling to His love; and yet we fall back from the height of inward consideration to our usual ways, from the very changeableness of this mortal condition, and are assaulted by the perverse importunity of impending sins. When, therefore, He insinuates subtle thoughts of Himself in our darkened minds, He raises up His voice in a cloud.

5. But when our very notion of God is overpowered by the temptation of sins, God is covered, as it were, in His voice, by the force of waters. For we cast as many waters over Him, as many forbidden thoughts as we dwell on in our heart, after the inspiration of His grace. But yet He 1 'op-forsakes us not even when overwhelmed ['oppressos,' al. 'oppressus.']; for He returns immediately to our mind, He disperses the mists of temptations, He pours on us the shower of compunction, and

brings back the sun of subtle understanding. And He thus shews how much He loves us, Who forsakes us not, even when He is rejected; in order that the human mind may, at least when thus instructed, blush to admit temptation within, since its Redeemer ceases not to love it even when wandering. This He endures in us by Himself, this does He daily hear from unbelievers through His preachers. For His gift is cast out by the rising of temptation within us, and yet He is not kept back by our infirmity from pouring into us His gifts. His words are publicly rejected, and yet He is not restrained, by any wickedness of unbelievers, from bestowing the abundance of His grace. For when wicked men despise preaching, He adds miracles also, for them to reverence. Whence after the voice has been uttered, and the force of the overwhelming waters, it is fitly subjoined; Ver. 35. *Wilt thou send lightnings, and will they go, and will they return and say to thee, Here we are?*

[ii]

6. For lightnings come forth from the clouds, just as wonderful works are displayed by holy preachers. Who, as we have often said, are therefore wont to be called ‘clouds,’ because they flash forth with miracles, and rain with words. And that the hearts of men, after being unmoved by preaching, are confounded by these flashes of miracles, we have learned by the witness of the Prophet, who says, *Thou wilt multiply Thy lightnings, and wilt discomfit them.* [Ps. 18, 14] As if he were saying, Whilst they hear not the words of Thy preaching, they are confounded by the miracles of the preachers. Whence it is written elsewhere, *Thine arrows will go in the light, in the splendour of the glittering of Thine arms.* [Hab. 3, 11] For the arrows of God to go forth in light, is for His words to resound with manifest truth. But because men frequently despise the words of life, even when understood, miracles are likewise added. Whence he there subjoined, *For the splendour of the glittering of Thine arms.* For the glittering of arms is the brightness of miracles. For we protect ourselves with arms, we destroy our opponents with arrows. Arms then, with arrows, are miracles together with preaching. For holy preachers strike their adversaries with their words, as if with darts, but they protect themselves with arms, that is, with miracles; in order that as far as they are to be heard, they may sound forth by the force of their darts, and as far as they are to be revered, glitter with the arms of miracles. It is said therefore to blessed Job, *Wilt thou send lightnings, and will they go, and will they return and say to thee, Here we are?* Thou understandest, ‘As to Me.’ For the lightnings go forth when preachers glitter with miracles, and transfix the hearts of their hearers with heavenly awe. But they return and say, Here we are, when they attribute not to themselves, but to the strength of God, whatever they know they have done powerfully. What is then their saying to God, ‘Here we are?’ For a kind of obedience is declared in this word. For holy preachers then to return and say, ‘Here we are,’ is for them to ascribe the glory of grace to Him, from Whom they feel that they have received victory in the contest; lest they attribute to themselves that which they do. And lightnings can go forth in doing their work, but they cannot return in pride.

7. Let us see then the lightning going forth. Peter says to a certain lame man; *Silver and gold have I none, but what I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and soles received strength, and he leaping up stood, and walked.* [Acts 3, 6-8] But when the multitude of the Jews had been disturbed by this which had been done, let us now see the returning lightning, which says; *Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this, or why look ye on us, as though by our own strength or power we have made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob,*

*the God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus.* [ibid. 12] And a little after; *Whereof we are witnesses; and His name, through faith in His name, hath made this man strong, Whom ye have seen and known; and the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.* [Acts 3, 15. 16.] The lightning therefore went forth, when Peter worked a miracle, it returned when he attributed what he had done, not to himself but to its Author. The lightnings go forth when holy preachers display wonderful deeds, but they say on their return, 'Here we are,' when, in that which they do, they refer to the power of its Author.

8. But this can be understood in another sense also. For holy men, as was said before, are sent and go forth as lightnings, when they come forth from the retirement of contemplation, to the public life of employment. They are sent and they go, when, from the secrecy of inward meditation, they spread forth into the wide space of active life. But they return and say to God; 'Here we are,' because after the outward works which they perform, they always return to the bosom of contemplation, there to revive the flame of their zeal, and to glow as it were from the touch of heavenly brightness. For they would freeze too speedily amid their outward works, good though they be, did they not constantly return with anxious earnestness to the fire of contemplation. Whence it is well said by Solomon, *Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return, to flow again.* [Eccles. 1, 7] For they are there called rivers, who are here called lightnings. For because they water the hearts of the hearers, they are called rivers, but because they kindle them, they are called lightnings. Of whom it is written elsewhere, *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice.* [Ps. 93, 3] And again, *His lightnings enlightened the world.* [Ps. 97, 4] The rivers therefore return to the place from which they go forth; because holy men, (though they come forth, for our sakes, from the sight of their Creator, Whose brightness they endeavour to behold with their mind, to the ministry of active life,) yet unceasingly recur to the holy study of contemplation, and if in their preaching they pour themselves into our ears by bodily words from without, yet do they ever return in their silent thoughts to consider the Fount of life Itself. Of whom it is also well said, *to flow again.* For did they not constantly return with anxious mind to the contemplation of God, their inward drought would doubtless dry up even their outward words of preaching. But while they thirst unceasingly to behold God, rivers are ever springing up, as it were, within, to flow forth without, in order that they may there derive by love the means of flowing down to us in preaching. Let it be said therefore rightly; *Wilt thou send forth the lightnings, and will they go, and will they return and say to thee, Here we are?* Thou understandest, as Myself, Who adapt My preachers, when I will, after the grace of contemplation, to the ministry of active life. And yet I ever call them back from outward good deeds, to the inward height of contemplation, in order that they may one while go forth, when commanded, to perform their tasks, and that at another they may dwell with Me more familiarly when recalled to the pursuit of meditation. They return therefore and say, 'Here we are,' because, though they may seem through their outward acts to be deficient for a little in contemplation, yet by the ardent desires which they ever kindle in their minds, they make known their presence to God, by obeying Him. For to say, 'Here we are,' is to shew that they are present by their love. It follows;  
Ver. 36. *Who hath placed wisdom in the inward parts of a man? or who hath given the cock understanding?*

[iii]

9. Who else are designated in this place by the name of the cock, but these same holy preachers,

mentioned again in another way, who strive amid the darkness of this present life to announce by their preaching, as if by their notes, the approaching light? For they say; the *night is far spent, but the day is at hand*. [Rom. 13, 12] Who by their voices arouse the sleep of our sluggishness, exclaiming; *It is now the hour for us to arise from sleep*. [ib. 11] And again; *Awake, ye righteous, and sin not*. [1 Cor. 15, 34] Of this cock it is written again; *There be three things that go well, and a fourth which goeth prosperously: a lion, the strongest of beasts, will not be afraid at the onset of any; a cock girt in the loins; and a ram, whom there is no king who can resist*. [Prov. 30, 29-31] For He is in this place mentioned as a lion, of Whom it is written; *The lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed*, [Rev. 5, 5] Who is called the strongest of beasts, because in Him the weakness of God is stronger than men. Who is not afraid at the onset of any one; for He says; *The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me*. [John 14, 30] The cock girt in the loins, that is, holy preachers announcing the true morn amid the darkness of this night. Who are girt in the loins, because they keep away from their members the looseness of lust. For it is in the loins in truth that there is lust. Whence it is said to the same persons by the Lord: *Let your loins be girt about*. [Luke 12, 35] And a ram, whom there is no king who can resist. Whom else in this place do we understand by a ram, but the first rank of priests in the Church? Of whom it is written: *Bring to the Lord the offspring of rams*; [Ps. 29, 1] who lead the people which is walking after their examples like a flock of sheep following them. And whom, if they live spiritually and rightly, no king is at all able to resist; because whatever persecutor may stand in their way, he is not able to hinder their intention. For they know both how to run anxiously to Him, Whom they long for, and to come to Him by dying. The lion is therefore placed first, the cock second, the ram last. For Christ appeared, next the holy preachers, the Apostles, and then at length the spiritual fathers, the rulers of the Churches, the leaders, namely, of the flocks, because they are the teachers of the peoples who follow them.

10. But we enforce these points still better, if we subjoin an exposition of the remainder of the same passage. For since after these things Antichrist will also appear, he added there a fourth point, saying; *And he who appeared a fool, after he had been lifted up on high. For if he had understood, he would have laid his hand on his mouth*. [Prov. 30, 32] For he in truth will be lifted up on high when he will feign that he is God. But he will appear a fool when lifted up on high, because he will fail in his very loftiness through the coming of the true Judge. But if he had understood this, he would have laid his hand on his mouth: that is, if he had foreseen his punishment, when he began to be proud, having been once fashioned aright, he would not have been raised up to the boastfulness of such great pride. And let not that move us which has been said of him above; *A fourth, which goeth prosperously*. For he said that three went well, and a fourth prosperously. For not every thing which goeth 'prosperously' goeth 'well,' nor in this life does every thing which goeth 'well,' go 'prosperously.' For a lion, a cock, and a ram, go indeed well: but not prosperously here, for they suffer the assaults of persecutions. But the fourth goeth prosperously, and not well: because Antichrist will go on in his craft, but his craft will be prosperous for a short space of this present life, as was said of him under the person of Antiochus by Daniel; *Strength was given him against the continual sacrifice by reason of transgression, and truth shall be cast down in the earth, and he shall do and shall prosper*. [Dan. 8, 12] That which Solomon says, *goeth prosperously*: this Daniel says, *shall prosper*. According to this testimony therefore which is stated by Solomon, *A cock girt in its loins*, we fitly understood in this place also holy preachers by the cock. The Lord therefore referring all things to Himself, says; *Who hath placed wisdom in the inward parts of a man? or who hath given the cock understanding?* As if He were saying, Who hath infused into the heart of a

man, who savours of human things, the grace of heavenly wisdom? Or who, but Myself, hath given understanding even to holy preachers themselves, to know when, or to whom, they ought to announce the coming morn? For they understand both what to do, and when, for the very reason that they know it, through My revealing it, within. But it must be observed, that divinely inspired wisdom is placed in the inward parts of a man; because, doubtless, as far as concerns the number of the Elect, it is given not in voices only, but also in the thoughts, in order that the conscience may live according to what the tongue speaks, and that its light may shine forth the more brightly on the surface, the more truly it glows in the heart.

11. But it is a matter of great labour to examine with still more minute exposition, that which is added; *Or who hath given the cock understanding?* For the understanding of teachers ought to be the more subtle, the more it exercises itself in penetrating things invisible, the more it discusses nothing material, the more, even when speaking by the voice of the body, it transcends every thing which is of the body. For it would not, in truth, be at all suited to the loftiest subjects, did not the Creator Himself of things above, bestow it on the cock which crows, that is, on the teacher who preaches. The cock also received understanding, first to distinguish the hours of the night season, and then at last to utter the awakening voice. Because, in truth, every holy preacher first considers in his hearers the quality of their life, and afterwards frames the voice of preaching, fitted to instruct them. For to decide on the qualities of sins is, as it were, to distinguish the hours of night, to reprove the darkneses of actions with fit voices of reproof is, as it were, to distinguish the hours of night. Understanding is therefore given to the cock from above, because to the teacher of truth there is given from above the virtue of discretion, for him to know to whom, what, when, or how to introduce his instruction.

12. For one and the same exhortation is not suited to all; because the same kind of habits does not bind all. For those things that benefit some, often hurt others. For frequently even herbs, which refresh some animals, kill others, and a gentle hiss pacifies horses, urges on dogs; and medicine which lessens one disease, gives strength to another: and bread which strengthens the life of the strong, destroys that of the young. The speech therefore of teachers ought to be fashioned according to the quality of the hearers, in order to suit each class according to their own case, and yet never to fail in the art of general edification. For what are the attentive minds of hearers, but certain strings which are strained tight in a harp? which the skilful performer touches in different ways, that they may not produce a discordant sound. And the strings give back an harmonious sound, because they are struck with one plectrum, but with different force. Whence also every teacher, in order to build up all in one virtue of charity, ought not to touch the hearts of his hearers with one and the same exhortation.

13. For men must be admonished in one way, and women in another; the young in one way, the old in another; in one way the poor, and in another the rich; in one way the cheerful, and in another the gloomy; in one way subjects, in another rulers; in one way servants, in another masters; in one way the wise of this world, in another the dull; in one way the shameless, in another the modest; in one way the insolent, in another the retiring; in one way the impatient, in another the patient; in one way the well-wishing, in another the envious; in one way the pure, in another the unclean; in one way the healthy, in another the sick; in one way those who fear the rod, and therefore live innocently, in another way those who have become so hardened in iniquity, as not to be corrected by the rod; in one way those who are over silent, in another those who give themselves to much

talking; in one way the timid, in another the bold; in one way the sluggish, in another the hasty; in one way the gentle, in another the angry; in one way the humble, in another the haughty; in one way the obstinate, in another the inconstant; in one way the gluttonous, in another the abstinent; in one way those who mercifully give away their own, in another those who strive to seize others' goods; in one way those who neither seize the goods of others, nor yet give away their own; and in another those who both give away their own goods which they have, and desist not from seizing those of others; in one way those who are at variance, in another those who are reconciled; in one way those who sow strifes, in another the peaceful. Those who do not rightly understand the words of the sacred Law must be admonished in one way, in another those who understand them rightly, but speak not of them humbly; in one way those who though they are able to preach in a worthy manner, are afraid from excessive humility, in another those whom imperfection or age excludes from preaching, and whom yet precipitation urges on; in one way those who prosper in their temporal desires, in another way those who desire indeed the things of the world, but who yet are wearied with the toil of adversity: in one way those who are bound in wedlock, in another way those who are free from the bonds of wedlock; in one way those who have had experience of carnal commixtion, in another way those who are ignorant of it; in one way those who deplore the sins of their deeds, in another those who deplore the sins of their thoughts; in one way those who lament their sins and yet do not abandon them, in another those who abandon but yet do not lament them: in one way those who even praise the unlawful deeds which they commit, in another those who blame their misdeeds, and yet do not avoid them; in one way those who are overcome with sudden concupiscence, in another those who are deliberately fettered with sin; in one way those who commit frequently unlawful deeds though most trifling, and in another those who guard themselves against trifling faults but are sometimes overwhelmed in grievous ones; in one way those who do not even begin good courses, in another those who do not complete what they have begun; in one way those who sin secretly and do right publicly, in another those who conceal the good deeds which they do, and who yet by some things they do publicly allow people to think evil of them. We ought indeed to mention minutely what course of advice should be observed in each particular case, but are hindered by fear of prolixity in our remarks. [S. Greg. Naz. Or. 2. §. 28.] But we are anxious to carry that out in another work [The 'Pastorale.'], by God's help, if some small portion of this painful life still remains to us.

14. But we have another point which we ought to consider concerning this understanding of the cock, namely, that it is accustomed to utter its louder and longer-drawn strains in the deeper hours of the night, and that when the hour of morn is now approaching, it utters altogether more gentle and feeble notes. And a consideration of the discretion of preachers shews us what the understanding of this cock in these respects suggests to us. For when they are preaching to minds which are still wicked, they declare the terrors of eternal judgment with loud and great voices, because, namely, they cry out, as it were, in the darkness of the profound night. But when they know that the light of truth is already present to the hearts of their hearers, they turn the loudness of their cry into the gentleness of sweetness; and bring forth, not so much the terrors of punishment, as the allurements of rewards. And they sing at that time even with diminished tones, because as the morn approaches, they preach all the subtlest mysteries, that their followers may hear more minutely of heavenly things, the nearer they approach to the light of truth, and that the shorter note of the cock may charm those when awake, whom its long drawn note had aroused from sleep; in order that every one who has been corrected, may delight in knowing minutely the sweets of heaven, who used before to dread adversities from the judgment. Which is well expressed by



Moses, when the trumpets are ordered to sound a shorter note, for the summoning forth the host. For it is written, *Make thee two trumpets of beaten silver*. [Numb. 10, 2] And a little after, *When a short blast hath sounded, the camp shall be moved*. [ib. 5] For the army is led by two trumpets, because the people is called by two precepts of charity to the girding of faith. But they are commanded to be made of silver, in order that the words of preachers may be clear with the brightness of light, and may not confuse the mind of their hearers, by any obscurity of their own. But to be hammered out, for this reason; because it is necessary that they who preach the life to come, should grow up by the blows of present tribulations. But it is well said, *When the short blast hath sounded, the camp shall be moved*: doubtless, because when the word of preaching is more subtilly and minutely enforced, the hearts of the hearers are more warmly excited to meet the contests of temptations.

15. But there is something else to be carefully observed in the cock, namely, that when it is preparing to utter its note, it first flaps its wings, and striking itself, makes itself more wakeful. And this we behold plainly, if we look carefully at the life of holy preachers. For they, when they utter the words of preaching, first exercise themselves in holy actions, that they may not, while themselves slothful in act, arouse others with their voice. But they first rouse themselves by lofty deeds, and then they render others anxious for well-doing. They first strike themselves with the wings of their thoughts, because whatever is slumbering uselessly within them, they discover by anxious examination, they correct with severe punishment. They first take care to punish their own faults by tears, and then denounce those doings of others which demand punishment. They flap with their wings, therefore, before they utter their song, because, before they put forth the words of exhortation, they proclaim by their deeds all that they intend to say: and when they are perfectly awake in themselves, they then summon others who are slumbering to awake.

16. But whence is this great wisdom of the teacher, that he is both perfectly awake in himself, and that he also summons the slumberers to awake with a certain elevation of voice; that he first carefully dispels the darkness of sins, and afterwards manifests discreetly the light of preaching, that he suits each one singly, in manner and in time, and that he shews to all at the same time the result of their doings? Whence is it directed to such great subjects, and with such subtlety, unless it be taught inwardly by Him, by Whom it was created? Because then the credit of such great understanding is not the merit of the preacher, but of his Creator, it is rightly said by the same Creator, *Or who hath given the cock understanding?* As if He were saying, Except Myself, Who have instructed the minds of teachers, which I marvellously fashioned out of nothing, more marvellously, to understand those things which are secret. Whence also, to shew that He is not only the Inspirer of wisdom in the sayings of teachers, but also the Author of their words, he well adds; Ver. 37. *Who will declare the system of the heavens?*

But because He withdraws their words, when He presents Himself to us in outward form, He immediately subjoined;  
*And who will make the harmony of heaven to sleep?*

[iv]

17. For in this life the Lord has spoken to our weakness, not by the outward manifestation of His majesty, but by the voice of His preachers; in order that the carnal tongue might strike those hearts

which are still carnal, and that they might the more readily receive unusual things, the more they heard them by the sound of an accustomed voice. But after that the flesh is resolved into dust by death, and the dust is animated by the resurrection, then we seek not to hear words from God, because we now behold in outward appearance that One Word of God, Which fills all things. Which sounds to us still louder, the more it penetrates our minds by the power of inward illumination. For when those words are taken away, which begin, and end, the very image of the inward vision becomes to us a kind of sound of eternal preaching. Whence the Lord now also says rightly to blessed Job; *Who will declare the system of the heavens, and who will make the harmony of heaven to sleep?* For what is meant by the system of the heavens, but the inward power of secrets? What is signified by the harmony of heaven, but the accordant language of preachers? When our Creator therefore has begun to relate the system of the heavens, He makes the harmony of heaven to sleep; doubtless, because when He is manifested to us in visible appearance, the words of preachers are withdrawn. For hence the Lord says by Jeremiah; *A man shall no longer teach his neighbour and his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest, saith the Lord.* [Jer. 31, 14] Hence Paul says, *Whether prophecies, they shall be made void; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall be destroyed.* [1 Cor. 13, 8] Or certainly the system of the heavens is that very vivifying power which forms the spirits of angels. For as God is the Cause of causes, and as He is the Life of the living, so is He the Reason ['Ratio.'] of reasonable creatures. The Lord therefore then declares the system ['Rationem'] of the heavens, when He brings Himself before us, as to the way in which He rules over Elect spirits. He then relates the system of the heavens, when the mist of our mind is wiped away, and He manifests Himself to us in bright vision. Whence the Lord also says in the Gospel; *The hour cometh when I shall no longer speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.* [John 16, 25] For He asserts that He shews plainly of the Father, because by the appearance of His Majesty, which was then manifested, He shews both how He springs from the Father not unequal to Himself, and how the Spirit of Both proceeds coeternal with Both. For we shall then openly behold, how That Which Is by an origin, is not subsequent to Him from Whom It springs; how He Who is produced by procession, is not preceded by Those [Plural. see note at end of Book XXIX] from Whom He proceeded. We shall then behold openly how both The One is divisibly Three, and the Three indivisibly One. The tongue of God then Who then speaks, is the visible brightness of God exalting us. And the harmony of heaven will then sleep, because when the Rewarder of our works appears in judgment, the words of exhortations will at once cease. Whence also the very period of the resurrection is openly subjoined, when it is stated immediately; Ver. 38. *When the dust was hardened into earth, and the clods were bound together.*

[v]

18. For the sacred language describes, after its custom, things still future, as though already passed: observing, namely, in itself, that which is said by it; *Who made the things that are to come.* [Is. 45, 11] The dust is therefore hardened at that time into earth, because it is brought back to solid limbs. And the clods are bound together, doubtless, because solid bodies arise together gathered from the dust. But after we have stated how these words of the Lord are to be understood of the future, let us now point out what they mean concerning the present.

19. *Who will declare the system of the heavens, and who will make the harmony of the heaven to sleep?* The Lord declares the system of the heavens, whilst He now illuminates the minds of His

Elect by teaching heavenly secrets. But He makes the harmony of heaven to sleep, whilst by a righteous judgment He conceals from the hearts of the reprobate the harmonious hymns of angels, and those joys of heavenly virtues. For this harmony of heaven, though inwardly wakeful in itself, yet slumbers outwardly through the very ignorance of the reprobate. The system of the heavenly mystery is therefore proclaimed, and yet the harmony of heaven is permitted to sleep; because to some the knowledge of the heavenly retribution is disclosed by inspiration, and what is the sweetness of inward praise is concealed from others.

20. The system of the heavens is set forth, because to the minds of the Elect there is unceasingly laid open what is the recompense of heavenly rewards; in order doubtless that they may unceasingly advance, and, passing over visible things, may stretch themselves forward to invisible. For every visible object which arrests the reprobate in this life, urges the Elect onward to other things. For whilst they behold the good deeds which have been done, they burn with love towards Him by Whom they have been done; and they love Him the more surpassingly, the more they consider that He was prior to that which He Himself created good. For the silently sounding invisible tongue of compunction speaks this to them within. And they hear it the louder within, the more entirely they turn away from the din of outward desires. To these then the harmony of heaven sleeps not, because their mind learns, by applying the ear of love, how great is the sweetness of heavenly praise. For they hear within that which they desire, and are, by their very longing for the Godhead, instructed in the rewards of heavenly blessings. Whence also they bear this present life, not only when opposing, but even when favouring them, as a heavy burden; because every thing which they behold is burdensome to them, whilst they are kept from enjoying that which they hear within. Every thing which is near them they deem heavy, because it is not that for which they pant. But their mind which is unceasingly wearied by the very labours of this temporal condition, hangs on the hope of being taken up to that heavenly joy, while, as the harmony of heaven bursts forth within on the ear of the heart, they daily expect for themselves the society of the heavenly citizens. That harmony of heavenly praise had burst forth in the ear of him, who was saying, *I will enter into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God, in the voice of exultation and confession, the sound of a feasting city.* [Ps. 42, 4] What else therefore but the harmony of heaven was awakening him, who had heard within the voice of exultation and confession, and the sound of a feasting city?

21. But this harmony sleeps for the reprobate, because it does not at all make itself known to their hearts by the voice of compunction. For they do not strive to think of that much longed for multitude of heavenly citizens, they behold with no ray of warmth those banquets of inward revelry, they are not borne up within by any wing of contemplation. For they are enslaved to visible objects alone, and therefore they hear within nought of inward sweetness; because, as we said before, the deafening tumults of worldly care oppress them in the ear of their hearts. Because then in the dispensation of the secret judgment that, which is laid open to some, is closed to others; and that which is disclosed to some is concealed from others, let it be rightly said; *Who will declare the system of the heavens, and who will make the harmony of heaven to sleep?* But this was then more fully disclosed to us, when our Redeemer, appearing in the mystery of the dispensation, both conferred mercy on the unworthy, and excluded those from Him, who seemed to be worthy. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 38. *When the dust was hardened into earth, and the clods were bound together.*

[vi]

22. Whom do we understand by dust but sinners, who, steadied by no weight of reason, are hurried away by the blast of any temptation? Of whom it is written; *Not so the ungodly, not so, but as the dust which the wind sweepeth away from the face of the earth.* [Ps. 1, 4] The dust therefore was hardened into earth, when sinners, having been called in the Church, were confirmed by the system of transmitted faith: in order that they, who before, being fickle through inconstancy, were raised up by the breath of temptation, might afterwards remain unmoved against temptations, and, constantly adhering to God, might hold a firm weight of good living. But clods are composed of moisture and of earth. The clods therefore are bound together in this earth, because sinners, when called and watered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, are joined together in the union of charity. These clods are therefore bound together in the earth, when people, who were before of different sentiments, as it were, in the dispersion of the dust, having received afterwards the grace of the Spirit, so agreed in that most peaceful concord of unanimity, that, when there were three thousand, or again five thousand, it was said, as Scripture witnesses, *That there was in them one heart and one soul.* [Acts 4, 32] The Lord therefore daily binds together these clods in the earth, of one dust indeed, but distinguished, as it were, by different size; because, having preserved the unity of the sacrament, He collects together faithful people in the Church according to the difference of their customs and languages. The Lord already designated these clods at that time, when He ordered them to sit down fifty or a hundred together, to eat the bread and fishes. [Mark 6, 4]

23. But if we observe these clods in the Church according to the diversity of their merits, we are perhaps able to distinguish them still more minutely. For while there is one order of preachers, another of hearers; another of rulers, and another of subjects; one of the married, another of those who abstain from marriage; one of penitents, another of virgins; there is, as it were, a diversely distinguished form of clods from the same earth, when in the one faith, and in the one charity, the merits of good workers are shewn to be unequal. That people, who with the same zeal offered different gifts for the construction of the tabernacle, signified these clods; of which it is written; *Whatever was necessary for the worship of the tabernacle, and for the holy garments, men with women furnished, bracelets and earrings, rings and armlets. Every golden vessel was set apart for the offerings of the Lord. If any man had blue, purple, and twice dyed scarlet, fine linen, and goats' hair, &c.* [Ex. 35, 21, 23]

24. For the adorning, therefore, of the tabernacle men offer gifts together with women, because in fulfilling the service of Holy Church, both the lofty deeds of the strong and the lowliest works of the weak are reckoned. But what is designated by bracelets which bind the arms, except the works of sturdily labouring rulers? And what is expressed by earrings, but the obedience of subjects? What by rings, but the seal of secrets? For teachers commonly put a seal on that which they consider cannot be understood by their hearers. And what is spoken of by armlets, but the ornaments of the first works? What is understood by a golden vessel set apart for the offerings of the Lord, except the understanding of the Godhead? which is the more detached from the love of inferior objects, the more it is raised to love those things only which are eternal. What by blue, but the hope of heavenly things? What by purple, but blood, and endurance of sufferings, displayed from love of the eternal kingdom? And what is pointed out by the twice dyed scarlet, but charity, which is twice dipped in order to its perfection, because it is adorned with the love of God, and one's neighbour? What by fine linen, but the immaculate purity of the flesh? And what is

designated by the goats' hair, of which the roughness of the hair cloths is woven, except the hard affliction of penitents? Whilst some therefore exercise their resolute authority by bracelets and rings, and others by earrings and armlets display devoted obedience, and upright conduct; some by the golden vessel which has been set apart possess a surpassing and more accurate knowledge of God; others by the blue, purple, and scarlet, cease not to hope for, believe, and love the heavenly things they have heard of, even those which they do not yet understand with more accurate knowledge; some by the fine linen offer the purity of the flesh; others by the goats' hairs bewail with severity that which they have committed with pleasure; innumerable clods are produced, as it were, from one earth, because unlike actions of the faithful proceed from one and the like obedience. But these clods would doubtless not be bound together and rise from the dust, did not the dust first receive water, and become solid from the moisture it has imbibed: because if the grace of the Holy Spirit did not bedew sinners, the unity of charity would not keep them firmly bound to deeds of faith. Let the Lord then make known when He will declare the system of the heavens, or make the harmony of heaven to sleep. For He says; *When the dust was being hardened into earth, and the clods were being bound together.* As if He were saying, My calling and My choice being then first manifested, I both disclosed, not without compassion, spiritual secrets to some, and hid them, not without justice, from others, when I was rejecting some, and was uniting others within the Church in the concord of unity. But because this Holy Church, when rejected by the unbelief of the Jews, betook herself to spoil the Gentiles, and to convert them in her own body, (which she did indeed not in her own strength, but that of the Lord,) it is fitly subjoined;  
Ver. 39. *Wilt thou seize the prey for the lioness, and fill the soul of her whelps?*

[vii]

25. She is doubtless that lioness, of which Job was saying, when he saw proud Judaea passed over by the preaching of the Church; *The children of the dealers have not trodden it, nor hath the lioness passed through it.* [Job 28, 8] The Lord therefore seizes the prey for this lioness, to fill the soul of her whelps, because for the increase of this Church, He has carried off many from the Gentile world, and has, by the gain of souls, satisfied the ravenous wishes of the Apostles. For they are in truth called whelps from the tenderness of their mind, and the weakness of their fear, because, after the Lord had suffered, they used to sit with closed doors, as is written of them; *When it was late on that day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them.* [John 20, 19] Whence it is here also fitly subjoined of these same whelps;

Ver. 40. *When they couch in their dens, and lie in wait in their caves.*

[viii]

26. For when the holy Apostles did not at all rise up against the limbs of the devil in the voice of bold preaching, and, not being yet strengthened after the Lord's Passion with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, did not preach their Redeemer with firm authority, they were still lying in wait, as it were, in dens against their adversaries. For when the doors were closed, the whelps who were about to ravage the world were couching, as it were, in certain secret caves: in order that they might afterwards boldly seize the prey of souls, of whom it was then certain, from their very concealment, that they were afraid of the assault of the world on themselves. These whelps in ambush with those closed doors sought for the death of our death, that so they might destroy our guilt, and kill all the

life of sin within us. To the chief of these, that famished, but still vigorous whelp, it is said, when the Gentiles had been set before him by the linen sheet, as though the prey had been pointed out to him, *Kill and eat*. [Acts 10, 13] These whelps, as though they were still weak, are ordered to couch in their dens, when it is said to them by the voice of the Lord, *Tarry ye here in the city until ye be endowed with power from on high*. [Luke 24, 49] Are not they rightly called the whelps of the lioness, who, having been born in the Church, seized with their mouth the opposing world?

27. And these things we know were done by the holy Apostles, these also we now see done by perfect teachers. For though they are the fathers of the people that follow them, yet are they the sons of those who go before; whence they are not improperly called whelps. Or certainly because though they are the teachers of certain of the faithful, yet they boast that they are the disciples of the Church universal. The Lord, therefore, seizes the prey for the lioness, because by the virtue of His inspiration He seizes the life of offenders from error; and He fills the soul of her whelps, because by the conversion of many He satisfies the holy longings of teachers. Of which whelps it is well subjoined; *When they couch in their dens, and lie in wait in their caves*. For all seasons are not fitted for teaching. For the value of sayings is commonly lost, if they are brought forward out of season. And frequently even that which is said gently, is animated by the concurrence of a fitting season. He therefore knows how to speak well, who knows also how to be silent at proper times. For of what use is it to reprove an angry man, at the time when with estranged mind he is not only unable to listen to the words of others, but is hardly able to hear himself. For he who reproves an angry man by inveighing against him, inflicts, as it were, blows on a drunken man who feels them not. Teaching therefore, in order to be able to reach the hearts of the hearers, must consider what seasons are suitable to it. It is therefore well said of these whelps, *When they couch in their dens, and lie in wait in their caves*. For when holy teachers perceive things to be reproved, and yet confine themselves in their thoughts by silence, they lurk, as it were, in caves, and cover themselves, as if in dens; because they are concealed in their own thoughts. But when they have found a fit season, they suddenly leap forth, they suppress nothing which ought to be said, and seize with the grasp of severe reproof the neck of the haughty. The Lord is therefore daily seizing the prey for this lioness, whether by Apostles, or by teachers whom He has appointed in the place of the Apostles; and by those whom He has seized, He ceases not to seize others also. For the righteous seize the sinners of this world for this purpose, that others also may be snatched from the world by them when they are converted. Whence the Gentile world itself also, which was seized by the holy mouth of the Apostles, is now ravenous after others, with the same hunger, as it knows that it was itself desired by the Apostles. Wherefore it is also fitly subjoined;  
Ver. 41. *Who prepareth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry to God, wandering because they have not meat?*

[ix]

28. For what is designated by the name of the raven, and its young ones, but the Gentile world blackened with sin? Of which it is said by the Prophet; *Who giveth to beasts their food, and to the young ravens which call on Him*. [Ps. 147, 9] For the beasts receive food, when minds before brutal, are satiated with the food of Holy Scripture. But food is given to the young ravens, namely, to the sons of the Gentiles, when their longing is refreshed by our conversion [al. 'conversation.']. This raven was food, while Holy Church was seeking for it. But it now receives food, because it seeks out others for conversion.

29. And its young, that is, the holy preachers which are sprung from it, truly trust not in themselves, but in the strength of their Redeemer. Whence it is well said: *When his young ones cry to God*. For they know that they can do nothing by their own strength. And though in their pious wishes they hunger for the gain of souls, yet they desire these effects to be wrought by Him Who works all things within. For they understand by true faith, that *neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God Who giveth the increase*. [1 Cor. 3, 7]

30. But in that which is said, *Wandering because they have no meat*, nothing else is designated by this wandering but the wishes of eager preachers. For while they desire to receive people into the bosom of the Church, being kindled with great warmth, they put forth their desire now to gather in these, and now those. For this very agitation of thought is, as it were, a kind of wandering; and they pass over as if to different places, with change of will, whilst they run here and there with ravenous mind, in numberless ways, and into different parts, for uniting souls together.

31. This wandering the young ones of the ravens, that is the sons of the Gentiles, learned from the teacher of the Gentiles himself. For in proportion to the strong love with which he burns, does he pass with rapid wandering from place to place; he wishes to pass from one place to another, because the love itself which fills him, urges him on. For when placed far away from the Romans, he writes, *I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come to you: for I long to see you*. [Rom. 1, 9-11] When kept at Ephesus, he writes to the Corinthians, *Behold this third time I am ready to come to you*. [2 Cor. 12, 14] Again, when tarrying at Ephesus, he speaks to the Galatians, saying, *I desire to be with you now, and to change my voice*. [Gal. 4, 20] When he was shut up also at Rome in the close keeping of the prison, because he is not permitted to go himself to the Philippians, he promises to send a disciple, saying, *I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good heart, having known your state*. [Phil. 2, 19] When bound also in chains, and detained at Ephesus, he writes to the Colossians, *For though I be absent in body, yet am I with you in the Spirit*. [Col. 2, 5] Behold how he wanders, as it were, in his holy longing; he is detained here in body, he is led thither in the Spirit; and exhibits the affection of fatherly love to those who are present, makes it known to those who are absent; bestows his labours on those who are before him, expresses his wishes for those who only hear him [so nearly all copies. Ben. prefers 'the absent.']; efficaciously present to those with whom he was, and yet not absent from those with whom he was not. But we gain a better notion of his wandering, if we consider still further his words to the Corinthians; for he says, *I will come to you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia ; for I shall pass through Macedonia; but I shall perhaps remain with you, or even winter*. [1 Cor. 16, 5. 6.] Let us consider, I pray you, what is this wandering. For behold in one place he remains for a while, in another he says that he will go, and in another he promises that he will turn aside. Why is it that he so anxiously distributes himself through so many places, except that he is bound around all with one love? For love, which is wont to unite things that are divided, compels the one heart of Paul to be divided amongst many things. And yet he gathers it together the more closely in God, the more widely he scatters it forth in holy longings. Paul therefore wishes to say all things at once in his preaching, to behold all men at once through his love; because he both wishes, by remaining in the flesh, to live for all, and, by passing out of the flesh, to profit all by the sacrifice of faith. Let therefore the young ones of the ravens wander, that is, let the sons of the Gentiles imitate their master, let them shake off the torpor of their mind, and

when they find not the gain of souls, that is, their food, let them not rest; let them stretch themselves forth to advancement after advancement; and, toiling for the benefit of many, let them wander, as it were, and hunger for their own refreshment. But because, in running to and fro by the works of preaching, they cease not to feed the Gentile world with the refreshment of faith, let it be rightly said, *Who prepareth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry to God, wandering because they have no meat.*

32. But by the name of 'raven,' the people of the Jews, black with the demerit of unbelief, can also be designated. For its young ones are said to cry to God, that food might be prepared for this very raven by the Lord; doubtless, because the holy Apostles, begotten of the flesh of the people of Israel, while they were pouring forth prayers to the Lord for their nation, fed with spiritual wisdom their parent people, as the young ravens feed him from whom they are sprung in the flesh. While therefore his young ones cry out, food is provided for the raven; because, while the Apostles entreat, the people, which was before unbelieving, is led to the knowledge of the faith: and from the preaching of its sons is fed, as it were, by the voice of its young ones. But we ought in this verse carefully to notice that point, that food is said to be prepared for this raven, first when his young ones are crying, and afterwards when they are wandering. For food is prepared for the raven, at the cry of his young ones, while at the preaching of the Apostles, Judaea, on hearing the word of God, was filled with spiritual wisdom, at one time in three, and at another in five thousand persons. But when, through the multitude of the reprobate, it was exercising its cruelty against the preachers, and was destroying, as it were, the life of the young ravens, they were dispersed also into every quarter of the world. Whence also they say to these their fathers in the flesh, who were opposing their spiritual preaching, *We ought to speak the word of God to you first, but since ye reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo! we turn to the Gentiles;* [Acts 13, 46] knowing full surely that after the Gentiles believed, Judaea also would come to the faith. Whence also it is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved.* [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] Because therefore the holy Apostles especially endeavoured, first to preach to those who heard them, and afterwards to set before those that resisted the example of the converted Gentiles; the hungry young ones sought its food for this raven, first by crying, and afterwards by wandering. For the raven finds food from the quarter where the young ones wander; for whilst the Jewish people beholds the Gentiles converted to God by the labour of preachers, it blushes sometime at the last, at the folly of its own unbelief, and then understands the sentences of Holy Scripture, when it perceives that they were known to the Gentiles before they were known to itself. And the wandering of its young ones having been fulfilled, it opens the mouth of its heart to take in the holy word; because when the courses of the Apostles through the world have been completed, it at last spiritually understands those things, from which it had long abstained through the bondage of unbelief. But because the virtue of Divine Power alone effects all these things, it is rightly said, *Who prepareth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry to God, wandering because they have no meat.* Thou understandest, Except Myself, Who both bear with the unbelieving people, when its sons entreat, and feed it by their preaching, and support it, to be converted at length in the end, when they wander to other places.

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

33. There is something further, which can be understood of this raven in a moral sense. For when its young are hatched, it declines, as is said, to give them food to the full, before they become dark in their plumage, and allows them to suffer from want of food, until its own resemblance appears in



them, through the blackness of their wings. But they wander hither and thither in the nest, and seek for the support of food with open mouth. But when they have begun to get black, it seeks the more eagerly for food to be given them, the longer it has deferred feeding them. Every learned preacher, who cries with a loud voice, whilst he carries the memory of his own sins and the knowledge of his own infirmity, as a kind of black shade of colour, is doubtless a raven. To whom disciples indeed are born in the faith, but perhaps they still do not know how to consider their own infirmity: perchance they turn away their memory from their past sins, and thus display not that blackness of humility which ought to be assumed against the pride of this world. But they open their mouth, as it were, to receive food, when they seek to be instructed in sublime secrets. But their own teacher supplies them the more scantily with the food of sublime instruction, the more he perceives that they bewail inadequately their past sins. He wails for them in truth, and warns them, first to become black, from the brightness of this life, by the lamentations of penitence, and then to receive afterwards the suitable nourishment of most subtle preaching. The raven beholds in the young ones their gaping mouths, but he first looks for their bodies to be covered with the blackness of wings. So too a discreet teacher imparts not inward mysteries to the understanding of those, whom he considers to have not yet in any way cast themselves off from this world. The less black then his disciples are, as it were, outwardly, through devotion to the present life, the less are they filled with the food of the word within: and the less they strip themselves of bodily glory, the more are they bereft of spiritual refreshment.

34. But if in the confession of their past life, they put forth the groans of their lamentation, as darkening plumage, the teacher immediately flies in contemplation, to bring down food from on high, as a raven thinking of the refreshment of its young ones; and brings back to them in his mouth the food they are gaping for: whilst with that wisdom which he has begun [al. 'gotten'], he supplies by his teaching the food of life to his hungry disciples. And he refreshes them the more eagerly from above, the more truly he perceives that, by the lamentation of penitence, they are turning black from the brightness of the world.

35. But whilst the young are clothing themselves in the dark hue of their wings, they also give promise of flying; because the more disciples think meanly of themselves, the more they despise and afflict themselves, the more do they hold out the hope of advancing to higher things. Whence also the teacher takes care to feed those more speedily, whom by certain marks he now foresees to be capable of assisting others. For hence Paul admonishes Timothy to nurture, as it were, with greater anxiety the newly fledged young, while he says; *And the things that thou hast heard of me by many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* [2 Tim. 2, 2] And while this discretion in teaching is carefully preserved by a preacher, a more abundant power of preaching is given him from above. For whilst he knows through love how to sympathize with his afflicted disciples, whilst through discretion he understands the fit season for teaching, he enjoys the greater gifts of his understanding, not only for himself, but for those also, to whom he devotes the efforts of his labour. Whence it is here also fitly said; *Who prepareth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry to God, wandering because they have no meat.* For when the young ones cry to be filled, food is prepared for the raven; because while good hearers hunger after the word of God, greater gifts of understanding are given to their teachers for their refreshment. It follows ;

Chap. xxxix. ver. 1. *Knowest thou the time when the wild goats (ibices) bring forth in the rocks, or hast thou observed the hinds when they calve?*

[x]

36. The southern part of the world calls birds, which inhabit the streams of the Nile, ‘ibices.’ But the eastern and western quarters term small quadrupeds, ‘ibices,’ whose custom also it is to bring forth in the rocks, because they know not how to dwell except in the rocks. And if they ever fall down, even from the lofty tops of the mountains, they catch themselves without hurt on their own horns. For in falling they strike their head, and while they present the tips of its horns, the whole body is exempt from the injury of the fall. But it is the custom with hinds to destroy the serpents which they have found, and to mangle their limbs with their bites. But it is said that, if ever they cross rivers, they rest the weight of their heads on the backs of those in front, and that, succeeding in turn to each other, they do not feel at all the labour of the weight. Why is it then that blessed Job is questioned concerning the bringing forth of the wild goats, and the hinds, except that by wild goats, and hinds, is signified the character of spiritual masters? For they in truth bring forth as wild goats in the rocks; because by the teaching of the fathers, who are called rocks for their solidity, they bring forth souls to conversion. They, like wild goats, feel not the losses of any fall, when they are caught on their own horns; because whatever temporal ruin befalls them, they support themselves on the testaments of Holy Scripture, and are saved, as it were, by being caught on their horns. For of these testaments it is said, *Horns are in His hands*. [Hab. 3, 4] They fly therefore to the consolation of Scripture, when they are struck with the loss of any temporal fall. Did not Paul, when sinking through the adversities of this world, catch himself, like the wild goats, on his horns; when he was saying, *Whatsoever things were written were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*. [Rom. 15, 4] They are also called hinds, as is said by Jeremiah of teachers carelessly deserting the children who were born to them; *The hind calved in the field, and forsook it*. [Jer. 14, 5] They, like hinds, live on destroyed sins, as on dead serpents; and from this very destruction of their sins are they more eagerly ardent for the fountain of life. Whence the Psalmist says, *As the hart longeth for the fountains of water, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God*. [Ps. 42, 1] They also, while they pass over the gliding moments of this temporal state, as if they were streams, place their burdens each on the other, being compassionate from love; because they keep with careful observation that which is written; *Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so ye will fulfil the law of Christ*. [Gal. 6, 2] But because after the coming of the Lord, spiritual teachers were scattered through the world, who were able by their preaching to travail with souls in conversion; and because this very season of the Lord’s Incarnation was not known, before the voices of the Prophets, though His coming Incarnation was foreknown to all the Elect, blessed Job is well questioned concerning the time when the wild goats and hinds bring forth, and it is said to him; *Knowest thou the time when the wild goats bring forth in the rocks, or hast thou observed the hinds when they calve?* As if it were said to him; Thou believest thyself to have acted in some sublime manner, because thou foreseest not, as yet, that time, when spiritual masters, sent into the world, beget children by the doctrine of the ancient fathers, and by their labours gather together for Me the gain of souls. For wert thou to behold their fruit, like the offspring of wild goats and hinds, thou wouldest think very humbly of thine own virtue. For the great things which we do, we regard as the very least, when we balance them with nobler examples. But they then increase in their merits with God, when through our humility they become less to ourselves.

37. But teachers can be understood by the designation of ‘hinds,’ but hearers by the term ‘wild

goats,' which are very small animals. But the wild goats bring forth in the rocks, because they are made fruitful in order to the performance of good works, by the examples of preceding fathers, in order that, if they hear perchance sublime precepts, and, conscious of their own infirmity, doubt their ability to fulfil them, they may look to the doings of their elders, and from considering their boldness, bring forth the offspring of good works. For to speak of a few instances among many, that the studious reader may learn much in few words, when such an one is hard pressed with insulting words, and is unable to maintain the virtue of patience, let him recal to his memory the conduct of David, who, when Semei was assailing him with so many insults, and the armed chieftains were striving to avenge him, says, *What have I to do with you, ye sons of Saruia? Let him curse; for the Lord hath ordered him to curse David; and who is there who dareth to say, wherefore hath he done so.* [2 Sam. 16] And a little after, *Let him alone, that he may curse according to the command of the Lord, if perchance the Lord may look on my affliction, and requite me good for this cursing to-day.* [ibid. 11, 12] In which words he plainly shews, that, when flying from his son rebelling against him, in consequence of the sins committed with Bethsabée, he recalled to his mind the evil which he had committed, and patiently submitted to what he heard, and that he believed insulting words to be not so much reproaches, as means of assistance, by which he considered that he could be purified, and have pity shewn to him. For we then bear patiently reproaches heaped on us, when we recur in the secrecy of our mind to what we have done wrong. For it will seem a light thing that we are assailed undeservedly, when we perceive in our conduct that what we deserve is much worse. And thus it comes to pass that the insults deserve our thanks rather than our anger, by whose occurrence we trust that a greater punishment can be avoided in God's judgment.

38. Behold, while another person is advancing in worldly prosperity, he feels himself assaulted with the provocations of lust, as the joy of his heart panders to his wishes; but he recalls to his memory the conduct of Joseph, and maintains himself in the stronghold of chastity. For he, when he saw that he was persuaded by his mistress to forfeit his chastity, says; *Behold my master, having given all things to me, knoweth not what he hath in his house, nor is there any thing which is not in my power, or which he hath not delivered to me, except thee, who art his wife; how then can I do this wickedness, and sin against my lord?* [Gen. 39, 8. 9.] By which words there is shewn one who suddenly brought to mind the good things he had obtained, and overcame the evil which was assailing him; and who, by bringing to mind the favour he had received, crushed the power of imminent sin. For when slippery pleasure assails us in prosperity, this very prosperity must be opposed to the sting of temptation; in order that we may be the more ashamed at committing sin, the more we call to mind that we have as a free gift received good things from God, and that we may convert the gift of outward blessings which has been conferred, into arms of virtues; that the goods we have received may be before our eyes, and that we may overcome those things that allure us. For because pleasure itself arises from prosperity, it must be struck down by a consideration of the same prosperity, in order that our enemy may perish by that same from which he takes his rise. For we must use consideration, lest we should turn into sin the gift we have received, and so, lest the whirlpool of wickedness should swallow us up, through the favour of life. For we kindle inextinguishably against us the wrath of the Heavenly Judge, if, even from His very bounty we fight against His goodness.

39. Another, seeking after the sweetness of inward knowledge, and unable to attain its secrets, looks at the life of Daniel as a pattern, and attains the desired eminence of wisdom. For he in truth

who is afterwards called, by the voice of the angel, in consequence of his eagerness after inward knowledge, *a man of desires*, [Dan 10, 11] is said to have first tamed within him the desires of the flesh in the king's court, so that he touched none of the delectable meats, but preferred a harder and rougher fare to that which was sumptuous and more delicate, [ib. 1, 8] in order that he might attain to the delight of inward nourishment, while taking from himself the pleasures of outward food, and that he might 'enjoy more eagerly the taste of wisdom within, the more firmly he had outwardly restrained his fleshly taste, for the sake of this same wisdom. For if we cut off a pleasure from the flesh, we presently find a spiritual delight. For if outward wandering is shut out, an inward retreat is laid open to the earnestness of the mind. For the more the mind is unable, on account of its discipline, to spread itself beyond itself, the more is it able to extend and advance above itself: because even a tree is compelled to grow in height, which is prevented from spreading out into branches: and when we obstruct the streams of a fountain, we provoke the streams to rise to a higher level. Whilst then thoughtful persons look at the life of Saints as a model, the wild goats drop their young on the rocks. Hence it is that Paul was exhorting his hearers to bring forth as wild goats in the rocks, when, after having enumerated the virtues of their ancestors, he was saying; *Having so great a cloud of witnesses placed over laying aside every weight, and the sin which surrounds us, let us run with patience to the contest set before.* [Heb.12, 1] And again; *Whose faith imitate, considering the end of their conversation.* [ib. 13, 7]

40. But when we conceive in our heart the Divine precepts, we do not bring them forth at once, as if already compacted solidly by thought. Whence also blessed Job is questioned not as to the bringing forth of the wild goats, but as to the time of their bringing forth. For if in truth we hardly comprehend this time in ourselves, we are much more ignorant of it in the mind of another. For the seeds of heavenly fear having been first conceived in the womb of the heart, are consolidated by studious meditation in order to remain; after that, when, having been kept firm by strict attention of thought, they proceed to reasonable discretion, they are formed, as it were, into distinct limbs; next, having been conformed by a habit of perseverance, they come, as it were, to the solidity of bones, but lastly, when strengthened by perfect authority, they proceed, as it were, to the birth. But no one observes these growths of the Divine seeds in another's heart, save Him Who creates it. For though we know, from the evidence of certain facts, that a person has conceived the might of heavenly desire, yet, when it comes forth to the birth, we cannot tell.

41. But the seeds which have been conceived in the mind frequently cannot arrive at perfection; because they precede, in their coming forth, the proper time of their birth. And because they come before the eyes of men not yet fully fashioned in thought, they die as if born out of due time. For the tongue of man frequently extinguishes virtues which are still tender, when it praises them as though already strong. For they perish the more rapidly, the more unseasonably they come forth to the knowledge of applause. But sometimes, when our imperfect and feeble thought is brought too soon before men, it is dissipated by the assault of opponents, and when it endeavours to appear to exist before the time, it causes itself not to be. But because holy men take care that all their good thoughts gain strength in secret, and first form within the womb of their mind the offspring which is about to be produced, blessed Job is rightly questioned concerning the season for bringing forth; because, namely, it is not known to any one, excepting to the Creator, what is the fitting season in each case. But He, when He looks to the secret recesses of the heart, discovers at what time our good deeds are properly brought forth to the knowledge of men. It is therefore well said; *Knowest thou the time when the wild goats bring forth in the rocks?* As if He openly said, As I, Who

therefore cause the progeny of the Elect to live, because I bring them forth at the time foreknown. But when the birth of the hearers has been completed, it is well subjoined; *Or hast thou observed the hinds when they calve?* For to observe the hinds when they calve, is to examine with careful consideration those labours of fathers, who beget spiritual children.

42. For it should be carefully noticed, that this language is so strictly attended to, that it is said, *Hast thou observed?* Because it is in truth the habit of very few to consider what labour there is in the preachings of the fathers, with what great pains, and efforts, as it were, they bring forth souls in faith and conversation; with what careful circumspection they watch themselves, that they may be resolute in their commands, sympathizing in infirmities, fearful in threats, gentle in exhortations, humble in displaying their authority, overbearing in their contempt for temporal goods, unbending in the endurance of adversity, and yet weak, when they ascribe not to themselves their own strength; how great is their pain for those that fall, how great their fear for those who stand, with what ardour they seek to gain some things, with what anxiety they preserve others which they have gained. Because, therefore, it is the habit of very few to consider these things, it is well said to him, *Or hast thou observed the kinds when they calve?*

43. But it is no objection, that God, when speaking of teachers, describes them under the type, not of stags, but of hinds. Because, doubtless, they are true teachers, who, while they are fathers through the vigour of their discipline, know how to be mothers through their bowels of compassion. Who endure the labours of holy conception, and bear within the womb of love children to be brought forth to God. For in the production of offspring mothers endure the greater labour, who bear for a long period of months the growing conception within their womb, and who deposit it, not without great pain, when it comes forth from the womb. Whence it is here also subjoined with fit consideration;

Ver. 2. *Hast thou numbered the months of their conception?*

[xi]

44. For when holy men think of the improvement of their hearers, they bear already a conception, as it were, in their womb. But when they put off some things which ought to be said, and seek a season fit for their exhortations, they are detained, as it were, by a weary length of months, from that birth which they wish to take place. And frequently when they are unwilling to express some of their sentiments to their hearers unseasonably; by this very slowness in declaring their opinion they are strengthened with greater wisdom, whether for giving this advice, or for reproving these faults. And while the life of their children is considered, but the tongue utters not the thoughts of the mind before the time, the offspring which has been already conceived grows, as it were, within the womb; in order that the sentiment of their heart may then come forth to the knowledge of the hearers, when being usefully uttered it can live, as if at the fit season for its birth. But since men are ignorant when, or how, these things take place in the mind of teachers, but God, in order to the glory of retribution, considers not only the effects, but also the seasons of thoughts, it is rightly said to blessed Job, *Hast thou numbered the months of their conception?* Thou understandest, As I, Who count in holy preachers not only the fruits of their outward doings, but their long-continued meditations themselves; Who reserve them also for retribution.

45. By months, because they are an aggregate of days, multiplied virtues can be likewise

understood. In months also the moon is new born; and there is no hindrance, if the new creating of regeneration is understood by months. Of which the Apostle Paul says, *In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.* [Gal. 6, 15] When holy men, therefore, prepare themselves for preaching, they first renew themselves within with virtues, in order to accord in their living with that which they teach in words. They first consider their own internal state, and cleanse themselves from all the filth of sin; taking special care to shine forth against anger with the light of patience, against the lust of the flesh to glitter with cleanness even of the heart, against torpor, to be bright with zeal, against the confused motions of precipitation to glow with serene gravity, against pride to shine with true humility, against fear to be brilliant with the rays of authority. Because therefore they first accumulate such attention on themselves, months of virtues pass, as it were, in the conception of holy preaching. And the Lord alone numbers these months, because no one but He Who has given these virtues, values them in their hearts. And because the produce of fruit follows according to the measure of their virtues, it is rightly subjoined;

*And hast thou known the time when they bring forth?*

[xii]

46. Thou understandest, As I, Who, when I number months in the thought of virtues, know when they are able to bring forth that which they wish to perform; because, doubtless, whilst I behold the secrets of the heart, I judge from the weight of thought within, the future result of the work without. It follows;

Ver. 3. *They bow themselves for the birth, and bring forth, and utter roarings.*

[xiii]

47. For they roar in truth, whilst by bending themselves down, they bring forth the souls of their hearers in the conversation of light; because they cannot release us from eternal punishments, except by tears and pain. For holy preachers sow in tears now, that they may afterwards reap a crop of joys. They are now like hinds in the pangs of bringing forth, that they may afterwards be fruitful in spiritual offspring. For, to speak of one out of many, I see Paul, like a hind, uttering roarings of great pain in his pangs of birth. For he says, *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you, I desire to be with you now, and to change my voice, since I am perplexed for you.* [Gal. 4, 19. 20.] Lo, he wishes to change his voice in his child-birth, that the voice of preaching may be turned into the roaring of pain. He wishes to change his voice, because those whom he had already brought forth by preaching, he was again bringing forth with groans in forming them anew. What a roaring did this travailing hind utter, when he was compelled to exclaim to these same persons, returning after him, saying, *O senseless Galatians! who hath bewitched you? and are ye so foolish, that when ye have begun in the Spirit, ye are now made perfect by the flesh?* [Gal. 3, 1. ib. 3] Or certainly; *Ye did run well; who hindered you that ye should not obey the truth?* [Gal. 5, 7] What a roaring was there in the birth-pains of this hind, which brought forth with so many difficulties her young so long conceived, and which knew they had returned, when at length brought forth, to the womb of wickedness? Let us consider what pain, what labour she suffered, who after she had had strength to bring forth what she had conceived, was, again, obliged to resuscitate them when dead.

48. But it must be particularly observed, that these hinds bow down to bring forth; doubtless, because they would not have strength to bring forth, if they were standing erect. For unless holy preachers were to come down from that boundlessness of inward contemplation which they embrace, by bending, as it were, to our infirmity, in the humblest preaching, they would surely never beget sons in the faith. For they could not benefit us, if they continued in the uprightness of their own height. But let us see the hind bending herself to bring forth. It says, *I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal; as unto babes in Christ, I have given you milk and not meat.* [1 Cor. 3, 1. 2.] And presently it mentions the causes of this bending, *For hitherto ye were not able, neither yet now are ye able.* [ibid.] But this hind, which has been bent on our account, let us, I pray you, behold erect says; *We speak wisdom among them that are perfect.* [1 Cor. 2, 6] And again, *Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God.* [2 Cor 5, 13] But when it is beside itself to God, we do not at all understand its transport. It therefore bows down to us, in order to gain us. Whence it fitly subjoins in that place, *Whether we be sober, it is for your cause.* [ibid.] For if holy men were to choose to preach to us those things which they hear, when they are intoxicated with heavenly contemplation, and did not rather temper their knowledge with some moderation and sobriety, who could receive those streams of the heavenly fount, in the still contracted channel of his understanding? But these bended hinds are called elsewhere ‘heavens,’ of which it is said, *Bow thy heavens, O Lord, and come down.* [Ps. 144, 5] For when the heavens are bowed down, the Lord descends, because, when holy preachers bend themselves in their preaching, they pour the knowledge of the Godhead into our hearts. For the Lord would not at all descend to us, if His preachers were to remain inflexible in the rigour of contemplation. The heavens are therefore bowed down, for the Lord to descend, the hinds are bent, for us to be born in the new light of faith. These bended hinds are in the Song of Songs called the breasts of the Bride, as it is written, *Thy breasts are better than wine.* [Cant. 1, 2] For they are the breasts, which, fixed on the casket of the bosom, feed us with milk; because they themselves clinging to the secrets of loftiest contemplation nourish us with subtle preaching. In order therefore to bring us back from eternal groaning and pain, the hinds are now bent down, and utter roarings as they bring forth. But because those very persons who are born by the holy preaching of fathers, sometimes precede their teachers in suffering, so that while these are still remaining in this life, they themselves are already consummated by martyrdom, it fitly follows;  
Ver. 4. *Their young ones are weaned, and go to their pasture; they go forth, and return not unto them.*

[xiv]

49. Holy Scripture terms ‘pasture’ that food of eternal verdure, where our refreshment will no longer waste away with any dryness of failing. Of which pasture it is said by the Psalmist, *The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing; He hath placed me there in a place of pasture.* [Ps. 23, 1] And again, *But we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.* [Ps. 96, 7] And of these pastures, doubtless, the Truth says, by Itself; *By Me, if any one hath entered in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and shall find pasture.* [John 10, 9] They go therefore to the pasture; because, on going forth from their bodies, they find those refreshments of eternal verdure. They go forth, and return not unto them; because, when they have been caught up in that contemplation of joys, they no longer need to hear the words of teachers. Having gone forth, therefore, they do not return to them; because, escaping the difficulties of this life, they require no longer to receive from teachers the preaching of life. For then that is fulfilled which is written, *Each man shall no longer teach his*

*neighbour, and each his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Me, from the least of them even unto the greatest, saith the Lord. [Jer. 31, 34] Then is fulfilled that which the Truth says in the Gospel, I shall declare to you plainly of My Father. [John 16, 25] For the Son in truth plainly declares of the Father; because, as we have said before, in that He is the Word, He enlightens us by the nature of the Godhead. For men seek not then for the words of teachers, which are streamlets, as it were, from the tongue of man, when they are themselves already derived from the fount of Truth Itself.*

After much then had been said, under the figurative bending down of hinds, concerning the virtue of teachers, His words are now directed to the conduct of those, who seek for the secrecy of retired conversation; to whom, since they obtain their very rest of cessation by the Divine aid, and not by their own strength, it is said by the Lord;

*Ver. 5. Who hath sent out the wild ass free, and who hath loosed his bands?*

[xv]

50. Understand, Except Myself. For the wild ass, who dwells in solitude, signifies, not inaptly, the life of those who dwell far removed from the crowds of people. And it is fitly also called free, because great is the drudgery of secular pursuits, with which the mind is grievously wearied, though it toil therein of its own accord. And to be freed from the condition of this slavery is no longer to desire any thing in this world. For prosperity while sought for, and adversities also while dreaded, oppress, as it were, with a kind of servile yoke. But if any one has but once freed the neck of his mind from the dominion of temporal desires, he enjoys already a kind of liberty even in this life, whilst he is affected by no longing for happiness, and is constrained by no dread of adversity. The Lord beheld this heavy yoke of slavery set hard on the necks of worldly men, when He was saying, *Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for My yoke is sweet, and My burden light. [Matt. 11, 28-30]* For it is, as we have said, a rough yoke, and weight of heavy bondage, to be subject to temporal concerns, to court the things of earth, to retain things which are gliding away, to wish to stand in things which stand not, to seek after passing objects, but yet to be unwilling to pass away with what are passing. For while all things, contrary to our wish, fly away, those things which had previously distressed the mind from its longing to acquire them, oppress it afterwards with the fear of loss. He therefore is set free, who, having trampled down earthly desires, is exonerated, in security of mind, from seeking after temporal things. *And who hath loosed his bands?* Thou understandest, Except Myself.

51. But the bands of each one are loosed, when by Divine help the inward bonds of carnal desires are burst asunder. For when a holy intention calls to conversion, but the infirmity of the flesh still calls back from this intention, the soul is fettered and impeded, as it were, by certain bonds. For we often see many desiring indeed a life of holy conversation, but fearing at one time the onset of present mishaps, and at another future adversities, so as to be unable to attain it. And while they look forward, as if with caution, to evils which are uncertain [read 'incerta.'], they are incautiously retained in the bands of their own sins. For they place many things before their eyes, on the occurrence of which in their course of life, they are afraid that they can not stand firm. Of whom Solomon well says; *The way of the slothful is as an hedge of thorns. [Prov. 15, 19]* For when they seek the way of God, the suspicions of their fears stand in their way, and wound them, as the thorns



of hedges which oppose them. But since this obstacle is not wont to oppose the Elect, he there proceeds to add, *The way of the righteous is without an obstacle.* [ibid.] For whatever adversity may have fallen in their way of life, the righteous stumble not against it. Because with the bound of eternal hope, and of eternal contemplation, they leap over the obstacles of temporal adversity. The Lord therefore looses the bands of the wild ass, when He tears off from the mind of each of His Elect the bonds of weak thoughts, and kindly rends asunder every thing which was binding his enchanted mind. It follows ;

Ver. 6. *To whom I have given a house in the solitude, and his tabernacles in the land of saltness.*

[xyi]

52. Ought we in this place to understand the solitude of the body, or the solitude of the heart? But what avails the solitude of the body, if the solitude of the heart be wanting? For he who lives bodily removed from the world, but yet plunges into the tumults of human conversation with the thoughts of worldly desires, is not in solitude. But if any one be bodily oppressed with crowds of people, and yet suffers from no tumults of worldly cares in his heart, he is not in a city. To those therefore of good conversation solitude of mind is first granted, in order that they may keep down within the rising din of worldly desires, that they may restrain by the grace of heavenly love the cares of the heart which bubble up from its lowest depths, and drive away from the eyes of the mind with the hand of gravity, all the motions of trifling thoughts which importunately present themselves, as flies which are flitting around them: and may seek for themselves some secret spot with the Lord within, there to speak with Him silently by their inward longings, when the noise is still from without.

53. Of this secret place of the heart it is said elsewhere; *There became silence in heaven for about half an hour.* [Rev. 8, 1] For the Church of the Elect is called 'heaven,' which, as it rises to eternal and sublime truths by the elevation of contemplation, abates the tumults of thoughts which are springing up from below, and makes a kind of silence within itself for God. And since this silence of contemplation cannot be perfect in this life, it is said to have been made for half an hour. For whilst the tumultuous noises of thoughts force themselves into the mind against its will, they violently draw the eye of the mind, even when steadily fixed on things above, to view again those of earth. Whence it is written; *The corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly habitation weigheth down the sense that museth on many things.* [Wisd. 9, 15] This silence is therefore well described as having been made not for a whole, but for 'a half hour:' because contemplation is never perfected here, however ardently it be begun. Which is also suitably described by the Prophet Ezekiel, who witnesses that he saw in the hand of a man, for the measure of the city built on the mountain, a reed of six cubits and a span. [Ez. 40, 5] For the Church is in truth situated on the mountain of the Elect, because it is not founded on the lowest desires. But what is pointed out by the cubit, except work, and what by the number six but the perfection of the work, because the Lord also is said on the sixth day to have completed all His works? What therefore does the span beyond the six cubits suggest, but the power of contemplation, which shews to us already the beginning of the eternal and seventh rest? For because the contemplation of eternal things is not here perfected, the measure of the seventh cubit is not completed. Because therefore the Church of the Elect completes all things which require to be done, the city presents itself as placed in six cubits on the mountain. But because it here beholds as yet only the beginnings of contemplation, of the seventh cubit it reaches only the span.

54. But it ought to be known that we do not at all reach the height of contemplation, if we cease not from the oppression of outward care. We do not at all look into ourselves, so as to know that there is within us one rational part that rules, another animal part which is ruled, unless we are made dead to all outward disturbance by returning to the secresy of this silence. Which silence of ours Adam also when sleeping rightly typified, out of whose side the woman presently came. [Gen. 2, 21. 22.] Because, whoever is hurried forward to the understanding of things within, closes his eyes to visible objects: and he then distinguishes in himself those qualities which ought either to rule manfully, or those which, as being weak, can submit: that there is one part of him which has power to rule as a man, another to be ruled, as a woman. In this silence of the heart, then, while we are awake inwardly by contemplation, we are sleeping, as it were, outwardly. Because then men who are separated, that is who are freed from carnal desires, inhabit this silence of the heart, the Lord gave to this wild ass a house in the solitude, that he might not be oppressed with a crowd of temporal desires.

55. It follows, *And his tabernacles in the land of saltness*. Saltness is wont to kindle thirst. And because holy men, as long as they dwell in the tabernacles of this life, are inflamed by the daily warmth of their desire to seek their heavenly country, they are said to have their tabernacles in the land of saltness. For they are in truth incessantly inflamed, in order to thirst, they thirst to be satisfied, as it is written, *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*. [Matt. 5, 6] It follows;  
Ver. 7. *He scorneth the multitude of the city*.

[xvii]

56. To scorn the multitude of the city, is to avoid the evil employments of human conversation, so as no longer to take pleasure in imitating the abandoned manners of earthly men, who, through the abundance of iniquity, are many. For they desire to enter, with the few, the narrow gate, and seek not, with the many, to enter the broad roads which lead to destruction. For they carefully behold by Whom, and for what, they are created; and from a right consideration of the image they have received, they disdain to follow the vulgar herd. Whence it is said by the voice of the Bridegroom to the Bride, in the Song of Songs, *If thou knowest not thyself, O beautiful among women, go forth, and go thy way after the footsteps of the flocks, and feed thy kids*. [Cant. 1, 8] For she who is beautiful among women knows herself, when every Elect soul, though placed amongst sinners, remembers that it was fashioned after the image and similitude of its Creator, and goes on, in accordance with the similitude it has perceived. But if it knows not itself, it goes forth; because, being expelled from the secret recess of its own heart, it is dissipated by outward objects of desire. But when it has gone forth, it goeth after the footsteps of the flocks, because namely, forsaking its own inward thoughts, it is led to the broad way, and follows the examples of the peoples. And it no longer feeds lambs, but kids, because it strives to nourish, not the harmless thoughts of the mind, but the evil motions of the flesh. Because then every Elect and continent person scorns to go after the footsteps of the herds, let it be rightly said, *He scorneth the multitude of the city*. Where it is also fitly subjoined; *He heareth not the cry of the exactor*.

[xviii]

57. What other exactor can be understood, but the devil, who once offered to man in paradise the coin of evil persuasion, and seeks to exact from him daily the guilt of this debt? The word of this exactor is the beginning of evil persuasion. The cry of this exactor is temptation, no longer gentle, but violent. This exactor cries out, when he tempts mightily. Not to hear then the voice of the exactor, is not at all to consent to the violent emotions of temptations. For a man would hear, if he were to do the things which he suggests. But when he scorns to do perversely, it is rightly said, *He heareth not. the cry of the exactor.*

58. But some persons in this place wish the belly to be understood by the exactor. For it exacts from us a kind of debt; because it requires even by nature the daily fruit of human labour to be spent on it. Whilst abstinent men, then, who in this place are typified by the word 'wild ass,' repress by force the desires of the appetite, they contemn, as it were, the words of the clamouring exactor. But since many contests of virtues against innumerable vices befall the continent man, why, in speaking of the cry of the exactor being despised, is it said of the belly alone, that he restrains its impulse and assault, except that no one gains the palm of the spiritual contest, unless he has first conquered the incentives of the flesh, by afflicting the concupiscence of the belly? For we cannot stand up to the conflict of the spiritual contest, unless the enemy who is posted within, that is to say, the appetite of gluttony, is first conquered; because if we overthrow not those evils which are nearer to us, we doubtless proceed in vain to attack those which are further off. For war is in vain waged in the plain against outward foes, if a treacherous citizen is retained within the very walls of the city. The mind also of the combatant is itself kept back, by the grievous disgrace of confusion, from engaging in the spiritual contest, when, feeble in its battle with the flesh, it is wounded and overcome by the swords of gluttony. For when it sees itself defeated by trifles, it is ashamed to engage in greater dangers.

59. But some, ignorant of the order of the contest, neglect to tame their appetite, and proceed at once to spiritual battles. And though they sometimes display many acts of great bravery, yet from the sin of gluttony ruling over them, they lose, by the allurements of the flesh, all that they have done boldly; and, while the belly is not restrained, all their virtues are overwhelmed at once by the lust of the flesh. Whence it is written also of the victory of Nahuchodonosor, *The chief of the cooks destroyed the walls of Jerusalem.* [2 Kings 25, 8] For what does Scripture signify and express by the walls of Jerusalem, but the virtues of a soul which is tending to the vision of peace? [Jer. 52, 12. Oxf. Mss. om. 'de.'] Or who is understood by the chief of the cooks, but the belly, which is served with most diligent care by cooks? The chief of the cooks then destroys the walls of Jerusalem, because the belly, when it is not restrained, destroys the virtues of the soul. Hence is it that Paul was withdrawing the strength of the chief of the cooks, who was contending against the walls of Jerusalem, when he was saying, *I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perchance having preached to others, I myself become a cast-away.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] Hence he also premised, saying, *I so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I, not as if beating the air.* [ib. 26] Because when we restrain the flesh, we beat with these blows of our abstinence not the air, but unclean spirits; and when we subject that which is within us, we inflict blows ['pugnos'] on adversaries set without. Hence is it that when the king of Babylon orders the furnace to be kindled, he commands a heap of bitumen, tow, pitch, and firebrands to be furnished. But yet he consumes not in this fire the abstinent youths; [Dan. 4, 27] because, though the ancient enemy presents to our view innumerable desires of dainties, to increase the fire of lust, yet the grace of the Holy Spirit breathes into holy minds, in order that they may remain uninjured by the heats of carnal concupiscence: so that though

the flame may burn so far as to tempt the heart, yet the temptation may not blaze forth as far as to consent.

60. It should also be known, that the vice of gluttony tempts us in five ways. For it sometimes anticipates the seasons of want: but sometimes does not anticipate them, but seeks for daintier food. Sometimes it looks for those things, which must be taken, to be prepared more carefully; but sometimes it agrees with both the quality of, and the season for, its food, but exceeds, in the quantity of what is to be taken, the measure of moderate refreshment. But sometimes that which it longs for is even of a baser kind, and yet it sins more fatally through the heat of unbounded desire. For Jonathan deserved in truth the sentence of death from the mouth of his father, because in staking honey he anticipated the time which had been fixed for eating. [1 Sam. 14, 44] And the people which had been brought out of Egypt, died in the desert, because it despised the manna, and sought for fleshly food, which it counted more delicate. And the first fault of the sons of Eli arose from this, that the servant, at their desire, would not receive cooked meat for the priest, after the ancient custom, but sought for raw flesh, for him to serve up with greater daintiness. [1 Sam. 2, 15] And when it is said to Jerusalem, *This was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance*, [Ez. 16, 49] it is plainly shewn that she forfeited her salvation, because, with the sin of pride, she exceeded the measure of moderate refreshment. And Esau lost the glory of the birth-right, because he desired mean food, namely, lentils, with great eagerness of longing; and when he preferred this, even to selling his birth-right, he shewed with what eagerness he was panting after it. [Gen. 25, 34] For it is not the food, but the desire that is in fault. Whence also we frequently take some delicate fare without blame, and take a taste of meaner food, not without guilt of conscience. For this Esau, whom we have spoken of, lost in truth his birth-right, through lentils, and Elias preserved the virtue of his body by eating flesh in the desert. Whence also the ancient enemy, because he knows that it is not food, but the desire of food, that is the cause of damnation, both subjected the first man to himself, not with flesh, but an apple; and tempted the second Man not with flesh, but with bread. Hence it is that the fault of Adam is commonly committed, even when mean and worthless food is taken. For it is not Adam alone who has received the prohibiting command to abstain from the forbidden fruit. For when God points out certain aliments as injurious to our health, He, by a kind of sentence, forbids us to use them. And while we desire and taste noxious food, what else do we do in truth but eat of what is forbidden?

