Morals on the Book of Job (part 3 of 5)

Gregory the Great (c. AD 540–604)

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Book XVIII

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 XVIII. — Contains the exposition of the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters — of the Book of Job, to the twenty-first verse and half through it, — after manifold senses.

IT is the case for the most part in Holy Writ that there are things of a mystical nature so represented, that nevertheless they seem put forth in accordance with the historical relation. But oftentimes such sort of descriptions are mixed together in that same historical relation, whereby the whole outside of history is rendered null [cassetur]; which same whilst they sound of nothing belonging to the history, oblige the reader to look for something else in them. For things being spoken that we suppose plain, when we find any particulars interspersed with a more obscure meaning, we are as it were pricked by a kind of spurs, that we should both be alive for the understanding some things in a deeper sense, and that we should take even those things as put forth in a more obscure sense, which we looked upon as spoken in their plain import. Whereas, then, blessed Job was speaking of the Word of the Lord, and the greatness of His thundering, next in order to these words it is directly introduced;

Chap. xxvii. 1. Moreover Job added taking up his parable, and said. [i] 2. By which same verse it is shewn in how great mystery the words of this most saintly man are delivered, when 'a parable,' i.e. a simile, is described as 'taken up' by him, who utters nothing below in the way of simile or comparison. For be it far from us in this place to interpret a 'parable' that musical instrument ['We know of no musical instrument so called either now or formerly; but one may imagine some so named from their parabolic figure.' Ben.]. Since neither is it allowable to suppose that under infliction of chastenings he used music, when Truth saith by His Scripture, Music in mourning is as a tale out of season. The word 'parable,' then, having been named, see how we now learn, the text itself telling it, not by the text only to estimate his words. And so every thing must be drawn to turn to that likeness, by which the Church is denoted in a figure. And indeed in the very beginning of his speaking, the things said are put forth in a plain sense, but they are entwined with more obscure ones subjoined.

For he begins as he is used, with a plain mode of speech, but he finishes his words with a description pregnant through mystical significations. And so he saith,

Ver. 2. As God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness. [ii]

3. By which same words blessed Job at once tells his own circumstances, and represents the times of Holy Church under affliction, wherein she is borne down by the open frowardness of unbelievers, and vexed by the bitterness of persecution. For in two ways the Church is subject to be tried by her adversaries, viz. that she should suffer persecution either by words or swords. Now Holy Church aims with the greatest diligence to possess wisdom and patience. And her wisdom is exercised when she is tried with words, her patience is exercised when she is tried with swords. Now, however, he is speaking of that persecution, wherein she is provoked not by swords, but by false statements. Now we know numbers, who when they encounter some things adverse in this life, do not believe that God is, but there are some that hold that God is, but does not concern Himself in the least with the affairs of men. For of the one it is said by David, The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. [Ps. 14, 1] But the latter say in him, How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High'! And again; Yet they say again; The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it.

[Ps. 94, 7] Thus this person who bore a type of Holy Church, whilst set fast in the very bitterness of his affliction, made answer against them both, For as life has 'being,' but death has not, to avow that God is, he saith, As God liveth, but that he might tell that God concerns Himself with the affairs of mortals, he added, Who hath taken away my judgment, and hath brought my soul to bitterness. For these ills which he suffers he bears record that he suffers not by accident, but by God Who ordereth all things, nor does he attribute the power for his bitterness to his tempter, but to his Creator.

4. For he knows that the devil, though he is ever aiming at the afflicting of the just, yet if he do not receive the power from our Maker is not empowered in the least degree for any tittle of temptation. And hence all the devil's will is unjust, and yet whilst God permits it, all his power is just. For of himself he does unjustly seek to try men indifferently, but those that require to be tempted, in so far as they require to be tried, God does not permit to be tried otherwise than justly. Whence also in the Books of the Kings it is written of the devil, That the evil spirit of the Lord came upon Saul. [1 Sam. 18, 10] Where the question justly occurs, 'If it was the Spirit of the Lord, why should it be called an evil spirit? and if an evil spirit, why the Lord's?' But in two words there is comprehended at once the just power and the unjust will in the devil. For both he himself is called an evil spirit in respect of a most evil will, and the same spirit is called the Lord's spirit in respect of the most just power bestowed on him. And so it is well said; God liveth, Who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, Who hath brought my soul to bitterness. For though the enemy rage furiously, who longs to deal the blow, yet it is the Creator, Who permits him to have power

for any thing. But forasmuch as the holy man by invoking the life of God bound himself to somewhat, let us hear what in so obliging himself he subjoins. It follows;

Ver. 3, 4. All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in, my nostrils, my lips shall not speak iniquity, nor my tongue meditate falsehood. [iii] 5. What he first calls 'iniquity,' this repeating afterwards he calls 'falsehood.' For both all 'falsehood' is 'iniquity,' and all 'iniquity' 'falsehood,' because, whatever thing is at variance with truth is surely at odds with equity. But between this which he expresses, 'to speak' and that which he adds afterwards, to 'meditate,' there is a wide difference. For sometimes it is a worse thing to 'meditate' falsehood than to speak it. For to speak is very frequently a matter of precipitation, but to 'meditate' of purposed wickedness. And who could be ignorant by what great difference the sin is distinguished, whether a man tell a lie by precipitation or of set purpose? But the holy man, to be entirely attached to the truth, tells that he would neither lie of set purpose, nor by precipitation. For all lying is very seriously to be guarded against, though sometimes there is a certain sort of lying which is of lighter complexion, if a man lie in rendering good [b]. But seeing that it is written, The mouth that belieth slayeth the soul. [Wisd. 1, 11] And, Thou shalt destroy all them that speak leasing. [Ps. 5, 7] This kind of lying also those that are perfect eschew with the greatest care, so that not even the life of any man should by deceit of theirs be defended, lest they hurt their own souls, whilst they busy themselves to give life to another's flesh; though the same particular kind of sin we believe to be very easily remitted. For if any sin is 'by godly practice ensuing after to be done away, how much more is this easily wiped off, which pitifulness, the mother of good works, herself accompanies?

6. But there are some that from the deceit of the midwives endeavour to establish that this species of lying is not sin, chiefly because, upon those midwives lying, it is written, That the Lord made them houses. [Exod. 1, 21] By which mode of recompensing it is rather learnt what the offence of lying earns; for the profits of their kindness which might have been repaid them in everlasting life, on account of the sin of lying mixing in are diverted into an earthly recompense, that in their own life, which they were ready to defend by lying, they should receive back the good which they did, and not have any reward of their recompensing, that they might look forward to beyond. For if the thing be weighed with exactness, it was from the love of the present life they lied, not from the being bent on the recompense; for by the act of sparing, they endeavoured to protect the life of the infants; but by the act of lying, their own life.

7. And though in the Old Testament a few such cases may possibly be discovered, yet almost on no occasion will the attentive reader there find this or a like kind of lying practised by those that were perfect, although the lie might seem to bear some sort of semblance of truth; and perchance it might be an offence of a lighter complexion under the Old Testament, wherein by victims of bulls and goats, the sacrifice was not the very Truth itself, but a shadow of the truth. For in the New Testament, after Truth has been manifested by flesh, we are advanced by a higher scale of precepts, and it is meet and right that certain actions

which in that People were instrumental to a shadow of the Truth, we should give over. But if there be any man, who would defend his lying by the Old Testament, because there perhaps it was less detrimental to particular persons, he must needs be compelled to say that the robbing of another's property, and the retaliation of an injury, which were there allowed to those in a weak state, cannot be injurious to himself. All of which it is plain to all men with what severe strictures Truth doth visit. Which 'Truth' now henceforth, the shadow of the betokenment of Him set aside, is brought to light in very flesh. But as the holy man gives his word neither to 'speak' nor 'meditate falsehood,' these actual particulars, wherein he agrees with the truth, he subjoins, carrying it on;

Ver. 5. God forbid that I should justify you; till I die, I will not depart from mine innocency. [iv] 8. For he would 'depart from his innocency,' if he reckoned good things of bad persons; as Solomon bears witness, who saith, He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord. [Prov. 17, 15] For there are persons, who, whilst they extol with commendation deeds of men ill done, heighten that which they ought to have rebuked. For hence it is said by the Prophet, Woe to those that sew pillows under every elbow of the hand, and make cushions under the head of every age. [Ez. 13, 18] For a 'pillow' is put for this, that we may rest the easier. Therefore whoever flatters persons doing wrongly is putting a pillow under the head or the elbow of one lying, so that the man that should have been chidden on account of sin, being stayed up therein by commendations, should rest at his ease. Hence again it is written, And one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it. [ib. 10.] For by the term of 'a wall,' the hardness of sin is denoted. And so 'to build up a wall' is for a man to rear against himself barriers of sin; but they' daub the wall,' who flatter those that commit sins, that what the first by doing wickedly build, those same persons by spreading their flatteries should as it were make of bright colour. But the holy man, as he does not think what is bad of the good, so he refuses to judge what is good of the bad; saying, God forbid that I should Judge you just: till I die, I will not depart from mine innocency. Where he subjoins in plain words;

Ver. 6. My righteousness, which I began to hold fast, I will not abandon. For 'his righteousness' that he had 'begun with,' he would 'abandon,' if he went out of the way into the praising of persons committing sin. But because we then more truly keep away from the sins of others when we first keep ourselves safe from our own, why he is so afraid to be guilty touching those, he gives the grounds of the principle, when he adds; For neither doth mine heart reproach me in all my life. [v] 9. As if he expressed himself in plain words; 'On your account I ought not to be drawn into guilt, in that I have dreaded to commit sin in my own affairs.' But it is a thing to be known, that everyone that is at variance with the precepts of the Lord in practice, as often as he hears them, is reproached and confounded by his own heart, because that which he has never done is brought to recollection. For whereinsoever it sees itself to have done amiss, the conscience by itself secretly accuses self. Whence the prophet David beseeches, saying, Then may I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all Thy commandments. [Ps. 119, 6] For greatly 'ashamed' is every man, when either by reading or hearing them he turns his eye to the precepts of God, which by his way of living

he has disregarded. Thus it is hence declared by the voice of John, If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him. [1 John 3, 21. 22.] As if he said in plain speech, 'If that He bids, we do, that we ask, we shall obtain.'

10. For with God both these two do of necessity match with one another exactly, that practice should be sustained by prayer, and prayer by practice. Thus it is hence that Jeremiah saith; Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts with our hands unto God in the heavens. [Lam. 3, 40. 41.] For to 'search our ways' is to sift what is inmost in the thoughts. But he 'lifts up his heart with his hands,' who strengthens his prayer by good works. For he that prays, but shuts his eyes to practice, 'lifts up the heart,' but does not 'lift up the hands.' But whosoever practises, but does not pray, 'lifts up the hands,' but does not 'lift up the heart.' And so according to the voice of John, the heart then acquires confidence in prayer, when no wickedness of life withstands it. Of which same confidence it is rightly said now by the holy man; For neither doth mine heart reproach me in all my life. As though he said in plain speech, 'It never remembers to have been guilty of that, whereby it might be made ashamed in its prayers.' But it may be asked, on what principle he declares that he is not reproached by his heart, seeing that he accuses himself above of having sinned, saying, I have sinned: what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men? [Job 7, 20] Or surely, If I would justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me. [Job 9, 20]

11. But it is requisite to be known that there are sins that by righteous men are possible to be avoided, and there are some sins which even by righteous men are not possible to be avoided. For what man's heart, whilst bound up with this corruptible flesh, does not slip in ill bent thought, even if be not plunged into the very pit of consenting? And yet to think these same wrong thoughts is to commit sin. But while there is a resisting of the thought, the soul is freed from being confounded. And so the mind of the righteous, though it be free from bad practice, yet sometimes it falls to the ground in bad thinking. Thus then into sin too it slips, because in the thought of the heart at all events it is made to swerve, and yet it hath not that whereon to upbraid itself afterwards in weeping, because it recovers itself before that it falls by consenting. And so with just propriety he who confessed himself a sinner, declares that he is never upbraided by his heart, because though perhaps by thinking unlawful thoughts he ever fell short of righteousness, yet the resolute struggle of the soul, he resisted the thought. It follows;

Ver. 7. Let mine enemy be like the ungodly, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous. [vi]

12. In Holy Writ, the words' like as' and' as if' are sometimes put not for a likeness, but for the reality. Whence we have that; And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. [John 1, 14] And thus here also 'like,' and 'as' seem to be said rather for the sake of affirmation than similitude. Now between the ungodly and the wicked man there is wont to be this difference sometimes, that every ungodly man is unrighteous, but not every

unrighteous man ungodly. For the' ungodly' is put instead of unbeliever, i.e. a stranger to the godliness of religion. But a man is called unrighteous, who by wrongness of practice is at variance with righteousness, even if he does perhaps bear the name of the Christian Faith. Therefore by the typical voice of blessed Job, Holy Church, which is subject to some gainsaying the right Faith, avouches that she has an 'ungodly man her enemy.' But because she has to bear others under the cloke of the faith within her pale living in bad practices, she abhors the 'unrighteous' man as being her adversary. But if' like' and 'as' it is right we should understand as put on account of 'likeness,' Holy Church brands by a likeness to the ungodly those whom she is subject to living in a carnal manner within her pale. For within her bounds he is an enemy to her, who whilst he maintains himself a believer by professions, denies it by practices. And because he accounts him as an unbeliever, who, whilst set within her pale in semblance, only assails her with mischief of evil doing, he rightly says, Mine enemy is like the ungodly, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous. As though he said in plain speech; 'He is at variance with me in faith as well, who does not agree with me in practice.' It follows;

Ver. 8. For what is the hope of the hypocrite, if he seize with covetousness, and God free not his soul? [vii]

13. The hypocrite, who in the Latin language is termed pretender [simlator], aims not to be but to appear just, and therefore he is a covetous robber, because whereas while doing wickedly he desires to be revered for sanctity, he seizes on the praise of a life not his own. But it is said to be the aim of hypocrites, that both what they are they may keep back, and what they are not they may make themselves known to men as being; so that they should surpass their own measure in esteem, and by credit for conduct shew themselves to excel the rest of the world. They eschew the seeming to be that which they are, and before the eyes of men they clothe themselves with a kind of overlaid respectability of innocency. Hence in the Gospel they are rightly upbraided by the voice of our Redeemer, when the words are spoken to them, Woe unto you, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear to men beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of covetousness and iniquity. [Mat. 23, 27. 28. Contrariwise all that are Saints really not only do not ever at all covet glory that is beyond their measure, but do also eschew appearing that very thing, which they have obtained to be. And hence that great Preacher of truth, in speaking against the false apostles;

while he was relating the extraordinary excellences of his practice for the instruction of his disciples; whilst he was describing that he had undergone such countless perils in accumulated persecution, and after this made mention of his having been carried up to the third heaven, and into Paradise again, where he had power to learn things so 'great, as he had not power in any degree to tell; was on the point perhaps of telling things still more marvellous of himself, yet holding himself in from human applause by deep reflecting he adds, But now I spare, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he

heareth of me. [2 Cor. 12, 6] He then had somewhat yet further to be declared concerning himself, who' forbears' to speak. But the great Preacher did both, that both by telling the things which he had done he might instruct his disciples, and by being silent keep himself safe within the bounds of humility. For he would have been over ungracious, if he had withheld all relating to himself from the disciples; and perhaps incautious over much, if even to the disciples he had uttered all about himself. But in a wonderful way, as has been said, he did both the one and the other, so that by speaking he might instruct the life of those that heard him, and by holding his peace preserve his own.

14. Now it deserves to be known, that holy men as often as they communicate any thing concerning themselves to their followers, are imitating the custom of their Creator. For God, Who forbids us that we never be commended by our own lips, in Holy Writ does utter His own praises; not that He Himself needs them, Who cannot be a gainer by praises; but whilst He relates to us His greatness, He lifts up our ignorance to Himself, and by telling His own good He teaches us; whereas man would never know Him, if He had been minded to be silent about Himself. And so He for this reason shews His own praises, that we may be able by hearing to know, by knowing to love, by loving to follow, by following to obtain, and by obtaining to enjoy the vision of Him. Whence the Psalmist saith, He will tell the people the power of His works, and that He may give them the heritage of the heathen.

[Ps. 111, 6] As if he expressed himself in plain terms; 'For this reason He tells the mightiness of His doing, that he that heareth thereof may be enriched with His gifts.' Therefore holy men, imitating the way of their Creator, sometimes reveal things that concern themselves, that those who hear them they may instruct, not that they may themselves be gainers, and yet in these things they keep guard over themselves by bethinking themselves deeply, lest whilst they lift up others from an earthward bent, they should themselves be sunk in the coveting of earthly applause. Whose statements hypocrites for the most part follow, but the meaning of their statements they are wholly blind to, because what the righteous do with a view to the advantaging of their neighbour, this these same do with a view to the extending of their own name. But the holy man beholding that hypocrites seek not at all after future glory, but desire to possess themselves of present glory, says, What is the hope of the hypocrite? in that while he loves the present things, he hopes not for the future. For it is written, For what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? [Rom. 8, 24] And so for this reason there is on the part of the hypocrite no advancing in any degree to the eternal rewards by hope, because that which required to be sought elsewhere, he makes it his pride to have in possession here.

And because his offence was set forth, the punishment too is subjoined, when it is forthwith brought in next;

Will God hear his cry, fchen trouble cometh upon him? [viii]

15. 'His cry in the time of his straits God heareth not,' because in the time of tranquillity he did not himself hear the Lord crying in His precepts. For it is written; He that turneth

away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. [Prov. 28, 9] And so the holy man seeing that all they that are indifferent to practise what is light now, in the time at the end betake themselves to words of beseeching, saith; Will God hear his cry? By which words assuredly he follows close upon the words of our Redeemer, Who saith, Last of all come the foolish virgins also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. And it is answered them, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. [Matt. 25, 11] Because great severity is exercised then, in proportion as now greater mercy is prolonged [al. granted beforehand], and He does then with strictness put forth judgment upon persons not corrected, Who now patiently bestows pity upon them going on transgressing. For hence it is the Prophet saith, Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found; call ye upon Him, while He is near. [Is. 55, 6] Now He is not seen, and' is near,' then He shall be seen, and shall not' be near.' He hath not yet appeared in judgment, and if He be sought, He is found. For in a wonderful way, when He appeareth in judgment He is at once able to be seen, and unable to be found.

