Morals on the Book of Job (part 2 of 5)

Gregory the Great (c. AD 540–604)

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Book IX

THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME I - THE SECOND PART. — 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.

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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 entireness. 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 be 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 stubborness, 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 'y;' 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.l0. 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 Be-

ing, 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 reverenced 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 be 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 innocency, 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 or 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 [arguite] 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. [xlv]

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. [l] 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 assaulting 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 keep 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. [liv] [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 bestead 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 multipliest 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 multipliest 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 incumbrand 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 BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME I - THE SECOND PART. — 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] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] 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 reproved 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 reprover, 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 reprover 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 forbad 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. [vii] [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? [viii]

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. [ix]

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 stedfast 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? [x] 16. The Lord 'overturns heaven,' when by His terrible and secret ordering He pulls down the height of man's contemptations. 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? [xi] [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. [xii] 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. [xiii]

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 command-

ments, 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. [xiv]

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.'

[xv] 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 reproved 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 stedfastness, 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 stedfastly 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. [xvi]

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. [xvii] [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. [xviii]

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, [xix] 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. [xx] 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. [xxi]

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 tutorage 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 singurality 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.

48. It is the wisdom of this world to overlay the heart with inventions, to veil the sense with words; things that are false to shew for true, what is true to make out fallacious. This is the wisdom that is acquired by the young by practice. This is learnt at a price by children, they that are acquainted with it are filled with pride, despising other men; they that know nothing of it, being subdued and browbeaten, admire it in others; for this same duplicity of wickedness, being glossed over by a name, is their joy and delight, so long as frowardness of mind goes by the title of urbanity. She dictates to her followers to seek the high places of honour, to triumph in attaining the vain acquisition of temporal glory; to return manifold the mischiefs that others bring upon us; when the means are with us, to give way to no man's opposition; when the opportunity of power is lacking, all whatsoever he cannot accomplish in wickedness to represent in the guise of peaceable good nature. But on the other hand it is the wisdom of the righteous, to pretend nothing in show, to discover the meaning by words; to love the truth as it is, to eschew falsehood; to set forth good deeds for nought, to bear evil more gladly than to do it; to seek no revenging of a wrong, to account opprobrium for the Truth's sake to be a gain.

But this simplicity of the righteous is 'laughed to scorn,' in that the goodness of purity is taken for folly with the wise men of this world. For doubtless every thing that is done from innocency is accounted foolish by them, and whatever truth sanctions in practice sounds weak to carnal wisdom. For what seems worse folly to the world than to shew the mind by the words, to feign nothing by crafty contrivance, to return no abuse for wrong, to pray for them that speak evil of us, to seek after poverty, to forsake our possessions, not to resist him that is robbing us, to offer the other cheek to one that strikes us? Whence that illustrious Wise one of God speaks well to the lovers of this world, We shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God [Exod. 8, 26]. For the Egyptians loathe to eat the flesh of sheep, but that which the Egyptians loathe, the Israelites offer up to God; for that singleness of conscience, which the unrighteous one and all scorn as a thing most mean and abject, the righteous turn into a sacrifice of virtue, and the just in their worshipping

sacrifice purity and mildness to God, which the sons of perdition in abomination thereof account weakness. Which same simplicity of the righteous man is briefly yet adequately expressed, in that the words are forthwith introduced;

Ver. 5. A lamp despised in the thought of the rich. [xxx] 49. What is denoted in this place by the title of the 'rich,' but the highmindedness of the proud, who have no respect for the judge that shall come, while they are swollen with proud thoughts within themselves? For there are some that by a fortune are not lifted up in pride, but elevated thereby through works of mercy. And there are some who, while they see that they overflow with earthly resources, do not look for the true riches of God, and have no affection to the eternal land, for they think that this is enough for them, that they are set up with temporal goods. The fortune then is not in fault, but the feeling. For all things that God created are good, but he who uses good things amiss, assuredly brings it about that as it were through gluttonness of greedy appetite, he perishes by the bread whereby he ought to live. The beggar Lazarus attained to rest, but torments racked the proud rich one. And yet Abraham was rich, who held Lazarus in his bosom. Yet holding commune with his Maker, he says, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes! [Gen. 18, 27] How then did he know to set a value on riches, who accounted himself to be dust and ashes? or how could his possessions even exalt him, who entertained such poor notions about himself who was the owner of them?