61. Those things must therefore be taken, which the necessity of nature requires, and not those which gluttony suggests. But it is a great effort of discretion to give this exactor something, and yet to refuse him something: both to restrain gluttony by not giving, and by giving to support nature. And this discretion is perhaps suggested, when it is said; *He heareth not the cry of the exactor*. For the word of this exactor is the necessary demand of nature. But his cry is the appetite of gluttony going beyond the measure of necessity. This wild ass then hears the word of this exactor, and hears not his cry; because a discreet and abstinent man both supplies his belly so far as to temper his need, and restrains it from pleasure.

62. But it should be known that pleasure so veils itself under necessity, that a perfect man can scarce discern it. For whilst necessity asks for a debt to be paid, pleasure secretly demands a longing to be fulfilled; it hurries the appetite onward the more fearlessly, the more it conceals itself under the creditable profession of relieving a necessity. But frequently pleasure secretly attached follows behind in the very course of eating; though sometimes impudently free it endeavours even

to go first. But it is easy to discover when pleasure anticipates its necessity, though very difficult to discern when it secretly connects itself with that very eating which is necessary. For because it follows the natural appetite which goes first, it seems, as it were, to advance slowly behind. For at that time, when the demand of necessity is paid, because pleasure is, through eating, blended with necessity, it is not known what necessity demands itself, and what (as has been said) pleasure secretly demands. But we frequently both distinguish them, and yet, from knowing that they are mutually connected together, take pleasure, when hurried beyond proper bounds, in being wittingly deceived: and whilst the mind flatters itself on the necessity, it is deceived by pleasure. For it is written; *Make not provision for the flesh in the desires thereof.* [Rom. 13, 14] That therefore which is forbidden to be done in desire, is yielded in necessity.

63. But often, whilst we incautiously condescend to necessity, we are enslaved to desires. And sometimes, while we endeavour to oppose our desires too immoderately, we increase the miseries of necessity. For it is necessary for a man so to maintain the citadel of continence, as to destroy, not the flesh, but the vices of the flesh. For frequently, when the flesh is restrained more than is just, it is weakened even for the exercise of good works, so as to be unequal to prayer also or preaching, whilst it hastens to put out entirely the incentives of vices within itself. For this very man, whom we hear outwardly, we have as the assistant of our inward intention, and both the motions of wantonness are within it, and there also abound in it the appliances of good works. But often, whilst we attack an enemy therein, we kill a citizen also whom we love; and often while we spare, as it were, a fellow-citizen, we nurture an enemy for battle. For our vices become proud upon the same food, on which our virtues are nourished and live. And when a virtue is nourished, the strength of our vices is frequently increased. But when unbounded abstinence weakens the power of vices, our virtue also faints and pants. Whence it is necessary for our inward man to preside, as a kind of impartial arbiter between itself, and him whom it hears without: in order that its outward man may both be always able to serve at its appointed ministry, and never proudly oppose it with unshackled neck; nor be moved if it whispers any suggestion, provided it always tramples it down with the heel of authority stamped upon it. And thus, whilst we allow our vices, when checked, to struggle against us, and yet prohibit their engaging with us on equal terms, it comes to pass that neither our vices prevail against our virtue, nor does our virtue again settle down to rest with entire extinction of our vices. In which way alone our pride [or 'pride alone'] is utterly extinguished, because though it may serve for victory, yet a continual fight is reserved for us, to keep down the pride of our thoughts. And hence, because every abstinent person both complies with the demands of necessity, and yet opposes violent pleasure, it is well said in this place also by the voice of the Lord, *He heareth not the cry of the exactor.* But since a discreet person raises himself the more to the understanding of higher things, the more he chastises in himself the incentives of the flesh, after his scorning the cry of the exactor, it is rightly subjoined ;  
Ver. 8. *He looks round on the mountains of his pasture.*

[xix]

64. The mountains of his pasture are the lofty contemplations of inward refreshment. For the more holy men abase themselves outwardly with contempt, the more abundantly are they supported within with the contemplation of revelations. Whence it is written; *He hath disposed the ascents in his heart in the valley of tears;* [Ps. 84, 6] because those, whom the valley of humility outwardly imprisons in tears, the ascent of contemplation elevates within. The mountains of pasture are also

the lofty powers of angels: which therefore refresh us here by ministering and assisting, because they are fattened there with the inward dew of contemplation. And because, by the bounty of God, they protect us in every contest, they are well said to be beheld around. For we behold them present on all sides around us, by whose defence we are protected against our adversaries on every side. The mountains of pasture can be taken, still further, for the lofty sentences of Holy Scripture, of which it is said by the Psalmist; *The high hills for the stags*, [Ps. 104, 18] because those who know already how to make the leaps of contemplation, ascend the lofty summits of the Divine sentences, as the tops of mountains. And because the feeble cannot reach in truth to these tops, it is there rightly subjoined, *the rock is a refuge for the urchins*, because, namely, their understanding does not sublimely exercise the feeble, but faith alone in Christ humbly keeps them in. It follows; *He searcheth after every green thing*.

[xx]

65. For parched in truth are all things, which, fashioned for a time, are dried up from the sweetness of the present life by the coming end, as if by the summer sun. But those are called green, which fade not away by any shortness of existence. For this wild ass then to seek every green thing, is for each holy man, despising transitory things, to long for those which are to endure for ever.

But all these things which have been said of the wild ass, can be understood in another way also. Which we explain, having repeated the former verse, in order to leave to the judgment of the reader what he believes is to be preferred. After, then, the dispensation of preachers has been described under the figure of hinds, to shew by Whom this same virtue of preaching is given, the mention of our Lord's Incarnation is immediately subjoined, so that it is said, Ver. 5. *Who hath sent out the wild ass free?*

[xxi]

66. Nor let any consider it unbecoming that the Incarnate Lord can be typified by such an animal; whilst it is admitted by all that He is spoken of, in Holy Scripture, as, in a certain sense, both a worm and a beetle. As it is written; *But I am a worm, and no man*. [Ps. 22, 6] And as it is said by the Prophet in the Septuagint, *A beetle cried out from the wood*. [Hab. 2, 11. LXX.] Since then He is typified by the mention of such vile and abject things, what is said offensively of Him, of Whom it is admitted that nothing is said appropriately? For He is called a lamb, but it is for His innocence. He is called a lion, but it is for His might. He is also sometimes compared to a serpent, but it is for His death, or for His wisdom. And He can therefore be spoken of figuratively by all these, because none of all these can be essentially believed of Him. For were He to be really one of these essentially, He could no longer be termed another. For were He properly called a lamb, He could no longer be called a lion. If He were properly called a lion, He would not be signified by a serpent. But we say all these things of Him in figure, with the greater latitude, the further removed they are from His essence. The wild ass can therefore designate the Incarnate Lord. For the wild ass is an animal of the fields. And because the Incarnate Lord profited the Gentiles more than the Jews, when, assuming a living body ['corpus animale'], He went, as it were, not into the house, but rather into the field. Of which field of the Gentiles it is said by the Psalmist; *The beauty of the field is with Me*. [Ps. 50, 11] The Incarnate Lord therefore, Who in the form of God is equal to the Father, is in the form of a servant less than the Father, in which He is also less than Himself. Let it be said

therefore by the Father of the Son in the form of a servant; *Who hath sent out the wild ass free, and who hath loosed his bands?* For every one who sins is the servant of sin. And because the Incarnate Lord was made partaker of our nature, not of our sin, He is said to have been sent forth free, because He is not held under the dominion of sin. Of Whom it is written elsewhere; *Free among the dead.* [Ps. 88, 5] He is said to have been sent forth free, because taking our nature, He is not at all held by the yoke of iniquity. And though the stain of our guilt touched Him not, yet the suffering of our mortality bound Him. Whence also after He is said to have been sent forth free, it is rightly added of Him; *And who hath loosed His bands?*

[xxii]

67. For His bands were then in truth loosened, when the infirmities of His Passion were changed into the glory of His Resurrection. For the Lord had those infirmities of our mortal state, which we endure as the desert of our iniquity, as a kind of bands with which He wished of His own accord to be bound, even to death, and which He loosed marvellously by His Resurrection. For to be hungry, to thirst, to be weary, to be bound, to be scourged, and to be crucified, was the bond of our mortality. But when on the completion of His death the veil of the temple was rent, the rocks were cleft, the tombs were opened, the barriers of hell were laid bare, what else is shewn by so many arguments of such mighty power, but that those bands of our infirmity were loosened, that He, Who had come to take on Him the form of a servant, might return in freedom to heaven even with His members? Of which bonds of His the Apostle Peter witnesses, saying, *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of hell, because it was not possible for Him to be holden of it.* [Acts 2, 24] And because after His Death and Resurrection He deigned to call the Gentiles to the grace of faith, after His bands are said to have been loosened, it is fitly subjoined ;  
Ver. 6. *To Whom I have given a house in the solitude, and His tabernacle in the land of saltiness.*

[xxiii]

68. For in the Gentile world, in which there was no Patriarch, no Prophet, there was hardly a man to exercise his reason to gain a knowledge of God. Of this solitude it is said by Isaiah; *The desert and the pathless land shall rejoice, and the solitude shall exult and blossom as the lily.* [Is. 35, 1] And again it is said of the Church; *He will make her desert as delights, and her solitude as the garden of the Lord.* [Is. 51, 3] But this same solitude, which, before it knew the true wisdom of God, had brought forth saltiness, is mentioned again as a land of saltiness; because it produced no verdure of good understanding, and savoured only of what was wrong. He receives therefore his house in the solitude, and His tabernacle in the land of saltiness, because God when Incarnate for men, forsook Judaea, and possessed the hearts of the Gentiles. Whence it is said to Him by the voice of the Father, through the Prophet; *Ask of Me, and I will give thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Thy possession.* [Ps. 2, 8] Who, as He is God, gives all things with the Father, as He is Man, receives of the Father among all things, as it is written; *He hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.* [John 5, 27] And it is written again; *Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands.* [John 13, 3] Or as He Himself says; *All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me.* [John 6, 37] But if it is now asked what is the difference between a house and a tabernacle; a house is for a dwelling place, a tabernacle for a journey. He possessed therefore on His coming the hearts of the Gentiles as if they were tabernacles, but, strengthening them by righteousness, He made them His house by inhabiting. And

because He scorned to imitate the conduct of those to whom He had come, it is rightly subjoined;  
Ver. 7. *He scorneth the multitude of the city.*

[xxiv]

69. That is, He despises the customs of human conversation. For having been made a Man amongst men, He refused to observe the practice of men. For He was therefore made a Man amongst us, not only to redeem us by the shedding of His blood, but also to change us by setting an example. He found therefore one thing in our conversation at His coming, and taught us another by His life. For all the progeny of the haughty race of Adam were striving to seek after the prosperity of the present life, to avoid its adversities, to escape disgrace, to follow glory. The Incarnate Lord came amongst them courting adversity, scorning prosperity, embracing insults, flying from glory. For when the Jews had wished to make Him their king, He shrunk from being a king. But when they were endeavouring to kill Him, He came of His own accord to the scaffold of the cross. He therefore avoided that which all seek after, He sought after that which all avoid; He caused all to marvel that both He Himself rose again when dead, and by His death raised others from death. For there are in truth two lives of a man who exists in the body, one before death, the other after the resurrection; one of which all practically knew, but knew not the other; and mankind were directing their thoughts to that only which they knew. The Lord came in the flesh, and while He took on Himself the one, He pointed out the other. While He took on Himself that which was known to us, He pointed out to us that which was unknown to us. For by His dying He practised that life which we possess, by rising again He disclosed that life for which we are to seek, instructing us by His example, that this life which we pass before our death, is not to be loved on its own account, but to be tolerated on account of the other. Because then, by practising a new conversation amongst men, He followed not the customs of Babylon, it is well written of Him, *He scorneth the multitude of the city.*

70. Or certainly, because He forsook the many who were wandering along the broad way, and chose the few who were walking through narrow paths. For to 'scorn the multitude of the city,' is to reject from a share in His Kingdom that portion of mankind which enters the broad way, which also through the abundance of iniquity is many. It follows;  
*He heareth not the cry of the exactor.*

[xxv]

71. As was said before, what exactor can be understood in this place, but the devil? who by his wicked persuasion held out the hope of immortality, but by deceiving exacted the tribute of death; who by his persuasion introduced sin, by his cruelty exacts punishment. The word of this exactor is his crafty persuasion of man before death, but his 'cry' is his violent seizure of him after death. For those whom he secretly intercepts before death, he violently hurries to share with him his punishment after death. But because the Lord when drawing near to death feared not the violent assaults of this exactor, (as He Himself says, *For the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me,*) [John 14, 30] it is well said, *He heareth not the cry of the exactor.* For the exactor of mankind came to Him, because he saw Him to be a man. But Him Whom He believed to be a man despised for His weakness, he felt, by his power, to be above man.



72. Laban doubtless represented this exactor, when coming with wrath, he demanded his idols which were with Jacob. [Gen. 31, 30] For Laban is interpreted 'whitening.' But the devil is appropriately understood by whitening, who though dark through his deserts, transforms himself into an angel of light. [2 Cor. 11, 14] Him did Jacob serve, that is, the Jewish people, on the part of the reprobate, from whose flesh the Lord Incarnate came. But by Laban can this world also be represented, which follows Jacob with fury, because it endeavours to oppress by persecution all the Elect, who are members of our Redeemer. Jacob carried off the daughter of this person, that is, either of the world or of the devil, when Christ united to Himself the Church from the Gentile world. Whom he takes away also from the house of her father, because He says to her by the Prophet; *Forget thine own people, and thy father's house.* [Ps. 45, 10] But what is designated by idols but avarice? Whence it is said by Paul; *And covetousness, which is idolatry.* [Col. 3, 5] Laban therefore on coming found not the idols upon Jacob, because when the devil displayed the treasures of the world, he found not in our Redeemer the traces of earthly concupiscence. [Gen. 31, 33] But those idols which Jacob had not, Rachel covered by sitting. [ib. 34] For by Rachel, which also means 'a sheep,' is typified the Church. But to sit, is to seek after the humility of penitence, as it is written; *Arise, after ye have sat down.* [Ps. 127, 2] Rachel therefore covered the idols by sitting, because Holy Church, by following Christ, covered, with penitence, the vices of earthly concupiscence. Of this covering of vices it is said by the Psalmist; *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* [Ps. 32, 1] That Rachel then signified us, who press down idols by sitting, if we condemn the sins of covetousness by penitence. But this covetousness is not wont to befall those, who run like men in the way of the Lord, to whom it is said; *Do manfully, and let your heart be strengthened;* [Ps. 31, 24] but those especially who walking, as it were, with effeminate step, are relaxed by the blandishments of the world. Whence also in that place these are the words of this same Rachel, *According to the custom of women it now is happening to me.* [Gen. 31, 35] Laban therefore finds not the idols upon Jacob, because the crafty exactor found nothing to blame in our Redeemer. Of which exactor it is said to our Redeemer by the Prophet, when He was delivering the Gentile world from his dominion; *For thou hast overcome the yoke of his burden, and the rod of his shoulder, and the sceptre of his oppressor, as in the day of Madian.* [Is. 9, 4] For the Lord in rescuing the Gentile world, overcame the yoke of its burden, when He delivered it, by His coming, from that bondage to the tyranny of the devil. He overcame the rod of its shoulder, when He kept his blow, which was oppressing it heavily in consequence of wickedness, from redeemed mankind. He overcame the sceptre of its oppressor, when He swept away from the heart of the faithful, that kingdom of the same devil, who had been wont to exact the due tribute of punishments for the fatal perpetration of sins.

73. But let us hear how these things were done. It is immediately subjoined, *As in the day of Madian.* I think it will not be amiss if we consider at greater length this war of the Madianites, which was intentionally introduced by the Prophet in comparison with the coming of the Lord. For in the book of Judges Gedeon is described as having fought against the Madianites. [Judg. 7, 1-22] When he was bringing forth the multitude of the army to war, he was ordered by a Divine admonition, to remove from the conflict of battle all whom on coming to the water he beheld drinking the water with bended knees. And the result was, that only three hundred men remained, who had drunk the water in their hands, standing. With these he proceeds to the battle, and he equipped them not with arms, but with trumpets, lamps, and pitchers. For, as is there written, they placed the lighted lamps in the pitchers, and held their trumpets in their right hand, but their pitchers in their left, and on coming close to their enemies, they sounded with the trumpets, they

brake the pitchers, the lamps appeared: and their enemies alarmed on one hand with the sound of the trumpets, and on the other by the glittering of the lamps, were turned to flight. Why then is it that such a battle is brought forward by the Prophet, and why is victory in that battle compared to the coming of our Redeemer? Did the Prophet intend to point out to us that that victorious battle under the command of Gedeon was a type of the coming of our Redeemer? Such deeds were doubtless there wrought, which, the more they exceed the usual mode of fighting, are the less removed from the mystery of prophecy. For who ever went forth to battle with pitchers and lamps? Who, when going against arms, ever abandoned his arms? These things would have been truly absurd to us, had they not been terrible to the enemies. But we have learned by the evidence of the victory itself, not to regard these things which were done as of little account. Gedeon, therefore, coming to the battle, signifies to us the coming of our Redeemer, of Whom it is written; *Lift up, O princes, your gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty. The Lord mighty in battle.* [Ps. 24, 7. 8.] He prophesied of our Redeemer, not only by his doings, but also by his name. For Gedeon is interpreted 'going about in the womb.' For our Lord embraces all things by the power of His majesty, and yet He came, through the grace of the dispensation assuming man's nature in the womb of the Virgin. Who then is He Who goes about in the womb, except Almighty God, redeeming us by His own dispensation, embracing all things by His Godhead, and taking man's nature in the womb? In which womb He was both Incarnate, and not confined; because He was both within the womb by the substance of His infirmity, and beyond the world by the power of His majesty. But Madian is interpreted 'from judgment.' For that His enemies were to be repulsed and destroyed, was not from the imperfection of their conqueror, but from the judgment of Him, Who judgeth rightly. And for this reason they are called 'from judgment:' because, being aliens from the grace of the Redeemer, they bear, even in their designation, the desert of just condemnation.

74. Against these Gedeon proceeds to battle with three hundred men. The plenitude of perfection is usually understood by the number 'hundred.' What then is designated by the number hundred taken thrice, except the perfect knowledge of the Trinity? For with those our Lord destroys the adversaries of the faith, with those comes down to the contests of preaching, who can understand Divine truths, who know how to think accurately of the Trinity, Which is God. But we must observe, that this number three hundred is comprised in the letter Tau ["T" or in the Greek but not in the Hebrew character], which bears a resemblance of the cross. For if there were added over the transverse line, the projecting part of the cross, it would no longer be a resemblance of the cross, but the cross itself. Because then that number of three hundred is comprised in the letter Tau, and by the letter Tau, as we have said, a resemblance of the cross is set forth, by those three hundred followers of Gedeon, those persons are not inappropriately designated, to whom it is said, *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.* [Luke 9, 23] And these take up the cross more truly, as they follow the Lord, the more severely they both tame themselves, and are tortured with the compassion of charity towards their neighbours. Whence it is said also by the prophet Ezekiel, *Mark Tau upon the foreheads of the men that groan and lament.* [Ez. 9, 4] Or certainly, by these three hundred who are comprised in the letter Tau, it is expressed that the sword of the enemy is overcome by the wood of the cross. And they are brought to the river, to drink the waters; and whoever drank the waters with bended knees, were removed from the struggle of war. For by the waters is designated the doctrine of wisdom, but by the unbended knee righteous conduct. They therefore who are reported to have bent their knees, while drinking the water, retired from the strife of battles, having been forbidden; because Christ proceeds to battle

against the enemies of the faith, with those who when they drink the streams of doctrine, distort not the uprightness of their actions. For all are said at that time to have drunk the water, but not all to have stood with unbended knee. And they who bent their knees, while they were drinking the waters, were rejected, because, as the Apostle witnesses, *For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law will be justified.* [Rom. 2, 13] For since dissoluteness of conduct is, as we have said, signified by this very bending of the knees, it is rightly again said by Paul, *Lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet.* [Heb. 12, 12] They therefore proceed, under Christ as their leader, to battle, who exhibit in their conduct that which they profess with their mouths, who drink spiritually the streams of doctrine, and yet are not carnally distorted by wicked works; because, as it is written, *Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner.* [Ecclus. 15, 9]

75. They go forth therefore to battle with trumpets, with lamps, and with pitchers. This, as we have said, was an unusual order of battle. They sounded with the trumpets, and the pitchers were held in their left hands. But lamps were placed within the pitchers; but, when the pitchers were broken, the lamps appeared, and by their flashing light the affrighted enemies are put to flight. By the trumpets is designated therefore the loud voice of preachers, by the lamps the brightness of their miracles, by the pitchers the frailness of their bodies. For our Leader led forth with Him, to the contest of preaching, such as by making light of their bodily safety, would overthrow their enemies by dying, and would overcome their swords, not by arms, not by words, but by patience. For our Martyrs came armed under their Leader to battle, but armed with trumpets, with pitchers, with lamps. And they sounded with their trumpets, when preaching; they broke their pitchers, when exposing their bodies to dissolution by the swords of the enemy in their suffering; they shone forth with lamps, when after the dissolution of their bodies they flashed forth with miracles. And their enemies were presently put to flight, because, when they beheld the bodies of dead Martyrs glittering with miracles, they were overpowered by the light of truth, and believed that which they had impugned. They sounded therefore with the trumpets, that the pitchers might be broken; the pitchers were broken, that the lamps might appear; the lamps appeared, that the enemies might be put to flight. That is, the Martyrs preached, till their bodies were dissolved in death; their bodies were dissolved in death, that they might shine forth with miracles; they shone forth with miracles, that they might overthrow their enemies with divine light; so that they might no longer stand up and resist God, but submit to, and be afraid of, Him.

76. And it must be observed, that the enemies stood firm before the pitchers, but fled before the lamps; doubtless because the persecutors of Holy Church resisted the preachers of the faith while yet in the body, but were put to flight by the miracles which were manifested after the dissolution of their bodies, because, terrified by fear, they ceased from persecuting the faithful. They were afraid, in truth, at the lamps of miracles which appeared, when the pitchers of their bodies had been broken, at the preaching of the trumpets.

77. We must also notice that which is there written; that they held the trumpets in their right hand, but the pitchers in their left. For we are said to have on the right hand, whatever we consider a great thing; but on the left, that which we regard as nothing. It is therefore well written in that place, that they held the trumpets in their right hand, but the pitchers in their left; because the Martyrs of Christ consider the grace of preaching as a great thing, but the benefit of their bodies as of the least moment. But whoever thinks more of the benefit of the body, than of the grace of preaching, holds

the trumpet in his left hand, but the pitcher in his right. For if the grace of preaching is attended to in the first place, and in the next place the benefit of the body, it is certain that the trumpets are held in the right hand, and the pitchers in the left. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, *Neither do they light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick.* [Matt. 5, 15] For by a bushel is understood temporal advantage, but by a candle the light of preaching. To place therefore a light under a bushel, is, for the sake of temporal advantage, to conceal the grace of preaching, which none of the Elect surely does. And it is well there added, *But upon a candlestick.* For by a candlestick is designated the position of the body, on which a candle is placed above, when the duty of preaching is preferred to the body. It is therefore well said by the Prophet, *Thou hast overcome the sceptre of his oppressor, as in the day of Madian.* [Is. 9, 4] But since we have made a long digression for the sake of expounding the testimony of the Prophet, let us return to the regular order of our work. After, therefore, it was said, *He heareth not the cry of the exactor;* because, namely, our Lord when manifested in the flesh despised the snares of the great enemy, He rightly subjoins what He did further in behalf of His Elect, saying;  
Ver. 8. *He looketh around on the mountains of His pasture.*

[xxvi]

78. Mountains we understand to be all the lofty ones of this world, who were swollen in their hearts with earthly loftiness. But since the Lord engrains ['inviscerat'] even such, when converted, into the body of His Church, and, turning them from their former pride, transforms them into His own members, these are mountains of His pasture; doubtless, because He is satisfied with the conversion of the wandering, and the humility of the proud. As He Himself says, *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me.* [John 4, 34] And as He commanded the Apostles, when sent forth to preach, saying, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto eternal life.* [John 6, 27] Of these mountains it is said by the Prophet, *The Lord will not reject His people, for in His hand are all the ends of the earth, and the heights of the hills He beholdeth.* [Ps. 95, 4. LXX.] For the heights of the mountains are surely the loftinesses of the proud. Which the Lord is said to behold, that is, to change from their iniquity for the better. For the Lord converts the person whom He looks on. Whence it is written, *The Lord turned, and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny Me thrice; and he went out, and wept bitterly.* [Luke 22, 61. 62.] And as Solomon says, *A King that sitteth on the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with His look.* [Prov. 20, 8] Of this looking at the mountains it is said again by the Prophet, *The mountains melted like wax from the face of the Lord;* [Ps. 97, 5] because, after the hardness of their perversity, they were melted by the Divine fear, and subsided from their former rigid swelling.

79. But we must observe, that He does not say, 'beholdeth,' but *looketh round on the mountains of His pasture.* For the Lord was in truth Incarnate in Judaea, which was placed in the midst of the nations. And He therefore looked round on the mountains, because He gathered together, from the whole body of the Gentiles, the proud of this world situated every where around. He feeds therefore in these mountains; because He is satiated with the good works of the converted, as if with green herbs. Hence is it that it is said to Him by the voice of the Bride in the Song of Songs, *Shew me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest at noon.* [Cant. 1, 7] For the Lord is fed, when He is delighted with our good deeds. But He lies down at noon, when, after the heart of the reprobate burning with carnal desires, He finds the cool refreshment of holy thought in the breasts of His Elect. For

Matthew had been a kind of mountain, when he was swelling with the profits of the custom house; of whom it is also written, that after he believed, he invited our Lord into his house, and made a great feast. [Luke 5, 29] This mountain therefore produced for this wild ass the herbs of green pasture, because he fed Him outwardly with a feast, and inwardly with banquets of virtues. And this is set forth still more fully, when it is subjoined;  
*He searcheth after every green thing.*

[xxvii]

80. For He deserts the parched places, and searches for every green thing. For parched are those hearts of men, which, planted in the perishing hope of this world, have no assurance of eternity. But those flourish, which cling to that inheritance of which the Apostle Peter says; *To an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.* [1 Pet. 1, 4] For they are more truly green, the more they plant the root of thought in the portion of an inheritance that fadeth not away. Let every one therefore, who dreads being parched within, fly from the barren desires of this world without. Let every one who longs to be sought for by the Lord, seek for his eternal home, and become verdant in the inward plantation of his heart.

81. Let this twofold exposition of the wild ass be sufficient. But it must be left to the judgment of the reader, which he thinks best to select. But if he chance to scorn the meaning of either exposition, I will willingly myself follow my reader, as a pupil his master, if he thinks more accurately and truly. Because whatever I find he knows better than myself, I believe it to be vouchsafed as a special gift to myself. For all we, who endeavour, full of faith, to utter something concerning God, are organs of truth: and it is in the power of this same Truth, whether It utters Its voice through me to another, or through another to me. For dwelling in the midst of us it deals alike with all, even though they live not alike, and often touches one person to hear plainly what It has spoken by another, but often touches another, to utter something clearly to be heard by others.

82. Power of speech is often given to a teacher, for the sake of his hearer, and skill in speaking is often taken away from a teacher, on account of the guilt of his hearer. Let not the teacher then be puffed up with pride in these cases in which he preaches copiously, lest his tongue be perchance filled, not for his own, but for his hearers' sake; and let not a hearer be angry, in cases in which a teacher speaks barrenly, lest the tongue of the teacher perchance be dumb, not for his own, but his hearers' rejection. For power of speech is given even to bad teachers for the sake of a good hearer, just as words of preaching were able to abound to the Pharisees, though it was written of them, *All therefore whatsoever they have said to you, observe and do: but do not after their works.* [Matt. 23, 3] But skill in speaking is taken away even from good teachers, for the rejection of their hearers. As is said to Ezekiel against Israel; *I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be as a man reproving, for it is a provoking house.* [Ez. 3, 26]

82. But the word of preaching is sometimes granted on account of both, sometimes withdrawn on account of both. For it is given on account of both, as is said by the voice of God to Paul amongst the Corinthians; *Be not afraid, but speak.* [Acts 18, 9] And a little after, *For I have much people in this city.* [ibid. 10] But it is withdrawn on account of both, as Eli the priest both knew the wicked conduct of his children, and exercised not the fitting language of reproof, when these the guilt of their sin, and him the punishment of his silence, was plainly about to mulct with the suffering of

death. When we know not therefore, amongst these cases, either for whom the fervour of speech is given, or on whose account it is withdrawn, the one safe remedy is, neither to pride ourselves on those gifts which we have received beyond others, nor yet to make jest of another for having received less: but to walk gravely and steadily, with the firm-fixed foot of humility. Because we are in this life the more truly learned, the more we know that our learning cannot be supplied to us from ourselves. Why should therefore any one be proud of his learning, who knows not either when it is given to any one by a secret sentence, or when it is withdrawn? For though fear seems to be always far removed from security; yet there is nothing safer for us than ever to feel fear, under the prevalence of hope, lest our mind should from want of caution plunge itself into sin through desperation, or fall headlong through boasting of its gifts. For the more humbly a man trembles for himself, together with hope, before the eyes of the strict and merciful Judge, the more firmly does he stand in Him.

## BOOK XXXI.

The ninth, with the remaining verses of the thirty-ninth chapter, is explained, the last three only being omitted; and the efficacy of Divine Grace, in the preaching of the Gospel, and in the conversion of sinners, is especially demonstrated.

[i]

1. The devil, through envy, inflicted the wound of pride on healthful man in Paradise; in order that he, who had not received death when created, might deserve it when elated. But since it is competent for Divine power, not only to make good things out of nothing, but also to refashion them from the evils which the devil had committed; the humility of God appeared amongst men, as a remedy against this wound inflicted by the proud devil, that they who had fallen through imitation of their haughty enemy, might rise by the example of their humbled Creator. Against, therefore, the haughty devil, God appeared amongst men, having been made a humble Man. The mighty of this world, that is, the members of the haughty devil, believed Him to be as despicable, as they saw Him to be lowly. For the more the wound of their heart swelled up, the more it despised the soothing remedy. Our medicine therefore being spurned by the wound of the proud, came to the wound of the humble. For, *God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.* [1 Cor. 1, 27] And a work was wrought upon the poor, for the wealthy proud ones afterwards to wonder at. For while they behold in them new virtues, they were afterwards astounded at the miracles of those, whose life they before despised. And thence, returning immediately with fear to their own hearts, they dreaded that sanctity in miracles, which they had scorned in precepts. Mighty things were therefore confounded by the weak; because while the life of the humble rises to veneration, the pride of the haughty has fallen. Because therefore blessed Job is a type of Holy Church, and Almighty God foresaw that, in the early times of the rising Church, the mighty of this world would refuse, with the stubborn neck of their heart, to undertake its light burden, let Him say;

Ver. 9. *Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee?*

[ii]

2. For the rhinoceros is quite of an untamed nature, so that, if it is ever taken, it cannot in any way be kept. For, as is said, it dies immediately from being unable to bear it. But its name when interpreted means in the Latin tongue, 'a horn on the nostril.' And what else is designated by the nostril, but folly; what by the horn, but pride? For that folly is usually understood by the nostril, we have learned on the evidence of Solomon, who says; *As a ring of gold in a swine's nostrils, so is a beautiful and foolish woman.* [Prov. 11, 22] For he saw heretical doctrine shining with brilliancy of eloquence, and yet not agreeing with the proper understanding of wisdom, and he says, *A ring of gold in a swine's nostrils*; that is, a beautiful and involved expression in the understanding of a foolish mind: from which gold depends, through its eloquence, but yet, through the weight of earthly intention, like a swine, it looks not upwards. And he proceeded to explain it, saying, *A beautiful and foolish woman*: that is, heretical teaching; beautiful in words, foolish in meaning. But, that pride is frequently understood by a horn, we have learned on the evidence of the Prophet, who says; *I said to the wicked, deal not wickedly, and to the sinners, lift not up your horn.* [Ps. 75, 4] What is, therefore, designated by this rhinoceros, but the mighty of this world, or the supreme powers themselves of the kingdoms therein, who, elated by the pride of foolish boasting, whilst they are puffed up by false honour without, are made inwardly destitute by real miseries? To whom it is well said; *Why boastest thou, O dust and ashes?* [Ecclus. 10, 9] But at the very beginning of the rising Church, when the might of the wealthy was raising itself against her, and was panting for her death, with the unboundedness of so great cruelty, when, anxious from so many tortures, and pressed by so many persecutions, she was giving way; who could then believe that she would subdue those stiff and stubborn necks of the haughty, and would bind them, with the gentle bands of faith, when tamed by the yoke of holy fear? For she was tossed about, for a long while, in her beginnings, by the horn of this rhinoceros, and was struck by it, as though to be utterly destroyed. But by the dispensation of Divine grace, she both gained life and strength by death, and this rhinoceros, wearied with striking, bowed down his horn. And that which was impossible to men, was not difficult to God, who crushed the stubborn powers of this world, not by words, but by miracles. For behold we observe daily the rhinoceroses becoming slaves, when we see the mighty of this world, who had before, with foolish pride, relied on their own strength, now subject to God. The Lord was speaking, as it were, of a certain untamed rhinoceros, when He was saying; *A rich man will hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 19, 23] And when it was replied to Him; *And who will be able to be saved?* He immediately added; *With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.* [ib. 25. 26.] As if He were saying; This rhinoceros cannot be tamed by human strength, but yet it can be subdued by Divine miracles. Whence it is here also fitly said to blessed Job, as representing Holy Church; *Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee?* Thou understandest, As Myself, Who bore for a long while with his resisting the preaching of men, but yet suddenly overpowered him with miracles, when thus I willed it. As if He said more plainly; Are they who are proud with foolish haughtiness, subjected to thy preaching, without My assistance? Consider therefore by Whom thou prevailest, and in every thing wherein thou prevailest bow down thy feeling of pride. Or certainly, what wondrous works are wrought at last by the Apostles, who subject the world to God, and bend the pride of the mighty of this world, when subdued to His power, is brought before the notice of blessed Job, to bring down his confidence, in order that blessed Job may think the less highly of himself, the more he beholds such stubborn souls gathered together to God by others, Let Him say then; *Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee?* Thou understandest, As it will serve Me, by means of those, whom I shall have sent. It follows; *Or will it abide by thy crib?*

[iii]

3. By 'crib' in this place, Holy Scripture itself is, not unfitly, understood; in which holy animals are fed with the food of the word. Of whom it is said by the Prophet; *Thine animals will dwell therein.* [Ps. 68, 10] Hence also our Lord, when born, was found by shepherds in a manger, because His Incarnation is learned in that Scripture of the Prophets, which refreshes us. This rhinoceros therefore, that is to say, every haughty person, in the beginning of the rising Church, when it heard the sayings of the Patriarchs, the mysteries of the Prophets, and the secrets of the Gospel, made jest of them; because it scorned the more to be confined and fed in the manger of the Preachers, the more it gave itself up to its own pleasures, and occupied the wide plain of its own desperation. It is this wide plain of the proud that Paul well speaks of, when saying, *Who despairing, have given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* [Eph. 4, 19] For every one gives himself wider range in present evil, the more he despairs of attaining eternal blessings after this life. But Almighty God bore for a long time with this rhinoceros, wandering through the plain of sinful pleasure, and yet, when He willed, suddenly fastened it to His own manger, that being safely confined it might receive the food of life, lest it should entirely lose its life through fatal liberty? For behold we now see that the mighty men of this world, and its chief rulers, willingly hear the preachings of the Lord, that they constantly read them, and every where depart not from His manger; because they transgress not, in their conduct, the precepts of the Lord, which they know either by reading or by hearing, but contentedly submit to stand confined, as it were, near the food of the word, that by feeding and abiding there, they may become fat. But, when we behold this wrought by God's agency, what else do we behold but this rhinoceros abiding at the manger? But since this rhinoceros, after it has received the food of preaching, ought to display the fruit of good works, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 10. *Wilt thou bind the rhinoceros with thy band to plough?*

[iv]

4. The bands of the Church, are the precepts of discipline. But to plough, is to cleave with the ploughshare of the tongue the soil of the human breast by earnestness of preaching. This rhinoceros therefore, which was before proud and stubborn, is now bound and fastened by the bands of faith; and he is led from the manger to plough, because he endeavours to make known to others also that very preaching, with which he has himself been refreshed. For we know with what cruelty this rhinoceros, that is to say, this earthly prince, raged against the Lord; and now we know with what humility he prostrates him beneath Him, by the power of the Lord. This rhinoceros was not only bound, but bound to plough: because, in truth, when bound by the bands of discipline, he not only keeps himself from wicked works, but also exercises himself in preaching the holy faith. For behold, as was before said, when we see the rulers and chiefs themselves of human concerns fearing God in their actions, what else do we see them than bound with bands? But when, by the enacting of laws, they cease not to preach that faith which they recently assaulted with persecution, what else do they, but toil at the labours of the plough?

5. We are permitted to see this rhinoceros, that is, this prince of the earth, bound with the bands of faith; how he both wears his horn, by the power of the world, and bears the yoke of faith, by the love of God. This rhinoceros were greatly to be feared, unless he were bound. For he has in truth a



horn, but yet he is bound. The lowly have therefore something to love in his bands, the proud have something to fear in his horn. For, as fast bound with thongs, he preserves the gentleness of meekness; but, as supported by the horn of earthly glory, he exercises the dominion of power. But frequently, when he is hurried on by the provocation of anger to strike, he is recalled by heavenly fear. And he rouses himself to fury, by his power being provoked; but because he calls to mind the eternal Judge, he bends himself down with fastened horn. I remember, that I myself have frequently seen, that when this rhinoceros was rousing himself to strike a heavy blow, and was threatening, as it were, with elevated horn, death, banishment, and condemnation to the smaller animals, who were suffering under unbounded dread, he extinguished all the blaze of fury within, on the sign of the cross being suddenly imprinted on his brow, that he was converted and laid aside his threats, and, as bound, acknowledged that he could not proceed to his resolutions. And not only does he subdue all wrath within himself, but he hastens to implant also every thing which is right, in the feelings of his subjects; in order to shew himself, by the example of his own humility, that all should reverence Holy Church from their inmost thoughts. Let it be said therefore to blessed Job; *Wilt thou bind the rhinoceros with thy band to plough?* As if He plainly said; Dost thou direct the mighty ones of this world, trusting in their foolish pride, to the labour of preaching, and restrain them under the bonds of discipline? Thou understandest, As Myself, who did that, when I willed; Who made My very persecutors, whom I first endured as enemies, to be afterwards themselves the defenders of sound faith. It follows;

*Or will he break the clods of the valleys after thee?*

[v]

6. The overlying clods of cultivated land are wont to press down the seeds which have been thrown in, and to stifle them when springing up. By which clods are signified in this place those, who through their own hardness, and deadly life, neither receive themselves the seeds of the word, nor yet allow others to bring forth fruits of the seeds they have received. For every holy preacher, on coming into the world, had, by preaching the Gospel to the poor, ploughed, as it were, the soft lands of the valleys. But the Church, unable to break down the hardness of some of the haughty, was bearing them when oppressed, as clods thrown upon her labours. For many of perverse mind, relying on this very unbelief of earthly princes, were oppressing the rising Church with the weight of evil living, when they were destroying, for a long while, those whom they could, at one time by their damnable examples, at another by threats, at another by blandishments, lest the cultivated soil of the heart of their hearers should attain to the fruit of spiritual seed. But when Almighty God subdued this rhinoceros with his bands, He broke at once by his aid the hardness of the clods. For He presently subjugated the princes of the earth to His faith, and crushed the hard hearts of persecutors, that the broken clods might, as it were, no longer oppress with their hardness, but might crumble and bud forth on receiving the seeds of the word. Whence He now rightly says; *Or will he break the clods of the valleys after thee?* As if He were saying, As after Me, Who, after I enter the mind of any lofty power, not only render it subject to Me, but also train it to crush the enemies of the faith, that the mighty of this world, being bound with the bands of My fear, may not only continue believers in Me, but may also from zeal for Me crush the hardness of another's heart.

7. But this, which we have said of unbelievers, we observe also in many who are reckoned by the name of faith. For many, placed in the midst of lowly brethren, hold the faith in word only, but while they abandon not the swelling of pride, while they oppress those, whom they can, by the

infliction of violence, while they themselves receive not at all the seeds of the word, while others are bearing fruit, but turn the ear of their heart from the voice of the adviser, what else are they, but hardened clods lying in the cultivated valleys? Who are the more wicked, inasmuch as they neither bring forth themselves the fruit of humility, and, what is worse, oppress the lowly who are producing it. To break down the hardness of these, Holy Church, because she suffices not with her own strength, sometimes seeks the assistance of this rhinoceros, that is, of an earthly prince, for him to break down the overlying clods, which the humility of the Churches, like the level of the valleys, is bearing. These clods, therefore, the rhinoceros presses and crushes with his foot, because the religion of the prince crumbles, by its power, the hardness of the wicked and powerful, which the humility of the Church is unable to withstand. And since it is the effect of Divine power alone, that the loftinesses of earthly sovereignty are bowed down, to advance the kingdom of heaven, it is now rightly said, *Or will he break the clods of the valleys after thee?* But that Job may think humbly of his virtues, and, under the name of the rhinoceros, still discern sublime truths concerning the powers of this world, it follows;

Ver. 11. *Wilt thou have confidence in his great strength, and wilt thou leave to him thy labours?*

[vi]

8. The Lord asserts that He has confidence in the strength of the rhinoceros; because He inclined the powers, which He had conferred for a temporal purpose on an earthly prince, to minister to His reverence, in order that by the power he had received, through which he had, heretofore, been puffed up against God, he might now bestow on God religious obedience. For the more powerful he is toward the world, the more does he prevail for the Creator of the world. For because he is himself dreaded by his subjects, he persuades them the more readily, the more he points out with his power, Who is truly to be feared. Let it be said then; *Wilt thou have confidence in his great strength?* As if it were said, As I, Who see, that the powers of earthly princes are about to submit to My worship. For I regard those things which thou art now doing, as of so much the less consequence, the more I now foresee, that I shall bend down to Myself even the greater powers of this world. But it is well subjoined; *And wilt thou leave to him thy labours?* For the Lord left His labours to this rhinoceros, because He entrusted to an earthly prince, on his conversion, that Church which He purchased by His own death, because, namely, He committed to his hand the great anxiety of preserving the peace of the faith. It follows;

Ver. 12. *Wilt thou trust him, to bring back thy seed to thee, and to gather thy floor?*

[vii]

9. What else is meant by 'seed,' but the word of preaching? As the Truth says in the Gospel, *A sower went forth to sow;* [Matt. 13, 3] and as the Prophet says; *Blessed are ye who sow upon all waters.* [Is. 32, 20] What else but the Church, ought to be understood by the threshing floor? Of which it is said by the voice of the Forerunner; *And He will thoroughly purge His floor.* [Matt. 3, 12] Who therefore could believe, in the beginning of the rising Church, when that unconquered sovereignty of the world was raging with so many threats and tortures against her, that this rhinoceros would bring back seed to God, that is, repay by his works the word of preaching which he had received? Which of the infirm could then believe, that he would gather His floor? For behold, he is now promulgating laws for the Church, who was before raging against it with various torments. Behold, whatever nations he has been able to seize, he brings by persuasion to the grace

of faith; and points out eternal life to those, to whom, when captured, he secures their present life. Why is this? Because he is now, in truth, gathering the floor, which before he used to winnow, by scattering it with his proud horn. Let blessed Job therefore hear what the princes of the Gentiles do, and not exalt himself in himself with the glory of his own so great virtue. Let the powerful prince hear also, with what devotion the mightier princes of this world become the servants of God, and let not him who has a pattern in others, pervert his virtue, in consequence of its singularity, into the sin of pride. For though God beheld no one like him at that time, yet He foresaw many, by whom to repress his boasting.

10. Because, therefore, earthly princes prostrate themselves before God with great humility, wicked men, who were before ranked in unbelief against the Church, and were raging with open hostility, now turn to other arguments of fraud. For since they see that those reverence religion, they themselves adopt a respect for religion, and under a despicable garb oppress the conduct of the good, by their wicked habits. For they are in truth lovers of the world, and make a show of that in themselves which man can admire, and unite themselves, not in heart, but in garb, to those who truly despise themselves. For since, though loving present glory, they cannot attain to it, they follow it, as if despising it. But they would manifest what they think against the good, if they were to find a fitting opportunity for their wickedness. But even these devices of the wicked tend to the purification of the Elect. For Holy Church cannot pass through the season of her pilgrimage, without the labour of temptation, and though she has no open enemies without, yet she endures false brethren within. For she is ever in array against sin, and, even in the season of peace, has her own contest. And she is perhaps more grievously afflicted, when she is assaulted, not by the blows of strangers, but by the manners of her own children. Whether therefore at that, or this time, she is always engaged in a struggle. For, both in the persecution of princes she is afraid that the good should lose, what they really are, and in the conversion of princes she bears with the wicked pretending to be good, which they are not. Whence Almighty God, because He stated that this rhinoceros had been bound with thongs, immediately subjoined the hypocrisy of the wicked, saying;

Ver. 13. *The wing of the ostrich is like the wings of the heron, and of the hawk.*

[viii]

11. Who can be ignorant how much the heron and the hawk surpass all other birds in the swiftness of their flight? But an ostrich has the likeness of their wing, but not the celerity of their flight. For it cannot in truth rise from the ground, and raises its wings, in appearance as if to fly, but yet never raises itself from the earth in flying. Thus, doubtless, are all hypocrites, who, while they simulate the conduct of the good, possess a resemblance of a holy appearance, but have no reality of holy conduct. They have, in truth, wings for flight, in appearance, but in their doing they creep along the ground, because they spread their wings, by the semblance of sanctity, but, overwhelmed by the weight of secular cares, they are not at all raised from the earth. For the Lord in reprobating the appearance of the Pharisees, reproves, as it were, the wing of the ostrich, which did one thing in action, and made a show of another in its colour; saying, *Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful to men outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones; even so do ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of covetousness and iniquity.* [Mat 23, 27. 28.] As if He were saying: The beautiful show of your wings seems to raise you up, but the weight of your conduct weighs you

down to the lowest depths. Of this weight it is said by the Prophet, *Ye sons of men, how long will ye be heavy in heart?* [Ps. 4, 3] The Lord promises that He will convert the hypocrisy of this ostrich, when He says by the Prophet; *The beasts of the field shall honour Me, the dragons and the ostriches.* [Is. 43, 20] For what is expressed by the word ‘dragons,’ but minds openly wicked, which ever creep along the earth in most grovelling thoughts? But what is designated by the word ‘ostriches,’ but those, who pretend that they are good, who retain a life of sanctity in appearance, as a wing for flight, but use it not in act? The Lord, therefore, says that He is glorified by the dragon, or by the ostrich, because He frequently converts both the openly wicked, and the pretendedly good, to obey Him from their inmost thought. Or certainly, the beasts of the field, that is the dragons and ostriches, glorify the Lord, when that Gentile people, which had before been a member of the devil in this world, exalts the faith which is in Him. And this He both upbraids with the name of ‘dragon,’ on account of its wickedness, and brands with the term ‘ostriches,’ on account of its hypocrisy. For the Gentile world received, as it were, wings, but was unable to fly; which both possessed the nature of reason, but knew not the operation of reason.

12. We have still something to examine more attentively, respecting the hawk and heron, in considering this ostrich. For the bodies of the hawk and the heron are small, but they are supported with thicker wings; and they therefore fly along with swiftness; because there is little in them which weighs them down, and much which supports them. But the ostrich, on the other hand, is endowed with scantier wings, and is weighed down with a huge body, so that though it desires to fly, yet the very fewness of the feathers supports not in the air the mass of so huge a body. The character of the Elect is, therefore, well signified by the heron and the hawk; for as long as they exist in this life, they cannot be without some infection of sin, however small. But since there is little in them which weighs them down, they have abundant virtue of good doing which exalts them on high. But the hypocrite, on the contrary, though he does many things to raise him up, yet perpetrates many things to weigh him down. For it is not, that the hypocrite does no good things, but he commits many wickednesses, with which to weigh them down. Its few feathers, therefore, raise not up the body of the ostrich, because a multitude of evil doings weighs down the little virtue of the hypocrite. This very wing of the ostrich has also a resemblance in colour to the wings of the heron and the hawk, but has no resemblance to their power. For the wings of these are close and firmer, and in flying can press down the air by the power of their solidity. But the loosely-formed wings of the ostrich, on the contrary, are unable to take flight, because they are overpassed by the very air, which they ought to keep down. What else then do we observe in these, except that the virtues of the Elect fly forth solid, so as to beat down the winds of human applause? But however right the conduct of the hypocrites may appear, it is not able to fly, because, namely, the breath of human praise passes through the wing of unstable virtue.

13. But behold, when we observe the garb of the good and the evil to be one and the same, when we see the very same appearance of profession in the Elect and the reprobate, whence is our understanding able to discern in its comprehension the Elect from the reprobate, the true from the false? But we learn this the sooner, if we stamp upon our memory the words of our Teacher which have been intimated to us, Who says; *By their fruits ye shall know them.* [Matt. 7, 20] For we must not consider what they display in appearance, but what they maintain in conduct. Whence after having mentioned in this place the appearance of this ostrich, He immediately subjoins its doings, saying;

Ver. 14. *Which leaveth her eggs in the earth.*

[ix]

14. For what is expressed by ‘eggs,’ but the still tender offspring, which must be long cherished, in order to be brought to a living bird? For eggs are, in truth, insensible in themselves, but yet when warmed are changed into living birds. And so, doubtless, it is certain, that young hearers and children remain cold and insensible, unless they are warmed by the earnest exhortation of their teacher. That they may not, therefore, when abandoned, become torpid in their own insensibility, they must be cherished by the frequent instruction of their teacher, till they have strength, both to live in understanding, and to fly in contemplation. But because hypocrites, though they are ever working perversity, yet cease not to speak right things, but bring forth children in faith and conversation by speaking rightly, though they cannot nourish them by good living, it is rightly said of this ostrich, *Who leaveth her eggs in the earth*. For the hypocrite neglects the care of his children, because he gives himself up, with his inmost love, to outward objects, and the more he is elated by them, the less is he pained at the loss of his children. To have left eggs, therefore, in the earth, is not to raise above earthly actions the children which have been born by conversion, by interposing the nest of exhortation. To have left the eggs in the earth, is to furnish to his children no example of heavenly life. For, since hypocrites glow not with the bowels of charity, they never grieve at the torpor of the offspring which has been born to them; that is at the coldness of their eggs; and the more willingly they engage in worldly pursuits, the more carelessly do they permit those, whom they beget, to pursue earthly courses. But, because the care of heaven deserts not the forsaken children of hypocrites, for it warms some even of such, foreknown in secret election, by the regard of grace bestowed, it is rightly subjoined;  
*Wilt thou perchance warm them in the dust?*

[x]

15. As if he said, As I, Who warm them in the dust; because, namely, I kindle with the fire of My love the souls of the young, even when placed in the midst of sinners. What is understood by ‘dust,’ but the sinner? Whence also that enemy is satiated with the perdition of this sinner, of whom it is said by the Prophet, *For the serpent, dust is his bread*. [Is. 65, 25] What is pointed at by dust but the very instability of the wicked? Of which David says, *Not so the ungodly, not so, but as dust which the wind sweepeth away from the face of the earth*. [Ps. 1, 4] The Lord therefore warms the eggs, which have been left in the dust; because He kindles, with the fire of His love, the souls of His little ones, bereft of the anxious care of their preachers, even when dwelling in the midst of sinners. Hence is it, that we behold many, both living in the midst of multitudes, and yet not adopting the conduct of the sluggish people. Hence is it, that we behold many both not flying the crowds of the wicked, and yet glowing with heavenly ardour. Hence is it, that we behold many, if I may so speak, glowing in the midst of cold. For whence do some, living amidst the sluggishness of earthly men, burn with desires of heavenly hope; whence are they kindled, even amidst frozen hearts, except that Almighty God knows how to warm the forsaken eggs even in the dust, and, having dispelled the insensibility of their former coldness, so to animate them with the feeling of spiritual life, that they no longer lie torpid on the earth; but changed into living birds, raise themselves by contemplation, that is, by their flight, to heavenly objects? But we must observe, that in these words not only is the wicked conduct of hypocrites reprobated, but the pride of even good teachers, if any has crept in, is also kept down.

For when the Lord says of Himself, that He Himself warms the forsaken eggs in the dust; He certainly plainly indicates, that He Himself works inwardly by the words of a teacher, Who, even without the words of any man, warms whom He will, in the cold of the dust. As if He openly said to teachers; That ye may know that I am He, Who work by you when speaking, behold, when I will, I speak even without you to the hearts of men. When the thoughts then of teachers have been humbled, His discourse proceeds to describe a hypocrite, and, with what folly he is stupified, is pointed out still more fully by the doings of the ostrich. For it follows;

Ver. 15. *She forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the beast of the field may break them.*

[xi]

16. What is understood by 'foot,' but the passing over of active work? What is signified by the 'field,' but this world? Of which the Lord says in the Gospel, *But the field is the world.* [Matt. 13, 38] What is expressed by the 'beast,' but the ancient enemy, who, lying in wait for the spoils of this world, is daily satiated with the death of men? Of which it is said by the Prophet, the Lord promising; *No evil beast shall pass through it.* [Is. 35, 9] The ostrich, therefore, deserting her eggs, forgets that the foot may crush them; because, namely, hypocrites abandon those whom they beget as their children in conversation [al. 'in conversion.'], and care not at all, lest the examples of evil in doings should lead them astray, when deprived of either the earnestness of exhortation, or of the care of discipline. For see next did they love the eggs, which they produce, they would doubtless be afraid, lest any one should crush them by pointing out evil doings. This foot Paul was fearing for his weak disciples, as for eggs which he had laid, when he said, *Many walk, of whom I told you often, but now I tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ.* [Phil. 3, 18] And again, *Beware of dogs; beware of evil workers.* [ib. 2] And again, *We command you, brethren, in the name of our 'Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us.* [2 Thess. 3, 6] This foot John was dreading for Caius; for when he had mentioned before many wickednesses of Diotrephes, he added, *Dearly beloved, imitate not that which is evil, but that which is good.* [3 John 11] This the leader of the Synagogue himself was fearing for his feeble flock, saying, *When thou hast entered the land, which the Lord thy God shall give thee, take heed that thou wish not to imitate the abominations of those nations.* [Deut. 18, 9] She forgets also, that the beast of the field may break them, because the hypocrite doubtless cares not at all, if the devil raging in this world carries off his children who are brought forth in good conversation. But this beast of the field Paul was fearing for the eggs, which he had laid, saying, *I fear, lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your senses should be corrupted from the love that is in Christ Jesus.* [2 Cor. 11, 3] This beast of the field Peter was fearing for his disciples, saying, *Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in the faith.* [1 Pet. 5, 8. 9.] Faithful teachers therefore have over their disciples the bowels of fear, from the virtue of charity. But hypocrites fear the less for those committed to them, the more they discover not what they ought to fear for themselves. And because they live with hardened hearts, they acknowledge not even the sons whom they beget, with any affection of the love which is due to them. Whence it is added still further under the figure of the ostrich;

Ver. 16. *She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers.*

[xii]

17. For he whom the grace of charity bedews not, looks upon his neighbour as a stranger, even though he has himself begotten him to God. As doubtless are all hypocrites, whose minds in truth, while ever aiming at outward objects, become insensible within: and while they are ever seeking their own, in every thing they do, they are not softened by any compassion of charity, for the feelings of their neighbour. O what bowels of tenderness was Paul bearing, when he was panting for his children, with so great a warmth of love, saying, *We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.* And, *God is my witness, how I wish for you all in the bowels of Christ Jesus.* [1 Thess. 3, 8] To the Romans also he says, *God is my witness, Whom I serve in my spirit, in the Gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request, if by any means, now at length, I may have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come to you; for I long to see you.* [Rom. 1, 9-11] He says also to Timothy, *I thank my God, Whom I serve from my forefathers in pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers, night and day desiring to see thee.* [2 Tim. 1, 3. 4.] He says also, pointing out his love to the Thessalonians, *But we, brethren, being taken away from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, hastened the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.* [1 Thess. 2, 17] Who when pressed by hard persecutions, and yet anxious for the safety of his children, added, *We sent Timotheus our brother, and minister of God in the Gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to exhort you concerning your faith, that no man should be moved by these afflictions. For ye yourselves know that we were appointed thereunto.* [1 Thess. 3, 2. 3.] He says also to the Ephesians, *I desire that ye faint not in my tribulations for you, which is your glory.* [Eph. 3, 13] Behold, when in the midst of tribulations, he exhorts others, and in that which he himself endures, he strengthens others. For he had not, like the ostrich, forgotten his children, but was greatly afraid, that his disciples, observing so many reproaches of persecutions in their preacher, would in him despise the faith, against which innumerable insults of sufferings were prevailing. And therefore he felt less pain at his torments, but was more afraid for his children, from the temptation of his torments. He was lightly regarding the wounds of his body in himself, whilst he was fearing for his children the wounds of the heart. He was himself patiently enduring the wounds of torments, but, by consoling his children, he was healing the wounds of their hearts. Let us consider, therefore, of what charity he was, to have feared for others, in the midst of his own sorrows. Let us consider of what charity he was, to seek for the welfare of his children, amidst his own losses, and to guard, even from his own abject condition, firmness of mind in those who were near him.

18. But hypocrites know not these bowels of charity. Because the more their mind is let loose on outward subjects by worldly concupiscence, the more is it hardened within, by its want of affection. And it is frozen by benumbing torpor within, because it is softened by fatal love without; and is unable to consider itself, because it strives not to think of itself. But a mind cannot think on itself, which is not entirely at home in itself. But it is unable to be entirely at home in itself, because by as many lusts as it is hurried away, by so many objects is it distracted from itself; and scattered, it lies below, though with collected strength it might rise, if it willed, to the greatest heights.

19. Whence the mind of the just, because it is restrained, by the guardianship of discipline, from the shifting desire of all visible objects, is compacted in itself and inwardly entire; and it fitly beholds how it should conduct itself towards God, or its neighbour, because it leaves nothing of its own without, and the more it is withdrawn and restrained from outward objects, the more is it increased and kindled within; and the more it burns, the more brightly does it shine for the detection of vices. For hence it is, that while holy men gather themselves within themselves, they detect even the

secret faults of others, with a wonderful and penetrating keenness of sight. Whence it is well said by the prophet Ezekiel, *The likeness of a hand was put forth, and took me by a lock of my head, and the Spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me, in the vision of God, into Jerusalem, by the inner door, that looked towards the north, where was placed the idol of jealousy to provoke jealousy.* [Ez. 8, 3] For what is a lock of the head, but the thoughts of the mind gathered together, so as not to be scattered and dispersed, but to remain bound by discipline? A hand is therefore put forth from above, and the Prophet is lifted up by the lock of his head; because when our mind collects itself by watchfulness, a heavenly power raises us upward from things below. He therefore well says, that he was lifted up between earth and heaven; because every holy man, when living in mortal flesh, does not as yet indeed fully arrive at heavenly objects, but yet at once abandons those that are below. But he is brought in the vision of God into Jerusalem, because in truth every one who is making progress through the zeal of charity, beholds what the Church ought to be. It is also well added, *By the inner door, that looked towards the north:* doubtless, because, while holy men look through the approach of inward contemplation, they detect more evil than good going on within the Church. And they turn their eyes in the quarter of the north, that is, to the left of the sun, because they warm themselves with the stimulants of charity against the frosts of sins. Where it is also rightly subjoined; *Because there was there placed the idol of jealousy to provoke jealousy.* For when they behold rapine and wickedness perpetrated within Holy Church, by some, who are faithful only in appearance, what else do they see, but an idol in Jerusalem? And it is called the idol of jealousy, because by this the jealousy of heaven is provoked against us: and it smites offenders the more severely, the more affectionately the Redeemer loves us.

20. Hypocrites, therefore, because they collect not the thoughts of their mind, are not held by a lock of their head. And when do they, who are ignorant of their own faults, detect the faults of those committed to them? These are therefore dead to heavenly things, for which they ought to burn; and burn anxiously for earthly objects, to which they would laudably have been dead. For thou mayest often behold them, having put aside the care of their children, prepare themselves for dangers of immense labour, cross seas, approach tribunals, assail princes, burst into palaces, frequent the wrangling assemblies of the people, and defend with laborious watchfulness their earthly patrimony. And if it is perchance said to them, Why do ye, who have left the world, act thus? they immediately reply, that they fear God, and that therefore they labour with such zeal in defending their patrimony. Whence it is well added still further concerning the foolish labour of this ostrich; Ver. 16. *She hath laboured in vain; no fear compelling her.*

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21. For, *There they trembled with fear, where no fear was.* [Ps. 14, 5] For behold it is commanded by the voice of God; *If any one hath taken thy coat, and wished to contend with thee in judgment, give up to him thy cloak also.* [Matt. 5, 40] And again; *If one hath taken away that which is thine own, ask it not again.* [Luke 6, 30] The Apostle Paul also, when he was wishing his disciples to despise outward things, in order to be able to retain those that are within, admonishes them, saying; *Now there is utterly a fault in you, because ye have trials among yourselves. Why do ye not rather take wrong, why do ye not rather suffer fraud?* [1 Cor. 6, 7] And yet a hypocrite, having assumed the garb of holy conversation, abandons the charge of his children, and seeks to defend, even by wrangling, all his temporal goods. He is not afraid to ruin their hearts by his example, and is afraid of losing his earthly patrimony as if by negligence. His disciple falls into error, and yet the heart of



the hypocrite is wounded with no sorrow. He beholds those committed to him plunging into the gulph of iniquity, and passes by these things, as though he had not heard them. But if he has felt any temporal loss slightly inflicted on him, how does he suddenly burst forth, from his inmost soul, into the anger of revenge. His patience is soon broken down; the grief of his heart is soon let loose in words. For while he hears with equanimity the loss of souls, but hastens, even with agitation of spirit, to repel the loss of temporal goods, he truly indicates to all, by this evidence of his emotion of mind, what he loves. For great earnestness of defence is there exercised, where the power of love is also mightier. For the more he loves earthly things, the more vehemently is he afraid of being deprived of them. For we learn not with what feeling we possess any thing in this world, except when we lose it. For, whatever is possessed without love, is lost without pain. But those things, which we ardently love, when possessed, we sigh for heavily when taken away. But who can know not that the Lord created earthly things for our use, but the souls of men for His own? A person is, therefore, convicted of loving himself more than God, who protects those things which are peculiarly his own, to the neglect of what are His. For hypocrites fear not to lose those things which belong to God, that is, the souls of men, and, as if about to render an account to a strict Judge, are afraid of losing those which are their own, things namely which are passing away together with the world. As if they would find Him favourably disposed, for Whom they preserve senseless and undesirable objects, having lost those which are desirable, that is, which are rational. We wish to possess something in this world, and behold the Truth exclaims, *Unless a man hath renounced all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple*. [Luke 14, 33]

22. How then ought a perfect Christian to defend by disputing those earthly goods, which he is not ordered to possess? When we lose therefore our own possessions, we are lightened of a great burden in this journey of life, if we perfectly follow God. But when the necessity of this same journey imposes on us the care of possessions, some persons are only to be submitted to, while they seize them from us, but others are to be prevented, without violation of charity, not however merely from anxiety lest they should take away from us our goods, but lest they should ruin themselves by seizing what are not their own. For we ought more to fear for the plunderers themselves, than to be eager in defending irrational possessions. For these we lose, at our death, even though not stolen from us; but we are one with the others, both now in the rank of creation, and, if they strive to amend, after their reception of the gift. But who can be ignorant that we ought to love the goods, which we use, less, and that, which we are ourselves, more. If therefore we speak to plunderers, even for their own benefit, we now no longer merely claim for ourselves those things which are temporal, but, for them also, those that are eternal.

23. But we must in this matter carefully watch, that covetousness steal not on us, through fear of necessity; and that a prohibition, kindled by zeal, when strained by immoderate force, may not break out into the disgracefulness of hateful contention. And whilst peace with our neighbour is torn from our hearts, for the sake of an earthly good, it appears plainly, that our property is loved better than our neighbour. For if we have no bowels of charity even towards our neighbour who plundered us, we persecute ourselves worse, than the spoiler does himself, and ravage ourselves more fatally, than the other could do; because by abandoning, of our own accord, the blessing of love, we lose for ourselves that which is within, though we lost, through him, those only which are without. But a hypocrite knows not this form of charity; for, preferring earthly to heavenly possessions, he inflames himself with furious hatred, in his inmost heart, against him who spoils his temporal possessions.

24. But it ought to be known, that there are some, whom mother Church tolerates, nursing them in the bosom of charity, and whom she would carry on even to the advanced growth of spiritual age, who sometimes both wear the garb of sanctity, and yet cannot attain to the merit of perfection. For they rise not to spiritual gifts, and therefore they assist those who are connected with them, in the preservation of earthly goods, and sometimes transgress in anger in this defence. But we must not believe that these persons fall into the numbers of hypocrites, for it is one thing to sin from infirmity, and another from wickedness. There is therefore this difference between these persons and hypocrites, that these, conscious of their own infirmity, prefer being reprov'd by all for their faults, to being praised for pretended sanctity. But those are both sure that they are doing wrong, and yet in the judgments of men are puffed up with the name of sanctity. These fear not to displease wicked men, even by a virtuous action, provided only they are approved by the judgments of heaven; but those never consider what they are doing, but how by every action they can please men. These, according to the measure of their understanding, contend for the causes of God, even in things of the world; but those subserve the design of the world, even in the causes of God; because in the very midst of the holy deeds they make a shew of doing, they seek not the conversion of men, but the breath of applause.

25. When therefore we behold any persons of no mean conversation defending worldly interests passionately or immoderately, we ought to reprove this fault of theirs charitably, and yet not to despair of them, while reproving them. Because there frequently exist in one and the same person certain censurable points which are apparent, and great qualities which lie concealed. But in ourselves our great qualities often come forth openly, and those which are reprehensible are sometimes concealed. Hence, therefore, our pride of mind must be brought low, because, both their weaknesses are public, and ours are secret: and again, their strong points are concealed, and ours are divulged and made public. Those therefore, whom we blame for their open weakness, it remains for us to venerate from our opinion of their hidden strength, and if our own mind is elated at their open weakness, let it keep itself down in humility, from considering its own secret infirmities. For some persons frequently obey many precepts, and pass over a few; and we pass over many, when we keep but a few. Whence it is frequently the case that, when we see others neglect a command, which we know we observe ourselves, our mind immediately exalts itself with pride, forgetting how many commands it passes over, when there are very *few* which it observes. It is therefore necessary for us in cases where we reprove others, to bring down the pride of our anxious thought. For if our mind sees that it is more exalted than others, being led, as it were, to headlong heights of singularity, it falls the more fatally. But why the hypocrite abandons heavenly lucre, and labours for that of earth, He still subjoins, under the description of the ostrich, saying:

Ver. 17. *God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He given her understanding.*

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26. Although to deprive is one thing, and not to give is another, yet His first expression 'deprived,' He repealed by subjoining, 'hath not given.' As if He were saying, My expression 'deprived' means not that He has unjustly taken away wisdom, but that He has justly not given it. Whence the Lord is described as having hardened the heart of Pharaoh, not because He Himself inflicted hardness, but because, according as his deserts demanded, He softened it not by any sensibility of heaven-infused fear. But now, because the hypocrite pretends that he is holy, and conceals himself under the

semblance of good works, he is kept down by the peace of Holy Church, and is therefore, before our eyes, arrayed with the appearance of religion. But if any temptation of his faith springs up, the rabid mind of the wolf strips itself of its garb of sheep's skin; and shews by persecution, how greatly it rages against the holy. Whence it is also rightly subjoined;

Ver. 18. *When the time shall be, she raiseth her wings on high, she scorneth the horseman and his rider.*

[xv]

27. For what do we understand by the wings of this ostrich, except the thoughts of the hypocrite, kept close at this time as if folded together? But when the time shall come, he raises them on high; because when an opportunity is found, he makes them manifest by his pride. To raise the wings on high, is to disclose his thoughts with unbridled haughtiness. But now, because he pretends that he is holy, because he confines what he thinks to himself, he folds, as it were, his wings on his body, by humility. But it must be observed, that He says not, *The horse and his rider*, but, *The horseman and his rider*. For the horse is the body which belongs to each holy soul, which it knows in truth both how to restrain from unlawful pursuits by the bit of continence, and again to let loose by the impulse of charity, in the exercise of good works. By the name, therefore, of 'horseman' is expressed the soul of a holy man, which keeps the body, its beast of burden ['jumentum corporis.'], under good control. Whence also the Apostle John, in the Apocalypse, having beheld the Lord, says; *And the armies which are in heaven, were following Him on white horses.* [Rev. 19, 14] For he rightly calls an army, the multitude of the Saints, which had toiled in this war of martyrdom. And they are said, for this reason, to sit on white horses, because their bodies doubtless were brilliant with both the light of righteousness, and the whiteness of chastity. The hypocrite therefore scorns the horseman, because, when he has burst forth in open iniquity, he despises the sanctity of the Elect; and in his pride calls those fools, whom he used to imitate with cunning art, when kept down by the peace of the faith. But who else is the rider of this horseman, but Almighty God, Who both, foreseeing, created those things which were not, and possessing, rules over those which are? For he surely mounts the horseman, because He possesses the soul of every holy man, who possesses his own members aright. For this hypocrite then to scorn the horseman, is for him to despise the saints: but to scorn the rider of the horseman, is for him to leap forward even to do wrong to the Creator.

28. For since in every lapse, men always begin with the smallest faults, and as defects secretly grow up, attain to more grievous sins, the iniquity of this hypocrite is rightly distinguished by a statement of his losses, so that he is said first, to set himself forth as the good thing, which he is not; that he afterwards openly scorns the good; and lastly, that he leaps forth even to do wrong to his Creator. For a soul never lies in the spot where it has fallen; because having once fallen of its own accord, it is carried on to greater sins by the weight of its own iniquity, so that, as it sinks into the deep, it is ever overwhelmed still deeper. Let the hypocrite then go, and seek for his own praises, let him afterwards oppress the life of his neighbours, and exercise himself at last in deriding his Creator: in order that, as he ever cherishes prouder thoughts, he may overwhelm himself thereby in more awful punishments. O how many such does Holy Church now tolerate, whom open temptation makes manifest, when the time has suddenly arrived. But because they do not now put forth their wills against her, they meanwhile press close, as it were, the folded wings of their thoughts. For since this life is passed in common by the good and the evil, the Church is now visibly made up of a

number of each of these. But it is distinguished in God's invisible judgment, and, at its end, is separated from the society of the wicked. But at present the good cannot exist therein without the wicked, nor the wicked without the good. For at this time the two parts are necessarily united and fitted to each other, in order that both the wicked may be changed by the examples of the good, and the good be purified by the temptations of the wicked. And therefore, the Lord, after having introduced under the image of the ostrich many remarks on the rejection of the hypocrites, immediately turns to speak of the lot of the Elect, in order that they who had heard in those what to fly from and endure, might hear in these what to imitate and love. It follows;

Ver. 19. *with thou give the horse strength, or with thou surround his neck with neighing?*

[MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

29. But perhaps before we discuss this strength and neighing of the horse, some persons are desirous of having both the strength of the rhinoceros, and the folly of this ostrich explained in another way, putting aside their moral meaning. For the word of God is manna, and gives, in truth, that taste in the mouth of the eater, which the wish of him who partakes it rightly desires. The word of God is the earth, which produces fruit more abundantly, the more the labour of the enquirer demands. The meaning, therefore, of Holy Scripture should be sifted with manifold enquiry, for even the earth, which is often turned by the plough, is fitted to produce a more abundant crop. We therefore briefly touch upon our other view of the rhinoceros and ostrich, because we are hastening onward to unravel those questions which are more complicated. This rhinoceros, which is called also the 'monoceros' in Greek copies, is said to be of such great strength, as not to be taken by any skill of hunters. But, as those persons assert, who have striven with laborious investigation in describing the natures of animals, a virgin is placed before it, who opens to it her bosom as it approaches, in which, having put aside all its ferocity, it lays down its head, and is thus suddenly found as it were unarmed, by those by whom it is sought to be taken. It is also described as being of box colour, and whenever it engages with elephants, it is said to strike with that single horn, which it bears on its nostrils, the belly of its opponents, in order to easily overthrow its assailants, when it wounds their softer parts. By this rhinoceros, or certainly monoceros, that is, the unicorn, can therefore be understood that people, who when it adopted, not good works, but merely pride among all men, at its reception of the Law, carried, as it were, a singular horn among other beasts. Whence the Lord, foretelling His Passion by the voice of the Prophet, says; *Save Me from the lion's mouth, and My humility from the horns of the unicorns.* [Ps. 22, 21] For as many unicorns, or certainly rhinoceroses, existed in that nation, as many as were those who with singular and foolish pride confided in the works of the Law, in opposition to the preaching of the truth. It is said therefore to blessed Job, as a type of the Church;

Ver. 9. *Will the rhinoceros be willing to serve thee?*

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30. As if it were said more plainly; Dost thou bend under the rule of thy preaching that people whom thou beholdest boasting, with its foolish pride, in the death of the faithful? Thou understandest, As Myself, Who both behold it raised against Me with its single horn, and yet subdue it to Myself, at once, whenever I will. But we set forth this point the better, if we pass from generals to particulars. Let that Paul therefore be brought before our notice, out of this people, both first in his pride, and afterward as a striking witness in his humility; who when he unwittingly

exalted himself against God, as if on his keeping the Law, carried a horn on his nostril. Whence also, when afterwards he was bowing down this horn of his nostril by humility, he says; *Who was before a blasphemer and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly.* [1 Tim. 1, 13] He who trusted that he would please God by his cruelty, carried a horn on his nostrils, as he himself afterwards says, when condemning himself; *And profited in the Jews' religion, above many my equals in years, in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* [Gal. 1, 14] But every hunter feared the strength of this rhinoceros; because every preacher dreaded the cruelty of Saul. For it is written; *Saul yet breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that, if he found any of this way, men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.* [Acts 9, 1. 2.] When a breath is drawn in by the nostril in order to be given back, it is called 'breathing,' and we often detect by its smell with our nostril that which we behold not with our eyes. This rhinoceros was therefore carrying a horn on his nostril, with which to strike; because, breathing threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, after he had killed those who were present, he was seeking for those who were absent. But behold every hunter hides himself before him; that is, every man, who savours of what is reasonable, is put to flight by his opinion of his terror. In order then that he may take this rhinoceros, let the virgin open her bosom, that is, let the Wisdom of God Itself, inviolate [al. 'enveloped'] in the flesh, of Itself, disclose to him Its mystery. For it is written, that, when he was journeying to Damascus, suddenly there shone round him, at mid-day, a light from heaven, and a voice was uttered, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?* [Acts 9, 4] And he, prostrate on the earth, answered, *Who art Thou, Lord?* And it is immediately said to him, *I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest.* [ib. 5] The Virgin doubtless opened her bosom to the rhinoceros, when the Uncorrupted Wisdom of God disclosed to Saul the mystery of His Incarnation by speaking from heaven and the rhinoceros lost its strength, because, prostrate on the ground, he lost all his swelling pride and when, having lost the sight of his eyes, he is led to Ananias, it is now discovered with what hands of God this rhinoceros is bound: because, namely, he is bound at once with blindness, with preaching, and with Baptism. And he abode by the manger of God, because he scorned not to ruminate on the words of the Gospel. For he says; *I went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. But I went up by revelation, and communicated my Gospel with them.* [Gal. 2, 1, 2] And he, who had first heard, when famished, *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,* [Acts 9, 5] having been afterwards tamed by the wonderful power of his rider, obtained strength from the food of the word, and lost the heel of pride.