Hence Solomon describes Wisdom at once caressing sweetly, and judging dreadfully, saying, Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets. Whose language he also tells, adding, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools delight in their own harm, and silly ones hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof. Behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto yow 1 will make known my words unto you. [Prov. 1, 20-28] Mark with what kind of words her sweetness in calling is expressed. Let us see now in what ways her severity in upbraiding is told, that in the end sooner or later her strictness in punishing may have free scope. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand; and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. Let her now say how she will smite those, whom she bears with so much longsuffering, never turning back to her: I also will laugh at your destruction, I will mock when your fear cometh, when sudden calamity falleth on you, and your destruction riseth as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer. They shall rise up early, but they shall not find me. By the mouth of Solomon then, the wisest of men, all particulars are carefully set forth relating to the Judgment from Above:

because she both at first calls us sweetly, and afterwards upbraids us terribly, and at the last condemns us irretrievably. And so it is well said; Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Surely because the hypocrite then findeth not a remedy in crying, who now lets slip the fitting opportunity of crying. Concerning whose wickedness it is yet further added;

Ver. 10. Or will he be able to delight himself in the Almighty? [ix]

16. For he that is overcome by the love of earthly things, in no degree delights himself in God. The soul indeed can never exist without its delight, for it delights itself either in things below or in things above, and in proportion as it is employed with higher devotion towards those above, it grows deadened with the greater loathing towards those below, and as it glows with a keener interest for those below, it cools in proportion with an accursed illsensibility from those above. For both cannot possibly .be loved together and alike. Hence

the Apostle John, well knowing that amongst the thorns of worldly attachments the crop of heavenly charity can never shoot, before he produces the seeds of the love eternal, with the holy hand of the word eradicates from the hearts of his hearers the thorns of worldly affections, in the words, Love not the world, neither the tleings that are in the world. And he directly subjoins, If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [1 John 2, 15] As if he said in express terms; 'Both these loves cannot contain themselves in one and the same heart, nor does the crop of charity from Above shoot in that heart, wherein the thorns of gratification down below kill it.' And he reckons up all the prickles arising from that gratification below, saying, For all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. [v. 16. 17.] And so the' hypocrite cannot delight himself in God,' because heavenly desires never spring forth in his mind, seeing surely that the thorns ofea11hly love overlay it. Of whom it is fitly added;

Will he always call upon God? [x] 17. For it is then that the hypocrite' calls upon God,' when the wretchedness of earthly circumstances wrings him hard. For when in this world he has obtained the carrying out of the good fortune sought for, his Maker, Who vouchsafed him this same good fortune, he asks not for; But because, as we said before, the art of those that teach should be, that in their hearers' minds they should first aim to destroy what is wrong, and afterwards to preach what is right; (lest the hearts that are full of evil things should not contain the good seed of holy preaching, whence it is said to Jeremiah, See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant. [Jer. 1, 10] For it is first bidden him that he should pull down, and afterwards that he should build, first to pluck up, and afterwards to plant; because the foundation of rightful truth is not laid, except the edifice of error be first pulled down;) blessed Job after that he had mane the case of the Universal Church his answer to the statements of his friends as if in opposition to words of heretics, and that by a manifold rejoinder he had destroyed their pride, describes himself henceforth to teach; that is, that he might be plainly seen in those things which he added to plant what is right, but in those that he premised to have plucked up what is wrong. It goes on;

I will teach you by the hand of God, that which is with the Almighty; I will not conceal. [xi] 18. In such a way does blessed Job speak in his own words as to denote something connected with what relates to us. For Holy Church in teaching, in so far as it is expedient to know it, hides not a particle of truth. Thus because 'the Hand of God' is a name for the Son; for, by Him were all things made [John 1, 3]; she tells that by the Hand of God she teaches those, whom she sees continuing foolish in their own wisdom. As if she said in plain words; 'I know not any thing of myself; but whatever I perceive of the Truth, this I comprehend by the bountifulness of that same Truth. Ye for this reason are not embued with right wisdom, because this same wisdom that you have yon ascribe not to the Hand of God, but to your own selves.' For the adversaries of Holy Church, if they do at times perceive any thing true, this they attribute to their own powers, and they deprive themselves so much the more of the Wisdom from Above, in the same proportion as they wish to have it appropriated to

themselves as being derived from their own wits. Unto whom it is sometimes vouchsafed for their judgment, that they should indeed know some things aright, but by this very same knowledge be rendered the more obnoxious to punishment. Whence it is fitly added;

Ver. 12. Behold, all ye yourselves know: why then do ye utter vain things without cause? 19. It is written; And that servant, 'Which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself; neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. [Luke 12, 47. 48.] But he that knew not, and did not worthily, shall be beaten with few stripes. And again it is written; Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. [Jam. 4, 17] And so for the heightening of greater guilt Holy Church tells it that her enemies at once know what they ought to follow, and will not follow what they may know. Of which same persons it is elsewhere said; Let them go down quick into hell. [Ps. 55, 15] Those are' quick' that are sensible of the things that are done towards them. For the dead neither know nor are sensible at all, and so 'the dead' who do not feel are used to be put for persons that know not, but' the quick,' who are sensible, for those that know. Therefore to 'go down quick into hell' is for persons to sin knowing and being sensible of it. It goes on; This is the portion of an ungodly man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty. Which same' portion' and' inheritance' he thereupon gives, when he adds;

Ver. 14. If his children be multiplied, it is in the sword; and his grandchildren shall not be satisfied with bread. 20. The title of the 'ungodly' is not without meaning given to heretics, who through the erroneousness of false doctrine are far removed from the knowledge of the truth; whom in the words following he calls 'violent' as well, as being persons who set themselves to wrest by violence to a wrong meaning the sentences of Holy Scripture containing right articles of doctrine. And so they are 'violent' if not in the goods of men, at all events in the senses of precepts. But the 'sons of violent men', are the follower's of heretics, who while they consent to their error, are as It were engendered by their preaching. But while being' multiplied' 'they shall' be in the sword,' for though now they grow up in an immense multitude in a ruinous liberty, yet they are smitten by the sentence of the Judge to come, Whence the Lord saith by Moses, My sword shall devour flesh. For 'the sword of God devours flesh,' because in the Final Judgment His sentence destroys those, who are carnally wise, On which point it is to be made out why it should be said that the wicked' receive this portion' and inheritance of theirs from the Almighty? Yet to those taking a right view it is plain that though they had it from themselves to act unjustly, yet it comes before the Equity Above, what is unjustly done justly to judge; so that the sentence of God should orderly appoint for punishment those whom their ill-ordered conduct drew into sin, Concerning whom it is fitly subjoined; And his grandchildren shall not be satisfied with bread.

21. For 'the grandchildren' of Heretics are they that are born by the preaching of children in error. And these 'bread fails to satisfy;' because while in the provender of the sacred Word they seek to perceive more than they take in, they are ever a hungering to the knowledge of the truth; and the preachings of instruction, which they are busy to seek for questioning,

they are incapable of having for refreshment. But because from the number of these heretics some Holy Church gathers in, some she leaves obstinate in their wickedness, it is thereupon added; Ver. 15. Those that remain of him shall be buried in death. [xiv] 22. Doubtless' the persons left' of that tribe of heretics 'are buried in death,' for whereas they return not to the light of truth, assuredly they are sunk down in everlasting punish. ment by an earthly perception. And because it is sometimes the case, that whilst the leader of the common herds in error is carried off to punishment, the common herds that were led astray are new set to a knowledge of the truth, and then the persons under them return to true knowledge, when these persons are brought to eternal punishments, who had been wrongly set over them, it is fitly added;

And his widows shall not weep. [xv] 23. Whom do we take for 'his widows' but the subject common herds left deserted for their happiness by his death? For oftentimes, as has been said, when the preacher of error is carried off to everlasting punishments, his subject multitudes are brought back to the grace of a true acquaintance. For these multitudes the wicked preacher was set over like a husband, because the seducer of the soul did cleave joined to them for the worse. Or, indeed, 'the widows do not weep,' because whilst continuing in their erring belief, whereas they hold their preacher to have been holy, they are beguiled by a deceitful hope, that they should not mourn. It follows; Ver. 16, l7. Though he heap up silver as the earth, and prepare raiment as the mud; he may prepare, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

[xvi]

24. Silver is used to be interpreted the clearness of sacred Writ, as it is elsewhere said; The words of the Lord are pure wo1.ds: as silver tried in a furnace of earth. [Ps. 12, 6] And because there are those that long to have the Word of God not inwardly in the exemplifying but externally in the displaying, therefore it is said by the Prophet, All they that are clothed in silver a1.e cut off, being those, who by the word of God do not fill themselves with the interior refreshment, but array themselves in the outward exhibition. Hence their 'silver,' i.e. the word of heretics, is compared to 'earth,' because touching the subject of Holy Writ, that there may be something that they know, they toil and strain from the coveting of earthly applause. And these, too, 'prepare raiment as the mud,' because they make up testimonies of Holy Scripture loosely and bedaubingly, whereby they would defend themselves, He shall 'prepare' indeed, 'but the just shall put them on,' because the person who is full of right faith, which is used to be accounted to the Saints for righteousness, gathers together those selfsame testimonies of Holy Writ, which the heretic adduces, and therefrom he charges home the obstinacy of that one's error. For whereas they fetch against us the testimonies of the Sacred Law, they bring with them unto us that whereby they may be defeated.

And hence David representing a type of the Lord, but Goliath the pride of Heretics, they spake that in deeds, which we are disclosing in words. Thus Goliath came to battle with a sword, but David with a shepherd's scrip, but David, defeating that same Goliath, with his own sword slew him. Which thing we likewise do, who by His deigning have obtained to

be made members of the promised David [al. 'the promised members of David.']. For when heretics full of pride, and advancing sentences of Holy Writ, we defeat by the same words and sentences, which they bring forward, we as it were behead Goliath in his pride with his own sword. And so 'the just puts on those same garments,' which the unjust man 'prepares,' because the holy man employs in the service of truth those same sentences by which the bad man strives to exhibit himself a master of learning in opposition to the truth.

25. And the innocent shall divide the silver. For 'the innocent to divide the silver' is to set forth the revelations of the Lord piece by piece and with discrimination, and to apply to each individual what may be proportionately suitable. For the Word of the Lord which is here entitled 'silver' or 'garments,' this same is elsewhere denominated 'spoils.' Which the Psalmist likewise witnesses in the way of comparison, saying, I rejoice at Thy Word as one that findeth great spoils. [Ps. 119, 162] Which spoils are so called for this reason, because on the Gentile world passing over to the faith of the Lord, the Jews are spoiled of the Sacred Oracles with which they had been invested. And of this division of the silver or of spoils it is elsewhere said, Benjamin is a ravening wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoils. [Gen. 49, 27] By which words, no doubt, the Apostle Paul is designated, as being descended from the stock of Benjamin, who 'in the morning devoured the prey,' because in his first beginnings seizing upon all the believers he was able, he glutted his own cruelty. But 'in the evening he divided the spoils,' because afterwards being made a believer, he portioned out the sacred oracles by interpreting them.

26. Though this' silver,' which' the innocent divides,' may be understood in another sense as well. For Heretics, that they may be easily able to recommend what is wrong, mix with their statements things that are right, that the minds of those that hear them by right views they may attract, and 'by wrong ones wound. Which same persons, because, in the precepts of God, they are pied with a sound and unsound mode of speech, are, in the Gospel, well represented by the appearance of the' ten lepers,' with whose healthy colour whereas an evil whiteness is intermixed, by this excessive whiteness they are rendered foul. Hence we are warned, Not to think of ourselves more than we ought to think, but to think soberly. [Rom. 12, 3] And these too, because they do not as yet love either God, of Whom they entertain wrong notions, nor yet their neighbour, from whom they are separated, are opposed to the precepts of the Decalogue, and therefore for the beseeching of the Lord they come ten in number. Now for this cause, that they mixed what is sound with what is unsound, they are pied with a difference of colour; but because they offended in His precepts, they call Him that whereby they had so offended, saying, Jesus, Preceptor; and hereby they directly obtained to be healed. And so because the Catholic makes out the things that are thought rightly, or that are thought wrongly by them, 'the innocent divideth the silver,' i.e. distinguisheth what may have been by them delivered either with wholesome or baneful effect. I t goes on;

Ver. 18. He buildeth his house as a moth. [xvii] 27. 'The moth builds a house' for itself by corrupting. Nor could the heretic have been shewn by a better comparison, who makes a dwelling for his misbelief no where else save in the minds which he has corrupted, who

also engages for his followers to be free from everlasting fire. For he pledges to them 'the refreshment of eternal rest, but his words 'have no solidity, because they lack the fulness of truth. Whence it is added, And as the keeper he maketh a booth. For' the booth of the keeper' is not set firm by any foundation, but the time passing it is directly destroyed. And the rest promised by heretics is destroyed together with the time, in that after this life it is not found at all. And because oftentimes Heretics in contempt of the Church Universal are supported by the patronage of the powerful ones of the world, and the rich do not cease to aid them with all the countenance of active agency that they are empowered with, that identical person also, whoever he be, that is made to swell against the face of his Maker by temporal good things, is now touched by the sentence of the holy man, and from the particular ruin of heretics, the discourse is drawn off to a general characterizing of all the self-exalted, when it is added;

Ver. 19. When the rich man sleepeth, he shall take nothing away with him, he shall open his eyes and shall find nought. 28. In harmony with which same sentence the Psalmist saith, All the foolish in heart are troubled, they have slept their sleep, and all the men of riches have found nothing in their hands. [Ps. 75, 5] For in order that the rich after death may 'find something in their hand,' it is told to them before death, in whose hands they should place their riches. Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye .fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations. When the rich man sleepeth, he shall take nothing away with him. His goods when he dieth he would take away with him, if whilst he lived, at the voice of him that besought him, he had taken them home to himself; for all things earthly, which we part with by keeping, we keep by bestowing; our patrimony which retained is lost, whilst paid out of hand it remains. For we cannot long continue together with our goods. Since either we by dying abandon them, or they by perishing as it were abandon us while living. And so it remains for us to manage that things doomed unreservedly to perish we may compel to pass over into a reward that does not perish.

29. But that is very much to be wondered at that is spoken, When he sleepeth, he shall open his eyes and shall find nothing. For in order to sleep we close our eyes, and on waking up open them. But on this point, forasmuch as man consists of soul and body, while it is called sleep of one subject, the waking of the other is shewn to view; because when the body falls asleep in death, then the soul wakes up in a true acquaintance. And so 'the rich man sleeps, and opens his eyes,' because, when he dies in the flesh, his soul is compelled to see what it despised to foresee. Then indeed it wakes up in true acquaintance; then it sees that all is nothing that it possessed; then it finds itself empty; whereas it used to rejoice in being full of good things above the rest of the world. It' sleeps, and takes away nothing along with it,' nothing surely, of the goods that it possessed. For the sin of the goods is carried on along with it, though every thing for the sake of which sin was committed be left behind here. So then let him go now, and swell himself out with good things gotten, let him lift himself up above the rest of the world, and Pride himself in having what his neighbour has not. The

time will come sooner or later that he shall awake, and then learn how empty that was which he had possessed in sleep.

For it often happens to the needy whilst sleeping that he sees himself lich in a dream, and on the strength of those acquisitions uplifts his mind, is overjoyed that he has what he had not, and now counts to be disdainful of those whom ,it grieved him to be disdained by; but that suddenly waking up he is grieved that he has woke up, in that meanwhile though but while sleeping he possessed the semblance of riches. For he groans directly under the weight of poverty, and is wrung by the straitness of his indigence, and this so much the worse, as though but for the shortest space of time he was even thus emptily lich. Thus, thus, too surely is it with the rich ones of this world, who are bloated with good things acquired. They have no knowledge to do right by their abundance; as persons asleep .they are rich; but on waking up they find their poverty, because they 'bring nothing with them' to that Judgment, that is calculated to remain, and in proportion as they are now lifted up the higher for a brief space, the more heavily they groan against themselves for everlasting. So then let him say, He shall open his eyes, and shall find nothing. Because he then 'opens those eyes' to punishments, which here he kept closed to mercy. He 'opens his eyes' and he 'finds not' the fruit of pity, in that he kept them shut here, when he did 'find' it.

Those also are slow in 'opening their eyes,' who, as Wisdom is witness, are described as going in the time of their condemnation to say, What hath pride profited us? or what good hath riches with, our vaunting brought us? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a post that hasteth by. That the things which they possessed were worthless and transitory they now learn by their loss, which same, so long as they were theirs, seemed to their foolish hearts at once great and lasting. It was late that the rich man 'opened his eyes,' when he saw Lazarus at rest, whom he scorned to see lying at his door. He understood There the thing that here to do he refused: by his condemnation he was forced to learn what it was that he lost, when he did not own his neighbour being in want. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 20. Want shall take hold of him like water; a tempest shall overwhelm him in the night.

30. Let us look now at the want of the rich man as burning, whose abundance was so great as feasting. For he says, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame. [Luke 16, 24] By which same words it is not this that is made known to us, that there in that excessive burning a single drop of water is then asked for as a sufficiency of refreshment, but that he who has sinned by abundance should there be consumed by a want burning to excess. For we see in the words of the rich man, resulting from the exactest judgment of God, how proportionate a punishment answered such sin. For moved by want, he is there driven to beg for the very least, who here, moved by covetousness, went so far as to refuse the very least. What can be paid back more exactly, what more strictly? He begged a drop of water, who refused crumbs of bread; and so 'want taketh hold of him like water.' That want is then not unsuitably likened to water, because there is that tormenting in hell, which, as

swallowing up those it receives in the depths below, is used to be denoted by the title of a' lake.' Whence it is delivered by the Prophet in the voice of mankind, My life is fallen into the lake. [Lam. 3, 53] But by the triumphing of those that are escaped it is sung, O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee and Thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast b1'ough't up my sold from the grave: Thou hast kept me from them that go down into the lake. [Ps. 30, 2. 3.]

31. A tempest shall overwhelm him in the flight. What in this place does he call' the night,' but the hidden time of sudden departing? And by the name of 'tempest' he represents the whirlwind of the Judgment. Which the Psalmist also testifies, in the words, Our God shall come in state, our God, and shall not keep silence; a fire shall devour before Him, and round about Him a mighty tempest. [Ps. 50, 3] Of which same 'tempest' Wisdom also saith by Solomon; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind. [Prov. 1, 26. 27. And because the very ignorance of the coming departure is itself called 'Night,' 'in the night a tempest shall overwhelm him,' i.e. the whirlwind of Divine Judgment, whilst he is ignorant, shall seize upon Him. For it is hence that Truth saith by Itself, But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready. For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh. [Mal. 24, 43. 44. Hence also it is spoken against the 'evil servant;' But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken.

The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of. Hence Paul says to the disciples, But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light and the children of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. [1 Thess. 5, 4. 5. Hence to the rich man, 'giving loose to pride, it is said by the voice of God, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? [Luke 12, 20] In the night he is described as giving up his soul, who whilst not seeing death beforehand is carried off in darkness of the heart. Thus then he saith, A tempest shall overwhelm him in the night. For because he is not minded to do the good things that he sees, he is caught by the tempest of his destruction which he seeth not. Of whom it is yet further added;

Ver. 2 The scorching wind shall carry him off, and take him away.

32. Who is in this place called the 'scorching wind' but the evil spirit, who stirs up the flames of divers lusts in the heart, that he may drag it to an eternity of punishments? And so 'the scorching wind' is said to 'carry off' any bad men, because the plotter, the evil spirit, who inflames a man whilst living to evil, 'drags him when dying to torments. For that 'the scorching wind' is wont to be meant for the unclean spirit, who by the breath of evil suggesting kindles the hearts of the wicked to earthly desires, the prophet Jeremiah testifies,

saying, A pot kindled I see, and the face thereof by the face of the North. [Jer. 1, 13] For 'the pot kindled' is the heart of man boiling with the heatings of worldly concerns, and with the restlessness of desires. Which is kindled by 'the face of the North,' i.e. set on fire by the suggestions of the devil. For that very being is used to be called by the title of 'the North,' who said, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. [Is. 14, 13] Thus by the burning effect of this scorching wind the mind of each one of the Elect is cooled down, when the heat of evil inclinations is extinguished therein, and the flame of carnal desires turned to ice.

And hence Holy Church in the praises of her spouse cries out with exultation, I sat down under the shadow of him, whom I had desired. [Cant. 2, 3] Of the abatement of this heat it is said to her by Isaiah, by promise of the Lord, Instead of the ground willow shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle tree. [Is. 55, 13] For 'instead of the ground willow there comes up in her the fir-tree,' when in the heart of the Saints, instead of the sunkenness of earthly thought, the elevation of heavenly contemplation rises up. Now the nettle is altogether of a fiery nature. But the myrtle is said to be of cooling virtue, and therefore' instead of the nettle there comes up the myrtle tree,' when the minds of the righteous are brought from the irritation and heat of bad habits to coolness and quietness of the thoughts, while they now no longer seek earthly things, while they extinguish the flames of the flesh by heavenly aspirations.