50. Yet again there are some, to whom earthly property is not vouchsafed, and yet they are set up in their own eyes, in height of swollen pride. At the same time that there is no fortune at all to uplift these to the display of power, yet the frowardness of their ways assigns them a place among the lost children of riches. All, then, that love of the life to come does not fill with abasement, the sacred word here calls rich. For in the avenging of Judgment, there is no difference to them whether they be swollen with goods, or only in disposition. These, when they see the life of the simple sort in this world to be lowly and abased, forthwith scoff at them

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. [xxxi]

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.

Book XI

THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME II - THE THIRD PART. — 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 fouls 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.l0. 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 prophetical 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. [xviii] [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. [xix]

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! [xx] [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. [xxi] 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. [xxii]

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 familar 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. [xxiii] 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! [xxiv] 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. [xxv] 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? [xxvi] 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 reproved his deeds as if they had nothing in themselves to be reproved, 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 reproves 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. [xxviii] 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. [xxix] 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. [xxx] 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. [xxxi] 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 carcases 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. [xxxii] 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? [xxxiii] [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-inflictions 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 inquities 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. [xlii] [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? [xliii]
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 wouldest 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. [xlviii] 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. [l] 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 stedfastness, 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

THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME II - THE THIRD PART. — 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 wouldest 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 wouldest 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 he 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 stedfastness 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 exact-

ness, 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 secresy of God's judgments under a kind of hiding, that one day it may also come forth out of the bag of secresy 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 doest 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 engulphed. 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 stingings 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. [xxvi] 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? [xxxi]

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? [xxxii] [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 swoln 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. [xxxvi] 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] [LITERAL AND MORAL INTERPRETATION] 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. [xl] 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 be 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 be 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. [xliii]

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. [xlvii]

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. [l] 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?

[MORAL INTERPRETATION] 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

THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME II - THE THIRD PART. — 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 holdup 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 doubledealing. 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 stedfast 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 be 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, 24] 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 ['conscius 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. [xxxi] 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. [xxxii] 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. [xxxiii] 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 astonied 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 prospersity 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. [xlviii] 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

THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME II - THE THIRD PART. — 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 befal the bad, and bad ones befal 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 be 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. [viii] 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. [ix] 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 cov-

etous 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 1ine 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 be 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 be 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, be 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 astonied, 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 astonied 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 astonied, 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. [xxiv] [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

28. For he had said above; He shall drive him from fight 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. [xxvi] 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 contemn 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 secresy 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 contemn 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. [l] 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 call 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 if 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 it 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 glorious-

ness 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 truthtelling 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 reproves 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

THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME II - THE THIRD PART. — 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 ruing.

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 necessaries 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 secresy 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 be longs to be brought out of it; then he seeks, if he might be able, to escape from his torments; then be 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 blood-thirsty 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,' saving 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? [xlvii]

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. [l]
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 griping 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.

[lvii] [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? [lviii] 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 reproved 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. [lix] 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 stedfast 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 re-

called 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

THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME II - THE THIRD PART. — 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 reproves 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 aught, 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 he 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 doubledealing, 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 discoursings, 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 stedfastness 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 overflown 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 comsume]? [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. [xvii] [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 he 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. [xix]

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. [xxi] 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. [xxiii] [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. [xxvi] [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 soothings 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! [xxvii]

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. [xxviii] 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. [xxix] 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. [xxx] 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. [xxxi]

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 shalt 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 shalt 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 throughly 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 contemn 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.

Book XVII

THE BOOKS OF THE MORALS OF ST. GREGORY THE POPE, OR AN EXPOSITION ON THE BOOK OF BLESSED JOB.

VOLUME II - 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 hast 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 evilminded 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 throughly 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, to, 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, Thousand 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 that 'minister' 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 innumerably 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? [xviii] 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 affordest 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? [xix] 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. [xxvii] [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 prominency, 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. [xxviii] 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. [xxix] [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 thraldom, 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 ravening, 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?

Source. English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.