31. But he is not only restrained from violence by the hands of God, but, what is more wonderful, is bound to plough; so as not only not to attack men with the horn of cruelty, but, ministering also to their support, to draw the plough of preaching. For he himself speaks of those who are preaching the Gospel, as if they were ploughing: *For he that ploweth should plow in hope, and he that thresheth, in hope of partaking the fruit.* [1 Cor. 9, 10] He therefore, who had just inflicted tortures on the faithful, and afterwards willingly endures scourges for the faith, who also, by writing his Epistles, preaches in lowliness and contempt the truth which before he fiercely assailed, is doubtless firmly fastened to the plough, and labours for the crop, who used to live in the plain, fatally exempt from fear. Of whom it is rightly said;

Ver. 10. *Or will he break the clods of the valleys after thee?*

32. The Lord had, in truth, already entered the minds of some, who believed Him to be truly the Redeemer of mankind. But yet, when they departed not from their former observance, when they kept to the harsh preaching of the letter, the illustrious preacher says to them; *If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.* [Gal. 5, 2] What else then did he, who in the humble mind of the faithful crushed by refutation the harshness of the law, but break the clods in the valley after the Lord? in order, namely, that the grains of the seeds, which the furrow of the heart, cleft by the plough of faith, was receiving, might not perish by being kept down by the observance of the letter. Of whom it is still rightly subjoined,

Ver. 11. *Wilt thou have confidence in his great strength, and wilt thou leave to him thy labours?*

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33. The Lord had confidence in the strength of this rhinoceros; because the more He endured him cruelly inflicting hardships upon Him, the more firmly He foresaw him enduring adversities for His sake. To whom also He left the labours, which He Himself had endured in the flesh; because He led him when converted even to the imitation of His own Passion. Whence also it is said by the same rhinoceros, *I fill up those things which are lacking of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh.* [Col. 1, 24] Of whom it is further added;

Ver. 12. *Wilt thou trust him to bring back thy seed to thee, and to gather thy floor?*

[xix]

34. Let us consider what Saul was, when, from his very youth, he was engaged in aiding those who stoned, when he was laying waste some places of the Church, and, having received letters, was seeking for others to lay waste, when no single death of the faithful sufficed him, but, after the destruction of some, he was ever panting for the death of others: and we know for certain, that none of the faithful, at that time, believed that God would bend to the yoke of His fear the might of such haughty pride. Whence also Ananias, even after he had heard by the voice of the Lord that he had been converted, was afraid, saying, *Lord, I have heard by many of this man, what evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem.* [Acts 9, 13] And yet, suddenly changed from being an enemy, he is made a preacher: and in all quarters of the world announces the name of his Redeemer, endures punishments for the truth's sake, exults at suffering himself what he had inflicted; invites some by allurements, and recals others by terrors, to the faith. To these he promises the kingdom of the heavenly country, to those he threatens the fire of hell. The one he corrects by authority, the others he attracts by humility to the path of rectitude: and bends himself on every side to the hand of his ruler, and collects the threshing floor of God with as great skill, as he used before to winnow it with pride.

35. But not even is this at variance with Paul, that the rhinoceros is said to be of box colour, and is stated to strike with his horn the bellies of elephants. For, because he was wont to live under the rigour of the Law, the observance of every virtue grew up more strictly in him than in others. For what is expressed by box colour, but the paleness of abstinence? To which he himself witnesses, that he tenaciously adheres, saying; *I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perchance, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway.* [1 Cor. 9, 27] Who, when, being endowed with knowledge of the Divine Law, he reproveth the greediness of others, strikes

elephants in their belly with his horn. For he had in truth struck elephants in the belly, when he was saying; *Many walk, of whom I told you often, but now I tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame.* [Phil. 3, 18. 19.] And again, *They that are such serve not the Lord Christ, but their own belly.* [Rom. 16, 18] This rhinoceros, therefore, no longer strikes men, but beasts, with his horn; when Paul no longer assaults the humble who are to be destroyed with that might of his doctrine, but slays the proud worshippers of their belly. It remains for us, therefore, to believe that those things, which we know were written of Paul, were done in others also. For many in truth were converted from the pride of that people, to the grace of humility; and whilst the Lord made their cruelty to submit to the yoke of His inspired fear, He doubtless subjected to Himself the might of the rhinoceros. But since we have heard what God's marvelous power has wrought with His Elect, let us now hear what His marvellous forbearance has endured in those whom He rejects.  
Ver. 13. *The wing of the ostrich is like the wings of the heron and the hawk.*

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36. What is signified by the name 'ostrich,' but the synagogue, which had indeed the wings of the law, but from grovelling in its heart in things below, never raised itself from the earth? But what is expressed by the 'heron' and the 'hawk,' but the ancient fathers, who had power even in their living to soar to those truths, which they were able to perceive by understanding? The wing, therefore, of the ostrich is like the wings of the heron and the hawk; because the voice of the synagogue maintained in its words the doctrine of the early teachers, but knew it not in its living. Whence also the Truth warns the people of this same synagogue against the Scribes and Pharisees, saying; *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they have said to you, observe and do: but do not ye after their works.* [Mat. 23, 2] We could say much of the habits of the heron, but since its wing only is brought to our memory, we are prevented speaking of its habits.  
Ver. 14. *When she leaveth her eggs in the earth, wilt thou perchance warm them in the dust?*

[xxi]

37. In 'eggs' there is one thing which is seen, another which is hoped for: and hope cannot be seen, as Paul witnesses, who says, *What a man seeth, why doth he hope for?* [Rom. 8, 24] What then is designated by the 'eggs' of the ostrich, but the Apostles born of the flesh of the synagogue? who whilst they present themselves as despised and lowly in the world, teach us to look for glory in heavenly places. For regarded by the haughty as abject, and as if of no account, they lay, like eggs on the ground; but the power of living, and of soaring to heavenly places, upborne by the wings of hope, lay hid within them. Which eggs the ostrich leaves in the earth; because the synagogue, scorning to listen to those Apostles, whom it had begotten in the flesh, gave them up to the Gentiles who were to be called. But the Lord with wonderful power warms these very same eggs in the dust; because He roused to life the progeny of the Apostles, in that Gentile world, which had hitherto been cast off; and they, whom the synagogue had despised as void of sense and life, now live and soar aloft, in the veneration of the Gentiles, by the authority of doctrine. The ostrich leaves her eggs in the dust; because the synagogue raised not from earthly desires those whom it begat by preaching. And because the ancient enemy finds those desires conceived in the heart, he doubtless hurries the minds assailed by them even into sins. Whence it is also subjoined;  
Ver. 15. *She forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the beast of the field may break them.*

[xxii]

38. The foot crushes, and the beast of the field breaks, the eggs at the time, when they are forsaken on the earth; because, namely, while the hearts of men seek to be ever thinking on earthly things, ever to be employed on things below, they throw themselves down for the beast of the field, that is, the devil, to trample on: so that, after they have been long degraded by the basest thoughts, they are at length crushed by the perpetration of even greater crimes. The synagogue, therefore, neglected to raise up from the earth by good living the eggs which it laid. But, though Almighty God found many of its children dead and chilled by earthly desires, yet he animated them with the warmth of His love. But that life, which the synagogue gave not its children, it grudged them afterwards, when it was striving to extinguish by persecution, those whom it remembered not to have by cherishing brought forth to good works. Whence it is also fitly added of this ostrich;

Ver. 16. *She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers.*

39. It despises, as though they were not its own, those whom it discovers to be living otherwise than it has itself taught, and, as its cruelty becomes obdurate, it applies terrors, and exercises itself in torturing them, and, inflamed by the firebrands of envy, it labours that they should perish, for whom it laboured not that they should live. And, when it persecutes the members of the Lord, it suspects that by this it is pleasing God. Whence also the Truth says to the same eggs of the ostrich, *The hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, thinketh that he doeth God service.* [John 16, 2]

Because, therefore, when the synagogue is led by cruelty to persecution, it thinks that it is acting thus by the impulse of divine fear, it is rightly subjoined;

*She hath laboured in vain, no fear compelling her.*

40. For not fear, but cruelty, has compelled it to pant in the labour of persecution. But because vices, when tinged with the colour of virtues, are commonly the more abominable, the less they are known even to be vices; the synagogue was more harsh in persecution, as it believed that it was becoming more religious by the deaths of the faithful. And therefore it could not at all discern what it was doing, because it shut out from itself the light of understanding, by putting pride in the way. Whence it is also well subjoined;

Ver. 17. *God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He given her understanding.*

41. For strict is the enquiry of secret retribution; and because it knowingly lost its humility, it also lost, unwittingly, the understanding of the truth. But the wounds, which it inflicted on the faithful at the coming of the Redeemer, are much less than those with which it still aims to smite the Church, by the coming of Antichrist. For it is preparing itself for that time, in order to oppress the life of the faithful with accumulated strength. Whence it is also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 18. *When the time shall come, she raiseth her wings on high, she scorneth the horseman, and his rider.*

[xxiii]

42. The ostrich raiseth her wings on high, when the synagogue opposes its Creator, not as before by dreading, but by now openly withstanding, Him. For being changed into the limbs of the devil, and believing the man of lies to be God, it exalts itself the higher against the faithful, the more it boasts



also, that it is itself the body of God. And because it despises, not only the Manhood of the Lord, but also His very Godhead, it scorns, not merely the horseman, but the rider of the horseman also. For, without violating the unity of the Person, it can be understood that the Word of God then mounted the rider, when he created for Himself a living Body within the womb of the Virgin. He then mounted the horseman, when, by creating Himself, He brought under the yoke of Divine worship a human soul, possessing power over its own flesh. For the Godhead assumed the flesh, by the intervention of the soul, and by this means He held together the whole horseman; [S. Aug. de Fid. et Symb. §. 10.] because He joined together in Himself, not that only which was ruled, but that also which ruled. Judaea therefore, because, having been caught in the snare of seduction, by the coming of haughty Antichrist, it scoffs at our Redeemer, for having been lowly among men, scorns the horseman. But because it, in every thing, denies His Godhead, it scorns equally his rider also. But our Redeemer is, in one and the same person, both the horseman and the rider of the horseman; and, when He came into the world, He set forth mighty preachers against the world; and when, in the end of the world, He endures the craft of Antichrist, He supplies strength to those, who contend in His behalf: that so, when our ancient enemy is set free in that liberty of his which is speedily to be terminated, our faithful ones may receive so much greater strength, the more they have to fight against an adversary who has been let loose. Whence in this place, when the ostrich is described as raising her wings, and scorning the horseman and his rider, the mention of mighty preachers is immediately subjoined, and it is said;

Ver. 19. *Wilt thou give the horse strength, or wilt thou surround his neck with neighing?*

[xxiv]

43. In Holy Scripture there is sometimes expressed under the term ‘horse,’ the slippery life of the wicked, sometimes temporal dignity, sometimes this present world itself, sometimes the preparation of right intention, sometimes a holy preacher.

For under the term ‘horse’ is signified the slippery life of the wicked, as it is written; *Be ye not as the horse and mule.* [Ps. 32, 9] And as is said by another Prophet, *They were made wanton horses, and stallions, every one was neighing after his neighbour’s wife.* [Jer. 5, 8]

By the name ‘horse’ is understood temporal dignity, as Solomon witnesses, who says, *I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.* [Eccles. 10, 7] For every one who sins is the servant of sin, and servants are upon horses, when sinners are elated with the dignities of the present life. But princes walk as servants, when no honour exalts many who are full of the dignity of virtues, but when the greatest misfortune here presses them down, as though unworthy. Hence it is said again; *They have slumbered who mounted horses.* [Ps. 76, 6] That is, in the death of the soul, they, who trusted in the honour of the present life, have closed the eyes of their mind to the light of truth.

Under the name of ‘horse’ is designated this present world, as is said by the voice of Jacob; *Let Dan be a serpent by the way, a horned snake in the path, that biteth the horses’ hoofs, that his rider falleth backward.* [Gen. 49, 17] In which testimony we set forth more plainly what ‘horse’ signifies, if we consider the circumstances somewhat more minutely. For some say, that Antichrist is coming out of the tribe of Dan, because in this place Dan is asserted to be a serpent, and a biting one. Whence also, when the people of Israel were choosing their position, in the partition of the

camp, Dan most rightly first pitched his camp to the north; signifying him in truth, who had said in his heart; *I will sit upon the mount of the testament, in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the height of the clouds. I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 13. 14.] Of whom also it is said by the Prophet; *The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan.* [Jer. 8, 16] But he is called not only a serpent, but a horned serpent, (cerastes.) For *κεφαλα* in Greek are called ‘cornua’ in Latin. And this serpent, by whom the coming of Antichrist is fitly set forth, is said to be horned: because, together with the bite of pestilent preaching, he is armed also against the life of the faithful with the horns of power. But who can be ignorant that a path is narrower than a way? Dan therefore becomes a serpent in the way, because he compels those, whom he flatters by seeming to spare them, to walk in the broad way of the present life: but he bites them in the way, because he destroys with the poison of his error those on whom he confers liberty. He becomes a horned serpent in the path, because those whom he finds to be faithful, and to be confining themselves to the narrow paths of the heavenly precept, he not only assails with the wickedness of crafty persuasion, but also oppresses with the terror of his power. And, after the kindness of pretended sweetness, he employs the horns of his power in the torture of persecution. In which passage, the ‘horse’ signifies this world, which foams through its pride in the lapse of passing times. And, because Antichrist strives to seize the latter end of the world, this horned serpent is said to bite the horses’ hoofs. For, to bite the horses’ hoofs, is to reach the ends of the world by striking them; *That its rider falleth backward.* The rider of the horse, is every one who is exalted in worldly dignities; who is said to fall backwards, and not on his face; as Saul is said to have fallen. For, to fall on his face, is for each one to confess his own faults, in this life, and to bewail them with penitence. But to fall backward, where one cannot see, is to depart suddenly out of this life, and to know not to what punishments he is being led. And because Judaea, entangled with the snares of its own error, is looking for Antichrist, instead of Christ, Jacob, in the same passage, rightly turned round suddenly in the language of the Elect, saying; *I will wait for Thy salvation, O Lord;* [Gen.49, 18] that is, I do not, as the infidels, believe in Antichrist, but I faithfully believe Him, Who is about to come for our redemption, even the true Christ.

By the name ‘horse’ is understood the preparation of right intention, as it is written, *The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but the Lord giveth safety;* [Prov.21, 31] because the mind prepares itself indeed against temptation, but contends not healthfully, unless it be assisted from above.

By the name ‘horse’ is understood each holy preacher, as the Prophet witnesses, who says; *Thou sentest Thine horses into the sea, disturbing many waters.* [Hab. 3, 15] For the waters, in truth, lay quiet, because the minds of men were lulled to rest a long while, beneath the torpor of their sins. But the sea was disturbed by the horses of God; because, when holy preachers had been sent, every heart which was benumbed with fatal security, was alarmed by the shock of wholesome fear. In this place, therefore, a holy preacher is understood by the name ‘horse,’ when it is said to blessed Job; *Wilt thou give the horse strength, or with thou surround his neck with neighing?*

44. But what is meant by the Lord’s saying, that He first gives strength to this horse, and afterwards surrounds his neck with neighing? For by neighing is set forth the voice of preaching. But every true preacher receives, first, strength, and afterwards neighing, because, when he has first extinguished sin in himself, he then attains to the voice of preaching, for the instruction of others. This horse hath strength, because he firmly endures adversity. He hath neighing, because by

blandishment he invites to heavenly things. The Lord declares, that He gives both strength and neighing to this horse, because unless both life and teaching meet together in His preacher, the virtue of perfection will never appear. For it avails not much, though he is supported by the doings of an exalted life, if he is yet unable to rouse others by his words to his own sentiments. Or, what avails it to kindle others by his speaking well, if he makes it plain that he has himself become slothful by living ill. Because therefore it is necessary for both these to meet together in a preacher, for his perfection, the Lord confers on His horse both the neighing of voice, with boldness of action, and boldness of action, with neighing of voice. And we must observe, why neighing, which is doubtless uttered inwardly through the throat, is said to be placed round the neck of the horse, that is, to be drawn in a circle outwardly. Because, namely, the voice of preaching emanates from within, but encircles from without. For as it rouses others to good living, it binds also the conduct of the preacher to good deeds, in order that his conduct may go not beyond his words, nor his life contradict his speech. The neighing then is placed round the neck of the horse, because the life of a preacher is restrained, even by his own words, from breaking forth into deeds of wickedness. Hence is it, that a collar is given as a reward to men who fight with all their power; in order that they may ever perform greater deeds, because they bear the tokens of valour; and may fear to incur the charge of weakness, while that, which they display on themselves, is already the reward of their bravery. Whence it is rightly said by Solomon to every hearer, in praise of wisdom; *Thou shalt receive a crown of grace for thy head, and a collar of gold for thy neck.* [Prov. 1, 9] It follows, Ver. 20. *Will thou rouse him as the locusts?*

[xxv]

45. By the name 'locusts' is sometimes signified the Jewish people, sometimes the converted Gentiles, sometimes the tongue of flatterers, but sometimes, by comparison, the Resurrection of the Lord, or the life of preachers.

For, that locusts express the people of the Jews, the life of John points out to us; of whom it is written; *He did eat locusts and wild honey.* [Mark 1, 6] For John proclaims, even in the kind of his food, Him, Whom he foretells with the authority of prophecy. For in himself he designated the Lord, Whom he preceded. And He, doubtless, coming for our redemption, ate wild honey, because He took of the sweetness of the unfruitful Gentiles. But, because He partly converted the people of the Jews, in His own body, He took locusts for food. For the locusts, which give sudden leaps, but fall immediately to the ground, signify them. For they were leaping, when they were promising to fulfil the precepts of the Lord; but they were falling speedily to the ground, when, by their wicked works, they were denying they had heard them. Let us behold in them a kind of leaping of locusts; *All the words, which the Lord hath said, will we both do and hear.* [Ex. 19, 8] But let us see how they speedily fall to the ground; *Would we had died in Egypt, and not in this vast wilderness. Would we may perish, and that the Lord may not lead us into that land.* [Numb. 14, 2] They were therefore locusts, because they used to leap in their words, but fall in their doings.

46. By the name of 'locusts' is the Gentile people also designated, as Solomon witnesses, who says; *The almond tree shall flourish, the locust shall become fat, the caper tree shall be destroyed.* [Eccles. 12, 5] For the almond shews its blossom before all other trees. And what are designated by the flower of the almond, except the beginnings of Holy Church? which expanded the primitive flowers of virtues in her preachers, and, in order to bring forth the fruits of good works, preceded

the saints which were to come, as shrubs which were to follow. And in this was the locust soon made fat; because the dry barrenness of the Gentile world was watered by the fatness of heavenly grace. The caper tree is destroyed; because when the Gentile world attained, on its call, the grace of faith, Judaea, remaining in its barrenness, lost the course of good living. Hence it is said again by the same Solomon; *The locust hath no king, and they go forth, all of them, by their bands.* [Prov. 30, 27] Because, namely, the Gentile world was forsaken, while it continued estranged from the Divine government, but yet, afterwards marshalled in order, it proceeded to the battle of faith against opposing spirits.

47. By the word 'locust' is expressed the tongue of the flatterer; as the plagues of Egypt, displayed from heaven, attest; which were once inflicted in a bodily manner, as their deserts demanded; but signified spiritually, what evils smite day by day the minds of the wicked. For it is written; *A burning wind was bringing up the locusts, which went up over all the land of Egypt, and covered the whole face of the earth, laying waste all things. The herb of the land, therefore, was devoured, and whatever fruit was on the trees.* [Ex. 10, 13-15] For Egypt was affected by these plagues, in order that being roused, and smarting thereby from an outward blow, it might consider, what losses of devastation it was enduring by inward neglect, and that, while it beheld things most trifling, but more highly esteemed, perishing without, it might feel, through looking at them, the heavier losses it had sustained within. But what do locusts, which injure the fruits of men more than any other smaller animals, portend by their signification, but the tongues of flatterers, which corrupt the mind of earthly men, if they ever observe them producing any good fruits, by praising them too immoderately? For the fruit of the Egyptians is the doings of the vain-glorious, which locusts destroy, when flattering tongues incline the heart of him who does them to seek for transitory praises. But the locusts eat up the grass, whenever any flatterers extol with applauses the words of speakers. They devour also the fruits of the trees, when by empty praises they weaken even the doings of some who now seem to be strong.

48. By the name 'locust' is designated by comparison the Resurrection of our Redeemer. Whence it is said also by the Prophet in His voice; *I am cast out as the locust.* [Ps. 109, 23] For He submitted to be held by His persecutors, even unto death, but He was cast forth as a locust, because He flew away from their hands by the leap of a sudden resurrection.

49. Which can be referred also to the body of preachers. For He was cast out in them as a locust, because, while Judaea was raging in its persecution, as they fly into different directions, they leaped, as it were, into their retreat. But because that preacher is raised to the height of perfection, who is made firm, not only by the active, but also by the contemplative life; this very perfection of preachers is rightly expressed by 'locusts,' which, as often as they endeavour to raise themselves into the air, first impel and raise themselves with their legs, and afterwards fly with their wings. Thus doubtless are holy men, who, when they aim at heavenly things, rely in the first place on the good works of active life, and afterwards raise themselves in flight to sublime truths by the spring of contemplation. They plant their legs firmly, and spread their wings, because they strengthen themselves by good doings, and are exalted to lofty things by their way of life. But, while dwelling in this life, they cannot remain long in divine contemplation, but, as if like locusts, they catch themselves on their feet from the leap they have given, when, after the sublimities of contemplation, they return to the necessary doings of active life; but yet are not content to remain in the same active life. But when they eagerly spring forth to contemplation, they again, as it were,

seek the air in flight: and they pass their life, like locusts, soaring up and sinking down, while they ever unceasingly endeavour to behold the highest objects, and are thrown back on themselves by the weight of their corruptible nature.

50. There is a still further resemblance which locusts bear to holy preachers. For, in the morning hours, that is, at the time of moderate heat, they hardly raise themselves from the earth. But, when the heat has blazed forth, they soar aloft, the higher the more cheerfully they fly. But every holy preacher, when he beholds quiet periods of the faith, appears lowly and contemptible, and, like a locust, hardly rises, as it were, from the earth. But if the heat of persecution should wax warm, clinging in his heart to heavenly things, he soon shews how great is his sublimity: and he who seemed before to have quietly sunk to rest below, now flaps his wings, and is hurried aloft. Of that horse, therefore, that is, His preacher, the Lord says to blessed Job, *Wilt thou rouse him as the locusts?* Thou understandest, As I, Who by exciting raise him up to higher objects, as I suffer him to be tortured by a fiercer fire of persecution; in order that his virtue may be more strong and wakeful, when the cruelty of unbelievers dashes itself against him more furiously.

But when a holy preacher suffers many things without, when he is tortured by the dire assault of persecutions; who can discern what it is that he beholds within, who feels not his many losses without? For were there not wonderful encouragements to supply him with health within, those torments, which are applied outwardly, would doubtless reach to his heart. But his mind raises itself aloft on the citadel of hope, and therefore it fears not the weapons of the siege which has been laid to it. Whence also in this place, the Lord, in order to shew what sweet odours this horse inhales within, when suffering outwardly so many adversities, rightly adds,  
*The glory of his nostrils is terror.*

[xxvi]

51. In Holy Scripture by the word ‘nostrils,’ is understood sometimes folly, sometimes the instigation of the ancient enemy, but sometimes foreknowledge. For folly is sometimes designated by ‘nostrils,’ as we have already taught before, on the evidence of Solomon; who says; *A ring of gold in a swine’s nostril is a beautiful and foolish woman.* [Prov. 11, 22] By the name ‘nostrils’ are understood the exhaling snares and instigation of the ancient enemy; which the Lord witnesses concerning him in this very book, saying; *From his nostrils proceedeth smoke.* [Job 41, 20] As if He said, From his perverse instigation arises a mist of most wicked thought in the heart of men, by which the eyes of those who see are darkened. Foreknowledge is also designated by ‘nostrils,’ as is said by the Prophet; *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; because he himself is counted lofty.* [Is. 2, 22] For we often detect by the smell that, which we see not, so that some things, even when lying far off, become known to us by the fragrance of their nature. And, when we draw our breath through our nostrils, we frequently foreknow some things, even when not seen. The breath of our Redeemer is, therefore, said to be in His nostrils; in order, namely, that His knowledge might be pointed out to exist in foreknowledge; because whatever things He declared that He knew in the nature of His Manhood, He doubtless foreknew before all ages by His Godhead. And, whence He possessed the breath in His nostrils, He immediately subjoined by the Prophet, saying; *Because He Himself is counted lofty.* As if He were saying; He foresaw from above, what would come to pass below; because He came from heaven to earth. Holy men likewise, because they have believed what they heard from Him, foresee themselves also what

things are to come; and, while they faithfully obey His precepts, wait for His coming with certain hope. Whence also in this place, by the nostrils of this horse are designated the foreknowledge and expectation of a holy preacher. For while he seeks for the last judgment to arrive, for the heavenly country to be manifested, and for the rewards to be paid to the righteous, he draws, as it were, through his nostrils a breath from what is to come.

52. But *the glory of his nostrils is terror*; because the unrighteous dreads the coming of the vision of the strict Judge, which the righteous earnestly expects. For he, considering his labour, looks for the reward of retribution, and, knowing the merit of his cause, seeks for the presence of his Judge; and most ardently desires Him to come in flame of fire, inflicting vengeance on the ungodly, and granting the godly, in recompense, the sight of His contemplation. But he, who calls to mind his unrighteousness, shudders at coming to judgment, and dreads the examination of his actions: because he knows, that, if they are inquired into, he is convicted. The glory, therefore, of his nostrils is terror; because the righteous glories on the same ground as the sinner is convicted. Let us behold the horse, how he already draws through his nostrils a breath from those things which as yet he sees not; let us behold with what glory he is elated, when he is waiting for things that are yet to come. Behold the illustrious preacher, in looking at his labours, exclaims; *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my dissolution is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day.* [2 Tim. 4, 6-8] Where also he fitly subjoins; *But not to me only, but to those also who love His coming.* As if he said; But to all also, who are conscious to themselves of good works. For none love the coming of the Judge, except those who know that they have in their cause the merit of righteousness. Because, therefore, the righteous boasts for the same reason, that the unrighteous is alarmed, let it be rightly said; *The glory of his nostrils is terror.* But let us hear, how this holy preacher meanwhile acts when placed in this life, whilst he is waiting for the coming glory, whilst striving to come before the face of his Judge, and whilst he is still put off from the reward of his labour. It follows;  
Ver. 21. *He diggeth up the earth with his hoof.*

[xxvii]

53. By the 'hoof of the horse,' the strength of labour is usually understood. What then is designated by the 'hoof,' except the perfection of virtues in a holy preacher? And with this hoof he, in truth, digs up the earth, when, by the example of his own works, he ejects worldly thoughts from the heart of his hearers. With his hoof he digs up the earth, because, when a good teacher shews by his conduct that the world is despised, he empties the minds of his hearers of secular cares. Let us see Paul, with what hoof of displayed virtue he digs the soil of the hearts of his hearers. For he himself says to his disciples; *Think on these things, which ye hate received, and heard, and seen in me, do these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.* [Phil. 4, 8. 9.] And again; *Brethren, be ye imitators of me, as I also am of Christ.* [1 Cor. 11, 1] He therefore, who corrects others by the example of his own conduct, doubtless digs up the earth with his hoof. We have another point, to treat still more minutely, concerning the digging of this hoof. For though holy men watch with the eye of their mind intent on heavenly things, though they spurn with the foot of hard contempt all things, which flow by and sink beneath: yet from the corruption of the earthly flesh, to which they are still bound, they frequently endure in their heart a thick dust of thoughts. And when they persuade others without to seek for the things of heaven, they ever examine, with searching

enquiry, themselves within, that they may not be polluted by any degrading thought long abiding in them. This horse, therefore, digs up the earth with his hoof, when every preacher examines with bold enquiry earthly thoughts within him. The horse digs up the earth with his hoof, when he, over whom the Lord now rules, considers the mass which is heaped on him from his former thoughts, and ceases not to empty himself of it by tears. Whence also Isaac is well described, as having dug wells in a strange nation. [Gen. 26, 18] By which example we learn, in truth, when dwelling in the sorrow of this pilgrimage, to penetrate the depths of our thoughts; and that, until the water of true wisdom comes in answer to our efforts, the hand of our enquiry should not desist from clearing away the soil of the heart. Yet the aliens lying in ambush, fill up these wells, because doubtless, when unclean spirits behold us studiously digging into our heart, they pile upon us the accumulated thoughts of temptations. Our mind must accordingly be always emptied out, and unceasingly dug up, lest the soil of our thoughts, if left undisturbed, should be heaped upon us, even to a mound of evil deeds. Hence it is said to Ezekiel; *Son of man, dig in the wall*: [Ez. 8, 8] that is, break through hardness of heart by frequent blows of examination. Hence the Lord says to Isaiah; *Enter thou into the rock, hide thyself in a ditch in the ground, from the face of the fear of the Lord, and from the glory of His Majesty*. [Is. 2, 10] For we enter the rock, in truth, when we penetrate the hardness of our heart; and we are hid in a ditch in the ground from the face of the fear of our Lord, if, casting out worldly thoughts, we are concealed from the wrath of the strict Judge in the humility of our mind. For the more the earth is thrown out by digging, the lower is the surface always laid open beneath. Whence also, if we carefully cast out from ourselves earthly thoughts, the humbler spot do we find, in which to lie hid within ourselves.

54. For behold, because the day of divine judgment is imminent, the very face of His fear is already visible; and it is the more necessary for every one to fear Him with greater dread, the more the glory of His Majesty is now approaching. What then must be done, or whither must we fly? For which way can any one be concealed from Him, Who is every where? But behold we are commanded to enter the rock, to be concealed in a ditch in the ground; in order, namely, that breaking through the hardness of our heart, we may escape the invisible anger, as we withdraw, in our heart within ourselves, from the love of visible objects: and that, when the soil of evil thought is cast out, our mind may be concealed within itself, the more safely, the lower it is. Hence the people of Israel were commanded by the Lord through Moses, to place a paddle in their belt, when they went out for the necessities of nature, and to cover in a ditch in the ground, whatever had been voided. For burdened as we are by the weight of a corruptible nature, certain superfluities of thought burst forth from the womb of our mind, like the heavy burden of the belly. But we ought to carry a paddle under our belt, in order, namely, that being always ready to reprehend ourselves, we may have about us the sharp sting of compunction, to pierce unceasingly the soil of our mind with the pain of penitence, and to conceal the fetidness which breaks forth from us. For the voidance of the belly is concealed by a paddle, in a ditch in the ground, when the superfluity of our mind, examined with minute conviction, is concealed, before the eyes of God, by the sting of its own compunction. Because, therefore, holy men cease not to blame, and to sentence whatever useless thoughts they entertain, let the Lord say of His horse; *He diggeth up the earth with his hoof*, that is, whatever earthly thought he beholds dwelling in his mind, he doubtless breaks, with the hard blows of superinduced penitence. But when they judge themselves within with strict minuteness, there is no longer any thing for them to fear without. For they are less alarmed at present evils, the more fully they provide themselves with future goods. Whence it is also added; *He exulteth boldly, he goeth on to meet the armed men*.

[xxviii]

55. He exults boldly; because he is not broken by adversity, just as he is not elated by prosperity. For adversities cast not down him, whom no prosperities corrupt. This horse is, therefore, both bold and under the rein; he has the strength of boldness, so as not to be weighed down by adversity; he has the weight of a rider, so as not to be elevated by prosperity. For times pass on, but they are therefore unable to draw along the righteous man, because they cannot raise him up. They, doubtless, lead those along, whom they elevate: they cast down, in their wrath, those whom they exalt by their blandishments. But a man, who is thoroughly subject to God, knows how to remain fixed, among transient things, knows how to plant firmly the footsteps of his mind, amid the lapses of passing years, knows how to be neither elated at victories, nor to be afraid of opposition. But frequently, because he knows that he is more profitably exercised with the pains of his contrition, he is cheerful in adversity, and while he endures them with firmness, for the truth's sake, he rejoices that the merit of his virtue is increased. Hence it is that we read, that the Apostles then rejoiced, when it befel them to have endured scourges for Christ's sake, as it is written; *They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus.* [Acts 5, 41] Hence, when Paul had been oppressed by hard persecutions in Macedonia, in insinuating that he had been afflicted, he proves that he had also been filled with joy, by saying; *For when we had come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest.* [2 Cor, 7, 5] As if he were plainly saying; because my spirit had rest, when my flesh endured the punishments of persecutions, through the advancement of the soul. Against this horse, therefore, there are prepared swords, by the adversaries of Holy Church, from the agony of punishments; there are prepared arms, from the patronage of secular powers. For heretics are wont to protect themselves, with the defences of the powerful of the world, as if by a kind of arms: all unbelievers are wont to impugn the preaching of the faith, by rousing also the powers of the world. But the horse of God exults boldly, and fears not outward torments, because he seeks inward delight; he dreads not the wrath of the powers of the world, because, by the rapture of his mind, he tramples down the desire even of the present life itself. Hence it is said by Solomon; *Whatever shall befall the just, it will not make him sad.* [Prov. 12, 21] Hence it is again written of him; *The righteous, confident as a lion, will be without fear.* [Prov. 28, 1] The lion is therefore not afraid in the onset of beasts, because he knows well that he is stronger than them all. Whence the fearlessness of a righteous man is rightly compared to a lion, because when he beholds any rising against him, he returns to the confidence of his mind; and knows that he overcomes all his adversaries, because he loves Him alone, Whom he cannot in any way lose against his will. For whoever seeks after outward things, which are taken from him even against his will, subjects himself, of his own accord, to outward fear. But unbroken virtue is the contempt of earthly desire, because the mind is both placed on high, when it is raised above the meanest objects, by the judgment of its hopes, and is the less affected by all adversities, the more safely it is fortified by being placed on things above.

56. This horse, therefore, not only fears not those who come against him, but even goes forth to meet them. Whence it is here properly added; *He goeth on to meet the armed men.* For we frequently are left in peace, and unassailed, if we are not eager to oppose the wicked in behalf of righteousness. But, if the mind has ever glowed with the desire of eternal life, if it beholds already the true light within, if it kindles in itself the flame of holy fervor; we ought, as far as the place admits, as far as the cause requires, to expose ourselves in defence of righteousness, and to oppose



the wicked, who are breaking forth into deeds of unrighteousness, even when we are not sought after by them. For when they assail in others the righteousness which we ourselves love, they wound us equally with their assault, even if they seem to reverence us. Because then a holy man opposes himself to the wicked and evil doers, even when he is not sought after, it is rightly said of the horse of God; *He goeth on to meet the armed men.*

57. Let us behold him urged on, by the spurs of his rider, against the armed enemies; what fervour had inflamed Paul, when the flame of zeal was hurrying him on at Ephesus to break through the crowds of the theatre. For it is written, *They were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians, and the city was filled with confusion; and having caught Caius and Aristarchus, Paul's companions, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.* [Acts 19, 28. 29.] And it is immediately subjoined; *And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. But some also of the chiefs of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.* [ib. 30. 31.] In which words we, doubtless, learn with what fury he would rush against the opposing array, unless the reins of love had restrained him, by means of his friends and disciples.

58. But if we ought to go to meet our enemies, of our own accord to seek the contest, and always to abandon ourselves in the course of our zeal, why is it that this same illustrious preacher confesses of himself, saying, *At Damascus, the governor of the nation under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes, in order that he might apprehend me; and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands?* [2 Cor. 11, 32. 33.] Why is it, that this horse attacks at one time, of his own accord, the ranks of armed men, and at another retires, as if through fear, from the armed enemies; except this, that it is necessary for us to learn, from his cunning valour, both at one time resolutely to seek for battle with our adversaries, and at another prudently to avoid it? For it is necessary for us, during every thing we do, to consider that there is placed in the balance of our mind on one side the weight, and on the other the fruit of our labour, and that when the weight outweighs the benefit, any one may innocently decline the labour; provided he employs himself on other pursuits in which the weight of the labour is outweighed by the gain of the benefits. But when the amount of labour is either equalled, or outweighed, by the subsequent amount of benefits, the labour is not avoided without great blame. Whence the holy preacher, when he perceived that the minds of his persecutors at Damascus were grievously obstinate, was unwilling to engage with their opposition; because he saw that he himself, who, he knew, would be profitable to many, could fall, and that he could be of use to none or but few there. He, therefore, sought for a retreat from the contest, and reserved himself for other battles, to fight with greater success. For courage was not wanting to the opportunity, but an opportunity for his courage; and therefore the most courageous soldier sought, from the closeness of the siege, the field of battle. But, wherever he beheld many necks of his adversaries to be brought into subjection to his own King, he feared not to engage in battle even with death, as he himself, (when he was going to Jerusalem, and the disciples were hindering him, having foreknown his suffering by prophecy,) witnesses to himself, saying, *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.* [Acts 21, 13] *Neither count I my life dearer than myself.* [ib. 20, 24] He therefore who sought undauntedly, in this place, the ranks of the enemy, even when he foreknew his suffering, taught in the other that it was of dispensation, not of fear, that he fled.

59. On which subject we must consider that he, who boldly endures other greater labours for God's

sake, laudably declines certain labours, through the judgment of dispensation. For feeble fear is often called, by men, cautious dispensation; and they declare that they have avoided the onset as if through prudence, when, flying disgracefully, they are wounded in their backs. Whence it is necessary in a cause of God, when a question of dispensation is discussed, for the fear of the heart to be weighed most accurately in the balance; lest fear should steal in through infirmity, and feign itself to be reason, through a semblance of dispensation; lest a fault should term itself prudence, and the mind should return no more to penitence, when it calls that which it does wrong, a virtue. It remains, therefore, for every one involved in doubts, when any adversity hangs over him, to contend first within himself against fear and precipitation; in order that he may neither withdraw himself through fear, nor yet precipitately oppose himself. For he is very precipitate, who always opposes himself to adversities; and he is very cowardly, who always hides himself.

60. But we learn these things the better in contests of the spirit, if we adopt our form of exercise from contests of the body. For he is not a wise leader, who always precipitately advances his army against the ranks of the enemy; nor is he a bold leader, who always withdraws it, through caution, from the face of the enemy. For a general ought to know how, at one time carefully to withdraw his army from the assault of the enemy, and at another, to press him close by drawing his wings around him. And perfect preachers doubtless carefully exhibit this skill, when at one time, avoiding the rage of persecution, they know how to retire, wisely, but not weakly; and when at another, despising the assault of persecution, they know how to meet it boldly, but not precipitately. But, because a holy man, when he sees it fitting, exposes his breast to blows, and beats back, even when dying, the shafts that are coming against him, it is rightly said, *He goeth on to meet the armed men.* Of whom it is still further rightly subjoined;

Ver. 22. *He mocketh at fear, and yieldeth not to the sword.*

[xxix]

61. Let us see how he mocks at fear, who, as he counts, tramples under foot the swords of the adversaries. For he says, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or persecution?* [Rom. 8, 35] In fear, coming punishment is dreaded; but in the sword, pain is felt already from a present blow. Because therefore a holy man dreads not coming evils, he despises fear: but because he is not overcome even by a blow as it comes upon him, he yields not at all to the sword. Against this horse then there are as many swords of enemies as there are kinds of persecutions, all which he meets and overcomes, because from the love of life, he prepares himself for destruction. But since we have heard how so very sturdy a breast exposes itself to the shafts, let us now hear what is done by the adversaries. It follows;

Ver. 23. *Over him will rattle the quiver.*

[xxx]

62. In Holy Scripture by the word ‘quiver’ is designated, sometimes the just and hidden counsel of God; but sometimes the clandestine machination of the wicked. By ‘quiver’ is expressed the just and hidden counsel of God, as this same blessed Job in a former part bears witness, saying, *Because He hath opened His quiver, and afflicted me.* [Job 30, 11] That is, He has disclosed His hidden counsel, and has wounded me with an open blow. For as arrows lie hid in the quiver, so do sentences lie hid in the secret counsel of God: and an arrow is drawn, as it were, from the quiver,

when God launches forth an open sentence from His secret counsel. The machination of the wicked is also designated by the word 'quiver,' as is said by the Prophet, *They have made their arrows in the quiver, that they may shoot in darkness at the upright in heart.* For when the wicked conceal by secret machinations the schemes, which they plan against the good, they prepare, as it were, arrows in the quiver, and in this gloom of the present life, as if in darkness, they strike the upright in heart; because their malicious shafts can both be felt by their wound, and yet cannot be discovered as they are coming. Because therefore the horse of God is alarmed by no adversity, and the more he is opposed, the more ardently is he led against the armed enemies by the power of his intention; his persecutors, who perceive that they are defeated even when striking him, being confounded, have recourse to skill, prepare stratagems, and conceal, as it were, their wounds by launching them from a distance; whence it is now rightly said, *Over him will rattle the quiver;* that they may strike him from a distance, by secret machination, whom they approach in vain with open onset. This quiver had rattled over the horse of God, when forty men who had conspired for his death, were seeking for Paul to be brought out of prison; that they might kill him, with the blows of their designs, as though secretly, by the craft of arrows, whom they could not at all overcome by the attack of public persecution. The quiver therefore rattled; because the cause of secret machination came to Paul.

63. Although if we attentively enquire, we find a still deeper meaning in the sound of the quiver. For adversaries frequently enter into designs against the good, rely on wicked inventions, betake themselves to devise schemes; but yet themselves engage, themselves send persons, who should disclose these same schemes to the good; in order that, while the preparation of punishment is secretly, as it were, made known to the credulous, it may be the more dreaded; and that wounds suspected may the more disturb the mind of the bearer, than if inflicted. For, while arrows are concealed, and rattle in the quiver, they threaten death even though unseen. The quiver, therefore, rattles against the horse, when the hidden machination of the wicked against a holy preacher discloses, even more fraudulently, the design which it fraudulently conceals; in order that, by launching its threats beforehand, it may frighten, as if by the sound of the quiver, when the preacher of God fears not open insults, as weapons which strike him close at hand. But when he is not alarmed by these same threats, the cruelty of persecutors soon proceeds to open punishments. Whence, after it is said, *Over him will rattle the quiver,* it is immediately rightly added; *The spear will shake.*

[xxxi]

64. The spear is shaken against the preacher of God, after the rattling of the quiver, when, after terrors have been displayed, open punishment is now brought forward, striking near at hand. But holy preachers, when they are undergoing punishments in defence of the faith, cease not, even in the midst of blows, to seize those, whom they are able, to the same faith. And when they patiently receive wounds, they skilfully return the arrows of preaching against the hearts of unbelievers. Whence it is sometimes the case, that the very persons who are raging in persecution, grieve not so much, because they do not soften the heart of the preacher, as because, by his words, they lose others also. Because then they do not overcome him by striking him, lest others who hear him should forsake them, they soon prepare, against the words of the speaker, the shield of reply. Whence when He was saying, *The spear will shake,* He rightly subjoins; *And the shield.*

65. For, after the raging persecutor smites with punishment the body of the preacher, he protects the heart of his hearers with the words of his disputation, as if with a shield. The spear, then, is shaken, that the holy man may be smitten; but the shield is placed in the way, that he may not be heard. For the defenders of God have their own arrows in the battle, which they launch more speedily into the hearts of their hearers, as they draw them from the bow of the spirit, that is, from the inmost tension of the heart. For Paul had armed himself with these, in the contest of faith, when saying, *I suffer, even to bonds, as an evil doer; but the word of God is not bound.* [2 Tim. 2, 9] As if he were saying; I am struck indeed with the spear of punishments, but yet cease not to launch forth the arrows of my words. I receive the wounds of cruelty, but I transfix the hearts of the unbelievers, by speaking the truth. Let it be said therefore; *Over him will rattle the quiver, the spear will shake, and the shield.* For the quiver rattles against the horse of God, because the counsels of the wicked resound about him; because open punishment is sought for, the spear is shaken; but because he is opposed by disputation also, the shield is wielded before him. But is he at all restrained from his warmth by these means? For with the greater persecution a holy man is oppressed, the more eagerly is he urged on to preach the truth; and, while he submits patiently to his persecutors, he eagerly hastens to attract his hearers to himself. Whence it is still further rightly added concerning the horse of God,

Ver. 24. *Raging and snorting he swalloweth the earth, neither believeth he that the blast of the trumpet soundeth.*

[xxxii]

66. For it was said to the first man when he sinned; *Earth thou art, and to earth shalt thou go.* [Gen. 3, 19] But the trumpets sound, when the powers of this world awfully prohibit holy men from preaching. Because, therefore, a preacher, inflamed by the zeal of the Holy Spirit, ceases not, even when set in the midst of punishments, to attract any sinners whomsoever to himself, he doubtless in his rage swalloweth the earth, but because he fears not at all the threats of persecutors, he believeth not that the blast of the trumpet soundeth. For what else is the 'trumpet,' which announces the peril of the contest, but the voice of worldly powers, which prepares when contemned the contest of death for those who resist?

67. This trumpet had been sounded by the chief priests, when they commanded the Apostles, when scourged, not to speak of God; as it is written; *They commanded them, when they had been scourged, that they should not preach in the name of Jesus.* [Acts 5, 40] But let us see how the blast of the trumpet frightens not the horse of God. Peter says; *We ought to obey God, rather than men.* [ib. 29] Who says also to others who were persecuting him; *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* [Acts 4, 20] The horse of God, therefore, fears not the blast of the trumpet, because the illustrious preacher, having despised the powers of the world, fears not the sounds of any threats.

68. Let us see how another horse of God swalloweth the earth, and how no dread of the trumpet reaches him. For it is written; *There came down certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, and, having persuaded the multitude, they stoned Paul, and drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. But, as the disciples stood about him, he rose up, and came into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. And when they had preached the Gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned to Lystrum, and Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the*

*disciples.* [Acts 14, 19-22] Let us consider, therefore, what threats could check this horse, when even death itself cannot keep him from his intention. Behold, he is overwhelmed with stones, and yet is not moved away from the word of the truth. He can be killed, he cannot be overcome. He is cast forth without the city as though he were dead. But he is found within the city another day an uninjured preacher. Oh ! what a noble weakness is there in this man! how victorious his punishment! how triumphant his endurance! He is by repulse stimulated to action: he is roused by blows to preach salvation, he is refreshed by punishment to cast off the weariness of toil. What adversity then can overcome him, whom punishment refreshes. But this horse of God both despises the arrows of the quiver, because he contemns the counsels of wickedness; he overcomes the brandished spear, because he strengthens his breast even against the wounds of open persecution; he breaks through the opposed shield, because he subdues by reasoning the disputation of opponents; he swalloweth the earth, because, by exhortation, he converts sinners into his own body: he believeth not that the blast of the trumpet soundeth, because he tramples down every voice of terrible prohibition. But that which is said of him, that he boldly perseveres in labours, is a smaller matter; he, besides, (which is a greater thing,) exults in adversities. Whence it follows; Ver. 25. *When he heareth the trumpet, he saith, Vah.*

[xxxiii]

69. By which words this also is plainly shewn, that, in this place, nothing is said by the Lord of the irrational horse. For a brute animal cannot say, 'Vah;' but while it is said to say that, which it is quite unable to say, it is pointed out whom it designates. For 'Vah' is a word of exultation. The horse, therefore, says 'Vah,' on hearing the trumpet, because every bold preacher, when he thinks the contest of suffering approaching, exults in the exercise of virtue: and is not alarmed at the peril of the contest, because he rejoices in the triumph of victory. For the horse, therefore, to say, 'Vah,' is for a holy preacher to rejoice in his approaching suffering. But if a bold preacher seeks the glory of suffering, if he seeks with joy to undergo the peril of death for the Lord's sake; why is it that the Truth declared to Peter, that boldest preacher, who from his sturdy heart, adopted his virtue in his name; *When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldest not?* [John 21, 18] How does he rejoice in his suffering, who being girt by another, will not go whither he is led? But if we consider how the mind is shaken by the approach of suffering, and the fear of death, and yet rejoices at the coming reward of the kingdom, we understand how it is willingly unwilling to undergo the peril of a glorious contest: because it both considers in death what to endure and fear, and it beholds in the fruit of death what to long and seek for.

70. Let us see how Paul loves what he shrinks from, how he shrinks from what he loves. For he says, *I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.* [Phil. 1, 23] And, *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* [ib. 21] And yet he says, *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.* [2 Cor. 5, 4] Behold he both longs to die, and yet is afraid of being stripped of the flesh. Why is this? Because, though victory makes him joyful for ever, punishment nevertheless disturbs him for the present: and though the love of the subsequent gift prevails, yet the blow of sorrow grazes the mind, not without pain. For as a bold man, when he girds himself with arms, as the strife of battle is now approaching, both palpitates, and is in haste, trembles, and is wroth; seems, through his paleness, as if afraid, but is urged on vehemently by his anger; in like manner a holy man, when

he sees himself drawing near to his suffering, is both agitated by the weakness of his nature, and strengthened by the firmness of his hope; both trembles at approaching death, and yet exults at living, through his death, a truer life. For he cannot pass over to the kingdom, except by the intervention of death; and is therefore doubtful, as it were, in his confidence, and confident, as it were, in his doubts; both fears with joy, and rejoices with fear; because he knows that he cannot arrive at the prize of rest, without passing with labour that which intervenes. Thus we, when we wish to repel diseases from our body, take with sorrow, indeed, the bitter cup of purgation; but rejoice as being certain of subsequent health. For since our body cannot otherwise attain to health, we are pleased even with that which is offensive in the draught. And when the mind beholds that life dwells in the bitterness, it rejoices when agitated with sorrow. Let it be said then, *when he heareth the trumpet, he saith, Vah*; because a bold preacher, on hearing tidings of the contest, though, as a man, he trembles at the violence of persecution, yet, through the certainty of hope, exults at the reward of the recompense. But he would not remain unmoved at this contest of suffering, if he did not anticipate this same suffering by meditating intently in thought upon it. For an evil, which is anticipated by wisdom, is, by reason, overcome by the mind which is struggling against it. Because a person is less overcome by adversity the more he is found prepared against it, by knowing it beforehand. For a heavy burden of fear is frequently made lighter by habit. Death itself, as it frequently startles when unexpected, so does it give us joy when anticipated by deliberation. Whence it is also rightly subjoined concerning this horse;  
*He smelleth the battle afar off.*

71. As if it were said more plainly; He overcomes in every contest whatsoever, because before the contest he prepares his mind for the contest. For to 'smell the battle afar off,' is so to foresee in thought misfortunes when yet far distant, that they may not, by being unexpected, be able to overcome him. Paul was admonishing his disciples to smell this battle afar off, when he was saying, *Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves.* [2 Cor. 13, 5] As if he were openly charging them, saying, Call to mind the contests of persecutions, and considering the inmost and secret thoughts of your hearts, discover, what ye are able to continue in the midst of sufferings. Holy men smell this battle from afar, when dwelling even in the peace of the Church Universal, they behold either contests with heretics, or the tortures of persecutions hanging over them from unbelievers. Who while they live uprightly, often receive evil for good, and bear contentedly the insults of detractions, in order that if an occasion of persecution should arise, their open enemies may find them the more resolute, the more the shafts of false brethren also within the Church overcome them not. For he, who falls from a state of patience before the wounds of tongues, witnesses for himself, that he stands not firm against the swords of open persecution. Because therefore a man of God, being exercised by present trials contends against future, and exercised by the smallest trials contends against greater; it is rightly said of the horse of God, that he smelleth the battle afar off. It follows;

*The exhortation of the captains, and the howling of the army.*

[xxxiv]

72. The captains of the adverse part are the authors of error, of whom it is said by the Psalmist, *Contention is poured forth over their princes, and their vain things led them astray, and He caused them to wander in the pathless place, and not in the path.* [Ps. 107, 40] Of whom the Truth says by Itself, *If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch.* [Matt. 15, 14] But an army follows these

captains, that is to say the crowd of the wicked, which obeys their unjust commands. It must also be observed, that He says that the captains exhort, and that the army howls; because, namely, they who rule over unbelievers or heretics enforce, as if by reason, the wicked practices they order to be observed. But the crowd subject to them, because it follows their commands without judgment, whilst it clamours through the madness of confusion, is said to howl with bestial mind. For howling properly belongs to wolves. And, because the bands of the reprobate are eager with rapacity alone, against the life and habits of the faithful, they shout as if with howling. The horse of God, therefore, smelleth afar off the exhortation of the captains, and the howling of the army, when each holy preacher considers long beforehand, either what the authors of errors are able to command against the Elect, or how fiercely the crowd which is subject to them can rage. Paul was smelling this exhortation of the captains, when saying, *By sweet words and fair speeches they seduce the hearts of the innocent.* [Rom. 16, 18] He was smelling this howling of the army, when saying, *After my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you.* [Acts 20, 29] Peter had smelled out the exhortation of the captains, when he was warning the disciples against certain persons, saying, *Through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandize of you.* [2 Pet 2, 3] He was smelling the howling of the army, when he was premising, saying, *And many will follow their lasciviousnesses, by whom the way of truth is evil spoken of.* [ib. 2]

73. Because, therefore, we have related, what kind of person each holy preacher, and leader of the faith in the war of persecution, is able to display himself, let us now describe, under the figure of this horse, each single soldier of Christ: that he also, who considers that he has not yet arrived at the height of preaching, may yet know, that he is described by this voice of the Lord, if he has already begun to live aright; in order to infer from hence, how much he may be known to God, if he attain to greater things, if God omits not to speak of him significantly, even in his smallest deeds. Let us repeat, therefore, the particulars which have been mentioned of the horse, and make known how the soldier of God advances from his original conversation, how he increases, from the least to greater things, or by what steps he arrives from the lowest to the highest. Let it be said, then, Ver. 15. *Wilt thou give the horse strength, or wilt thou surround his neck with neighing.*

[xxxv]

74. Upon every soul, over which the Lord mercifully rules, He confers, above all things, the strength of faith: of which Peter says, *Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist, strong in the faith.* [1 Pet. 5, 8. 9.] But neighing is joined to this strength, when that takes place which is written, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* [Rom. 10, 10] It follows; Ver. 20. *with thou rouse him as the locusts?*

[xxxvi]

[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

75. Every one, who follows God, is, at his beginning, roused as a locust, because, though in some of his doings he clings to the earth, like the locusts, with bended knees, yet in some of them he raises himself up into the air with expanded wings. For the beginnings of conversions are a mixture of good and evil habits, whilst both the new life is carried on in intention, and the old life is still retained from habit. But we are so much the less injured by the evil being meanwhile mixed up

with us, the more we daily contend against it without ceasing. Nor does the fault, whose evil habit our mind anxiously opposes, claim us any longer as its own. And therefore, worldly pursuits injure us less, when beginners; because they are forbidden to remain any longer within us. Accordingly, because the Lord mercifully tolerates some weaknesses in us in the very beginning of our conversion, that He may lead us at length to heavenly things, by perfection, He rouses us at first as locusts; because though He raises us aloft by the flight of virtue, He yet despairs not at our falling by worldly doing. It follows;

*The glory of his nostrils is terror.*

[xxxvii]

76. Because a thing, which is not seen, is detected by its smell, by the word ‘nostrils’ are expressed, not improperly, the thoughts of our hope; by which we already foresee in hope the coming judgment, though we as yet behold it not with our eyes. But every one, who begins to live righteously, on hearing that the righteous are, by the last judgment, summoned to the kingdom, is joyful; but because he considers that some evils are still remaining within him, he dreads the approach of this very judgment, about which he is beginning to rejoice. For he beholds his life to be a mixture of good and evil, and confuses his thoughts, in a measure, with hope and fear. For when he hears what are the joys of the kingdom, happiness immediately elevates his mind; and again when he considers what are the torments of hell, fear immediately disturbs his mind. The ‘glory of his nostrils’ is therefore well called ‘terror:’ because being placed between hope and fear, whilst he beholds in his mind the future judgment, he dreads the very thing, from which he glories. His own glory is itself his terror; because, having commenced good deeds, he rejoices in hope at the judgment, and, not having yet put an end to his evil doings, he is not entirely free from anxiety. But he meanwhile anxiously turns back to his own mind, casting away the storms of so great strength, and, composing himself in the calmness of peace alone, endeavours with all his powers to be found free by the strict Judge. For he counts it slavish to dread the presence of the Lord; and, that he may not fear the sight of his Father, he does those things, by which He may recognise him as His son. He learns therefore, to love his Judge with full expectation, and, so to speak, through fear he casts away fear. But he considers, that fear arises in the heart, by reason of carnal conduct, and therefore, before all things, he chastens his flesh with firm discipline. Whence, after it has been said, *The glory of his nostrils is terror*; it is rightly subjoined; Ver. 21. *He diggeth up the earth with his hoof.*

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77. For to dig the earth with the hoof, is to tame the flesh by strict abstinence. But the more the flesh is kept down, the more fearlessly does the mind rejoice, from the hope of heaven. And hence, when the earth has been dug out, it is fitly subjoined; *He exulteth boldly*. For since he firmly represses that which contends against him, he exults boldly at those things, which he longs for in everlasting peace; and his mind is the better disposed to seek for heavenly objects, the more strictly the body is restrained from unlawful pursuits. Whence it is rightly said by Solomon, *Diligently cultivate thy field, that thou mayest afterwards build thine house*. [Prov. 24, 27] For he rightly builds the house of his mind, who first cleanses the field of his body from the thorns of vices; that the whole fabric of virtues may not be destroyed within, as the famine of good works increases, if the thorns of desires make head in the field of the flesh. But any one, who is engaged in the very



height of the battle, discerns more skilfully the fraud of the enemies, the more strictly also he keeps under his own body, as though it were a confederate of the foe. Whence also after the bruising of the body, after the joy of the heart, it is rightly subjoined;

*He goeth on to meet the armed men.*

[xxxix]

78. Armed enemies are unclean spirits, girded with countless frauds against us. For, when they cannot persuade us to what is wrong, they present it to our sight under the guise of virtues, and cover themselves, as it were, under certain arms, that they may not appear before us in their own naked wickedness. And we proceed to meet these armed men, when we foresee their stratagems afar off. To go forth, therefore, to meet the armed enemies, after the earth has been dug up, is, after the pride of the flesh has been tamed, to search out wonderfully the crafts of unclean spirits. To go forth to meet the armed enemies, after the earth has been dug up, is, after the wickedness of the flesh has been overcome, to engage in contest with spiritual vices. For he, who as yet contends but feebly with himself, vainly rouses against himself contests from without. For how does he, who subjugates himself to sins of the flesh, contend against those of the spirit? Or how does he seek to triumph from the labour of an outward contest, who still gives way in himself to the inward battle with lust?

79. Or certainly we go out to meet armed enemies, when, by zeal of exhortation, we prevent their stratagems even in the heart of another. For we go, as it were, from the place in which we were, to another place, to meet our enemies, when we put aside the care of ourselves in regular course, and keep off the approach of evil spirits from the mind of our neighbour. Whence it is frequently the case, that crafty enemies tempt the more terribly, concerning himself, the soldier of God, who is already victorious in the contest within, the more they see that he is mightily prevailing against them even in the heart of another; in order that, when they call him back to defend himself, they may the more freely attack the hearts of others, which were protected by his exhortation. And since they cannot overcome, they endeavour, at least, to employ him, so that, while the soldier of God is staggered about himself, not he himself, but he, whom he had been wont to defend, may perish. But his mind, immovably fixed on God, despises the darts of temptations, and fears not the shafts of any terror. For, relying on the aid of grace from above, he so tends the wounds of his own infirmity, as not to neglect those of others. Whence it is also well subjoined concerning this horse;

Ver. 22. *He mocketh at fear, and yieldeth not to the sword.*

[xl]

80. He mocketh at fear, because he is not so far alarmed by fear of any temptation, as to keep silence. And he yieldeth not to the sword; because though violent temptation assails him, it yet drives him not away from the care of his neighbour. Whence also Paul, teaching us an example of resolute conversation, both states what swords he endures from the enemy, and shews how he yields not to these same swords. For he had endured from the enemy the sword of carnal temptation, after every contest with the works of the flesh had been already overcome, who said; *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin, which is in my members.* [Rom. 7, 23] But to that sword, which he had overcome in himself, he yielded not in others also, when saying in truth, to those about him; *Let not sin reign in*

*your mortal body, to obey the desires thereof.* [Rom. 6, 12] And again; *Mortify your members, which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil concupiscence.* [Col. 3, 5] There smote him more heavily the sword of those temptations, of which he himself says, *In more numerous labours, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, by night and by day I have been in the deep of the sea.* [2 Cor. 11, 23-25] And other sufferings, which he was able to endure, and we are weary of enumerating. But how, from love to his neighbour, he yields not to this sword, after stating many things, he himself subjoins; *Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches.* [ib. 28] The horse of God is therefore smitten with the sword, and yet is not, by this blow, kept from his course, whilst the bold soldier in the spiritual contest both receives himself wounds from the enemy, and yet binds [or ‘smites.’ (strength)] others, for their salvation. But, against this so hard breast of the heavenly soldier, the ancient enemy seeks the more for sharper weapons, as he beholds himself more resolutely despised. Whence it also follows; Ver. 23. *Over him will rattle the quiver, the spear will shake, and the shield.*

[xli]

81. For since he sees that the zeal of a holy mind helps others also against him, he labours to wound it with multiplied temptation. Whence it frequently happens, that they who rule over others under them, endure severer struggles with temptations; in order, that when the leader himself is put to flight, after the manner of bodily contests, the associated unanimity of the resisting host may be dispersed without an effort. Therefore the crafty enemy, devising divers wounds of blows against the heavenly soldier, wounds him at one time by stratagem, by an arrow from the quiver, at another brandishes a spear before his face; because, namely, he both conceals some vices under the guise of virtues, and presents others to his sight openly as they are. For where he perceives the soldier of God to be weakened, he there requires not the veil of deceit. But where he observes that he firmly opposes him, he there doubtless contrives stratagems against his strength. For when he sees any one weak in an allurement of the flesh, he openly sets before his sight the appearance of a body capable of being desired. But if perchance he sees that he is mighty against avarice, he importunately suggests to his thoughts the want of those of his family; in order that, while the mind is directed, with seeming piety, to the care of providing for them, it may be secretly seduced and hurried into sin by seeking after wealth. The arrow then insidiously assails the horse of God, when the crafty enemy conceals for him a vice beneath a virtue. But the spear wounds in close combat, when open wickedness tempts him, even aware of it.

82. But the heavenly soldier is often opposed by the enemy in both ways, at one and the same time; in order that he may be destroyed by some one blow. For the crafty adversary endeavours to strike at the same time, both raging openly, and lurking in ambush; in order that while the arrow is dreaded from a secret spot, the spear may be less feared before his face; or that, while he withstands the spear before his face, the arrow may not be observed when coming from a secret place. For he often puts forward the temptation of lust, and suddenly desisting, more craftily suggests pride at chastity having been preserved. And there are some, who when they observe that many have fallen, from the stronghold of chastity, into the pit of pride, neglecting to watch over their life, are plunged into the filthiness of lust. But there are some, on the other hand, who, while they avoid the uncleanness of lust, plunge, through the height of chastity, into the gulph of pride. A fault therefore,

which springs from a vice, is, as it were, a spear striking openly; and a fault which springs from a virtue, is, as it were, an arrow from the quiver wounding in secret. But the horse of God both overcomes the spear before his face, when he tramples down lust; and looks round at the arrow on the side, when, in the cleanness of chastity, he keeps himself from pride. Whence also it is well said by Solomon to one engaged in both contests; *The Lord shall be on thy side, and will keep thy foot, that thou be not taken.* [Prov. 3, 26] For the foot stretches out to things in front. But he, who beholds those things which are on the side, sees not those things which are before him. And again, he, who from looking forward to guard his foot, beholds what are before, gives up keeping watch at his side. But whilst we perform any act of virtue before our face, we look forward, as it were, where our foot ought to be placed; but when a fault secretly rises up from this virtue, whilst we look forward, as it were, our side is laid open to the arrow. But frequently, when we are afraid of a rising fault, we decline the virtue, which ought to be put in act; and when the side is, as it were, looked round upon, we see not how the foot is to be placed in front. It is, therefore, well said, *The Lord shall be on thy side, and will keep thy foot that thou be not taken;* because the soldier of God, protected by the shield of Divine grace, both observes, by looking round, what dangers can come forth on the side, and, by advancing forwards, ceases not to place his footsteps before his face. And the crafty enemy who envies him, because he sees that he prevails not at all by quiver and spear, opposes to him his shield; in order that, if he pierces not the breast of his opponent by striking it, he may at least obstruct his onward course by some obstacles. For to his efforts he opposes certain difficulties; and when he is unable to overcome, he however resists him. But let us hear, what the horse of God does against the arguments of so many contests;

Ver. 24. *Raging and snorting, he swalloweth the earth, neither believeth he that the blast of the trumpet soundeth.*

[xlii]

83. The blast of the trumpet sounds against the horse, when any sin, placed nigh, fearfully assails the mind of an Elect one, in that which he does boldly. But raging and snorting he swalloweth the earth, because he rouses himself by his violent ardour; and consumes, by daily advancing, whatever earthly things he finds within him. And he believeth not that the blast of the trumpet soundeth; because he carefully avoids, by firm consideration, all evil which arises from the glory of his virtue. For he would believe that the blast of the trumpet soundeth, if he were, perchance, to be afraid of doing other things which are right, on account of something else which wickedly springs from them. Because, therefore, he is not afraid of acting boldly, even in the presence of temptations sounding against him; he does not, when in his rage, dread the blast of the trumpet. But often, when he sees that he is prosperous in virtues, lest that very prosperity of virtues should exalt him, he rejoices that he is assaulted with temptations. Whence it is also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 25. *When he heareth the trumpet, he saith, Vah.*

[xliii]

84. For their own good fortune has more fatally over-thrown many, and a long-continued peace has rendered many slothful; and the unexpected enemy has struck them the more heavily, the more he has found them careless, from being long used to quiet. Whence holy men, when they observe that they are advancing in great prosperity of virtues, rejoice that they are exercised also with temptations, by a kind of adjustment of heavenly dispensation; because they guard the more firmly

the glory received in their virtues, the more humbly they acknowledge their own infirmity, from being assaulted with the shock of temptation. The horse, therefore, says, 'Vah,' when he has heard the trumpet, because, namely, the warrior of God, when he beholds the force of temptation pressing on him, considering the benefit of the heavenly dispensation, is more firmly confident, from his very adversity. And the assaults of this adversity therefore do not overcome him, because they never attack him unexpectedly. For he marks long beforehand, from each circumstance, of what vice the assault is coming on. Whence it also follows;

*He smelleth the battle afar off.*

[xliv]

85. For, to 'smell the battle afar off,' is to discern from preceding causes, what contests of vices succeed. For because, (as has been already frequently said,) a thing which is not seen, is discerned by its smell, to smell the battle afar off is to search out lurking wickedness, by the looking forward of our thoughts, as if by the breath of our nostrils. Of which power of scent the Lord rightly says in the praise of His Church, *Thy nose is as the tower, which is in Libanus*. [Cant. 7, 4] We distinguish also by the nose between odours and foul smells. And what is designated by the nose, but the farseeing discernment of the saints? But a watch-tower is placed on high, that the approaching enemy may be seen from far. The nose of the Church is therefore rightly said to be like the tower in Libanus; because while the far-seeing discernment of the saints, being placed on high, looks anxiously on all sides, it discovers a fault before it arrives; and as it watchfully marks it beforehand, so it boldly avoids it. Hence Habakkuk says, *I will stand upon my watch*. [Hab. 2, 1] Hence Jeremiah, admonishing the soul of each Elect one, says, *Set thee up a watch-tower, place thyself bitternesses*. [Jer. 31, 21] For, to set one's self a watch-tower, is to foreknow by lofty considerations the approaching struggles of vices. And the soul of an Elect person places itself bitternesses, when firmly rooted even in the peace of virtues, it consents not to rest secure, on beholding evils in ambush.

86. But he takes thought, first, not to commit any evils, and secondly, not to do good things inconsiderately; and, after he has subdued wickednesses, he strives also to subject to himself his very virtues, lest they should be converted into the sin of pride, if they should get beyond the control of the mind. For since, as has before been said, evils frequently spring from good deeds, through the vice of negligence; he observes with watchful zeal how arrogance rises from learning, cruelty from justice, carelessness from tenderness, anger from zeal, sloth from gentleness. And, when he performs these good deeds, he observes that these enemies are by these means able to rise against him. For when he is labouring diligently in acquiring learning, he anxiously prepares his mind for the struggle with arrogance. And when he desires to punish justly the faults of offenders, he most skilfully avoids the severity of punishment exceeding the measure of justice. When he endeavours to restrain himself by tenderness, he carefully provides not to be overcome by any relaxation of discipline. When he rouses himself by the stimulants of right zeal, he specially takes care, that the flame of anger may not kindle him more than is necessary. When he controls himself with great tranquillity of gentleness, he keeps careful watch, not to be chilled by torpor. Because, therefore, in the thought of the spiritual soldier every vice is detected before it can steal in secretly, it is rightly said of the horse of God; *He smelleth the battle afar off*. For he considers what a crowd of iniquities would rush on him, were he to allow ever so few sins to enter within him. Whence it also follows;

*The exhortation of the captains, and the howling of the army.*

[xlv]

87. For the tempting vices, which fight against us in invisible contest in behalf of the pride which reigns over them, some of them go first, like captains, others follow, after the manner of an army. For all faults do not occupy the heart with equal access. But while the greater and the few surprise a neglected mind, the smaller and the numberless pour themselves upon it in a whole body. For when pride, the queen of sins, has fully possessed a conquered heart, she surrenders it immediately to seven principal sins, as if to some of her generals, to lay it waste. And an army in truth follows these generals, because, doubtless, there spring up from them importunate hosts of sins. Which we set forth the better, if we specially bring forward in enumeration, as we are able, the leaders themselves and their army. For pride is the root of all evil, of which it is said, as Scripture bears witness; *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* [Ecclus. 10, 1] But seven principal vices, as its first progeny, spring doubtless from this poisonous root, namely, vain glory, envy, anger, melancholy, avarice, gluttony, lust. For, because He grieved that we were held captive by these seven sins of pride, therefore our Redeemer came to the spiritual battle of our liberation, full of the spirit of sevenfold grace.

88. But these several sins have each their army against us. For from vain glory there arise disobedience, boasting, hypocrisy, contentions, obstinacies, discords, and the presumptions of novelties. From envy there spring hatred, whispering, detraction, exultation at the misfortunes of a neighbour, and affliction at his prosperity. From anger are produced strifes, swelling of mind, insults, clamour, indignation, blasphemies. From melancholy there arise malice, rancour, cowardice, despair, slothfulness in fulfilling the commands, and a wandering of the mind on unlawful objects. From avarice there spring treachery, fraud, deceit, perjury, restlessness, violence, and hardnesses of heart against compassion. From gluttony are propagated foolish mirth, scurrility, uncleanness, babbling, dulness of sense in understanding. From lust are generated blindness of mind, inconsiderateness, inconstancy, precipitation, self-love, hatred of God, affection for this present world, but dread or despair of that which is to come. Because, therefore, seven principal vices produce from themselves so great a multitude of vices, when they reach the heart, they bring, as it were, the bands of an army after them. But of these seven, five namely are spiritual, and two are carnal.

89. But they are, each of them, so closely connected with other, that they spring only the one from the other. For the first offspring of pride is vain glory, and this, when it hath corrupted the oppressed mind, presently begets envy. Because doubtless while it is seeking the power of an empty name, it feels envy against any one else being able to obtain it. Envy also generates anger; because the more the mind is pierced by the inward wound of envy, the more also is the gentleness of tranquillity lost. And because a suffering member, as it were, is touched, the hand of opposition is therefore felt as if more heavily impressed. Melancholy also arises from anger, because the more extravagantly the agitated mind strikes itself, the more it confounds itself by condemnation; and when it has lost the sweetness of tranquillity, nothing supports it but the grief resulting from agitation. Melancholy also runs down into avarice; because, when the disturbed heart has lost the satisfaction of joy within, it seeks for sources of consolation without, and is more anxious to possess external goods, the more it has no joy on which to fall back within. But after these, there

remain behind two carnal vices, gluttony and lust. But it is plain to all that lust springs from gluttony, when in the very distribution of the members, the genitals appear placed beneath the belly. And hence when the one is inordinately pampered, the other is doubtless excited to wantonness.