33. In reference too to this cooling of the soul, which is given from heaven, it is said to Mary, The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee [Luke 1, 35]; though on this point, by the term of' the overshadowing,' either Nature of God to be made Incarnate might have been denoted. For a shadow is followed by light and body. Now the Lord is Light in respect of the Divine Nature, Who, by means of a soul intervening, vouchsafed in her womb in respect of human nature to become a body. And so because the Incorporeal Light was in her womb to be made corporeal, to her, who conceived the incorporeal for corporality, it is said, The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; i.e. The Incorporeal Light of the Divine Nature shall in thee take the corporeal substance of Human Nature. But now let us carry to an end what we began relating to any wicked man. Accordingly' the scorching wind takes him away,' in this way, viz. that him whom the evil spirit now kindles with the fire of evil concupiscence, he afterwards carries off to the flames of hell. It goes on;

And as a whirlwind shall carry him out of his place. [xxi] 34. 'The place' of the wicked is the gratification of the life of time, and the enjoyment of the flesh. Therefore every single individual is in a manner' carried out of his place by a whirlwind,' when overwhelmed with affright on the Last Day he is severed from all his gratifications. Of which same Last Day it is directly added with justice, Ver. 22. For He shall let loose upon him, and not spare. [xxii]

35. God, as often as He chastens the sinner by smiting him, for this reason' lets loose' the scourge, that He may 'spare.' But when by smiting He brings his life to an end whilst remaining in sin, He 'lets loose' the scourge, but never at all 'spares.' For the Same, Who 'let loose' the scourge that He might 'spare,' one day 'lets it loose' with this view that He may

not spare. For in this life the Lord busies Himself so much the more that He may spare, in proportion as He scourges the more in awaiting; as He Himself saith to John by the voice of the Angel, As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten [Rev. 3, 19]; and as it is elsewhere spoken, For whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth. [Hab. 12, 6] But reversely it is written of the scourge of condemnation, The wicked is taken in the work of his own hands [Ps. 9, 16]. Of whom the Lord saith by Jeremiah, when He sees the multitudes transgressing irreclaimably, whom He now no longer regards as sons under discipline, but as enemies under unmitigated scourging, For I have wounded thee with the wound of an enemy, with a cruel chastisement. [Jer. 30, 14] And what is said here, and not spare, is there likewise brought out in other words; Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable.

[ver. 15] Whence the Elect always make this provision, that they should return to righteousness before the wrath of the Judge is inextinguishably kindled, lest being caught by the last stroke, they find life ended to them, together with sin, For the rod will then do away with the sin, when it alters the life, since whosesoever ways it does not change, his doings it does not atone for. Therefore all smiting from God is either a purifying of the present life in us, or a commencement of the punishment that follows. For with reference to those who profit by the scourge it is written, Who framest pain in the commandment [Ps. 94, 20]. For in that case when the wicked man is scourged and amended, to the commandment he would not give ear; to the pain he does. And so there is 'pain framed in the commandment' to him, who by pain as it were in the stead of the commandment is kept back from evil practices, But touching these persons to whom scourges are a curse, not a clearance, it is said, Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction. [Jer. 5, 3] With these, their scourges commence in this life, and last on in everlasting smiting, Whence the Lord saith by Moses, For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell [Deut. 32, 22].

For so far as regards the present smiting it is rightly said, A fire is kindled in Mine anger. But as regards the eternal damnation, it is immediately added with propriety, And shalt burn unto the lowest hell. Though by some persons that is used to be alleged, which is written, God judgeth not twice upon the same thing [Nah. 1, 9. LXX]. Which persons, howsoever, do not pay regard to this that is spoken by the Prophet of the wicked; And crush them with double confusion [Jer. 17, 18]. And that, which is written elsewhere; Jesus in saving the People out of Egypt, a second time destroyed them that believed not [Jude 5]. To which persons, however, if we yield assent, that any sin cannot be twice visited with punishment, this must be ‚judged of those persons smitten for sin and dying in their sin, that their smiting begun here is completed there, that so to the unreformed there should be one and the same scourge, which begins here in time, but is consummated in eternal punishments, that to those that wholly refuse to be amended, the dealing of present scourges now should be the beginning of the torments to ensue. And so God shall let loose upon him, and not spare. It goes on;

Fleeing he shall flee out of His hand, [xxiii] 36. For he 'flees out of the hand' of the Smiter, who amends the wickedness of his behaviour; or otherwise, because in Holy Writ the hand is used to be taken for acting, he 'flees from the hand of the smiter,' who, whilst he marks the destruction of the wicked man, forsakes the path of wickedness. Whence it is yet further added; Ver. 23. He shall bind up his hands over him. [xxiv] 37. For to 'bind up the hands' is to establish the practices of his life in uprightness, Whence Paul too saith; Wherefore lift up the loosed hands, and the unstrung knees [Heb. 12, 12]. While, then, they behold the destruction of another, they are made to turn back to the conscience, to remind themselves of their own, and by the very same cause whereby one man is carried to torments, another is freed from torments, And so 'he binds up his hands over him,' because he observes in the punishment of another what to be afraid of; and whilst he sees one living in transgression so smitten, he binds fast his own too loose practices with the sinews of righteousness. And so it is brought to pass that he who, being a bad man, whilst living, had drawn numbers into transgression by the delightfulness of sin, in dying recovers some from transgression by the terribleness of torments. Which same the Psalmist bears witness to be of advantage to the good as well, saying, The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash has hands in the blood of sinners. [Ps. 58, 10] For 'in the blood of sinners,' when dying, 'the righteous do wash their hands,' because, when their punishment is seen, the life of the person seeing it is cleansed. It goes on;

And he shall hiss upon him, beholding his place. [xxv] 38. What is expressed in the hissing, but the straining of wonderment? But if in the hissing there is some other meaning ought, when the sinner dies, these that witness his death draw tight the mouth in hissing, in that they are converted to those spiritual words, which they had contemned, so that they henceforth begin to believe and to teach, what before, while they perceived the wicked man thriving, they need not to believe. For it very often happens that the mind of the weak is the more unsteadied from the hearing of the truth, as it sees the despisers of the truth flourishing; but when just vengeance takes away the unjust, it keeps others away from wickedness. Whence it is said by Solomon; When the pestilent man is punished, the little one will be wiser. Thus the holy man after he had adequately filled up the punishments of the men of power that are lifted up in the world, again directs his words to the pride of heretics, who are lifted up in speech, saying ;

Chap. xxviii. ver. 1. The silver hath the beginning of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it. 39. In silver the power of speaking, in gold brightness of life or of wisdom is used to be denoted. And because heretics are so filled with pride for the brilliancy of their speaking, that they are not based firmly by any authority of the sacred books, (which books are for speaking like a kind of veins of silver to us, because from those identical books we derive the spring and source of our speaking,) he recalls them to the pages of sacred authority, that if they have a desire to speak in a true way, they may from that source draw forth what to say. And he saith, The silver hath the beginning of its veins, and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.

As if he said in plain words; 'He that is fitting himself for the words of true preaching, the originals of the cases he must of necessity derive from the sacred page, so as to bring round every thing that he speaks to a foundation of divine authority, and in that set firm the edifice of his own speaking. For, as we before said, oftentimes heretics, whilst they are eager to prop up what is bad of their own, broach things which assuredly are not maintained in the page of the sacred books. And hence the great Preacher admonishes his disciple, saying, O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane novelties of speaking [1 Tim. 6, 20], for whereas heretics long to be extolled as if for excellency of wit, they as it were bring out new things which are not maintained in the old books of the ancient Fathers, and thus it follows, that whilst they desire to appear wise, they scatter seeds of foolishness to their wretched hearers.

40. And it is well added; And to the gold there is a place, where they fine it. As if he said in plain terms; 'The true wisdom of believers, which has the Church Universal for its place, undergoes tribulation by you persecuting her, but from all the dross of sins by the fire of your persecution she is purified.' Whence it is written; For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity. [Ecclus. 2, 5] In which passage this too may be appropriately taken for the meaning, that for their foolish suffering heretics might seem to be rebuked. For oftentimes for the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, they suffer much, and by those same sufferings they look for themselves to become His martyrs. To which persons it is now said by the voice of the holy man; and to the gold there is a place, where they fine it. For according to that which has been already said even before us, he that suffers out of the unity of the Church, punishments he may suffer, but a Martyr he cannot be made; for 'to the gold there is a place, where they fine it.' What then, ye heretics, say ye to these things? Ye are minded to be 'fined' by the afflicting of the flesh, nay even by martyrdom, but the place where ye must be fined, ye know not. Hear ye what is spoken by the voice of the holy preacher. 'To the gold there is a place, where they fille it.' So then, seek ye this 'place for the fining,' this furnace, wherein the gold may be fitly purged, find ye out.

41. There is one Church, .in which he that may have attained to be fined, may likewise be purified from all the dross of sins. If for the sake of God ye undergo aught of bitterness, if aught of tribulation, being without her pale, ye can only be burnt, ye cannot be purified. Let Jeremiah tell, let him tell in what way the fire of your fining is void of all efficacy. The finer melteth in vain; for their wickednesses are not done away [Jer. 6, 29]. See how the fire externally melting at once administers a punishment of hard suffering, and yet does not clear off the sin of misbelief; it both furnishes torments of cruel punishments, and does not cause additions of good merits. Moreover the fire of this fining which is undergone out of the Catholic Church, how utterly it is void of all efficacy the Apostle Paul instructs us, when he says, And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. [1 Cor. 13, 3] For some think wrong things touching God, and others hold what is right about the Creator, but do not maintain unity with their brethren; the one are sundered by erroneousness of faith, and the others by the commission of schism.

And hence in the very first part of the Decalogue the sins of both sides are checked, seeing that it is said by the voice of God, And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. [Mark 12, 30. 31. Deut. 6, 5] And it is immediately added, And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. For whoso imagines what is wrong about God, surely it is evident that he does not 'love God.' But he who while he entertains right notions about God is divided from the unity of the Holy Church, it is plain that he does not love his neighbonr, whom he refuses to have for his fellow.

42. Whosoever, then, is divided from this unity of the Church our Mother, either through heresy in entertaining wrong notions concerning God, or by the erroneousness of schism in not loving his neighbour, is bereft of the grace of that charity, concerning which Paul saith what we have before given; And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. As if he expressed himself in plain utterance; 'Without the bounds of its place, the fire of fining being applied to me only afflicts me with torment, and does not purify me by its cleansing.' This place all they that are lovers of holy peace seek with heartiest endeavours, this on seeking they find, this finding they keep, knowing the remission of sin, as to where, or when, or to what sort it is vouchsafed. For where is it, save in the bosom of our Catholic Mother? When, but before the day of coming departure? Because, Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. [2 Cor. 6, 2] And, Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. [Is. 55, 6] To what sort of persons, but to the converted, who after the imitating of little children are fashioned by humility as their mistress? To whom it is said; Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. [Matt. 19, 14] And, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. [Matt. 18, 3] And therefore, because there are no true martyrs made saving in the Catholic Church, it is rightly said, To the gold there is a place where they fine it. Because the soul would not be made bright in the radiance of everlasting beauty, except, so to say, it were first burnt here in the workshop of charity.

43. Moreover, we are to consider that there are some whom Almighty God by His secret counsel preserving in innocency from their very beginnings promotes to the topmost heights of virtuous attainments, that, as their age increases, both numerousness of years and loftiness of merits should simultaneously advance in them. But others abandoning in their outset He suffers to go with bad habits fermenting by headlong ways. . Yet for the most part even these He has regard to, and for the following after Him He kindles them with the fire of holy love, and the itchings of bad propensities engrained in their hearts He converts into a fervour of virtue, and they are the more set on fire to the desire of beseeching the pitifulness of God, in proportion as they are the more ashamed at the recollection of their own wickedness; as it often happens, that in the conflict of the fight the soldier, who is placed before the eyes of his leader, basely yields to the enemy's valour, and that whilst he powerlessly turns his back he is struck; yet nevertheless being ashamed of this very thing that he has done [2 Mss. 'yeilded.'] disgracefully before his leader's eyes, from the mere sense of shame

he gathers greater force; and afterwards executes deeds of Prowess, to so high a degree that he may at once achieve present credit of his valour, and cover past disgrace of weakness.

In a like way, these persons are sometimes more actively established in the service of God by consequence of past weakness, and such persons for the keeping of His commandments both the desire of things future draws on, and the remembrance of things past urges forward, that on the one side affection to that which is to come should stimulate, and on the other shame for that which is past spur on. Which same however, while the enemies of the Church see to be endowed with the highest virtues, and in their present life cannot any way find out that whereby they may derogate from their merit, they set themselves to impeach them of the past, as the Manichaean assails our Moses, in whom he endeavours to soil with the sin of a past homicide the grace of subsequent virtuous attainments; in whom he heeds not how patient he was afterwards to endure, but how precipitate he was before to strike. Such adversaries as these blessed Job encountering with the exactest eye of observation, after that he said, Silver hath the beginning of its veins; and to gold there is a place where they fine it; he justly added;

Iron is taken out of the earth. [xxvii] 44. Heretics are used to pride themselves against us by the self-priding of their righteousness, and to boast high their practices with the swelling of ostentation, and ourselves, as we have said, they impeach either for being or having been bad persons. Accordingly in a most humble confession, and in a truthful defence against those, the holy man speaks, saying, Iron is taken out of the earth. As if he said in plain speech; 'men of strength, who by the sharpest swords of their tongues are become iron in this pitched battle of the defending of the faith, were one time but' earth 'in the lowest sphere of actions.' For to man on his sinning it was spoken; Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return. But 'iron is taken out of the earth,' when the hardy champion of the Church is separated from an earthly course of conduct, which he before maintained. Accordingly he ought not to be contemned in any thing whatever, that he was, who has already begun to be that which he was not. Was not Matthew found in the earth, who, involved in earthly matters, served the business of the receipt of custom? But having been taken out of the earth, he was strengthened into the forcibleness of iron, in that by his tongue, as by the sharpest sword, the Lord in the enforcing of the Gospel pierced the hearts of unbelievers. And he that before was weak and contemptible by his earthly occupations, was afterwards made strong for heavenly preachings. Hence it is yet further subjoined;

And the stone being melted with heat is turned into brass. 45. Then is 'the stone dissolved with heat,' when the heart that is hard and cold to the fire of divine love is touched by that same fire of divine love, and melted in the glowing warmth of the Spirit, that to the life that follow's it should bum with the heat of its longings, which life on hearing of before, it remained uninfluenced. By the power of which same heat, he is at once softened down to love and invigorated to practice, that as before he was hard in the love of the world, so he should afterwards give himself out strong unto the love of God, and what he declined to give ear to before, he should henceforth begin both to believe and to preach. And so, the

stone being dissolved with heat is turned into brass, because the hardened mind, being melted by the fire of love from Above, is changed to true strength. So that the sinner that was before unmoved should afterwards be made at once strong in respect of authority, and sounding in respect of preaching. Which is well spoken by Isaiah; They that trust in the Lord shall change their strength. [Is. 40, 31] We 'change our strength,' when being converted, we eschew the present scene of things with as much power and might as we before were seeking it. But because the foregoing life is unfairly by adversaries counted to the character of Catholics, it is rightly added;

Ver. 3. He hath set a time to darkness, and Himself vieweth the end of all and everyone. 46. He hath Himself 'set a time to the darkness,' i.e. bounds to the wicked, where they should cease to be wicked. Whence it is said to them by the Apostle; Ye-were sometimes darkness, but 1l0W are ye light in the Lord. Like as to the other disciples as well the same great teacher saith, The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore put off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day. Hence also in the Song of Songs on the coming of the Church it is said, Who is she that cometh forth as the morning in rising?

For fitly is the Church described by being compared with 'the morning,' in that, by the knowledge of the faith she is changed from the darkness of sins to be in the bright light of righteousness. By the term of 'all and every one,' he would have both the Elect and the damned to be comprehended. For God both in doing and ordering what is good, yet not doing what is bad, but what by the wicked is done Himself so regulating that the things should not come forth irregularly, 'vieweth the end of all and every one,' and bears all things patiently, and beholds the goal of the Elect, how that from evil they are changed to good. He sees, too, the end of the damned, how that for bad practice they are dragged to a punishment worthy of them. He saw the end of Saul when persecuting, wherein prostrated on the earth he should say, Lora, what wilt Thou have me to do? He saw the end of the seeming-obedient disciple, that for the guilty deed he had committed he should tie his throat with a noose, and both punish himself when guilty of sin, and by thus punishing, betray himself the worse. He saw the Ninevites transgressing, but beheld the end of the transgressing in the repentance of the reformed. He saw likewise Sodom transgressing, but He beheld the end of the burning of lust in the fire of hell. He saw the end of the Gentile world, how that whilst occupied by the darkness of iniquities, it should be one day brightened with the light of faith. He also saw the end of Judaea, how that from that light of faith, which it held, it should blind itself with the darkness of hardened unbelief. Whence it is yet further added with just applicability, Ver. 4. The stone likewise of darkness, and the shadow of death, the torrent divides from the people on travel.

47. What was that people of the Jews, hard by unbelief, that refused to behold by faith that Author of life, whom it foretold by prophecy, but 'a stone of darkness?' because it proved at once hard by cruelty, and clouded by unbelief. Which same is also called by another term 'the shadow of death.' For a shadow is drawn such and of the same sort as the outlines were

of that object, from which it is derived, And who is designated by the name of' death' but the devil? Of whom in a kind of mode of representation by his minister' it is said, And his name was Death. [Rev. 6, 8] Of whom that people was a shadow, because in following his wickedness, it presented in itself a semblance of him. But what is named by the title of the 'torrent,' save that fire that issues forth from the sight of the Awful Judge in the final Inquest, and divides the Elect and the damned? Whence too it is said by the Prophet, A fiery and rapid stream came forth from before Him. [Dan. 7, 10]

48. But what People is 'on travel' in this world, but that which hastening to the inheritance of the Elect knows well that it has its native country in the heavenly world, and expects that it will there find its own the more, in proportion as here it reckons all things that pass away to be unconnected with itself? Thus the 'pilgrim People' is the number of all the Elect, who accounting this life a species of exile to themselves, pant with the whole bent of the heart after their native country Above; of which persons Paul saith, And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. [Heb. 11, 13. 14. This pilgrim state that same Apostle also was undergoing when he said, Knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we go pilgrims [peregrinamur] away from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight. [2 Cor. 5, 6. 7. The woes of this pilgrim state he was in haste to get quit of when he said, Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; [Phil. 1, 23] and again, To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. [ver. 21] The burthen of this pilgrimage the Psalmist felt lying heavy upon him, when he said; Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in ,the tents of Kedar! My soul hath been much a sojourner. [Ps. 120, 5. 6.

From this he was panting to be extricated as speedily as possible, when inflamed with heavenly aspirations he said, My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God! [Ps. 42, 2] But this desire they are strangers to, who rivet their heart on earthly gratifications. For whilst they love only the things that are visible, surely the invisible things, even if they believe them to exist, they do not love, in that whilst they follow themselves too much with the outward following, even in the interior they become carnal. Thus both people run together in this life, but do not together attain to the life everlasting, because, the stone of darkness and the shadow of death the torrent divides from the people on travel. As if he said in plain speech, 'Those whom in this present time either infidelity makes blind, or cruelty makes hard, the fiery stream that issues from before the Judge Eternal doth then sever from the People of the Elect, that thus from the company of good men the fire of the strict Inquest should part those, whom the darkness of evil habits makes blind in their lusts.