90. But the leaders are well said to exhort, the armies to howl, because the first vices force themselves into the deluded mind as if under a kind of reason, but the countless vices which follow, while they hurry it on to every kind of madness, confound it, as it were, by bestial clamour. For vain glory is wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, Thou oughtest to aim at greater things, that, as thou hast been able to surpass many in power, thou mayest be able to benefit many also. Envy is also wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, In what art thou inferior to this or that person? why then art thou not either equal or superior to them? What great things art thou able to do, which they are not able to do! They ought not then to be either superior, or even equal, to thyself. Anger is also wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, The things that are done to thee cannot be borne patiently; nay rather, patiently to endure them is a sin; because if thou dost not withstand them with great indignation, they are afterwards heaped upon thee without measure. Melancholy is also wont to exhort the conquered heart as if with reason, when it says, What ground hast thou to rejoice, when thou endurest so many wrongs from thy neighbours? Consider with what sorrow all must be looked upon, who are turned in such gall of bitterness against thee. Avarice also is wont to exhort the conquered mind, as if with reason, when it says, It is a very blameless thing, that thou desirest some things to possess; because thou seekest not to be increased, but art afraid of being in want; and that which another retains for no good, thou thyself expendest to better purpose. Gluttony is also wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, God has created all things clean, in order to be eaten, and he who refuses to fill himself with food, what else does he do but gainsay the gift that has been granted him. Lust also is wont to exhort the conquered heart, as if with reason, when it says, Why enlargest thou not thyself now in thy pleasure, when thou knowest not what may follow thee? Thou oughtest not to lose in longings the time thou hast received; because thou knowest not how speedily it may pass by. For if God had not wished man to be united in the pleasure of coition, He would not, at the first beginning of the human race, have made them male and female. This is the exhortation of leaders, which, when incautiously admitted into the secrecy of the heart, too familiarly persuades to wrong. And this a howling army in truth follows, because when the hapless soul, once captured by the principal vices, is turned to madness by multiplied iniquities, it is now laid waste with brutal cruelty.

91. But the soldier of God, since he endeavours skilfully to pursue the contests with vices, smells the battle afar off; because while he considers, with anxious thought, what power the leading evils possess to persuade the mind, he detects, by the sagacity of his scent, the exhortation of the leaders. And because he beholds the confusion of subsequent iniquities by foreseeing them afar off, he finds out, as it were, by his scent the howling of the army.

Because, then, we have learned, that either the preacher of God, or any soldier in the spiritual contest, is described in the account of the horse, let us now behold the same person under the signification of a bird; that we, who have learned his strength by the horse, may learn his contemplation also by the bird. For since we have heard in the description of the greatness of the horse, how much a holy man endures through patience against the assaults of vices, let us now

learn by the appearance of birds, how high he soars by contemplation. It follows;  
Ver. 26. *Doth the hawk get feathers by thy wisdom, stretching her wings toward the South?*

[xlvi]

92. That the hawk casts off its old feathers every year, as the new grow up, and gets a plumage without intermission, hardly any one is ignorant. But that time of plumage, when it is clothed in the nest, is not here spoken of; because, namely, at that time, being doubtless yet but young, it is not able to stretch its wings towards the South. But that annual plumage is described, which is renewed, as the old feathers become loose. And for domesticated hawks, moist and warm spots are sought out, for them to get their plumage the better. But it is the custom, with wild hawks, to stretch their wings, when the south wind blows, in order that by the mildness of the wind their limbs may become warm, so as to loosen the old feathers. But when there is no wind, they make for themselves a warm air by stretching and flapping their wings against the rays of the sun, and when the pores have thus been opened, either the old feathers fall out, or the new ones grow up. What is it then for the hawk to get its plumage in the south, except that every Saint glows, when he is touched by the breath of the Holy Spirit, and, casting off the habit of his old conversation, assumes the form of the new man? Which Paul advises, saying, *Stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man*. [Col. 3, 9] And again; *Though that outward man of ours be corrupted, yet that which is within is renewed day by day*. [2 Cor. 4, 16] But to cast off the old feathers, is to give up the inveterate pursuit of crafty conduct; and to assume the new, is, by good living, to maintain a gentle and simple feeling. For the feather of old conversation weighs down, and the plumage of the new change raises up, to render it the lighter for flight, as it makes it newer.

93. And He well says, *It stretches its wings towards the South*. For to stretch out our wings towards the South, is, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, to open our hearts in confession, so as no longer to take pleasure in concealing ourselves by defence, but in exposing ourselves by accusation. The hawk, therefore, then gains its plumage, when it has stretched out its wings towards the South, because every one then clothes himself with the feathers of virtues, when, by confession, he subjects his thoughts to the Holy Spirit. For he, who lays not open his old deeds by confession, brings not forth the works of a new life. He who knows not how to lament that which weighs him down, is unable to produce that which raises him up. For the very power of compunction opens the pores of the heart, and pours forth the plumage of virtues. And, when the mind studiously convicts itself of a sluggish old age, it gains the fresh newness of youth. Let it be said then to blessed Job, *Doth the hawk get plumage by thy wisdom, stretching her wings towards the South?* That is, Hast thou conferred understanding on any of the Elect, to expand the wings of his thoughts, at the breath of the Holy Spirit, in order to cast off the weight of the old conversation, and assume the feathers of virtues for the purpose of a fresh flight? In order, namely, for him to gather from hence, that the vigilance of sense which is in him he has not of himself, who is unable to confer it from himself on others. But, by this hawk the renewed Gentile people can also be designated. As if it were plainly said to blessed Job; Behold the future plumage of virtues in the Gentiles, and cast off the old feathers of pride. It follows;

Ver. 27. *Will the eagle mount up at thy command, and make for thee her nest in high places.*

[xlvii]

94. In Holy Scripture, by the word 'eagle' are sometimes designated malignant spirits, the spoilers of souls, sometimes the powers of the present world, but sometimes either the very subtle understandings of the Saints, or the Incarnate Lord, swiftly flying over things below, and presently seeking again those on high.

By the name 'eagle' are set forth the spirits, which lie in wait, as Jeremiah witnesses, who says, *Our persecutors were swifter than the eagles of the heaven.* [Lam. 4, 19] For our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven, when malignant men perform so many things against us, as to seem to surpass even the powers of the air themselves in the inventions of their malice.

By the word 'eagle,' earthly power is also typified. Whence it is said by the Prophet Ezekiel, *A great eagle, of great wings, long limbed, full of feathers and variety, came to Libanus, and took away the marrow of the cedar, and plucked off the top of his branches.* [Ez. 17, 3. 4.] For by this eagle who else is, in truth, designated but Nabuchodonosor, the king of Babylon? Who, in consequence of the immensity of his army, is described as of great wings; in consequence of the length of his continuance, as of long extent of limbs; for the multitude of his riches, as full of feathers, and because of the countless things that made up his earthly glory, as full of variety. Who came to Libanus, and took away the marrow of the cedar, and plucked off the top of his branches, because he attacked the loftiness of Judah, and carried off the nobility of its kingdom, as the marrow of the cedar. And whilst he took away captive the most delicate offspring of kings from the lofty height of their power, he plucked off, as it were, the top of his branches.

By the word 'eagle' is expressed either the subtle understanding of the Saints, or the flying of the Lord's Ascension. Whence the same Prophet, when describing that he had seen the four Evangelists under the appearance of living creatures, declares that in them there had appeared to him the face of a man, of a lion, of an ox, and of an eagle. Doubtless designating by an eagle, the fourth living creature, John, who left the earth in his flight, because, through his subtle understanding, he penetrated, by beholding the Word, inward mysteries. With which sentence of the Prophet concerning himself, John himself, in his Revelation, does not disagree, saying, *The first beast was like a lion, the second beast like a calf, the third beast having a face as of a man, the fourth beast like a flying eagle.* [Rev. 4, 7] And though these several points are well suited to each particular Evangelist, (while one teaches the order of His human Nativity; another, by the offering of the sacrifice of the world, suggests, as it were, the death of the calf; another the might of His power, as the roaring of the lion; another, beholding the Nativity of the Word, gazes like the eagle at the risen sun;) yet these four living creatures can signify Him their very Head, of Whom they are members. For He Himself is both a Man, because He truly took our nature; and a calf, because He patiently died for our sakes; and a lion, because, by the strength of His Godhead, He burst the band of the death He had undergone; and, lastly, an eagle, because He went back to heaven, from whence He had come. He is called therefore a man, from His being born; a calf, from His dying; a lion, from His rising again; an eagle, from His ascending to the heavens. But in this place under the name 'eagle' is typified the subtle understanding of the Saints, and their sublime contemplation. For the sight of the eagle surpasses the vision of all birds, so that the sun's ray does not, by striking on its eyes, which are fixed upon it, close them by any coruscation of its light. The eagle therefore mounts up at the command of God, when the life of the faithful, obeying the Divine commands, is suspended on high. And it is also said to place its nest in high places, because, despising earthly desires, it is already nourished, in hope, with heavenly things. It places its nest on high; because it



constructs not the habitation of its mind in abject and grovelling conversation. Hence is that which is said to the Cinite, by Balaam when prophesying, *Strong indeed is thy dwelling place, but if thou hast placed thy nest in the rock.* [Numb, 24, 21] For Cinite is interpreted 'possessor.' And who are they who possess present things, except those who are skilled in the ability of worldly wisdom? And they truly build themselves therein a strong dwelling place, if becoming, by humility, as little children in their own sight, they are nourished in the sublimity of Christ; if they feel themselves to be weak, and give up the confidence of their mind, to be cherished by the lofty humility of the Redeemer Who is known to them; if they seek not after things below; if they pass over, with the flight of their heart, every thing which passes away.

95. Let us behold the eagle building itself the nest of hope in high places. He says; *Our conversation is in heaven.* [Phil. 3, 2] And again; *Who hath raised us up together, and hath made us sit together in heavenly places.* [Eph. 2, 6] He has his rest in high places, because in truth he fixes his thought on things above. He wishes not to degrade his mind to the lowest objects, he wishes not, by the baseness of human conversation, to dwell in things below. Paul was, perhaps, then confined in prison, when he was witnessing that he was sitting together with Christ in heavenly places. But he was there, where he had already fixed his ardent mind, not there, where the sluggish flesh was still necessarily detaining him.

96. For this is wont to be a special mark of the Elect, that they know how so to travel along the journey of the present life, as well aware, by the certainty of hope, that they have already attained to things above; so that they see all things which flow by to be beneath them, and trample down, through love of eternity, all that is eminent in this world. For hence it is that the Lord says, by the Prophet, to the soul which follows Him; *I will raise thee above the high places of the earth.* [Is. 58, 14] For losses, insults, poverty, contempt, are, as it were, some lower places of the earth, which even the very lovers of the world, as they walk along the level of the broad way, cease not to trample down, by avoiding them. But the high places of the earth are, gain of goods, flattery of inferiors, abundance of riches, honour, and loftiness of dignities; along which whoever walks with his desires still grovelling, he considers them high, just as he counts them great. But if the heart is once fixed on heavenly things, it is seen at once how lowly are those things which seemed to be high. For as he, who ascends a mountain, looks down for a little while on all other objects which lie beneath, the more he advances his step to higher ground, so he who strives to fix his attention on things above, as he finds by the very effort that the glory of this present life is nothing, is raised above the high places of the earth: and that which at first he believed to be above him, when plunged in grovelling desires, he afterwards discerns to be beneath him, as he advances in his ascent. The things then which the Lord there promises that He will do, saying, *I will raise thee above the high places of the earth*, these very things He witnesses to blessed Job, that He alone is able to do, saying; *Will the eagle mount up at thy command, and make for thee her nest in high places?* As if He were saying; As at Mine, Who inspire within by the grace of hidden bounty, that which I command from without. It follows;  
Ver. 28. *She abideth in the rocks.*

[xlviiii]

97. In Holy Scripture, when a 'rock' is mentioned in the singular number, who else is understood but Christ? As Paul witnesses, who says, *But the rock was Christ.* [1 Cor. 10, 4] But when 'rocks'

are spoken of, in the plural number, His members are described, namely, holy men, who are confirmed by His strength. Whom the Apostle Peter doubtless calls stones, saying, *Ye as lively stones are built together as spiritual houses*. [1 Pet. 2, 5] This eagle, therefore, which raised the eyes of her heart to the rays of the true sun, is said to abide in the rocks, because she is planted, in the firmness of her mind, in the sayings of the ancient and mighty fathers. For she recalls to memory the life of those, whom she sees to have gone before in the way of God; and by studying in the loftiness of their strength, she builds herself a nest of holy meditation. And when she thinks silently on their deeds and words, when she considers the glory of the present life, how mean it is in comparison with eternal excellence, she sits, as it were, on the rocks, and beholds the lower places of the earth to be beneath her.

98. Rocks can also be understood to be the lofty powers of heavenly virtues, which the wind of our mutability now bends not hither and thither, like trees. Because being like rocks, placed on high, they are exempt from every motion of mutability, and fastened to the solidity of their height, they have become firm, by the very eternity to which they adhere. When a holy man, therefore, despises the things of earth, he raises himself, like an eagle, to higher things; and, elevated by the spirit of contemplation, waits for the eternal glory of Angels, and, being a stranger in this world, by seeking after the things he beholds, is already fixed on things above. It is therefore rightly said, *She abideth in the rocks*; that is, by intention of heart she dwells among those heavenly virtues, which are already, even by the strength of their eternity, fixed with such great solidity, as not to be bent on any side to sin by the variableness of change. Whence also it fitly follows;  
*And she dwelleth in the abrupt flints, and in the inaccessible rocks.*

[xlix]

99. For who else are those abrupt flints, but those firmest choirs of Angels, who, though not in their integrity, yet remained firmly fixed in their own estate, when the devil fell with his angels? For they are abrupt, because part of them fell, part remained firm. Who stand indeed entire, as to the quality of their deserts, but broken off, as to the quantity of their number. This breaking off the Mediator came to restore, that, having redeemed the human race, He might repair these losses of the angels, and might perhaps heap up more richly the measure of the heavenly country. By reason of this breaking off it is said of the Father: *He purposed in Him, in the dispensation of the fulness of times, to restore all things in Christ, which are in heaven, and which are on earth, in Him*. [Eph. 1, 9. 10.] For in Him are restored those things, which are on earth, when sinners are converted to righteousness. In Him are restored those which are in heaven, when humbled men return to that place from which apostate angels fell by pride. But in that He says, *In inaccessible rocks*, those doubtless, who are abrupt flints, are themselves inaccessible rocks. For the brightness of Angels is very inaccessible to the heart of sinful men, because the more it has fallen down to bodily attractions, the more it has closed its eyes to spiritual beauty. But, whoever is so rapt by contemplation, as, being raised up by Divine grace, already to engage his thought on the choirs of Angels, and, fixed on things above, to keep himself aloof from every grovelling deed, is not contented with beholding the glory of angelic brightness, unless he is able to behold Him also, Who is above Angels. For the vision of Him is alone the true refreshment of our mind. And hence, when He had said, that this eagle abides in the rocks, and remains in the abrupt flints and inaccessible rocks, He immediately added;  
Ver. 29. *From thence she beholdeth her food.*

[I]

100. That is, from these choirs of Angels he directs the eyes of his mind to contemplate the glory of the Majesty on high: and, not seeing it, he is still hungry: and seeing it, at length, he is satisfied. For it is written, *Because his soul, hath laboured, he shall see and be satisfied.* [Is. 53, 11] And again, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.* [Matt. 5, 6] But who is the food of our mind is plainly pointed out, when it is said; *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.* [Matt. 5, 8] And because, from being weighed down by the interposition of the corruptible flesh, we cannot behold God as He is, it is rightly subjoined; *Her eyes behold afar off.*

[li]

101. For whatever progress any one may have made, when placed in this life, he cannot as yet behold God in His real appearance, but darkly, and through a glass. But when we look close at hand, we see more truly, but when we turn our sight further off, we are darkened by our uncertain sight. Because, therefore, holy men raise themselves up to lofty contemplation, and yet cannot behold God as He is, it is well said of this eagle; *Her eyes behold afar off.* As if He were saying; They resolutely direct the keenness of their intention, but they cannot, as yet, behold Him nigh, the greatness of Whose brightness they are not at all able to penetrate. For the mist of our corruption darkens us from the incorruptible light, and when the light can both be seen in a measure, and yet cannot be seen as it is, it shews how distant it is. But if the mind were not to see it in any way, it would not see that it was far off. But if it were already to behold it perfectly, it would not in truth see it through a mist. Because then He is neither completely seen, nor again completely hidden, it is rightly said, that God is beheld from far.

102. Let us bring forward the words of Isaiah, and point out how they and these are uttered by the same Spirit. For when he was describing the virtues of active life, saying; *Who walketh in righteousnesses, and speaketh the truth, who casteth off the gain from oppression, and shaketh his hand from every bribe, that stoppeth his ears, lest he hear blood, and shutteth his eyes not to see evil;* [Is. 33, 15] he immediately added to what heights of contemplation he can ascend by these steps of active life, saying; *He shall dwell in high places, his loftiness shall be the munitions of rocks; bread is given him, his waters are sure. His eyes shall see the King in His beauty, they shall behold the land afar off.* [ib. 16] For to dwell in high places, is to set our heart on heavenly things. And our loftiness is the munitions of rocks, when we look back to the precepts, and examples of mighty fathers, and separate ourselves from grovelling thoughts. Our loftiness is the munitions of rocks, when we are joined in mind to the choirs and camp of heaven, and, standing in the citadel of our heart, expel, as though placed beneath us, the malignant spirits who lie in wait. Then also bread is given to us; because our attention, raised to things above, is refreshed with the contemplation of eternity. Our waters are also sure, because that, which the teaching of God here promises through hope, it then offers as a gift. For the wisdom of this world is not trustworthy, because it is not likely to remain after death. Our waters are sure, because that, which the words of life teach us before death, the same they point out to us also after death. Our eyes behold the King in His beauty, because our Redeemer is, in the judgment, beheld as Man, even by the reprobate; but those alone who are Elect are exalted to behold the loftiness of His Divinity. For, to behold the servile form

alone, in which He is despised by the wicked, is to see, as it were, a kind of deformity of the King, But the King is seen, by the Elect, in His beauty; because, being rapt above themselves, they fix the eyes of their heart on the very brightness of His Godhead. And because, as long as they are in this life, they cannot behold that land of the living, as it really is, it is rightly added; *They shall behold the land afar off*. That then, which He says here; *The eagle will mount up, and make its nest in high places*, is there expressed, *He shall dwell in high places*. That which is here said, *She abideth in the rocks, and dwelleth in the abrupt flints, and inaccessible rocks*, is there added, *His loftiness shall be the munitions of rocks*. That again which is here introduced, *From thence she beholdeth her food*, is here also subjoined, *Bread is given him, his waters are sure, his eyes shall see the King in His beauty*. And that which is here subjoined, *Her eyes behold afar off*, is there fitly added, *They shall behold the land afar off*.

103. Let us consider, what a lofty eagle was Paul, who flew even to the third heaven, yet, when dwelling in this life, he still beholds God afar off, who says, *We now see through a glass darkly, but then face to face*. [1 Cor. 13, 12] And again; *I count not myself to have apprehended*. [Phil. 3, 13] But, though he himself beholds eternal things much short of what they really are, though he knows that he cannot perfectly understand them; yet he cannot instil by preaching, into his weak hearers, those very things, which he is able to behold only through a mirror and an image. For he speaks of himself, as if of another person, saying, *He heard secret words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter*. [2 Cor. 12, 4] Although therefore the smallest, and most extreme, inward truths are seen, yet to mighty preachers they are most exalted, but beyond the capacity of weak hearers. Whence also holy preachers, when they see that their hearers cannot receive the statement of His Divinity, come down to speak only of the Lord's Incarnation. And hence here also, when the eagle is said to be raised on high, and to see from far, it is immediately rightly subjoined; Ver. 30. *Her young ones suck up blood*.

[lii]

104. As if it were plainly said; She herself indeed feeds on the contemplation of His Godhead, but because her hearers cannot understand the mysteries of the Godhead, they are satiated with hearing of the blood of the Lord Crucified. For to suck up blood, is to reverence the weaknesses of the Lord's Passion. Hence it is, that the same Paul, who, as we said a little before, had soared to the secrets of the third heaven, said to his disciples; *For I have determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified*. [1 Cor. 2, 2] As if this eagle were plainly saying; I indeed behold as my food the power of His Godhead afar off, but to you, who are still young, I give the blood only of His Incarnation to be sucked up. For he, who in his preaching had been silent as to the loftiness of the Godhead, and informs his weak hearers of the Blood alone of the Cross, what else does he do, but give blood to his young ones? But, because the soul of every holy preacher is, when stripped of the corruption of the flesh, led directly to Him, Who of His own accord submitted to death for us, and rose from death, it is fitly added of this eagle, *And wheresoever the carcase shall be, she is immediately present*.

[liii]

105. For a carcase is so called from its fall [cadaver, a casu]. And the body of the Lord is, not undeservedly, called a carcase, on account of the fall of death. But that which is here said of this

eagle; *Wheresoever the carcase shall he, she is immediately present*; this same thing the Truth has promised will take place, in souls as they depart from the body, saying, *Wheresoever the body shall he, thither will the eagles also be gathered together*. [Luke 17, 37] As if He plainly said, I, your Incarnate Redeemer, Who preside over the heavenly abode, will exalt the souls of the Elect also, to heavenly places, when I shall have released them from the flesh.

106. But this which is said of this eagle; *Wheresoever the carcase shall be, she is immediately present*, can be understood in another sense also. For every one, who has fallen into the death of sin, will be able, not inappropriately, to be called a carcase. For he, who has not the quickening spirit of righteousness, lies, as it were, without life. Because, then, every holy preacher anxiously flies to the spot, where he thinks there are sinners, to shew the light of revival to those who are lying in the death of sin, it is well said of this eagle; *Wheresoever the carcase shall be, she is immediately present*. That is, he proceeds to the place, where he foresees the utility of preaching; in order that, because he already lives a spiritual life, he may benefit others who are lying in their death, whom he devours, as it were, by reproving, yet, by converting them from iniquity to innocence, he changes them, as it were, by eating them, into his own members. Lo, the very Paul, whom we have already frequently brought forward for a testimony, when he was going at one time to Judaea, at another to Corinth, at another to Ephesus, at another to Rome, at another to the Spains, that he might announce the grace of eternal life to those who were lying in the death of sin; what else did he prove himself to be but an eagle; which, swiftly flying over every thing, was seeking for the carcase wheresoever lying; in order that, while he was performing the will of God, in having gained sinners, he might find, as it were, his own food in the carcase? For the food of the righteous is the conversion of sinners, of which it is said, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto eternal life*. [John 6, 27] Having heard, therefore, such numerous virtues of holy men, blessed Job is understood to have been astonished, and to have been silent, from the awe of admiration. For it follows,

Ver. 31, 32. *The Lord added, and spake to Job; Doth he that contendeth with God, so easily remain quiet? He that reproveth God, ought certainly also to answer Him*. [E.V. 40, 1. 2.]

107. The holy man did not consider that his merits were being increased, but that his vices were being cut away by this so great severity of the scourge. And since he knew that there were no vices within him, he believed that he was unjustly smitten; and, to murmur at the blow, is altogether to reprove the Smiter. But the Lord, considering that what he brought forward, he had gathered, not from the swelling of pride, but from the character of his life, gently reproves him, saying, *Doth he that contendeth with God, so easily remain quiet? He that reproveth God, ought certainly also to answer Him*. As if He were plainly saying; Why hast thou, who hast said so much of thy own conduct, remained silent on hearing of the life of the Saints? For to doubt of My smiting, whether it was just or not, was to reprove Me. And thou hast stated thy own good qualities truly, but thou hast not known the tendency of these scourges. For though thou hast no longer any thing to correct, yet thou hast still something in which to increase. But, behold, thou hast learned from My narrative, to what a height of virtue I exalt very many. Thou wast considering thine own loftiness, but wast ignorant of that of others. Having heard then the virtues of others, answer Me, if thou canst, concerning thine own. But we know that he, who, when he acts rightly, omits looking at the merits of his betters, extinguishes the eye of his heart, by the darkness of pride. But, on the other hand, he who carefully weighs the good qualities of others, enlightens his own deeds, by a powerful ray of humility; because when he sees the things he has done himself, done by others also without, he

keeps down that swelling of pride, which strives to break forth within from singularity. Hence is it that it is said by the voice of God to Elias, when thinking that he was solitary, *I have left Me seven thousand men, who have not bent their knees before Baal*; [1 Kings 19, 18] in order that by learning that he remained not solitary, he might avoid the boasting of pride, which might arise in him, from his singularity. Blessed Job therefore is not blamed for having done any thing perversely, but he is informed of the good deeds of others besides, in order that while he considers that he has others also equal to him, he may humbly submit himself to Him, Who is specially the Highest.

## BOOK XXXII.

The two last verses of the thirty-ninth chapter having been explained, the first fourteen verses of the fortieth chapter are expounded, and many things are taught, both concerning the infinite power of God, and the hurtful designs of Satan against men.

[i]

1. The higher holy men advance with God, in the dignity of virtues, the more accurately do they discover that they are unworthy; because while they become close to the light, they find out whatever escaped their notice in themselves, and they appear to themselves the more deformed without, in proportion as that is very beautiful, which they see within. For every one is made known to himself, when he is illumined with the touch of the true light, and by the same means as he learns what is righteousness, he is also instructed to see what is sin. Hence is it that though our mind is often benumbed with cold in converse with men's doings, though it sins and is ignorant in some points, though it regards some sins as though they were none; yet when it raises itself by the compunction of prayer to aim at things above, having been roused by the eye of its compunction, it returns to observe itself with greater vigilance after its tears. For when it deserts itself in neglect, and is torpid with fatal lukewarmness, it fully believes that idle words or unprofitable thoughts are of lesser guilt. But if warmed by the fire of compunction, and touched by the sudden breath of contemplation, it starts from its lukewarmness, it soon begins to dread, as grave and deadly offences, those things which but a little before it believed to be trifling. For it avoids, as most atrocious, all things which are in the very least degree hurtful; because, namely, being pregnant with the conception of the Spirit, it no longer allows any vanities to enter in unto it. For from that which it beholds within, it feels how dreadful are those sins which clamour without; and the more it has advanced when raised up, the more does it shrink from the grovelling pursuits, in which it sank prostrate. For nothing in truth supports it, but that which it has beheld within, and it endures the more heavily whatever thrusts itself on it from without, the more it is not that which it beheld within; but from those inward objects which it has been able to catch a glance of, it forms a standard for judging of those outward things which it has to bear with. For it is rapt above itself, when it contemplates sublime objects, and now beholding itself, by going out of itself more freely, it comprehends more minutely whatever remains to it, of itself, under itself. By which means it is wonderfully brought to pass, as was before said, that it appears the more unworthy to itself, by the very means by which it is rendered more worthy; and that it then feels itself far removed from uprightness, when it is approaching near it. Whence Solomon says, *I have tried all things by*

*wisdom, and said, I will become wise, and it departed the farther from me.* [Eccles. 7, 23] For wisdom which is sought after is said to depart far off, because it seems higher to a person approaching it. But those who do not seek it, think themselves the nearer it, the more they know not also its standard of uprightness; because, living in darkness, they know not how to admire the brightness of the light, which they have never seen, and since they do not tend towards the comeliness of its beauty, they willingly become more deformed every day in themselves. For whoever is touched by its rays, his deformity is more manifestly pointed out to him, and he finds the more truly how much he is distorted in sin, the more keenly, from considering the highest objects, he beholds how far distant he is from uprightness. Whence blessed Job, surpassing in virtues the race of men, overcame his friends in speaking; but when instructed more highly, by God speaking to him, on knowing himself, he remained silent. For he overcame those who spoke unjustly, but at the words of the voice within he knew that he was justly condemned. And he knows not indeed why he was scourged, but yet he proved by silence why he revered not the scourges. For when the Divine judgments are not known, they are not to be discussed with bold words, but to be venerated with awful silence; because even when the Creator of all things discloses not His reasons in inflicting the scourge, He shews them to be just, by pointing out that He inflicts them Who is perfectly just. Let the holy man, then, who has been reprov'd both first for his words, and afterwards for his silence, make known what he thinks of himself. For he says;  
Ver. 34. *I who have spoken lightly, what can I answer?* [E.V. 40, 4]

[ii]

2. As if he said, I would defend my speech, if I had uttered it with weight of reason. But after a tongue is convicted of having used levity, what remains for it but to be restrained with silence? It follows,  
*I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*

In the usage of Holy Scripture, work is wont to be understood by the hand, speech by the mouth. To lay therefore the hand upon the mouth, is by the virtue of good living to conceal the faults of incautious speech. But who can be found, however perfect, who has not offended in idle words? As James witnesses, who says, *Be not many masters, for in many things we offend all.* [James 3, 1] And again, *The tongue can no man tame.* [ib. 8] And the Truth, exposing its faults by Its own mouth, says, *But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall have spoken, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* [Matt. 12, 36] But holy men study to conceal before the eyes of God the faults of the tongue by the merits of their life, they study to keep down their immoderate words by the weight of good works. Whence in Holy Church the hand is laid upon the mouth, when the sin of idle talk is daily covered in its Elect by the virtue of good actions. For it is written; *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* [Ps. 3. 21] But since it is written again; *All things are naked and opened unto His eyes,* [Heb. 4, 13] how can they be concealed which can never be at all hid from the eyes of Him, to Whom all things are naked? But since we place lower, that which we conceal, and doubtless spread that over, with which we cover it, in order to cover that which is placed beneath, we are said to cover our sins, which we place, as it were, beneath, when we give them up; and we draw something else over them, when we choose afterwards to prefer for this end the work of good deeds. He therefore who abandons his former evil deeds, and afterwards does good works, by this addition covers his past iniquity, over which he spreads the merits of good deeds. Let blessed Job therefore, as typifying Holy Church,

and in what he says alleging his own circumstances, but designating ours, say for us; *I will lay mine hand upon my mouth:* that is, that of my words in me which I consider to have displeased the strict Judge, I conceal before His eyes under the veil of upright conduct. It follows;

Ver. 35. *One thing have I spoken, which I would I had not said; and another, to which I will add no further.* [E.V. 40, 5]

[iii]

3. If we examine the former words of blessed Job, we find that he has said nothing wickedly. But if we distort his words, which were uttered with truth and freedom, into a sort of sin of pride, there will no longer be two only; because there will be many. But since our speaking is the laying open to men our secret meaning in words; but our speaking to the ears of God is the exhibiting the motion of our mind even by an expressive action; blessed Job, on weighing himself by the balance of most accurate examination, confesses that he had a second time offended in his speech. For to 'say one thing' unlawfully, is to do things worthy of the scourge, to 'say another' is to murmur too at the scourge. He therefore, who was preferred above men in all his doings before the reproof of the Lord, rising higher by this very reproof, acknowledged that he was in the first place far from right in his conduct, and afterwards far from patient under the rod. Whence he reproves himself, saying, *One thing have I spoken, which I would I had not said; and another, to which I will add no further.* As if he said, I believed myself to be righteous indeed among men, but, as Thou wert speaking, I found myself to be both wicked before the scourges, and stubborn after the scourges. *To which I will add no further*, because now, the more accurately I understand Thee speaking, the more humbly I search out myself.

4. And because blessed Job typifies Holy Church, these words of his can be applied to all the Elect, who knowing the Lord, feel that they have offended in one and another point, because they understand that they have sinned either in thought and deed, or in neglecting the love of God and their neighbour. To which they promise to add no further, because through the grace of conversion, they take care to purge away daily by penitence even their former deeds. And yet blessed Job, by convicting himself in his penitence of two points, plainly shews, that every sinner ought in his penitence to have two groans, because, in truth, he has both not done the good which he ought, and has done the evil which he ought not. For hence is it that it is said by Moses, of him who took an oath to do any thing, either evil or good, and has transgressed it through forgetfulness, *Let him offer a she lamb from the flocks, or a she goat, and the priest shall pray for him, and for his sin. But if he is not able to offer a lamb, let him offer two turtle doves, or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering.* [Lev. 5, 6. 7.] For to take an oath is to bind ourselves with a vow of servitude to God. And when we promise good works, we pledge ourselves to do well. But when we vow abstinence and the torture of our flesh, we swear to do ill to ourselves for the present. But because no one in this life is so perfect, however devoted to God, as not to sin in ever so small a degree in the midst of these pious vows, a she lamb of the flocks, or a she goat, is ordered to be offered for his sin. For what is signified by the she lamb, except the innocence of active life? what by the she goat, which often feeds as it is hanging on the summits and extremities of the rocks, but a life of contemplation? He therefore who sees that he has not fulfilled what he has promised and proposed, ought the more studiously to prepare himself for the sacrifice of God, either by the innocence of good works, or by the lofty food of contemplation. And a she lamb is well ordered to be offered from the flocks, but a she goat not from the flocks; because an active life



is the lot of many, a contemplative of few. And when we do those things which we see many are doing, or have done, we offer, as it were, a she lamb from the flocks. But when the power of the offerer is not equal to a she lamb, and she goat, it is added as a remedy for the penitent, that two young pigeons or two turtle doves may be offered. We know that young pigeons or turtle doves utter moans instead of a song. What then is designated by two young pigeons, or two turtle doves, except the twofold groaning of our penitence? That so when we rise not to the offering of good works, we may bewail ourselves in two ways, both because we have not done right, and have also wrought evil things. Whence also one turtle dove is ordered to be offered for a sin offering, but the other for a burnt offering. For a holocaust means 'entirely burnt.' We offer therefore one turtle dove for a sin offering, when we groan for our fault, but we make a holocaust of the other, when, because we have neglected good works, thoroughly inflaming ourselves, we glow with the fire of grief. Because therefore a twofold groaning is required in penitence, blessed Job, making progress by the chiding of God's voice, and increasing in self-reproach, confesses with penitence that he has said one and another thing. As if he openly said, I have through negligence been slothful in good works, and through audacity have broken out into evil.

Chap. xl. ver. 1, 2. *But the Lord answered unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins as a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me.* [E.V. 6, 7]

What is the Lord answering out of the whirlwind, what blessed Job girding up his loins, what the demand of God, and the declaration of man, has been already treated of in the first address of the Lord. Because therefore we forbear to weary our reader, we are especially careful not to repeat our words. It follows;

Ver. 3. *Wilt thou disannul My judgment, and condemn Me, that thou mayest be justified?* [E.V. 8]

[iv]

5. Whoever strives to defend himself against the scourges of God, endeavours to set aside the judgment of Him Who inflicts them. For when he says that he is not smitten for his own fault, what else does he but accuse the injustice of the Smiter? The scourges of heaven therefore smote not blessed Job to extinguish in him his faults, but rather to increase his merits, in order that he who in the season of tranquillity had shone forth in so great sanctity, might also manifest from the blow what virtue of patience lay concealed within him. But he, not detecting his fault during the scourges, and yet not discovering that those very scourges were the cause of increasing his merit, believed that he was unjustly smitten, when he found nothing in himself which required to be corrected. But, lest his very innocence should be puffed up into the swelling of pride, he is reproved by the Divine voice; and his mind, free from iniquity, but weighed down by scourges, is recalled to the secret judgments; in order that the sentence of heaven, though not understood, may not be considered unjust: but that he may at least believe that every thing which he suffers is just, as it is doubtless plain that he is suffering at the hands of God. For the righteous will of our Maker, is a great satisfaction for the blow. For since it is wont to do nothing unjust, it is acknowledged to be just even though hid. For when we are smitten for the sin of injustice, if we are conjoined to the Divine will in our smiting, we are soon released from our injustice by this very conjunction. For whoever now endures the blow, but still knows not the causes of the blow, if he welcomes this very sentence against him, believing it to be just, he is at once released from his unrighteousness, just as he rejoices that he has been justly smitten. For by associating himself with God in his own punishment, he sets up himself against himself; and great already is his righteousness, because he

accords with the will of God in his punishment, from which he differed in sin. The holy man, therefore, because he had not disagreed with God through any sin, with difficulty, as it were, agreed with Him when in the midst of his punishments. For he believed not that the scourges, which commonly extinguish vices, were in him only increasing his merits. Whence he is now justly reprov'd, in order that even unwittingly he might be brought under the Divine judgments: and it is said to him; *Wilt thou disannul My judgment, and wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be justified?* As if it were plainly said; Thou considerest indeed thine own good deeds, but thou knowest not My secret judgments. If therefore thou disputest against My scourges, on account of thy merits, what else dost thou, but hasten to convict Me of injustice, by justifying thyself? It follows;

Ver. 4. *Hast thou an arm like God, and dost thou thunder with a voice like Him?* [E.V. 9]

[v]

6. Because blessed Job transcended in merits the race of men, his merciful Creator and Teacher challenges him to consider the resemblance of His greatness, in order that, having known the great dissimilarity, he may keep himself down in humility.

7. But when a voice and arm are spoken of in God, we must take the greatest care that our mind imagines nothing corporeal in Him. For to confine Him within the lineaments of a body, Who without circumscription fills and embraces all things, is to fall into the heresy of the Anthropomorphites. But Almighty God, in drawing us to His own things, humbles Himself even to ours, and, to teach lofty, condescends to lowly things; in order that the mind of little ones, being nourished with the things it knows, may rise to enquire into those it knows not, and hearing from Him Who is far above it, some truths nigh itself, may move, as it were, some steps towards Him. Whence it happens, that in His own Scripture He sometimes from the bodies of men, sometimes from their minds, but sometimes from birds, and sometimes even from insensate objects, applies to Himself some very unlikely resemblances. For He frequently applies to Himself a resemblance from the bodies of men, as the Prophet says of Him to the Israelites, *He that hath touched you, toucheth the apple of His eye.* [Zech. 2, 8] And as it is said again of Him by the Prophet to a man who trusts in Him; *He will make a shadow for thee with His shoulders.* [Ps. 91, 4] It is doubtless admitted that God in His own nature has neither eye, nor shoulders; but since we see with our eye, but support burdens on our shoulders, God, because He sees all things, is said to have an eye; but because He carries us, and by carrying preserves us, He is said to make a shadow for us with His shoulders. For he says, *He will make a shadow for thee with His shoulders.* As if He were saying to man who was a sinner, and, after his sin asking pardon, The Lord protects thee with the same affection, with which He endured thee. For He shadows thee with His shoulders, because while He carries, He defends thee. But sometimes He applies to Himself a resemblance from our minds, as He *to*, says by the Prophet to Israel; *I have remembered thee, having pity on thy youth.* [Jer. 2, 2] And again speaking by the comparison of a wife, He says; *Even if she shall have forgotten, yet will I not forget thee.* [Is. 49, 15] For who can be ignorant, that the memory of God is neither broken off by oblivion, nor yet repaired by recollection? But when He neglects and passes over some things, He is said, after the manner of minds, to forget, and when, after a long time, He visits the things He wills, He is said, after the fashion of our changeableness, to have remembered. For how does oblivion weaken the strength of that Godhead, with Which even praiseworthy memory itself has no essential agreement. For men remember no things, except those which are either past or absent.

How then does God remember past things, when the very things which in themselves pass away, stand ever present at His beck? Or how does He call to mind things absent, when every thing that is, is present to Him, from the fact that it exists in Him? For if it were not present to Him, it would not exist at all; for things nonexistent He creates, by looking on them, things existent He keeps together, by looking on them. Whatever, therefore, the Creator beholds not, is bereft of the essence of subsistence. But sometimes a resemblance is applied to Him from birds, as is said by Moses, *He spread abroad His wings, and took them*. [Deut. 32, 11] And the Prophet says; *Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings*. [Ps. 17, 8] For because when we are young He nourishes us, as He protects us, and cherishes us with no heavy and burdensome, but with light and gentle, protection, when He puts forth His mercies towards us, He extends His wings over us, as if after the manner of birds. He sometimes, with deep condescension, compares himself, on account of our infirmity, with objects without sense; as He says by the Prophet, *Behold, I will shriek over you, as a cart creaketh laden with hay*. [Amos 2, 13] For since the life of the carnal is hay, as it is written, *All flesh is hay*; [Is. 40, 6] in that the Lord endures the life of the carnal, He declares that He carries hay as a cart. And to creak under the weight of the hay is for Him to bear, with murmuring, the burdens and iniquities of sinners. When therefore He applies to Himself very unlike resemblances, we must carefully observe that some things of this kind are sometimes spoken of concerning God, on account of the effect of His doings, but sometimes to indicate the substance of His Majesty. For when an eye, shoulders, a foot, and wings, are said to be in God, the effect of His operation is set forth. But when hand, arm, right hand, or voice, is said to belong to God, by these words His Consubstantial Son is pointed out. For He is in truth both hand, and right hand, of Whose Ascension the Father speaks by Moses, saying, *I will lift up My hand to heaven, and I will swear by My right hand*. [Deut. 32, 40] He is the arm, of Whom the Prophet says, *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* [Is. 53, 1] He is the voice, because the Father said when He begat Him, *Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee*. [Ps. 2, 7] And of Whom it is written, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. [John 1, 1] By this Word David declares that the Father made all things, saying, *He spake, and they were made*. [Ps. 33, 9] For God, therefore, to have an arm, is for Him to beget a Son that worketh; to thunder with His voice, is for Him to manifest fearfully to the world His Consubstantial Son. When therefore the Lord says to blessed Job, *Hast thou an arm like God, and dost thou thunder with a voice like Him?* by a wonderful dispensation of mercy He exalts, while He reproves him. Because He proves him to be superior to all, whom He surpasses only by comparison with Himself. To whom He subjoins with this proposal; Ver. 5. *Surround thyself with beauty, and raise thyself on high, and be full of glory, and array thyself with beautiful garments*. [E.V. 10]

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8. Thou understandest, As I. For He surrounds Himself with beauty, of Whom it is written, *The Lord hath reigned, He hath put on beauty*. [Ps. 93, 1] He is raised aloft in us, when He is proved to be in His own Nature unsearchable by our minds. But He is glorious, Who while He enjoys Himself, needs not any added praise. He is arrayed in beautiful garments, because He assumed for the service of His beauty, the choirs of the holy Angels, whom He created, and sets forth His Church as a kind of glorious garment, not having wrinkle or spot. Whence it is said to Him by the Prophet, *Thou hast put on confession, and beauty, clothed with light as with a garment*. [Ps. 104, 1. 2.] For here He puts on confession, there beauty; because those whom He has here made to confess by penitence, He will there set forth refulgent with the beauty of righteousness. He is clothed,

therefore, with light as with a garment, because in that eternal glory He will be clothed with all the Saints, to whom it is said, *Ye are the light of the world*. [Matt. 5, 14] Whence also it is said by the Evangelist, that when the Lord was transfigured in the mountain, His raiment became white as snow. In which transfiguration what else is announced but the glory of the final resurrection? For in the mountain His raiment became as snow, because in the height of heavenly brightness all Saints will be joined to Him, refulgent with the light of righteousness. But since He teaches, under the expression beautiful garments, how He unites the righteous to Himself, He shews also how He separates from Himself the unrighteous. It follows;

Ver. 6. *Scatter the proud in thy wrath*. [E.V. 11]

[vii]

9. Thou understandest, As I, Who in the season of tranquillity bear with them united against Me, and when I come at last with severity, I scatter them in My wrath. But we must carefully observe on these subjects, that a grievous error of misbelief is admitted, if any one perchance thinks, that in that Substance of the Godhead, wrath and tranquillity are variable. For the Creator of all is supremely immortal, in that He is not changeable, like a creature. Hence it is said of Him by James, *With Whom is no variableness, nor shadow of change*. [James 1, 17] Hence again it is written, *But Thou, O Lord, judgest, with tranquillity*. [Wisd. 12, 18] Hence the Prophet says, *The land is made desert from the face of the anger of the Dove, from the face of the fury of the Lord*. [Jer. 25, 38] For that which he had first called the anger of the dove, he afterwards called the fury of the Lord. For the dove is a very simple animal; and because no inequality of fury steals in upon God, He called the fury of the Lord the anger of the dove. For to point out the inalterable might of the Divine severity, he termed it both 'anger,' and that of 'the Dove.' As if he were saying more plainly; He Who still continuing gentle punishes the unrighteous, inflicts unmoved a severe judgment. Whence also in the last Judgment, remaining immutable in Himself, He is not altered by any vicissitude or change; but yet He is not manifested to the Elect and reprobate under the same appearance of unchangeableness, because He will appear calm to the righteous, but wrathful to the unrighteous. For by the witness of conscience within they bring themselves to a point, from which their minds behold alike One Person, but are not alike affected, because to the one their former righteousness represents Him as gentle, and to the others their sin represents Him as terrible. But who can explain their dread, when it falls to the lot of these wretched men, both to discern faults within themselves, and to see the righteous Judge before themselves? And it is doubtless the case in the daily course of the present life, that the hearts of men are being instructed in the character of the coming Judge. For when two persons are going to trial, the one conscious of his innocence, the other of his fault, even before the sentence is passed, they both look at the judge when still silent, and yet the guilty one suspects that this very silence of the judge is heavy wrath against him. Which wrath, his remembrance of his wickedness, and not the passion of the Judge, denounces against him: for though the sentence does not as yet outwardly proclaim him guilty, yet his conscience heavily accuses him within. But, on the other hand, the friend of justice beholds the countenance of him who is giving sentence, but rejoices within from the testimony of a good conscience, and as he has had nothing to fear in himself, he looks on every thing which is done to him as kind. In this place then the wrath of God means not any agitation of the Substance of the Godhead, but the enquiry of righteous vengeance upon sinners conscious of their guilt. For though they see Him to be calm in judgment, yet, from not doubting that they will be smitten by Him, they think that He is agitated in their emotions. It follows;

*And behold every one that is arrogant, and abase him.*

[viii]

10. As if He said, As I. But as to the order of punishment, the sin of the proud is fitly mentioned before the arrogant; because in truth pride is not generated by arrogance, but arrogance by pride. But every sinner is looked upon in two ways by the Lord, when he is either converted from sin, or punished for sin. Of looking in order to conversion it is said, that *the Lord looked upon Peter; and Peter, remembering the word of Jesus, wept bitterly.* [Luke 22, 61] With regard to punishment it is said again; *The countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil, to destroy the remembrance of them from the earth.* [Ps. 34, 16] But in both ways is the arrogant brought down in humility, because he either acknowledges his fault with penitence, or by perishing suffers punishment. Ver. 7. *Look on all the proud, and confound them, and I tread down the wicked in their place.* [E.V. 12]

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11. Thou understandest, As I. For the proud are confounded at the look of the Lord, either here, by His mercy, when acknowledging and condemning their faults, or there, by suffering punishments from His justice. But pride itself is the place of the wicked; for, since it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin,* [Ecclus. 10, 13] it is comprised in that place, whence impiety arises; although impiety hardly differs from pride. For to be very proud is to think impiety of our Maker. The impious then is trodden down in his place, because he is crushed by that very pride, by which he is raised up; and when by boasting he raises himself in his thoughts, he hides from himself the light of righteousness, which he ought to find. But frequently when he is outwardly advancing his false glory against God, he is inwardly wasting away in real misery. Whence the Prophet says; *Thou castedst them down while they were being raised up.* [Ps. 73, 18] For he says not, Thou castedst them down after they were raised up, but while they were being raised up; because the very fact, that the proud happen to be exalted outwardly by false glory, is their being cast down within. For in the course of the divine judgment here, one thing is not their fault, and another their punishment; but their very fault is to them converted into punishment, so that when they are exalted with the haughtiness of pride, that which appears outwardly their progress, is itself in truth their inward fall. It follows;

Ver. 8. *Hide them in the dust, and at the same time plunge their faces into the pit.* [E.V. 13]

[x]

12. As if He said, As I. For God by a just judgment hides the proud and impious in the dust, because He permits their hearts to be overwhelmed with those earthly employments, which they choose, having scorned the love of their Creator. Whence also when He enquires into their conduct, He acknowledges it not, as though it were hid from Him saying; *I know not who ye are.* [Luke 13, 27] The life of the wicked is hidden under the dust, because it is weighed down by mean and grovelling desires. For whoever still desires these things that are of the world, appears not, as it were, before the face of the true light, because he is in truth concealed under the dust of earthly thought. The burdened mind endures this dust of wicked thoughts, which the wind of most evil temptation brings with it. For hence it is that it is said by the Prophet, of every soul which is

weighed down by earthly desires, under the character of Ephraim, *Ephraim has become as bread under the ashes, which is not turned*. [Hos. 7, 8] For by nature our intention is well fashioned, to rise towards God; but from an evil habit of conversation pleasure arises, to weigh us down towards the present world. But bread under the ashes, is cleaner on that side, which it conceals beneath, and dirtier on that, on which it bears the ashes from above. Whoever therefore neglects the effort with which he ought to seek God, presses down the cleaner side, like bread under the ashes, and when he willingly endures the cares of the world, he bears, as it were, above him a heap of ashes. But the bread under the ashes would be reversed, if he were to throw off the ash of carnal desires, and display above that good intention, which he had, by neglecting it, kept under in himself. But he refuses to be turned, when a mind, weighed down with the love of secular cares, neglects to throw off the mass of ashes which lies upon it; and when it seeks not to rise up to a good intention, it presses under the cleaner surface.

13. But it is fitly subjoined; *And at the same time plunge their faces into the pit*. As if He said, As I. For by a just judgment the Lord plunges the faces of the proud into the pit; because He casts down the intention of their heart, when it raises itself above men. For he whose face turns to the pit, looks towards things below. And it is well said of the proud, that their faces are plunged into the pit; because they are sinking lower, when through pride they are seeking higher things; and the more they raise themselves in their exaltation, the lower do they tend in their fall. For they seek earthly glory, and the things to which they look forward are of the basest kind, whilst they follow after high things in their pride. Whence it comes to pass in a wonderful and contrary manner, that the humble seek after heaven, whilst they cast themselves down the lower, and that the proud pursue the lowest objects, while by despising others they are raised, as it were, higher. The one, while they despise themselves, are united to heavenly things, the latter, while they exalt themselves, are separated from higher things. And, so to speak, the one, by elevating, depress, the other, by depressing, elevate themselves. And it is well said of the proud by the Psalmist; *But He humbleth the sinners even to the earth*; because by seeking after those things that are below, while they raise and extol themselves, what else do they, but, having lost heaven, fall to the earth? For their having already fallen to the bottom is their having sought after things below, having forsaken things above. Their faces are therefore rightly said to be plunged into the pit, because by following after things below, they tend to the pit of hell. For it comes to pass by a just judgment, that those whom wilful aversion benightens here, the well-deserved pit of punishment there excludes from the view of the true light. Because therefore the holy man is questioned with so great a dread of Divine Power, as to have it said to him, *Hast thou an arm like God, or dost thou thunder with a voice like Him? Scatter the proud in thy wrath, and behold every one that is arrogant, and abase him*, and other things which God is able to do, but man is hardly able to hear; the Lord shews with what intention He first spoke of all these things, by the end of the conclusion subjoined; saying, Ver. 9. *And I will confess that thy right hand can save thee*. [E.V. 14]

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14. As if He were openly saying, If thou art able to do these terrible things, which I Myself have displayed, I attribute to thee, and not to Myself, all the good things thou hast done. But if thou canst not destroy others, that sin, by a look, it is plain that thou canst not set thyself free from the guilt of wickedness, by thy own power. Behold! it is said by the Divine voice to blessed Job, that he is not saved by his own right hand, and yet certain men, who are far from the strength of this man,

despising the assistance of God, trust that they can be saved by their own strength. And for these what else ought we to pray, except that, if they have already received the gifts of good works, they may receive also this gift, to know from Whom they have received them? But since the Lord in the preceding words mentioned the greatness of His power, He now in what follows points out the wickedness of the ancient enemy: in order that the good servant, having first heard of the virtues of the Lord, might know how much to love, and having known afterwards the craft of the devil, might learn how much to fear. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, *The lion will roar, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who will not prophesy?* [Amos 3, 8] For after the power of his Creator has been made known to him, the strength of his adversary ought not to be concealed from him, in order that he might submit himself the more humbly to his defender, the more accurately he had learned the wickedness of his enemy, and might more ardently seek his Creator, the more terrible he found the enemy to be, whom he had to avoid. For it is certain that he who less understands the danger he has escaped, loves his deliverer less; and that he who considers the strength of his adversary to be feeble, regards the solace of his defender as worthless. Whence the Prophet rightly said, ascribing his deliverance to the Lord; *I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength,* [Ps. 18, 1] plainly saying, that is, I love Thee the more, the more, feeling my own infirmity, I acknowledge Thee to be my strength. Hence he says again, *Make Thy loving-kindness marvellous, O Thou that savest them that trust in Thee:* [Ps. 17, 7] because the loving-kindnesses of the Lord doubtless then become wonderful to us who are delivered, when, by the same loving-kindnesses, it is found how grievous were the perils we have escaped.

15. And because the Lord, in the preceding part of His speech, disclosed to blessed Job the marvellous works of subsequent Saints, that he might learn, on hearing them, how humbly he ought to think of the height of his own virtues; it is now shewn him with what enemy he is waging war, and his strength and his crafts are more accurately pointed out, in order that he who has been led to converse with his Maker, may know plainly the arguments of the adversary. For in the words which follow, the Lord makes known to His faithful servant all the machinations of the crafty enemy, all wherein he seizes by oppressing, all wherein he flies around with insidiousness, all wherein he frightens by threatening; all wherein he allures by persuasion, all wherein he crushes by desperation, all wherein he deceives by promising. He commences therefore all his contests of craftiness, saying;

Ver. 10. *Behold Behemoth, which I made with thee.* [E.V. 15]

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16. Whom does He suggest, under the name ‘Behemoth,’ except the ancient enemy? which being interpreted from the Hebrew word, means ‘Animal’ in the Latin tongue. For when his malice is added below, his person is plainly pointed out. But since it is written of God that He made all things together, why does He declare that He made this animal at the same time with man, when it is plain that He made all things at once? Again, we must enquire how God created all things at once, when Moses describes them as created separately with the varying change of six days. But we learn this the more readily, if we enquire minutely into the actual cases themselves of their beginnings. For the substance of things was indeed created at once, but the form was not fashioned at once: and that which existed at the same time in the substance of matter, appeared not at the same time by the figure of its shape. For when heaven and earth are described as made at the same time, it is pointed out that things spiritual and things corporeal, whatever arises from heaven, and

whatever is produced from earth, were created all of them together. For the sun, the moon, and the stars, are said to have been created in the heaven on the fourth day: but that which on the fourth day came forth in appearance, existed on the first day in the substance of heaven by the creation. The earth is said to have been created on the first day, and the trees and all the green things of the earth are described as being made on the third. But that which on the third day put itself forth in appearance, was doubtless created on the first day in the substance of the earth, from which it sprung. Hence it is that Moses distinctly related the creation of all things in separate days, and yet added that all were created at the same time, saying, *These are the generations of the heaven and the earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord made the heaven, and the earth, and every plant of the field, before it sprung up in the earth, and every herb of the region.* [Gen. 2, 4, 5] For he who had related that the heaven, and the earth, the trees and herbs, were created on different days, now declares that they were made on one day; in order clearly to point out that every creature began to be at the same time in substance, although it came not forth at the same time in appearance. Hence also it is written there, *God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him, male and female created He them.* [Gen. 1, 27] For Eve is not as yet described as having been made, and yet man is already said to be male and female. But because woman was certainly about to come forth from the side of Adam, she is already reckoned as being in him in substance, from whom she was hereafter to come forth in form. But we can consider these points in the smallest matters, in order from the smallest to consider greater. For when the herb is created, neither fruit, nor the seed of its fruit, as yet appears in it. But fruit and seed exist therein, even when they appear not; because they doubtless exist together in the substance of the root, which appear not together in the increase of time.

17. But because we say that those things are created at the same time in substance, which we find come forth the one from the other, in what way is Behemoth declared to be created together with blessed Job, when, neither is the substance of an angel, and of a man the same, and man springs not forth from an angel, nor an angel from a man? But if Behemoth is said to be created together with blessed Job, because every creature is without question created at the same time by a Maker, Who is not spread out in His doings in extent of time, why is that specially said of Behemoth, which is possessed in common with all creatures in general? But if we weigh the causes of things with accurate enquiry, we learn that Angels and men were created together; together, that is, not in unity of time, but in the knowledge of reason; together, by receiving the image of wisdom, and not together by the union of the substance of their form. For it is written of man, *Let us make man after Our image and likeness.* [Gen. 1, 26] And it is said to Satan by Ezekiel, *Thou wast a seal of similitude, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty in the delights of the Paradise of God.* [Ez. 28, 12] In the whole creation, then, men and angels came into being together, because they came forth distinct from every irrational creature. Because then in all the creation there is no rational being but men and Angels, whatever can not exercise reason, is not made together with Man. Let it be said then to man, let it be said of the angel, who although he lost the power of his high estate, yet lost not the subtlety of a rational nature; *Behold, Behemoth, which I made with thee.* In order that while man considers that he who was made together with him in reason has perished, he may, from the ruin of him who is near him, fear that the fall of pride is nigh himself also. But we must carefully notice that in these words, the wicked doctrine of Manichæus is plainly reprovèd by the voice of the Lord; for he, when he speaks of two principles, endeavours to establish that the ‘race of darkness’ was not created. For how is that most wicked race said to have not been made, when the Lord declares that He created that Behemoth, the author, namely, of wickedness, who was rightly



fashioned by nature? But because we have heard with whom that Behemoth was made, let us hear what he does, when ruined. It follows;  
*He will eat hay as an ox.*

[xiii]

18. If we carefully examine the words of the Prophets, we discover that these and they were put forth by the same Spirit. For when Isaiah observed the life of sinners devoured by the ancient and insatiable enemy, he said, the *lion shall eat straw like the ox*. [Is. 11, 7] But what is signified by the words hay, and straw, except the life of the carnal? Of which it is said by the Prophet, *All flesh is hay*. [Is. 40, 6] He then who here is 'Behemoth,' is there a 'lion;' they who are here called 'hay,' are there called 'straw.' But the mind strives to enquire why this lion in Isaiah, or Behemoth as he is called by the voice of the Lord, is in both passages compared not to a horse, but an ox. But we ascertain this the sooner, if we consider what is the difference of foods in the two animals. For horses eat hay, however dirty, but drink clean water only. But oxen drink water, however filthy, but feed only on clean hay. What then is it, for which this Behemoth is compared to an ox, which feeds on clean food, except that which is said of this ancient enemy by another Prophet; *His food is choice*. [Hab. 1, 16] For he rejoices not in seizing those whom he beholds lying of their own accord in the lowest depths with himself, involved in wicked and filthy actions. He therefore seeks to eat hay as an ox, because he seeks to wound with the fang of his suggestion the pure life of the spiritual.

19. But I see we must enquire, how this Behemoth, who eats hay like an ox, is said to destroy the life of the spiritual, when, as was before said, by the word 'hay' is designated the life of the carnal. His food also will no longer be choice, if, in eating hay, he seizes the carnal. But it occurs at once in reply, that some men are both hay in the sight of God, and among men are counted under the name of holiness, when their life displays one thing before the eyes of men, and before the Divine judgment their conscience intends another. They therefore in the opinion of men are 'choice,' ['electi'] but in the accurate judgment of the Lord are 'hay.' Was not Saul hay in the sight of God, of whom the Prophet Samuel said to the people, *Ye surely see him whom the Lord hath chosen*, [1 Sam. 10, 24] and of whom it is said just above, *He is choice and good?* [ib. 9, 2] For he whom the sinful people deserved, was both reprobate in the sight of God, and yet in the order of causes was choice and good. That many are hay, and suspect that they are Elect from the opinion of men, is well said by Solomon; *I saw the wicked buried, who even while they were still living were in the holy place, and were praised in the city as if of good works*. [Eccles. 8, 10] That many are hay, but yet are protected by the favour of sanctity, a certain wise man well points out, saying, *Pass over, O stranger, and furnish a table*. [Ecclus. 29, 26] For a stranger is said by passing over to furnish a table; because if any one standing at the altar of God seeks his own glory by good works, both the praise of the altar is extended by the display of his sanctity, and yet he himself is not counted by God in the number of the citizens. His opinion advances with others, and yet he himself 'passes over as a stranger' from God. He therefore 'adorned the table in passing over,' because he would not remain at the sacrifice, who in all he studied to do descended in thought to the praises of men. Because then some persons studiously lead a clean life, but seek not thereby to approve themselves within, his food is both rightly said to be choice, and yet this Behemoth is said to eat hay as an ox. For clean hay lies, as it were, on the ground, and below, before the mouth of this Behemoth, when both a life is passed, as it were, in innocence through keeping the commandments, and yet in the

midst of conduct which is set forth as good, the heart is not raised to seek after things above. What useful purpose then does he effect, who guards purity of life in himself, if by his base intention, he leaves himself on the earth to be found by the mouth of this Behemoth? Because therefore Almighty God informs us what our enemy is doing, let Him now make known to us how he prevails, in order that the more the wickedness of his cunning is known, the more easily it may be overcome. It follows;

Ver. 11. *His strengthen is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.*

[xiv]

20. The places for the seed of coition are said to be in the loins with men, but in the navel with women. For hence it is that the Truth says to His disciples; *Let your loins be girded about.* [Luke 12, 35] Hence Peter, when keeping away lust from the heart, admonished, saying, *Girded up in the loins of your mind.* [1 Pet. 1, 13] Hence Paul, when saying that the priesthood of Levi was tithed by the sacrifice of Abraham in the time of Melchisedec, said, in shewing where Levi was then concealed in the body of his father; *For he was yet in the loins of his father.* But that the seed-vessel of lust is with women contained in the navel, the Prophet witnesses, who, reproving the wantonness of Judaea, under the character of a prostituted woman, says; *In the day of thy birth thy navel was not cut.* [Ez. 16, 4] For to cut the navel in the day of birth, is to cut off the lust of the flesh at the time of conversion. For since it is difficult to correct evil beginnings, and to mould into a better shape things that have once been shapen amiss, Judaea is blamed from her birth, as having, while born of God, retained her navel unsevered, because she lopped not off the loosenesses [‘fluxa’] of lust. Because therefore both sexes are grievously overcome by the infirmity of lust, through the power of the devil, his strength is both said to be in his loins, against men, and his force in his navel, against women.

21. But why, when He had first mentioned this Behemoth as eating hay, did He subjoin the fatal effects of lust, as the first arguments of his deception? Except that it is plain to all, that after pride has once seized the spirit of a man, he immediately stretches forth to the pollution of the flesh. Which we observe even in the first man and woman; who, by covering their shameful parts, after the commission of pride, plainly shewed that after they had endeavoured in themselves to grasp at high things within, they presently were subject in the flesh to what bringeth shame without. This Behemoth therefore, who rages insatiably, and seeks to devour the whole man at once, at one time exalts his mind to pride at another corrupts his flesh with the pleasure of lust. But his strength is well said not to be in the loins or the navel of them who are overcome; but, *his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly.* As if it were plainly said, His strength is in his own loins, and his force is in the navel of his own belly; because they doubtless specially become his body, who, being deceived by the blandishments of base suggestions, submit to him through the loosenesses of lust. It follows,

Ver. 12. *He setteth fast his tail, like a cedar.* [E.V. 17]

[xv]

22. There are in these words many points, to be brought forward for moral instruction. But we examine in the first place the violences of this Behemoth, in order afterwards to detect more accurately his crafts. In Holy Scripture under the name ‘cedar,’ sometimes the lofty excellence of

heavenly glory is expressed; but sometimes the stubborn pride of the wicked is designated. By the name 'cedar' is expressed the loftiness of heavenly glory, as the Psalmist witnesses, *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall be multiplied like a cedar in Libanus*. [Ps. 92, 12] Again, under the name 'cedar' is designated the haughty power of the wicked, as is said by the same Prophet; *The voice of the Lord breaking the cedars*. [Ps. 29, 5] But what is meant by the tail of this Behemoth, except that latter end of the ancient enemy, when he enters, doubtless, that ruined man, his peculiar vessel, who is specially called Antichrist? For since he is permitted, at one time by the honours of the world, at another by signs and prodigies of pretended sanctity, to be elevated to the swelling of power, his tail is rightly compared by the voice of the Lord to a cedar. For as a cedar leaves behind other trees by increasing in height, in like manner will Antichrist, possessing in temporal things the glory of the world, surpass at this time the standard of man both in the height of his honour, and in the power of his miracles. For there is in him a spirit, who having been created in high estate, lost not, even when cast down, the power of his nature. But his power is at present very little displayed, because it is held bound by an exercise ['dispensatione'] of Divine strength. Whence it is said by John; *I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand: and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him*. [Rev. 20, 1-3] For he is said to be bound, and cast into the bottomless pit; because he is thrust back and bound in the hearts of the wicked by Divine power, so as not to be unchecked, as far as he is able to hurt; that, though he may secretly rage by them, he may not break forth into the violent ravages of pride. But it is there intimated how he is to be loosed at the end of the world; *And after the thousand years shall have been completed, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out, and seduce the nations*. [ib. v. 7] For by the number 'thousand,' on account of its perfection, is expressed this whole period, whatever it be, of Holy Church. On the completion of which the ancient enemy, given up to his own strength, for a short time, but with much power is let loose against us.

23. But though his fierceness makes him break forth into cruelty, yet the Divine pity confines him with fewness of days. For hence the Truth says by Itself, *Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, nor shall be*. [Matt. 24, 21] Hence again It says, *Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved*. [ib. v. 22] For since the Lord beholds us to be both proud and weak, those days, which He spoke of as singularly evil, He, in His mercy, says were shortened; in order doubtless to alarm our pride by the adversity of the time, and to comfort our weakness by the shortness of the days.

24. But it must be greatly considered, in what way that Behemoth, when he raises his tail as a cedar, arises with greater fierceness than he now exerts himself. For what kinds of punishments do we know, at which we rejoice not as having already exercised the strength of Martyrs? For the sword plunged in the neck prostrated some with a sudden blow; the cross torturing ['crucis patibulum'] fastened some, in which death is both repelled when courted, and courted when repelled; some the saw ground with its rugged teeth; some the iron-armed hoof trampled on and mangled ['carpsit,' al. sparsit,' 'dashed in pieces']; some the rage of beasts tore limb from limb with their bite; some the force of blows imprinted through the skin pierced from their inmost entrails; some the deep dug earth buried alive; some the precipice crushed when hurled headlong to death; some the water drowned and swallowed up when plunged into it; some the devouring flame fed upon and consumed to ashes. When therefore this Behemoth expands his tail more fatally, in

the end of the world, what greater cruelty can spring up in these torments, except that which the Truth says Itself in the Gospel; *There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, so that, if possible, even the Elect may be led into error.* [Matt. 24, 24] For now our faithful ones do wonders, when they suffer wrongs, but at that time the ministers of this Behemoth are about to do wonders, even when they inflict wrongs. Let us consider therefore what will be that temptation of the mind of man, when both the pious martyr submits his body to tortures, and yet his torturer works miracles before his eyes! Whose resolution would not then be shaken, from the very bottom of his thoughts, when he who tortures with the scourges, glitters also with miracles? Let it be rightly said then; *He setteth up his tail as a cedar*, because he will doubtless be exalted from reverence for the prodigy, and harsh with the cruelty of his torture.

25. For he is then not exalted only in power, but is supported also by the display of miracles. Whence is it also said by David; *He lieth in wait in secret, as a lion in his den.* [Ps. 10, 9] For for open power, it would have sufficed, if he had been a lion, even though he had not lain in wait: and again for secret craft, it would have sufficed for him to have spoiled secretly in ambush, even if he had not been a lion. But because this ancient enemy is unchecked in all his strength, he is permitted to rage in both ways, so as that he is let loose in contest against the Elect both by fraud and strength; in strength by his power, in fraud by his miracles. He is therefore rightly said to be both a lion, and lying in wait: lying in wait by the splendour of his miracles, a lion by his secular power. For in order to draw those who are openly wicked, he displays his secular power; but in order to deceive even the just, he pretends sanctity by his miracles. For he persuades the one by the height of his greatness, he deceives the others by a display of sanctity. Of this tail of this Behemoth, it is said by John, under the form of a dragon; *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth.* [Rev. 12, 4] For heaven is the Church, which in this night of the present life, when it contains within it the countless virtues of the Saints, glitters from above with radiant stars. But the tail of the dragon casts down the stars to the earth, because that latter end of Satan, exalted by the boldness of the man it has assumed, by gaining possession of some, whom it finds in the Church as if the Elect of God, shews them to be reprobates. For stars therefore to fall from heaven, is for some, having abandoned the hope of heavenly things, to be eager, under his guidance, for the pursuit of secular glory.

26. Hence Daniel speaks against this tail of the dragon in the person of Antiochus, saying, *It cast down some of the strong host, and of the stars, and stamped upon them, and magnified himself even to the prince of the strong host, and took away from him the perpetual sacrifice, and cast down the place of his sanctification. But strength was given him against the perpetual sacrifice, by reason of transgressions; and truth will be cast down in the earth, and he will do, and prosper.* [Dan. 8, 10-12] For he casts down some of the strong host [*de fortitudine*], and of the stars, when he crushes some who both are resplendent with the light of righteousness, and strong through the virtue of their works. And he magnifies himself as far as to the prince of the host, because he sets himself up against the Author of virtue Himself. He takes away the perpetual sacrifice; because he breaks off the desire of conversation in the Church in those whom he has seized. But strength is given him against the perpetual sacrifice by reason of transgressions; because unless the deserts of those who are perishing demanded it, the adversary would never be able to gain possession of those who were believed to be righteous. Truth is cast down in the earth, because belief in heavenly things is then perverted into a longing for temporal life. And he will do and prosper; because he will then do his violence not only on the minds of the reprobate, but also on the bodies of the Elect with

incalculable cruelty, without any opposition. Hence again it is said by Daniel, *A king of shameless face, and understanding dark sentences shall rise up, and his power shall be rendered strong, but not in his own strength.* [Dan. 8, 23. 24.] For the power of that man is not strengthened by his own strength, because by the might of Satan he is exalted to the glory of perdition. Hence again he says; *He shall slay the mighty and the holy people, according to his will, and craft shall be directed aright in his hand.* [ib. 24. 25.] For he slays the mighty, when he overcomes, in their bodies, those who are unconquered in mind. Or he certainly slays the mighty, and the people of the Saints, according to his will, when he draws at the beck of his will those who were believed to be mighty and holy. And craft is directed aright in his hand, because in him craft is helped on by his doings. For that which he says in his craft, he supports by working wonders; for whatever his lying tongue pretends, that does the hand of his work set forth, as if true.

27. Hence again he says; *He will rise up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken without hand.* [ib. 25.] Hence Paul says, *So that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself, as if he were God.* [2 Thess. 2, 4] Hence again he says; *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.* [ib. 8] For that which is said by Daniel, *He will rise up against the Prince of princes,* is expressed by Paul, *So that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself as if he were God.* And that which is subjoined by Daniel, *He shall be broken without hand,* is expressed by Paul, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth.* For he will be broken without hand, because he will be smitten with eternal death, not in battle with the Angels, not in contest with the Saints, but through the coming of the Judge, by the breath of His mouth alone. Of the pride of this Behemoth it is also said by Paul, *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped.* [2 Thess. 2, 4] Of whom Daniel, when saying that the fourth beast was strengthened with ten horns, immediately added, *I was considering the horns, and behold there came up from the midst of them another little horn, and three of the first horns were plucked up from before its face, and behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.* [Dan. 7, 8] He is described in truth as the eleventh horn of this beast, because the power of his kingdom is strengthened by iniquity. For every sin belongs to the number eleven, because while it does perverse things, it goes beyond the precepts of the decalogue. And because sin is bewailed in goats' hair, hence it is that in the Tabernacle there are made eleven veils of goats' hair. [Ex. 26, 7] Hence it is said in the eleventh psalm, *Save me, Lord, for the godly man hath ceased.* [Ps. 12, 1] Hence Peter, being afraid of the Apostles continuing in the number eleven, sought, by casting lots, for Matthias as the twelfth. [Acts 1, 15-26] For unless he observed that fault was signified by the number eleven, he would not be so hastily anxious for the number of the Apostles to be completed to that of twelve. Because therefore transgression is expressed by the number eleven, the author of transgression himself is indicated by the eleventh horn of this beast. Which springs up of small size in truth, because he is born a mere man; but it increases hugely, because he advances even to the power of angelic strength united to himself. And it plucks up the three horns, which are before its face, because he subjects to his power the same number of kingdoms which are near him. And its eyes are like the eyes of a man, but its mouth speaketh great things, because there is seen in him the form indeed of a man, but in his words he is exalted above men. That then which is said by Paul, *Exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped,* [2 Thess. 2, 1] this the Prophet Daniel witnesses, saying, *A mouth speaking great things.* [Dan. 7, 8] But Daniel's declaring that he speaks great things, or Paul that he is exalted above the worship of the Godhead, is the very thing which in the words of God to blessed Job is compared to a cedar. For, like a cedar, he strives after high things, when, in all the

pride of deceit, he prospers both in strength of might, and in height of elevation. But he is well said to set fast his tail, because his whole power is brought together and condensed in that one ruined man, in order that he may the more perform mighty and marvellous things through him, the more he urges him on by his collected strength. But since we have heard of what kind is the head of the wicked, let us now learn what members cleave to this head. It follows;  
*The sinews of his stones are wrapped together.*

[xvi]

28. This Behemoth has as many 'stones,' as he possesses preachers of his iniquity. Are not they who corrupt the hearts of men with evil persuasions, by pouring in the poisonous seeds of their error, his stones? But it is fitly said, that the sinews of his stones are wrapped together, because, namely, the arguments of his preachers are bound together with cunning assertions, as to pretend to be right, which persuade perverse things, so that though the entanglement of their assertions can be seen, like the wrapping together of sinews, yet it cannot be unravelled. His 'stones' have their 'sinews wrapped together,' because the acuteness of his preachers is concealed beneath ambiguous assertions. But generally when they infect hearts with their words, they display innocence in their conduct. For they would not attract the good to them by their persuasion, if they were to exhibit themselves as perverse in their conduct also. But because they are the stones of this beast, and are bound by sinews wrapped together, they both display themselves as upright in order to escape notice, and preach perverse things in order to corrupt, imitating, doubtless, their head, who, as a lion in ambush, both rages by the power of earthly dignity, and flatters by a show of sanctity. But would that this beast were acting thus then only, and that he had not now also these testicles of lust to corrupt the inner parts of the faithful. For not only is that which is evil infused with the speaking of the mouth, but that which is worse is held by more in the example of conduct. For how many have not beheld Antichrist, and yet are his testicles: because they corrupt the hearts of the innocent by the example of their doings! For whoever is exalted with pride, whoever is tortured by the longings of covetousness, whoever is relaxed with the pleasures of lust, whoever is kindled by the burnings of unjust and immoderate anger, what else is he but a testicle of Antichrist? For while he willingly engages himself in his service, he furnishes by his example the progeny of error to others. The one works wickedly, the other cleaves to those who work wickedly; and so far from opposing, even favours them. What else then but a testicle of Antichrist is he, who having cast aside the authority of the faith he has pledged to God, witnesses in favour of error? But if any reprove these persons, they presently conceal themselves under some cloke of defence; for since their sinews are wrapped together, and entangled for evil, they cannot be released from corruption. It follows;  
Ver. 13. *His bones are as pipes of brass.* [E.V. 18]

[xvii]

29. In the body they are bones which hold the members together, and members which are held together. This beast then has flesh, it has bones also; because there are some wicked persons, who are yet retained in error by others, and others still more wicked who retain others also in error. What else then do we understand by the bones of Antichrist, but some more powerful persons in his body? in whose hearts while iniquity has become greatly hardened, the whole framework of his body is held together by them. For there appear to be many rich in this world, who while relying on their possessions and wealth, are consolidated, as it were, by strength, but by lavishing these goods

by which they were supported, they lead others into their own error. At one time they allure others by their gifts to become wicked, at another they bind others by their presents to continue in wickedness. What then are these but bones of Antichrist, who while they multiply the wicked by keeping them together, support the flesh in his body? These sometimes exhibit a sweetness of speech in deceiving their hearers, because even thorns produce flowers, and that in them which smells sweetly is seen, that which wounds is hid. They blend the sweet with the bitter, the soothing with the hurtful, and though they strive to be admired, by reason of their power, yet through their skill in deceiving, they abase themselves, as if humbly, by their easy address, and by their speech insinuate that of themselves, which they deny by their outward conduct.

30. Whence also the 'bones' of this Behemoth are rightly compared to pipes of brass, because doubtless like insensible metal, they have the sound of right speech, but not the sense of right living. For they assert, as if humbly, that in words, which they set at nought by living haughtily. Whence it is well said by Paul; *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charily, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.* [1 Cor. 13, 1] For he who speaks good things, but pursues not the same good things through love, utters a sound like brass or a cymbal; because he himself feels not the words which he utters. But there are some in the body of this beast, not illustrious from honours, not supported by riches, not adorned with the beauty of virtues, not skilled in the science of cunning, who yet aim at appearing such as they are not, and who are therefore more hurtful to the life of the righteous. Of whom it also follows, *His cartilage as plates of iron.*

[xviii]

31. For cartilage has indeed the appearance of bone, but has not the strength of bone. What is meant then by his cartilage being compared to plates of iron, except that those in him who are most feeble, are more evilly disposed for the perpetration of wickedness? For other metals are cut by iron, and his cartilage is said to be like iron, because those in his body who are unequal to the display of mighty powers, are the more violently inflamed to cause the death of the faithful. For because they consider that they cannot with him work signs and prodigies, they prove themselves faithful to him by their cruelty, and instead of being able to corrupt by their persuasion the hearts of the innocent, they glory in destroying the bodies of the good manifoldly more than others. It is therefore well said; *His cartilage is as plates of iron;* because that which any one would believe to be the weaker part of his body, is the very thing which wounds the more fatally. And they are rightly compared not to iron only, but to 'plates of iron,' because while they go about to spread themselves out on every side in cruelty, they extend themselves, as it were, into plates of iron.

32. It seems good to us to examine with a stricter hand of enquiry these same words of the Creator, which seem already discussed, and to gather more abundant fruits of understanding for moral instruction. For since we have heard what the ancient enemy effects against men, by the man he has assumed, it remains for us now to examine what he works in men even by himself, without the aid of men. For behold it is said,  
Ver. 12. *He setteth fast his tail, like a cedar.* [E.V. 17]

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[MORAL INTERPRETATION]

33. The first suggestion of the serpent is soft indeed, and tender, and easily to be crushed by the foot of virtue. But if it is carelessly allowed to gain strength, and access is freely allowed it to the heart, it increases itself with such great power, as to weigh down the enslaved mind, and to increase to intolerable strength. He is said therefore to set fast his tail like a cedar, because his temptation when once received in the heart, in all subsequent assaults, rules as if by right. The head of this Behemoth therefore is grass, his tail a cedar, he fawns and humbles himself at this first suggestion, but gaining great strength by habit, he is hardened in the increasing close of temptation. For every thing which he suggests at first is easily overcome; but thence there follows, that which can hardly be overcome. For he first addresses the mind in gentle terms, as if advising it: but when he has once fastened on it the fang of pleasure, he is afterwards bound to it almost indissolubly, by powerful habit. Whence also he is well said to 'set fast his tail.' For he wounds with his tooth, but binds with his tail; because he strikes with the first suggestion, but binds the mind, once struck, with the increasing close of temptation, that it cannot escape. For since sin is admitted in three ways, namely, when it is perpetrated by the suggestion of the serpent, with the pleasure of the flesh, with the consent of the spirit; this Behemoth first puts forth his tongue, suggesting unlawful thoughts, afterwards alluring to delight, he infixes his tooth; but lastly, gaining possession by consent, he clenches his tail. Hence it is that some persons blame in themselves sins which have been committed through long habit, and avoid them in judgment, but cannot even though contending against them avoid them in act; because when they do not crush the head of this Behemoth, they are frequently, even against their will, bound by his tail. And this has become as hard as a cedar against them, because it has grown up from the alluring pleasure of its beginning even to the violence of retention. Let it be said then; *He clengeth his tail like a cedar*; in order that every one should the more avoid the beginnings of temptation, the more he understands that it cannot be easily escaped from at the last.

34. It should be known also, that to those whom he has seized, he commonly suggests more grievous sins, when he knows that they are drawing near the close of this present life: and that the more he considers that he is about to consummate the temptation, the more heavy burdens of iniquities does he heap upon them. Behemoth, therefore, clenches his tail like a cedar, because those whom he has seized by evil beginnings, he makes worse at the end; in order that the sooner his temptations are to cease, the more mightily they may be fulfilled. For since he is busied to make their suffering equal to his own punishment, the more ardently does he strive to exaggerate every sin, before their death. But frequently this Behemoth possesses a heart already fatally subject to him, but yet Divine grace repels him; and the gift of mercy ejects him whom the captive will brought in to itself. And when he is expelled from a heart, he strives to inflict sharper wounds of sin, in order that the mind may feel, when assaulted by him, those waves of temptations, which it knew not even when possessed by him. Which is well expressed in the Gospel, when the unclean spirit is said at the Lord's bidding to go forth from a man. For when the boy, which was possessed by the spirit, was presented to Him, it is written; *Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying, Thou deaf and dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. And it cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him.* [Mark 9, 25. 26.] Behold, it had not rent him, when it possessed him, it rent him when it came out; because he doubtless then harasses the thoughts of the mind more fearfully, when, compelled by Divine power, he draws near his departure. And him whom he had possessed as a dumb spirit, he was leaving with cries: because frequently, when in possession, he inflicts smaller temptations; but when he is expelling from the heart, he disturbs it with sharper



assaults. It is therefore well said, *He clengeth his tail like a cedar*, both because when possessing a heart, he always increases in malice at the end; and when leaving a heart, he smites it with severer wounds of thoughts. But, through the wonderful compassion of the Creator, the more subtle arguments of this Behemoth are also laid open, when it is subjoined;

*The sinews of his stones are wrapped together.*

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35. The sinews of his stones are the deadly arguments of his machinations. For by these he rouses the strength of his cunning, and corrupts the unstable hearts of men. His stones are wicked suggestions, with which he rages in the corruption of the mind, and begets in the debauched soul the progeny of wicked works. But the sinews of these stones are wrapped together, because the arguments of his suggestions are bound together by complicated devices; so as to make many sin in such a way, that, if they wish perchance to escape a sin, they cannot escape it without being entangled in another sin; and that they commit a fault in avoiding it, and that they are unable to release themselves from one, unless they consent to be bound by another. A point which we make clearer, by bringing forward some instances of this ensnaring from the common doings of men. But because Holy Church consists of three orders, namely, the married, the continent, and rulers, (whence both Ezekiel saw three men set free, namely, Noah, Daniel, and Job, [Ez. 14, 14] and the Lord in the Gospel, by saying that there were some in the field, some in the bed, and some in the mill, [Luke 17, 34-36] doubtless points out three orders in the Church,) it is plainly sufficient for us to select an instance out of each class.

36. For, behold, one man, while seeking the friendships of the world, binds himself by an oath to another, leading a similar life, to conceal his secrets with perfect silence; but he, to whom the oath has been sworn, is discovered to be guilty of adultery, so as even to endeavour to kill the husband of the adulteress. But he who has taken the oath, turns back to his own mind, and is assailed by different thoughts on one side and the other, and is afraid of being silent in this matter, lest by silence he should be an accomplice in adultery and homicide at the same time; and is afraid to disclose it, lest he should involve himself in the guilt of perjury. He is bound therefore by the sinews of stones wrapped together, because to whichever side he inclines, he is afraid of not being free from the taint of transgression.

37. Another, forsaking all worldly things, and seeking in all things to crush his own will, wishes to submit himself to the authority of another. But he does not carefully enquire into and discern the character of him who is to rule over him in the Lord. And when he, perhaps, who is injudiciously selected, has begun to rule over him, he forbids the things of God to be done, and enjoins the things of the world. The person under him considering, therefore, either what is the sin of disobedience, or what is the pollution of secular life, both trembles to obey, and fears to disobey; lest by obeying he should forsake God in His commands, or again by disobeying should despise God in the superior he has chosen; and lest by obeying unlawful commands, He should exercise against God that which he chooses for God's sake; or again, by disobeying, should postpone to his own judgment him whom he had sought for as his own judge. He is, therefore, through the fault of his indiscretion, bound by the sinews of stones wrapped together, because either by obeying, or certainly by disobeying, he is bound with the sin of transgression. He was studying to break down his own will, and he takes care even to strengthen it by despising his superior. He resolved entirely to abandon

the world, and he is compelled to return to the cares of the world even through the will of another. The sinews, therefore, are wrapped together, when the arguments of the enemy so bind us, that the knots of sins hold the firmer, the more they are sought to be disentangled.

38. Another, neglecting to think of the weight of ecclesiastical distinction, ascends by bribes to a place of rule. But because every eminent position in this world is more affected by griefs, than delighted by its honours, when the heart is weighed down by tribulations, its fault is recalled to its memory: and a man laments that he has attained to a laborious post by wrong means, and he learns how wrong is his conduct, by being crushed by the very difficulty. Acknowledging, therefore, that he is guilty with the bribes he has expended, he wishes to abandon the lofty position he has gained: but he is afraid it should be a more grievous sin to have resigned the charge of the flock he had undertaken. He wishes to take care of the flock committed to him, but he is afraid it should be a greater fault to hold the authority of pastoral grace which he purchased. He perceives therefore that, through seeking for distinction, he is hampered by sin on every side. For he sees that neither course is without the imputation of guilt, if either the flock he has once taken charge of be abandoned, or again if a sacred office be retained, when purchased in a secular way. He is afraid in every direction, and is suspiciously fearful on every side, either lest remaining in his purchased office he should not properly bewail his not correcting his fault by even abandoning it, or certainly, lest, while endeavouring to lament one fault, by resigning his authority, he should again commit another, by this very forsaking of his flock. Because, therefore, this Behemoth binds with such entangled knots, that a mind, when brought into doubt, binds itself firmer in sin by the very means it attempts to free itself from sin, it is rightly said; *The sinews of his stones are wrapped together*. For the more the arguments of his machinations are loosened, as if to release us, the more are they entwined to hold us fast.

39. There is, however, a plan which may be usefully adopted to overthrow his craft, namely, that when the mind is held in bondage between less and greater sins, if no outlet for escape is open without sin, the less evils should always be preferred: because even he who is shut in by a circuit of walls on every side, lest he escape, there throws himself down in flight, where the wall is found lowest. And Paul when he observed certain incontinent persons in the Church, conceded the smallest faults, in order that they might avoid greater, saying, *On account of fornication, let every man have his own wife*. [1 Cor. 7, 2] And because married people are then only without sin in their connection, when they come together, not for the gratification of lust, but for the begetting of children, in order to shew that this which he had conceded was not without sin, though of least degree, he immediately added, *But I speak this by indulgence, not by commandment*. [ib. 6] For that which is pardoned, and is not commanded, is not without fault. He surely saw that to be a sin, which he foresaw he was able to concede [al. 'could be excused.']. But when we are constrained by doubts, we profitably yield to the least, for fear of sinning unpardonably in great faults. The entanglement of the sinews of this Behemoth is therefore frequently unravelled, when we pass to the greatest virtues through the commission of smaller faults. It follows, Ver. 19. *His bones are as pipes of brass*. [E.V. 18]

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40. What are designated by the 'bones' of this Behemoth, except his counsels? For as the uprightness ['positio'] and strength of the body subsist in the bones, so does his whole malice exalt

itself in crafty designs. For he does not oppress any one by force, but he destroys him by the craftiness of his deadly persuasion. And again, as the marrow strengthens the bones which it moistens, so also does the subtlety of his genius, infused by the power of a spiritual nature, strengthen his designs. But in this his 'testicles' differ from his 'bones,' that is, his suggestions from his designs, that by the former he openly inserts what is noxious, but by the latter, when counselling as if for good he leads into sin; by the former he overcomes in fight, but by the latter he supplants by advising. Whence also his 'bones,' that is, these very designs, are well compared to pipes of brass. For pipes of brass are usually adapted to sonorous tunes, and when on being applied to the ears they delicately utter a soothing strain, they attract the mind within to outward delights; and when the sound is sweet which they utter to the ears, they weaken the manliness of the heart with the flow of pleasure. And when the hearing is drawn on to delight, the understanding is relaxed from the firmness of its strength. So also when his crafty designs counsel, as it were, with gentle forethought, they withdraw the heart from its resolute intention, and when they utter sweet sounds, they dispose to hurtful things. They are like pipes of brass then, which when heard with pleasure plunge the mind from its inward resolution into the pleasure of outward life. For it is this, which this Behemoth specially labours at in prosecuting his deception, to be able to utter sweetly what he says, when he puts forth his scheme of wickedness as if for our good, in order that he may beguile the mind by putting forward its usefulness, and corrupt it by concealing its iniquity.

41. And we make this plainer in every respect, by briefly laying open a few of the arguments of his counsels. For behold, a person, content with his own possessions, has resolved not to be entangled with any of this world's occupations, being greatly afraid of losing the advantages of his ease, and utterly disdaining to accumulate wealth with sin. The crafty enemy in approaching him, in order to undermine his intention of sincere devotion, secretly offers a suggestion as if for his benefit, saying, Those things which thou hast are sufficient at present, but what dost thou intend to do when these fail? For if nothing is provided after these, thou hast what must be expended at once on thy children, but yet goods must be acquired to be laid up in store. Even what thou hast can soon fail, if anxious forethought ceases to provide what is wanting. Cannot worldly business be discharged, and yet sin be avoided in the doing it, in order that it may both furnish outward means, and yet not pervert inward rectitude? He insinuates these thoughts, and flatters the while; and is already secretly concealing the snares of sin in the worldly business, which he provides. His bones are therefore like pipes of brass, because his pernicious suggestions flatter their hearer with the sweetness of a voice which is giving them counsel.

42. Another also has resolved not merely not to seek for worldly advantages, but even to resign all that he possesses, in order to exercise himself the more freely in the discipline of heavenly training, the more he has disburdened himself, and abandons and tramples under foot the things which could weigh down their possessor. The lurking enemy addresses his heart with secret suggestion, saying, Whence has arisen the boldness of such great temerity, as for thee to dare to believe that thou canst subsist, by resigning every thing? Thy Creator formed thee in one way, and thou disposest of thyself in another: He would make thee more strong and robust, if He had wished thee to follow His footsteps with the neediness of want. Do not most men never give up their earthly patrimonies, and yet purchase by these, through works of compassion, the eternal goods of a heavenly inheritance? He suggests these things with flattery; but secretly in his deceit annexes deadly pleasures to the very things he advises him to retain, before the eyes of him who retains them, in order that he may attract the deluded heart to outward pleasures, and may draw aside its secret

vows of perfection. His bones, therefore, are like pipes of brass, because when his crafty designs utter outwardly a soothing sound, they inflict deadly destruction within.

43. Another having given up all his outward possessions, prepares also to crush his inmost wishes, in order that, by submitting himself to the sounder judgment of another, he may renounce not merely his evil desires, but, (to add to his perfection,) himself also even in good resolves, and may observe all his duties at the will of another. The crafty enemy addresses him the more gently, the more ardently he endeavours to push him down from his loftier position, and presently, fawning on him with deadly suggestions, he says, O what great marvels thou wilt be able to perform by thyself, if thou dost not submit thyself in any way to the judgment of another. Why dost thou check thy progress, from a desire for improvement? Why dost thou crush the goodness of thy intention, when thou endeavourest to extend it further than is necessary? For what wickednesses didst thou perpetrate, when exercising thy own will? Why then dost thou require the judgment of another over thee, since thou wilt be of thyself fully sufficient for holy living? He suggests these things in a flattering tone, but he secretly prepares, in the indulgence of his own will, causes for the exercise of pride, and, while he praises his heart for its inward rectitude, he craftily seeks out where to undermine it with sin. His bones are, therefore, like pipes of brass, because his clandestine designs, by the very means with which they flatter, as it were, and delight the mind, fatally divert it from its right intention.

44. Another, having entirely subdued his will, has already corrected many sins of the old man, both by change of life, and by the lamentation of penitence; and is inflamed with greater zeal against the sins of others, the more he is entirely dead to himself, and is not held captive by his own iniquities. The crafty enemy, observing that by his zeal for righteousness he is benefiting others besides himself, attacks him with words which advise him as if for his advantage, saying, Why dost thou extend thyself to attend to others' concerns? Would thou mayest have strength to consider thine own! Dost thou not consider, that when thou art stretched forth to the concerns of others, thou art found unequal to attend to thine own? And of what use is it to wipe off the blood of another's wound, and by neglect to extend the corruption of thine own? While he speaks thus, as if giving advice, he takes away the zeal of charity, and destroys, with the sword of secretly instilled sloth, all the good which could result from charity. For if we are commanded to love our neighbours as ourselves, it is right for us to be kindled against sin, with zeal for them, as for ourselves. Because then he estranges the mind from its own resolution, while he pleasingly offers advice, it is rightly said, *His bones are as pipes of brass*. For when by his crafty designs he utters a pleasing sound to the mind of the hearer, he sings, as it were, with a pipe of brass, so as to deceive by means of his allurements. But this Behemoth engages much more gently in the contest, when, under the cloke of infirmity, he exercises himself in ambush. But he then arouses harder temptations, when he conceals the sources of iniquity, before the eyes of him who is tempted, under the semblance of virtue. Whence it is also rightly subjoined, *His cartilage as plates of iron*.

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45. For what but his simulation is understood by cartilage? For cartilage presents the appearance of bone, but it has not the strength of bone. And there are some vices which present an appearance of rectitude, but which proceed from the weakness of sin. For the malice of our enemy clokes itself

with such art, as frequently to make faults appear as virtues before the eyes of the deluded mind; so that a person expects, as it were, rewards, for the very conduct for which he deserves to meet with eternal punishments. For cruelty is frequently exercised in punishing sins, and it is counted justice; and immoderate anger is believed to be the meritoriousness [‘meritum’] of righteous zeal; and when sinners ought to be carefully made straight from their crooked habits, they are snapped by being violently bent. Frequently negligent remissness is regarded as gentleness and forbearance, and while delinquents are spared temporally more than is proper, they are cruelly reserved to eternal punishments. Lavishness is sometimes believed to be compassion, and though it is a fault to be over saving, there is no fear of that which has been given being more wickedly lavished. Tenacity is sometimes considered frugality, and since it is a grievous fault not to give, it is considered a virtue to retain what has been received. The pertinacity of the wicked is often termed constancy, and when a mind does not submit to be turned from its wickedness, it glories as if in defending what is right. Inconstancy is often regarded as tractability, and because a person does not keep his word to any one, he considers himself on that account a friend to all men. Sometimes incompetent fear is believed to be humility, and when any one, oppressed by temporal fear, shrinks in silence from the defence of the truth, he thinks, that, according to the order of God, he demeans himself humbly to his superiors. Sometimes haughtiness of voice is counted freedom for the truth; and when through pride the truth is spoken against, forwardness in speaking is thought a defence of the truth. Sloth is frequently looked upon as a maintenance of peace, and though it is a grievous fault not to be zealous in doing what is right, it is believed to be a most meritorious virtue, merely to abstain from evil conduct. Restlessness of spirit is frequently termed a watchful solicitude, and when a person cannot endure rest, he thinks that he performs an exercise of virtue which is due from him, by doing what he likes. Incautious precipitation in things which must be done, is believed to be the warmth of praiseworthy zeal, and though a desired advantage is marred by unseasonable acting, it is considered that the quicker a thing is done, the better. Slowness in promoting goodness, is counted judgment, and when progress is expected to be made by reconsideration, delay lurks in ambush and disappoints it. When a fault then appears like virtue, we must needs consider that the mind abandons its fault the more slowly, in proportion as it does not blush at what it is doing; and that the mind abandons its fault the more slowly, in proportion as, having been deceived by the semblance of virtue, it seeks therefrom the recompense of rewards. But a fault is easily corrected, which is also blushed at; because it is felt to be a fault. Since, therefore, error is corrected with more difficulty, when it is believed to be a virtue, it is rightly said, *His cartilage as plates of iron*. For the more craftily this Behemoth exhibits his cunning under the cloke of virtue, the more firmly does he enthrall the mind in sin.

46. Hence it is that sometimes those who seek after the way of holiness, when they have fallen into error, are improved but slowly. For they consider what they do to be right, and devote their perseverance to the practice of vice, as they do to the cultivation of virtue. They consider what they do to be right, and therefore promote the more earnestly their own judgment. Accordingly when Jeremiah said, *Her Nazarites were whiter than snow, purer than milk, more ruddy than old ivory, more beautiful than the sapphire: their visage is made blacker than coals; and they are not known in the streets*; he rightly added immediately, *Their skin cleared to their bones, it is withered, and has become as a stick*. [Lam. 4, 7. 8.] For what is signified by the word ‘Nazarites’ but the life of the abstinent, and continent, which is said to be whiter than snow and milk? For snow is congealed from water, coming as it does from above; but milk is squeezed from flesh which is nourished by things below. What then is pointed out by ‘snow’ but the brightness of the heavenly life, and what

by 'milk' but the ordering of the temporal stewardship? And because continent men in the Church frequently perform such wonderful works, that many who have maintained a heavenly life, many who have dispensed aright the things of earth, seem to be surpassed by them, they are said to be both whiter than snow, and purer than milk. And since they sometimes appear by the fervour of their spirit to surpass the conduct of the ancient and mighty fathers, it is rightly subjoined, *More ruddy than old ivory*. For where the word 'ruddiness' is used, the flame of holy desire is signified. But we are not ignorant that ivory is the tusk of great animals. They are therefore more ruddy than old ivory, because they frequently appear before human eyes as of more fervent zeal than some of the preceding fathers. Of whom it is added, that the whole may be set forth at once; *More beautiful than the sapphire*. For the sapphire is of the colour of the heaven. And because they surpass many who precede them, and who are aiming at things above by a heavenly conversation, they are said to have been more beautiful than the sapphire. But when the abundance of virtues increases more than is expedient, the mind is frequently led to a kind of self-confidence, and, deceived by presuming on itself, is suddenly darkened by sin stealing it away. Whence it is rightly subjoined; *Their visage is made blacker than coals*. For they become black after whiteness, because having lost the righteousness of God, when they presume about themselves, they fall soon even into those sins which they understand not; and because, after the fire of love, they come to the chill of numbness, they are, in comparison, preferred to extinguished coals. For sometimes when they lose the fear of God through self-confidence, they become even colder than cold minds. Of whom it is rightly subjoined; *They are not known in the streets*. For a street (platea), according to the Greek tongue, is put for breadth [platea from *πλατυς*]. But what is straiter for the mind of man, than for it to crush its own will? Of which crushing the Truth says; *Enter ye in at the strait gate*. [Matt. 7, 13] But what is broader than not to struggle against any of our wills, and to spread one's self forth without restraint, wherever the impulse of choice may have led? They, therefore, who through confidence in their holiness follow themselves, and put aside the opinion of their betters, proceed as it were along the broad streets ['plateas.']. But they are not known in the streets, because they had made their life appear different, when by crushing their own wills they used to keep themselves in the narrow path. And it is well added; *Their skin cleaved to their bones*. What is expressed by 'bone,' but the hardness of strength; what by 'skin,' but the softness of infirmity? Their skin is said, therefore, to cleave to their bones, because through their depraved judgment the infirmity of vice is considered by them the hardness of virtue. For their doings are weak, but from being deceived by the confidence of pride, they connect them with notions of strength, and because they think highly of themselves, they scorn to be reformed of their wickedness. Whence it is also rightly added; *It hath grown dry, and is become as a stick*. For their fault is rendered the less perceptible, the more it is considered by them to be even deserving of praise. And He rightly declares that it is 'dry,' because it never grows green by self-reflection. That then which by Jeremiah is called 'skin' by reason of its weakness, is called 'cartilage' by blessed Job by reason of its frailness; and that which there is termed 'bones' from its hardness, is here said to be 'plates of iron.' But let us hear of what nature, and what origin ['conditionis'] is this Behemoth, who by his members exerts himself against the Elect of God with such skill in iniquity at the last time, and who also in his own person displays himself with such great craftiness of stratagems. For he would not be able to work such wonders even in working wickedness, if he did not exist from some mighty origin. Whence also the Lord, as if accounting for such great cunning, and such mighty strength, added with great consideration, saying,  
Ver. 14. *He is the chief of the ways of God*. [E.V. 19]

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47. As if He were plainly saying, He has strength sufficient for so many purposes, because in the nature of things the Creator made him first, when creating him in his substance. For what do we understand by the 'ways' of God, but His doings? Of which He says by the Prophet; *For My ways are not as your ways*. [Is. 55, 8] And Behemoth is said to be the chief of the ways of God, because doubtless when He was performing all the work of creation, He created him first, whom He made more eminent than the other Angels. The Prophet is looking at the eminence of this superiority ['primatus.'], when he says, *The cedars in the paradise of God were not higher, the fir trees equalled not his summit, the plane trees were not equal to his branches, nor any tree in the paradise of God was like him and his beauty, since He made him beautiful with his many and thick branches*. [Ez. 31, 8. 9.] For who can be understood by cedars, fir trees, and planes, unless those bands of heavenly virtues of lofty height, planted in the verdure of eternal joy? But these, though created lofty, were yet neither preferred nor equalled to him. And he is said to have been made beautiful with his many and thick branches, because when set above the other legions, a comeliness, as great as the subject multitude of Angels which adorned him, rendered him the more beautiful. This tree in the paradise of God had, as it were, as many crowded branches, as were the legions of heavenly spirits, it beheld placed beneath it. And therefore, when sinning, he was condemned without pardon, because he had been created great beyond comparison. Hence it is again said to him by the same Prophet, *Thou wast a seal of the likeness of God, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty in the delights of the paradise of God*. [Ez. 28, 12. 13.] For having many things to say of his greatness, he comprehended all in the first word. For what good had he not, if he was the seal of the similitude of God? For from the seal of a ring such a likeness is impressed in image, as exists in essence in the seal itself. And though man was created after the likeness of God, yet as if ascribing something greater to an Angel, he says not that he was made after the likeness of God, but that he was the very seal of the likeness of God; in order that, as he is more subtle in nature, the likeness of God may be believed to have been more fully impressed on him.

48. Hence it is that the same Prophet, still speaking of the power of his superiority, subjoins; *Every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, and topaz, and jasper, the chrysolite, the onyx, and the beryl, the sapphire, the carbuncle, and the emerald*. [Ez. 28, 13] He mentioned nine kinds of stones, doubtless because there are nine; orders of angels. For when in the very words of Scripture, Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Princedoms, Powers, Cherubim, and Seraphim, are plainly spoken of and mentioned, it is shewn how great are the distinctions of the citizens of heaven. And yet this Behemoth is described as being covered by them, because he had those as a vesture for his adornment, by comparison with whom he was more brilliant, when he transcended their brightness. Of whose description he further adds in that passage, *Gold the work of thy beauty, and thy holes* [read 'foramina.'] *were prepared in the day that thou wast created*. [Ez. 28, 13] Gold existed as the work of his beauty, because he shone forth with the brightness of the wisdom, which he received when created aright. But holes are made in stones in order that when bound together by gold, they may be united in the composition of an ornament, and that they may not be separated from each other, which the gold binds together by being poured between and filling the holes. The holes of this stone were prepared then in the day of its creation, because, namely, he was created capable of love. And had he wished to be filled therewith, he would have been able to cling firm to the Angels who stand, as to stones placed in the ornament of a king. For had he given himself up to be penetrated by the gold of charity, when associated with the holy

Angels, he would still be remaining, as we said, a stone firmly fixed in the ornament of a king. This stone then had holes, but, through the sin of pride, they were not filled with the gold of charity. For since they are fastened with gold, so as not to fall, he therefore fell, because, even though perforated with the hand of the artificer, he scorned to be bound with the bands of love. But now, the other stones, which had been perforated similarly with him, were bound together by charity mutually penetrating them, and obtained, on his fall, this, as a gift, that they should now be never loosened by falling from the ornament of the King. The same Prophet, still gazing on the loftiness of his superiority ['principatus.'], subjoins, *Thou, the outspread and covering Cherub in the holy mountain of God, hast walked perfect in the midst of the stones of fire.* [Ez. 28, 14] For Cherub is interpreted, 'Plenitude of knowledge,' and he is therefore called a Cherub, because he is not doubted to have surpassed all in his knowledge. And he walked in perfection in the midst of the stones of fire, because he dwelt amid the hearts of Angels, which were kindled with the fire of love, bright with the glory of his creation. And he rightly speaks of him as *outspread and covering*. For we overshadow every thing which we protect when stretched out. And because he is believed to have overshadowed the brightness of the others, through comparison with his brightness, he is said to have been himself *outspread and covering*. For he who transcends the greatness of others by his great excellence, has covered them, as it were, by overshadowing. That then which is said in one place to be beautiful with branches, in another a seal of similitude, in another a Cherub, and in another covering, is in this place declared by the voice of the Lord to be this Behemoth, the chief of the ways of God.

49. But He mentions these wondrous things of him, in what he had, and in what he lost, expressly to shew to awestruck man, what, if guilty himself of pride, he is likely to suffer from the sin of his haughtiness; if He would not abstain from smiting him, whom He exalted at his creation to the glory of such great brightness. Let man then consider what he deserves for his pride on earth, if even an Angel, placed above other Angels, is cast down in heaven. Whence it is also well said by the Prophet, *My sword is made drunk in heaven.* [Is. 34, 5] As if He were plainly saying, Consider with what wrath I shall smite the haughty of the earth, if I have not forborne to smite for the sin of pride, those even, whom I have created next to Myself in heaven. Having heard then these many powers of the ancient enemy, having known the greatness of the state in which he was made; who would not fall down with unbounded fear, who would not sink under the blow of desperation? But because the display of our enemy's power keeps down our pride, the Lord comforts our infirmity also by disclosing the dispensation of His grace. Hence when calling him 'the chief of His ways,' He immediately added;

*He that made him, hath bended up his sword.*

[xxiv]

50. For the 'sword' of this Behemoth is his malice in doing hurt. But his sword is bended by Him, by Whom he was created naturally good. Because his malice is so restrained by Divine dispensation, as not to be permitted to strike the minds of men, as much as he wishes. Because, therefore, our enemy both has great power, and strikes a less blow, the kindness of our Creator restrains his sword, so that it is bent back, and lies hid in his own conscience, and that his malice does not extend itself further for the death of men, than it is righteously ordered from above. The great strength therefore which he has for many things, he possesses from the original ['principio'] of his mighty creation; but so far as he is defeated by some, his sword is doubtless bent back by his



Creator. For when this Behemoth, who is the chief of the ways of God, received permission to practise temptation against the holy man, he roused the nations, he took away the flocks, he cast down fire from heaven, he agitated the air and roused the winds, he shook and overthrew the house, he killed his sons, when feasting together, [Job 1, 19] he employed the mind of the wife in the craft of evil persuasion, he pierced the flesh of the husband with the wounds he inflicted. [ib. 2, 9. 10.] But his sword is bent back by his Creator, when it is said, *Save his life*. [ib. 6.] And how great is his weakness, when his sword has been bent back, is described by the witness of the Evangelist, that he was not able to continue in the man he had possessed, and again that he presumed not, unbidden, to assail the brute animals, saying, *If Thou cast us out, send us into the herd of swine*. [Matt. 8, 31] For it is shewn how much his sword of malice is bent back, since he would not be able to assail even the herd of swine, unless the supreme Power gave him permission. When then can he venture of his own accord to injure men who are made after the likeness of God, of whom is it doubtless quite plain, that he cannot presume to touch the swine, without permission? [‘non jussus.’]

51. We must observe also, that when Behemoth is called the chief [‘principium’] of the ways of God, the insane doctrine of Arius is overthrown by plain reason. For he confesses that the Son of God is a creature, and behold Behemoth is set forth as the first created in the creation of things. It remains therefore for Arius either to assert that the Son is not made, or to believe in his folly that he was created after Behemoth. But since every thing which is folded [‘applicatur.’] is turned back on itself, Behemoth is rightly said to be a sword bent back. For his malice is steeped in itself, when, on being forbidden, it does not exert itself according to its wish, against the life of the Elect. But it is permitted to strike many, as their merits deserve, in order that when they forsake God they may serve His cursed enemy. But he is defeated the more powerfully by the Elect, the more they bow themselves with greater humility before the sole Author of all things. Since therefore from being called the chief of the ways of God, from being proved to be very insupportable, when the Lord permits it, we know plainly with how strong an enemy we are fighting; it remains therefore for each of us, to subject himself more entirely to his Maker, the more truly he considers the mighty power of his adversary against him. For what are we but dust? But what is he, but one of the heavenly spirits, and what is still greater, their chief? What then can he venture on his own strength, when he contends, though dust, against the chief of angels? But because the Creator of heavenly spirits has assumed an earthly body, lowly dust now rightly overcomes the haughty angel. For by adhering to True Strength he gains powers, which the apostate spirit lost by following himself. And it is meet for him, who believed that he was strong, when he had forsaken his Creator, to be conquered by dust, in order that he may learn on defeat, that he has failed through pride. But he pants with furious rage, because when sufferings torture him below, man ascends to the highest happiness; because flesh is exalted to, and abides in, that loftiness, from which he, that great spirit, lies cast forth for ever. But their relative deserts changed the positions of their minds. Thus, thus did pride deserve to be cast down, thus humility to be exalted, so as that a heavenly spirit might endure hell, by exalting himself, and earth, through humility, reign for ever above the heavens.

### BOOK XXXIII.

Sets forth an exposition of the fifteenth, and remaining verses of the fortieth chapter, and also of the first twelve verses of the forty-first chapter: where the various arts of

the devil are exposed, and predestination of free grace is taught, and reconciled with free will.

1. The proud become the more familiarly devoted to the ancient enemy, who is described by the voice of the Lord, under the name Behemoth, the higher they swell with pride within, at the successes of this life. For their pride increases with their distinction, but with their pride is added care; the mind is distracted hither and thither, because their desires also increase together with their possessions. And when they bring forth thoughts without number as the hay of the field, they feed the hunger of this Behemoth with these thoughts, as if with food which he longed for. Whence it is now rightly said;

Ver. 15. *The mountains bring him forth grass.* [E.V. 20]

[i]

2. In Holy Scripture, when 'mountain' is put in the singular number, there is designated sometimes the Incarnate Lord, sometimes Holy Church, sometimes the covenant of God, sometimes the apostate angel, sometimes any particular heretic. But when 'mountains' are named in the plural number, there is expressed sometimes the high estate of Apostles and Prophets, but sometimes the pride of worldly powers. For a mountain designates the Lord, as it is written, *And in the last days the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains.* [Is. 2, 2] For the mountain on the top of the mountains is the Incarnate Lord, transcending the loftiness of Prophets. Again, by a mountain is designated Holy Church, as it is written, *They that trust in the Lord are as mount Sion.* [Ps. 125, 1] For Sion means looking out, and by this looking out is typified the Church contemplating God. Again, by a mountain is expressed the covenant of God, as Habakkuk says, *God will come from Libanus, and the Holy One from the shady and thick mountain.* [Hab. 3, 3] For He Who by the pages of His covenant has promised that He will come, came, as it were, from that by which He held Himself, as it were, under a promise. And this covenant is well said to be a shady and thick mountain, because it is darkened by the thick obscurities of allegories. Again, by a mountain is designated the apostate angel, as is said to preachers concerning the ancient enemy under the character of the king of Babylon, *Lift ye up a banner upon the gloomy mountain.* For holy preachers lift up a banner above the gloomy mountain, when they exalt the virtue of the cross against the pride of Satan, which is frequently concealed under the mist of hypocrisy. Again, by a mountain any kind of heretic is expressed, as the Psalmist says with the voice of the Church, *In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye to my soul, Pass over as a sparrow to the mountain?* [Ps. 11, 1] For when a faithful soul is bidden to abandon unity, and to trust in the swelling doctrine of an heretical preacher, it is persuaded, as it were, to forsake the Lord, and to migrate to the mountain. Again, by mountains is designated the loftiness of Apostles and Prophets, as it is written, *Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God.* [Ps. 36, 6] And it is said by the voice of Paul, *That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.* [2 Cor. 5, 21] Or as the Psalmist again says by the voice of the Church in hope, *I have lifted up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence will come my help.* [Ps. 121, 1] Again, by mountains is expressed the pride of secular powers, of whom the Psalmist says, *The hills melted like wax from the presence of the Lord:* [Ps. 97, 5] because many, who had before been swollen up with stubborn pride, were melted through penitence with great fear, when God was manifested in the flesh. Or as the same Prophet says again, *They go up, mountains and go down, plains.* [Ps. 104, 8] For many persecutors of the Lord come against Him in pride, but return from Him in humility. And these go up, mountains, by the swelling of power; but come down, plains,

namely, by becoming level, through acknowledgment of sin.

3. But because some continue in the height of their pride, and disdain to bend humbly to the Divine commands, and that, because they cease not to think and perpetrate wickedness according to the desire of the ancient enemy; it is rightly said of Behemoth in this place; *The mountains bring him forth grass*. For the proud men of the world bring forth grass to this Behemoth, because they refresh him by that which they work wickedly. They bring forth grass to this Behemoth, because they offer him their unstable and treacherous pleasures. *For men*, says the Apostle, *shall be lovers of their own selves*. [2 Tim. 3, 2] And he summed up their description, saying; *Lovers of pleasures more than of God*. [ib. 4] What then is the grass of the mountains, except unstable pleasure, which is begotten from the heart of the proud? For if they did not despise God in their pride, they would never commit so many wantonnesses [‘lubrica’] in their lasciviousness, by which grass this Behemoth is doubtless fed; because by hungering in them after the punishment of eternal death, he is pampered with their evil habits. For the proud of this world, even if ever, hindered by the course of God’s dispensation, they desist from fulfilling their wicked works, yet multiply wickednesses in thought; at one time to make themselves appear superior to others in wealth and honour; at another, to exercise this very power in endeavouring to injure others; at another, to melt away in light deeds and pleasures, when influenced by wanton emotions. For since they never think of doing right, but always wrong, things, from the favours they have received from God, what else do they but fight against God with His own gifts? Because then this Behemoth always discerns in the minds of the proud his own desires, he finds, as it were, grass on the mountains, with which he replenishes and swells the belly of his malice. But it is well subjoined, *All the beasts of the field will play there*.

[ii]

4. What are designated by ‘beasts’ but unclean spirits, what by the ‘field,’ but the present world? Whence it is said against Ephraim, of the chief of the malignant spirits himself; *The beasts of the field shall tear them*. [Hos. 13, 8] Or as Isaiah says; *No evil beast shall go up thereon*. [Is. 35, 9] But that the world is understood by the word field, the word of the Lord witnesses in the Gospel, which says, *But the field is the world*. [Matt. 13, 38] The beasts of the field, then, play in the grass of the mountains, because in this world the devils, who have been cast forth from above, delight in the evil doings of the proud. The beasts play in the grass, when the reprobate spirits draw away the hearts of men into unlawful thoughts. Is it not sport for evil spirits, to deceive at one time by false promises the minds of men which were made after the image of God, at another to make mock at them with empty terrors, at another to urge upon them transitory pleasures as if lasting, at another to make light of lasting punishments as if transitory? He had doubtless feared being the sport of these beasts, who said, *O my God, I trust in Thee, let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies make a jest of me*. [Ps. 25, 2] Because then the heart of the proud is overcome by every sin, so as to be ready for every malignant spirit which assails it with evil thoughts, it is rightly said of the grass of the mountains, *All the beasts of the field will play there*. For since the proud pass over no wickedness in their thoughts, there is no beast of the field which is not satiated with the grass of these mountains. For even if at any time they avoid the lust of the flesh, yet they commit the sin of inward lust by boasting of their very chastity. If at any time they do not covetously grasp at any thing without them, they are by no means free from the allurements of avarice; for though they are not eager after any thing, yet they strive to grasp at praise, for their forbearance, from human

applause. The mountains, therefore, bring forth grass for this Behemoth, and all the beasts of the field play there, because every malignant spirit feeds at greater liberty in the heart of the proud, in proportion as every sin is generated from pride. But since we have heard what this Behemoth feeds on, we must now needs hear where it is that he rests meanwhile through his evil desire. It follows, Ver. 16. *He sleepeth under the shadow, in the covert of the reed, in moist places.* [E.V. 21]

[iii]

5. Overshadowing is sometimes used in Holy Scripture for the Incarnation of the Lord, or the cooling of the mind from the heat of carnal thoughts; whence by the expression 'shadow' this cooling of the heart in consequence of heavenly protection is usually spoken of. But sometimes 'shadow' is taken to mean the numbness of the frozen minds when charity departs. For that the Incarnation of the Lord is signified by the term overshadowing, still preserving the truth of the history, the word of the Angel attests, who says to Mary, *The Power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* [Luke 1, 35] For because a shadow is caused in no other way than by a light and a body, the Power of the Highest overshadowed her, because the incorporeal Light assumed a body in her womb. By which overshadowing in truth she received in herself every refreshment of mind. Again, by 'shadow' is expressed the refreshment of the heart by reason of heavenly protection, as the Psalmist says, *Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.* [Ps. 17, 8] Or as the Bride in the Song of Songs, having waited for the coming of the Bridegroom, announces, saying, *I sat down under the shadow of Him, Whom I had longed for.* [Cant. 2, 3] As if she said, I rested under the protection of His coming from the heat of carnal desires. Again, by 'shadow' is expressed the numbness of the frozen mind, when charity departs, as is said of sinful man, that he sought the shadow. For man, flying from the warmth of charity, has forsaken the sun of truth, and hid himself under the shade of inward cold. Whence it is said by the voice of the same Truth, *Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold.* [Matt. 24, 12] Whence the first man, after his sin, is found hid amidst the trees of paradise at the cool after midday ['ad auram']. [Gen. 3, 8] For since he had lost the midday warmth of charity, he was already benumbed beneath the shadow of sin, as if under the cold of the air.

6. Because then this Behemoth finds a kind of rest in those, whom he chills by withdrawing from the light of the true Sun, he is said to sleep under the shadow. But sometimes by 'shadow,' if used with the addition of the word 'death,' is expressed either the death of the flesh, or any reprobates, who by their eagerness in evil doing imitate the darkness of the ancient enemy. Whence it is said by the Psalmist with the voice of the Martyrs; *Thou hast humbled us in the place of affliction, and the shadow of death hath covered us.* [Ps. 44, 19] For the shadow of death covers the Elect of God, when the death of the flesh, which is the image of eternal death, cuts them off from this life; because as that separates the soul from God, so does this separate the body from the soul. Or certainly the shadow of death covers them, because it is written of the ancient enemy, *His name was death.* [Rev. 6, 8] All reprobates are therefore the shadow of death, because they imitate the malice of his wickedness, and shadow forth his image, as it were, when they take in themselves a resemblance of his malice. And they cover the Elect of God, when they gain strength against them for a time, in the cruelty of persecution. But in this place 'shadow' is taken for the slumber of wickedness, and this Behemoth slumbers therein, because he watches anxiously against hearts glowing with charity, but lies securely in minds benumbed with cold. For he cannot slumber in the minds of Saints, because, even if he places himself therein for a short moment, the very warmth of

heavenly desires wearies him, and he is pricked, as it were, to make him depart, as often as they sigh after eternal things with inmost love. And as many holy thoughts as cry aloud from their minds unto heaven, are as so many voices to rouse him. Whence it is, that, frightened by the arms of good deeds, and smitten with the darts of sighs, he takes his flight, and that, returning to the frozen hearts of the reprobate, he seeks for that shadow of wickedness to occupy in security. And where it is found by him, is shewn by its being immediately subjoined, *In the covert of the reeds*.

7. In Holy Scripture, by the expression ‘cane’ [‘calamus’] or ‘reed’ [‘arundo’] is sometimes understood the Abiding Word, sometimes the skill of the learned, sometimes the changeableness of the mind, sometimes the brightness of temporal glory. For by ‘cane’ is designated the eternity of the Word, when it is said by the Psalmist with the voice of the Father, *My tongue is the reed* [‘calamus’] *of a swift writer*. [Ps. 45, 1] For since that which we speak passes away, but that which we write remains, the tongue of the Father is called the reed of a writer, because from Him is the Word Coeternal with Himself, and begotten without transition [‘transitu’]. Again, by ‘reed’ is expressed the learning of writers, as the Prophet promises concerning Holy Church, saying, *In the lairs in which dragons used before to dwell, there will spring up the greenness of the reed, and rush*. [Is. 35, 7] For in this sentence, as we said a long way above in this work, by ‘reed’ is expressed the doctrine of writers, by ‘rush’ the freshness of hearers [see Bk. 29, §. 51]. Again, by ‘cane,’ or certainly by ‘reed,’ is expressed changeableness of mind, as is said by the Lord to the crowds of the Jews in praise of John, *What went ye out into the wilderness to see? a reed shaken with the wind?* [Matt. 11, 7] in order, namely, that it should be understood, ‘No.’ For John was not in truth a reed shaken with the wind, because no breath of tongues inclined on different sides his mind, which was made firm by the Holy Spirit. Again, by ‘rush’ or ‘reed’ is expressed the brightness of temporal glory, as is said of the righteous by Wisdom, *the righteous shall shine, and run to and fro like sparks in the reed-bed*. [Wisd. 3, 7] For He terms a ‘reed-bed’ the life of the worldly, who like reeds, outwardly increase to a height by temporal glory, but are inwardly bereft of the solidity of truth. Whence also the kingdom of the Jews is compared to a reed, when it is said by the Prophet, on the Lord appearing in the truth of the flesh, *A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench*. [Is. 2, 43] For what does he set forth by the name ‘reed’ but the temporal kingdom of the Jewish people, brilliant indeed without, but empty within? And because in this people the royal race had already failed, and a stranger was possessing its kingdom, He fitly calls the same kingdom a broken reed. But what is expressed by ‘flax,’ except it be its priesthood, which doubtless wore linen vestments? And because at the coming of the Lord, it had lost the warmth of charity, it was not burning but smoking, having already lost, as it were, the fire of faith. But the Incarnate Lord broke not the bruised reed, and quenched not the smoking flax, because He smote not with the might of judgment the kingdom of Judæa, which had been already well nigh destroyed, and its priesthood which retained not the fire of faith, but endured them with the long-suffering of patience.

8. What else, therefore, is designated in this place by the term ‘reed’ but the minds of the worldly, which are devoted to temporal glory? For they are the more empty in themselves within, the more they appear tall and beautiful without; for while they melt away into external glory on the surface, they are not strengthened by any solidity within. For like reed they are, through their folly, hollow within, but are outwardly beautiful through show and appearance; but the more studiously outward glory is sought for by them, the more are their minds agitated with sharper pangs of thought. Whence this Behemoth is now rightly said to slumber in the covert of the reed, because he silently

possesses the hearts of those, whose desires he excites to seek after temporal splendor and dignity; and he himself sleeps, as it were, quietly in that spot, where he does not allow those whom he possesses to remain at rest. For whilst they go about to surpass others by the loftiness of their goods, while through the brightness of outward cleanliness they surpass the righteous in appearance, as a reed surpasses the bark of solid trees; by remaining hollow within, they make a fitting place for this Behemoth to rest within them. Whence also the Lord says in the Gospel, that the spirit who went forth and found no rest in barren and dry places, because he found the house which he had left empty, and swept clean, entered it in more abundant measure. [Matt. 12, 43-45] For because the earth which is watered becomes moist, the barren and dry places are the hearts of the righteous, which by the power of discipline are drained dry of all the moisture of carnal concupiscence. Whence here also the place where this Behemoth slumbers is still further pointed out, where it is immediately added, *In moist places*.

9. For 'moist places' are the minds of earthly men, which the moisture of carnal concupiscence makes fluid, because it fills them. In which this Behemoth plants deeper the footsteps of his iniquity, the more as in passing he sinks ['pertransitus ejus'] in their minds as in wet earth. For 'moist places' are voluptuous deeds. For the foot does not slip on dry ground, but when planted in slippery ground it is hardly supported. They therefore journey through this life in moist places, who cannot herein stand upright in righteousness. Behemoth, therefore, sleeps in these moist places, because he rests in the slippery doings of reprobate men. But some suppose that by 'moist places' are meant the genitals. But if this is so, what else is plainly designated by moist places but lust, so that by a 'reed' is expressed the glory of pride, and by 'moist places' the lust of the body? For these in truth are two sins, which hold cruel sway over the human race, one, namely, of the spirit, and the other of the flesh. For pride exalts the spirit, lust corrupts the flesh. The ancient enemy, therefore, specially oppressing mankind either by pride or by lust, sleeps in the covert of the reed, and in moist places, because he holds ruined man under the sway of his domination, either by pride of spirit, or by corruption of flesh. But some he possesses in both ways, because when the spirit of pride exalts them, not even shame for their corruption brings them down from pride at their high estate. But are not the teachers of virtues continually watchful against them within the bounds of Holy Church? Do they cease to reprove grovelling pleasures, and to recommend the joys of the heavenly country? But the minds of the wicked refuse the more obstinately to listen to the highest things, the more closely they have cleaved to those that are basest. Nor are they contented with merely perishing themselves, but, (which is worse,) when they see others convinced and improved, they also oppose the reproofs of the righteous, to keep others at least from being corrected. Whence it is well subjoined;

Ver. 17. *The shadows cover his shadow*. [E.V. 22]

[iv]

10. For all the wicked are in truth shadows of the devil: for while they give themselves up to imitate his iniquity, they derive, as it were, a form of resemblance from his body. But as the reprobate are his 'shadows' in the plural number, so each separate sinner is his 'shadow' in the singular. But when the wicked gainsay the teaching of the just, when they do not permit any wicked person to be corrected by them, the shadows of this Behemoth cover his shadow; because sinners, whenever they are conscious to themselves of sin, support another sinner in the same course. His shadows cover his shadow, when the more wicked support by their misdirected patronage the doings of the

most wicked. And this they doubtless do with this object, that, while the fault, with which they themselves are bound, is corrected in others, they may not at last be reached themselves. They cover themselves therefore, when they protect others, because they foresee that their own conduct is attacked, by the same means as they see others confounded with bold reproof. And thus it happens, that while the aggregate of sins is defended, it is also increased, and that the guilt of each person is more easy of commission, the more difficult it is of punishment. For the evil doings of sinners derive so much greater increase, the longer they are permitted, through the defence of the powerful, to remain unpunished. But such persons, whether they seem to be within or without Holy Church, display themselves more openly as the enemies of God, the greater patrons they are of sins. For in defending themselves they fight against Him, Who is displeased with those doings, which they multiply, by defending them. Which conduct the Lord by the Prophet well reproves, under the character of Babylon, saying; *Thorns and nettles shall spring up in her houses, and the bramble in the fortresses thereof.* [Is. 34, 13] For what do we understand by ‘nettles,’ but the irritations of thoughts, and what by ‘thorns,’ but the piercings of sins? Nettles therefore and thorns spring up in the houses of Babylon, because in the disorder of a reprobate mind there arise longings of thoughts which exasperate, and sinful deeds which wound. But they who act thus have others also more wicked than themselves as their defenders. Whence he there fitly subjoined immediately, *And the bramble in the fortresses thereof.* For the bramble is crowded with such a circle of thorns, that it can hardly be touched from its roughness. The nettle and the thorn therefore spring up within, but both of them are fortified without by the bramble: because, namely, smaller offenders commit any kinds of evil, but greater and most abandoned ones defend them. Whence it is here also well said, *His shadows protect his shadow.* For whilst a greater sinner defends a wicked person, a shadow, as it were, darkens a shadow, that it be not irradiated with the light of truth. It follows; *The willows of the brook will compass him about.*

[v]

11. ‘Willows’ are trees which bear indeed no fruit; but are of such great greenness, as hardly to dry up, even when cut off by the roots and torn up. Whence in Holy Scripture by the name ‘willows,’ the good are sometimes designated, from their greenness, and sometimes the reprobate from their sterility. For unless by their continual greenness they typified the life of the Elect, the Prophet would not have said concerning the children of Holy Church, *They shall spring up among the grass, as willows by the water courses.* [Is. 44, 4] For the children of Holy Church spring up as willows among the grass, when amidst the withering life of carnal men, they last on in manifold numbers, and perpetual greenness of mind. And they are well said to spring up by the water courses, because each of them derives its fruitful productiveness from the teaching of Holy Scripture, which runs along in this temporal state. And again, if the life of sinners were not signified by the sterility of willows, the Psalmist would not have said against Babylon by the voice of preachers; *We hanged our instruments upon the willows in the midst thereof.* [Ps. 137, 2] For the willows are described as being in the midst of Babylon, doubtless because the unfruitful, and those estranged from the love of their heavenly country, are rooted with all the affections of their heart in this confusion of the world. Whence also holy preachers do not play, but hang their instruments in these willows, because when they see minds unfruitful and reprobate, they display not the power of their preaching, but rather weep and are silent. What also is expressed by the brook except the course of this mortal life? Of which it is said again by the Prophet, *He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up his head.* [Ps. 110, 7] Because, namely, our Redeemer tasted the

punishment of mortal life, as though in a passage through it, and therefore did not long abide in that death to which he had yielded of his own accord. Whence on the third day he lifted up at His resurrection that Head which He had laid down at His death. What then is the meaning of that which is said of this Behemoth, the *willows of the brook will compass him about*? except that lovers of this mortal life, unfruitful in good deeds, cleave the closer to him, the more abundantly the delight of transitory pleasure waters them. For a brook waters them, as it were, at their roots, when the love of a carnal life intoxicates them in their thoughts. And like willows they bring forth in truth no fruit, but are green in their leaves, because they sometimes utter words of propriety, which are not burdensome to be said, but display by their good works no weight of life. It is therefore well said, *The willows of the brook will compass him about*, because when they who bear no fruit devote themselves to the love of this temporal life, they comply too familiarly with the depraved customs of the ancient enemy. But since we have heard what is rendered him by his clients, let us now hear what he works in them. It follows;

Ver. 18. *He will drink up a river, and will not wonder, and trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth.* [E.V. 23]

[vi]

12. For what is in this place designated by the name of 'river,' except the downward course of the human race, which rises at its birth, as if from the source of its fountain, but passes down, as if flowing to its lowest level at its death? But who are signified by the expression 'Jordan,' except those who have been already imbued with the sacrament of Baptism? For since our Redeemer deigned to be baptized in this river, all who have been baptized must needs be expressed by the name of that stream, in which this very sacrament of Baptism happened to be begun. Because, therefore, this Behemoth has drawn to himself like a river the human race flowing downward from the beginning of the world, even to the times of redemption, but a few Elect ones escaping him, it is now well said; *He will drink up a river, and will not wonder.* But since even after the coming of the Mediator he seizes some even of the faithful, who neglect to live righteously, it is rightly subjoined; *And trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth.* As if it were plainly said, Before the coming of the Redeemer of the world, he drank up the world without wondering, but, which is far worse, even after the coming of the Redeemer, he trusts that he is able to swallow up some, who have been sealed with the sacrament of Baptism. For he devours some who have been placed in the profession of Christians, because he supplants them by causing error in their faith itself. But others he does not turn aside from the uprightness of the faith, but inclines to the practice of wicked works. Others he is unable to bend as much as he wishes in deeds of impurity, but he inwardly turns them aside from the zeal of their intention; so that, when they sever their minds from charity, whatever they may do outwardly may not be right. And they retain the faith, but they retain not the life of faith; because they either openly do those things which are unlawful, or else from their perverted heart, their doings are wicked, even though they seem to be holy. For since some persons are faithful in their professions, but not in their lives, it is said by the voice of the Truth, *Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt 7, 21] Hence He says again; *But why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* [Luke 6, 46] Hence Paul says, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.* [Tit. 1, 16] Hence John says, *He that saith that he knoweth God, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar.* [1 John 2, 4] Hence it is that the Lord complains of His own ancient people; *This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.* [Mark 7, 6; Is. 29, 13] Hence also the Psalmist says, *They loved Him with*



*their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongue.* [Ps. 78, 36] But it was no wonder that this Behemoth before the water of the laver, before the heavenly sacraments, before the corporeal presence of the Redeemer, drank up, with the yawning gulph of his deep persuasion, the river of the human race. But it is very wonderful, it is very terrible, that even after the knowledge of the Redeemer, he seizes many with his open mouth, that he pollutes them after the water of the laver, that after heavenly sacraments he hurries them away to the depth of hell. Let it be said then, let it be said fearfully by the voice of the Truth; *He will drink up a river, and will not wonder, and trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth.* For the devil counted it not a great thing that he seized unbelievers, but he now rouses himself with all his efforts to destroy those, whom he pines at seeing regenerated against him. Let no one then trust that faith without works can be sufficient for him, when we know that it is written; *Faith without works is dead.* [James 2, 20] Let no one think that he has entirely escaped the bite of Behemoth by a mere confession of faith. Because he has already drunk up a river, but still thirsts after Jordan. And Jordan flows into his mouth as often as any Christian sinks down into iniquity. We have now escaped his mouth, by the aid of faith, but we must take earnest heed, not to fall therein by slippery doings. If care in walking is neglected, it is in vain that we keep the straight road by faith. Because the way of faith leads indeed to the heavenly country, but it does not carry to the close those who stumble therein.

13. We have another point to consider more minutely on this head. For those who we said were expressed by 'Jordan,' can also be designated by the 'river.' For they who have already confessed their belief in the truth, but neglect to live faithfully, can rightly be called a 'river:' namely, because they flow downwards. But 'Jordan' in the Hebrew word means 'the descent of them.' And there are some who in seeking the way of truth cast away their own selves, and come down from the pride of their former life. And when they desire eternal things, they entirely estrange themselves from this world, by not only seeking after the goods of others, but even abandoning their own. And so far from seeking glory therein, they despise it even when it offers itself. For hence is that which is said by the voice of the Truth, *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself.* [Luke 9, 23] For a man denies himself, if, having trampled down the haughtiness of pride, he shews before the eyes of God that he is strange to himself. Hence the Psalmist says, *I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites.* [Ps. 42, 6] For Jordan, as I said, is interpreted 'Descent,' but Hermonites, Anathema, that is, 'Alienation.' He therefore remembers God from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, who by humbling himself, and by living estranged from himself, is recalled to think on his Creator. But the ancient enemy considers it no great matter, that he holds under the rule of his tyranny those who seek after earthly things. For we know, as the Prophet witnesses, that *His food is choice.* [Hab. 1, 16] Nor does he count it a wonderful thing if he swallows up those whom pride exalts, covetousness wastes away, pleasure relaxes ['dilatat'], wickedness contracts ['angustat'], anger inflames, discord separates, envy exulcerates, lust pollutes and kills. He will therefore swallow up a river, and will not wonder, because he counts it no great thing, when he devours those, who by the very pursuits of their life run downwards. But he earnestly endeavours to seize those whom he sees already united to heavenly things, from their contempt of the things of earth. And hence, when the river has been swallowed up, it is rightly subjoined, *And he trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth,* because he is anxious to lurk in ambush, and seize those, whom he sees casting themselves down from the glory of the present life through love of their heavenly country. For some in truth forsake the world, abandon the vanities of transient honours, and, seeking the lowliness of humility, transcend by good living the custom of human conversation; and advance in such lofty pursuits ['tanta studiorum arce'], as even now to perform mighty

wonders. But because they neglect to protect themselves by circumspection, they are wounded by the shaft of vain glory, and fall the more fatally from on high. For hence it is that the eternal Judge, Who weighs the secrets of the heart, foretells this same fall and ruin, and threatens, saying, *Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them that I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity, I know not who ye are.* [Matt. 7, 22. 23.] Hence also it is said by the Prophet, *The Lord called judgment to the fire, and it devoured the great abyss, and will eat up a part of the house of the Lord.* [Amos 7, 4] For judgment is called to the fire, when the sentence of justice is already displayed for the punishment of eternal burning. And it devours the great abyss, because it consumes the wicked and incomprehensible minds of men, which now conceal themselves from men even under the miracles of signs. But a part of the house of the Lord is eaten up; because Gehenna devours those also, who now boast, as it were, by their holy deeds, of being in the number of the Elect. They therefore who are here called ‘Jordan,’ are there called ‘a part of the house of the Lord.’ The ancient enemy therefore trusts that even Jordan can flow into his mouth, because he sometimes destroys, by the stratagems of his cunning, those even who are now considered Elect. But whose hardness of heart would not these words of the Lord arouse? Whose firmness of mind would not be shaken from the inmost depths of his thoughts, when our enemy is shewn to be of such great power against us? Will there be no aid of consolation? There will surely be, for it is subjoined;  
Ver. 19. *In his eyes He will take him as with a hook.* [E.V. 24]

[vii]

14. It is much to be observed, that the Lord, tempering in His mercy the words of His Scripture, alarms us at one time with sharp excitements, comforts us at another with gentle consolations, and blends terror with comforts, and comforts with terror; in order that, while they are both tempered towards us with wonderful skill of management, we may be found neither to despair through fear, nor yet incautiously secure. For when He had pointed out in manifold expressions the cunning crafts, and the unrestrained strength of Behemoth, He immediately sets forth the coming of His Only-begotten Son our Redeemer, and teaches in what way this Behemoth is to be destroyed; in order that, having oppressed our heart by recounting his might, He might speedily alleviate our sorrow by pointing out his destruction. Therefore, after He had said, *He will drink up a river, and will not wonder, and trusteth that Jordan can flow into his mouth,* He immediately announces the coming of the Lord’s Incarnation, saying, *In his eyes He will take him as with a hook.* Who can be ignorant that in a ‘hook’ a bait is shewn, a point is concealed? For the bait tempts, that the point may wound. Our Lord therefore, when coming for the redemption of mankind, made, as it were, a kind of hook of Himself for the death of the devil; for He assumed a body, in order that this Behemoth might seek therein the death of the flesh, as if it were his bait. But while he is unjustly aiming at that death in His person, he lost us, whom he was, as it were, justly holding. He was caught, therefore, in the ‘hook’ of His Incarnation, because while he sought in Him the bait of His Body, he was pierced with the sharp point of His Divinity. For there was within Him His Humanity, to attract to Him the devourer, there was there His Divinity to wound; there was there His open infirmity to excite, His hidden virtue to pierce through the jaw of the spoiler. He was, therefore, taken by a hook, because he perished by means of that which he swallowed. And this Behemoth knew indeed the Incarnate Son of God, but knew not the plan of our redemption. For he knew that the Son of God had been incarnate for our redemption, but he was quite ignorant that this

our Redeemer was piercing him by His own death. Whence it is well said, *In his eyes He will take him as with a hook*. For we are said to have in our eyes that which we see placed before us. But the ancient enemy of mankind saw placed before him the Redeemer, Whom he confessed in knowing, feared in confessing, saying, *What have we to do with Thee, Thou Son of God? Hast Thou come to torment us before the time?* [Matt. 8, 29] He was taken therefore with a hook in his eyes, because he both knew, and seized it; and he first knew Whom to fear, and yet afterwards feared Him not, when hungering in Him for the death of the Flesh, as if it were his proper bait. Because then we have heard what our Head has done by Himself, let us now hear what He is doing by His own members. It follows;

*And bore through his nostrils with stakes.*

[viii]

15. What else do we understand by stakes ['sudes'], that is, poles ['palos'], (which are sharpened indeed in order to be fixed in the ground,) but the sharp counsels of the Saints? And these perforate the nostrils of this Behemoth, while they both watchfully behold on every side his most ingenious stratagems, and pierce, by overcoming them. But a scent is drawn through the nostrils, and by drawing our breath deep, an object is detected even when placed at some distance. By the nostrils of Behemoth are, therefore, designated his cunning stratagems, by which he most ingeniously endeavours both to learn the secret good qualities of our heart, and to scatter them by his most fatal persuasion. The Lord, therefore, perforates his nostrils with stakes, because, penetrating his crafty stratagems by the acute senses of the Saints, He takes from them their power. But he often hovers about the paths of the righteous with such insidious art, as to seek to approach them for their hurt, even by means of the good qualities which he knows to exist in them. For from observing the liberality of one person, he inflames another with the fire of discord; and when he sees one person compassionate, he persuades another to be angry, in order that, by suggesting that a good deed has not been done in common, he may cut off accordant minds from the benefit of a common favour. For since he is not able to break down the resolutions of the just by persuading them to sin, he is busy in sowing evils therein by means of their good deeds. But holy men overcome these his stratagems the more speedily, the more acutely they detect them. A point which we set forth the better, if we bring forward Paul, one of many maintainers of the truth in evidence. For when a certain Corinthian under his care had committed the sin of incest, the illustrious teacher delivered him up to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, for the satisfaction of penance, and reserved his spirit to be saved to the day of the Lord Jesus. [1 Cor. 5, 5] For by great skill in discipline he was forcibly delivered for punishment to the very person, to whom he had in his sin voluntarily submitted; in order that he who had been the author of the sin of wickedness, might himself become the scourge of discipline. But when this penance had been well gone through, on learning that the Corinthians had been already moved with compassion towards him, he says, *To whom ye forgive any thing, I also; for I forgave any thing, for your sakes I forgave it in the person of Christ*. [2 Cor. 2, 10] As thinking of the blessing of communion, he says, *To whom ye forgive any thing, I also*. As if he were saying, I agree with your good doings; may whatever you have done be counted as mine. And he immediately added, *And if I forgave any thing, for your sakes I forgave it*. As if he were saying, Whatever I have done compassionately, has added further good to your doings. My goodness is, therefore, your profit, your goodness is my profit. And he immediately added and subjoined that binding of hearts ['compagem cordium'], in which he is thus held, *In the person of Christ*. For as if we were presuming to say to him, Why dost thou so carefully couple thyself with

thy disciples? why dost thou so anxiously conform either thyself to them, or them to thyself in thy doings? he immediately subjoined, *That we may not be circumvented by Satan*. [ib. 11] And with what acuteness he penetrates his crafty stratagems, he teaches, adding, *For we are not ignorant of his devices*. As if he said in other words, We are sharp stakes of the Lord's making, and we penetrate the nostrils of this Behemoth by subtle circumspection, lest he should pervert to an evil end that which the mind enters on aright.

16. By 'stakes' can be signified the acute words of Wisdom Himself manifested in the flesh, so that by the nostrils of Behemoth may be typified (since scent is drawn in by the nostrils) that prying search of the ancient enemy. For when he doubted whether God were incarnate, he wished to ascertain this by tempting and asking of Him miracles, saying, *If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread*. [Matt. 4, 3] Because then he wished to learn the scent of His Divinity from the evidence of miracles, he drew in the breath, as it were, by his nostrils. But when it is immediately said to him in answer, *Man liveth not by bread alone*, and, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, [ib. 4, 7] because the Truth repelled the searching enquiry of the ancient enemy by the sharpness of his sayings, he pierced his nostrils, as it were, with stakes. But because this Behemoth spreads forth with various arguments of deceit, he is marked still further by the addition of another name; for it is subjoined,

Ver. 20. *Wilt thou be able to draw out Leviathan with a hook?* [E.V. 41, 1]

[ix]

17. For Leviathan means 'their addition.' Of whom, in truth, but of men? amongst whom he introduced once for all the guilt of sin, and carries it onward to eternal death by the most evil suggestions day by day. And while he multiplies their guilt by the usury of sin, he doubtless without ceasing adds to their punishment. He can also be called Leviathan by way of mocking. For he declared in his cunning persuasion that he would confer a divine nature on the first man, but he took away immortality. [Gen. 3, 4. 5.] He can therefore be called ironically 'The addition to men,' for when he promised them to bestow that which they were not, he even took away by his craft that which they really were. But this Leviathan was caught with a hook, because when in the case of our Redeemer he seized through his satellites the bait of His Body, the sharp sting of His Godhead pierced him through. For a hook held as it were the throat of its swallower, when both the bait of the flesh appeared for the devourer to seize, and at the time of His passion His Godhead was concealed, in order to kill him. For in this abyss of waters, that is, in this boundlessness of the human race, this whale was rushing hither and thither with open mouth, eager for the death, and devouring the life of almost all. But a hook for the death of this whale was suspended by a marvellous arrangement in this gloomy depth of waters. The line of this hook, is that genealogy of the ancient fathers recorded in the Gospel. For when it is said, *Abraham begat Isaac, Isaac begat Jacob*, and the other descendants are described, with the insertion of the name of Joseph, down to Mary, the betrothed Virgin, a kind of line is spun, for the Incarnate Lord, that is to say, this hook to be bound to the end of it; [Matt. 1, 2-16] Whom this whale would catch at with open mouth when hanging in these waters of the human race, but when it was bitten by the cruelty of his satellites, he would no longer have power to bite. That this whale then, who is lying in ambush for the death of men, might no longer devour whom he wished, this hook held firm the jaws of the spoiler, and wounded him that bit it. God, therefore, as pointing out to his faithful servant the Incarnation of His Only-begotten Son, says, *Wilt thou be able to draw out Leviathan with a hook?* Thou

understandest, As I; Who send My Only-begotten Son in the flesh for the death of the spoiler; in Whom while mortal flesh is seen, and the power of His immortality is not seen, a kind of hook destroys, as it were, him who swallows it, by concealing the keenness of the power, with which He wounds. It follows;

*And wilt thou bind his tongue with a cord?*

[x]

18. Thou understandest, As I. For Holy Scripture is wont to designate by a 'cord,' sometimes measured allotments, sometimes sins, sometimes faith. For on account of the hereditary measured allotments, it is said, *The lines have fallen unto me in goodly places, for I have a goodly heritage.* [Ps. 16, 6] For lines fall for us in goodly places, when through humility of life the lot of a better country awaits us. Again, because sins are signified by a 'cord,' it is said by the Prophet; *Woe unto you that draw iniquity with the cords of vanity.* [Is. 5, 18] For iniquity is drawn with cords of vanity, when sin is drawn out by increase. Whence it is also said by the Psalmist; *The cords of sins* [or, *sinner*s, as S. Aug. ad loc.] *have twined about me.* [Ps. 119, 61] For since a cord, when added to, is twisted, in order to increase, sin is not unfitly figured by a cord, since it is frequently multiplied, when it is defended with a perverse heart. Again, by a 'cord' faith is expressed, as Solomon witnesses, who says; *A threefold cord is not easily broken;* [Eccles. 4, 12] because faith in truth which is woven by the mouth of preachers from the knowledge of the Trinity, remaining firm in the Elect, is broken ['dissipatur'] only in the heart of the reprobate. In this place, therefore, nothing prevents either faith or sin being understood by the word 'cord.' For our Incarnate Lord bound the tongue of Leviathan with a cord, because He appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, and condemned all his erroneous preaching. Whence it is said, as Paul witnesses; *And from sin He condemned sin.* [Rom. 8, 3] He bound his tongue with a cord, because by means of the likeness of sinful flesh He swept away all his deceitful arguments from the hearts of His Elect. For behold, when the Lord appears in the flesh, the tongue of Leviathan is bound, because, when His truth had become known, those doctrines of falsehood were silenced.

19. For where is now the error of the Academicians, who endeavour to establish on sure grounds that nothing is sure, who with shameless brow demand from their hearers belief in their assertions, when they declare that nothing is true? Where is the superstition of the Mathematicians, who, looking up at the courses of the constellations, make the lives of men to depend on the motions of the stars? Though the birth of twins often scatters their doctrine to the winds; for though born at one and the same moment, they do not abide in the same kind of conversation. Where are those many false teachings, which we abstain from enumerating, for fear of digressing far from the course of our commentary? But every false doctrine has now been silenced, because the Lord has bound the tongue of Leviathan by the cord of His Incarnation. Whence it is also well said by the Prophet; *And the Lord shall lay waste the tongue of the Egyptian sea.* [Is. 11, 15] For the 'tongue of the sea,' is the knowledge of secular learning. But it is well called 'the Egyptian sea;' because it is darkened with the gloom of sin. The Lord, therefore, laid waste the tongue of the Egyptian sea, because by manifesting Himself in the flesh, He destroyed the false wisdom of this world. The tongue of Leviathan is, therefore, bound with a cord, because the preaching of the old sinner was bound by the likeness of sinful flesh.