49. Perhaps by the designation of the 'torrent,' the actual whatering of holy preaching may be understood, according to that, that is said by Solomon; The eye that sneereth at his father and despiseth the travail of his mother, lo the ravens from the torrents shall pick it out. [Prov. 30, 17] For bad men, while they find fault with the judgments of God, do 'sneer at their father,' and heretics of all sorts whilst in mocking they contemn the preaching of

Holy Church, and her fruitfulness, what else is this but that they 'despise the travail of their mother?' whom we not unjustly call the mother of them as well, because from the same they come forth, who speak against the same, as John bears witness, who says, They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. [1 John 2, 19] But 'the ravens from the torrents come,' when the true Preachers come forth for the defence of Holy Church from the streams of the Sacred Books. Which same also are rightly termed 'ravens,' because they never pride themselves on the light of their righteousness, but by the grace of humility confess in themselves the blackness of sins. Whence too, it is spoken by the Church of Elect souls, I am black, but comely. And John says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.

Which same ravens, no doubt, 'pick out the eyes' of him that 'sneereth,' because they overcome the aim of bad and froward men. Thus by this testimony, if here as well 'the torrent' is to be taken for preaching; the stone of darkness, and shadow of death, the torrent divides from the people on travel; because the preaching of the Saints gives over the hardened minds of the lost, and betakes itself to the pious hearts of the lowly. Hence it is yet further subjoined,

Those whom the foot of the needy man forgot, a1~d the inaccessible ones.

50. What other in this place is taken to be the needy man, saving Him concerning Whom it is said by Paul, Though He was rich, yet .for your sakes He became poor. [2 Cor. 8, 9] The 'feet' of which 'needy man' were the holy Preachers, by the presence of which same compassing the Gentile world, He went round about the whole globe. Of whom it is said by the Prophet, And I will walk in them. [Lev. 26, 12] Was not he His foot, who whilst held fast in fetters, said, For which I am an ambassador in bonds? [2 Cor. 6, 16. Eph 6, 20] But those, who proved themselves 'a shadow of death and a stone of darkness,' 'the foot of the needy Man forgot,' because in the very outset of the new born Church, whereas the holy Apostles were minded to have preached the kingdom of heaven to Judaea, seeing that they profited for nothing at all, they went off for the preaching to the Gentiles, as they themselves say in their Acts; It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it ,from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. [Acts 13, 23] Concerning whom also it is said by the Psalmist, The mountains shall be carried into the heart of the sea [Ps. 46, 2]; because the Apostles, being thrust off by Judaea, were 'carried' into this scene of the Gentile world.

Who then are those, that by unbounded hardness and from dimsightedness of heart, like a kind of' stone of darkness and the shadow of death,' are divided from the People of the Saints going on travel, saving those whom' the foot of the needy Man forgot,' i.e. whom the Preachers of the Lord, poor as He was, that is, in respect of human nature, abandoned on account of the swelling of their pride; and those they wholly forgot, whilst they transferred the seeds of their preaching to the getting fruit of the Gentiles only? Whom moreover he rightly calls' inaccessible' also, because while they were hardened in their infidelity, they refused to give the words of life access to their heart. But this Judaea which grows thus

hardened, whether what she was for 1ong, or what she underwent afterwards, let us listen to. It goes on;

Ver. 6. The earth from which bread arose, is overturned in its place by fire. 51. Judaea was wont to give bread, in that she used to set before men the words of the Law. Which same Law because the children of perdition could now no longer understand and interpret, the prophet Jeremiah bewails in the Lamentations, saying, The young children asked bread, and there was no man to break it unto them [Lam 4, 4]; but this 'earth is overturned in its place with fire,' because on beholding the miracles of the faithful it consumed itself with the firebrand of envy. For because envy is always used to be engendered from pride, she 'perished in her place by fire,' who for this reason burned with envy, because she did not abandon pride. And so 'the earth, which first had bread, was afterwards overturned by fire,' because the Synagogue, which set before men the commandments of God in the Law, by persecuting the new-born Church consumed itself with the fire of envy. Was it not in flames with the brands of its jealousy when on seeing the miracles of our Redeemer; it said by certain of its own, What do we? for this Man doeth many miracles? [John 11, 47] Or, surely, Ye see that we gain nothing; yea, the whole world goeth after Him. [ib. 12, 19] They saw that whereby they should have been converted, and they were thereby rendered the more froward. They sought to stifle Him, Whom they beheld give life to the dead. They held the Law in the mouth, but persecuted the Author of the Law. Therefore the earth, from which bread arose, was overturned in its place by fire. Because Judaea had in her own self first the Law that should refresh, and afterwards envy that should consume her. For the describing of whom it is further added,

Ver. 6. The stones of it are the place of sapphire, and her clods gold. [xxxiii]

52. The proclaim of the glory going before adds to the guilt of the sin following after. For the fall of every individual is of worse criminality, in proportion as before he fell he had the power to be of greater excellency. Thus let it be told of Judaea, let it be told what she was, and let the greatness of the excellencies going before grow into the heightening of the delinquencies succeeding afterwards, Her stones were the place of sapphires, arid her clods of gold, What do we understand in this place by 'gold,' but the minds of the Saints and strong ones? For in Holy Scripture 'stones' are wont to be taken sometimes on the side of bad and sometimes on the side of good, For when a' stone' is put for insensibility, by 'stones' we have hard hearts denoted. Whence also it is said by John; God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham [Matt. 3, 9]; who, surely, by the name of' stones' denotes the hearts of the Gentiles, at that time hard and insensible in respect of unbelief, And by the Prophet the Lord promises, saying, And I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh. [Ez. 11, 19] Again by 'stones' the minds of the strong ones are used to be denoted. And hence it is said to the Saints by Peter, Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood.

[1 Pet. 2, 5] And by the Prophet the Lord promises to the Church when she comes, saying, Behold, I will lay down thy stones in order, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I

will make thy bulwarks jasper, and thy gates in cut stones, and all thy borders into pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord. [Is. 54, 11-13] For He did 'lay down in her the stones in order,' in that He distinguished the holy souls in her by the diverseness of merits, He 'laid her foundation in sapphires,' which same stones retain in themselves the likeness of the colour of the air, because the strength of the Church is firmly based in souls seeking after heavenly things. And because a jasper is of a green hue, He 'made his bulwarks of the jasper,' because they are advanced against her adversaries in the defence of Holy Church, who growing green and fresh by interior desires, do not die off by any drying up of damnable lukewarmness. But He 'set her gates in cut stones.' For those are the 'gates' of the Church, by whose life and teaching the multitude of those that believe enter into her, Who also for this reason, that they are rich in great deeds, and that-what by speaking they declare, by living they exhibit, are described to be not plain but' cut stones.' For in whosesoever life right practice is seen, there is as it were represented in those same persons what they have done.

Where also embracing all the number of the Elect in a general roll, he added, and all thy borders in pleasant stones. And as though we, on hearing these things, begged that he would make known those stones that he spoke of, he added, All thy children shall be taught of the Lord. And therefore because from out of Judaea there were never wanting holy souls, to lead a heavenly life, it is said, he?' stones are the place of sapphires. And because with an extraordinary brightness of life and of wisdom she shone forth by faith, it is added, and her clods gold. What is denoted by 'clods,' but the assemblages and multitudes of the several orders? Now clods are compacted of moisture and dust; and so all they that being watered with the dew of grace confessed with a true-sighted knowledge that by the debt of death they are dust, whilst they were made to shine bright by excellency of life, lay in her like' clods of gold.' 'Clods' this earth had in the Prophets,' clods' she had in the teachers, 'clods' in the Ancient Fathers, who by an extraordinary infusion of grace kept themselves close in unanimity of profession and of practice. Therefore let him say, And the clods of it gold; because therein the multitude of the spiritual souls shone with greater perfection, in proportion as it bound itself up in God and its neighbour with greater unanimity.

53. But this gold was afterwards dimmed by the darkness of unbelief. Whose blackness, surely, the Prophet Jeremiah surveying laments, saying, How is the gold become dim? how is the most fine gold changed! For 'the gold is become dim,' in that that ancient brilliancy in them of faith and innocency, upon unbelief coming upon them, dulled itself with the night of wickedness. Therefore, what it was since we have heard, even that her stollen are the place of sapphires, now let us bear next wherefore that People so beloved of God lost these great blessings. It goes on; Ver. 7. The pathway of the bird it knew not, nor beheld the eyes of the vulture. [xxxiv]

54. Who is denoted in this place by the title of' the bird,' saving He, Who in ascending poised sky wards the fleshly body, which He took to Him. Who furthermore is fitly designated by the title of the 'vulture' as well. For the 'vulture' while it is flies if it sees a carcase lying,

drops itself down for the devouring of the carcase, and very often it is in this way taken in death, when it has come from on high after the dead animal. Rightly therefore is the Mediator between God and Man, our Redeemer, denoted by the appellation of a 'vulture,' Who whilst remaining in the loftiness of His Divine Nature, marked as it were from a kind of flight on high the carcase of our mortal being down below, and let Himself drop from the regions of heaven to the lowest places. For in our behalf He vouchsafed to become man, and while he sought the dead creature, He found death among us, Who was deathless in Himself. Now 'the eye' of this 'vulture' was the actual aiming at our Resurrection, because He Himself being dead for three days set us free from everlasting death. And so that faithless people of Judaea saw Him in the state of mortality, but how by His death He should destroy our death, it noted not.

It beheld, indeed, the vulture, but' the eyes of the vulture it did not behold.' Which People, whereas it refused to regard the ways of His humility, whereby He lifted us up on high, 'knew not the pathway of the bird.' For neither did it betake itself to consider that His humility would lift us to the heavenly heights, and the aim of His death renew us to life. Therefore the pathway of the bird it knew not, nor beheld the eyes of the vulture. For though it saw Him Whom it held bound in death, it refused to see what wonderful glory by His death followed our life [al. 'what glory in our life should follow from His death']. And hence it was kindled to the cruelty of persecution likewise; it refused to receive the words of life; the Preachers of the kingdom of heaven, by forbidding, by evil entreating, by smiting it thrust from it. Which same, being so thrust off, abandoning Judaea whereto they had been sent, were dispersed for the gathering together of the Gentile world. And hence it is further added;

Ver. 8. The children of the dealers have not trodden it, nor hath the lioness passed through it.

55. In all the Latin copies we find the word 'Instructors' [Institutores] put down, but in the Greek we find 'traders,' [negotiatores] whereby it may be inferred that in this passage the several copyists from being ignorant put 'instructors' ('institutors') instead of 'institores' (' dealers'). For we call traders 'institores' on this account, that they are 'instant in plying work.' But both the one phrase and the other, though they disagree in utterance, yet are not at variance in meaning, because all those who instruct the practice of the faithful, carryon a spiritual dealing, that while they supply preaching to their hearers, they should receive back from them faith and right works; as where it is written touching Holy Church, She maketh fine linen, and selleth it. Concerning whom it is likewise said a little after in that place, She perceiveth that her trading is good. [Prov. 31, 24] Who in this place are called 'instructors' but the holy Prophets, who busied themselves by prophesying to instruct the ways of the Synagogue unto faith? 'Sons' of whom, assuredly, the holy Apostles are styled, who that they should believe God Man were begotten to the same faith by the preaching of those. Concerning whom it is said to the Church by the Psalmist; Instead of thy fathers are born to thee children, whom thou mayest make princes over all the earth.

[Ps. 45, 16] But because the Apostles being thrust off went out from the borders of the Synagogue, it is lightly said now, The children of the dealers have not trodden it. Since the 'children of the dealers' would have 'trodden it,' if the holy Preachers had borne down the badness of the Synagogue with the heel of goodness. But if those same 'dealers' we take for the Preachers of Holy Church, then the 'children' of the dealers, nothing hinders us taking for the Shepherds and Teachers who followed the way of the Apostles. Which did not 'tread' the Synagogue, because whilst their fathers, i.e. the Apostles, were thrust off by that Synagogue, they themselves too ceased from the calling of her.

56. Which same Synagogue' the lioness passed not by,' because Holy Church, being devoted to the assembling together of the Gentiles, never any longer employed itself upon that people of Judaea. Now the Church is lightly called' a lioness,' in that persons living amiss in bad habits, it kills with the mouth of holy preaching. Hence to the first Shepherd himself it is said as to the mouth of this lioness; slay and eat. [Acts 10, 13] For what is 'slain' is killed out of life, whilst that which is eaten is changed into the body of the person eating. Accordingly it is said, 'Slay and eat;' i.e. 'Kill those to the sin wherein they are living, and convert them from themselves into thine own members.' And because this Church is the body of the Lord, the Lord likewise Himself by the voice of Jacob is called' a lion' in respect of Himself, a 'lioness' by the body, when it is said to him under the likeness of Judah, To the prey, my son, art thou gone up. Thou hast couched as a lion, and as a lioness. Who shall rouse him up? [Gen. 49, 9] Accordingly this lioness it is never said' passed not' Judaea, but' passed not through.' For upon the Apostles preaching, in the first instance three thousand out of her, and afterwards five thousand, believed. And so the Church' passed by' the way of the Synagogue, but' passed not through,' because a few from out of her it carried off to faith, but yet that faithless people it did not utterly make extinct to misbelief. But, what we have already often said, being cast off by the infidelity of the Jews it turned away to the calling of the Gentiles. Hence it is yet further said of that same lioness;

Ver. 9. He stretcheth out his hand to the flint; He overturneth the mountains by the roots. [xxxvi]

57. For 'he stretched out his hand to the flint,' because He put forth the arm of His preaching to the hardness of the Gentiles. Hence the same blessed Job, forewarned of the history of his suffering being destined to be made known to the Gentiles, says, Let these things be graven with an iron pen in a plate of lead, or hewn in the flint. [Job 19, 24] But whom in this place do we understand by the' mountains' saving the powerful ones of this world, who on account of earthly substance swell themselves high? Concerning whom the Psalmist saith, Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke [Ps. 144, 5]; but the mountains are overturned from the roots, because, on Holy Church preaching the highest powers of this world fell from their inmost thinking into the adoring of Almighty God. For 'the roots' of the mountains are the inmost thoughts of the proud. And 'the mountains fall from the roots,' because for the worshipping of God, the powers of the world are laid level with the earth from the lowest thoughts. For by a root the hidden thought is rightly denoted, because by means of that

which is not seen, being within, there bursts out what should be seen without. And hence on the side of good it is said by the Prophet, And the remnant that is escaped of the House of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

[Is. 37, 31] As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'Deep down below the thought springs up, that up on high the reward may be rendered back.' So then let him say, He stretcheth out his hand to the flint, and overturneth the mountains from the roots. For whilst the sacred preaching sought the hardness of the Gentiles, it entirely frustrated the loftiness of the proud. But because those whom it empties of earthly thoughts, it fills with heavenly gifts, and those, whom it drains of interest below, it waters with streams from Above, it is directly added;

Ver. 10. He cutteth out streams in the rocks. [xxxvii] 58. i.e. in the hard hearts of the Gentiles he opened the rivers of preaching; as it is likewise spoken by the Prophet of watering the dryness of the Gentiles; He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs. [Ps. 107, 35] And in the Gospel the Lord promises, saying, He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. [John 7, 38] What we then heard promised, we now see fulfilled. For see how in the holy preachers, not sprung from Judaea, through the universal Church spread over the whole world, streams of heavenly precepts flow forth in abundance from the mouths of the Gentiles. Thus because in the rocks He opened streams, from hard hearts too there flowed forth the river of holy preaching. It goes on;

And his eye hath seen every precious thing. [xxxviii]

59. It is a thing to be especially borne in mind, that each individual soul is rendered the more precious in the sight of God, by bow much it is for Jove of the truth the more despised in its own eyes. When thou wast little in thine own sight, did I not make thee the head of the tribes of Israel? [1 Sam. 15, 17] As if he said in plain terms, "Thou wast great with Me, because thou wast contemptible to thyself, but now because thou art great to thyself, thou art become contemptible to Me.' And hence it is said by the Prophet; Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Thus every man becomes the more worthless to God, in proportion as he is more precious to himself, so much the more precious to God as he is for His sake more worthless to himself; because He regardeth the lowly, and knoweth the high afar off. Every precious thing, therefore, His eye saw. [Ps. 138, 6] In Holy Scripture God's 'seeing' is put for 'choosing,' as it is written in the Gospel; When thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee, [John 1, 48] i.e. I chose thee whilst placed under the shadow of the Law.' Therefore He 'saw every thing precious,' because He chose the lowly. God hath chosen the weak things of the world to co1ifound the things which are mighty.

He' saw the precious thing' when the human soul, having base views of itself, He visited with the illumination of His grace. Of which same soul it is said by the Prophet; If thou separatest the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth. [Jer. 15, 19] For the present world is vile with God, but the soul of man is precious to Him. He, then, that

'separates the precious from the vile' is called 'as the month of God,' because by that man God deals forth His words, who by speaking the things that he is able to speak, plucks out the soul of man from the love of the present world. And because the teachers of the New Testament are brought to this, that even the hidden darkness of allegories in the Old Testament they search out, it is rightly added;

Ver. 11. The depths also of the floods He hath searched, and the hidden things He hath brought to light. [xxxix]

60. For what else are here called 'floods' but the sayings of the ancient Fathers. For who might be able to estimate how vehement a flood, whilst he was founding the Law, burst forth from the very breast of Moses? how vehement a flood gushed from the heart of David? what mighty streams of floods flowed out from the lips of Solomon and all the Prophets? Now of these 'floods' Judaea held the shew, when in keeping the surface of the letter she knew not the depths thereof. But we, who, on the Lord coming, seek therein interior spiritual things, search their 'depths.' And this thing the Lord is Himself said to do, because by Himself vouchsafing it we are enabled to do it; and so by us, who follow not the letter which killeth, but the spirit which maketh alive, the Lord 'searcheth the depths of. the floods, and bringeth the hidden things into light,' because the statements of the Law, which the too dark history makes obscure, a spiritual interpretation now lights up. And hence 'Truth' when speaking in parables in the Gospel bade the Disciples, saying, What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house tops. [Mat. 10, 27] For the plainly spoken words of these interpreting have made the sentences of the ancient Fathers henceforth clear to us.

Hence the Prophet Isaiah viewing the words plain by the interpretation of Holy Church, not obscured by the darkness of allegories, exclaimed, saying, The place of rivers, the broadest and open streams. [Is. 33, 21] For the sayings of the Old Testament were as narrow and close streams, which bound up the sentences of their lore in the darkest gathering together. But on the other hand the teaching of Holy Church are' streams both broad and open,' because her declarations are at once many in number to those that find them, and plain to those that seek. Therefore he says, The depths of the floods he hath searched, and the hidden things he hath brought to light. Because when He poured into His interpreters the spirit of understanding, He set open the ancient obscurities of those prophesying. And that Holy Church henceforth knows and sees by the Spirit, which the Synagogue before was not at all able to understand by the letter.. Whence Moses also, while he spoke to the people, veiled his face; surely, in order to denote that that People of the Jews knew the words of the Law, but did not at all see the clearness of that Law. And hence it is rightly said by Paul; But even to this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.

[2 Cor. 3, 15] But because the declarations of God are, without His wisdom, never fathomed at all, (for except him who hath received His Spirit, none knoweth in any sort His words,) the holy man adds words touching the subject of searching out that same Wisdom of God, saying;

Ver. 12-15. But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof: neither is it found in the land of them that live pleasantly. The depth saith, It is not with me, and the sea saith, It is not with me. Fine gold shall not be given for it: neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof: [xl]

61. It is first to be noted, that two points be proposed to himself, and two he adds making answer. For to this that he said above, Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? he answered in this verse, The depth saith, It is not with me; and the sea saith, It is not with me. But in answer to that which he had said, Man knoweth not the place thereof; neither is it found in the land of them that live pleasantly; he gave the lower verse, saying, Fine gold shall not be given for it; neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. So then he answered to both questions, yet in adding to what he had objected, not in solving it. For when he enquired the place of Wisdom, and then answered below, The depth saith, It is not with me; he pointed out not where it was, but where it was not. Again when he said that' the price thereof was not known by man,' and rejoined to this below, fine gold shall not be given for it; he shewed not what was the price of it, but what was not. For it is plain to all that neither can this wisdom of man be held in a place, nor be bought with riches. But the holy man being full of mystical ideas sends us on for the making out other things, so that we should look for not wisdom created, but Wisdom creating;

for except in those words we search the secret depths of allegory, surely those things that follow are utterly deserving of disregard, if they be estimated according to the historical narration alone. For a little afterwards he saith, Gold and glass cannot equal it; and while, as we know, glass is far and incomparably of lower price than gold, wherefore after the name of gold, which is unquestionably a precious metal, byway of unlimited praise did he say that 'glass' too is not equal to wisdom? So by the mere difficulty of the letter, we are forced that we be quick sighted to the mystical sentiments in these words. So then what wisdom is it, the holy man is contemplating, but that of which Paul the Apostle saith, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God? [1 Cor. 1, 24] Concerning which it is written by Solomon; Wisdom hath builded her house [Prov. 9, 1]; and of which the Psalmist saith; In wisdom hast Thou made all things. [Ps. 104, 24] Of this same Wisdom 'man knoweth not the price,' because he findeth nothing worthy of the estimate thereof. Now this price of Wisdom is not said at once 'to be,' and not 'to be known,' but as for this reason 'not to be known,' because it is wanting, in that manner of speaking by which a person caught in a strait, when he finds no remedy of succour, is wont to confess that' what to do he knows not.'

62. So then 'not to know the price of this Wisdom,' is to find no meriting of meet practice whereby to obtain it. For we give a price with this object, that instead of it we may possess ourselves of that object which we long after. But what have we given, that we should deserve to obtain this Wisdom, which is Christ? Since it is by grace we are redeemed. For those works alone by living badly have we given, for which if a ‚just return were reserved, not Christ but punishments would be rendered back [c]. But man deserved one thing in the way of justice, and obtained another in respect of grace. Let Paul bear witness, before the

time that his mind received the seed of unbought truth, with what briars of error he was overlaid. Who was before, he says, a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. [1 Tim. 1, 13] Let him testify for what sort of persons Christ deigned to die, While we were yet sinners, he says, Christ in due time died for the ungodly. [Rom. 5, 8. 6.] We, then, who on Wisdom's coming were found ungodly, what title of good practice have we given, whereby we might obtain to receive that Wisdom? 'The price of this Wisdom man knoweth not,' because whoso is separated from brute animals by the understanding faculty of reason, understands that he is not saved by his own merits, knows and sees that he had not given any thing of good practice that he might come to faith. For it is as it were to give a price for the obtaining of Wisdom, to anticipate the coming to the knowledge of God by the merchandize of one's conduct.

63. He had learnt that of this Wisdom there is 'no price,' who said, Who hath first given unto Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again. [Rom. 11, 35] Hence it is written again, For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. [Eph. 2, 8] Not of works, lest any man should boast. Hence concerning himself he again speaks, saying, By the grace of God I am what I am. [1 Cor. 15, 10] And as by the inspiration of this same grace, the practices of the parts of virtue are at once engendered in the heart, so that from free will also conduct should follow, which after this life the Eternal Recompensing should answer to, he thereupon added, And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain. But there are those who exult that they are in a sound state by their own powers, and pride themselves that by their own merits going before they have been redeemed, whose declaration, surely, is found to be contradictory to themselves, because, while they maintain themselves at once 'innocent' and' redeemed,' this very name of redemption they make null and void in themselves. For everyone that is redeemed is doubtless set free from some sort of captivity. Whence then is this said person redeemed, if he was not before captive under sin? It is plain then that he greatly misjudges who judges so. For heavenly grace does not find desert of man, in order to make it come, but after it has come, causes the same; and God, when He comes to the undeserving mind, at once sets it forth to Himself deserving by so coming, and causes therein merit for Him to recompense, whereas He had found only that for Him to punish.

64. It is good herein to recall the eyes of the mind to that robber, who from the jaws of the devil ascended the Cross, and from the Cross mounted to Paradise. Let us behold what sort of person he came to the stock of the Cross, what sort of person he went from the Cross. He came bound by his brother's blood, he came bloodstained, but by interior grace he was changed on the Cross; and he who inflicted death upon a brother, of the Lord when dying proclaimed the life, saying, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom. [Luke 23, 42] On the Cross the nails had bound fast his hands and feet, and there remained nought in him that punishment left free, but the tongue and the heart. But God inspiring it, he offered all to Him that he found free in himself, so that according to that which is written, he should with the heart believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation. [Rom. 10, 10] But that in the hearts of the faithful there are three virtues

in a special inner abiding, the Apostle testifies, saying, And now abideth faith, hope, charity [1 Cor. 13, 13]; all of which the robber being filled with instantaneous grace both received and kept on the Cross. For he had faith, who believed the Lord was about to reign, when he saw Him dying equally with himself;

he had hope, who begged for admission into His kingdom, saying, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. Charity also in his death he livingly retained, who at once charged home for his iniquity a brother and fellow robber dying for the like crime, and preached to him the life which he had learnt, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly: for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss. [Luke 23, 40. 41. He that came such to the Cross by sin, see what he departed from the Cross by grace. He confessed the Lord, Whom he beheld dying along with himself by human frailty, at the time that the Apostles denied Him, Whom they had seen doing miracles by divine power.

65. But they who make out that man is saved by his own powers, fancy that that same confession of man is from the efficacy of man by himself. Which if it were so, the Psalmist would not say in praise of God, Confession and great doing are His work. [Ps. 111, 3] So that from Him we receive it to confess what is right, by Whom it is granted us to practise what is great also. Therefore because we have not given aught of good practice, whereby we might deserve to be vouchsafed this Wisdom, let it be rightly said, Man knoweth not its price. Inasmuch as he that henceforth uses reason looks down upon himself under the perception of this Wisdom so much the deeper, in proportion as he more truly knows the interior depth of that Wisdom, so as to see that he has attained to her being unworthy, by the which it is brought to pass without price, that he should be made worthy. Concerning which it is well said;

Neither is it found in the land of those that live sweetly. [xli]

66. What is denoted in this passage by the title of the 'land,' saving the soul of man? Concerning which the Psalmist saith, My soul thirsteth after Thee, as a land without water. [Ps. 143, 6] But this wisdom cannot be 'found in the land of those that live sweetly;' because the man that is still fed with the pleasures of this life, is severed from the perception of Eternal Wisdom. For if he were truly wise-minded, being banished from the interior delights, he would mourn over that blind estate of his exile, whereinto he has fallen. For hence it is said by Solomon; He that addeth knowledge, addeth pain also. [Eccl. 1, 18] For the more a man begins to know what he has lost, the more he begins to bewail the sentence of his corruption, which he has met with. For he sees whence and whereto he has fallen; how that from the joys of Paradise he has come to the woes of the present life, from the companyings of the Angels to carings for necessities; he considers in what a number of perils he now lies prostrate, who before without peril disdained to stand; he bewails the exile which being accursed he undergoes, and sighs after the state of heavenly glory, which he might be enjoying in security, if he had not had a mind to commit sin. Which same the Psalmist regarding rightly, saith, I said in my fear, I am cast out from the face of thine eyes.

[Ps 31, 22] For after contemplating the interior joys of the vision of God, and the assemblage in fellowship of the Angels holding fast, he brought back his eyes to things beneath, he saw where he was laid low, who was created for this end that he might have been able to stand in heavenly realms; he considered where he was, and where he was not he grieved to think, he mourned for himself as 'cast out from the face of God's eyes,' because by comparison with the interior light, he had felt the darkness of his exile, that he was undergoing, to be the heavier. Hence it is that he admits not to his soul the solace of any favouring from the present life, saying, I refused my soul to be comforted. For oftentimes the rich ones of this world, being afflicted with weariness of spirit, are used to regard the good gifts bestowed on them in time, and to soften down their sadness. For when they feel themselves affected with something of sadness, they look at their horses, they survey the vessels of their gold and their silver, they go the round of their estates. And while they gladly carry their eyes through the range of these temporal things, they get the better of the sadness of soul that has risen up. And hence Truth saith to them also in the Gospel; But woe unto you that are rich, for ye have your comfort here.

[Luke 6, 24] But the holy man, who mourns for this, that he has fallen from everlasting joys, does not admit consolation on the ground of things temporal, saying, I have refused my soul to be comforted. As though he said in plain speech; 'I, who do not grieve for the loss of temporal things, am utterly unable to be comforted by the abundance thereof.' And as though we ourselves on hearing these things said to him, 'What then dost thou seek, who refusest to find comfort in those things that are of the world?' he thereupon added; I remembered God, and was delighted. As if he said in plain terms; 'Me not even the abundance of things earthly doth cheer, but even able to see, gives me delight.' So then, this is the bitterness the remembrance only of my Maker, Whom as yet I am not of the wise, that whilst they are lifted up on high in hope, they do not bow down the mind here to any delights. For hence it is written; The heart of the wise is where there is sorrow, and the heart of fools where there is mirth. [Eccl. 7, 4] Hence James saith: Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

[James 4, 9] Hence 'Truth bears witness by Itself, saying, Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' [Matt. 5, 4] So wisdom cannot be 'found in the land of those that live sweetly;' because they are the more really foolish, in proportion as whilst parting with the greater things they delight themselves in the least. Hence Peter blames that same folly of the wicked, saying, That count for pleasure the indulgence of the day of defilement and stain [Reading 'coinquinationis,' 'coinquinationes.' Vulg. as ours.]. [2 Peter 2, 13] Hence Solomon saith, I counted laughter an error; and said to mirth, Why art thou vainly deceived? [Eccl. 2, 2] Accordingly let the holy man say concerning Wisdom, Neither is it found in the land of those that live sweetly. In this way plainly, that those who in this world live sweetly, are still so besotted, that this very thing too they know not, viz. Whence they have fallen. It follows;

Ver. 11. The bottomless pit saith, It is not with me.

67. What does he call 'the bottomless pit' but the hearts of men, which are at once by the fall all floating, and by the mistiness of double-dealing full of darkness? Which same 'bottomless pit' declares that this Wisdom 'is not with' it; because the wicked mind, while it longs to be wise in a carnal way, shews itself foolish as to things spiritual. For because as Paul testifies, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, so much the more completely is every one rendered foolish within, as he endeavours to appear wise without. Concerning this abyss it is said by John, And I saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him, into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled. [Rev. 20, 1'3. For by the number of a thousand, he denoted not the quantity of time but the universality, with which the Church exercises dominion. Now the old serpent is bound with a chain and cast into the bottomless pit, because being tied up from the hearts of the good, while he is shut up in the minds of lost sinners, he rules over them with worse cruelty.

And a little while afterwards he is described as brought up out of the hollow of the bottomless pit, in that from the hearts of the wicked which now rage secretly, having then gotten power against the Church, he shall break out into the violence of open persecution. And so this bottomless pit, wherein the devil is now kept hidden, 'saith that Wisdom is not with it,' because by wicked deeds it shows itself a stranger to true wisdom. For, whilst a man covers wickedness in the heart, but with the mouth gives forth flatteries, whilst he overshadows his purposes with double-dealing, whilst he eschews words of singlemindedness as foolishness, whilst he shuns the ways of simple innocency, it is as if the Abyss denies that she has the Wisdom of God. And because minds that are devoted to this world, are disturbed by the cares and anxieties of the present life, and therefore are quite unable to enjoy the repose of that Wisdom, it is rightly added;

And the sea saith, It is not with me. [xliii]

68. For what is there denoted by the name of the sea having the bitter disquietude of worldly minds, which while they fall foul of one another in enmities by turns, dash themselves together like encountering waves? For the life of worldly persons is rightly called 'a sea;' because, whilst it is agitated by the tempestuous stirrings of actions, it is parted from the tranquillity and stedfastness of interior Wisdom. Contrary to which it is well said by the Prophet, Upon whom shall My Spirit rest but upon him that is humble and quiet, and that trembleth at my words? [Isa. 66, 2] But from earthly minds the Spirit flies the further in proportion as He findeth no rest with them. For it is hence that it is said of certain by the Psalmist; Bruising and unhappiness is in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. [Ps. 13, 7. Vulg. 14, 7. Com. Pr. From which same bruising of disquietude the Lord calls us back, saying, Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. [Matt. 11, 28. 29. For what is more toilsome in this

life than to be fevered with earthly desires? or what is there more full of repose here, than to long for nought of this world?

It is hence that the Israelitish people received the keeping of the Sabbath in gift; it is hence on the opposite side that Egypt was smitten with a multitude of flies. For the people, that follows God, receives the Sabbath, i.e. the rest of the spirit, that it should not be worn out in this life by any craving of carnal passions. But Egypt, which bears a likeness of this world, is stricken with flies. For the fly is an excessively intrusive and restless creature. Wherein what else is there represented but the intrusive solicitations of carnal desires. Whence it is said elsewhere, Dying flies destroy the sweetness of the ointment. [Eccl. 10, 1] Because superfluous thoughts, which in the mind taken up with things carnal are for ever both springing into life and dying away, destroy that sweetness, with which each individual has been inwardly anointed by the Spirit; because they do not suffer him to enjoy the unadulteratedness thereof. And so Egypt is smitten with flies, because the parts of those persons that love an earthly life, while they are stricken with the disquietudes of their desires, are by the swarms of carnal imaginations borne down beneath, so that they cannot be lifted up to the desire of interior rest. Whence when Truth comes to the heart with the wonderful help of His pitifulness, He first banishes therefrom the fevers of carnal thoughts, and afterwards distributes in it the gifts of the parts of virtue. Which same the sacred history of the Gospel excellently conveys to us;

in which when the Lord being besought was led by the way in order to restore the daughter of the ruler to life, it is added directly, But when the crowd were put forth He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. [Matt. 9, 20] So the crowd is cast forth without, in order that the damsel may be raised up; because if the importunate throng of worldly cares be not first expelled from the inner recesses of the heart, the soul, which lies dead in the interior, cannot rise up. For whilst it lets itself loose amongst the countless imaginings of earthly desires, it never in any degree gathers itself up to the consideration of self. Thus then, knowing and seeing that in these waves of perturbations Wisdom cannot dwell, he says, And the sea saith, It is not with me. For no man receives her fully, saving he who strives to withdraw himself from all the drifting to and fro of carnal courses. And hence it is said elsewhere, Write wisdom in the time of leisure. And he that is lessened in doing, even he shall win her. [Ecclus. 38, 24] And again, Be still, and know that I am God. [Ps. 46, 10]

69. But how is it that we know that most of the old Fathers at once interiorly held fast this Wisdom in its life, and outwardly administered the affairs of the world in ordinary? Do we call Joseph deprived of the attainment of this Wisdom, who in the time of dearth taking upon himself the affairs of all Egypt not only furnished provisions to the Egyptians, but by the skilfulness of his administration preserved the life of foreign people as well that came to him? Did Daniel prove a stranger to this Wisdom, who, when he was made by the king of the Chaldeans in Babylon chief of the governors, was busied with greater charges in proportion as by a higher pitch of dignity he was likewise set above all? Whereas then it is plain that

very often even the good are engaged in earthly charges with no interest, we plainly see that in this way the citizens of Jerusalem sometimes render services [angarias] to Babylon, in like manner as oftentimes the citizens of Babylon pay suit and service to Jerusalem. For there are some persons who preach the word of life for the displaying of wisdom alone, they minister the succour of alms from the passion of vain-glory; and indeed the things they do seem to be proper to Jerusalem, but yet are they citizens of Babylon.

70. In this way then it sometimes happens, that they who love the heavenly Country alone, seem to be subjected to the charges of the earthly country. Whose ministration however is distinguished from the practices of the wicked for the most part in act, but sometimes before the Judge Above in thought only. For being full of wisdom from Above, they distinguish how they may at once be free to one thing inwardly, and busied with another thing outwardly; so that if perchance by God's secret appointment aught of the concerns of this world is charged upon them, they coveting it not, they may yield to God Whom they delight in, and from the love of Him, may interiorly desire His Vision only, but from the fear of Him externally discharge the course imposed upon them with humility, that they should at once desire to be disengaged to God by force of the free attachment of loving affection, and again fulfil the charges imposed upon them by force of the constitution of servitude; and when the affairs of business make a din without, within the most peaceful repose is maintained in love; and the turmoils of employments outwardly clamouring, reason as presiding judge disposes of within, and with tranquil governance regulates the things, which all around it are too little tranquil. For as force of mind is at the head for bridling the motions of the flesh, so very often the love of tranquillity regulates aright the imposed turmoils of business;

because exterior charges, if they be not desired with a wrong affection, may be executed with a mind not disordered but regulated. For holy men never court them, but lament them when put upon them by secret appointment, and though in respect of a better aim they shun them, yet in respect of a submissive mind they bear them. Which same they are above every thing eager to avoid if it might be, but fearing the secret dispensations of God, they lay hold of that they eschew, and execute what they avoid. For they go into their conscience, and they there take counsel what the secret will of God would have, and being conscious that they ought to be subject to the Appointments on high, they humble the neck of the heart to the yoke of Divine Providence. But he that is such as this, whatever turmoils are at work without, they never reach to his interior parts. And so it comes to pass that there is one thing maintained within in wish and another thing maintained without in office, and that with this Wisdom their hearts are filled, being no longer troubled and disordered, but in a state of tranquillity. Well, then, is it said thereof, that the depth saith, It is not with me, and the sea saith, It is not with me. As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'The troubled minds of the worldly cry out by the mere circumstance of their not being quiet, that they are widely separated from true Wisdom.

But because this Wisdom of God, abiding with the Father before the ages of the world, was to be made Incarnate in the end thereof, so that in order to redeem the human race, It

should send not the holy Angels, not just men, but in the manifestation of very sight comes by Its own Self, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 15. Fine gold shall not be given for it. [xliv] 71. For what is denoted by 'fine gold,' save the holy Angels, who are rightly called both 'gold,' and 'fine [obrysum];' 'gold,' because they shine with brightness of righteousness; 'fine,' because they never had any defilement of sin. But for just men, so long as they are in this corruptible flesh with the conditions of mortality, 'gold' they may indeed be, 'fine gold' they cannot be in any wise; because the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthy tabernacle weigheth down the mind, that museth upon many things. [Wisd. 9, 15] For though in this life they may shine by an extraordinary brightness of righteousness, yet they never purely lack the dross of sins; as John the Apostle bears witness, who says, if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us [1 John 1, 8]; and as James affirms, who puts a proof, saying, For in many things we all offend. [James 3, 2] As the Prophet likewise beseeches, who says, Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. [Ps. 143, 2] Those then are termed 'fine gold' who whilst holding fast in that innocency, wherein they were created, at once shine with the brightness of righteousness, and are stained with no dross of sins, no not the very least.