20. But if faith is signified by a 'cord,' the same meaning is again suggested to us; because when

faith in the Trinity became known to the world by holy preachers, the doctrine of the world ceased to break forth against the mind of the Elect. Whence it is well said to the Lord by the Prophet; *Thou hast cloven fountains and torrents, Thou hast dried up the rivers of Ethan.* [Ps. 74, 15] For Ethan is interpreted 'strong.' And who is this strong man, except him of whom the Lord says in the Gospel; *No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, unless he first bind the strong man.* [Mark 3, 27] The Lord, therefore, clave the fountains and the torrents, when He spread in the hearts of His Apostles the streams of truth. Of whom it is said again by another Prophet; *With joy shall ye draw water from the fountains of the Saviour.* [Is. 12, 3] For we go in our thirst to their teaching, that we may bring back the pitcher of our hearts full of truth. But He dried the rivers of Ethan by the springing forth of His own fountains, when He withered the doctrine of the mighty and malignant spirit by displaying the ray of His own truth. The tongue, therefore, of Leviathan is bound with a cord, because by the spreading of faith in the Trinity, the preachings of errors were silenced. But since he cannot now raise himself openly, he goes about hither and thither, and bites by stealth. But the Lord watches against him in our behalf with wonderful pity, and defeats him even in his treacherous designs. Whence it is subjoined; Ver. 21. *Wilt thou put a ring into his nostrils?* [E.V. 41, 2]

[xi]

21. As stratagems are signified by 'nostrils,' so by a 'ring' is designated the omnipotence of Divine Power. For when it keeps us from being seized by temptations, it encircles around and holds firm in wondrous ways the snares of the ancient enemy. A ring is, therefore, put into his nostrils, when by the strength of heavenly protection drawn around us, his cunning is so restrained, as not to prevail so far against the weakness of man, as far as it secretly searches out its fatal arguments. But by the name 'ring' can be designated also the aid of the secret judgments, which is put into the nostrils of this Behemoth when he is restrained from his artful cruelty. Whence it is well said by the Prophet to the King of Babylon, when he is kept from injuring the Israelites; *I will put a ring in thy nostrils.* [Is. 37, 29] As if it were plainly said; Thou breathest hard with thoughts of guile; but from being unable to fulfil thy desires, thou bearest in thy nostrils the ring of My omnipotence, in order that when thou pantest more eagerly for the death of the righteous, thou mayest return unsatisfied from their life. But that which Holy Scripture calls in this place a 'ring,' it calls a 'sickle' by John in the Apocalypse. For he says, *I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.* [Rev. 14, 14] For the power of Divine judgment is called a 'ring,' because it binds on every side; but because in its cutting it embraces all things within it, it is marked out by the term 'sickle.' For whatever is cut by a sickle falls within it, in whatsoever direction it is turned. And because the power of the heavenly judgment cannot be in any way avoided, (for we are in truth within it, wherever we may endeavour to escape,) when the Judge Who is to come is represented, He is rightly said to hold a sickle. Because when He comes to meet all things in His might, He surrounds them in cutting them off. The Prophet saw that he was within the sickle of judgment, when he said, *If I ascend into heaven. Thou art there: if I descend into hell, Thou art present. If I take my wings before the light, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.* [Ps. 139, 8. 9.] He saw himself to be within a kind of sickle, when he knew that there was no way of escape open to him from any place, saying, *For neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the desert mountains,* [Ps. 75, 6] thou understandest, 'a way of escape is open.' And he proceeded immediately to speak of this all-embracing comprehension of the Divine power,

saying, *For God is the Judge*. [ib. 7] As if he were saying, A way of escape is wanting on every side, because He judges Who is every where. Therefore as the Divine judgments are signified by a sickle, because they encircle and cut down, so are they expressed by a ring, because they bind on every side. A ring is, therefore, put by the Lord in the nostrils of Leviathan, because he is restrained by the power of His judgment from prevailing as much as he wishes in his stratagems. Let it be said then, *Wilt thou put a ring into his nostrils?* Thou understandest, As I, Who restrain by Almighty judgment his crafty stratagems, so that he neither attempts as much as he wishes, nor succeeds as far as he attempts. It follows,  
*Or wilt thou bore through his jaw with a bracelet?*

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22. A 'bracelet' differs not in meaning from a 'ring,' because this also binds and encircles the spot where it is placed. But because a bracelet extends wider, by a bracelet is designated the more careful protection of His secret judgment over us. The Lord, therefore, bores through the jaw of this Leviathan with a bracelet, because by the ineffable power of His mercy He so thwarts the malice of the ancient enemy, that he sometimes loses even those whom he has seized, and they, as it were, fall from his mouth, who after the commission of sin return to innocence. For who that had once been seized by his mouth would escape his jaw, if it were not bored through? Had he not seized Peter in his mouth, when he denied? Had he not seized David in his mouth, when he plunged himself into such a gulph of lust? But when they returned each of them through penitence to life, this Leviathan let them escape, as it were, through the holes of his jaws. Those, therefore, are withdrawn from his mouth through the hole of his jaw, who after the perpetration of such great wickednesses have come back with penitence. But what man can escape the mouth of this Leviathan, so as not commit any thing unlawful? But hence we know how much we are indebted to the Redeemer of mankind, Who not only restrained us from falling into the mouth of Leviathan, but granted us also to return from his mouth; Who bereft not the sinner of hope, because He pierced his jaw that He might make a way to escape, so that he, who at first was incautious and not afraid of being bitten, might at least escape after the bite. The heavenly remedy, therefore, every where comes to our aid, because He both gave man precepts, that he should not sin, and yet furnished him with remedies when in sin, that he should not despair. There must, therefore, be exercised the greatest caution; that no one through pleasure in sin be seized by the mouth of this Leviathan. And yet, if he has been seized, let him not despair, because if he thoroughly bewails his sin, he finds a hole in his jaw, by which to escape. He is even now being crushed with his teeth; but if a way of escape is still sought for, a hole is found in his jaw. He who would not keep a look out, so as not to be taken, has, even when taken, a place to escape at. Let every one then who is not yet taken, avoid his jaw; but let every one who has been already taken, seek for a hole in his jaw. For our Creator is merciful and just.

23. But let no one say, Because He is merciful, I sin venially. And let no one who has sinned say, Because He is just, I despair of the remission of my sin. For God looses the sin which is bewailed; but let every one be afraid of sinning, because he knows not whether he can worthily bewail it. Before sinning then, let him fear His justice; but after sinning, let him presume on His mercy; and let him not so fear His justice, as not to be strengthened by any consolation of hope, nor be so confident of His mercy, as to neglect to apply to his wounds the medicine of worthy penitence. But let him always think also, that He Who he ventures to hope spares him in mercy, judges also with

severity. Let the hope of the sinner then rejoice in His mercy, but let the correction of the penitent tremble under His severity. Let the hope, therefore, of our confidence have also a sting of fear, in order that the justice of the Judge may frighten into the correction of his sins him whom the grace of the Forgiver invites to the confidence of pardon. For hence it is said by a certain wise man; *Say not, the mercies of the Lord are many, He will not be mindful of my sins.* [Ecclus. 5, 6] For he immediately speaks of His mercy and justice, saying, *For mercy and wrath are from Him.* [ib. 7] The Divine clemency, therefore, by piercing the jaw of this Behemoth, comes to the aid of mankind on every side, both mercifully and powerfully, because it did not abstain from giving them caution and admonition when free, nor took from them the remedy of escape when they had been captured. For the sins of such persons, that is, of David and Peter, are recorded in Scripture for this end, that the fall of their betters may be a caution to inferiors. But the penitence and the pardon of both are alike inserted to this end, that the recovery of the lost may be the hope of the perishing. Let no one boast then of standing firm himself, when David falls. Let no one also despair of his own fall, when David rises. Behold how marvellously Holy Scripture humbles the proud with the same word with which it raises up the humble. For it recorded but one circumstance, and recalled, by a different effect, the proud to the fearfulness of humility, and the humble to the confidence of hope. O the surpassing value of this new kind of remedy! which applied in one and the same manner, dries up the swollen by pressing on it, and restores the withered by upraising it. For it alarmed us at the fall of our superiors, but strengthened us by their restoration.

24. For thus, in truth, thus does the mercy of the Divine dispensation ever check us when proud, and support us from sinking into despair. Whence He also warns us by Moses, saying, *Thou shalt not take either the upper or the nether millstone to pledge.* [Deut. 24, 6] For by 'take' we sometimes mean 'take away.' Whence also those birds which are eager in seizing other birds are called hawks [accipitres, ab accipio]. Whence the Apostle Paul says, *For ye suffer, if a man devour you, if a man take.* [2 Cor. 11, 20] As if he said, If any one takes away. But the pledge of the debtor is the confession of a sinner. For a pledge is taken from a debtor, when a confession of sin is obtained from a sinner. But the upper and nether millstone are hope and fear. For hope raises up the heart, but fear weighs it down lower. But the upper and the nether millstone are so necessarily joined together, that one is possessed in vain without the other. Hope and fear, therefore, ought to be unceasingly united in the breast of a sinner, because he hopes in vain for mercy, if he does not also fear justice; he in vain fears justice, if he does not also rely on mercy. The upper or the nether millstone is, therefore, ordered not to be taken as a pledge; because he who preaches to a sinner, ought to order his preaching with such management, as not in leaving hope to remove fear, nor yet in withdrawing hope, to leave him in fear only. For the upper or the nether millstone is removed, if by the tongue of the preacher, either fear is severed from hope, or hope from fear, in the breast of the sinner.

25. But since on having brought forward David, as the case demanded, we have made mention of so great a sin, the mind of our reader is perhaps moved to enquire, why Almighty God does not keep uninjured by bodily sins, those whom He has elected for ever, and has also taken up to the height of spiritual gifts. To which, because we believe they will be speedily satisfied, we give a brief reply. For some through the gifts of virtues they have received, through the grace of good works bestowed on them, fall into the sin of pride, but yet know not whither they have fallen. Accordingly, the ancient enemy, because he already rules over them within, is permitted also to rage against them from without, in order that they who are elated in thought, may be brought down



by the lust of the flesh. But we know that it is sometimes much less to fall into corruption of body, than to sin in our silent thought from deliberate pride. But when pride is believed to be less disgraceful, it is less avoided. But men are more ashamed of lust, the more they all alike know it to be disgraceful. It is hence frequently the case that some persons on falling into lust after pride, are, from their open fall, ashamed of the guilt of their latent sin. And they then also correct their greater faults, when they are more sorely confounded from having been overcome in those that are less. For they who believed that they were free when living in greater sins, behold that they are guilty even amid smaller ones. This Behemoth then, when let loose by the merciful dispensation of God, leads on from sin to sin, and while he strikes the more heavily, loses thereby him whom he has seized, and is conquered by the very means by which he seems to have triumphed. It is pleasing to consider within the well guarded bosom of grace, with what great favour of compassion God surrounds us. Behold! he who prides himself on his virtue, through sin comes back to humility. But he who is puffed up by the virtues he has received, is wounded not with a sword, but, so to say, with a remedy. For what is virtue but a remedy, and what is vice but a wound? Because, therefore, we make a wound of our remedy, He makes a remedy of our wound; in order that we who are wounded by our virtue, may be healed by our sin. For we pervert the gifts of virtues to the practice of vice; He applies the allurements of vices to promote virtues [*in artem virtutem*], and wounds our healthy state in order to preserve it, and that we who fly from humility when we run, may cling to it at least when falling. But it should be understood in these matters, that the more the greater number of men fall in many things, the more firmly are they bound; and that when this Behemoth smites them with one sin to make them fall, he binds them also with another to keep them from rising. Let a man, therefore, consider with what an enemy he is waging war; and if he perceives that he has already offended in any matter, let him at least be afraid of being drawn from sin to sin, in order that the wounds may be carefully avoided, with which he frequently destroys. For it is very seldom that our enemy subserves the salvation of the Elect by actual wounds.

26. But the perforated jaw of this Behemoth can be understood in another sense also; so that he may be said to hold in his mouth not those whom he has already completely entangled in sin, but those whom he is still tempting by the persuasions of sin: so as that his chewing any one may be his tempting him with the pleasure of sin. He had received Paul to be chewed, but not swallowed, when he was harassing him, after so many sublime revelations, with thorns of the flesh. [2 Cor. 12, 7] For when he received permission to practise temptation against him, he then held him in his jaw, which yet had been pierced through. But he who could perish through pride, was tempted, that he might not perish. That temptation was, therefore, not an abyss of vices, but a protection of his merits; because this Leviathan by wearying him crushed him with affliction, but did not devour by involving him in sin. But he would not lose men who were elated by their sanctity, unless he tempted them. For they would not be holy, if they boasted of the glory of their sanctity, and would fall the more under his power, the more they extolled themselves for their virtues. But by the wonderful course of the dispensation, when they are tempted, they are humbled; when they are humbled, they cease at once to be his. The jaw of this Behemoth is, therefore, well said to have been pierced through, because he loses the Elect of God by crushing them, by attempting to destroy, he keeps them from perishing. The ancient enemy, therefore, subserving the secret dispensations of God, willingly tempts the souls of the holy to their ruin, but, by tempting, unwillingly preserves them for the kingdom. His jaw is, therefore, pierced through, because those whom he crushes by tempting, that is, by chewing them, he loses as it were, when he goes to swallow. But since it is the work not of human, but divine, forethought, that the very craft of the

ancient enemy promotes [‘suffragetur’] the benefit of the just, (so that when he tempts the Elect he protects them the more by his temptation,) it is well said to blessed Job; *Or wilt thou bore through his jaw with a bracelet?* Thou understandest, As I; Who providently disposing all things, preserve My Elect more firmly in their integrity, by permitting them to be moved [‘labefactari’] in a measure from their integrity by the jaw of this Leviathan. It follows;

Ver. 22. *Will he multiply prayers to thee, or will he speak soft words to thee?* [E.V. 41, 3]

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27. Thou understandest, As to Me. For if these words are referred to the person of the Son, he spake soft words to Him Incarnate, when he said, *I know Thee, Who Thou art, the Holy One of God.*

[Luke 4, 34] And this Leviathan multiplied prayers to Him, when he said by the legion which was subject to him; *If Thou cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.* [Matt. 8, 31] Although it can be understood in a still more plain manner, because he multiplies prayers to the Lord, when the wicked, who are his body, pray, on the day of the last judgment, that they may be spared; when his members, that is, the reprobate, cry out too late, and say, *Lord, Lord, open unto us.* To whom it is said immediately, *I know you not, whence ye are.* [Luke 13, 25] Then also he will say by his members soft words to the Lord, when many of his body are about to say, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name have done many wonderful works?* [Matt. 7, 22] They say soft words in deprecation, when they say in reply what they have done in His Name, but when they did these very deeds with hard heart, they claimed them for their own credit. Whence they shortly hear, *I know you not, who ye are.* It follows;

Ver. 23. *Will he make a covenant with thee?* Thou understandest, As with Me. *And wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?* [E.V. 41, 4]

[xiv]

28. Thou understandest, As I. But it must be carefully observed, that this Leviathan makes a covenant with the Lord, in order to be counted His servant for ever. For in a covenant the wishes of parties who are at variance are fulfilled, that each attains to what it desires, and terminates its quarrels by the desired result. The ancient enemy, therefore, when kindled by the torch of his malice, is at variance with the purity of the Divine innocence, but even in his variance, disagrees not with His judgment. For he is ever maliciously seeking to tempt righteous men. But yet the Lord permits this to take place, either mercifully, or righteously. This liberty to tempt is, therefore, called a ‘covenant,’ wherein the desire of the tempter is effected, and yet the will of the righteous Dispenser is thereby wonderfully fulfilled. For, as we have lately said, the Lord frequently subjects His Elect to the tempter, in order to be instructed; just as after the barriers of Paradise, after the secrets of the third heaven, an angel of Satan was given to Paul that he might not be exalted by the greatness of the revelations. [2 Cor. 12, 7] But, as we have said before, it is so ordered in this very temptation, that they who could perish from pride, are, by being humbled, preserved from destruction. In the secret course, therefore, of the dispensation, by the iniquity of the devil being permitted to rage, the kindness of God is brought about in mercy. And from this covenant which he is said to make with God, he is rightly described as being taken for a servant. Because he obeys the commands [‘nutibus’] of the heavenly grace, just as he exercises the wrath of his most evil will. He is, therefore, a servant by agreement, who when permitted to fulfil his own will, is restrained by the will of the counsel of heaven, so as willingly to tempt the Elect of God, as was before said, and

unwittingly to prove them by his temptation.

29. But because he promotes in this life the interests of the Elect, as long as he is able to exercise in temptations the evil of his malice; but is said in this place to be taken by the Lord not merely as a servant under an agreement, but a servant for ever; we are compelled to investigate how we can prove that even after the close of the present life, he is a servant of the Lord for ever. For he is no longer permitted to tempt the righteous who are powerful in heavenly happiness, when he is condemned before their eyes to the eternal fires of hell. Because in that heavenly country, in which they are now rewarded for the labours of their temptations, they need not to be disciplined by temptations. But at that time this Leviathan with his body, namely all the reprobate, is consigned to the avenging flames, to be tortured therein for ever. And while the just behold these torments, they praise God in truth more and more, because they both see in themselves the blessing with which they have been rewarded, and in the others witness the punishment which they have themselves escaped. For so will the universe be full of beauty, when both hell justly tortures the ungodly, and eternal felicity justly rewards the righteous. For as a black colour is put as the back ground of a picture, in order that the white or red which is put over it may seem more beautiful; so at that time, God by rightly disposing even of the wicked, increases the happiness of the blessed, by displaying before their eyes the sufferings of the reprobate. And although the joy they derive from the vision of the Lord is not of a kind to increase, yet they feel themselves to be more indebted to their Creator, when they both behold the good with which they perceive they have been justly rewarded, and the evil they have overcome from having been mercifully assisted. If then the temptation of this Leviathan here, and his damnation there, contributes to the benefit of the just, he is a servant for ever, when he unwittingly promotes the glory of God; yea both his just punishment there, and his unjust will here. It follows;

Ver. 24. *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?* [E.V. 41, 5]

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30. Why is it that our adversary is first called Behemoth, afterwards Leviathan, but is now compared to a 'bird,' in ridicule at his destruction? For Behemoth, as we have said, is interpreted 'monster,' ['bellua'] and it is shewn to be a quadruped, when it is said to eat hay as an ox. But Leviathan, as he is taken with a hook is doubtless set before us as a serpent in the waters. But now he is brought into comparison with a bird, when it is said, *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?* Let us examine, therefore, why he is called a 'monster,' or a 'beast,' why a 'dragon,' and why a 'bird.' For we learn more quickly the meaning of his names, if we accurately examine the craft of his cunning. For he comes from heaven to earth, and no longer raises himself by any aspiration to the hope of heavenly things. He is, therefore, an irrational and four-footed animal by the folly of his unclean doings, a dragon by his malice in doing hurt, a 'bird' by the levity of his subtle nature. For because he knows not what he is doing against himself, he is a monster with brute sense; because he maliciously seeks to hurt us, he is a 'dragon;' but because he exalts himself haughtily on the subtlety of his nature, he is a 'bird.' Again, because he is in his wicked doings employed by the Divine power for our benefit, he is a 'beast;' because he secretly bites, he is a 'serpent;' but because he sometimes through his indomitable pride feigns himself to be an Angel of light, he is a 'bird.' For though he harasses mankind with his inexplicable skill in wickedness, yet he specially tempts by three sins; in order, namely, to subdue to himself some by lust, some by malice, and some by pride.

31. He is, therefore, deservedly designated by the very name of his doings, in what he attempts to do, when he is called a 'beast,' a 'dragon,' or a 'bird.' For in those whom he excites to the folly of lust, he is a 'beast;' in those whom he inflames to do malicious injury, he is a 'dragon;' but in those whom he exalts to the haughtiness of pride as though they understood high things, he is a 'bird.' But in those whom he pollutes equally with lust and malice and pride, he exists as a 'beast,' ['jumentum'] a 'dragon,' and a 'bird' at the same time. For he has insinuated himself into the hearts of those deluded by him in as many shapes as the wickednesses in which he entangles them. He is, therefore, called by the name of many things, because he is changed into various kind of shapes before the eyes of those who are deluded by him. For when he tempts this one by the lust of the flesh, and yet does not overcome him, he changes his suggestion, and kindles his heart into malice. Because, therefore, he was unable to approach him as a 'monster,' ['bellua'] he comes near as a 'dragon.' He is unable to corrupt him with the poison of malice, but yet he places his good qualities before his eyes, and exalts his heart to pride. He could not, therefore, steal up to this man as a dragon, but yet by bringing before him the phantom of vain glory, he flew before the sight of his thought as a bird. And this bird is doubtless raised up the more cruelly against us, the less it is impeded by any weakness of its own nature. For because it is not overcome by the death of the flesh, and saw our Redeemer was mortal in the flesh, it was puffed up with greater haughtiness of pride. But where it raised itself against its Maker with the wing of pride, it there found the snare of its death. For he was overcome by that very death of His flesh, which in pride he sought, and suffered from the snare by his very seeking the death of the Just One, as the prey of his malice. Let it he said then, *Wilt thou play with him as with a bird?* For the Lord in truth played with him as with a bird, when in the passion of His Only-Begotten Son He shewed him the bait, but concealed the snare. For he saw that which he was taking in his mouth, but he saw not what he was holding in his throat. For though he had himself confessed Him to be the Son of God, yet he believed that He was dying as a mere man, for whose death he had roused the minds of the persecuting Jews. But he is understood to have learnt at last too late, at the very moment of His betrayal, that he would be punished by that His death. Whence also he frightened the wife of Pilate by dreams, in order that her husband might desist from the persecution of the Just One. [Matt. 27, 19] But the plan which had been by the secret dispensation ordained, could not be by any machination overthrown. For it was expedient that the death of a Just Man dying unjustly should be a ransom for the death of sinners dying justly. But because this Leviathan was ignorant of this even to the time of His passion, he was deluded as a bird, and suffered from the snare of His Godhead, when he seized the bait of His Manhood. It follows;

*Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?*

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32. Thou understandest, As I. Though the condition of male servants is despicable, their manhood is strong. But in maid servants their sex lies low, together with their condition. The Lord, therefore, well declares that He binds this Leviathan not for his male servants, but for his maidens. Because when He came for our redemption, and sent His preachers against the pride of the world, He chose the foolish, and left the wise; the weak, and left the strong; the poor, and left the rich. The Lord, therefore, bound the strength of this Leviathan for His maidens, because, as Paul witnesses, *God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.* [1 Cor. 1, 27] Whence it is well said by Solomon; *Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out seven pillars, she hath slain*

*her victims, she hath mingled wine, she hath set forth her table, she hath sent her maidens to summon to the citadel, and to the walls of the city.* [Prov. 9, 1-3] For Wisdom in truth built her a house, when the Only-Begotten Son of God, through the intervention of His soul [Note: 'Mediante anima.' He means to say, not that the Human Soul of our Lord was the means of *creating* the Body, but that it is the medium through which that Body is personally united with the Godhead. See Bk. xxxi. §. 42], created Himself a human body within the womb of the Virgin. For the body of the Only-Begotten is called the house of God, just as it is also called a temple; but so, that that one and the same Son of God and Man, is Himself the Inhabitor, Himself the Inhabited. But this can be rightly understood in another sense also, if the Church is called the house of Wisdom. And She hath hewn out Herself seven pillars, because She has severed the minds of preachers from the love of the present world, and has raised them up to bear the fabric of this selfsame Church. And these, because they are supported by the virtue of perfection, are designated by the number seven. She hath slain her victims, because she allowed the life of preachers to be sacrificed by persecution. She hath mingled her wine, because she has announced to us the mysteries of the Godhead and Manhood alike. She hath also set forth her table, because She hath laid open and prepared for us the food of Holy Scripture. She hath likewise sent her maidens, to summon us to the citadel and to the walls of the city, because she studied to have weak and abject preachers, to gather the faithful people to the heavenly edifices of their spiritual country. Whence the Lord praises Nathaniel in the Gospel, [John 1, 47] but yet does not number him in the class of preachers, because such as had nothing praiseworthy of their own, ought to come to preach Him; in order that that which they were doing might be known more surely to be of the truth, the more plainly it was also seen that they were not sufficient of themselves to effect it. In order then that His wonderful power might shine forth by the tongues of His preachers, it was first ordered still more wonderfully, that these preachers should have no merit of their own. The Lord, therefore, sent 'maidens' and bound the strength of this Leviathan, because He set forth to the world feeble preachers, and confined with the bond of His terror all the mighty, who had been of his body. And this Leviathan is bound in His own person by maidens, when, on the light of truth shining forth by weak preachers, the ancient enemy is not permitted to rage, at his will, against the minds of the Elect, but is restrained by signs and mighty wonders from holding all whom he desires under the bondage of unbelief. He, therefore, who gives strength against him to the weak, works this mightily by Himself. But because the Lord informs us whom He sends against him, He now also adds what they do who are sent. It follows;

Ver. 25. *His friends shall cut him in pieces; the merchants shall divide him.* [E.V. 41, 6]

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33. This Leviathan is cut in pieces, as often as his members are severed from him by the sword of the Divine Word. For when wicked men hear the word of truth, and, smitten with holy fear, suspend their imitation of the ancient enemy, he, from whom those who wickedly adhered to him are withdrawn, is himself divided in his own body. But He terms those His 'friends,' whom before He calls 'maidens,' those also He calls 'merchants,' whom He had termed 'friends.' For holy preachers are first 'maidens' through their fear, afterwards 'friends' through faith, at last 'merchants' also through their actions. For it is said to them when weak; *Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased the Father to give you a kingdom.* [Luke 12, 32] It is said to them again, growing strong, *But I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you.* [John 15, 15] Lastly, they are ordered when going forth to carry on their business; *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* [Mark 16, 15] For in the preaching of the faith a kind of traffic is, as it were, carried on; when the word is given to, and faith

received from, the hearers. They make as it were a kind of traffic, who make a venture [‘prærogant’] with their preaching, and bring back faith from the people. They impart to them faith, and immediately receive back their holy life. For if the preaching of the righteous had not been a traffic, the Psalmist surely would not be saying, *Take a psalm, and give a timbrel*. [Ps. 81, 2] For in a timbrel, leather is dried, in order that it may sound. What is meant then by saying, *Take a psalm, and give a timbrel*, except this? Take ye the spiritual song of the heart, and give back the temporal maceration of the body. If heavenly preaching had not been a traffic, Solomon would never say of Holy Church under the type of a virtuous woman, *She made fine linen, and sold it, and delivered a girdle to the Canaanite*. [Prov. 31, 24] For what is signified by a garment of fine linen, but the subtle texture of holy preaching? In which men rest softly, because the mind of the faithful is refreshed therein by heavenly hope. Whence also the animals are shewn to Peter in a linen sheet, [Acts 10, 11. 12.] because the souls of sinners mercifully gathered together are inclosed in the gentle quiet of faith. The Church, therefore, made and sold this fine garment, because she imparted in words that faith which she had woven by belief; and received from unbelievers a life of upright conversation. And she delivered a girdle to the Canaanite, because by the might of the righteousness she displayed, she constrained the lax doings of the Gentile world, in order that that might be maintained in their doings which is commanded, *Let your loins be girded about*. [Luke 12, 35] The Lord, therefore, in searching out for His preachers finds them as ‘maidens,’ by changing them He makes them ‘friends,’ by enriching sets them forth as ‘merchants.’ For they who in their infirmity were at first afraid of the threats of the world, ascend afterwards to know the Divine counsels. But when enriched with virtues, they are led as far as to carry on the traffic of faith, in order that by their threats and persuasions they may smite the members of this Leviathan the more severely, the more truly, having become even friends, they unite themselves to the love of the Truth; and that they may withdraw from him more quickly the souls of sinners, the more, having become skilful traffickers, they display in themselves the most ample treasures of virtues. For that the possession of this Leviathan is, much to their praise, taken from him by the preachers of God, the voice of Truth promises by the Prophet, saying, *And if thou wilt separate the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as My mouth*. [Jer. 15, 19] For he in truth separates the precious from the vile, who cuts off the minds of men from accursed [‘reproba’] imitation of the ancient enemy. He is rightly called the mouth of God, because by him doubtless the divine words are uttered. It follows,

Ver. 26. *Wilt thou fill nets with his skin, and the cabin of fishes with his head?* [E.V. 41, 7]

[xviii]

34. What is designated by ‘nets,’ or a ‘cabin of fishes,’ except the churches of the faithful which make one Catholic Church? Whence it is written in the Gospel, *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea, and gathering of every kind of fishes*. [Matt. 13, 47] The Church is in truth called the kingdom of heaven, for while the Lord exalts her conduct to things above, she already reigns herself in the Lord by heavenly conversation. And it is also rightly compared to a net cast into the sea, gathering of every kind of fishes; because when cast into this gentile world, it rejected no one, but caught the wicked with the good, the proud with the humble, the angry with the gentle, and the foolish with the wise. But by the ‘skin’ of this Leviathan we understand the foolish, and by his ‘head,’ the wise ones of his body. Or certainly by the ‘skin,’ which is outermost, are designated those who serve him as inferiors in these meanest offices, but by the ‘head’ those placed over them. And the Lord observing the proper order rightly declares that He will fill these ‘nets,’ or ‘cabin of

fishes,' that is, His Church, and the wishes of the faithful with his 'skin' first, and afterwards with his 'head.' Because, as we said before, He first chose the weak, that He might confound the strong afterwards. [1 Cor. 1, 27] He chose in truth the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise. For He gathered together the unlearned first, and philosophers afterwards; and He taught not fishermen by means of orators, but with wondrous power He subdued orators by means of fishermen. He says therefore, *Wilt thou fill nets with his skin, or the cabin of fishes with his head?* Thou understandest, As I, Who first gather within the Church of the faithful the most distant, and the lowest, as the 'skin' of the devil, and afterwards subdue to Myself his 'head,' that is, wise adversaries. It follows; *Wilt thou lay thine hand upon him?* That is, As I, Who restraining him by My mighty power, permit him not to rage more than is expedient, and Who, as far as I shall have permitted his cruelty, turn it to the benefit of My Elect. For certainly to lay a hand upon him, is to subdue him by the might of virtue. It is said then to blessed Job in a question;  
Ver. 27. *Wilt thou lay thine hand upon him?* [E.V. 41, 8]

As if it were openly said, wilt thou restrain him with thine own strength? Whence it is also fitly subjoined;  
*Remember the battle, and speak no more.*

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35. The deep dispensation of God's judgment for this reason often either assails His well-deserving servants with threats, or presses on them with scourges, or weighs them down by some superimposed burdens, or entangles them in laborious employments, because it foresees with wonderful power, that if they were to remain quiet, and in freedom under tranquillity, they would sink beneath the wounds of the mind from being unable to endure the temptations of the adversary. Whilst then it engages them in scourges or burdens to be endured without, it protects them from receiving the darts of temptations within. For it is frequently a practice for a physician to draw out the inflammation of the bowels into an itching on the skin; and he often effects a cure within, by causing an outward wound. In like manner the medicine of the Divine dispensation frequently causes the removal of an inward wound by outward pains, and the throwing out of that inward corruption of sins, which would otherwise occupy the mind, by the deep wounds of scourges. And yet frequently, when men are not conscious to themselves of an open sin, and are either tortured by pain, or weighed down by labours, they break out into complaints against the Just and Almighty Judge; from not observing against how mighty an adversary they are waging war. But did they but observe anxiously his irresistible strength, they would not murmur at the outward sufferings they endure.

36. But these seem to us grievous, for the very reason that we do not like to consider our still more grievous contests with our secret adversary. From which assaults, as we said, we are frequently defended, when scourged, and concealed when afflicted. For if our flesh is afflicted with no pain, before it is strengthened with the incorruption of the resurrection, it is unchecked in temptations. But who can be ignorant that it is much better to burn with the heat of fevers, than with the fire of sins? And yet when we are seized with a fever, because we neglect attending to the heat of sins, which might possess us, we murmur at the blow. Who can be ignorant, that it is much better to be held in bondage by cruel men, than to be under the power of the flattering spirits of devils? And yet when we are galled by the yoke of our human condition [perhaps 'of subjection to man'], in the

deep judgment of God, we break out into complaint, doubtless because we do not consider that if no condition of bondage oppressed us, our mind, more fatally free, would perchance be in bondage to many iniquities. We believe then the sufferings we endure to be weighty, because we see not how severe and irresistible are the assaults of the crafty enemy against us. For every weight would be as nothing to our mind; if it considered the assaults of the secret adversary which might oppress it. But what if Almighty God were to lighten the burdens we suffer, and yet withdraw from us His assistance, and leave us amid the temptations of this Leviathan? Where shall we betake ourselves, when so mighty an enemy is raging against us, if we are not defended by any protection of our Creator? Because, therefore, blessed Job was not conscious to himself of a fault, and yet was enduring severe scourges, lest he should haply exceed in the sin of murmuring, let him be reminded what to fear, and let it be said to him, *Remember the battle, and speak no more*. As if it were plainly said to him, If thou considerest the contest of the secret enemy against thee, thou dost not blame whatever thou sufferest from Me. If thou beholdest the sword of the adversary assailing thee, thou dost not at all dread the scourge of a Father. For thou seest with what scourge I smite thee, but thou omittest to look from how great an enemy I keep thee free by My scourging. *Remember therefore the battle, and speak no more*: that is, keep thyself the more silent under the discipline of a Father, the more thou seest that thou art weak for the assaults of the enemy. Whilst then thou art smitten by My correction, in order that thou mayest bear it with patience, recal thine enemy to mind, and consider not that every thing thou sufferest is hard, when by outward tortures thou art freed from inward suffering. But because this Leviathan flatters himself with a false promise of the Divine compassion, after He had spoken of the terror of his strength, and had roused the mind of blessed Job with circumspection towards Him, (saying, *Remember the battle, and say no more*;) in order to shew his unpardonable guilt, He immediately added; Ver. 28. *Behold, his hope shall disappoint him*. [E.V. 41. 9]

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37. But this ought to be so understood, as to be referred to his body also; because all wicked men who fear not the strictness of Divine justice, flatter themselves in vain on His compassion. And He presently returns to console us, and foretels his coming destruction at the last judgment, saying; *And in the sight of all he shall be cast down*. For he will be cast down in the sight of all, because when the eternal Judge then terribly appears, when legions of Angels stand at His side, when the whole ministry of heavenly Powers is attending, and all the Elect are brought to behold this spectacle, this cruel and mighty monster is brought captive into the midst, and with his own body, that is, with all reprobates, is consigned to the eternal fires of hell, when it is said, *Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels*. [Matt. 25, 41] O what a spectacle will that be, when this most huge monster will be displayed to the eyes of the Elect, which at this time of contest, could he but be seen, might have too much terrified them! But it is so ordered by the secret and wonderful judgment of God, that he is now conquered by His grace, though not seen by the combatants, and that then he is beheld by the joyful victors as already captive. But they then learn more fully how much they are indebted to the Divine assistance, when they have once seen so mighty a beast, whom they have now conquered in their weakness; and behold in the huge size of their enemy, how much they owe to the grace of their Defender. For our soldiers then return from this battle bringing back the trophies of their virtues; and when, having recovered their bodies, they are now about to obtain, in that judgment, an admission to the heavenly kingdom, they behold first the most monstrous strength of this ancient serpent, that they may not



esteem lightly the danger they have escaped. It is therefore well said; *And in the sight of all he will be cast down*, because the sight of his death then causes joy, whose life, being now endured, daily engages with tortures in contest with the just. But as if we should immediately complain on hearing these things, and should say to the Lord, ‘O Lord, Who art not ignorant that this Leviathan is of such great strength, why dost Thou arouse him to engage in contest with our weakness?’ He immediately added;

Chap. xli. ver. 1. *I will not rouse him as one that is cruel.*

And as if the ground of the reason were immediately asked by us, ‘How dost Thou not arouse him, as one that is cruel, since we know that Thou permittest him to devour and to destroy so many?’ He immediately added, saying,

Ver. 2. *For who can resist My countenance? and who hath first given to Me that I should repay him?* [E.V. 10. and 11.]

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38. In which two verses He fully stated both the might of His own power, and the whole weight of the reason. For on account of His power He said, *For who can resist My countenance?* And on account of the reason He added; *Who hath first given to Me, that I should repay him?* As if He said, I do not rouse him up as one that is cruel, because I both rescue by My might My Elect from his power, and again, I condemn the reprobate not unjustly, but with good reason. That is, I am both able to rescue marvellously those whom I mercifully elect, and those whom I reject, I do not unjustly abandon. For no one has first given any thing to God, in order that the Divine Grace should follow him. For if we have prevented God by our good works, where is that which the Prophet says; *His mercy shall prevent me?* [Ps. 59, 10] If we have given any good works, in order to deserve His grace, where is that which the Apostle says, *By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God, not of works?* [Eph. 2, 8] If our love prevented God, where is that which John the Apostle says; *Not that we loved God, but that He first loved us?* [1 John 4, 10] Where is that which the Lord says by Hosea; *I will love thee of My own accord?* [Hos. 14, 4] If without His gift, by our own strength we follow God, where is that which the Truth protests in the Gospel, saying, *Without Me ye can do nothing?* [John 15, 5] Where is that which He says; *No man can come to Me, except the Father, Which hath sent Me, hath drawn him?* [ib. 6, 44] Where is that which He says again; *Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you?* [ib. 15, 16] If we only prevent the gifts of good works by thinking aright through our own strength, where is that which is again said so salutarily by Paul, that all self-confidence of the human mind might be cut away from the very root of the heart, when he says; *Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God?* [2 Cor. 3, 5] No one therefore prevents God by his merits, so as to be able to hold Him as his debtor. But the All-just Creator has in a wonderful manner both chosen some beforehand, and justly leaves some in their own wicked habits.

39. But yet He does not display to His Elect mercy without justice, because He here weighs them down with hard afflictions. Nor again does He exercise on the reprobate justice without mercy, because He here patiently endures those, whom He condemns hereafter for ever. If therefore both the Elect follow the grace which prevents them, and the reprobate receive according to that which they deserve; both the Elect find something to praise in His mercy, and the reprobate have nothing

to blame in His justice. It is, therefore, well said; *Who hath first given to Me, that I should repay him?* As if it were plainly said; I am not compelled by any reason to spare the reprobate, because I am not bound to them as a debtor by any doings of theirs. For they therefore receive not the eternal rewards of the heavenly country, because now, when they could deserve, they have of their free will despised them. But this very free will is fashioned aright in the Elect, when their mind is raised above earthly desires, by the inspiration of grace.

40. For the good which we do belongs both to God, and to ourselves. It is God's by preventing grace, our own by the free will which follows. For if it is not of God, why do we return Him thanks for ever? Again, if it is not our own, why do we hope for rewards to be conferred on us? Because then we do not give thanks undeservedly, we know that we are prevented by His grace. And again, because we do not seek for recompense undeservedly, we know that by the compliance of free will, we have chosen good deeds to perform. It follows; *All things that are under heaven are Mine*. It is clear to all persons, that not only those things that are under heaven, but that those very things, which from being created above the heavens, are called heavenly, subserve the will of Him by Whom they remember they were created. Why then does He speak only of things below and say, *All things that are under the heaven are Mine?*

[xxii]

41. But because He is speaking of Leviathan, who no longer dwells in the abode of the ethereal heaven, He asserts that all things that are under the heaven are His, in order to teach that he also who has fallen from heaven, is subject to His power. As if He said, This Leviathan has lost indeed My blessedness, but he has not escaped My authority: because even those very powers, which oppose Me by their evil doings, are subservient to Me. It follows;  
Ver. 3. *I will not spare him, nor his mighty words, and framed for entreaty*. [E.V. 12]

[xxiii]

42. Who can think this, which he knows he has never read, that the devil is about to ask pardon for his faults? But perhaps that man, whom this Leviathan in the end of the world makes his peculiar vessel, (*whom, as Paul attests, the Lord Jesus shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming*,) [2 Thess, 2, 8] alarmed at the presence of such great majesty, because he is unable to exercise his strength, bends himself ['*inclinatur*'] to prayer. But this can be more fitly understood of his body, that is of all the wicked, who have recourse at last to words of supplication, because they now scorn to perform its deeds. Whence the Truth says in the Gospel, *Last of all come also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us*. [Matt. 25, 11] To whom it is immediately replied, *Verily I say unto you, I know you not*. [ib. 12] But when he is said to compose words mighty for entreaty, he urges us the more to understand at this time that which we have said of his body in time to come.

43. For there are some within Holy Church who offer to God long prayers, but have not the conduct of those who entreat. For they follow after heavenly promises in their petitions, but avoid them in their deeds. These sometimes feel even tears in their prayer, but when after the seasons of prayer pride has struck their mind, they immediately swell up with the haughtiness of high-mindedness; when avarice urges them, they frequently glow with the heat of covetous thought; when lust has

tempted, they pant at once with unlawful desires; when anger has persuaded them, the flame of madness soon consumes their gentleness of mind. As we have said then, they both experience tears in prayer, and yet at the close of their prayers, when they are assaulted with the suggestions of sins, they remember not that they had wept for desire of the heavenly kingdom. Which Balaam openly stated concerning himself, who says, on beholding the tabernacles of the just, *Let my soul die with the death of the just, and let my last end be like theirs*. [Numb. 23, 10] But when the time of compunction passed, he gave counsel against the life of those, to whom he had asked to be made like even in death; and when he found an occasion of avarice, he immediately forgot whatever he had wished for himself in the way of innocence. A prayer, then, which the perseverance of continual love does not hold fast, has not the weight of virtue. And, as the contrary of this, it is well said of Hannah when weeping, *And her countenance was no more changed to a different form*; [1 Sam. 1, 18] namely, because her mind lost not after her prayers, by wantoning in foolish joy, that which at the season of its prayer, it sought for with hardness of groans. But by some the labour of prayer is turned to the purpose of traffic. Of whom the Truth says in the Gospel, *Which devour widows houses under the pretence of long prayers. These shall receive greater judgment*. [Mark 12, 40] Because therefore the prayers of the wicked, who are the body of this Leviathan, are in no way spared, when their prayers are destroyed by their conduct, it is now rightly said, *I will not spare him, nor his mighty words, and framed for entreaty*. Although from the words being said to be mighty, and framed for entreaty, the emptiness of their prayer is plainly pointed out. For truly to pray is to utter bitter groans in compunction, and not well arranged words. But because the more severely the ancient enemy is crushed, the more does he expand in wickedness by manifold arguments; and because the Lord manifests his snares the more mercifully, the more artfully He observes them to be concealed, it is rightly subjoined,  
Ver. 4. *Who will uncover the face of his garment?* [E.V. 13]

[xxiv]

44. This Leviathan tempts in one way the minds of men which are religious, and in another those which are devoted to this world. For he presents openly to the wicked the evil things they desire; but he secretly lays snares for the good, and deceives them under a show of sanctity: he presents himself to the one more manifestly as wicked, as though they were his friends, but to the others he covers himself, as it were, with a cloke of comeliness, as if they were strangers, in order to introduce secretly, concealed beneath the cover of a good action, the evils which he cannot publicly effect. Whence also his members, when they are unable to injure by open wickedness, often assume the guise of a good action, and display themselves to be wicked in conduct, but yet deceive by their appearance of sanctity. For if the wicked were openly evil, they would not be received at all by the good. But they assume something of the look of the good, in order that while good men receive in them the appearance which they love, they may take also the poison, which they avoid, blended with it. Whence the Apostle Paul, on beholding some men under the cloke of preaching devoting themselves to the service of the belly, says, *For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. What wonder then if his ministers are transformed as the ministers of righteousness?* [2 Cor. 11, 14] Joshua feared this transformation when, on seeing an Angel, he asked him on which side he was, saying, *Art thou ours, or our adversaries?* [Josh. 5, 13] in order, namely, that if he were of the adverse force ['virtutis'], he might, from knowing that he was suspected, shrink from practising deception. Because therefore this Leviathan, in attempting a work of iniquity, frequently clothes himself with a semblance of sanctity, and because the garb of his simulation cannot be detected

except by Divine grace, it is well said, *Who will uncover the face of his garment?* Thou understandest, except Myself, Who inspire into the minds of My servants the grace of most subtle discernment, in order that, on the unveiling of his malice, they may see his face exposed, which he conceals closely covered under the garb of sanctity. And because he endeavours to corrupt the minds of the faithful sometimes by openly shewing himself, sometimes by suggestion, (for he acts at one time by deed, at another by persuasion,) it is rightly subjoined;  
*And who will enter into the midst of his mouth?*

[xxv]

45. Thou understandest, But I, Who by the discreet minds of the Elect examine the words of his suggestions, and prove that they are not such as they sounded. For they seem to promise what is good, but they lead to a fatal end. To enter, therefore, into the middle of his mouth is so to penetrate his words of cunning, as to make, not their sound, but their meaning, to be considered. Adam would not enter into the middle of his mouth, when he neglected to consider carefully the purpose of his persuasion. For he believed in truth that he was receiving Divinity through him, and he lost his immortality. From incautiously remaining then external to the meaning of his words, he utterly exposed himself to be devoured by his mouth. It follows;  
*Ver. 5. Who will open the gates of his face?* [E.V. 14]

[xxvi]

46. The ‘gates of his face’ are wicked teachers, who are called the gates of his face for this reason, because, every one enters through them, in order that this Leviathan may be seen, as it were, in the principdom of his power. For as sacred Scripture is wont to call holy men gates of Sion, [Ps. 87, 2] (for Sion is by interpretation, ‘watching,’ and we deservedly call holy preachers the gates of Sion, because by their life and doctrine we enter the secrets of heavenly contemplation,) so also are the teachers of errors signified by the gates of this Leviathan; for when their false preaching is received, the way of perdition is opened to their wretched hearers. But these gates are generally opened before the eyes of men, in order to admit, but yet are closed in order to seize; because in appearance they present right things, but in their doings they persuade evil things. They are closed therefore in order to seize, because they are kept by outward hypocrisy from being discerned within. But yet the Lord opens them with wonderful power; because He makes the hearts of hypocrites comprehensible to His Elect. *Who, therefore, will open the gates of His face?* Thou understandest, except Myself, Who make manifest with clear understanding to My Elect the teachers of errors who are concealed beneath the semblance of sanctity. And because Antichrist, who rages with a twofold error, and endeavours both to draw the hearts of men to himself by sending his preachers, and to bend them by exciting the powers of the world, will also gain possession of these chief powers, the Lord well added concerning this Leviathan, saying,  
*In a circle is the terror of his teeth.*

[xxvii]

47. For He wished to change the expression, and, in another phrase, to call these his ‘teeth,’ whom He had above called ‘gates.’ For false preachers are his ‘gates,’ because they open the entrance to perdition. They are his ‘teeth,’ because they break down from the solidity of truth those whom they

seize in error. For as by the teeth of Holy Church we understand those who crush by their preachings the hardness of sinners, (whence it is said to her by Solomon, *Thy teeth as flocks of sheep that have been shorn, coming up from the washing*; [Cant. 4, 2] and they are deservedly compared to shorn and washed sheep, because when assuming an innocent life they laid aside the old fleeces of their former conversation in the laver of Baptism,) so also the teachers of errors are typified by the teeth of this Leviathan. Because they mangle with their bite the life of the reprobate, and offer them, when withdrawn from the integrity of truth, in the sacrifice of falsehood. Their preaching might easily be despised by their hearers, but the additional terror of worldly powers exalts it in the judgment of men.

48. It is, therefore, rightly said, *In a circle is the terror of his teeth*, that is, the corrupted powers of this world protect the wicked preachers of Antichrist. For many of the powerful strive to alarm by cruelty those whom they seek to seduce with their words. In a circle, therefore, is the terror of his teeth. As if it were openly said, These false preachers crush some by their persuasions, because there are others around them, who afflict with their terrors the minds of the weak. What a season of persecution will that appear, then, when some rage with words, and others with swords, to pervert the piety of the faithful? For who would not despise, even if he were weak, the teeth of this Leviathan, if terror did not defend them by a circle of worldly powers? But they are proceeded against with twofold cunning, because that which is said to them by some with nattering words, is enforced by others with the blows of swords. And the conduct of both of these, that is, of the powerful, and the persuasive [‘*potentium atque loquentium*’], is summed up in the Apocalypse of John, in a short sentence, wherein it is said, *The power of the horses was in their mouth, and in their tails*. [Rev. 9, 19] For by the ‘mouth’ is typified the knowledge of the learned, but by the ‘tail’ the power of men of the world. For by the ‘tail’ which is behind is designated the temporal condition of this world which must be put behind us, of which the Apostle Paul says, *But one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before*. [Phil. 3, 13] For every thing which passes by, is *behind*; but every thing which coming abides, is *before*. The power therefore of these horses, that is, of most evil preachers, who are hurrying on every where by carnal impulse, is in their mouth and their tail. Because they themselves indeed preach perverse things in their persuasion, but, by relying on temporal powers, exalt themselves by means of those things which are behind. And because they themselves may possibly appear despicable, they exact respect to themselves from their wicked hearers, by means of those, by whose patronage they are supported. Whence in this place also fear is rightly described as being in the circle of his teeth, because it is caused by many terrors that temporal power, though not the sentence of truth, is certainly dreaded in their perverse preachings. Whence the Psalmist well described this same Antichrist, saying, *Under his tongue is labour, and sorrow: he sitteth in ambush with the rich in secret places*. [Ps. 10, 7, 8] For, on account of his perverse doctrines, labour and sorrow is under his tongue. But on account of his display of miracles he sitteth in ambush; but on account of the glory of secular power, with the rich in secret places. But because he uses at the same time both the craft of miracles, and earthly power, he is said to sit both in secret places, and with the rich.

Ver. 6. *His body as molten shields*. [E.V. 15]

[xxviii]

49. Holy Scripture is wont to use the word ‘shield,’ sometimes in a favourable, sometimes in an

unfavourable way. For the defence of a shield is often put for Divine protection, but it is sometimes used for the opposition of man. For it is put for Divine protection, as is said by the Psalmist, *Thou hast crowned us with the shield of Thy good will*. [Ps. 5, 12] The Lord is said to crown as with a shield, because those whom He assists by protecting, He crowns by rewarding. Again, a 'shield' is put by the same prophet for the opposition of man, as he says elsewhere, *There brake He the horns, the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle*. [Ps. 76, 3] For by 'horns' is designated the haughtiness of the proud, by the 'bow' the snares of those who strike from far; but by a 'shield' obstinate hardness in defence, by a 'sword' a blow near at hand; but in 'battle' the movement of the mind itself against God. And the whole of this is doubtless crushed in Holy Church, when the minds of those who resist God are tamed by the yoke of humility placed upon them. Hence it is again said by the same Psalmist, *He will break the bow, and snap the arms, and burn the shields in the fire*. [Ps. 46, 9] For the Lord breaks the bow, when He scatters the secret machinations of those who lie in wait. He snaps the arms, when He crushes the patronage of man, which had been raised up against Him. He burns the shields in the fire, when by the heat of the Holy Spirit He kindles into the warmth of penitence and confession the minds of sinners which defend themselves with stubborn hardness. But because the body of this Leviathan is in this place compared to 'molten' shields, it is suggested to us to enquire, that every vessel which is molten is indeed hard, but yet when it falls it is usually fragile. If shields then are molten, they are strong in bearing the blows of arrows, but are fragile when they fall. They are not indeed penetrated by the blow of those that strike them, but shiver into fragments by their own fall. The body therefore of this Leviathan, that is, all the wicked, because they are hardened by obstinacy, but fragile in their life, are compared to molten shields. For when they hear the words of preaching, they permit not any shafts of reproof to penetrate them; because in every sin which they commit they oppose the shield of proud defence. For when any one of such persons is reproofed for the guilt of his iniquity, he does not think at once how to correct his fault, but what to oppose in aid of his defence. He is therefore not penetrated by any arrow of truth; because he receives the words of holy reproof on the shield of proud defence. Whence it is well said by Jeremiah concerning the Jews who were guarding themselves against the precepts of the Lord by a proud defence, *Thou wilt render unto them a recompense, O Lord, according to the work of their hands*. [Lam. 3, 64] And he immediately mentioned this same recompense more expressly, saying, *Thou wilt give them a shield of heart, Thy labour*. [ib. 65] For the labour of the Lord which appeared among men was His passible Humanity, which the Jews despised, when they beheld it, with their proud thoughts; and they scorned to believe Him to be immortal, Whom in His passible nature they saw to be mortal. And when they beheld His humility, being hardened with the haughtiness of pride, they laboured with the greatest care that the holy words of preachers should not penetrate their minds. Whilst the Lord then was rendering them a recompense for their evil deeds, He 'gave them as a shield of heart His labour:' because by a righteous judgment He proved them to be obstinately proud against Him, by His very labouring in infirmity for our sakes. For they rejected in truth the words of preachers, because they disdained in the Lord the weaknesses of His sufferings. They had therefore the labour of the Lord as a shield of heart against the Lord Himself, because He appeared despicable to men of haughty thoughts, even in that He became humble for their sake.

50. This shield, as we have already said above, that first sinner held up; who, when the Lord asked him, why he had touched the forbidden tree, referred not the fault to himself, but answered that he had received it from the woman whom the Lord had given him; in order indirectly to throw back his guilt on his Maker, Who had given him a woman to offer such advice. The woman also when

questioned held up this shield, when she also referred not the blame to herself, but replied that it was by the persuasions of the serpent, saying, *The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat*; [Gen. 3, 13] in order that she also might indirectly refer her guilt to her Maker, for having permitted the serpent to enter in thither to persuade them thus. But the serpent is not questioned at this time, because his repentance was not sought for. But they, whose repentance was sought for, held up the shield of most sinful defence against the words of most righteous reproof. Whence it is now become even a habit with sinners, for a fault to be defended, when it is reproofed, and for guilt to be increased by the very means by which it ought to be terminated. It is therefore well said, *His body as molten shields*; because all the wicked prepare shields of defence as if against the shafts of enemies, that the words of their reprovers may not reach them. But He lays open to us still more expressly this very body of his, when He subjoins;

*Compacted with scales pressing each other.*

[xxix]

51. It is said that the body of the dragon is covered with scales, to keep it from being quickly penetrated with shafts. In like manner the whole body of the devil, that is, the multitude of the reprobates, when reproofed for its iniquity, endeavours to excuse itself with whatever evasions it can, and opposes, as it were, some scales of defence, that it may not be transfixes with the arrow of truth. For whoever, when reproofed, seeks to excuse rather than to lament his sin, is covered, as it were, with scales, when assailed by holy preachers with the sword of the word. He has scales, and therefore the sword of the word has no way of reaching his heart. For the spiritual sword is kept by the hardness of the flesh from being plunged into him.

52. Saul had become hardened against the Lord with carnal wisdom, when no arrow of Gospel preaching penetrated his heart. But after he had been smitten by severe reproof from heaven, and blinded by the heavenly vision, (for he had lost light in order to receive it,) on coming to Ananias he is illuminated. And because in this illumination he lost the stubbornness of his defence, it is well written of him; *There fell from his eyes as it had been scales*. [Acts 9, 18] The hardness of a carnal integument had in truth pressed upon him, and therefore he saw not the rays of the true Light. But after his haughty resistances were overcome, the scales of his defences fell off. They fell indeed under the hands of Ananias from the eyes of his body, but they had already fallen before, at the reproof of the Lord, from the eyes of his heart. For when he was lying wounded with the shaft of deep reproof, he asked with heart already humble and penetrated, saying, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* [Acts 9, 6] The arrow of truth had already reached the inmost parts of the heart, on the removal, namely, of the scales, when he had laid aside the haughtiness of pride, confessing that Lord Whom he had assailed, and not knowing what to do, was thus enquiring. Let us behold, where is that cruel persecutor, where the ravenous wolf. Behold, he is already turned into a sheep, which asks for the path of the shepherd in order to follow it. And it is to be observed, that when he said, *Who art Thou, Lord?* [ib. 5] the Lord does not reply to him; I am the Only-Begotten of the Father, I am the Beginning, I am the Word before all ages. For because Saul scorned to believe in the Incarnate Lord, and had despised the weaknesses of His Humanity, he heard from heaven that which he had despised; *I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom thou persecutest*. [ib.] As if He were saying, Hear from Me this from above, which thou despisest in Me below. Thou hadst scorned the coming of the Maker of heaven on earth, therefore learn from heaven of the Man from earth, in order that thou mayest more greatly fear in Me the mysteries of My infirmity, the more thou beholdest even

them exalted in heavenly places to excellence of power. In humbling thee, therefore, I teach thee not that I am God before all worlds; but thou hearest from Me that which thou disdainest to believe of Me. For after He had said, *Jesus*, He added, still farther to express His earthly abode, of *Nazareth*. As if it were openly said, Bear with the infirmities of My humility, and lose the scales of thy pride.

53. But it should yet be known, that though these scales of defences cover nearly the whole of mankind, yet that they specially weigh upon the minds of hypocrites, and crafty men. For they shrink the more vehemently from confessing their own faults, the more they are foolishly ashamed of appearing as sinners before men. When their pretended sanctity is therefore reproved, and their hidden wickedness is detected, it opposes the scales of defence, and repels the sword of truth. Whence it is well said by the Prophet against Judaea, *There the lamia hath lain down, and hath found rest for herself, there the hedgehog had its hole.* [Is. 34, 14. 15.] For by the ‘lamia’ are designated hypocrites, but by the ‘hedgehog’ all the wicked who protect themselves by divers defences. For the ‘lamia’ is said to have the face of a man, but the body of a beast. Thus also in the first appearance which all hypocrites present, there is a kind of fashion of sanctity; but that which follows is the body of a beast, because the deeds which they attempt under the show of goodness, are very wicked. But under the name of ‘hedgehog’ is designated the defence of wicked minds; because, namely, when a hedgehog is being seized, his head is seen, and his feet appear, and all his body is beheld; but presently, as soon as he has been seized, he gathers himself up into a ball, draws his feet inward, hides his head; and the whole which was before seen at once, is lost at once in the hands of him that holds it. Thus, doubtless, thus are wicked minds, when they are caught in their own excesses. For the head of the hedgehog is seen, because it is seen with what beginnings the sinner made his approach to sin. The feet of the hedgehog are seen, because it is seen with what footsteps his wickedness has been perpetrated; and yet the wicked mind, by suddenly adducing its excuses, draws its feet inward, because it conceals all the footsteps of its iniquity. It withdraws its head, because, by its extraordinary defences, it shews that it has never even begun any thing wicked; and it remains as a ball in the hand of him that holds it, because he who reproves a sinner, suddenly losing all which he had before known, holds the sinner involved within his conscience, and he who had before seen the whole, by detecting it, being deceived by the evasion of a wicked defence, is equally ignorant of the whole. The hedgehog therefore has a hole in the reprobate, because the wicked mind, gathering itself within itself, hides in the darkness of its defence. But the Divine discourse shews us also how the sinner, in thus excusing himself, and in thus clouding over, by his defences which serve to obscure [‘caliginosis’], the eye of his reprover which is fastened upon him, is supported by those who are like him. It follows;  
*Ver. 7. One is joined to another, and not even a breath comes between them.* [E.V. 16]

[xxx]

54. These scales of sinners are both hardened and joined together, so as not to be penetrated by any breath of life from the mouth of preachers. For those whom a like guilt associates, the same does a perverse defence also crowd together in obstinate agreement, in order that they may protect each other with mutual defence for their sins. For every one fears for himself, when he beholds another admonished or corrected, and therefore arises with the like feeling against the words of reprovers, because, in protecting another, he protects himself. It is therefore well said; *One is joined to another, and not even a breath comes between them;* because while they mutually shield each other



in their iniquities by their proud defence, they suffer not the breath of holy exhortation in any way to reach them. But He added still more plainly their deadly agreement, saying;

Ver. 8. *They will adhere one to another, and holding each other they will not be separated.* [E.V. 17]

[xxxix]

55. For they who might be corrected, if divided, persevere, when united, in the obstinacy of their iniquities: and are day by day the more easily separable from the knowledge of righteousness, the more they are not mutually separated from each other by any reproach. For as it is wont to be injurious if unity be wanting to the good, so is it fatal if it be not wanting to the wicked. For unity strengthens the perverse, while it makes them accord; and it makes them the more incorrigible, the more unanimous. Of this unity of the reprobate it is said by a wise man; *The congregation of sinners is now gathered together.* [Ecclus. 21, 9] Of this the Prophet Nahum says; *As thorns embrace each other, so is the feast of those who drink together.* [Nahum 1, 10] For the feast of the reprobate is the delight of temporal pleasures. In which feast they doubtless drink together, who make themselves drunk alike with the allurements of their delight. Because therefore an equal guilt unites, for their own defence, the members of this Leviathan, that is, all the wicked, whom the word of God compares to scales compacted together, it is well said; *They will adhere one to another, and holding each other, they will never be separated.* For they cannot be separated when holding each other, because they are the more bound together for their mutual defence, the more they remember that they are like each other in all things. Having described then his body, the discourse goes back to his head, and what power the ancient enemy exercises by himself in the time of the closing persecution, is set forth. For it follows;

Ver. 9. *His sneezing is the splendour of fire.* [E.V. 18]

[xxxix]

56. This passage we expound the better, if we first enquire, how sneezing is produced. For in sneezing the breath rises up from the breast, and when it finds no pores open for its escape, it touches the brain, and, passing out condensed through the nostrils, it shakes at once all the head. In this body therefore of Leviathan, that is, in either malignant spirits, or reprobate men, who have adhered to him through resemblance in their guilt, a breath rises, as it were, from the breast, when pride exalts itself through the power of the present world. And it finds as it were no pores for escape; because in this raising up of itself against the just, it is kept, by God's provision, from prevailing as much as it desires. But it ascends and touches and shakes the brain, because the collected pride of Satan strikes the sense more closely at the end of the world, and disturbs the head, when it excites more vehemently the author himself of malignant spirits to the persecution of the faithful, by him who is called Antichrist. Then does the condensed breath come forth through his nostrils, because the iniquity of his pride is fully set forth by the open blasts of his malice. Because therefore sneezing especially shakes the head, that last commotion of this Leviathan, with which he enters into that accursed man, and by him rules over the reprobate, is called his 'sneezing.' And he rouses himself at that time with such power, as to confound, if possible, even the Elect members of the Lord: he makes use of such signs and prodigies, as to seem to glitter with the power of miracles, as if with a kind of light of fire. Because his head then strives, when aroused, to shine forth with miracles, his sneezing is rightly called the splendour of fire. For in

rousing himself to persecute the just, he shines forth before the eyes of the reprobate with mighty signs. And because the wise ones of the world adhere to his tyranny, and he exercises by their advice every evil which he attempts, it is rightly subjoined,  
*And his eyes as the eyelids of the morning.*

[xxxiii]

57. For by his 'eyes,' which are fixed in his head, and serve the purpose of sight, his counsellors are not improperly designated, who, when they foresee in their perverse machinations in what manner what things are to be done, point out to his evil workers a way, as it were, for their feet. And they are rightly compared to the eyelids of the morning. For by the 'eyelids of the morning' we understand the last hours of the night, in which the night opens, as it were, its eyes, when now setting forth the beginnings of the coming light. The prudent then of this world, who adhere to the perverse counsels of the malice of Antichrist, are, as it were, the eyelids of the morning, because they declare that the faith in Christ which they meet with is, as it were, the night of error, and profess that veneration for Antichrist is the true morning. For they promise to banish the darkness, and to announce the light of truth by brilliant miracles; because they cannot persuade what they wish, unless they profess to offer better things. Whence also this very snake, when speaking to our first parents in paradise, by pretending to provide something better for them, opened as it were the eyelids of the morning, when he reproved in their innocent minds the ignorance of humanity, and promised the knowledge of Godhead. For he banished, as it were, the darkness of ignorance, and announced the divine morning of eternal knowledge, saying; *Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* [Gen. 3, 5] In like manner when coming then in that accursed man, his eyes are compared to the eyelids of the morning, because his wise ones reject the simplicity of the true faith, as if the darkness of the night which is past, and display his lying wonders as the rays of the rising sun. But because this Leviathan not only has eyes to foresee evil things with malignant designs, but also opens his mouth to pervert the minds of men, (since by his wicked preachers he inflames the hearts of his hearers to love the deceit of error,) it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 10. *Out of his mouth proceed lamps.* [E.V. 19]

[xxxiv]

58. For those who look forward are called his 'eyes,' but those who preach, his 'mouth.' But lamps proceed from this 'mouth,' because they inflame the minds of their hearers to the love of misbelief, and from seeming to shine by wisdom, they doubtless thence burn with wickedness. But what kind of light their wisdom is, is shewn, when it is immediately subjoined,  
*As kindled torches of fire.*

[xxxv]

59. Behold the hypocrisy of those is now plainly described, whose preaching is compared to lamps of torches. For when a torch is lighted, it has a sweet scent, but a dismal light. And so because these preachers of Antichrist claim to themselves a show of sanctity, but yet practise works of iniquity, the smell, as it were, which they emit is pleasant, but the light they give is dark. For they smell sweetly through their pretence of righteousness, but burn gloomily by their perpetration of iniquity.

The malice of their hypocrisy John sums up in a brief description in the Apocalypse, saying; *I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb's, and he spake as a dragon.* [Rev. 13, 11] He had spoken indeed of the first beast, that is, Antichrist, in a former description; after whom this other beast is said to have also come up, because the multitude of his preachers after him boasts in his earthly power. For to come up from the earth is to boast in earthly glory. And it has two horns like a lamb, because, through his pretended sanctity, he falsely asserts that that wisdom and conduct exist in him, which the Lord truly possessed in Himself in a special manner. But because under the appearance of a lamb he infuses into his reprobate hearers the poison of serpents, it is there rightly subjoined; *And he spake as a dragon.* If this beast therefore, that is, the multitude of preachers, were to speak openly as a dragon, he would not appear like a lamb. But he assumes the appearance of a lamb, in order to perform the works of a dragon. Both of which points are here expressed by lamps of torches; because they both burn mistily by their malicious doings, and smell, as it were, sweetly, by the hypocrisy of their life.

60. But we must not suppose that the preachers of Antichrist will appear then only, and that now they take no part in the deception of men. For even now, before he appears himself, some preach him in words, but most by their conduct. Are not they the preachers of his hypocrisy, who while they hold the holy orders of God, grasp with all their desires the fleeting world, who profess that all their doings are virtues, but every thing they do is sin? But the more the mind of the Elect keeps close to the light, the more keenly does it see how it should distinguish virtues from vices. But what wonder is it that we do that spiritually, which we see money-changers daily performing in the body? Who, when they receive a coin, examine first its quality, afterwards its shape, but last of all, its weight, lest either brass should be concealed under the appearance of gold, or lest the shape of counterfeit coin should disgrace that which is truly gold, or lest deficient weight should prove that to be light, which is both gold, and of the proper shape. When therefore we behold the wonderful works of men whom we know not, we ought, as skilful money-changers, to betake ourselves to the scales of our heart, in order for our judgment first to weigh the gold, lest sin should conceal itself under the cloak of virtue, and lest that which is done with evil intention should be veiled under the appearance of what is right. And if the character of its intention is approved, we must next look for the shape of the stamp which has been impressed on it, whether it is stamped by approved moneyers, that is, by the ancient fathers, and is not distorted, by any error, from a resemblance to their life. But when both its quality is ascertained by its intention, and its right shape by a model, it remains for us to examine its full weight. For if a good deed which is brilliant with signs and miracles, possesses not the full amount of perfection, it ought to be anxiously considered with careful circumspection, lest an imperfect thing, when taken for a perfect one, should turn to the loss of the receiver. How then do the preachers of Antichrist, who know not in what they do the power of right intention, possess the quality of a true coin? For they seek not thereby their heavenly country, but the height of temporal glory. How do they, who, by persecuting the just, disagree with all the piety of the just, differ not from the shape of a true coin? How do they, who have not only not attained the perfection of humility, but have not even reached its threshold, display in themselves the weight of full amount? Hence, then, hence let the Elect know how to despise the wonders of those persons, whose conduct plainly impugns every thing which is said to have been done by the holy fathers. But even the very Elect, on beholding so many wonders, and in trembling at his many miracles while they despise his life, suffer in their heart a kind of mist of doubt. Because while his wickedness exalts itself by prodigies, their clearer sight is in a measure obscured. Whence it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 11. *Out of his nostrils goeth smoke.* [E.V. 20]

[xxxvi]

61. For the sight of the eyes is pained by smoke. Smoke is therefore said to go out of his nostrils; because by the craft of his miracles a darkening doubt is generated for an instant even in the heart of the Elect. A smoke goes out of the mouth of Leviathan, because, on account of his lying wonders, a mist of alarm confuses the eyes even of good minds. For when his terrible signs have been seen, then do gloomy thoughts crowd together in the hearts of the Elect. It is hence that that which we have already brought forward is spoken by the mouth of Truth in the Gospel; *False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, so as even for the Elect, if possible, to be led into error.* [Mark 13, 22] In which subject it must be specially enquired, how either those who are Elect can be led into error, or why the words '*if possible*' are subjoined, as if doubtingly, when the Lord, Who foresees all things, looks forward to what is to be done. But since both the heart of the Elect is shaken with anxious thought, and yet their constancy is not moved, the Lord included both points in this one sentence, saying, *So as even for the Elect, if possible, to be led into error.* For to stagger in thought is, as it were, to err already. But it is immediately subjoined, *If possible*; because it is without question impossible for those who are Elect to be fully involved in error. But in this mist of smoke the warmth of their minds is also well expressed, when it is immediately subjoined;  
*As of a heated and boiling pot.*

[xxxvii]

62. For at that time every soul is as a boiling pot, sustaining the assaults of its thoughts, like the foam of boiling waters, which both the fire of zeal puts in motion, and temporal oppression, after the manner of a pot, keeps confined within. Whence John also, when relating the wonders of this beast, added, *So that he maketh fire come down from heaven.* [Rev. 13, 13] For for fire to come down from heaven, is for flames of zeal to pour forth from the heavenly souls of the Elect. But because this Leviathan is called in another place not merely a serpent, but also a basilisk [quasi 'little king.'], because he rules over unclean spirits, or reprobate men, as Isaiah says, *Out of the serpent's root shall come forth a basilisk,* [Is. 14, 29] must attentively observe how a basilisk destroys, that by the doings of the basilisk, his malice may be more plainly made known to us. For a basilisk does not destroy with its bite, but consumes with its breath. It often also infects the air with its breath, and withers with the mere blast of its nostrils whatever it has touched, even when placed at a distance.

63. We are hence then, we are hence compelled to consider, because smoke is said to proceed from his nostrils, even before he appears openly, what he is daily working in the hearts of men by the smoke of his pestilent breath. For because, as we said also above, the sight of the eyes is weakened by smoke, smoke is rightly said to proceed from the nostrils of him, by whose hurtful inspirations an evil thought arises in the hearts of men, by which the keenness of the mind is blunted, so that the inward light is not seen. For he breathes forth darkness, as it were, from his nostrils, because from his crafty inspirations he heaps up, in the hearts of the reprobate, the heat of many thoughts, from love of this temporal life. And he multiplies, as it were, clouds ['globos'] of smoke, because he crowds together in the mind of earthly men the most trifling anxieties of this present life. This

smoke, which comes forth from his nostrils, sometimes affects for a time the eyes even of the Elect. For the Prophet was enduring this smoke within, when he said, *Mine eye is disturbed because of anger.* [Ps. 6, 7] He was oppressed by its pouring in upon him, saying, *My heart is troubled within me, and the light of mine eyes is not with me.* [Ps. 38, 10] For this smoke deadens in truth the keenness of the heart, because with the cloud of its darkness it disturbs the serenity of inward peace. But God cannot be recognised, except by a tranquil heart. Whence it is again said by the same Prophet, *Be still, and see that I am God.* [Ps. 46, 10] But that mind cannot be at ease [‘vacare’], which is oppressed with inundations of this smoke; because volumes of earthly thoughts are crowded therein from love of the present life. The light of inward rest is therefore lost through this smoke, because the eye of the heart is darkened, when it is confused by the irritation of cares.

64. But this smoke annoys the minds of the Elect in one way, and blinds the eyes of the reprobate in another. For it is dispersed from the eyes of the good by the breath of spiritual desires, so as not to become dense, through the prevalence of wretched thoughts. But in the minds of the reprobate the more freely it collects itself by means of foul thoughts, the more entirely does it remove from them the light of truth. This smoke as it crowds into the hearts of the reprobate so many unlawful desires, swells out, as it were, into so many clouds before them.

65. And we certainly know that in clouds of smoke, when some are fading away [‘inanescent’] above, others rise up from below: so too in carnal thoughts, though some evil desires pass away, yet others succeed. But frequently the wretched mind beholds what has already passed, but does not behold where it is still detained. It rejoices in being no longer subject to some sins, but neglects to be careful, and to lament, because others have succeeded in their place, to which perhaps it yields more sinfully. And so it is that, while some sins pass away, and others succeed, the heart of the reprobate is possessed without intermission by this serpent. Whence it is well said by the Prophet Joel, *That which the palmer-worm hath left, the locust hath eaten; and that which the locust hath left, the canker-worm hath eaten; and that which the canker-worm hath left, the mildew hath eaten. Awake, ye drunkards, and weep.* [Joel 1, 4] For what is designated by the palmer-worm [‘eruca’], which creeps with all its body on the ground, except it be lust? which so pollutes the heart which it possesses, that it cannot rise up to the love of heavenly purity. What is expressed by the locust, which flies by leaps, except vain glory, which exalts itself with empty presumptions? What is typified by the canker-worm [‘bruchus’], almost the whole of whose body is gathered into its belly, except gluttony in eating? What but anger is indicated by mildew, which burns as it touches? That therefore which the palmer-worm hath left, the locust hath eaten, because, when the sin of lust has retired from the mind, vain glory often succeeds. For since it is not now subdued by the love of the flesh, it boasts of itself as if it were holy through its chastity. And that which the locust hath left, the canker-worm hath eaten, because when vain glory, which came as it were from holiness, is resisted, either the appetite, or some ambitious desires are indulged in too immoderately. For the mind which knows not God, is led the more fiercely to any object of ambition, in proportion as it is not restrained by any love even of human praise. That which the canker-worm hath left, the mildew consumes, because when the gluttony of the belly is restrained by abstinence, the impatience of anger holds fiercer sway, which, like mildew, eats up the harvest by burning it, because the flame of impatience withers the fruits of virtues. When therefore some vices succeed to others, one plague devours the field of the mind, while another leaves it.