72. But because in the stead of this Wisdom no one of the Angels was to be sent as the Redeemer of the human race, lest in those Angels, who, we have been taught, have often appeared in aid of men, any man should rest his hope, it is said, Fine gold shall not be given for it. As though it were expressed in plain speech; 'By Its own Self shall Wisdom be manifested, in order that the human race may be redeemed from sin.' There is no Angel sent in His stead; because it must needs be that by the Creator the creature should be set free. And hence the Lord said in the Gospel, If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. [John 8, 36] But the holy man, being filled with the Spirit of that same Wisdom, foresaw that there would not be wanting in Judaea some that should put their hope in the Lawgiver, and make Moses the author of their salvation, even as to the man that had been healed, speaking evil, they say, Be thou His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. [John 9, 28] Whence it is yet further introduced with propriety,

Nor shall silver be weighed in exchange thereof. [xlv]

73. For because the divine revelations are often denoted by 'silver,' by the term of silver it may be that the writers of that revelation are also understood, whose life shone amidst the crowds of their fellow-creatures with the light of virtuous attainments. But because the Law was able to point out sins, but not able to take them away, it was not anyone of the ancient Fathers, nor the Lawgiver Moses, that became the Redeemer of mankind. So 'silver is not weighed in exchange of this Wisdom,' because all that have had power to be holy, by comparison with the Only-begotten Son of God are accounted to have been of no worth, who except they had known and seen that they were servants of that 'Wisdom,' could never at all have been holy. For to this end were they sent, that in the hearts of men they might by preaching prepare a way for this 'Wisdom,' neither yet that for her, but by her they might

govern the peoples under their charge. For because it was certain that by the accession of periods of time, the ailments of the waning world should grow to a height, it was brought about that in the end of ages the Eternal Wisdom of God should by Its own Self come to this full grown sick one, with his over great infirmity, i.e.

to the human race lying sick, throughout the whole world, that preachers having been dispatched beforehand, like a kind of visitors, the power of the physician might afterwards come so much the more efficacious, in proportion as the sickness of the diseased had more grown to a head. But because there is no one sent in the stead of Him for the saving of us, let it be rightly said, Nor shall silver be weighed in the exchange thereof. Forasmuch as the life of the just men who preached, with whatever light of holiness it might abound, doth not by its presence make exchange for the coming of Heavenly Wisdom to us. But there were multitudes of the Gentiles, who being attached to the systems of discipline of this world's wise ones, observed those things which are honourable among men, and believed that, honourable dealing being observed, they were sure to be saved, nor any longer sought a Mediator between God and man, since they held the teaching of the philosophers as being sufficient for them. In contempt of whom it is directly added;

Ver. 16. Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India. [xlvi]

74. For what is meant by India, which furnishes a black people, saving this world, wherein the life of man is engendered dark in respect of sin? Now 'the dyed colours of India' are the wise ones of this world, who though in respect of infidelity, and oftentimes in respect of behaviour, they be foul, yet before the eyes of men are stained with the hue of overlaid honourableness. But the coeternal Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the dyed colours of India,' in that he, who really takes It in, discovers how widely it differs from those human beings whom the world has worshipped for wise ones. And the very words of His precepts differ from the wise ones of this world, in that while they strain after eloquence, their sayings appear as if fair in shew and in the staining of the dye, and while they lack the power of realities, feign themselves to be something else than what they are by combination of words as by overcoated colours. But on the other hand the instruction of Wisdom is at once fair by preaching and shining by unadulterated truth, nor does it by deceit set itself forth one thing outwardly, and retain another thing inwardly, nor in its sayings aim to appear fair by brilliancy of speech, but by uncorruptness of truth. Therefore in its precepts the Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the dyed colours of India,' since whereas it has not the stained adornments of eloquence, it pleases like a robe without dye. Which staining of the dye Paul rightly despised, when he said, Which things also we speak not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth. For he chose rather to display this 'Wisdom' by the simple transparency of truth alone, but not to stain it with thy dyeing of speech.

Nor to the most precious sardonyx stone, nor to the sapphire. 75. That the sardonyx and sapphire are not precious stones, who would be ignorant? And whereas there be many other precious stones, which immeasurably exceed these in the account of greatness, why is the

sapphire or the sardonyx especially called precious, when either stone by comparison with other stones is most contemptible? except that those stones which are described as precious, when we know not to be precious, we look out for some other thing in the meaning of them. For the sardonyx bears the likeness of red earth, but the sapphire has an aereal appearance. And so it may be that in the sardonyx by the red earth human beings are denoted, in the sapphire by the aereal appearance the Angels are denoted. For whereas the sardonyx stone bears the appearance of red earth, it not improperly denotes man; because 'Adam' himself, who was created the first, is called in the Latin tongue 'Red earth.' What does it mean then that it is said that this Wisdom is not 'compared to the sardonyx nor to the sapphire,' but that He, Who is the 'Power of God and the Wisdom of God,' i.e. the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, surpasses all things by such preeminent greatness that neither the first man on the earth, nor the Angels in heaven, can be compared to Him. And hence it is said by the Psalmist, Who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the sons of God ['Sons of God' was a common expression for Angels] can be likened unto the Lord?

76. But it is possible that by the sardonyx stone the Fathers of the Old Testament, while by the sapphire the Preachers of the New Testament, are set forth. For the first, though they maintained an extraordinary life of righteousness, yet lent themselves to carnal procreation. Therefore whereas it is plain that they did some things of an earthly kind, they are not inappropriately denoted by the sardonyx stone, which as we before said bears the appearance of 'red earth.' But by the sapphire, which is of an ethereal blue, we suitably understand the Preachers of the New Testament, who laying aside the desires of carnal gendering, followed after the things of heaven alone. And hence the Prophet beholding the holy Apostles mounting above all the desires of the flesh with spiritual fervency, being struck with admiration, saith, Who are these that fly as clouds? [Is. 60, 8] As though he expressed it in plain speech; 'We go along by the way of earth, in that we are still involved in marryings and employ acts of the flesh upon the propagating offspring; but these walk not on earth, but they 'fly as clouds,' who whilst they aim at heavenly things touch nought connected with earthly desires.' Therefore he says that the Wisdom of God is not 'compared to the sardonyx or the sapphire stone.' As though he told in plain terms, saying, 'To Him, Who is seen Man among men, neither any in the old Fathers nor any in the new is equalled, in that from His Godhead He derives it that in His Manhood He hath not any like to Him.' Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 17. The gold and the glass cannot equal it. [xlviii] 77. Who that is sound of perception would deem it worthy to understand this according to the letter? For 'glass,' as we said above, is of much less worth than 'gold,' and after it was said that 'gold is not equal' to this Wisdom, it is yet further, as if heightening, subjoined, that 'glass' too cannot equal it either. But the bare letter failing us in the historical sense, sends us to investigating the mystery of the allegory. For we know that the metal gold shines with a superior brightness to all the metals. But it is of the nature of glass that whilst seen without it shines with perfect transparency in the inside. In every other metal whatever is contained within is hidden

from sight, but in the case of glass, every liquid, such as it is contained within, such is it shewn to be without, and, so to say, all the liquid in a glass vessel, whilst shut up is open. What other thing, then, do we understand by 'gold and glass,' but that heavenly Country, that society of blessed citizens, whose hearts mutually one with another at once shine with brightness, and are transparent by pureness; which John in Revelations had beheld, when he said, And the building of the wall of it was of jasper, and the city was of pure gold like unto clear glass. [Rev. 21, 18] For because all the Saints shall shine in the supreme brightness of bliss, it is described as constructed of gold.

78. And because their very brightness itself is reciprocally open to them in each other's breasts, and when the countenance of each one marked his conscience is penetrated along with it, this very gold is described as like pure glass. For there the mind of every person no bodily frame of limbs will hide from the eyes of his fellow, but the interior will be given to view, the very harmony of the body too will also be plain to the eyes of the body, and each one will be in such wise distinguishable to another, as now he cannot be distinguishable to himself. But now our hearts, so long as we are in this life, because they cannot be seen in one by another, are enclosed not within glass vessels, but within vessels of earthenware; in which same clay in respect of the mind being affected the Prophet dreaded to stick, when he said, Deliver me out of the clay, that I may not stick fast. [Ps. 69, 14] Which very tabernacle of bodies, Paul calls 'our earthly house,' saying, For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2 Cor, 5, 1] Therefore in this earthly house so long as we live, the mere partition wall of our corrupt state, so to say, we do not penetrate with the eyes of the mind, and the hidden things in each other we cannot see.

Hence Holy Church desiring to see the form of her Spouse in the Godhead, yet not being able, because the fashion of His Eternal Being, which she longed to behold, His Manhood, which He took upon Him, hid from her eyes, says mourning in the Song of Songs; Behold he standeth behind our wall. [Cant. 2, 9] As if she said in plain speech, 'I desire to see HIM now already in the appearance of His Godhead, but I am still shut out from the sight of Him by the wall of the flesh He has assumed.' Therefore so long as we live in this corruptible flesh, we see not the thoughts of the hearts in one another. Whence it is said by the same Paul, For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him? [1 Cor. 2, 11] And again; Therefore Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts. [1 Cor. 4, 5] So then that City, which manifests the hearts of them that are in it to each severally and reciprocally, is described 'of gold like to pure glass,' that by the gold it may be represented bright, and by the glass transparent.

79. But though all the Saints therein glitter with such wonderful brightness, and shine through with such extraordinary transparency, yet that Wisdom, by a likeness of Which they have all that they are, they 'cannot equal.' Therefore it is well said, The gold and the glass cannot equal it. For it is for this that all the Saints are brought to those eternal joys,

that they may be like to God, as it is written, When He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. [1 John 3, 2] And yet it is written, O Lord God of hosts, who is like unto Thee? [Ps. 89, 9] And again; Who shall be like unto God among the sons of God? [ib. v. 6] Whence then shall they be like, and whence not like, but that to this 'Wisdom' they at once be like for a semblance and not like for equality? For by gazing on the Eternity of God, it is brought to pass upon them that they should be eternal, and while they receive the gift of seeing Him, by the receiving of Blessedness they copy the thing that they see. They are both like, then, because they are made blessed; and they are not like to the Creator, because they are a creature. And thus they both have a certain likeness to God, because they are without end; and yet they have no equality to the Incomprehensible One, because they have comprehensible being.

Therefore let it be justly said, The gold and the glass is not equal to it. For with whatever brightness and transparency the Saints may shine, it is one thing for men to be wise in God, and another thing for a Man to be the Wisdom of God. Which same Wisdom he was truly acquainted with, who never ventured to liken any one of the Saints to the Mediator between God and man. And hence it is added; .

Neither shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged instead of it. [xlix]

80. For a 'lofty vessel of gold' did Elijah prove, 'a lofty vessel of gold' Jeremiah, 'lofty and overtopping vessels of gold' the old Fathers were. But this Wisdom of God, in order that It might redeem us from a carnal kind of life, appeared in the flesh, and he, who did not see that Wisdom in a true light, supposed that the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, was one of the Prophets, which Christ the eyes of the Elect held for God, when they saw by Him but Man. Hence it is said by Him to the holy Disciples, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? [Matt. 16, 13, &c. And when they thereupon answered Him, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some Elias: some Jeremias, or one of the prophets; they were immediately interrogated touching their own perception; But whom say ye that I am? To whom Peter, answering directly in the voice of the whole Church, says, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Thus, then, forasmuch as according to the declaration of Paul we 'know Christ, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God,' for this Wisdom Peter refused to 'exchange vessels of gold lofty and overtopping,' because he understood concerning it no other thing than it was. For as has been said, a great 'vessel of gold' was John, a great 'vessel of gold' Elijah, a great vessel of gold 'Jeremiah.

Now whoever accounted that That God was anyone of these, did 'exchange a vessel of gold high and overtopping' for this 'Wisdom.' But for this Wisdom the Church doth not 'exchange vessels of gold high and overtopping,' because it holds that Christ the Son of God is not one of the Prophets, but the One Lord of the Prophets. For seeing that 'Wisdom' Itself had come to her, she refused to keep herself fixed in those golden vessels, but was eager with certainty of faith to pass on into that Wisdom. Whence she saith in the Song of Songs; The watchmen that keep the city found me; to whom I said, Saw ye him, whom my soul loveth? It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him, whom my soul loveth. [Cant.

3, 3. 4. For whom do we take 'the watchmen that go about the city' to be, but the former fathers and prophets who set themselves to watch by the voice of holy preaching for our safe keeping? but when the Church sought her Redeemer, she would not fix her hope in those same ancient preachers, in that she says, It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth. For Him she had not been able to find, if she had been unwilling 'to pass by through these.' For the unbelievers had rested themselves in those warders, who believed that Christ the Son of God was anyone of those.

With the voice then and the faith of Peter, Holy Church passed by the watchmen she found, in that she disdained to believe the Lord Who had been prophesied to be anyone of the number of the prophets. Thus, let it be said, nor shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged for it. Because the Elect severally both venerate the life of the Saints for their loftiness, and yet do not take up with it for error. For those whom they know to be simple men they do not all compare to God-Man. Whence it is further added;

Ver. 18. Nor shall they be mentioned in comparison with her. [l]

81. For all the Elect of the Country Above are indeed holy and righteous, but by a participation of Wisdom, not by comparison therewith. For what are men compared with God? Now 'Light' Wisdom is used to be called, 'light' also the servants of Wisdom are wont to be called; but She as light lighting up, they as light lighted up; as it was written; That was the true Light, Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. [John 1, 9] But to these it is only said, Ye are the light of the world. [Matt. 5, 14] 'Righteousness' indeed Wisdom is called 'righteousness,' the servants of 'Wisdom' as well are called: but She righteousness that maketh righteous, they righteousness that is made righteous. For of God, Who is 'Wisdom,' it is said, That He might Himself be just and the Justifier; [Rom. 3, 26] but these say, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. [1 Cor. 5, 21] So then it is after one sort that the 'Light lighting' is to be reverenced, after another that the 'light lighted' is to be; in one way the Righteousness that maketh righteous, in another way the righteousness that is made righteous. Now Wisdom both is and is wise, nor has She for one thing to be, and for another thing to be wise; but the servants of 'Wisdom' are indeed able to be wise men, but yet they have not their being the same thing as being wise. For they may be, and not be wise.

Wisdom hath life, but She hath not one thing, and is another thing, inasmuch as, to Her it is that to be that it is to live. But the servants of 'Wisdom' whilst they have life are one thing and have another, inasmuch as to whom to be is not the identical thing it is to live. For they may be after a sort, and yet not live. For to them it is one thing to be, and a different thing to live; for in the very first parent they had being by a beginning, and life by an addition, since man was first made of the earth, and afterwards as it is written; He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. [Gen. 2, 7. Now Wisdom hath being, She hath life; but this, which She hath, She Her own Self is. Wherefore She lives unchangeably, because she lives not by contingency, but essentially. He then alone Is truly with the Father and the Holy

Spirit, to Whose Being ours compared, is not to Be. To this Wisdom if we be joined, we are, we live, we are wise. If we be compared to Him, we neither are wise, nor live at all, nor are.

82. Hence it is that all the Saints, when they advance in the vision of God, the more they view the interior depths of the Divine Nature, see so much the more that they themselves are nothing. For it is no where read that Abraham confessed that he was dust and ashes except when he obtained to enjoy the converse of God. For he says, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes. [Gen. 18, 27] For he would perchance have thought that he was something, if he had not perceived at all the true Essence that is above himself. But when for the contemplating of the Unchangeable One he was transported above himself, being filled with so mighty a power of contemplation, when he saw Him, he saw that he himself was nought but 'dust.' Hence it is that the Prophet being filled with the same Wisdom crieth out, Remember, O Lord, that we are but dust; [Ps. 103, 14. lxx. who again viewing the unchangeableness of that Essence, saith, Yea, all of them shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed; but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail. [Ps. 102, 26. 27. Hence it is said to Moses, I AM THAT I AM: Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, HE THAT IS hath sent me unto you. [Ex. 3, 14. For He alone truly IS, Who alone unchangeably continues.

For every thing that now is after this way, and now after another way, is near to not being. For to continue in its standing, it is not able. And in some manner there is a going on not to be, whilst from that which was, it is by the enfarings of time ever being led away to some other thing. In order then that in the partaking of His Body we may be something, let us know and see our own selves, that we are well nigh nothing. Therefore it is well said, Nor shall they be made mention of in comparison with her; because vessels of gold high and overtopping, which by participation of Wisdom are fit objects of reverence to us, in comparison of Wisdom are not even fit to be made mention of. But because this Wisdom is by secret means poured into the hearts of men, (as it is likewise said of the Holy Spirit, The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; [John 3, 8]) for this reason it is added,

For wisdom is drawn from out of sight. [li] 83. 'Wisdom is drawn from out of sight;' because whereas She is invisible, She cannot be found saving in an invisible way. And She is rightly said to be 'drawn' also, because like as we draw the breath, that the body may live, so from the interior depths of Wisdom the Spirit is derived, that the soul may hold on to life. Whence the Psalmist says, I opened my mouth, and drew in the spirit. [Ps. 119, 131.] Which very Wisdom, taking human flesh together with [al. 'by the medium of.'] a rational soul, when It had presented Itself from the interior depths close at hand, because this world could not behold its invisible Maker, Him Whom it saw visible Man, it also knew as invisible God as well. The Gentile world was converted from the darkness of its unbelief, being before full of pride by its avertedness; signs and wonders being exhibited, faith gained ground; and the faith being spread abroad, the summit of Holy Church shone forth in reverence with all men. To which same when there were wanting open adversaries, she began to be tried

by her own members. For numberless heresies springing up in her, they arrayed against her wars of cruel conflict. For she must be exercised at this time by toiling, who is on the way to her recompensing in that which follows. Whereby it has come to pass that some in her should come forth who should call the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, created mere man, but one by grace made God, and should attribute so much of holiness to him as they knew in the rest of the Saints, the same being His servants. Which persons blessed Job being inspired with the spirit of prophecy, reproves by the laying out of his sentence, saying,

Ver. 19. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it. [lii]

84. What do we take 'Ethiopia' for, save the present world, which same by darkness of hue denotes a sinning people in the foulness of its merits. But sometimes by the name of Ethiopia the Gentile world in a special manner is used to be denoted, as being before black by the sins of unbelief. Which same on the Lord's coming, the Prophet Habakkuk beheld affrighted with fear, and says, The tents of the Ethiopians tremble with dread, the tents of the land of Madian. [Hab. 3, 7] David also, the Prophet, seeing that the Lord should come for the redeeming of Judaea, but that first the Gentile world should believe, and afterwards Judaea should follow, (as it is written, Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved, [Rom. 11, 25. 26.]) says, Ethiopia, her hand shall be first to God; [Ps. 68, 31] i.e. 'before that Judaea believes, the Gentile world being black with sins offers itself to Almighty God to be saved.' Now the topaz is a precious stone, and because in the Greek tongue to pan is the word for 'every thing,' on this account, that it shines bright with every colour, it is called 'topazium,' as if 'topantium.' But when the Gentile world being turned to God believed, numbers from out thereof were so enriched with the gift of His Spirit, that as with many colours, so with many virtues they shone bright.

But lest any man be lifted up by the virtues he has received, it is now said by the holy man, The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it. As though he said in plain words; 'No one of the Saints, with however many virtues he may be filled, yet as being gathered out of this blackness of the world can equal Him, concerning Whom it is written, That holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. [Luke 1, 35] For we, though we are made holy, yet are: not born holy, because by the mere constitution of a corruptible nature we are tied and bound, that we should say with the Prophet, Behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin hath my mother conceived me. But He only is truly born holy, Who in order that He might get the better of that same constitution of a corruptible nature, was not conceived by the combining of carnal conjunction.

85. To this Wisdom as it were a kind of 'topaz from Ethiopia wished to equal itself,' when a certain heresiarch [Nestorius, Ben. said, 'I do not envy Christ being made God, because, if I wish even I myself may be made so.' Who imagined our Lord Jesus Christ to be God, not by the mystery of His conception, but by the promotion of grace, arguing by misconstrued proofs that He was born simple man, but in order to be God that He had advanced by merit, and on this account reckoning that both himself and any others might be made coequal with

Him, which same are made the children of God by grace, not understanding nor minding that the topaz from Ethiopia is not equal to Him. For it is one thing for those born men to receive the grace of adoption, and another for one by the power of Godhead preeminently to have come forth God from the very conception. Neither is it possible that to the glory of the Only-begotten, possessed by nature, another glory should be equal, received by grace. For the Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, [1 Tim. 2, 5] is not as this one raves one person in His human nature, and another person in the Divine nature. Not conceived and brought forth simple man, did he afterwards obtain of merit that He should be God.

But the Angel announcing it, and the Spirit coming, at once the Word in the womb, at once within the womb the Word made flesh, (that unchangeable Essence likewise remaining to Him which He has coeternal together with the Father and the Holy Spirit; did take upon Him within the bowels of the Virgin that whereby He might both being Impassible suffer passion, and Undying suffer death, and whilst Eternal before the world be a temporal being in the end of the world, that through an unutterable mystery, by a holy conception and an inviolate birth, in accordance with the verity of both natures, the same Virgin should be at once the handmaid and mother of the Lord. For so is it said to her by Elisabeth; Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? [Luke 1, 43] And the Virgin herself at her conception said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy word. [v. 38] And though He the same Being is one thing from the Father, and another thing from the Virgin, yet He is not one Person from the Father, and another Person from the Virgin. But the same Person is Eternal from the Father and the same a temporal being from the Mother, the same Who made is the same That was made, the same beautiful in form above the children of men [Ps. 45, 2] in respect of the Divine nature, and the same of whom it is written;

We saw Him, and there was no shew, and He hath not form nor comeliness, [Is. 53, 2] in respect of the human nature. The same before the world from the Father without mother, and the same at the end of the world from the Mother without father. The same a Temple, the same the Builder of the Temple. The same the Maker of the work, and the same the Work of the Maker, remaining one Person from both and in both natures, neither being confounded by the conjunction of natures, nor doubled by the distinctness of natures. But because it is not these points that we have taken upon us to treat of, let us return to our course of interpreting.

86. We are to take note that the holy man, in order to shew that the Angels are, widely distant from this Wisdom, says, Fine gold shall not be given for it. Which same that he might exhibit the ancient Fathers likewise, dealers with sacred Revelation, as inferior, added, Nor shall silver be weighed in exchange thereof. Moreover that he might point out that the wisdom of the philosopher is far beneath this Wisdom, he brought in; Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India. And he subjoined, Nor to the most precious sardonyx stone, nor to the sapphire. Furthermore in order that he might shew that in that city Above no one

attains to equality with the Only-begotten, he added; The gold or the glass cannot equal it. That he might make it appear that the Prophets likewise were beneath It, he added; Neither shall vessels of gold high and overtopping be exchanged instead of it. Nor shall they be mentioned in comparison with her. For Wisdom is drawn from out of sight. Whilst at the last, that he might rebuke the very heretics in the Church themselves as well, who on coming from the error of the Gentile world, split through pride the faith which they receive, he added; The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it. As though he taught in plain words, saying; These, who from the blackness of sin come to conversion, cannot equal God-Man, though they may seem to shine bright with many virtues for colours. And that their pride might be thrown over, it is fitly added,

Neither shall the purest dyes be brought into comparison. [liii] 87. For those are called 'the purest dyes' who are genuinely humble, and genuinely holy, who know that from themselves indeed they have not the shew of virtuous attainments, but that they hold this by the gift of accessory grace. For they would not be 'dyed,' if they had possessed holiness by nature. But they are 'the purest dyes' because they keep in themselves with humility the superinduced grace of virtues which they have been vouchsafed. Hence it is that it is said by the voice of the Spouse concerning Holy Church; Who is this that cometh up blanched? [Cant. 6, 10] For because Holy Church has not a heavenly life by nature, but on the Spirit adding Itself is arrayed with beautifulness of gifts, she is described not as white but as 'blanched.' And observe, that when he said above, Nor shall it be compared to the dyed colours of India, those same colours he did not bring in 'pure;' but in this place that he might distinguish the dye of true virtues from that staining of the philosophers, whilst speaking of dyes, he added 'the purest.' For those are rightly called 'the purest dyes,' who were aforetime foul through wicked deeds, yet, the Spirit coming upon them, are clothed with the brilliancy of grace, that they should appear to be far other than they were. Whence also 'Baptism,' i.e. 'dyeing [tinctio],' is the name given to our own descending into the water itself. Since we are dyed, and we, who were before unsightly by the deformity of bad habits, on the faith being received are rendered beautiful by grace and the adornment of virtues. It goes on ;

Ver. 20, 21. Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living. [liv]

88. It deserves to be especially considered, that it is asked by the holy man, whence Wisdom cometh. For It 'comes' from Him from Whom It sprung. Now because It is born of the Invisible and Coeternal Father, the way thereof is hidden. Whence too it is said by the Prophet, And who shall declare His generations? [Is. 53, 8] Now 'the place of the understanding of her' is the mind of man, which mind the Wisdom of God when it has filled makes holy. And so because both He is invisible, from Whom It came forth, and it is doubtful to us in whose mind It rests as being understood, it is rightly said now, Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? But this is very wonderful that it is directly brought in; seeing that it is hidden from the eyes of all living. For if the Wisdom, which is God, had been 'hidden from the eyes of all living,' then surely this Wisdom no one of the Saints would

have seen. But see, I hear John agreeing with this sentence, who says, No man hath seen God at any time. [1 John 4, 12] And again, when I look at the Fathers of the Old Testament, I learn that many of those, as the very history of the Sacred Reading is witness, did see God. Thus Jacob saw the Lord, who says, For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

[Gen. 32, 30] Moses likewise saw God, of whom it is written, And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man Speaketh unto his friend. [Ex. 33, 11] This very Job saw the Lord, who says, I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. [Job 42, 5] Isaiah saw the Lord, who saith, In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up. [Is. 6, 1] Michaiah saw the Lord, who saith, I saw the Lord sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. [1 Kings 22, 19] What does it mean then that so many Fathers of the Old Testament have witnessed that they have seen God, and yet concerning this Wisdom, which is God, it is said, Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living? And John saith, No man hath seen God at any time. Seeing this, which is plainly given us to understand, that so long as we live here a mortal life, God may be seen by certain semblances, but by the actual appearance of His Nature He cannot be seen, so that the soul being inspired with the grace of the Spirit should by certain figures behold God, but not attain to the actual power of His Essence?

For hence it is that Jacob, who bears witness that he had seen God, saw Him not save in an Angel. Hence it is that Moses who 'talked with God face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend,' in the midst of the very words of his speaking, says, If I have found grace in Thy sight, shew Thyself manifestly to me, that I may see Thee. [Ex. 33, 13. Vulg. Shew me Thy face. For assuredly if it were not God with whom he was talking, he would have said, 'Shew me God,' and not 'Shew me Thyself.' But if it was God, with Whom he was speaking 'face to face,' wherefore did he pray to see Him, Whom he was seeing? But from this requesting of his, it is inferred that Him he was athirst to perceive in the brightness of His Incomprehensible nature, Whom he had already begun to see by certain semblances, that so the heavenly Essence might be present to the eyes of his mind, in order that for the vision of Eternity there might not be interposed to him any created semblance with the circumstances of time. And so the Fathers of the Old Testament saw the Lord, and yet according to the voice of John, No man hath seen God at anytime;

and according to the sentence of blessed Job, the Wisdom Which is God is 'hid from the eyes of all living,' because by persons settled in this mortal life He was both able to be seen in certain comprehensible images, and not able to be seen in the Incomprehensible Light of Eternity.

89. But if it is so, that by some while still living in this corruptible flesh, yet growing in incalculable power by a certain piercingness of contemplation, the Eternal Brightness is able to be seen, this too is not at variance with the sentence of blessed Job, who says, Seeing that it is hid from the eyes of all living; because he that sees 'Wisdom,' Which is God, wholly

and entirely dies to this life, that henceforth he should not be held by the love thereof. For no one has seen Her, who still lives in a carnal way, because no man can embrace God and the world at one and the same time. He who sees God dies by the mere circumstance alone, that either by the bent of the interior, or by the carrying out of practice, he is separated with all his mind from the gratifications of this life. Hence yet further it is said to that same Moses too; For there shall no man see Me, and live. [Ex. 33, 20] As though it were plainly expressed, 'No man ever at any time sees God spiritually and lives to the world carnally.' Hence Paul the Apostle too, who as yet had learnt the invisible things of God, as he himself testifies, in part, [1 Cor. 13, 12] related that henceforth he was dead all over to this world, saying, By Whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

[Gal. 6, 14] For as we have already said far above, it is not enough for him to say, I am crucified to the world, except he also first out with, The world is crucified to me, that he might not only bear witness that he was dead to the world, but also that the world was dead to himself, so that neither he himself should covet the world, nor the world henceforth covet him. For if perchance there be two in one place, of whom one is alive, and the other dead, though the dead person does not see the living, yet the live one does see the dead. Now the Preacher of God, in order that he might shew that by the abasement whereby he had cast himself down in humbling himself he was now become such, that neither he himself longed after the world, nor the world after him; not only says that he was crucified to the world, that he himself as one dead should not see the glory of the world, that he might long after, but likewise declared the world crucified to him, wherein he had cast himself down to the ground with such humility, that the world itself likewise, as if dead to him, could not now at all see Paul as being humble and despised.

90. But we are to know that there were some persons, who said that even in that region of blessedness God is beheld indeed in His Brightness, but far from beheld in His Nature. Which persons surely too little exactness of enquiry deceived. For not to that simple and unchangeable Essence is Brightness one thing, and Nature another; but Its very Nature is to It Brightness, and the very Brightness is Nature. For that to Its votaries the Wisdom of God should one day display Itself, He Himself pledges His word, saying, He that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. [John 14, 21] As though He said in plain terms, 'Ye who see Me in your nature, it remains that ye should see Me in Mine own nature.' Hence He says again; Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. [Matt. 5, 8] Hence Paul says, For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, then shall I know even as also I am known. [1 Cor. 13, 12]

91. But because it is said concerning God by the first preacher of the Church, Whom the Angels desire to look upon, [1 Pet. 1, 12] there are some who imagine that even the Angels never see God; and yet we know that it is spoken by a sentence of Truth, In heaven their Angels do always behold the face of My Father, Which is in heaven. [Matt. 18, 10] Does, then, Truth sound one thing and the preacher of truth another? But if both sentences be

compared together, it is ascertained, that they are not at all at variance with one another. For the Angels at once see and desire to see God, and thirst to behold and do behold. For if they so desire to see Him that they never at all enjoy the carrying out of their desire, desire has anxiety without fruit, and anxiety has punishment. But the blessed Angels are far removed from all punishment of anxiety, because never can punishment and blessedness meet in one. Again, when we say that these Angels are satisfied with the vision of God, because the Psalmist too says, I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness, [Ps. 17, 15] we are to consider that upon satisfying there follows disgust. So then, that the two may rightly agree together, let Truth say, that they always see; and let the excellent Preacher say, that they always desire to see.

For that there be not anxiety in desire, in desiring they are satisfied, and that there be not disgust in their satisfying, whilst being satisfied they desire. And therefore they desire without suffering, because desire is accompanied by satisfying. And they are satisfied without disgust, because the very satisfying itself is ever being inflamed by desire. So also shall we too one day be, when we shall come to the fountain of life. There shall be delightfully stamped upon us at one and the same time a thirsting and a satisfying. But from the thirsting necessity is far absent, and disgust far from that satisfying, because at once in thirsting we shall be satisfied, and in being satisfied we shall thirst. Therefore we shall see God, and it shall be the very reward of our labour, that after the darkness of this mortal state we should be made glad by His light being approached unto.

92. But when we talk of His light being approached, that presents itself to the mind which Paul says, Dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen, nor can see. [1 Tim. 6, 16] And again, I hear what the Psalmist says; Approach unto Him, and be enlightened. [Ps. 34, 5] How then by approaching are we enlightened, if we see not the very Light by which we are able to be enlightened? But if by approaching to Him we see the very Light whereby we are enlightened, how is it declared to be unapproachable? Wherein it deserves to be considered that he called it unapproachable, but to every man that minds the things of men. Since sacred Scripture is used to mark all the followers of carnal things with the designation of the being 'men.' Whence the same Apostle says to certain persons at strife, For whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal; and walk as men? [1 Cor. 3, 3. 4. To which he soon afterwards appends, Are ye not men? And hence he elsewhere brought forward the testimony; Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. [1 Cor. 2, 9] And when he had described this as hidden from 'men,' he added directly, But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit;

[1 Cor. 2, 10] separating his own self from the designation of 'man' in that having been transported above man he now tasted what is divine. So also in this place, when he told of the light of God being unapproachable, that he might shew to what persons unapproachable, he added, Whom no man hath seen, no nor can see. After his manner calling 'men' all whose taste is for things of man. Because they who have a taste for what is divine, are doubtless

above men. Therefore we shall see God, if by a heavenly conversation we obtain to be above men. Not yet that we shall so see Him as He Himself sees His very own Self. For the Creator sees Himself in a way far unlike to that in which the creature sees the Creator. For as to the unmeasurableness of God there is a certain measure of contemplation set to us, because we are limited by the mere weight that we are a creature.

93. But assuredly we do not so behold God, as He sees Himself, as we do not so rest in God, as He rests in Himself. For our sight or our rest will be to a certain degree like to His sight or His rest, but not equal to it. For lest we should be prostrate in ourselves, the wing of contemplation, so to say, uplifts us, and we are carried up from ourselves for the beholding Him, and being carried away by the bent of the heart and the sweetness of contemplation, in a certain manner go away from ourselves into Himself, and now this very going away of ours is not to rest, and yet so to go is most perfectly to rest. And so it is perfect rest because God is discerned, and yet it is not to be equalled to His rest, Who doth not pass on from Himself into another, that He may rest. And therefore the rest is, so to say, like and unlike, because what His rest is, our rest imitates. For that we may be blessed and eternal for everlasting, we imitate the Everlasting. And it is a great eternity to us to be imitating eternity. Nor are we heritless of Him Whom we imitate, because in seeing we partake, and in partaking imitate Him. Which same sight is now begun by faith, but is then perfected in Appearance, when we drink at the very springhead the Wisdom coeternal with God which we now derive through the lips of those that preach, as it were in running streams.

Book XIX

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

VOLUME II - THE FOURTH PART. — BOOK XIX.

The interpretation being carried on from the last part of the twenty-first verse of the twenty-eighth chapter to the twenty-first verse of the following chapter exclusive, various meanings are laid open not less learnedly than piously, chiefly concerning Christ and the Church. [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION] 1. WHAT wonder is it if the Eternal 'Wisdom' of God is not able to be seen, when the very invisible things themselves as well, which were created thereby, cannot be embraced by the eyes of men? So then by things created we learn with what self-abasement to revere the Creator of all things; so that in this life the human mind should not dare to usurp to itself aught belonging to the Appearance of Almighty God, which He reserves for His Elect only as their reward in the ensuing Recompensing. Whence after it was said, It is hid from the eyes of all living, we have the words thereupon introduced next;

Chap. xxviii. 21. And is kept close also from the fowls of the air. [i]

2. For in Holy Scripture 'birds' are sometimes given to be understood in a bad sense, and sometimes in a good sense. Since by the birds of the air occasionally the powers of the air are denoted, being hostile to the settled purposes of good men. Whence it is said by the mouth of Truth, And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it; [Matt. 13, 4] in this way, because evilspirits besetting the minds of men, whilst they bring in bad thoughts, pluck the word of life out of the memory. Hence again it is said to a certain rich man full of proud thoughts; the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head. [Matt. 8, 20. Luke 9, 58. For foxes are very cunning animals, that hide themselves in ditches and caves; and when they face the light, they never run in straight courses, but always by crooked doublings. But the birds as we know with lofty flight lift themselves into the air. So, then, by the name of 'foxes,' the crafty and cunning demons, and by the title of the 'birds of the air' these same proud demons are denoted. As if he said, 'The deceitful and uplifted demons find their habitation in your heart; i.e.

in the imagination of pride,' 'but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head,' i.e. 'My humility findeth not rest in your proud mind.' For as by a kind of flight that first bird lifted itself up, which said in the uplifted imagination of the heart; I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the North. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High. [Is. 14, 13] Mark how he in flying sought the regions on high with pride. Which same flight also he recommended to the first of human kind as well. For they themselves by flying as it were tried to go above their own selves, when it was told them that they should taste and be like gods. And while they seek after the likeness of the Deity, they lost the blessings of immortality, which same would not by dying have gone into the earth, if they had been willing to stand with humility upon the earth.

3. But, on the other hand, 'the birds of the air' are wont to be put in a good sense, as in the Gospel the Lord, when He was declaring a likeness of the kingdom of heaven by a grain of mustard seed, said, Unto what is the kingdom of heaven like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden, and it grew and waxed a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. [Luke 13, 18. 19. For He is Himself 'a grain of mustard seed,' Who, when He was planted in the burial place of the garden, rose up a great tree. For He was 'a grain,' whereas He died, but 'a tree,' whereas He rose again. 'A grain,' through the abasement of the flesh, 'a tree,' through the mightiness of His Majesty. 'A grain,' because we have seen Him, and He was not regarded [Is. 53, 2]; but 'a tree,' because fairer in form than the children of men. [Ps. 45, 2] The branches of this tree are the holy preachers. And let us see how wide they are stretched out. For what is said concerning them? Their sound is gone forth into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

[Ps. 19, 4] In these 'boughs the birds of the air rest,' because the holy souls, which by a kind of wings of virtues lift themselves up from earthly thinking, do in the word and consolations of these take breath from the wearying of this life. And so in this place after it was said of 'Wisdom,' It is hid from the eyes of all men; it is rightly added, It is kept close also from the fowls of the air: because being settled in the corruptible flesh, these very persons do not in seeing penetrate the mightiness of His Nature, who earn by holy contemplation even now to fly with wings. Where it is well added,

Ver.22. Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. [ii.]

4. Who are denoted by the title of 'destruction and death,' save the evil spirits, who proved the inventors of 'destruction and of death,' as of their leader himself under the appearance of his minister it is said by John, And his name was Death. [Rev. 6, 8] Unto whom all spirits of pride being subject, say concerning this 'Wisdom,' Which is God, we have heard the fame thereof with our ears, in this way, that the vision thereof doubtless they could not have with complete blessedness. For perfectly to see the Wisdom coeternal with God, is the same thing as to 'have.' Hence it is said to John of the reward of one conquering, I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that

receiveth it. [Rev. 2, 17] For in this life we are able either to know or see sometimes a thing even which we have not received; but to have 'a new name written on a white stone' is in an eternal recompense to have the knowledge of God strange to the faculties of men, which no man can know saving he that receiveth it. Therefore as we have said, because to see God is the same thing that it is to have, therefore the evil spirits do not see this 'Wisdom,' because being cast off through pride they were never able to have It.