66. But it is there well subjoined; *Awake, ye drunkards, and weep.* [Joel 1, 5] For they are called

‘drunkards,’ who, confused with the love of this world, feel not the evils which they suffer. What then is meant by saying; *Awake, ye drunkards, and weep*, but ‘shake off the sleep of your insensibility, and oppose by watchful lamentations the many plagues of sins which succeed one to the other in the devastation of your hearts?’ The smoke therefore rises in as many clouds from the nostrils of Leviathan, as are the plagues by which he consumes the fruit of the reprobate heart with his secret breathing. But the Lord carefully explains still further the power of this smoke, when He immediately subjoins; *As of a heated and boiling pot*. For the pot is heated when the mind of man is instigated by the persuasion of the malignant enemy. But the pot boils, when it is already inflamed by consent with the desires of evil persuasions. And it throws out, as it were, as many waves in boiling, as are the wickednesses by which it extends itself into outward action. For the Prophet had beheld this heat of carnal concupiscence (that is, of the pot) arising from the smoke of Leviathan, when he said; *I see a heated pot, and its face from the face of the north*. [Jer. 1, 13] For the pot of the human heart is heated from the face of the north, when it is inflamed with unlawful desires by the instigation of the opposing spirit. For he who says; *I will sit on the mount of the covenant, in the sides of the north*, [Is. 14, 13] inflames with the malignant blasts of his persuasion, as with fires placed beneath it, the mind of which he has once gained possession; in order that being discontented with what is before it, it may be so unceasingly agitated by desires, as to seek some things presently to be contemned, and to condemn other things which it has obtained; at one time to be eager for its own profit, at another to oppose another’s advantages, even to its own loss; at one time to satisfy the allurements of the flesh, and at another to be hurried as it were on high by pride of thought, to put aside all concern for the flesh, and to raise itself up altogether with the haughtiness of exaltation. Because then a heart, which is inflamed by the instigations of this Leviathan, is led astray by various desires, its smoke is rightly said to be like a heated and boiling pot. Because its conscience, being blasted by his temptations, rouses itself by as many boilings, as are the thoughts by which it is puffed up within. But this point the Truth proceeds to speak of more plainly in other words, when it is subjoined;  
Ver. 12. *His breath kindleth coals*. [E.V. 21]

[xxxviii]

67. For what does He call ‘coals,’ but the minds of reprobate men, kindled with earthly desires. For they are on fire when they seek after any temporal object; doubtless because their longings, which suffer not their mind to be quiet and whole [‘integrum’], inflame them. The breath of Leviathan therefore kindles the coals, as often as his secret suggestion allures the minds of men to unlawful pleasures. For it inflames some with the torches of pride, some with those of envy, some with those of lust, some with those of avarice. For he applied in truth the torch of pride to the mind of Eve, when he instigated her to despise the words of the Lord’s command. [Gen. 3, 6] He kindled the mind of Cain with the flame of envy, when he was grieved at his brother’s sacrifice being accepted, and in this way arrived as far as the sin of fratricide. [Gen. 4, 5] He inflamed the heart of Solomon with the torches of lust, whom he overcame with such great love for women, that by having been led to the worship of idols, he forgot the reverence due to his Maker, when he was pursuing the pleasure of the flesh. [1 Kings 11, 4] He also burnt up the mind of Ahab with the fire of avarice, when he urged him with impatient desires to seek for the vineyard of another, and drew him on in this way even to the guilt of homicide. [ib. 21, 2] This Leviathan therefore blows on the coals, with a breath as great as the effort of secret suggestion with which he inflames the minds of men to aim at what is forbidden. Whence also it is immediately subjoined;

*And a flame goeth out of his mouth.*

[xxxix]

68. For the flame of his mouth is in truth the very instigation of secret suggestion. For he addresses the words of evil persuasion to the mind of each person, but that which goes out of his mouth is a flame; because the mind burns with desires, when it is instigated by his suggestions. These he daily suggests, these he ceases not to suggest even to the end of the present life: but he then expands himself more wickedly when coming in that accursed man, he displays himself more openly in the glory of this world. A mightier smoke proceeds then from his nostrils, because a greater instigation assails the hearts of men when frightened at the marvels of his wonders. Then does his breath make the coals to burn more fiercely, because, on finding the minds of the reprobate already warm with the love of temporal glory, he inflames them with the breath of his suggestion, even to the wickedness of exercising cruelty. Then does a flame go forth from his mouth, because whatever he says by himself or by his preachers, is a fire with which unfruitful trees are burnt up. But the mind of those who do not at all wish to become precious metals, is touched by the fire of earthly concupiscence. Whosoever therefore wishes not to suffer from the flame of his mouth should take care, according to the expression of the teacher of truth, to be found, not *wood, hay, stubble*, but *gold, silver, and precious stone*. [1 Cor. 3, 12] Because the fire of his persuasion burns them the more fiercely, the softer every one has rendered himself to yielding his consent. But because a mind, when placed in this corruptible flesh, is in no way permitted not to be touched by the heat of his persuasion, it remains for it, when parched by its malignant blasts, to betake itself unceasingly to the aid of prayer. For a wave of tears quickly extinguishes the flame of his suggestions.

## BOOK XXXIV.

The thirteenth, with the remaining verses of the forty-first chapter is explained, chiefly with reference to the pride of the Devil, and the most cruel persecutions of Antichrist against the Saints.

[i]

1. Because we bear about us a body from this world, let us consider the end of the universe, from the part of it in which we ourselves are [al. 'which we are']. For we learn more quickly of what kind is the end of the world, if we carefully consider that which we bear about us from the world. For our age flourishes more vigorously in our youthful years, but in the time of old age it is shrivelled up by increasing diseases, and while its existence is extended to greater length, instead of dying it daily fails every moment of its life. So also as the duration of the world increases in years, it suffers under increasing evils, and it feels the loss of its health, as it obtains increase of age. For its tribulations increase together with its years, and it endures with greater weakness the losses of life, the more it lasts on, as it were, to a more advanced age. For the ancient enemy is let loose against it with all his strength, who, although he has already perished, as having lost the happiness of his heavenly condition, is yet at that time more fully extinguished, when he is deprived of his permission to tempt, and is fast bound in eternal fires. He is about, accordingly, to assail the ends of

the world with severer temptations, because he becomes more raging in his cruelty, the nearer he perceives himself to punishment. For he considers that he is just about to lose his privilege of most fatal liberty. And the more he is confined by the shortness of the time, the more does he spread forth with multiplicity of cruelty, as is said of him by the voice of the angel to John; *Woe to the earth, and to the sea, because the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.* [Rev. 12, 12] He then spreads himself forth into the fury of great wrath, in order that he, who could not remain in his state of happiness, may not fall into the pit of his damnation with a few only. He then searches out with greater craft whatever power of iniquity he has gotten, he then exalts more highly his neck of pride, and by means of that accursed man whom he wears, displays for the purpose of evil, all the temporal power he possesses. Whence also it is now rightly said by the Divine voice;

Ver. 13. *In his neck will remain strength.* [E.V. 22]

[ii]

2. For what is designated by the 'neck' of that Leviathan, except the stretching out of his pride, with which he raises himself up against God, when, with pretended sanctity, he is exalted also by the pride of power? For that pride is expressed by the 'neck,' the Prophet Isaiah witnesses, who reproves the daughters of Jerusalem, saying, *They have walked with stretched forth neck.* [Is. 3, 16] Strength then is said to remain in the 'neck' of this Leviathan, because power is also subjoined and ministers to his pride. For all his haughty pride, all his crafty machinations, he prosecutes at that time by the strength also of secular power. Which the prophet Daniel observing, says, *Craft will be directed aright in his hand.* [Dan. 8, 25] For craft in his hand, is fraud in his strength; for all his wicked designs he is able also, for the time, to carry out with strength. But his craft is said to be 'directed,' because the malice of his fraud is impeded by no difficulty. For this Leviathan or his vessels are wont frequently to possess this peculiarity, that, to add to their iniquity, they are able to carry out more wickedly what they wickedly desire.

3. For when the Elect perchance are weakened, and rush headlong in their unlawful desires, they are frequently restrained by the hand of the Divine gift, so as to find no results from their wretched will. And when a strong opposition arises to their wishes, they are frequently corrected by the very impossibility, and by the wonderful course of the inward disposal, a change of their evil will succeeds through conversion, while through their infirmity perfection [or 'through their weakness fulfilment'] is denied them. For hence is that which the Lord says, under the character of every soul, to Judæa who is weak, and walking in evil ways; *Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and I will hedge it up with a wall, and she shall not find her paths, and she shall follow after her lovers, and she shall not overtake them, and she shall seek them, and not finding them shall say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better with me than now.* [Hos. 2, 6. 7.] For the ways of the Elect are hedged up with thorns, when they find the pain of piercing in that which they desire in this world. He obstructs, as it were, by interposing a wall, the ways of those, whose desires the difficulty of attainment opposes. Their souls truly seek their lovers, and find them not, when by following malignant spirits, they do not gain hold of those pleasures of this world, which they desire. But it is well added that she says immediately in consequence of this very difficulty; *I will go and return to my former husband, for then it was better with me than now.* For the Lord is the first husband, Who united to Himself the chaste soul, by means of the love of the Holy Spirit. And the mind of each one then longs for Him, when it finds manifold bitternesses, as thorns in



those delights, which it desires in this world. For when the mind has begun to be stung by the adversities of the world which it loves, it then understands more fully, how much better it was for it with its former husband.

4. Those then, whom an evil will perverts, adversity frequently corrects. Whence also it is much to be feared, lest prosperity should follow, when unjust things are longed for, because an evil, which is supported also by the prosperity of attainment, is with more difficulty corrected. Both craft then is directed aright in the hand of this Leviathan, who with his members is consigned to eternal tortures, and strength remains in his neck, because that which he longs for in this world with evil resolve against the good, he consummates with more evil ability, in order that no present adversity may oppose him, in proportion as no prosperity awaits him for the future. And because every one who, from depraved habits, is familiar with his friendship, loses first the true riches of the mind, it is fitly subjoined;

*And want will go before his face.*

[iii]

5. For acquaintance is wont to be designated by the 'face.' Whence it is written; *And My Face shall go before thee*, [Ex. 33, 14] that is, knowledge of Me will give thee guidance. But it should be known, that the want of the Elect is used in one sense in Holy Scripture, the want of the reprobate in another. For it is the want of the Elect, when the true riches of the heavenly country recur to their mind, and when, placed in the sorrowful banishment of this present life, they remember that they are poor. For they sigh in truth unceasingly after those riches, of which Paul says; *That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints*. [Eph. 1, 18] And because as yet they do not behold them, they earnestly groan, the mean while, in the sorrow of this poverty. Jeremiah had doubtless gained a sight of this poverty, when he was saying; *I am a man who behold my poverty by the rod of His indignation*. [Lam. 3, 1] For the rod of the indignation of God is the blow of severity. And man then endured this indignation, when he was expelled from Paradise, and lost the true riches of inward joy. But because all the Elect continually behold that they have fallen into the poverty of the present life from that faculty of innate strength, it is well said, *I am a man who behold my poverty*. For whoever still longs after these visible things, understands not the misery of his pilgrimage, and has not skill to see the very evil which he is suffering. The prophet David, beholding this poverty, says, *My strength is weakened in my poverty*. [Ps. 31, 10] For strength is said to be weakened in poverty, because the mind which has fallen in this pilgrimage, and has been assaulted by the annoyances of its own corruption, is hindered from beholding that which it has lost.

6. But the reprobate know not how to think of this poverty, because, while they pursue those things which they behold, they neglect to think of the invisible things which they have lost. Whence it is rightly called their 'want;' for while they are filled with sins, they are emptied of the riches of virtues. And it is frequently their lot, that, when, from being lifted up by the madness of pride, they consider not the losses of their fall, they discern not that they are poor also in good deeds. Whence it is said by the voice of the Angel to the preacher of Laodicea; *Thou sayest that I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*. [Rev. 3, 17] He who is elated through pride at his sanctity, declares himself, as it were, to be rich, but is proved to be poor, blind, and naked. Poor,

assuredly, because he has not the riches of virtues; blind, because he sees not the poverty which he is suffering; naked, because he has lost his first garment, but in a worse way, because he knows not that he has lost it. Because then, as we have said, the 'want' of the reprobate is their being stripped of their merits, it is rightly said of Leviathan; *Want will go before his face*. For no one is joined to the knowledge of him, unless he is first stripped of the riches of virtues. For he first steals away good thoughts, and afterwards infuses in them a clearer knowledge of his own iniquity. Want is therefore said to go before his face, because the faculty of strength is first destroyed, in order that a knowledge of him may be afterwards gained, as if through familiarity. Or certainly, because he steals upon many in so crafty a manner, that he cannot be detected by them, and so makes void their virtues as not to display the evil design of his cunning, want is said to go before his face. As if it were openly said, Because when he tempts by lying in ambush, he spoils men before he is perceived. For hence is that which is said of Ephraim by the Prophet, *Strangers have devoured his strength, and he hath known it not*. [Hos. 7, 9] For by 'strangers' are usually understood apostate angels, who devour our strength, when they consume the virtue of the mind by perverting it. Which Ephraim both endured, and knew it not, because through the temptation of malignant spirits he both lost the strength of his mind, and understood not that he had lost it. Want therefore goes before the face of Leviathan, because he spoils by his temptation the minds of the careless, before he who is tempted knows his snares. By this then which is said, *In his neck will remain strength*, is set forth the power of his violence. But by this which is added, *And want will go before his face*, is designated the subtlety of his craft.

7. Although with regard to our knowing that want goes before his face, there is another point for us to expound in a more melancholy manner. For by the awful course of the secret dispensation, before this Leviathan appears in that accursed man whom he assumes, signs of power are withdrawn from Holy Church. For prophecy is hidden, the grace of healings is taken away, the power of longer abstinence is weakened, the words of doctrine are silent, the prodigies of miracles are removed. And though the heavenly dispensation does not entirely withdraw them, yet it does not manifest them openly and in manifold ways as in former times. And this is so caused by a wonderful dispensation, in order that the Divine mercy and justice may be fulfilled together by one and the same means. For when Holy Church appears as if she were more abject, on the withdrawal of signs of power, both the reward of the good increases, who reverence her for the hope of heavenly things, and not on account of present signs; and the mind of the wicked is the more quickly displayed against her, who neglect to pursue the invisible things which she promises, when they are not constrained by visible signs. When therefore the humility of the faithful is deprived of the manifold manifestation of wonders, by the terrible judgment of the secret dispensation, there is heaped up more abundant mercy for the good, and just anger for the evil, by the same means. Because these signs of power cease, in great measure, in Holy Church, before this Leviathan manifestly and visibly comes, it is now rightly said; *Want will go before his face*. For the riches of miracles are first withdrawn from the faithful, and then that ancient enemy displays himself against them with visible prodigies, in order that as he boasts himself on his wonders, he may be overthrown more mightily and more honourably by the faithful without wonders. For though signs will not be wanting to the faithful in their contest with him, yet his will be so great, that those of our people will seem to be rather few or none at all. But their virtue doubtless becomes mightier than all signs, when it crushes with the heel of inward resolution all his terrible deeds which it beholds. But the malignant enemy displays himself against them with so much the fiercer cruelty, the more he grieves that he is despised even with the brightness of his miracles. He therefore

gathers himself together for their destruction, and unites all the reprobate with unanimous cruelty for the death of the faithful; in order that he may put forth his cruelty with so much greater power, in proportion as all the members of his body agree with him in the things he seeks perversely to effect. Whence also it is rightly said;

Ver. 14. *The members of his flesh cling to each other.* [E.V. 23]

[iv]

8. The 'flesh' of this Leviathan are all the reprobate, who rise not in their longing to a knowledge of their spiritual country. But the 'members of his flesh' are those, who are united to these very persons, when acting wickedly, and preceding them in the way to iniquity. As is said on the other hand by Paul to the Lord's body; *Ye are the body of Christ, and members of a member.* [1 Cor. 12, 27] For a member of a body is one thing, a member of a member is another. For a member of the body is a part referred to a whole, but a member of a member is a particle to a part. For a member of a member is a finger to the hand, the hand to the arm, but a member of the body, is the whole of this together to the body at large. As therefore in the spiritual body of the Lord we term 'members of a member' those who in His Church are governed by others; so, in that reprobate congregation of this Leviathan, those are the 'members of his flesh,' who by their wicked deeds are joined to some more wicked than themselves. But because the malignant enemy agrees with himself in his perverse doings from first to last, the Divine discourse speaks of the members of his flesh clinging to each other in him. For they so agree in their wicked opinions, as not to be divided by any mutual disputations with each other. No quarrel of disagreement then divides them, and they therefore prevail mightily against the good, because they keep themselves together with close agreement in evil. For as we have already said above, that it is fatal if unity is wanting to the good, so it is more fatal if it is not wanting to the evil. For the unity of the reprobate obstructs more firmly the path of the good, the more firmly it opposes itself to it by being collected together.

9. Paul had beheld this unity of the reprobate destructive to himself, when being seized in the midst of the Sadducees and Pharisees he was saying; *Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am judged.* [Acts 23, 6] And struck by this voice, the crowd of his hearers immediately mutually started asunder against itself. And when the tumultuous multitude is divided into two parts, a way of rescue is opened to Paul, because the crowd of persecutors when divided released him whom it had held fast when united together. The righteous are therefore rescued, when the unrighteous are divided, and the wishes of the Elect arrive at completion, when the hosts of the reprobate are confounded by discord. And this is also well designated by the dividing of the Red Sea. [Ex. 14, 21] For when the wave is divided into two parts, the Elect people journeys on to the land of promise, because, when the unity of the wicked is rent asunder, holy minds attain to, that which they desire. If the unity of the wicked had not been hurtful, Divine Providence would never have divided the tongues of the proud with such great diversity. [Gen. 11, 9] If the unity of the wicked had not been hurtful, the Prophet would not say of the enemies of Holy Church; *Cast down, O Lord, and divide their tongues.* [Ps. 55, 9] Because then this Leviathan is then let loose in his might against the Elect of God, to increase his power of hurting, he is permitted also to have unity among the reprobate, in order that he may put forth his might more powerfully against us, the more he assaults us not merely with the blow of strength, but also with the weight of unity. But who can be sufficient against these things? What mind must not tremble at the weight of such pride and compactness, from the very bottom of his thought? Whence, because the Divine Clemency sees that

we are trembling through weakness, It immediately adds what It does for us, by Itself. For it follows; *He shall send lightnings against him, and they shall not be carried to another place.*

[v]

10. What is designated by the appellation of 'lightnings,' except those tremendous sentences of the last judgment? And they are, therefore, called 'lightnings,' doubtless, because they consume for ever those whom they strike. For Paul had beheld lightnings coming down on him, when he was saying, *Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.* [2 Thess. 2, 8] But these lightnings which are sent against him, are not carried to another place, because they then smite the reprobate only, while the righteous rejoice. For after the threshing of the present life, in which the wheat now groans beneath the chaff, such a separation is made by that fan of the last judgment between the wheat and the chaff, that neither does the chaff pass into the garner of the wheat, nor do the grains of the garner fall into the fire of the chaff. Those lightnings then touch not another place, because, namely, they burn with their fire not the grains, but the chaff. But He teaches us, that punishment does not correct this Leviathan, when he adds;

Ver. 15. *His heart shall be hardened as a stone.* [E.V. 24]

[vi]

11. For the heart of the ancient enemy will be hardened as a stone, because it will never be softened by any penitence of conversion. And because he will be fitted only for the blows of eternal punishment, it is rightly immediately added;

*And he will be bound as the anvil of the hammerer.*

For the hammerer puts up an anvil fitted to receive blows only. For an anvil is erected for the very purpose of being struck with frequent blows. Leviathan therefore will be bound as the anvil of the hammerer, because he will be confined by the chains of hell, in order to be beaten with the continual blows of eternal punishment. And he is struck also even now, when any of the just are saved, as he is watching in ambush, but wasting away with pain. But in an anvil other vessels are wrought into shape, while the anvil itself by its many blows is not changed into a vessel of another kind. This Leviathan is therefore rightly compared to an anvil, because we are wrought into shape by his persecutions, but he is both always struck, and is never changed into a useful vessel. We abandon him to eternal blows, and we, who have been smitten through his temptation by the hand of the heavenly Artificer, come out by his means properly shaped vessels. For on him we are beaten, but it is that we may come into use for the House above. But he is bound as an anvil, because, though he now goes about the world with his temptations, yet when placed in the pit, under the blow of his sentence, he wanders no more. It follows;

Ver. 16. *When he shall be taken away, the angels shall fear, and being affrighted shall be purified.* [E.V. 25]

[vii]

12. Holy Scripture often so mixes up past and future times, as sometimes to use the future for the past, sometimes the past for the future. For it uses the future for the past, when there is pointed out

to John a woman, who is about to bring forth a male child, to rule the Gentiles with a rod of iron. [Rev. 12, 5] For since this had already taken place by the coming of the Lord in the flesh, an event which had occurred was being announced. Again, it was the past for the future, as the Lord speaks by the Psalmist, saying; *They have dug My hands, and My feet, they have numbered all My bones.* [Ps. 22, 16. 17.] For by these words in truth, the nature of the Lord's Passion is described as already past, but yet it is announced as still far future. In this place then in which it is said; *When he shall he taken away, the angels shall fear*, nothing prevents its being understood, that past events are described under the form of the future tense. Nor do we give up the sense of its true meaning, if we believe that when this Leviathan was falling from the height of blessedness, the Elect Angels also were greatly terrified at his fall, in order that, as the fall of pride was casting him out from their number, their very fear might give them strength to stand more firmly. Whence it also follows; *And being affrighted shall be purified.*

13. But they are purified; doubtless because, when he went forth with his reprobate hosts, they alone, who were to live in happiness for ever, remained in the abodes of heaven. His fall then alarmed and purified them; it alarmed them, in order that they might not proudly despise their Creator. But it purified them, because it was so ordered, that when the reprobate went forth, the Elect alone remained. And because God, the Maker of all things, knows how to apply even the evil doings of the reprobate to the protection of the good, He converted the lapse of those who fell to the benefit of those who remain; and the fault of the proud is punished, by the same means by which the increased merits of the humble Angels were discovered and confirmed. For on the fall of these, it was granted as a special gift to those that they should never in any wise fall. For while the holy Angels behold in them the ruin of their own nature, they stand with greater caution and firmness in their own persons. Hence it is ordered, by the Lord the Maker of all, marvellously arranging all things, that even the losses of its ruin are of service to that abode of Elect spirits, when it is more firmly built up, in consequence of its having been partially destroyed.

14. But because Holy Scripture is frequently accustomed to designate the preachers of the Church, by the name of 'Angels,' because they announce the glory of the heavenly country, we can in this place understand 'Angels' to mean holy preachers. For this cause it is that John, in the Apocalypse, writing to the seven Churches, speaks to the Angels of the Churches, that is, to the preachers of the peoples. [Rev. 2, and 3] Hence the Prophet says; *And the angels of peace shall weep bitterly.* [Is. 33, 7] Hence again the Prophet Malachi says; *The priest's lips keep knowledge, and they seek the law at his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.* [Mal. 2, 7] Hence Paul says; *Great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, is believed on in this world, is received up into glory.* [1 Tim. 3, 16] He therefore, who, after he had said that the mystery of the dispensation appeared to Angels, added also that it had been preached unto the Gentiles, certainly by the name 'Angels' designated holy preachers, that is, the messengers of truth.

15. If therefore the expression, *When he shall be taken away, the angels shall fear, and being affrighted shall be purified*, is referred to future time, there is here pointed out the last damnation of this Leviathan, in this world, on the coming of the strict Judge. Because he, who is now tolerated by the wonderful long-suffering of gentleness, is taken out of this world by the wrath of judgment. But he is cast out from thence with so great a weight of terror, that even the strength of holy preachers is disturbed; *For when he shall he taken away, the angels shall fear.* Because when he is swept

away with the whirlwind of judgment, even those messengers of the heavenly country, who shall be found in their bodies, are staggered with unbounded fear, and tremble. For though they now are strong and perfect, yet, as still living in the flesh, they cannot fail of being agitated with fear, at the whirlwind of such great terror. But when this Leviathan is swept away, and when all the elements are shaken at his destruction, the hope of the approach of the kingdom fills those holy preachers with joy, whom, as I have said, that time of judgment shall find still in their bodies, and the infirmity of their flesh alarms them at the display of wrath. There will therefore be in them, in a certain way, a joyful trembling, and a fearless fear; because they are sure of being rewarded in the heavenly kingdom, and through fear of so great a whirlwind they tremble from the infirmity of the flesh.

16. Let us consider therefore how greatly the conscience of the wicked is then agitated, when the life even of the just is disturbed. What will they do, who hate the coming of the Judge, if even they who love tremble at the terror of so great a judgment? And because, whatever rust of slight sins could possibly exist in holy preachers, is burnt out by this dread, after He had said, *When he shall be taken away, the angels shall fear*, He fitly subjoined immediately; *And being affrighted shall be purified*. But because we have learnt these things concerning the end of this Leviathan, let us hear what he does meanwhile, before he perishes. It follows;

Ver. 17. *When a sword has reached him, it will not be able to remain, nor a spear, nor a breastplate*. [E.V. 26]

[viii]

17. In Holy Scripture by a 'sword' is sometimes designated holy preaching, sometimes eternal damnation, sometimes temporal tribulation, sometimes the wrath or persuasion of the ancient enemy. For a 'sword' is put for holy preaching, as Paul says, *And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*. [Eph. 6, 17] By the word 'sword' is designated eternal damnation, as is written of an heretical preacher; *If his children be multiplied, they will be in the sword*; [Job 27, 14] because in whatever great number they here shoot forth, they are consumed with eternal damnation. A 'sword' is taken for temporal tribulation, as is said to Mary concerning tribulations which are about to follow; *And a sword shall pass through thine own soul*. [Luke 2, 35] Again, by 'sword' is expressed the wrath or persuasion of the malignant enemy, as the Psalmist says; *Who hast delivered David Thy servant from the malicious sword*. [Ps. 144, 10] For kind is the sword of holy preaching, with which we are struck that we may die from sin. But the sword of diabolical persuasion is malicious, with which a man is fatally wounded, that he may be deprived of rectitude of life. The sword then of the ancient enemy is, at that time, that accursed man, assumed for the purpose of his service. For he sharpens him through the malice of cunning, and pierces the hearts of the feeble. The sword therefore of this man reaches Leviathan, when his own accursed man has taken him up. But if by the word 'sword' his wrath is designated, he is rightly described, not as seizing the sword, but as seized by the sword. For he is then turned into such madness, that, seeking to rule over all, he is unable to control his own anger. For we, when we assume wrath in the exercise of justice, hold a sword; because we control it by keeping it under the moderation of judgment. But he, because he is hurried on through the precipices of fury, is said not to seize his sword, but to be seized by his sword. For he does not keep and control his anger, but, in his fury, is possessed by his anger.

18. But it is plain to all, that we strike our adversary with a spear, but are protected from our

adversary by a breastplate. By a spear we inflict wounds, by a breastplate we are protected from wounds. What therefore is designated by a 'spear' but the shaft of preaching; what by a breastplate but the strength of patience? This Leviathan then, because by taking that reprobate man to himself, he is let loose in the wrath of every kind of cruelty, is said to be 'seized by a sword.' For by the display of his immense strength, he then exhibits whatever power of wickedness he possesses. And neither the spear nor the breastplate will be able to stand, because entering into Antichrist, he will seem to be of such great strength, as (if heavenly assistance were wanting) to blunt the keenness of preachers, and to overthrow the long-suffering of the patient. For unless heavenly grace strengthens the life of the righteous, the spear does not stand, because the strength of preachers is broken; the breastplate does not resist, because the patience of the constant is burst through and penetrated. Whence it is also subjoined,

Ver. 18. *For he shall esteem iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood.* [E.V. 27]

[ix]

19. That which above He called a 'spear,' he mentioned again below under the appellation of 'iron:' and that which He spoke of as a 'breastplate,' He again designated by mentioning it as 'brass.' For iron is sharpened, that the adversary may be wounded; but brass is hardly destroyed by any rust. Whence also it is said by Moses of Holy Church under the character of Asher; *His shoe is iron and brass.* [Deut. 33, 25] For by 'shoe' is understood in Holy Scripture the defence of preaching; as it is written, *Feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.* [Eph. 6, 15] Because then strength is expressed by 'iron,' but perseverance by 'brass;' her shoe is said to be iron and brass, when her preaching is protected by sharpness, and firmness at the same time. For by iron she penetrates opposing evils, but by brass she patiently preserves the blessings she has set before her. Whose perseverance he there in truth more plainly points out, saying, *As the days of his youth, so also shall his old age be.* [Deut. 33, 25] But when this Leviathan has taken that sword, whom the Holy Scriptures call Antichrist, for the sake of practising his iniquity, he will esteem both iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood; because, unless Divine grace gives protection, he will both consume with the fire of his wickedness the strength of preachers as straw, and will reduce to dust the constancy of the patient like rotten wood. And therefore the keenness of iron and the strength of brass fail, when by the violence of his might both the understanding of preaching is blunted, and the long-suffering of patience is scattered.

20. Unless then the Divine assistance strengthens its Elect, where will the weak then be, if the strong are counted as straw? What will this Leviathan then do with the straw, if he will count the iron as straw? What is he about to do with the rotten wood, if he will break as rotten wood the strength of brass? But O! how many who think that they are in their own strength iron or brass, in that fire of tribulation then find that they are straw; and how many who from their own infirmity are afraid that they are straw, when supported by the Divine help are strengthened with the solidity of brass or iron, so as to be the stronger in God against their adversary the more they remember that they are weak in themselves. But the higher this Behemoth rises against the Elect of God by miracles, the more earnestly do the saints gird themselves for the words of preaching against him. But yet he so possesses the minds of the reprobate, as not to leave them though he is wounded by all the darts of the truth. Whence it is also subjoined,

Ver. 19. *The archer shall not put him to flight.* [E.V. 28]

[x]

21. For what do we understand by 'arrows' but the words of preachers? For when they are drawn forth by the voice of holy livers, they transfix the hearts of the hearers. With these arrows Holy Church had been struck, who was saying, *I am wounded with love*. [Cant. 2, 5] Of these arrows it is said by the voice of the Psalmist, *The arrows of children are made their wounds*; [Ps. 64, 7] because, that is, the words of the humble have penetrated the minds of the proud. Of these arrows it is said to the coming champion, *Thine arrows are sharp, O Thou most mighty, people shall fall under Thee in their heart*. [Ps. 45, 5] An 'archer' then is he, who by the bow of holy intention fixes in the hearts of his hearers the words of sound exhortation. Because then this Leviathan despises the words of preachers, and when he has wounded the minds of the reprobate by his evil persuasions, does not, in his hardness, in any wise abandon them even in the midst of darts, it is rightly said, *The archer shall not put him to flight*. As if it were plainly said, The arrow of a holy preacher does not dislodge him from the hearts of the reprobate; because, whoever is seized by him, scorns at once to listen to the words of preachers. Whence the Lord, being deservedly angry for their former sins, says by the Prophet of those whom He abandons in the hands of the ancient enemy, *I will send among you serpents, basilisks, for whom there is no charm*. [Jer. 8, 17] As if He were saying, I will deliver you up by just judgment to such unclean spirits, as cannot be shaken off by you, by the exhortation of preachers, as if by the word of charmers. But because this Leviathan is not driven from the hearts of the reprobate by the darts of holy preaching, his very contempt for holy men is also added, when it is immediately observed;  
*The stones of the sling are turned with him into stubble*.

[xi]

22. What is typified by the 'sling,' but Holy Church? For when a sling is whirled round, so do stones fly out of it, for the breasts of the adversaries to be struck therewith. In like manner when Holy Church is led through a circuit of tribulations, in the whirl of time, mighty men come forth from her, by whom the hearts of the wicked are to be beaten as if by the blows of stones. Whence the Lord says to the Prophet concerning good teachers, *They shall devour, and subdue with sling stones*. [Zech. 9, 15] For holy teachers who train others also in virtue, devour their enemies, when they change them within [one Ms. 'into'] their own body by the power of conversion. And they subdue them with sling stones, because while they train all the mighty men in Holy Church, they crush by their means the hard breasts of proud adversaries. Whence also the giant Goliath is killed by the stone of the sling; [1 Sam. 17, 49] because the lofty height of the devil is overcome by a single stone of Holy Church. Because then this Leviathan, when he has assumed that accursed man, despises all the mighty ones of the Church, as if they were weak, and crushes their strength for a season, is it now rightly said, *The stones of the sling are turned with him into stubble*. As if it were plainly said, He reduces as it were into the softness of stubble the strength of Saints, whose tongue before smote his breast with hard blows. For then putting forth all the strength of his iniquity, the more he grieves at being vanquished by them spiritually, the more fiercely does he prevail against them bodily. And because he considers that he has no power against their spirit, he carries out in their flesh all the methods of his cruelty. But what wonder if he despises the strength of men, since he scorns even the very torments of the heavenly judgment against him. Whence it is also subjoined,  
Ver. 20. *He will esteem the hammer as stubble*. [E.V. 29]



[xii]

23. As if he were saying, He despises even the weight of that reproof, which strikes him by a punishment coming from above. For in Holy Scripture by the name 'hammer' is sometimes designated the devil, by whom the faults of offenders are now smitten. But it is sometimes taken for the smiting of heaven, by which even the Elect feel blows from above, in order to amend their evil ways: or it strikes the reprobate with just indignation, in order that by now anticipating eternal punishments, it may shew them what they also deserve hereafter. For that the ancient enemy is expressed by the term 'hammer' the Prophet witnesses, when he observes the power of the last judgment upon him, and says, *How is the hammer of the whole earth broken and crushed?* [Jer. 50, 23] As if he were saying, Who can imagine with what a whirling stroke, at the coming of the last judgment, the Lord shatters him with eternal damnation, by whom He smites those vessels of His which are to be fashioned for the use of His service? Again, by a 'hammer' is expressed a blow from heaven, which is signified by Solomon building the temple, when it is said, *And the house when it was in building, was built of stones hewn, and made ready, and neither hammer, nor hatchet, nor any tool of iron was heard in the house, while it was in building.* [1 Kings 6, 7] For what did that house typify but Holy Church, which the Lord inhabits in heavenly places? To the building of which the souls of the Elect are brought, as if they were some polished stones. And when it is built in heaven, no hammer of discipline there any longer resounds, because we are brought thither, as stones hewn, and made ready to be arranged in places fitted for us according to our desert. For here we are beaten outwardly, in order that we may arrive thither without reproach. Here does the hammer, here the hatchet, here do all the iron tools of blows resound. But in the house of God no blows are heard, because in the eternal country the noises of smitings are now hushed. There the hammer strikes not, because no punishment afflicts. The hatchet cuts not, because no sentence of severity casts out those who have been once received within. The instruments of iron resound not, because not even the slightest scourges are any longer felt. Because then the weight of the heavenly blow is expressed by a hammer coming down from above, what is meant by this Leviathan despising the hammer, except that he scorns to dread the blows of the heavenly punishment? And he counts the hammer as stubble, because he prepares himself for the weight of just wrath, as if against the lightest alarms. Whence it is also added still more expressly;

*And will laugh at Him that shaketh the spear.*

[xiii]

24. For the Lord shakes a spear against Leviathan, because He threatens a severe sentence in his destruction. For to 'shake a spear' is to prepare for him eternal death through strict punishment. But the apostate spirit, despising the Author of his life, even with his own death, laughs at Him that shaketh the spear; because whatever severe, whatever horrible fate he foresees approaching from the strict judgment, he fears not to suffer it: but the more he perceives that he cannot escape eternal torments, with the greater cruelty does he rise up in practising his wickedness. And when the wise ones of this world behold him made firm with such perseverance, and such might, in all that he desires, they, most of them, incline their hearts to yield to his tyranny; and all that they know by the gift of God, do they turn against Him and apply to the service of His enemy. Whence it is also rightly subjoined;

Ver. 21. *The rays of the sun will be under him.* [E.V. 30]

[xiv]

25. For in Holy Scripture when the 'sun' is used figuratively, there is designated sometimes the Lord, sometimes persecution, sometimes the display of an open sight of any thing, but sometimes the understanding of the wise. For by the 'sun' the Lord is typified, as is said in the Book of Wisdom, that all the ungodly in the day of the last judgment, on knowing their own condemnation, are about to say; *We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun rose not upon us.* [Wisd. 5, 6] As if they plainly said: The ray of inward light has not shone on us. Whence also John says; *A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.* [Rev. 12, 1] For by the 'sun' is understood the illumination of truth, but by the moon, which wanes and is filled up every month, the changeableness of temporal things. But Holy Church, because she is protected with the splendour of the heavenly light, is clothed, as it were, with the sun; but, because she despises all temporal things, she tramples the moon under her feet. Again, by the 'sun' is designated persecution, as the Truth says in the Gospel, that the seeds which sprang up without roots withered when the sun arose. [Matt. 13, 6] Because, namely, the words of life which flourish for a moment of time in the heart of earthly men, are dried up by the heat of persecution coming upon them. Again, by the 'sun' is designated the setting forth of a clear view, as the Prophet announces the Lord of all things appearing to our eyes, saying; *He hath set His tabernacle in the sun.* [Ps. 19, 4] As if he were saying, He displayed in the light of clear vision the mystery of His assumed humanity. And as it is said to the same Prophet by the Divine voice by Nathan; *For thou didst it secretly; but I will do this thing in the sight of all Israel, and in the sight of the sun.* [2 Sam. 12, 12] For what does he mean by the sight of the sun, except the knowledge of manifest vision. Again, by the name 'sun' is expressed the understanding of the wise, as it is written in the Apocalypse; *The fourth angel poured forth his vial upon the sun, and it was given unto him to afflict men with heat and fire.* [Rev. 16, 8] To pour forth a vial upon the sun is in truth to inflict the punishments of persecution on men shining with the splendour of wisdom. *And it was given unto him to afflict men with heat and fire.* Because when wise men, overcome by tortures, are smitten with the error of evil living, the weak, being persuaded by their example, burn with temporal desires. For the falls of the strong increase the destructions of the weak. That the acuteness of wisdom is designated by the 'sun,' is said also in the way of comparison by Solomon; *A wise man continueth as the sun, a fool changeth as the moon.* [Ecclus. 27, 11] What then is pointed out in this place by the rays of the sun, but the acuteness of wise men? For because many, who seemed to be resplendent in Holy Church with the light of wisdom, either caught by persuasions, or alarmed by threats, or overpowered by tortures, submit themselves at that time to the power of this Leviathan, it is rightly said, *The rays of the sun will be under him.* As if it were plainly said, These, who within Holy Church seemed by the acuteness of wisdom to shed, as it were, rays of light, and by the authority of rectitude to be resplendent from above, submit themselves under the power of this Leviathan by their evil doings, so as no longer to shine from above by sound preaching, but to submit to him by obeying him in perverse ways. The rays therefore of the sun are under him, when some, even learned men, do not exalt the acuteness of their wisdom by acting freely, but bend themselves down, both by the perversity of their doings, and by the fawning of adulation, to the steps of this Leviathan; so that their understanding, which by the gift of heaven was like a sun to them from above, is cast down, by earthly desire, beneath the feet of the ancient enemy. And accordingly even now when any of the wise or learned, for the sake

of advantage, or of the glory of temporal life, submits, by falling into flattery, to the powers of the world who work wickedness, a ray of the sun casts itself, as it were, beneath the feet of the coming Antichrist. And Behemoth humbles, as it were, beneath himself the light of heaven, when he tramples under foot, through their fatal assent, the minds of the wise. The rays, therefore, of the sun submit themselves to the feet of this Leviathan, as often as those who seem to be resplendent with the light of doctrine derive, through excessive acuteness, wrong opinions from Holy Scripture, and by their perverse opinions yield themselves up to his errors. For when they set themselves up against the faithful preaching of the truth, they follow by their false opinions the footsteps of this Leviathan. The rays of the sun are under him, as often as those who are learned, or powerful with the light of understanding, either exalt themselves in pride, to the contempt of others, or putting aside the lofty thoughts they feel, are polluted with the filthy desires of the flesh, or, forgetting heavenly things, pursue those of earth, or, not remembering that they are earth, boast vainly of their knowledge of heavenly things. Whence it is there also rightly subjoined,  
*He will strew gold under him like clay.*

[xv]

26. For by the term 'gold' in Holy Scripture is understood sometimes the brightness of Divinity, sometimes the splendour of the heavenly city, sometimes charity, sometimes the brightness of secular glory, sometimes the beauty of sanctity. For by the name 'gold' is designated the very inmost brightness of Divinity, as the appearance of the Bridegroom is described in the Song of Songs; *His head is the most fine gold*. [Cant. 5, 11] For because God is the Head of Christ, but in metals nothing is brighter than gold, the Head of the Bridegroom is said to be gold, because His Humanity rules over us from the brightness of His Divinity. Again, by the name 'gold' is understood the splendour of the heavenly city, as John bears witness that he saw it, saying; *The city itself was of pure gold, like unto clear glass*. [Rev. 21, 18] For the gold of which that city consists is said to be like glass, in order that by the gold it may be described as being bright, and by the glass as being clear. Again, by the name 'gold' charity is suggested, as *the Angel*, whom the same John beheld talking with him, he saw girt at the paps with a golden girdle. [Rev. 1, 13] Doubtless because when the breasts of the citizens of heaven are no longer subject to the fear of punishment, and are not separated by any rent the one from the other, they bind themselves together by charity alone. [see Bk. xxi. §5. comp. Acts 7, 30] But to 'have a golden girdle about the paps,' is to restrain all the movements of our changeable thoughts by the hands of love alone. Again, by the name of 'gold' is expressed the brightness of secular glory, as is said by the Prophet, *Babylon is a golden cup*. [Jer. 51, 7] For what is designated by the name of Babylon, but the glory of this world? And this 'cup' is said to be 'golden,' because while it shews the beauty of temporal things, it so intoxicates foolish minds with its concupiscence, that they desire temporal display, and despise invisible beauties. For in this golden cup Eve was the first who was made drunken of her own accord, of whom the history of truth says, that when she desired the forbidden tree, she saw that it was beautiful to the sight, and delightful to the look, and ate thereof. [Gen. 3, 6] Babylon is therefore a golden cup; because while it displays a look of outward beauty, it steals away the feeling of inward rectitude. Again, by the name of 'gold' is understood the splendor of sanctity, as Jeremiah deplores the change of the Jewish people from the splendor of righteousness to the gloom of wickedness, saying, *How is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed?* [Lam. 4, 1] For as we said before, gold is dimmed, when the beauty of righteousness is forsaken, as the darkness of iniquity succeeds. The finest colour is changed, when the splendour of innocence is turned into the

foulness of sin.

27. By the name also of 'clay' is designated in Holy Scripture sometimes the multiplicity of earthly goods, sometimes wicked teaching which savours of filth, sometimes the allurements of carnal desire. For by 'clay' is typified the multiplicity of earthly goods, as is said by the Prophet Habakkuk, *Woe to him that multiplieth those things which are not his; how long doth he heap against himself the thick clay?* [Hab. 2, 6] For he weighs himself down with thick clay, who multiplying earthly goods by avarice, confines himself with the oppression of his sin. Again, by the name of 'clay' is designated teaching which savours of faith, as is said to the Lord by the same Prophet; *Thou madest a way in the sea for thy horses, in the clay of many waters.* [Hab. 3, 15] As if he were saying, Thou hast opened a way for thy preachers amid the doctrines of this world which savour of filthy and earthly things. By 'clay' is designated also the desire of filthy pleasure, as the Psalmist says in entreaty; *Take me out of the clay, that I stick not.* [Ps. 69, 14] For to stick in the clay, is to be polluted with the filthy desires of carnal concupiscence.

28. In this place therefore 'gold' is taken for the brightness of sanctity; but nothing hinders our understanding by 'clay,' either covetousness in earthly things, or the infection of wicked doctrines, or the filth of carnal pleasures. For because this Leviathan subjects at that time to himself many, who seemed within Holy Church to be resplendent with the brightness of righteousness, either by the desire of earthly things, or by the infection of erroneous doctrine, or by carnal pleasures, he doubtless strews the gold under him like clay. For to strew gold as clay, is to trample down in some persons purity of life by unlawful desires; so that even they may follow his filthy footsteps, who used before to flash forth against him with the splendour of their virtues. The ancient enemy then deceives some at that time under a show of sanctity, but intercepts others by the foul sins of a carnal life. But he will then openly attack in these ways, but now he rules secretly in the hearts of many, as the Apostle Paul says, *That he may be revealed in his time; for the mystery of iniquity doth already work.* [2 Thess. 2, 6. 7.] He therefore even now throws gold under him as clay, as often as he overthrows the chastity of the faithful through the sins of the flesh. He tramples on gold as clay, as often as he distracts the understanding of the continent by unclean desires. And this he performs the more vehemently at that time, the more unrestrainedly he perpetrates all that he desires, as given up to his own abandoned liberty.

29. And it may perhaps disturb some one, why the merciful Lord permits those things so to happen, that this Leviathan either now by crafty suggestions, or then by that accursed man whom he fully possesses, subjects to himself even the rays of the sun, that is, the learned and wise, or strews gold (that is, holy men refulgent with the brightness of sanctity) as clay beneath him, by polluting them with sins. But we reply at once, that the gold which could be strewed as clay by his evil persuasions, was never gold before the eyes of God. For they who can at any time be seduced so as never to come back again, seem in the eyes of men to lose the sanctity they possessed; but they never had it in the sight of God. For a man is often involved secretly in many sins, and he seems great in some one virtue. And this virtue itself also becomes weak and fails, because, when it is observed by men, it is doubtless praised, and its praise is eagerly sought after. Whence it comes, that even that very virtue is no virtue in the eyes of God, while it conceals that which displeases, puts forward that which pleases Him. What merits then can there possibly be with God, when both sins are concealed, and good qualities made public? For frequently, as we have said, pride is hidden, and chastity is publicly known; and therefore the chastity which has been long made a shew

of, is lost towards the end of life, because the concealed pride is sustained unamended even to the end. Another is busy in almsgiving, he distributes his own goods; but he is yet a slave to many acts of injustice, or perhaps employs his tongue in detraction. And it is frequently the case, that he, who had been compassionate, is inflamed, at the end of his life, with the stimulants of rapacity and cruelty. And it is the effect of a most righteous judgment, that he loses before men, even that by which he pleased men, who was never careful to amend that, by which he was displeasing to God. Another studies patience; but while he does not avoid envying others, and keeping malice in his heart, he at last becomes impatient, who for a long while grieved in secret. These therefore are in some measure 'gold,' and in some measure 'clay.' And this 'gold' is strewed as 'clay,' when even the virtue, which had shone brightly before men, is scattered by the force of secret sins. But we think it worth while to consider more accurately the excellence of the heavenly dispensation in these cases.

30. For Almighty God often tolerates the secret sins of some persons, in order that He may so make use of their known virtues as to promote the interests of His own Elect. For some persons do not entirely forsake the world, and lay hold on the narrow way, not so as to persevere. But yet by their example they inflame those, who are about to persevere, to seek the narrow way. Whence it frequently happens that this good life which they seem to live, they live not for themselves, but rather for the Elect alone, when, though not about to persevere themselves, they excite others, who will persevere, to zeal in holy living. But we often behold some persons enter on a way, and hasten to the proposed spot; and others follow them, because they see them on the way, and they go on together to the same place. But it frequently happens that when any difficulty assails them, those who were going before, return back, and that those who were following reach the appointed spot. So doubtless are those who lay hold on the way of holiness, though not about to persevere. For they enter on the way of virtue, though not about to reach its end, for the very purpose of shewing to those who are about to reach it, the way in which they should walk. And even the fall of these promotes, with no slight benefit, the advancement of the Elect. Because while they behold their fall, they tremble for their own state, and the ruin which condemns those, humbles these. For they learn to trust in the protection of heavenly assistance, when they see that many have fallen from their own strength. When therefore the reprobate seem to be acting rightly, they are pointing out as it were a level road for the Elect who are following them; but when they fall and lapse into wickedness, they shew, as it were, to the Elect who are journeying after them, the pitfall of pride to be guarded against. Let this Leviathan then go his way, and 'put beneath himself the rays of the sun,' and 'cast under him the gold like clay.' Almighty God knows how to use aright the sin of the reprobate for the comfort of His own Elect, when they who are about to reach Him, both advance toward Him by their own merits, and are frequently corrected in their proud thoughts by the lapses of others. But if this Leviathan acts thus even with those whom some virtue distinguishes, what is he likely to do with those whose mind is not in any degree raised up above earthly desires? These persons however the divine discourse plainly mentions, when it subjoins, Ver. 22. *He will make the deep sea to boil like a pot.* [E.V. 31]

[xvi]

31. What is expressed by the 'sea' but the life of the worldly, what by the 'deep' ['profundum'] but their deep and hidden thoughts? And this deep sea this Leviathan makes to boil like a pot, because it is doubtless quite plain, that in the time of the last persecution he studies to excite the minds of

the reprobate against the life of the Elect by the flame of cruelty. Then does the deep sea boil as a pot, when he inflames with strong heat the hearts of the lovers of this world, and when those who in this time of peace kept their malice close within itself, then boil over with the heat of most savage persecutions, and with the headlong liberty of open cruelty breathe forth that hatred of ancient envy, which they had long suppressed. But because, when persuaded by deadly error they so serve Antichrist in these doings, as to imagine that they are the more truly doing service to Christ; after he had said, *He will make the deep sea to boil like a pot*, be fitly subjoined, *He will make it as when ointments boil*.

[xvii]

32. For ointments when they boil give forth the fragrance of sweetness. Because then this Leviathan will so seduce the hearts of the reprobate, that, whatever they do from the wickedness of unbelief, they imagine they are doing it for the truth of the right faith, that which they do with zeal for religion, smells, as it were, sweetly to them. Whence the Truth says to His disciples in the Gospel; *That every one that killeth you, will think that he doeth God service*. [John 16, 2] They, therefore, boil as a pot, while they cruelly persecute: but this very persecution smells, to their sense, with the fragrance of ointments, when their mind, deceived by vain imaginations, thinks that it is doing God service. For in Holy Scripture by the sweet smell of ointments is usually signified an opinion of virtues. Whence the Bride in the Song of Songs, longing for the Bridegroom, says, *We run in the odour of Thy ointments*. [Cant. 1, 3] And hence the Apostle Paul, knowing that he was fragrant with the praise of virtues, says, *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ*. [2 Cor. 2, 15] Because, therefore this Leviathan involves the ministers of that accursed vessel of his in deeds of cruelty, under the notions of praise, and the pretext of virtue, after He had said, *He will make the deep sea to boil as a pot*: He immediately rightly adds, *He will make it as when ointments boil*. For the sea which boils with the fire of cruelty, He shews to boil as ointments, in the judgment of those same persons, who are excited by the feigned name of virtue; in order that they may become more atrocious in their cruelty, the more they believe that they even deserve rewards for their zeal for religion. And in the Divine judgment it is just that they, who neglect to consider and guard the power of piety, should be deceived by the odour of their own fancy. Whence, to increase the illusion, signs also and prodigies attend them when committing their cruelties, as it is also rightly subjoined;

Ver. 23. *A path will shine after him*. [E.V. 32]

[xviii]

33. For a 'path' is said to shine after Leviathan, because wherever he passes along, he leaves behind him great astonishment from the brightness of his miracles, and wherever he goes forth, either by himself or by his ministers, he glitters with lying wonders. Whence the Truth says in the Gospel, that which we have already frequently quoted; *There will arise false Christs, and false prophets, and will give signs and wonders, so as even for the Elect, if possible, to be led into error*. [Mark 13, 22] A path, therefore, shines after Leviathan, because he enlightens by prodigies the deeds of those, whose hearts he penetrates; in order, doubtless, to keep their minds more deeply involved in the darkness of error, the more powerfully he displays, as it were, by their means the light of miracles without. But there are some, who retaining in their memory both the words of the Prophets, and the precepts of the Gospel, know that both the wonders he displays are false, and that the punishments,

to which he leads them on by his deceit, are true. Because, therefore, this Leviathan does not deceive their hearts by a display of sanctity, he presents himself to them with another illusion. For he observes some persons, though knowing these things, yet loving the present life; to whose minds he proceeds to make light of future punishments; he asserts, that the sentence of severity will at length terminate; and hurries them on, when craftily deceived, to present pleasures. Whence it is also immediately fitly subjoined;

*He will esteem the deep ['abyssum'] as growing old.*

[xix]

34. That the eternal and incomprehensible judgments are usually designated by the name 'deep' the Psalmist witnesses, saying, *Thy judgments are a great deep*. [Ps. 36, 6] But old age is sometimes put for the approach of the end. Whence the Apostle says, *That which decayeth and waxeth old, is near to destruction*. [Heb. 8, 13] This Leviathan, therefore, will look on the deep as growing old, because he so infatuates the hearts of the reprobate, as to infuse in them a suspicion that the approaching judgment may come, as it were, to an end. For he considers that the abyss is growing old, who thinks that the heavenly infliction of punishment will ever be brought to a close. This ancient deceiver, therefore, makes light in his members, that is, in the minds of the wicked, of future punishments, which he bounds, as it were, by a certain limit, in order that he may prolong their faults without any limit from reproof, and that they may not here put an end to their sins, the more they imagine that the punishments of sins will be there brought to a close.

35. For there are those even now, who neglect to put an end to their sins, for the very reason that they suspect that the future judgments upon them will, some time or another, have an end. To whom we briefly reply; If the punishments of the reprobate will at any time be ended, the joys of the blessed will also be ended at last. For the Truth says by His own mouth, *These shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into life eternal*. [Matt. 25, 46] If, therefore, this is not true which He has threatened, neither is that true which He has promised. But they say, He threatened eternal punishment to sinners, in order to restrain them from the perpetration of sins; because He ought to threaten, not inflict, eternal punishments on His creature. To whom we reply at once: If He has made false threats in order to withdraw ['corrigerere'] from unrighteousness, He has also made false promises, in order to encourage to righteousness. And who can tolerate this madness of theirs, who, while they assert in their fair offers that the punishments of the reprobate are terminated, overthrow by their assertion the rewards, and recompenses, of the Elect also? Who can tolerate their madness, who endeavour to establish that that is not true which the Truth has threatened concerning eternal fire, and who, while busy in declaring God to be merciful, are not ashamed to proclaim Him to be false?

36. But they said, A fault, which has an end, ought not to be punished without end. Almighty God is doubtless just, and that which is not committed with eternal sin, ought not to be punished with eternal torment. To whom we reply at once, that they would say rightly, if the just and strict Judge at His coming considered not the hearts, but only the doings of men. For the wicked have sinned with a limit, because their life had a limit. For they would have wished to live without end, in order that they might continue in their sins without end. For they are more eager to sin than to live; and they therefore wish to live for ever here, in order that they may never cease to sin, as long as they live. It pertains then to the justice of the strict Judge, that they should never be free from

punishment, whose mind desired when in this life never to be free from sin; and that no end of punishment should be granted to the wicked, because as long as he was able he wished to have no end to his sin.

37. But they say, No just person revels in cruelty, and an offending servant is ordered by his just master to be scourged, in order to be corrected of his wickedness. He is, therefore, scourged for some object, when his master delights not in his tortures. But to what end will the wicked ever burn, who have been consigned to the fires of hell? And because it is certain that the Merciful and Almighty God revels not in the tortures of the wicked, why are the wretched put to torture, if they make not expiation? To whom we reply at once, that Almighty God, because He is merciful, revels not in the torture of the wretched; but because He is just, He ceases not, even for ever, from punishing the wicked. But all the wicked are punished with eternal suffering, and indeed by their own iniquity; and yet they are burnt for some purpose, in order, namely, that all the just may behold in God the joys they experience, and may see in them the punishments they have escaped; in order that they may acknowledge that they are the more indebted to Divine grace, the more they see the eternal punishment of the sins, which by His help they were able to avoid.

38. But they say, And where then is their saintship, if they will not pray for their enemies, whom they will then see burning, though it is expressly said to them, *Pray for your enemies?* [Matt. 5, 44] But we reply at once, They pray for their enemies at that time when they are able to convert their hearts to fruitful penitence, and save them by this very conversion. For what else must we pray for our enemies, except that which the Apostle says, *That God may give them repentance, and that they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil, by whom they are held captive unto his will?* [2 Tim. 2, 25. 26.] And how will prayers be made at that time for them, when they can no longer be in any degree turned from iniquity to works of righteousness? There is, therefore, the same reason for not praying then for men condemned to eternal fire, as there is now for not praying for the devil and his angels who have been consigned to eternal punishment. And this is now the reason for holy men not praying for unbelieving and ungodly men who are dead; for they are unwilling that the merit of their prayer should be set aside, in that presence of the righteous Judge, when in behalf of those whom they know to be already consigned to eternal punishment. But if even now the just when alive do not sympathize with the unjust who are dead and condemned, (when they know that they themselves are still enduring from their flesh that which will be called into judgment,) how much more severely do they then regard the torments of the wicked, when, stripped of every sin of corruption, they will themselves cleave more closely and firmly to righteousness? For the power of severity so absorbs their minds, by means of their cleaving to the most righteous Judge, that they take no pleasure whatever in any thing which is at variance with the strictness of that inward rule. But because we have made these brief remarks against the followers of Origen [See Huetii Origeniana, B. 2. q. 11.], as the opportunity occurred, let us go back to the course of exposition, from which we have digressed. After the merciful Lord had pointed out the crafty machinations of this Leviathan, openly announcing all the fierce oppressions he inflicts outwardly on the Elect, and every thing which he infuses into the reprobate within by his flattering suggestion, He immediately subjoins, in speaking briefly of the hugeness of his strength;

Ver. 24. *There is no power upon earth, which can be compared to him.* [E.V. 33]

[xx]



39. His power upon earth is said to be preeminent over all, because though he has fallen below men by the merit of his doings, yet he transcends the whole human race by the condition of his angelic nature. For though he has lost the happiness of eternal felicity, yet he has not lost the greatness of his nature; by the strength of which he still surpasses all human things, though he is inferior to holy men, by the baseness of his deserts. Whence also the meritorious recompense of the Saints, who are contending against him, is the more increased, the more he is defeated by them, who boasts that, by the power of his nature, he has as it were a right to rule over men. It follows;  
*Who was made to fear no one.*

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40. He was indeed so made by nature, as to be bound to feel a chaste fear for his Creator; that is to say, with a subdued and fearless fear, not with the fear which love casts out, but with the fear which remains for ever and ever, that is, which love begets. For a loving wife fears her husband in one way, an offending handmaid fears her master in another. He had therefore been so created, as, with joyful dread, to fear his Maker with love, and to love Him with fear. But by his own perversity he was made such as to fear no one. For he scorned to be subject to Him by Whom he had been created. For God is in such way above all, as to be Himself subject to no one. But this Leviathan, beholding the height of His loftiness, aimed at the privilege of the fatal liberty of ruling over others, and being subject to no one, saying, *I will ascend above the height of the clouds, and I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 14] But he lost His likeness, because he proudly desired to be like Him in loftiness. For he who was bound to imitate His charity, in subjection, aimed at gaining His loftiness, and lost through pride that which he was able to imitate. He would, doubtless, have been lofty, if he had been willing to cleave to Him Who is truly lofty. He would have been lofty, if he had been contented with a participation in true loftiness. But while he proudly aimed at high estate by himself, he rightly lost that which was participated. For having left that First Cause, to Whom he was bound to adhere, he aimed at being, in a sense, his own first cause ['principium']. Having forsaken Him, Who was able truly to be sufficient for him, he decided that he was able to be sufficient for himself, and fell the more beneath himself, the more he raised himself up against the glory of his Creator. For him, whom a slavery akin to freedom exalted, a slavish freedom cast down. With which liberty he is so let loose, as to fear no one, but he is grievously restrained by this very want of restraint. For, by the heavenly judgment which wisely ordains all things, the liberty which he desired, fettered him; because he, who was able to subdue even the elements, if he had been willing to fear the One Whom he ought, is now, though in every way not fearing, subject to every punishment. He doubtless would fear One with possession of all things, who now, by not fearing One, suffers all things.

41. He was therefore made to fear no one, no one, that is, because not even God. But he neither feared that which he was about to suffer. But it had been doubtless more blessed for him to avoid punishments, by fearing them, than by not fearing, to endure them. He changed therefore his desire after high estate into hardness of heart, in order that he, who sought in his ambition to rule over others, might feel not, through hardness of heart, that he has wrought wickedly. For because he did not obtain the right of the power he sought for, he found the madness of insensibility a kind of remedy for his pride; and because he was not able, by going beyond, to surpass all things, he, by making light of these, prepared himself to meet all things. But his pride is still further carefully described, when it is immediately observed;

Ver. 25. *He beholdeth every high thing.* [E.V. 34]

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42. That is, he looks down as if from above on all, who are, as it were, placed beneath him; because while he strives in his intention against his Maker, he scorns to think any one like himself. And this fitly suits his members also, because all the wicked, elated through swelling of heart, despise with the haughtiness of pride all whom they behold. And if they ever respect them outwardly, yet within, in the secret of their heart, where they are great in their own estimation, they consider the life and the merits of others inferior to themselves. And they look on them as beneath themselves, because, through the lofty thought of their heart, they have placed themselves on a kind of high eminence. To whom it is well said by the Prophet; *Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight.* [Is. 5, 21] Hence also Paul says; *Be not wise in your own conceits.* [Rom. 12, 16] Hence it is said to Saul by the Divine reproof; *When thou wast little in thine own eyes, did I not make thee a head in the tribes of Israel?* [1 Sam. 15, 17] For he is little in his own eyes, who in considering himself, regards himself as inferior to the merits of others. For whoever in the loftiness of his thought extends himself above the merits of others, looks, as it were, on himself as great. But the reprobate Saul remained not in the good which he had begun, because he was swollen with pride at the power he had received. But, on the other hand, David, ever thinking humbly of himself, and counting himself inferior, in comparison with the same Saul, after he had met with an opportunity of striking, and spared this same raging adversary, prostrated himself with humble profession, saying; *Whom dost thou pursue, O king of Israel? whom dost thou pursue? A dead dog, and a single flea.* [1 Sam. 24, 15] And he had been already certainly anointed as king, and had already learned by Samuel praying, and pouring the oil upon his head, that Divine Grace, having rejected Saul, was preserving him to hold the helm of the kingdom. And yet with humble mind he was prostrating himself to his persecuting adversary, to whom he knew that he had been preferred in the Divine judgment. He therefore humbly placed himself beneath him, to whom he knew that he was incomparably superior through the grace of election. Let those then, who are still ignorant in what rank they are held by God, learn in what way they should humble themselves to their neighbours, if even His Elect thus humble themselves before those, to whom they know they are already preferred in His secret judgments.

43. But it is a usual mark of the Elect, that they ever think more meanly of themselves than they really are. For hence it is said by the same David; *If I did not think humbly, but exalted my soul.* [Ps. 131, 1] Hence Solomon invites the little ones to wisdom, saying; *If any is a little one, let him come to her.* [Prov. 9, 4] But he who as yet despises not himself, does not lay hold of the humble wisdom of God. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel; *I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones.* [Matt. 11, 25] Hence again the Psalmist says; *The Lord keeping little ones.* [Ps. 116, 5] Hence the teacher of the Gentiles says; *We became little ones in the midst of you.* [1 Thess. 2, 7] Hence advising his disciples, he says; *Each esteeming others better than themselves.* [Phil. 2, 3] For, because every wicked person considers every one whom he knows, to be inferior to himself, the righteous, on the contrary, endeavours to regard all his neighbours as superior to himself. And lest, when one person humbles himself before another, this humiliation should tend to the pride of the other, he rightly admonished both parties, saying; *Each esteeming others better than themselves:* in order that in the thoughts of the heart I should prefer him to myself, and he in return

should prefer me to himself; so that, when the heart is kept down on either side, no one may be elated by the honour bestowed on him.

44. But the reprobate, because they are members of this Leviathan, scorn either to know or to maintain this form of humility. Because, though they sometimes shew themselves outwardly humble, yet they neglect to maintain the power of humility within. And it often happens to them that if they ever perform one single good thing, however trifling, they immediately turn away the thought of their mind from all their faults, and ever look with all their attention at even this last good thing they may have done, and that from this they regard themselves as already holy, forgetting all the wickedness they have committed, keeping in mind only their one good action, which perhaps they were able but imperfectly to execute. As, on the other hand, it is usually the case with the Elect, that though powerful in the grace of many virtues, one sin, however inconsiderable, greatly harasses and assails them, in order that, by considering that they are weakened in one quarter, they may not pride themselves on those virtues in which they are powerful. And while they tremble at their weakness, they also maintain more humbly that point in which they are strong. The wicked, therefore, by thus incautiously looking at their one inconsiderable good quality, discern not the many and grievous sins in which they are plunged. And it is so ordered by a marvellous dispensation, that the Elect from the fear of being weakened by even their most minute sin, lose not the great virtues to which they have advanced.

45. It is so ordered then by the rule of the righteous and secret judgment, that their evils are of service to the one, and that their good things are injurious to the others; when these make use of their slight sins for their advance in virtue, and those avail themselves of their smallest good deeds to add to their sin. For these advance to greater perfection in virtue from the fact that they are tempted to sin. But those fall back into greater sin, from the fact that they boast of their goodness. The reprobate therefore applies what is good to a bad purpose, and the virtuous applies what is had to a good purpose. As it frequently happens that one person falls into the evil of sickness from wholesome food taken improperly, and that another, by taking the poison of a serpent in a medicine of proper composition, gets the better of his troublesome sickness. He therefore who would not use his wholesome food aright, perishes fatally by the very means from which others live in health. But he who took care to use the serpent's poison cautiously, lives in health by the very means by which others perish fatally. We call then not the wickedness itself, but the suggestion of wickedness, with which we are often tempted against our will and efforts, the poison of the serpent. But this is then turned into a remedy, when the mind which is raised on high by its virtues, is brought low by the temptations it sees ranged against it. Whatever works then the wicked, and those who are rejected from the approval of inward examination, may perform, with whatever virtues they may shine forth, they are utterly ignorant of the sense of humility; doubtless because they are members of this Leviathan, of whom it is said by the voice on high, *He beholdeth every high thing*. Because not only by himself, but by the hearts of those whom he has possessed, he looks down as from a high place on all beneath him.

46. But it must be observed, that this Leviathan, who is described by a beast which possesses a body, is described as looking on high, because, namely, when pride of heart extends outwardly as far as to the body, it is first indicated by the eyes. For they, being puffed up by the swelling of pride, look, as it were, from on high, and the more they depress, the higher they raise, themselves. For unless pride shewed itself through the eyes, as if through certain outlets ['fenestras'], the

Psalmist would never say to God, *Thou wilt save the humble people, and wilt bring down the eyes of the proud.* [Ps. 18, 27] Unless pride poured forth through the eyes, Solomon would not say also concerning the pride of Judaea; *A generation, whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids lifted up on high.* [Prov. 30, 13] Because then this Leviathan is designated by an animal possessing a body, and pride, when it comes forth into the body, more plainly rules over the eyes, the ancient enemy is described as seeing all men, as it were, from on high. But because many points are brought forward to set forth the enemy of the human race, the mind is very desirous, that some one point should be more plainly stated, in the end of the Lord's speech, by which his members can be pointed out by a brief description. It follows;

*He is a king over all the children of pride.*

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47. This Leviathan, in order to fall in all the points mentioned above, smote himself with pride alone. For he would not wither up, through those many branches of sins, had he not first, through this, become rotten in the root. For it is written, *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* [Ecclus. 10, 13] For by this he himself fell, by this he overthrew men who followed him. He assaulted the health of our immortality with the same weapon as he destroyed the life of his own blessedness. But God introduced it at the end of His speech, for this reason, that by mentioning the pride of this Leviathan after all his sins, He might point out what was worse than all sins. Although further, from the fact of its being placed at the bottom, it is pointed out to be the root of vices. For as a root is covered over beneath, but yet branches expand outwardly from it, so pride conceals itself within, but open vices immediately shoot forth from it. For no evils would come forth to view, if this did not fetter the mind in secret. This is that which makes the mind of this Leviathan to boil as a pot. And by this he agitates also the minds of men with a kind of glow of madness, but he shews by their outward deeds how he subverts the mind of the person he agitates. For that first boils with pride within, which afterwards foams forth in works without.

48. But because an opportunity has offered itself of speaking about pride, we ought to examine into it with greater minuteness and anxiety, and to point out with what power or in what way it enters the minds of men, and on whom, and in what way, it commits ravages. For other sins assail those virtues only by which they themselves are destroyed; as, namely, anger patience, gluttony abstinence, lust continence. But pride, which we have called the root of vices, far from being satisfied with the extinction of one virtue, raises itself up against all the members of the soul, and as an universal and deadly disease corrupts the whole body. So that whatever is doing when it makes its assaults, even if it appears to be a virtue, vain-glory alone, and not God, is served thereby. For when pride assaults the mind, a kind of tyrant closely invests, as it were, a besieged city: and the wealthier is any one he has seized, the more harshly does he rise up in his authority; because the more largely the business of virtue is transacted without humility, the more widely does pride exercise its sway. But whoever has with enslaved mind admitted its tyranny within, suffers this loss first of all, that from the eye of his heart being closed, he loses the equitableness of judgment. For even all the good doings of others are displeasing to him, and the things which he has done, even amiss, alone please him. He always looks down on the doings of others, he always admires his own doings; because whatever he has done, he believes that he has done with singular skill; and for that which he performs through desire of glory, he favours himself in his thought; and when he thinks that he surpasses others in all things, he walks with himself along the broad spaces of his thought,

and silently utters his own praises. But the mind is sometimes brought to such haughtiness, as in his pride to be unrestrained even in boastfulness of speech. But ruin follows the more easily, the more shamelessly a man is puffed up in his own mind. For hence it is written, *The heart is exalted before a fall*. [Prov. 16, 18] Hence it is said by Daniel, *The king was walking in the palace of Babylon, and he answered and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, in the glory of my beauty?* [Dan. 4, 29] But how vengeance swiftly aroused repressed this pride, he immediately added, saying, *While the word was yet in the king's mouth, there fell voice from heaven, To thee it is said, O king Nabuchodonosor, the kingdom shall depart from thee, and they shall drive thee out from men, and thy habitation shall be with cattle, and wild beasts: thou shalt eat hay as an ox, and seven times shall be changed over thee*. [ib. 31] Behold, because the pride of mind vented itself even in open words, the forbearance of the Judge immediately burst out in his sentence; and smote him the more severely, the more immoderately his pride exalted itself; and because he enumerated and mentioned the goods in which he flattered himself, he heard the evils enumerated with which he was to be smitten.

49. But it should be understood, that this very pride, of which we are speaking, possesses some persons in secular, and others in spiritual concerns. For one prides himself on gold, another on eloquence, one on weak and earthly things, another on the highest and heavenly virtues. And yet one and the same thing is going on before the eyes of God, though, as it comes to the hearts of men, it is clothed in their sight with a different garb. For when he who was at first proud of earthly glory, is afterwards elated at his sanctity, pride has never forsaken his heart, but, coming to him as usual, it has changed its garment, that it may not be recognised.

50. It should be known also, that it attacks rulers in one way, and subjects in another. For it suggests to the thoughts of a ruler, that he has by the sole merit of his life risen above others; and if he has ever done any things well, it suggests them unseasonably to his mind. And when it suggests that he has specially pleased God, in order the more easily to enforce its suggestion, it brings forward in evidence, the recompense of the power entrusted to him; saying, That unless Almighty God perceived thee to be better than these men, He would not have given them all under thy power. And it presently exalts his mind, points out that those who are under his power are vile and worthless, so that he no longer regards any body as fit for him to speak to on equal terms. And hence the calmness of his mind is soon turned into wrath; because when he despises all, when he blames without any moderation the understanding, and the conduct of all, he swells out the more unrestrainedly into anger, the more he considers that those who are committed to his charge, are not worthy of him.

51. But, on the other hand, when pride urges on the heart of subjects, it strives especially to make them neglect entirely the consideration of their own conduct, and in their silent thoughts always to become judges of their ruler. For when they look unseasonably for what they ought to blame in him, they never notice what to correct in themselves. And hence they perish the more dreadfully, the more they avert their eyes from themselves; because they stumble and fall in the journey of this life, while they fix their attention elsewhere. They declare that they are sinners indeed, but not to such a degree that they should be delivered up to the control of so hurtful a person. And while they despise his doings, while they scorn his precepts, they are plunged into such madness, as to think that God does not care for the concerns of men; because they grieve that they have been put under the charge of one, who is, as it were, deservedly blamed. And while they are thus proud against

their ruler, they also rise up against the sentence of their Maker. And whilst they pass sentence on the conduct of their pastor, they impugn also the wisdom of Him who orders all things. But they often oppose the commands of their ruler impertinently, and term this haughtiness of language, liberty. For pride frequently thus presents itself, as if it were proper liberty, just as fear frequently puts itself in the place of humility. For, just as many are silent through fear, and yet consider that they are silent from humility, so do some speak from the impatience of pride, and yet think that they are speaking with rightful freedom. But sometimes inferiors utter not the impertinencies which they feel; and they whose loquacity is hardly restrained, are sometimes silent solely from the bitterness of their inward rancour. But, by suppressing through grief of mind their words of impertinence, though they are wont to speak wickedly, they are more wickedly silent. Because when on having sinned they hear any correction, they keep back, through indignation, the words of reply. Whenever they are treated harshly, they frequently break out into words of complaint at this very harshness. But when their teachers prevent them with gentleness, they are more grievously indignant at this very humility, with which they are prevented. And their mind is the more vastly inflamed, the more considerately it is regarded as weak. These doubtless, because they are ignorant of humility, which is the parent of virtues, lose the benefit of their labour, even if there are any good things which they seem to do; because the height of the rising fabric is not strongly fixed, which is not by the strength of its foundation made fast on the rock. That then which they build rises up only to fall, because before they erect the fabric they do not first prepare the foundations of humility. But we thoroughly lay open their inmost character, if we shew what they are in a few outward points.

52. For to all who swell within with proud thoughts there is noisiness in their speech, bitterness in their silence, dissoluteness in their mirth, wrath in their sorrow, unseemliness in their conduct, comeliness in their appearance, erectness in their gait, rancour in their reply. Their mind is ever strong in inflicting, weak in enduring, contumely; sluggish in obeying, importunate in provoking others; slothful in those things which it ought, and has power, to do, but ready for those which it neither ought, nor is able, to do. In that which it seeks not of its own accord, it is turned by no exhortation, but it seeks to be compelled to do that which it secretly longs for, because while it fears to become cheap from indulging its desire, it wishes to suffer compulsion even in its own will.

53. Because then we have said that the minds of men are tempted in one way by carnal, and in another by spiritual, concerns, let those hear; *All flesh is grass, and the glory thereof as the flower of grass.* [Is. 40, 6] And let these hear that which is said to some persons after their miracles; *I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.* [Luke 13, 27] Let those hear; *If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.* [Ps. 62, 10] Let these hear that the foolish virgins, who come with empty vessels, are shut out from the marriage within. [Matt. 25, 12] Again, because we have said before, that rulers are tempted in one way, and subjects in another, let those hear that which is said by a certain wise man; *Have they made thee a ruler? Be not lifted up, but be among them as one of them.* [Ecclus. 32, 1] Let these hear; *Obey them that have the rule over you, and be subject to them, for they watch as if about to give an account for your souls.* [Heb. 13, 17] Let those, when they boast of the power they have received, hear that which is said by the voice of Abraham to the rich man in flames; *Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things.* [Luke 16, 25] Let these, when they break into complaints against their rulers, hear that answer which is given to the murmuring people by the voices of Moses and Aaron; *Nor is your murmur against us, but against the Lord. For what are we?* [Ex. 16, 8] Let those hear; *They shall*

*be troubled in the sight of Him Who is the Father of orphans, and the Judge of widows.* [Ps. 68, 4] Let these hear what is said against the contumacy of subjects; *Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God.* [Rom. 13, 2] Let all together hear; *God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* [James 4, 6] Let all hear; *Every one that exalteth his heart is unclean before God.* [Prov. 16, 5] Let all hear; *Why art thou proud, O earth and ashes?* [Ecclus. 10, 9] Against the plague of this sickness, let us all hear that, which the Truth our Instructor teaches, saying; *Learn of Me, for I am meek, and lowly in heart.* [Matt. 11, 29]

54. For for this end the Only Begotten Son of God took on Him the form of our infirmity; for this the Invisible appeared not only visible, but even despised; [Phil. 2, 5-8] for this He endured the jests of contumely, the reproaches of derisions, and the torments of sufferings, that God in His humility might teach man not to be proud. How great then is the virtue of humility, since for the sole purpose of truly teaching it, He Who above estimation is great, became little, even to suffering? For since the pride of the devil caused the origin of our fall, the humility of God was found out as the instrument of our redemption. For our enemy who was created great among all things, wished to appear exalted above all things. But our Redeemer remaining great above all things, deigned to become little among all things.

55. But we both detect more readily the cause of pride, and lay bare the foundations of humility, if we briefly mention and run over what the author of death, and what the Creator of life declare. For the one says; *I will ascend into heaven.* [Is. 14, 13] But the Other says by the Prophet, *My soul is filled with evils, and My life hath drawn nigh unto hell.* [Ps. 88, 4] The one says; *I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven.* [Is. 14, 13] The Other says to mankind expelled from the abodes of Paradise; *Behold, I come quickly, and I will dwell in the midst of thee.* [Zech. 2, 10] The one says; *I will sit in the mount of the testament, on the sides of the north.* [Is. 14, 14] The Other says; *I am a worm, and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.* [Ps. 22, 7] The one says; *I will ascend above the height of the clouds; I will be like the Most High.* [Is. 14, 14] The Other; *When He was in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant;* [Phil. 2, 6] and He speaks by His members, saying; *Who is like unto Thee, O Lord?* [Ex. 15, 11] The one speaks by his members, saying; *I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* [Ex. 5, 2] The Other says by Himself; *If I should say I know Him not, I shall be a liar, like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying.* [John 8, 55] The one says; *The rivers are mine, and I have made them.* [Ez. 29, 9] The Other says; *I can of Mine own Self do nothing.* [John 5, 30] And again; *My Father that abideth in Me, He doeth the works.* [John 14, 20] The one, when shewing all kingdoms, says; *All this power will I give Thee, and the glory them, for they are delivered to me, and to whom I will give them.* [Luke 4, 6] The Other says; *Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, but to sit on My right hand, or on My left, is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.* [Matt. 20, 23] The one says; *Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* [Gen. 3, 5] The Other says; *It is not for you to know the times or the moments which the Father hath put in His own power.* [Acts 1, 17] The other, in order that the Divine Will might be despised, and his own enforced, says; *Why hath God commanded you, that ye should not eat of every tree of Paradise?* [Gen. 3, 1] And a little after; *For God doth know, that in whatsoever day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened.* [ib. 5] The Other says; *I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him Which hath sent Me.* [John 5, 30] The one speaks by his members, saying; *Let there be no meadow, which our luxury does not pass through, let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered, let us leave every where tokens of our joy.* [Wisd. 2, 2] The Other announces to His

members, saying, *Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice.* [John 16, 20] The one teaches the minds who are subject to him nothing else but to aim at the height of loftiness, to transcend all their equals in swelling of mind, to surpass with lofty pride the society of all men, and to exalt themselves even against the might of their Creator: as is said of these very persons by the Psalmist; *They have passed into the affection of the heart, they have thought and spoken wickedness, they have spoken iniquity on high.* [Ps. 73, 7] The Other when approaching the spitting, the palms of the hands, the buffets, the crown of thorns, the cross, the spear, and death, admonishes His members, saying; *If any man serve Me, let him follow Me.* [John 12, 26]

56. Because then our Redeemer rules the hearts of the humble, and this Leviathan is called the king of the proud, we know plainly, that pride is a most evident token of the reprobate, but humility, on the contrary, of the Elect. When it is known then which any one possesses, it is found out under what king he is fighting. For every one bears as it were a kind of inscription [‘titulum’] in his work, to shew thereby easily under the power of what ruler he is serving. Whence it is also said by the Gospel; *Ye shall know them by their fruits.* [Matt. 7, 16] Lest then the members of this Leviathan should deceive us by performing even wonders, the Lord has pointed out a plain token by which they can be detected, saying; *He is a king over all the children of pride.* For though they sometimes assume a pretended appearance of humility, yet they cannot conceal themselves in every point. For since then pride cannot bear to be long concealed, when it is concealed by one action it is exposed by another. But they who war under the king of humility, ever fearful, and circumspect on every side, fight against the darts of pride, and specially guard, as it were, the eye only of their body against the coming blows, when in themselves they principally defend their humility.

## BOOK XXXV.

In which many things already said are repeated in recapitulation, and this immense work is brought to a close by a most lowly confession of human infirmity.

Because this is the last book of this work, and since, the more difficult places having been treated, those which remain are less obscure, it seems good to run through it with less attention and care. For as if we had traversed a mighty ocean, we now gain sight of the shore, and lowering the sails of our intention, are not borne along with the same force as before, but yet we still hold our way from the impulse of the former blast. The storm of our anxiety has, so to speak, abated, but its violence, through now moderated, yet still wafts us on to our station on the shore. After then the Lord had shewn to His faithful servant how strong and crafty is Leviathan His enemy, while He carefully disclosed his strength and craft, blessed Job replied to both, saying,  
Chap. xlii. ver. 2. *I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no thought is hid from Thee.*

[i]

2. For against his huge strength he observed; *I know that Thou canst do all things;* but against his hidden machinations he subjoined; *And no thought is hid from Thee.* Whence he immediately upbraids the same Leviathan, saying;  
Ver. 3. *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?*



For Leviathan hides counsel without knowledge, because, though he is concealed from our infirmity by many frauds, he is yet disclosed to us by the holy inspiration of our Protector. He hides counsel without knowledge, because though he escapes the notice of those who are tempted, yet he cannot escape the notice of the Protector of the tempted. Having heard therefore the power and craft of the devil, having heard also the power of our Creator, which both mightily represses him, and mercifully protects us, we entreat thee, O blessed Job, not to conceal from us that which thou thinkest of thyself. It follows;

*Therefore I have spoken foolishly, and things that above measure exceeded my knowledge.*

[ii]

3. All human wisdom, however powerful in acuteness, is foolishness, when compared with Divine wisdom. For all human deeds which are just and beautiful are, when compared with the justice and beauty of God, neither just nor beautiful, nor have any existence at all. Blessed Job therefore would believe that he had said wisely what he had said, if he did not hear the words of superior wisdom. In comparison with which all our wisdom is folly. And he who had spoken wisely to men, on hearing the Divine sayings, discourses more wisely that he is not wise. Hence it is that Abraham saw, when God was addressing him, that he was nothing but dust, saying; *I speak unto my Lord, though I am dust and ashes.* [Gen. 18, 27] Hence it is that Moses, though instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, as soon as he heard the Lord speaking, discovered that he was a person of more hesitating and slower speech, saying; *I beseech Thee, O Lord, I am not eloquent; for from yesterday, and the day before, since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant, I am of a more hesitating and slower tongue.* [Ex. 4, 10] Hence it is that Isaiah, after he saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted up, after he beheld the Seraphim covering their face with two wings, and their feet with two, and flying with two, after he heard them crying one to the other, That Which He is, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts*, he returned to himself, and said; *Woe is me, because I have held my peace, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people that hath unclean lips.* [Is. 6, 5] And he immediately added, whence he had learned this pollution, and said; *And I have seen with mine eyes the King, the Lord of Hosts.* Hence also Jeremiah, on hearing the words of God, found that he had no words in himself, saying; *Ah, ah, ah, Lord God, behold I know not how to speak, for I am a child.* [Jer. 1, 6] Hence Ezekiel speaking concerning the four animals, says; *When there was a voice above the firmament, which was over their heads, they stood, and let down their wings.* [Ez. 1, 25] For what is designated by the flying of the animals but the sublimity of evangelists and doctors? Or what are the wings of the animals, but the contemplations of saints raising them up to heavenly things? But when a voice is uttered above the firmament which is over their heads, they stand, and let down their wings, because when they hear within the voice of heavenly wisdom, they drop down, as it were, the wings of their flight. For they discern, in truth, that they are not able to contemplate the loftiness itself of truth. To drop down their wings then at the voice which comes from above, is, on learning the power of God, to bring down our own virtues, and from contemplating the Creator, to think but humbly of ourselves. When holy men, therefore, hear the words of God, the more they advance in contemplation, the more they despise what they are, and know themselves to be either nothing, or next to nothing. Let blessed Job then reply to the words of God, and, as he advances in wisdom, find himself to be a fool, saying; *I have spoken foolishly, and things that above measure exceeded my knowledge.* Behold, he reproved himself the more, the more he advances, and believed that he had beyond measure exceeded his

knowledge, because in the words of the Lord he discerned, more than he had imagined, the secrets of His wisdom. It follows;

Ver. 4. *Hear, and I will speak; I will question Thee, and answer Thou me.*

[iii]

4. To hear, is, with us, to adapt our ear which is in one place to a sound which comes from another. But with God, on the other hand, to Whom nothing is external, hearing is properly for Him to perceive our longings which are rising up beneath Him. For us then to speak to God, Who is acquainted with the hearts even of those that hold their peace, is not for us to utter what we think with the words of our throat, but to long for Him with eager desires. And because a person asks a question in order to be able to learn that of which he is ignorant, for a man to question God, is for him to acknowledge that he is ignorant in His sight. But for God to reply, is for Him to instruct with His secret inspirations him who humbly acknowledges his ignorance. Blessed Job then says; *Hear, and I will speak*. As if he were saying, Mercifully understand my desires, in order that, while Thy mercy receives and furthers them, they may rise up to Thee in greater number. For as often as good wishes obtain their effect, they are multiplied. Whence it is written in another place; *I have called, for Thou hast heard me*. [Ps. 17, 6] For he says not, Because I called, Thou hast heard me: but, *I have called, for Thou hast heard me*. For he who had been heard when speaking, when he had been heard, and his wishes had been successful, exclaimed; *I will question Thee, and answer Thou me*. As if he were saying, From the contemplation of Thy knowledge I acknowledge myself to be ignorant. Answer me therefore when I question Thee, that is, teach me who humbly confess my own foolishness. For that he himself was questioning God from his longing after humility, and was seeking for God to answer him by the instruction of inspiration, is declared in the following words. For he announced that he would put a question, and yet added nothing in the shape of a question. For as thinking only humbly of himself, and as acknowledging the favours he had mercifully received from God, he immediately subjoins;

Ver. 5. *I have heard Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee.*

[iv]

5. By these words he doubtless plainly declares, that as far as sight is superior to hearing, so far does the progress also he had made through suffering differ from that which he was before. And because he had beheld more plainly the light of truth with the eye within, he more clearly discerned and beheld the darkness of his humanity. Whence it also follows;

Ver. 6. *Wherefore I reprove myself.*

[v]

6. For the less a person sees himself, the less is he displeased with himself; and the more he discerns the light of greater grace, the more blameworthy does he acknowledge himself to be. For when he is elevated within, by all that he is, he endeavours to agree with that standard which he beholds above him. And because human weakness still impedes him, he perceives that he differs therefrom in no slight degree, and every thing within him is burdensome, which does not agree with that inward standard. This standard blessed Job more fully beholds, as he was making progress after his suffering, and with great self-reproach is at variance with himself, saying; *Therefore I*

*reproach myself.* But because there is no knowledge of reproach, if the lamentations of penitence do not also follow, it is rightly added, after the reproach,  
*And do penance in dust and ashes.*

[vi]

7. For to do penance in dust and ashes, is, after having contemplated the supreme Essence, to acknowledge himself to be nothing else but dust and ashes. Whence the Lord in the Gospel says to the reprobate city, *If the mighty works which have been done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have done penance long ago in sackcloth and ashes.* [Mat. 11, 21] For by 'sackcloth,' is set forth the roughness and the piercing of sin, but in 'ashes' the dust of the dead. And therefore both of these are wont to be used in penance, in order that by the piercing of sackcloth we may know what we have done through sin, and that in the dust of ashes we may consider what we have become through judgment. Let piercing sins then be considered in sackcloth, let the just punishment of sins, which succeeds by the sentence of death, be considered in ashes. For since insults of the flesh have sprung up after sin, let man behold in the roughness of the sackcloth what he has done through pride, let him behold in the ashes how far he has gone through sin. But by sackcloth can be designated also the very compunction of grief which arises from remembrance and penitence. For blessed Job in saying, *I reproach myself,* is wounded as it were by a kind of sackcloth, when he is galled in his mind by the sharp stings of reproaches. But he does penance in ashes; because he carefully observes what he has been made by a just judgment after his first sin, saying, *I do penance in dust and ashes.* As if he plainly said, I do not boast myself of any gift of my Creator, because, having been taken from the dust, I know that I return to dust by the sentence of death which has been inflicted on me.

8. Having heard then all the words of Job, having known also all the answers of his friends, let us turn the sight of our mind to the sentence of the inward Judge, and say to Him; Behold, Lord, we have heard both the sides of those who are disputing in Thy sight, and we know that Job, in this contest, goes through his virtuous deeds, and that his friends maintain against him the glory of Thy justice. But Thou knowest what amid these things is the opinion of our mind. For we cannot possibly blame the sayings of those whom we know to be contributing to Thy defence. But, behold, the parties are present, and wait the sentence; bring forth therefore, O Lord, from Thine invisible rule the most discriminating sentence of Thy judgment, and shew us which has spoken most rightly in this contention. It follows;

*Ver. 7. But after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, He said to Eliphaz the Themanite, My anger is kindled against thee and thy two friends, because ye have not spoken before Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job.*

[vii]

9. O Lord, the sentence of Thy judgment declares how much our blindness is at variance with the light of Thine uprightness. Behold, we know that in Thy judgment blessed Job is victorious, whom we believed to have sinned against Thee by his words. In Thy judgment those are condemned, who believed that they surpassed the merits of blessed Job by speaking in Thy behalf. Since then we have learned by the Divine sentence what to think of the parties, let us now examine a little more minutely the words of this sentence. For how is it that blessed Job is blamed above, if, in

comparison with his uprightness, his friends are said not to have spoken that which is right before the Lord? Is not this decision concerning him still further confirmed, in which it is said to the ancient enemy, *Hast thou seen My servant Job, that there is none like him upon the earth?* [Job 1, 8] But what is this, that he is praised to the enemy, and reprov'd in his own person; reprov'd in his own person, and yet preferred to the friends who spake to him? Unless it be that the holy man surpassed all men by the virtue of his merits, and yet, inasmuch as he was man, could not possibly be without blame before the eyes of God. For in a holy man sojourning in this temporary state, the rule of the Divine judgment has still something to judge, though in comparison with the rest of men it has even now something to praise. Blessed Job therefore believed that he was scourged for his fault, and not as a favour; he considered that his sins were lopped off, not that his merits were increased. And he is blamed for imagining that the intention of the scourging was different, and yet is preferred, in the decision of the inward judgment, to his friends who opposed him. Whence it is plainly gathered how great was his justice, in establishing the innocence of his doings against the arguments of his friends, since he is preferred in the Divine judgment even to those very persons who defended the Divine judgment. But we learned in the beginning of this Book [Bk. 3. § 15] that Satan had said of him to the Lord; *Put forth Thy hand and touch him, and see if he do not bless Thee to Thy face.* [Job 2, 5] At which request blessed Job is permitted to be touched with losses, with bereavement, with wounds, and with offensive words, because, in truth, He Who had praised him was certain, that the holy man would never, according to the assertion of the devil, fall into the sin of cursing. As we have then said also above, [Preface chap. 3] whoever considers that blessed Job sinned in his words after he had been scourged, plainly decides that the Lord had been the loser in His pledging. And though the Lord in speaking to the devil, brought forward his present good qualities, but did not promise his perseverance, it should yet be known that He would not have put forward his righteousness by permitting it to be tempted, if He foresaw that he would not be able to continue righteous under temptation. Since the devil then had been permitted by God to tempt him, if any one considers that he sank under temptation, he blames the ignorance of Him who permitted it.

10. Let us then truthfully approve of blessed Job in his sayings, lest we should sinfully blame God in His providence. And although, as far as concerns human judgments, his friends might be believed to have said in their words many things better than himself, yet Truth bringing forth another rule from the secret place, says; *Ye have not spoken before Me* the thing that is *right*, as *My servant Job*. Before Me, He says, that is, within, where the conduct of many often displeases, even if outwardly it is pleasing to men. Whence it is said with great judgment, in praise of the righteous married people; *They were both righteous before God.* [Luke 1, 6] For it is no safe praise to appear just before men. For the opinion of man often approves of a person as if mighty before God, but Almighty God knows not him, who is approved of as if by Him. For hence is it that the Psalmist watchfully prays, saying; *Direct my way in Thy sight.* [Ps. 5, 8] Doubtless, because even that way is frequently believed to be right in the sight of men, which is turned aside from the way of truth. And it is observable, that it is not said, *Ye have not spoken before Me* the thing that is *right as Job*, but, *as My servant Job*. In order, namely, that by speaking of him as if in some sort in a peculiar character, by introducing the mention of his being a *servant*, He might point out that all that had been urged in his defence, he had said not with haughty pride, but with humble truth. But because God is just and merciful, He both reprov's his friends strictly with His justice, and graciously converts them by His mercy. For it follows;

Ver. 8. *Take unto you seven bulls, and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up for*

*yourselves a whole burnt offering. But My servant Job shall pray for you; his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you.*

[viii]

11. Behold the just and merciful God neither passes over their faults without reproof, nor yet leaves their guilt without conversion. For since He is our inward Physician, He first made known the corruptions of our wound, and afterwards pointed out the remedies for obtaining health. But we have already often said, [Pref. chap. 6] that the friends of blessed Job represent heretics, who offend God, while they endeavour to defend Him; for they are in their words rebels against the truth, which they imagine they are serving by their false assertions. Because therefore Almighty God frequently incorporates them into the body of Holy Church, through the knowledge of the truth; their conversion also, which is often mercifully effected, is well designated by this pardon which the friends of Job obtain.

12. But it must be specially observed, that they are ordered to offer to the Lord the sacrifice of their conversion, not by themselves, but by Job. Heretics doubtless, when they come back from their error, cannot appease the wrath of God towards them by a sacrifice offered by themselves, unless they are converted to the Catholic Church, which blessed Job designates; that so they may obtain their salvation by her prayers whose faith they used to impugn with their false assertions. For He says; *My servant Job will pray for you; his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you.* As if He openly said to heretics. I accept not your sacrifices, I hear not the words of your petitions, except through the intercession of her, whose words of confession concerning Me I acknowledge true. And do ye indeed bring down bulls and rams to offer the sacrifices of your conversion, but ask of Me your salvation through the Catholic Church, which I love. For I wish to remit to her the sin which ye have committed against Me in her, in order that she may obtain your recovery, who used to suffer from your sickness.

13. For it is she alone through whom God willingly accepts a sacrifice, she alone who intercedes with confidence for those who are in error. Whence also the Lord commanded concerning the sacrifice of the lamb, saying; *In one house it shall be eaten, neither shall ye carry forth of the flesh thereof out of the house.* [Ex. 12, 46] For the lamb is eaten in one house, because the true Sacrifice of the Redeemer is immolated in the one Catholic Church. And the Divine law orders its flesh not to be carried forth abroad, because it forbids that which is holy to be given to dogs. [Matt. 7, 6] It is she alone in whom a good work is fruitfully carried on, whence they only who had laboured in the vineyard received the reward of a penny. [Matt. 20, 10] It is she alone who guards those who are placed within her by the strong bond of charity. Whence also the water of the deluge raised the ark indeed aloft, but destroyed all those whom it found out of the ark. It is she alone in whom we truly contemplate the heavenly mysteries. Whence also the Lord says to Moses; *There is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock.* [Exod. 33, 21] And a little after; *I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts.* [ib. 23] For since the truth shines forth from the Church Catholic alone, the Lord says that there is a place by Him, from which He is to be seen. Moses is placed on a rock, to behold the form of God, because if any one maintains not the firmness of the Faith, he discerns not the Divine presence. Of which firmness the Lord says; *Upon this rock I will build My Church.* [Mat. 16, 18] What is then in this place the saying to the friends of Job, *Go ye to Job,* except, 'Ascend ye the rock?' What is, *His face I will accept for you, that folly be not imputed to*

*you*, except that which is there said, *Thou shalt see My back parts?* that is, thou shalt understand the mysteries of that Incarnation which is hereafter to be.

14. But heretics, because they disdain to stand on the rock, behold not the back parts of God as He passes by; because, being situated without the Church, they discern not the mysteries of His Incarnation, as they really are. For, as we have said before, by ‘bulls’ is expressed the neck of pride; [Pref. chap. 8] but by ‘rams,’ the leadership which is exercised by heretics, when people are persuaded by them, as flocks that are led astray. For of proud heretics, who corrupt the minds of the weak by their evil persuasion, it is said; *The congregation of the bulls amongst the kine of the people*. [Ps. 68, 30] And because they lead like flocks the people that follow them, they are sometimes called ‘rams.’ For rams in truth lead the flock. Whence Jeremiah says by way of reproof; *Thy princes are like rams*. [Lam. 1, 6] Because then heretics, when they return to the Church, abandon the haughtiness of pride, and lead not the multitude of the people to destruction, like herds that follow them, the friends of blessed Job are ordered to offer bulls and rams. For to offer bulls and rams in sacrifice, is to sacrifice proud leadership with the humility of conversion, so that they, who before endeavoured to take the lead in teaching, may tame the neck of pride, and learn to follow by obedience. This their pride is also rightly expiated by seven sacrifices; because heretics, on returning to the Church, receive through the offering of humility the gifts of the Spirit of sevenfold grace, in order that they who had wasted away through their old habit of pride, may be formed afresh by the newness of grace.

15. But the number seven is among the wise of this world considered to be perfect on some special grounds of its own, because it is the sum of the first even, and the first uneven number. For the first uneven number is three, and the first even number is four. Of these two numbers that of seven is composed, which, by multiplying together these very parts rises up to the number twelve. For whether we multiply three by four, or four by three, we arrive at that number. But we, because we enjoy the preaching of truth by a gift from above, tread under foot and look down on these matters which are fixed on the loftiness of knowledge, doubtless retaining this with unshaken faith, that those, whom the Spirit of sevenfold grace has filled, it makes perfect; and imparts to them not merely the knowledge of the Trinity, but also the performance of the four virtues, that is, prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. And It is increased, in a manner, in its parts, within those also whom It enters, when both the performance of the four virtues is received through the knowledge of the Trinity, and by the performance of the four virtues we attain even to the manifest sight of the Trinity. And therefore among ourselves the number seven is perfect, but in a very different way; because it rises fully and with no deficiency to the number twelve, when it both perfects works by faith, and again faith by works [i. e. four by three and three by four]. The holy Apostles also, who were to be filled with the Spirit of sevenfold grace, were chosen twelve in number. For they were sent in the four quarters of the world to make known the Trinity, Which is God. They were therefore chosen in number twelve, that even by the nature of the number itself, the cause might be plain, why they preached the three highest, through the four lowest things.

16. Whether then from this, or perhaps from some other reason, in Holy Scripture, by the number seven is designated sometimes the secure rest of eternity, sometimes the whole of this present time, but sometimes the whole body of Holy Church. For by the number seven the perfection of eternity is suggested, when the seventh day is called sanctified for the rest of the Lord. [Gen. 2, 3] And no

evening is said to belong to it, because the rest of eternal blessedness is confined by no limit. Hence also it is that, on the giving of the Law, the seventh day is ordered to be one of rest, in order that eternal rest may be designated by it. [Ex. 20, 8-11] Hence it is, that in the course of years, the number seven multiplied seven times, with a unit added, amounts to fifty, in order that the most holy rest of the Jubilee, signifying perpetual blessedness, might be observed. [Lev. 25, 10] Hence it is, that the Lord, rising again and frequently appearing, is said at His last feast to have eaten with seven disciples; [John 21, 2] because they who are now perfected in Him, are filled by Him with eternal refreshment.

17. Again by the number 'seven' is understood the whole of this temporal condition. For hence it is that the whole season of this present life is passed over in periods of seven days. Hence it is, that in type of Holy Church, which at all times traverses this world with her preaching, the Ark of the Lord, carried round for seven days with the sound of trumpets, overthrew the walls of Jericho. [Josh. 6, 12-20] Hence the Prophet says; *Seven times a day have I praised Thee*. [Ps. 119, 164] And as signifying that he had said this for the whole and entire season of his supplication, he says; *His praise shall he ever in my mouth*. [Ps. 34, 1] But that the whole of the present life is designated by the number 'seven' is shewn more plainly, when the number 'eight' is mentioned after it. For when another number besides follows after seven, it is set forth by this very addition, that this temporal state is brought to an end and closed by eternity. For hence it is that Solomon advises, saying; *Give portions to seven, and also to eight*. [Eccles. 11, 2] For by the number seven he expressed the present time, 'which is passed by periods of seven days. But by the number 'eight' he designated eternal life, which the Lord made known to us by His resurrection. For He rose in truth on the Lord's day, which, as following the seventh day, that is, the Sabbath, is found to be the eighth from the creation. But it is well said; *Give portions to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be on the earth*. As if it were plainly said; So dispense temporal goods, as not to forget to desire those that are eternal. For thou oughtest to provide for the future by well-doing, who knowest not what tribulation succeeds from the future judgment. Hence it is, that the Temple is ascended with fifteen steps, in order that it may be learned by its very ascent that by seven and eight our worldly doings may be carefully discharged, and an eternal dwelling may be providently sought for. Hence also it is that, by increasing a unit to ten, the Prophet uttered a hundred and fifty Psalms. For on account of this number 'seven' signifying temporal things, and the number 'eight' eternal things, the Holy Spirit was poured forth upon a hundred and twenty of the faithful, sitting in an upper room. For fifteen is made up of seven and eight, and if in counting from one to fifteen we mount up by adding the sums of the numbers together, we reach the number a hundred and twenty. By this effusion of the Holy Spirit they learned in truth both to pass through with endurance things temporal, and eagerly to seek after those that are eternal.

18. Again, by the number 'seven' is designated the whole body of Holy Church. Whence John in the Apocalypse writes to seven Churches: [Rev. 1, 20] but what else but the Church universal did he wish to be signified by them? And in order that this universal Church might be signified to be full of the Spirit of sevenfold grace, Elisha is described as having breathed seven times over the dead child. [2 Kings 4, 35] For the Lord, coming to a lifeless people, opens his mouth seven times, because He confers on it in His mercy the gifts of the Spirit of sevenfold grace. Because then the whole body of Holy Church is typified by the number 'seven,' let the friends of blessed Job come to him, and offer the whole burnt offering commanded by God. But let them guard with all watchfulness the mysteries of the number seven; in order, namely, that they who are living without

may first unite themselves to the general body of Holy Church, and then at length seek pardon for the guilt of their former pride. Let them offer for their fault seven sacrifices, because they receive not the washing away of their guilt, unless by the Spirit of sevenfold grace they are united to that universal peace, from which they had been cut off. Let it be said then, *Take unto you seven bulls, and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer for yourselves a whole burnt offering. But My servant Job shall pray for you; his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you.* As if it were plainly said to heretics on their return; Unite yourselves to the universal Church by the humility of penance, and obtain from Me through her prayers that pardon, of which of yourselves ye are not worthy: for when through her ye learn to be truly wise, ye are the first to blot out before Me the foolishness of your wisdom. It follows;

Ver. 8. *For ye have not spoken before Me the thing which is right, like My servant Job.*

[ix]

19. The Lord used these words a little before, and yet He again repeats and adds the same words. What is this, except that, by again repeating, He confirms the sentence which He had already pronounced in judgment? And, in order that the righteousness of blessed Job and the unrighteousness of his friends might be the more manifestly displayed, the praise of the one and the reproof of the other is brought forward by a repetition of the words, so that by being repeated outwardly, it might appear how firmly fixed they are held within. For when the king of Egypt had known in two visions the fearful seasons of the coming famine under the figure of kine and of ears of corn, he heard by the voice of the holy interpreter; *For that thou hast seen a second time a dream pertaining to the same thing, it is a token of the certainty.* [Gen. 41, 32] From which it is plainly collected, that whatever is repeated in the word of God, is more strongly confirmed. But since we have heard what the Judge has decreed, let us hear also what they do who are convicted. It follows;

Ver. 9. *Therefore Eliphaz the Themanite, and Baldad the Suhite, and Sophar the Naamathite, went and did according as the Lord had spoken to them: and the Lord accepted the face of Job.*

[x]

20. We say nothing concerning the interpretation of these names, because we remember that we discussed it at greater length in the beginning of this work. But it must be noticed, that the order of the pardon they received is so carefully observed, as had been announced, that the Lord is said to have accepted in their sacrifices not their face, but the face of blessed Job. But, because whoever endeavours to intercede for others, promotes still more his own interest from this very love, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 10. *The Lord also was turned at the penitence of Job, when he prayed for his friends.*

[xi]

21. For he is before shewn to have been heard in behalf of his friends, when the circumstance, which we before mentioned, is stated; *They did according as the Lord had spoken, and the Lord accepted the face of Job.* But when it is immediately observed, *The Lord also was turned at the penitence of Job, when he prayed for his friends;* it is plainly shewn, that a penitent has deserved to be heard the more quickly in his own behalf, the more devoutly he has interceded for his friends.



For he makes his prayers more powerful in his own behalf, who offers them also in behalf of others. For that sacrifice of prayer is more willingly received, which, in the sight of the merciful Judge, is flavoured with love for one's neighbour. And a person then truly adds to its amount, if he offers it even for his enemies. For hence is that, which the Truth Who is our Teacher says; *Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.* [Luke 6, 28] Hence again He says, *When ye shall stand to pray, forgive if ye have ought against any, that your Father also Who is in heaven may forgive you your sins.* [Mark 11, 25] But how much he obtained for himself, who interceded for others, is immediately pointed out, when it is subjoined,  
*The Lord added all that had been to Job, twofold.*

[xii]

22. He received twofold all that he had lost, because through the tenderness of the merciful Judge the assistance of consolations far surpasses the loss of our temptation. But the temptation tries us less than the reward consoles us; in order that he, who used from the weight of the blow to consider that he had suffered some heavy trial, may learn from the recompense he has earned [*'retributionis merito'*], that what he endured was but light. Whence it is said also to afflicted Judæa; *For a small moment have I forsaken thee, and in great mercies will I gather thee.* [Is. 54, 7] But sometimes the measure of consolation is dispensed in proportion to the weight of affliction. Whence it is written elsewhere, *According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have rejoiced my soul.* [Ps. 94, 12] For he, who exclaims that he had been made joyful according to the multitude of his sorrows, points out that he was consoled in the same measure as he had been afflicted. But the reader is not slightly instructed, if he considers the very order of the remuneration. For correction follows excess, penitence correction, pardon penitence, gifts pardon. But because he who had been smitten by permission of Divine Providence, was afflicted also by the words of his friends, when he is consoled by the gifts of the Divine mercy, he deserves to be cherished also with human love; in order that to him, whom the sorrows and adversities of pains wounded on every side, the joys of consolation may on every side correspond. Whence also it is added,  
Ver. 11. *But there came to him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all that knew him before, and did eat bread with him in his house, and moved the head over him.*

[xiii]

23. What is designated by the eating of bread but charity, and what by the moving of the head but admiration? But it is well subjoined, *And comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him.* For to console the grief of one that had been smitten, is to rejoice with him on his pardon after he had been smitten. For the more a person is seen to rejoice on the restoration of his neighbour's health, the more does he give proof that he had grieved at its loss.  
*And they gave him each one sheep, and one earring of gold.*

[xiv]

24. Although all these things are truly stated according to the history, we are yet compelled by the very gifts which were offered to go back to the mystery of allegory. For we ought not to hear in a listless manner that they offered a sheep, and a single one, and a golden earring, and a single one. And if perhaps it is not wonderful in the mere letter why the sheep which was offered was one, yet

it is very wonderful why the earring was one. But what reference has a sheep to an earring, or an earring to a sheep? We are compelled therefore, by the very definiteness [‘fine’] of the gifts, to examine in the mysteries of allegory the former statements also, which we have run through and treated superficially according to the mere history. Because therefore Christ and the Church, that is, the Head and the body, are one person, we have often said that blessed Job sometimes typifies the head, sometimes the body. Preserving then the truth of the history, let us understand that as performed under the type of the Church, which is written, *The Lord added all that had been to Job twofold*. For though Holy Church now loses many by the stroke of temptation, yet in the end of this world she receives those things that are her own, twofold, when, having received the Gentiles in full number, all Judaea also which shall then be found, agrees to run to her faith. For hence it is written, *Until the fulness of the Gentiles should come in, and so all Israel should be saved*. [Rom. 11, 25. 26.] Hence the Truth also says in the Gospel, *Elias shall come, and he shall restore all things*. [Matt. 17, 11] For now the Church has lost the Israelites, which she was unable to convert by preaching, but when, at that time, on the preaching of Elias, she gathers together as many as she shall have found, she receives as it were in fuller measure that which she has lost.

25. Or certainly, for Holy Church to rejoice over each of us at both the blessedness of our soul, and the incorruption of our body, is for her to receive double at her end. For hence is that which is said of the Elect by the Prophet, *In their land they shall possess the double*. [Is. 61, 7] Hence it is that the Apostle John says of the Saints who were seeking for the end of the world; *While robes were given, unto every one of them one, and it was said unto them that they should rest yet a little season, until the number of their fellow-servants and of their brethren should be filled up*. [Rev. 6, 11] For as we have said a great way above, [Pref. chap. 10] the Saints receive a single garment before the resurrection, because they enjoy the happiness of their souls alone; but in the end of the world they are about to have, each of them, two, because, together with blessedness of mind, they will possess also the glory of the flesh.

26. But these words which are subjoined attest that they rather announce the conversion of the Jewish people at the end of this world. For it is added; *There came to him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all that knew him before, and did eat bread with him in his house*. For then do His brethren and sisters come to Christ, when as many as shall have been found of the Jewish people are converted. For from that people He took the substance of His flesh. His brethren and sisters therefore then come to Him, when from that people which is united to Him by kindred, either those who are about to be strong, as brethren, or weak, as sisters, flock to Him with devout congratulation through the knowledge of the Faith. They then set forth in His house a banquet of most crowded festivity, when they no longer despise Him as a mere man, and, mindful of their relationship, rejoice together in cleaving to His Godhead. They then eat bread in His house, when they put aside the observance of the letter which is inferior, and feed, as it were, on the marrow of the grain of mystical teaching in Holy Church. But it is well subjoined; *All who knew Him before*. For they knew Him before, Whom they scorned in His Passion as if unknown to them. For no one who completely learned the Law was ignorant that Christ would be born. Whence even Herod the king, when alarmed by the coming of the Magi, endeavoured to enquire diligently of the priests and riders, where they knew Christ would be born; to whom they immediately answered; *In Bethlehem of Judah*. [Matt. 2, 5] They therefore knew Him before, Whom they knew not, when they despised Him at the time of His Passion. And both their former knowledge and their subsequent ignorance is well and briefly signified by the dimness of Isaac. For when he was blessing Jacob, he both foresaw

what would afterwards happen, and knew not who was standing before him. [Gen. 27, 1] Thus in truth was the people of the Israelites, which received the mysteries of prophecy, but yet had eyes which were dim in contemplation, because it saw not Him when present, of Whom it foresaw so many things in the time to come. For it was unable to see Him when standing in its presence, the might of Whose coming it had long before announced. But, behold! they come at the end of the world, and recognise Him Whom they knew before. Behold! they eat bread in His house, because they feed on the grain of sacred doctrine in Holy Church, and shake off all the insensibility of their former torpor. Whence it is subjoined; *And they moved the head over him*. For what is understood by the head but the ruling power [‘principale’] of the mind? As is said by the Psalmist; *Thou hast made fat my head with oil*. [Ps. 23, 5] As if it were plainly said, Thou hast watered with the unction of charity my mind which is dried up in its thoughts. The head therefore is moved, when the mind, smitten with dread of truth, is roused from its insensibility. Let the kinsmen [‘parentes’] then come to the banquet, and having shaken off their drowsiness, let them move their head; that is, let those who are connected with our Redeemer in the flesh, enjoy at last the refreshment of the word by faith, and lose the hardness of their former insensibility. Whence it is well said by Habakkuk; *His feet stood, and the earth is moved*. [Hab. 3, 6] For the earth is doubtless moved when the Lord stands, because when He imprints on our heart the footsteps of His fear, every earthly thought in us trembles. In this place, therefore, to move the head, is to shake off the immoveableness of the mind, and to approach to the knowledge of the faith by the steps of belief.

27. But because Holy Church suffers now from the estrangement of the Hebrews, and then is relieved by their conversion, it is rightly subjoined; *And comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him*. They, namely, console Christ, they console the Church, who repent of the error of their former unbelief, and abandon the depravity of life by which they had opposed the teachers of the truth. Is it not a weighty sorrow to preach fruitlessly to hard hearts, to endure labour in setting forth the truth, but to find no fruit of our labour from the conversion of our hearers? But the subsequent progress of their hearers is on the other hand a great consolation to preachers. For the conversion of a learner [‘proficientis’] is a consolation to his teacher. And it is to be observed that they would not console him when exposed to the scourge, but that they come to console him after the scourge; doubtless because the Hebrews, despising at the time of His Passion the preaching of the faith, disdained to believe Him to be God, Whom they had proved to be a man by His death. Whence the Lord says by the Psalmist, *I looked for one to lament with Me, and there was none; I sought for one to comfort Me, and I found none*. [Ps. 69, 20] For He found no one to comfort Him in His Passion, because in His contempt of death He endured even His very enemies, for whom He came to death. After his scourging, then, his neighbours come to console him; because the Lord now also suffers in His members, but in the last times all the Israelites flock together to the faith, on hearing the preaching of Elias, and return to the protection of Him from Whom they had fled; and then is celebrated that splendid banquet by the manifold assemblage of the people. At that time Job is shewn, as it were, to be in health after his scourging, when, to those who are converted and believe, the Lord is by the certainty of faith known to live, after His passion and resurrection, immortal in the heavens. At that time Job is as it were seen to be rewarded, when in the power of His Majesty He is believed to be God, as He is, and those who before resisted Him are seen to be subjected to the faith. Let the believing Hebrews therefore assemble together at the end of the world, and offer, as if to Job in health, the vows of their oblations to the Redeemer of mankind in the power of His Godhead. Whence it is also well subjoined; *And they gave him each one sheep, and one earring of gold*. What is designated by a ‘sheep’ but innocence, what by an

‘earring’ but obedience? For by a sheep is expressed an innocent mind, but by an earring, hearing adorned with the grace of humility.

28. But because a fit opportunity has offered itself for setting forth the virtue of obedience, let us examine into it with somewhat more attention and care, and point out how great is its merit. For obedience is the sole virtue which implants other virtues in the mind, and keeps them safe when planted. Whence also the first man received a precept to keep, to which if he had willed obediently to submit himself, he would attain without labour to eternal blessedness. Hence Samuel says; *For obedience is better than victims, and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams, because to rebel is as the sin of witchcraft, and to refuse to obey as the sin of idolatry.* [1 Sam. 15, 22. 23.] For obedience is justly preferred to victims, because by victims the flesh of another, but by obedience our own will, is offered up; a person therefore appeases God the more quickly, the more he represses before His eyes the pride of his own will, and immolates himself with the sword of the commandment. And on the other hand, disobedience is said to be the sin of witchcraft, in order that it might be pointed out how great a virtue is obedience. It is shewn therefore the better from its opposite what is thought in its praise. For if to rebel is as the sin of witchcraft, and to refuse to obey as the guilt of idolatry, it is the sole virtue which possesses the merit of faith, without which a person is convicted of being an unbeliever, though he seem to be a believer [‘fidelia’]. Hence it is said by Solomon in speaking of obedience; *An obedient man speaketh of victories.* [Prov. 21, 28] For an obedient man in truth speaketh of victories, because, when we humbly submit ourselves to the voice of another, we overcome ourselves in our heart. Hence the Truth says in the Gospel; *Him that cometh to Me I will not cast out, for I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.* [John 6, 37. 38.] For what? if He were doing His own will, would He have rejected those who come to Him? But who can be ignorant that the will of the Son differs not from the will of the Father? But since the first man went forth from the joy of Paradise, because he wished to do his own will; the second Man coming for the redemption of men, when He shews that He does the will of the Father, and not His own will, taught us to remain firm within. When therefore He does not His own will, but that of the Father, He casts not out those that come unto Him, because, while by His own example He brings us under the rule of obedience, He closes against us the way of escape. Hence again He says; *I can of Mine own Self do nothing; but as I hear I judge.* [John 5, 30] For obedience is enjoined on us to be observed even to death. But if He judges as He hears, He obeys also at that time when He comes as Judge. Lest then obedience to the end of our life should appear wearisome to us, our Redeemer points out that He practises it, even when He comes as a Judge. What wonder then if man who is a sinner subjects himself to obedience in the short period of the present life, when the Mediator between God and men does not abandon it, even when He recompenses the obedient.

29. But it should be known, that a sin ought never to be committed, through obedience, but that sometimes a good deed which is being performed ought, through obedience, to be given up. For the tree in Paradise was not evil, which God commanded man not to touch. But in order that man, who was rightly created, might increase the better by the merit of obedience, it was right that He should prohibit him even what was good; in order that his conduct might be more truly virtue, the more humbly he shewed that he was subject to his Maker, by forbearing what was good. But it should be observed that it is there said, *Eat ye of every tree of paradise, but touch ye not of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.* [Gen. 2, 16. 17.] For it is necessary that he who forbids those under him one good thing, should concede many, lest the mind of the person who obeys should perish

utterly, if it is famished from having been entirely shut out from all good things. But the Lord granted all other trees of Paradise for food, when He prohibited them from one, in order that He might restrain His creature, whose advancement He desired, and not its destruction, the more easily from one, the greater liberty He gave for the rest.

30. But because sometimes worldly advantages, and sometimes worldly losses, are enjoined on us, it should be especially understood that sometimes if obedience has something of its own, it is none at all, but sometimes if it has not something of its own, it is a very paltry obedience. For when success in this world is enjoined, when a higher rank is commanded to be taken, he who obeys these commands makes void for himself the virtue of his obedience, if he is eager for these things with longing of his own. For he guides not himself by the rule of obedience, who in attaining to the good things of this life gives way to his own natural desire of ambition. Again, when contempt for the world is enjoined, when the endurance of reproaches and insults is commanded us, unless the mind desires these things of itself, it diminishes the merit of its obedience, because it descends reluctantly and against its will to those things which are despised in this life. For obedience incurs loss, when its own consent does not in a measure accompany a mind in submitting to the reproaches of this world. Obedience then ought both in adversity to have something of its own, and again in prosperity to have nothing at all of its own; in order that in adversity it may be more glorious, the more it is united even in desire to the Divine ordinance, and may be more sincere in prosperity, the more entirely it is separated in desire from that present glory, which it obtains from God.

31. But we shew more clearly this value of virtue if we mention the doings of two men of the heavenly country. For Moses, when he was feeding sheep in the desert, was called by the Lord speaking to him in the fire by means of an Angel, to take the lead in the deliverance of all the multitude of the Israelites. But because he was humble in his own mind, he trembled at once at the glory of such authority which had been offered to him, and immediately had recourse to his weakness as a defence, saying, *I beseech Thee, O Lord, I am not eloquent: from yesterday and the day before, since Thou hast begun to speak unto Thy servant, I am of a more hesitating and slower tongue.* [Exod. 4, 10] And, having put himself aside, he asks for another, saying; *Send whom Thou wilt send.* [ib. 13] Behold, he is speaking with the Maker of his tongue, and that he may not undertake the power of such great authority, he alleges that he has no tongue. Paul had also been admonished by God that he ought to go up to Jerusalem, as he himself says to the Galatians; *Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem, taking with me Barnabas and Titus; but I went up by revelation.* [Gal. 2, 1] And when he had found on his journey the Prophet Agabus, he heard from him what adversity awaited him in Jerusalem. For it is written that this Agabus placed Paul's girdle on his own feet, and said; *So shall they bind at Jerusalem the man whose girdle this is.* [Acts 21, 11] Paul immediately answered; *I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of Jesus;* [ib. 13] *neither do I count my life more precious than myself.* [Acts 20, 24] Going up then to Jerusalem by the command of revelation, he knows his sufferings, and yet he willingly seeks them, he hears of things to fear, but yet he more ardently pants after them. Moses therefore has nothing of his own to lead him on to prosperity, because he strives in his prayers not to be set over the people of Israel. But Paul is even by his own wish led on to suffering, because he gains a knowledge of the evils that threaten him, but yet in his devotion of spirit he is eager for sharper sufferings. The one wished, though God commanded him, to decline the glory of present power; the other when God had provided severity and hardships, yet studied to prepare himself for

severer sufferings. We are taught then by the stubborn virtue of both these leaders going before, that if we truly endeavour to lay hold on the reward of obedience, we must contend for the prosperity of this world only by command, but that we must fight against its trials with devotion.

32. But it must be observed, that in this place a sheep is offered with an earring, and an earring with a sheep; doubtless because the ornament of obedience is always connected with innocent minds, as the Lord witnesses, Who says; *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.* [John 10, 29] No one therefore offered blessed Job an earring without a sheep, no one a sheep without an earring; because, in truth, he who is not innocent obeys not his Redeemer, and he cannot be innocent who despises obedience. But since this very obedience must be maintained not with servile fear, but with the affection of love, not with dread of punishment, but with love of justice, all who come to the feast are said to have offered a 'golden' earring, in order, namely, that in that obedience which is displayed, charity should shine forth so as to surpass all virtues, as gold the other metals.

33. But because there can be no innocence, no true obedience, in the manifold divisions of heretics, let those who come to the knowledge of the faith offer a lamb, but only one; and an earring, but only one. That is, let them come so minded as to abide innocent and obedient in the unity of Holy Church. For that which is 'one' cannot be divided by numbers, because also this very 'one' of which we are speaking, is not a number. Let them offer therefore a sheep, but only one; let them offer an earring, but only one. That is, coming to Holy Church with innocence and obedience, let them offer such a mind as the schisms of sects cannot divide.

34. Let us open the eyes of faith, and contemplate that last banquet of Holy Church at the reception of the people of Israel. To which banquet that mighty Elias who is coming is engaged as the inviter of the guests. Then do neighbours, then do friends, come with gifts to Him, Whom they despised but a little before when exposed to the scourge. For as the day of judgment draws near, either by the words of His forerunner, or by certain signs which burst forth, does the might of the approaching Lord shine out in a measure before them. And while they hasten to prevent His wrath, they forward the time of their own conversion. But when converted they come with gifts, because by offering their virtuous deeds, they then reverence Him, Whom but a little before they derided in His Passion. Doubtless by this their oblation fulfilling that which we behold already made good in great measure, and which we believe is still to be made good in its fulness; *The daughters of Tyre shall adore Him with gifts.* [Ps. 45, 12] For then do the daughters of Tyre more fully adore Him with gifts, when the minds of the Israelites, which are now overcome by the desires of this world, bring to Him, Whom they proudly denied, when known at last, the offerings of their confession. And although at these very times, at which Antichrist draws near, the conduct of the faithful seems to be to a certain extent less virtuous, although in the contest with that ruined man, mighty fear constrains the hearts even of the strong; yet not only do all the faithful, strengthened by the preaching of Elias, remain in the firmness of Holy Church, but, as we said before, many also of the unbelievers are converted to the knowledge of the faith. So that the remnants of the nation of Israel, which had before been utterly rejected, crowd together to the bosom of the Church their Mother with the most pious devotion. Whence it is now well subjoined;  
Ver. 12. *But the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.*

35. We believe that these things have taken place historically, we hope that they are to take place mystically. For the latter end of Job is blessed more than his beginning, because as far as concerns the admission of the people of Israel, when the end of the present world is pressing on, the Lord consoles the pain of Holy Church by a manifold ingathering of souls. For then she will be the more abundantly enriched, the more clearly it becomes known that the temporal condition of the present life is hurrying to its close. For the Psalmist had beheld the preachers of Holy Church enriched with the blessing of the latter times, when he said; *They shall still be multiplied in a fruitful old age, and shall be well patient to announce.* [Ps. 92, 14] They are in truth multiplied in a fruitful old age, because, when their life is prolonged, their strength is ever carried on to a better condition, and the gains of their merits are increased by means of the increase of their age. But they are well patient to announce, because, when preaching heavenly truths, they endure adversities with greater firmness, the more abundantly they bring back benefits for their souls by their very endurance. It follows; Ver. 13, 14. *And he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses; and he had seven sons, and three daughters.*

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36. That he had had seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, before the trial of his scourging, the preface of this same history points out to us. Those things which were lost through his scourging, were now restored twofold. But as many children were restored as he had lost. For he had seven sons and three daughters. But he is now described as having received seven sons and three daughters, in order that those who had been destroyed may be shewn to be alive. For when it is said; *The Lord added all that had been to Job twofold*, and yet He restored him as many children as he had lost, He also added to him a double number of children, to whom He afterwards restored ten in the flesh, but reserved the ten that had been lost, in the hidden abode ['vita'] of souls. But if any one wishes, as an intellectual being, to put aside the chaff of the history, and to feed on the grain of mysteries, it is necessary for him to learn what is our opinion. For it is possible for us to understand that by these animals is designated the universal body of the faithful. For hence is that which is said by the Psalmist to the Father concerning the Son; *Thou hast put all things under His feet, sheep and all kine, and, moreover, the herds of the plain.* [Ps. 6, 7] Hence is it that the same Prophet, beholding the simple ones inhabiting Holy Church, says; *Thine animals shall dwell therein.* [Ps. 68, 10]

37. What then do we understand by 'sheep,' but the innocent, what by 'camels,' but those who surpass the evil doings of others by the involved mass of their exuberant vices; what by 'yoked oxen,' but the Israelites subject to the Law; what by 'asses,' but the simple minds of the Gentiles? For that the innocent are designated by the name of 'sheep' the Psalmist witnesses, who says, *But we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.* [Ps. 95, 7] For those who neglect to preserve their innocence, are not fed with that refreshment of the spiritual pasture.

38. But by the name of 'camel' is expressed in Holy Scripture sometimes the Lord, sometimes the pride of the Gentiles, tortuous, as it were, with a swelling excrescence from above. For since a camel bends itself of its own accord to take up its burdens, it designates not improperly the grace of our Redeemer, Who, in deigning to hear the burden of our infirmity, descended of His own accord from the height of His power. Whence He says also in the Gospel; *I have power to lay down My*

*life, and I have power to take it up again, and no man taketh it from Me.* [John 10, 38] Whence He also says again; *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.* [Matt. 19, 24] For what does He mean by the name 'rich,' but any haughty person, what by the expression 'camel,' but His own condescension? For a camel passed through the eye of a needle, when the same our Redeemer entered through the narrow straits of His passion to the suffering of death. And this passion was like a needle, because it wounded His body with pain. But a camel goes more easily through the eye of a needle, than a rich man enters the kingdom of heaven, because, unless He took on Him first the burdens of our infirmity, and shewed us the opening ['foramen'] of humility by His passion, our haughty stubbornness would never bend itself down to His humility. Again, by the name 'camel' is designated the Gentile world, tortuous and full of sins; as it is said by Moses, that when the day had already declined, Rebecca sitting on a camel beheld Isaac who had gone forth in the field, and that she immediately descended from the camel, and being ashamed at the sight of him, covered herself with a veil. [Gen. 24, 64. 65.] For whom did Isaac designate, in having gone forth in the field when the day had already declined, but Him, Who, coming in this last age of the world, as if in the close of the day, went forth as it were into the field? Because though He is invisible, yet He shewed Himself to be visible in this world. And Rebecca when sitting on a camel beheld him, because the Church, coming forth from the Gentiles, when it was still resting on its sins, and cleaving not to spiritual, but animal emotions, listened to Him. But she immediately descended from the camel, because it abandoned the sins, with which it had before been proudly elated, and was careful to cover itself with a veil, because, on beholding the Lord, it blushed at the infirmity of its own conduct; and she, who was before carried by the camel unconstrained, is afterwards on descending modestly covered. Whence it is said by the voice of the Apostle to this same Church, when converted from her former pride, as if to Rebecca descending from the camel, and throwing over her a veil; *For what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?* [Rom. 6, 21]

39. But in 'oxen' is expressed sometimes the madness of the lustful, sometimes the laborious strength of preachers, sometimes the humility of the Israelites. For that by the name of ox is designated by comparison the madness of the lustful, Solomon points out. For when he had first mentioned the wantonness of the seducing woman, he added; *Immediately he followeth her, as an ox led for a victim.* [Prov. 7, 22] Again, that the labour of preachers is expressed by the name of ox, the words of the Law witness, which says; *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox when treading out the corn.* [Deut. 25, 4] As if it plainly said; Thou shalt not keep the preachers of the word from obtaining their stipends. [1 Cor. 9, 9; 1 Tim. 5, 18] Again, that the people of Israel is typified by the name of ox, the Prophet asserts, who says, when announcing the coming of the Redeemer, *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.* [Is. 1, 3] Signifying in truth by the 'ox' the people of Israel, brought into subjection to the yoke of the Law, but indicating by the 'ass' the people of the Gentiles, given up to pleasures, and more overwhelmingly brutish.

40. Under the name also of he asses and she asses is designated sometimes the wantonness of the lustful, sometimes the gentleness of the simple, but sometimes, as we have before said, the foolishness of the Gentiles. For that the wantonness of the lustful is expressed, by way of comparison, by the term he asses, is plainly declared, when it is said by the Prophet; *Whose flesh is as the flesh of asses.* [Ez. 23, 20] Again, because the life of the simple is typified by the name of she asses, when our Redeemer was going to Jerusalem, He is said to have sat on a she ass. For Jerusalem means the vision of peace. [Matt. 21, 5] What then does it signify, that our Lord sits on a



she ass, and guides it to Jerusalem, except that when He possesses simple minds by ruling over them, He leads them by His own sacred indwelling [‘sessione’] to the vision of peace? Again, that by the name of he asses the foolishness of the Gentiles is designated, the Prophet witnesses, saying; *Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters, sending in thither the foot of the ox and the ass.* [Is. 32, 20] For to sow upon all waters is to preach to all people the fruitful words of life. But to send in the foot of the ox and the ass, is to bind the ways of the Israelitish and the Gentile people by the bands of heavenly precepts.

41. While preserving then the truth of the letter, we rightly believe that under the name of blessed Job, the people of Holy Church are designated by all these animals; in order that those things that are written, by the dispensation of the Holy Spirit Which wonderfully orders all things, may both relate to us what has happened, and announce what is to come. Let us recognise then in the ‘sheep’ the faithful and innocent people from Judaea, which had been before fed with the pastures of the Law. Let us recognise in the ‘camels’ the simple-minded from the Gentiles coming to the faith, who before, when under sacrilegious rites, through a kind of deformity of limbs, from the foulness, that is, of their vices, appeared very hideous. And because, as we have before said, the Holy Scriptures take good care to repeat their assertions, the Israelites, who were crushed, as it were, by the yoke of the Law, can again be understood by the ‘oxen.’ But, as has been said, by asses, can be understood the Gentile people, who, when they used to bow down to worship stones, foolishly, as it were, bent down their back, and, with no reluctant mind, served any idols whatever with brutish sense. Holy Church therefore which, when oppressed at her first beginnings with innumerable temptations, lost either the people of Israel, or many of the Gentiles, (those, namely, whom she was unable to gain,) receives double at the end; because there springs up in her, out of each people, a multiplied number of believers. By yoked oxen preachers can also be understood. Whence, when the Lord sent them forth to preach, He is described as having sent them two and two; [Luke 10, 1] in order that either because there are two precepts of charity, or that society cannot exist between a less number than two, the holy preachers might learn from the very mode of their sending forth, how much they should love the agreement of fellowship. By she asses, as we have before said, the minds of the simple can be designated. But Holy Church receives oxen and she asses in double number; because holy preachers, who from being oppressed with fear in the time of her temptation had hitherto remained silent, and the minds of the simple, which from being overpowered by terrors were afraid to confess her truth, now exert their voices with greater powers in confession of the truth, the more weakly they were before afraid.

42. We have briefly stated these points as typical of Holy Church. But how they serve to set forth the Head of this same Holy Church, we remind you that we have stated at greater length in the beginning of this work. Whoever therefore is anxious to be more fully satisfied on these points, should deign to read the second book of this work. But if we are now asked to discuss the number of the animals, why a thousand yoke of oxen, or a thousand she asses, and six thousand camels, and fourteen thousand sheep, are mentioned; we can state briefly, that in secular knowledge the number thousand is considered perfect, because it is the solid square of the number ten. For ten times ten are a hundred, which though a square, is a plane figure. But in order that it may rise in height and become solid, the hundred is again multiplied by ten, and becomes a thousand. But the number six is perfect, because it is the first number which is made up of its several parts, that is, its sixth, its third, and its half, which are one, and two, and three, and these added together become six. Nor is any other number found before six, which, when it is divided into its several parts, has its whole

amount made up. But because we transcend all this knowledge, by advancing through the loftiness of Holy Scripture, we there find the reason why the numbers six, seven, ten, and a thousand, are perfect. For the number six is perfect in Holy Scripture, because in the beginning of the world God completed on the sixth day those works which He began on the first. The number seven is perfect therein, because every good work is performed with seven virtues through the Spirit, in order that both faith and works may be perfected at the same time. The number ten is perfect therein, because the Law is included in ten precepts, and no fault is forbidden further than by the ten words, and as the Truth relates, the labourers in the vineyard are rewarded with a denarius. [Mat. 20, 2] For in a denary three are joined to seven. But man, who consists of soul and body, consists of seven qualities. For he flourishes in three spiritually and in four bodily. For in the love of God he is excited in three qualities spiritually, when it is said to him by the Law; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.* [Matt. 22, 37] But he consists of four qualities bodily; because, namely, he is composed of hot and cold, of moist and dry matter. Man therefore who consists of seven qualities is said to be rewarded with a denarius, because in that attainment of the heavenly country our seven are joined to the eternal Three, in order that man may enjoy the contemplation of the Trinity, and, by the reward of his work, live as though made perfect by a denarius. Or certainly, because there are seven virtues in which we toil in this life, and when the contemplation of the Trinity is granted them as a reward, the life of those that toil is rewarded with a denarius. But every one who is perfect receives a denarius even in this life, when he unites to these same seven virtues, faith, hope, and charity. The number thousand is also considered as perfect in Holy Scripture, because universality is designated by its appellation. Whence it is written; *The word which He commanded to a thousand generations.* [Ps. 105, 8] For since it cannot be believed that the world can be extended to a hundred generations, what else is set forth by a thousand generations but the whole number of generations? Blessed Job therefore received fourteen thousand sheep. For since in Holy Church the perfection of virtues extends to both sexes, the number seven is doubled therein. *And six thousand camels;* because they receive therein the plenitude of their work, who were before cut off from her by the filthiness of their sins. He received also a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses, because she exalts Israelites and Gentiles, learned and simple, after the falls of temptations, to the height of perfection. He received also seven sons and three daughters, because to the minds of those whom she had begotten with seven virtues, she adds faith, hope, charity, to complete their perfection, in order that she may the more truly rejoice in her offspring, the more she considers that there is no virtue wanting to her faithful ones. But because we have run over these points briefly, let us now turn to examine also the names themselves of his daughters. It follows,  
Ver. 14. *And he called the name of one Dies, and the name of the second Casia, and the name of the third Cornustibii.*

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43. Because these names are derived from virtues, the translator appropriately took care not to insert them as they are found in the Arabic language, but to shew their meaning more plainly when translated into the Latin tongue. For who can be ignorant that Dies and Casia are Latin words? But in Cornustibii, (though it is not *corn us* but *cornu*, and the pipe of singers is called not *tibium* but *tibia*,) I suppose he preferred, without keeping the gender of the word in the Latin tongue, to state the thing as it is, and to preserve the peculiarity of that language from which he was translating. Or because he compounded one word out of the two, (*cornu*, and *tibia*,) he was at liberty to call both

words, which are translated in Latin by one part of speech, whatever gender he pleased. What is the reason then that the first daughter of Job is said to have been called Dies, the second Casia, but the third Cornustibii, except that the whole human race, which is chosen by the kindness of its Creator, and by the mercy of the same Redeemer, is designated by these names? For man as he was made shone as bright as the day (dies), because his Maker overspread him with the splendour of innate innocence. But when he fell of his own accord into the darkness of sin, because he deserted the light of truth, he concealed himself as it were in the night of error; because he is elsewhere said to have followed a shadow. [Ps. 39, 6] But because the bounteousness of His goodness failed not our Maker, even in spite of the darkness of our iniquity, He afterwards received him by a mightier redemption from his error, whom He at first mightily created for righteousness. And because he wanted, after his fall, the strength of his original creation, He supported him against the inmost assaults of His opposing corruption with the manifold virtues of His gifts. And these virtues of those who are advancing are doubtless fragrant, in the discernment of other men, as if with sweet odours. For hence is that which is said by Paul, *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ*. [2 Cor. 2, 15] Hence it is that Holy Church, having scented a kind of fragrant sweetness in her Elect, speaks in the Song of Songs, saying, *While the king is at his repose, my spikenard gave forth its odour*. [Cant. 1, 12] As if he plainly said, As long as the king is concealed with himself from my sight in the rest of the heavenly retreat, the life of the Elect is regaled [‘exercetur’] with wonderful odours of virtues, in order that as it still beholds not Him Whom it seeks for, it may burn the more ardently with desire. For the spikenard gives forth an odour, as the king is taking his repose, because when the Lord is resting in His blessedness, the virtue of Saints in the Church supplies us with the delight of great sweetness. Because then the human race shone bright, on its creation, with the light of innocence, and afterwards, when redeemed, scattered the odour of sweetness by the exercise of good works, the first daughter is rightly named *Dies*, and the second is not unfitly named *Casia*. But she is well called Casia who is spread abroad with so strong an odour of a sublime life. For man, in his very beginning, in which he was created righteous, needed not such great virtues as he now requires. Because if he wished to remain as he had been created, he would have been able without difficulty to overcome his enemy placed without. But after that the adversary, through man’s consent, has forced his way into his inmost parts, he is now cast out with greater labour as conqueror, who would, when still an assailant, be repulsed without difficulty.

44. For many qualities now need to be displayed, which were not necessary in Paradise. For now we require the virtue of patience, laborious instruction in learning, chastening of the body, assiduity in prayer, confession of faults, a deluge of tears; none of which man wanted in truth on his creation, because by his very creation he enjoyed the blessing of salvation. For a bitter cup is held out to a sick man, that he may be restored to a state of health by the removal of disease. But a man in health is never ordered what to take in order to regain his strength, but what to avoid, lest he should be ill. We therefore display now greater zeal, when we do not preserve the health we possess, but endeavour to regain that which we have lost. And because all these efforts for our restoration, are supported by great opinions in Holy Church, the name of the second daughter justly smells as cassia; in order that, as the first daughter existed as ‘the day’ [‘dies’] through the dignity of her creation, the second may be ‘cassia’ through the fragrance of strength by the grace of redemption. Whence also it is said by the prophet to the same Redeemer on His coming; *Myrrh and amber and cassia come from Thy garments, from the ivory steps, out of which the daughters of kings have delighted Thee in Thine honour*. [Ps. 45, 8] For what is designated by the name of myrrh, amber, and cassia, except the sweetness of virtues? What is expressed by the ivory steps, except the ascent

of proficients, which shines with great strength? Our Redeemer, therefore, when He comes, uses myrrh, amber, and cassia in His garment, because He scatters forth from His Elect, with whom He mercifully arrays Himself, the fragrance of the myrrh of virtue. And in them this odour is led on by ivory steps, because, in them an opinion of their virtues arises not from the show of pretence, but from the ascent of true and solid deeds. But it is well subjoined; *Out of which the daughters of kings delighted Thee in Thine honour.* For holy souls, which had been brought forth by the ancient fathers to the knowledge of the truth, delight their Redeemer in His honour, because they claim nothing to their own credit from all that they do well. But because the human race in its third condition, even when new fashioned for the resurrection of the flesh, is engaged in that concert of eternal praise, the third daughter is called *Cornustibii*. For what is expressed by ‘Cornustibii’ but the song of those that rejoice? For there is that truly fulfilled which is now said by the Prophet? *Sing unto the Lord a new song.* [Ps. 149, 1] It is there truly fulfilled, where the song of praise to God will be sung no longer by faith, but in a contemplation of His Person. There does our Creator receive from us the true songs of His praises, Who both made the human race ‘Dies’ by creating it, ‘Casia’ by redeeming it, and ‘Cornustibii’ by taking it to Himself. For we who were ‘light’ when created, and are now ‘casia’ by having been redeemed, shall at last be ‘cornustibii’ when engaged in the exultation of eternal praise. But before the Bride comes to the marriage chamber, she casts off from herself all filthiness of life, and preparing herself for the love of the Bridegroom, adorns and arrays herself with the beautifyings of virtues. For she studies to approve herself to the judgment of the inward Judge, and from being exalted in her inmost desires, to transcend the filthy habits of human conversation. Whence it is also well subjoined concerning the same daughters of blessed Job;

Ver. 15. *But in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job.*

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45. For the souls of the Elect surpass, by the comeliness of their beauty, all the human race which lives after the fashion of men on the earth: and the more they slight themselves by outward affliction, the more truly do they array themselves within. Hence it is, that it is said by the Psalmist to Holy Church, which is adorned with the beauty of the Elect; the *King hath greatly desired thy beauty.* [Ps. 45, 11] Of whom it is added a little after; *All the glory of this daughter of kings is from within.* [ib. 13] For if she sought glory without, she would have no beauty within, for the king greatly to desire. And although many shine therein with the beauty of virtues, and surpass the merits of others by the very perfection of their conduct, yet some, because they are not able to attain to higher things, being conscious of their own weakness, are embraced in the bosom of her gentleness. For these, as far as they possess strength, avoid sins, although they do not fulfil higher excellencies as far as they desire. Yet God graciously receives them, and admits them to Himself in proportion to the recompense they deserve. Whence it also follows;

*And their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.*

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46. Because then of the merit of the perfect they are said to be beautiful; but as being a type of the imperfect they also receive, as if they were weak, an inheritance among their brethren. For the practice of life in former times admitted not females to obtain an inheritance among males, because the severity of the Law, selecting the strong, and despising the weak, studied to sanction what was

strict rather than what was merciful. But on the coming of our gracious Redeemer, let no one who is conscious of his infirmity despair of obtaining the inheritance of the heavenly patrimony. For our Father has granted to women also a right of succession among males, because amid the strong and perfect He admits the weak and humble to the lot of the heavenly inheritance. Whence the Truth Itself says in the Gospel; *In My Father's house are many mansions*. [John 14, 2] For there are in truth many mansions with the Father, because in that equal life of blessedness each one obtains a different place according to his different desert. But he feels not the losses of this disparity, because that which he has received is quite sufficient for him. Sisters therefore come to an inheritance together with their brethren, because the weak are admitted thither together with the strong; in such wise that if any one through imperfection shall not be the highest, he may not through humility be shut out from his lot of the inheritance. And these mansions Paul well teaches us are apportioned to each one according to his merits, when he says; *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differeth from star in glory*. [1 Cor. 15, 41] It follows;

Ver. 16. and last. *But Job lived after these scourges a hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even to the fourth generation, and he died an old man, and full of days*.

[xx]

47. In Holy Scripture a person is not easily recorded as 'full of days,' unless he is one whose conduct is praised in the same Scripture. For he is in truth void of days, who, even if he has lived ever so long, has wasted the time of his life in vanity. But he, on the other hand, is said to be 'full of days,' whose days pass not away and come to nought, but by the daily reward of good works, are treasured up with the just Judge, even after they have been passed.

48. But because there are some who wish to interpret these things also as typical of Holy Church, (whose wishes we must the rather obey, the more we must also rejoice at their spiritual understanding,) if we multiply fourteen by ten, we come to the number one hundred and forty. And the life of Holy Church is rightly reckoned as made up of ten and four, because by keeping both Testaments, and living both according to the ten commandments of the Law, and the four books of the Gospel, it is carried on to the height of perfection. Whence also, though the Apostle Paul wrote fifteen Epistles [He refers to the Epistle to the Laodiceans, Col. 4, 16 which however is thought to be that to the Ephesians, including Laodicea, as all Achaia is associated with Corinth. Some Fathers have quoted the Ep. to the Ephesians as 'to the laodiceans.' There is a spurious Epistle in Hutter's N. Test. 12. Linguarum, and one held by the Marcionites is rejected by St. Epiphanius. *Ab. from Ben.*], yet Holy Church does not retain more than fourteen, in order that the illustrious teacher might shew by the very number of his Epistles, that he had searched out the secrets of the Law and of the Gospel. But blessed Job is well said to 'live' after his scourgings, because Holy Church too is first smitten with the scourge of discipline, and afterwards strengthened by perfection of life. And she beholds also her sons, and her sons' sons even to the fourth generation, because in this life, which rolls on through four seasons in the year, she beholds children daily born to her, by the mouths of preachers even to the end of the world. Nor is it inconsistent with the truth to say that times are designated by generations. For what is each succession but a kind of offshoot of a race? And when the butler of the king of Egypt had seen a dream which was throwing out three shoots, Joseph, who was endowed with the solution of dreams, declares that the three shoots designate three days. [Gen. 40, 10. 12.] If therefore the space of three days is expressed by three shoots, why should not also the four seasons of the year be typified by four generations? Holy Church, therefore, beholds her sons, when she beholds the first progeny of

the faithful. She sees her sons' sons, when she beholds that sons are begotten to the faith by these same faithful ones. And she dies also old and full of days, because in the light, which follows as a reward for her daily doings, having laid aside the weight of corruption, she is changed into the incorruption of the heavenly country. She dies, namely, full of days, since her days pass not away as they glide on, but are made firm by the recompense of her enduring deeds. She dies full of days, who in this transitory state works that which passes not away. Whence it is also said to the Apostles; *Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.* [John 6, 27] Holy Church therefore loses not her days, even when she leaves the present life. Because she finds their lights more abundantly multiplied in her Elect, the more cautiously and anxiously she now guards herself in them from all temptation. The Church loses not her days, because she neglects not to examine herself watchfully day by day in this life, and is not weighed down with any sloth in all things which she is able rightly to perform. For hence is that which is said of her by Solomon; *She considers the ways of her house, and eateth not her bread in idleness.* [Prov. 13, 27] For she considers the ways of her house, because she accurately examines all the thoughts of her conscience. She eateth not her bread in idleness, because that which she learned out of Holy Scripture by her understanding, she places before the eyes of the Judge by exhibiting it in her works. But she is said to 'die,' because when the contemplation of eternity has absorbed her, it makes her entirely dead to this vicissitude of her changeableness, so that there lives no longer within her any thing to impede the keenness of inward vision. For she then more truly beholds inward things, the more entirely she is dead to all outward things. Let us both believe therefore that this death, this plenitude of days, has taken place in blessed Job, who is in truth one member of the Church; and let us hope that it is to take place in the whole Church together; in order that the truth of the history may be so maintained, that the prophecy of what is to take place may not be made void. For if the good deeds which we learn from the life of Saints are wanting in truth, they are nothing; if they contain no mysteries, they are of very little value. Let the life then of good men, which is described by the Holy Spirit, both shine upon us in its spiritual meaning, and yet let not its interpretation depart from belief in the history, in order that the mind may remain more firmly fixed in its understanding, the more hope binds it to the future, and faith to past, when standing, as it were, midway between them.

49. This work then being now completed, I see that I must go back to myself. For our mind, even when it endeavours to say what is right, is much distracted from itself. For when we think on how our words are spoken, it takes from the perfection of the mind, because it draws it out of itself. I must therefore return from the outward utterance of words to the council chamber ['curiam'] of the heart, to summon together the thoughts of my mind in a kind of council of consultation, to examine myself, in order that I may there see, whether I have either incautiously said wrong things, or right things in a wrong way. For a right thing is then rightly spoken, when he who says it, seeks by what he says to please Him alone from Whom he has received it. And though I do not find that I have said any things that are wrong, yet I do not maintain that I have not said any at all. But if I have said any good things, by a gift from above, I profess that it is my own fault in truth that I have spoken them but imperfectly. For on returning to myself within, and putting aside the leaves of words, and the branches of sentences, when I look closely at the very root of my intention, I find that I specially desired to please God thereby. But yet the desire of human praise, in some unknown secret way, blends itself with this intention with which I strive to please God. And when I discern this slowly and at last, I find that I do a thing in one way, which I knew I began in another. For the desire of human praise, secretly joining itself, and meeting with it, as it were, on the way,

frequently comes up with our intention, when it is rightly commenced before the eyes of God. As food is taken indeed as a matter of necessity, but when gluttony stealthily creeps in, as it is being eaten, the pleasure of eating is blended with it. Whence it frequently happens, that we finish for the sake of pleasure the bodily refreshment we begin for the sake of health. It must be confessed therefore that a less correct intention, which seeks to please men by means of the gifts of God, sometimes insidiously accompanies our right intention, which seeks to please God alone. But if we are strictly examined on these points by God, what place of safety remains for us therein, when both our evils are purely evil, and the good things we believe we possess, cannot possibly be purely good? But I believe it to be worth my while, to disclose without hesitation to the ears of my brethren all which I secretly blame in myself. For since in my exposition I have not concealed what I thought, in my confession I hide not what I suffer. By my exposition I have laid open my gifts, by my confession I discover my wounds. And because in this numerous race of men, there are not wanting little ones, who ought to be instructed by my words, nor yet great ones, who are able to pity my infirmity, when made known to them; in both these ways I confer assistance on some brethren, as far as I can, and hope for it from others. The one I have told in my exposition what to do; to the others I make known by my confession what to spare. From the one I withdraw not the healing remedies of my words; from the others I conceal not the laceration of my wounds. I pray therefore that every one who reads these books, may confer on me before the strict Judge the solace of his prayers, and wash away with his tears every filthiness which he discover, in me. But on comparing the virtues of prayer, and of exposition, my reader surpasses me in his recompense, if when he receives words by my means, he gives me tears in return.