For they shut the eyes of the heart to the light of It, resisting the rays thereof shed abroad over them, as that may be also understood of the same evil spirits, which is written, They are of those that rebel against the light. [Job 24, 13] And so for evil spirits to have 'heard of the fame of Wisdom,' but not to have seen that Wisdom, is at once to have ascertained the power thereof by its efficacy, and yet to have been unwilling to stand humbly under it. Hence it is said by the voice of Truth of the actual head of evil spirits, He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. [John 8, 44] It follows;

Ver. 23, God understandeth, the way thereof; and He knoweth the place thereof. [iii.]

5. This Wisdom coeternal with God has 'a way' in one sense, and in another sense 'a place;' but only a 'place,' if a person understand it a place not local. For God is not capable of being held close after the manner of a body. But as has been said, a place not local is meant. The 'place' of 'Wisdom' is the Father, 'the place' of the Father is 'Wisdom,' as, Wisdom Herself bearing testimony, it is said, I am in the Father, and the Father in Me. [John 14, 10] So then the same identical Wisdom has 'a way' in one sense, and 'a place' in another sense; 'a way' by the passing of the manhood, 'a place' by the settledness' of the Godhead. For She passes not by in the respect that She is eternal, but She does pass by in the respect that for our sakes She appeared subject to time. For it is thus written in the Gospel, And as they departed from Jericho, the Lord passed by. And, behold, two blind men, sitting by the way side, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, Thou Son of David. [Matt. 20, 29. 30. At whose voice, as it is there written, Jesus stood still, [ver. 32] and restored light. Now what is it to hear passing by, but to restore sight standing still, but that by His manhood He compassionated us, Who by the power of His Godhead banished from us the darkness of our souls?

For in that for our sakes He was born and suffered, that He rose again and ascended into heaven, it is as if Jesus passed by, because surely these are doings in time. But He touched and enlightened them standing still, because not as that temporal economy doth likewise the Word's Eternity pass by, Which while remaining in Itself renews all things. For God's standing is His ordering all things mutable by immutable purposing. He, then, Who heard the voices of those imploring Him while 'passing by,' restored light standing still. For though for our sakes He underwent things temporal, yet He bestowed light upon us by the same thing that He knows not to have the passing of mutability. Therefore because when He should through flesh appear to men was an uncertain thing, it is rightly said now, God understandeth the way thereof; and He knoweth the place thereof. As though it were expressed in plain words; 'To the thought of man the two are hidden, whether the time when

by flesh Wisdom may come to men, or the mode bow, even when he appears without, He continues invisible with the Father.

6. Although this may also be understood in another sense. For 'the way thereof' is not inappropriately taken to be that actual thing that comes into the mind, and infuses itself into us in the interior. And 'the place thereof' the heart becomes, coming unto which She abides. Thus of this Her way it is said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord [Matt. 3, 3]; i.e. 'Open in your hearts an entrance to Wisdom at Her coming;' as it is elsewhere said; Make a way for him, that ascendeth above the setting. [Ps. 68, 4. Vulg. For to 'ascend over the setting,' was by rising again to have got the mastery over that very death, He had undergone. And so he says, For him, that ascendeth above the setting, make ye a way; i.e. 'To the Lord on His rising again make a way in your hearts by faith.' Hence it is said to John by the Spirit; Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His way. [Luke 1, 76] For everyone that by preaching cleanses the hearts of those that hear him from the defilements of bad habits, prepares a way for Wisdom on Her coming. Thus, this 'Wisdom' hath 'a way,' and hath 'a place;' 'a way' whereby She comes, 'a place' wherein She abides; as She Herself saith;

If any man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. [John 14, 23] So then there is 'a way' by which She comes, 'a place' wherein She abideth. But whereunto does She come, Who is every where? Is it for Wisdom to come, by the enlightening of our mind to make the presence of Her mightiness to appear? And because it is doubtful to men both into what person's heart She comes, or in what man, after She has come, She rests in abiding there, it is rightly said now, God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. Because it appertains to the Divine sight alone to see, whether by what methods the perception of Wisdom may come to the heart of man, or whose soul shall not lose by deadly imaginations the understanding of life, which it has been vouchsafed. And because this same 'Wisdom' made manifest by the graciousness of the Manhood was destined in all the regions of the world to fill to the full the hearts of the Elect, it is rightly added;

Ver. 24. For he regardeth the ends of the earth, and seeth all things that are under the heaven. [iv.] 7. For God's 'regarding' is the renewing to His grace the things that were lost and undone; whence it is written, A King that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with His eyes. [Prov. 20, 8] For by regarding He restrained the evils of our lightness, and bestowed great worth of maturedness. Whence it is further added; Who made the weight for the winds. [v.]

8. For in the Holy Scripture, by the rapidity and subtlety of the winds souls are used to be denoted, as it is spoken by the Psalmist of God; Who walketh above the things of the winds; [Ps. 104, 3. Vulg. i.e. 'Who passes above the virtues of souls.' Accordingly 'He made the weight for the winds,' in that whilst Wisdom from above fills souls, it renders them weighty with imparted maturity, not with that weightiness, of which it is said, Ye children of men, how long with a heavy heart. [Ps. 4, 2] For it is one thing to be weighty in respect of

counsel, and another in respect of sin; it is one thing to be weighty, by constancy, another to be weighty by offence. For this latter weightiness has weight of burthen, the other weight of merit. Thus, therefore, souls receive weight, that they should not henceforth with light motion glance off from their aim at God, but be made to settle into Him with immoveable weightiness of constancy. Still was that people lightly moved to and fro, of which it is said by the Prophet, And he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart. I have seen his ways: and I let him go. [Is. 57, 17, 18] But weighty counsel in heart banishes all inconstancy of wandering.

And because there are souls, that with light motion are now after one set of objects, now after another, Almighty God, because these very light waverings of men's minds He does not estimate lightly, by abandoning passes judgment on the wandering of the heart. But when through grace He regards the wandering mind, He fixes it into stedfastness of counsel. And so it is rightly said now, And made weight for the winds; because the light motions of the mind, when He deigns to regard with mercifulness, He directly fashions that mind to maturedness of constancy. Or otherwise to 'make weight for the winds,' is to qualify with intermixed infirmity the glory resulting from virtuous achievements, which is vouchsafed to the Elect here. Whence it is also subjoined;

And he weigheth the waters by measure. [vi.]

9. 'Waters' in Holy Scripture are wont sometimes to denote the Holy Spirit, sometimes sacred knowledge, sometimes wrong knowledge, sometimes calamity, sometimes drifting peoples, sometimes the minds of those following, the faith. Thus by water we have the Inpouring of the Holy Spirit represented, as when it is said in the Gospel, He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Where the Evangelist following on added; But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive. [John 7, 38. 39. Again, by water sacred knowledge is denoted, as it is said; And give him the water of wisdom to drink. [Ecclus. 15, 3] By water likewise bad knowledge is wont to be designated, as when the woman in Solomon, who bears a type of heresy, charms with crafty persuasion, saying, Stolen waters are sweet. [Prov. 9, 17] By the term of waters too tribulation are used to be signified, as it is said by the Psalmist, Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto my soul. [Ps. 69, 1] By water peoples are denoted, as it is said by John, Now the waters are peoples. By water likewise not only the tide of peoples drifting away, but also the minds of good men that follow the preachings of faith, are denoted, as the Prophet saith, Blessed are ye that sow upon all waters. [Is. 32, 20] And it is said by the Psalmist;

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters. [Ps. 29, 3] In this place, then, what is denoted by the title of 'waters,' saving the hearts of the Elect, which by the understanding of Wisdom, have now received the hearing of the heavenly voice? Touching whom it is rightly said; And weigheth the waters by measure. Because the very Saints, who by the Holy Spirit bearing them up are transported on high, so long as they are in this life, that they may not swell high with any self-elation, are kept down by certain temptations, that they may never have

the power to advance as much as they have the wish, but lest they should be exalted by pride, there takes place in them a kind of measure of their very virtues.

10. It is hence that Elijah, after that by so many achievements he had advanced on high, was suspended aloft by a kind of measure, when he afterwards fled from Jezebel, though a queen, yet only a weak woman. For I consider with myself that this man of marvellous power drew down fire from heaven, and once and again by momentary beseeching consumed the captains of fifty with all their men, by a word shut up the heavens from rain, by a word opened the heavens to rain, raising the dead, foreseeing the several things to come, and, lo, again it occurs to mind, with what dismay he fled before a single weak woman. I see the man, as being stricken with fear, from the hand of God seeking death, yet not obtaining it, from the hand of a woman shunning death by taking to flight. For he sought death, whilst he fled, saying, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. [1 Kings 19, 4] Whence then was he so powerful as to perform those so numerous miracles? whence so weak as to be dismayed at a woman, except that 'the waters are weighed with measure;' that the very Saints of God should at once prevail greatly through the power of God, and again be limited by a kind of measure through their own infirmity. In those powers Elijah learnt what he had received 'from God, in these weaknesses what he had power to be by himself. That mightiness was power, this weakness the keeper of power. In these powers he shewed what he had received, in these weaknesses that which he had received he kept safe. In the miracles Elijah was to be brought out to view, in the weaknesses he was to be preserved secure.

11. In the same way I see that Paul, encountering the perils of rivers and robbers, of the city and the wilderness, of sea and land, bridling the body by fasts and watchings, undergoing the ills of cold and nakedness, exercising himself watchfully and with pastoral care to the safe-keeping of the Churches, [2 Cor. 11, 26] being caught up into the third heaven, and again caught up into Paradise, at once heard secret words which it is not permitted to man to utter, and yet is given over to an angel of Satan to be tempted; he prays that be might be released, and is not heard. And when I look to the mere beginnings of his conversion, I consider with myself that heavenly pity opens the heavens to him, and Jesus shews Himself to him from on high. He that lost the light of the body for a time, received the light of the heart for evermore. He is sent to Ananias, he is called A chosen vessel, [Acts 9, 15] and yet from that same city, which he had entered after the vision of Jesus, he departs in flight, as he himself bears witness, saying, In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept guard over the city of the Damascenes, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall, and so escaped his hands. [2 Cor. 11, 32. 33.

Unto whom I will take leave to say, 'O Paul, already seest thou Jesus in heaven, and still dost thou fly man on earth? Art thou carried into Paradise, art thou made acquainted with secret words of God, and still art thou tempted by a messenger of Satan? Whence so strong, that thou art caught up to heavenly places, whence so weak that thou fliest from man on the earth, and still sufferest hard handling from a messenger of Satan, saving that the Same,

Who lifts thee on high, again limits thee with the minutest measuring, that both in thy miracles thou shouldest preach to us the power of God, and again in thy fear cause us to remember our own infirmity?' Which same infirmity, however, that it may not draw us on into despair when it buffets us, whilst thou wert beseeching God touching thine infirmity, because thou wert not heard, to us also thou hast told what thou didst hear; My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness. [2 Cor. 12, 9]

12. Thus by the plain voice of God it is shewn that the guardian of power is frailty. For we are then kept to good effect within, when by God's appointment we are tempted to a bearable degree without, sometimes by bad propensities, sometimes by pressing misfortunes. For to these likewise, whom we know to have been men of mighty virtues, there were not wanting temptations and conflicts from the vices. Hence it is that for our encouragement the same great Preacher condescends to bring to view things of that kind concerning his own case, saying, I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. [Rom. 7, 23] For the flesh forces down below, that the Spirit may not uplift, and the Spirit draws up on high, that the flesh may not bring to the ground. The Spirit lifts up, that we may not lie grovelling in the lower world, the flesh weighs down, that we should not be lifted up on account of the things on high. If the flesh tempted us, while the Spirit did not uplift us, too surely by the absoluteness of its tempting it would cast us down below. But again, if the Spirit lifted us above, while the flesh did not tempt, It would by that very uplifting prostrate us the worse in the fall of pride.

But by a certain regulating method it takes place, that whilst each one of the Saints is already indeed transported on high inwardly, but is still tempted outwardly, he 'neither incurs the downfall of desperation, nor of self-exaltation; seeing that neither does outward temptation bring transgression to its accomplishment, because the interior bent draws upwards; nor again does this interior bent lift up into pride, because the exterior temptation abases whilst it weighs down. Thus by a high appointment we see in the interior advancement what we receive, in the exterior shortcoming what we are, and by a strange method it is brought to pass that a man should neither be lifted up on the ground of virtue, nor despair on the ground of temptation, because while the Spirit draws, and the flesh draws back, by the exactest regulating of the Interior Judgment, the soul is balanced in a kind of mean above the things below, and below the things above. Therefore it is well said,

Ver. 26, 27. When He made a decree for the rain, and a way for the sounding tempests, then did He see it and declare it; He prepared it, yea, and searched it out. [vii.]

13. By 'rain' the sayings of those that preach are used to be denoted. Whence it is said by Moses; Let my doctrine be waited for as the rain; [Deut. 32, 2] whose words, that is to say, when they gently persuade are 'rain,' but when they thunder out terrible things touching the Judgment to come, they are 'sounding tempests.' And it deserves to be noted, that 'a decree is made for the rain,' in order that 'a way may be opened for the sounding tempests.' For a decree has been set to the preachers themselves, that by living they fulfil

what by uttering they are forward to recommend. For the authoritativeness of speaking is lost, when the voice is not supported by the practice. For here it is said by the Psalmist, But unto the wicked God saith; What hast thou to do to declare My statutes, or that thou shouldest take My covenant in thy mouth? seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest My words behind thee. [Ps. 50, 16. 17. For the words of God the preacher does cast behind himself, when the same that he says he thinks scorn to do. But when may another obey his sayings, whilst he himself rejects in practice what he preaches with the voice, and shews not to hear that he tells? Of this law of preaching it is written; Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;

but whoso shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. [Matt. 5, 19] 'The kingdom of heaven,' we see, He calls the present Church; concerning which it is written, And they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend. [Matt. 13, 41] For in the Kingdom Above 'offences' that should have to be gathered out thereof do not take place. He then that breaks in practice, and teaches the like in words, in this kingdom of heaven shall be the least, in the other not even the least. Now 'He set a way to the sounding tempests,' when for His preachers He made access to the hearts of men stricken with dread of the Judgment to come. So first 'a law is set,' that afterwards 'a way may be opened,' because that voice pierceth the heart of him that heareth, which maintains by practice the thing that it has sounded with the lips. Now it was then when 'He set a law to the showers, and a way to the sounding tempests,' that God 'saw, declared, prepared, and searched' this 'Wisdom.' By a mode of speech customary to Holy Writ, for God to see is a phrase for causing us to see, as the Lord saith to the righteous man, Now I know that thou fearest God. [Gen. 22, 12] And the Israelites are forewarned;

The Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God, [Deut. 13, 3] i.e. 'that He may make you to know.' At that time, then, when 'He set a law to the showers,' i.e. gave the precept of watching to the preachers, this 'Wisdom' made Incarnate He caused to be 'seen and declared' by the preachers, to be 'prepared and searched' by the hearers. Since he 'prepares' Her for himself, whosoever by living aright is procuring Her favourable against the Day of Judgment. And observe that there are four particulars spoken respecting her. For he says, He did see it and declare it, He prepared it, yea, He searched it. Thus He 'saw,' in that She is 'a Likeness;' He 'declared it,' in that She is 'the Word;' 'prepared it,' in that She is a remedy; and 'searched it,' in that She is a thing hidden from sight. But this, viz. that the Eternal Wisdom of God is 'the Likeness' and 'the Word' of the Father, when is it penetrated by the mind of man? For who might understand either a Word apart from time, or a Likeness apart from limiting. Therefore there was need for something to be said, which man might recognise concerning Her by himself; whence it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 28. And unto man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding. [viii.] 14. As though it were spoken in plain speech; 'Man, turn back to thine own self; sift thoroughly the secrets of thine own heart. If thou findest out

that thou dost fear God, surely it is plain that of this Wisdom thou art full. Which same if thou art not able to learn what in herself She is, meanwhile thou henceforth findest what She is in thyself. For She that is feared in herself by the Angels, in thee is called 'the fear of the Lord.' Because it is certain that thou possessest Her, if it is not uncertain that thou dost fear God.' Hence also it is said by the Psalmist; The beginning of Wisdom is the fear of the Lord, [Ps. 111, 10] because She then begins to penetrate the heart, when She disturbs it by the dread of the final Judgment. Therefore the Word of God draws Itself in to our littleness; just as a father, when he speaks to his little child, in order that he may be able to be understood by him, talks stammeringly of his own accord. For because we are unable to penetrate the nature of Wisdom, what She is in herself, by the condescension of God, we have heard what She is in us, when it is said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom. But because he really understands the force of Divine fear, who keeps himself from all bad practices, it is rightly subjoined; And, to depart from evil is understanding. So then the things that come after, that they are full of the spirit of prophecy, the words of the sacred history themselves bear testimony, whereas it is said,

C. xxix. l. Moreover Job continued his parable, and said. [ix.] 15. For because a parable is a name for a likeness, it plainly appears that through a form of exterior words he speaks mysteries, who with reference to speaking is recorded to have 'taken up a parable.' [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

For when he relates his own circumstances, he is telling all the things that are to come to Holy Church, and through the thing that he himself undergoes he points out what she should undergo. But sometimes he so mixes the words of his own history, that he sounds not of any thing allegorical, while sometimes he so utters his own sorrows as though he were giving utterance in the voice of the sorrowing Church. But in the last part of his discourse, he designates the last time of the Church, when her adversaries, i.e. carnal persons, or heretics and pagans, whom she now busies herself to repress by the authority of wisdom, being set up with unbridled boastfulness, she is obliged to put up with, while derided. Whence in this discourse likewise it is said; But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with the dogs of my flock. [Job 30, 1] And the very principle of the arrangement requires that by the last words of blessed Job, the last days of Holy Church should be denoted, when, persecution increasing, she is forced to bear the undisguised voices of heretics, when those motions of their hearts, which they now cover up within the depths of their thoughts, they then disclose in the utterance of error made manifest.

For now, as it is said by John, the dragon is imprisoned and held fast in the bottomless pit [Rev. 20, 3], because the wickedness of the devil is hidden from sight in their crafty hearts. But, as is there said, the dragon shall be brought forth out of the bottomless pit, because whatsoever is now covered over from fear, then against the Church openly out of the hearts of the wicked is all that serpent's venom brought to light. For now the envenomed feeling hides itself from sight under a flattering tongue, and malevolence of craft as it were covers

itself with a kind of bottomless pit of dissembling. Now the Lord, as it is expressed by the voice of the Psalmist, gathereth the waters of the sea as in a skin. [Ps. 33, 7] For the 'skin' is carnal thinking. So 'the waters of the sea are gathered in a skin,' when the bitterness of a froward mind does not burst forth outwardly into the voice of unhallowed liberty. Surely the time shall come, when the froward and the carnal speak forth against her with unreserved voice that which they now go about with secret thought. The time shall come when they shall oppress the Catholic Church not only with unjust words, but with cruel wounds.

16. For from her adversaries the Church suffers persecution in two ways, viz. either by words or by swords. Now when she bears persecution by words, her wisdom is put in exercise, when by swords, her patience. Now persecutions of words we do now too as well daily undergo at the hands of heretics, when heretics themselves flatter us with crafty tongues and with feigned humility, but the persecutions of swords are destined to follow towards the end of the world, that the grains to be stored up in the heavenly granaries may be the more genuinely cleared of the chaff of sins, the more straitly they are bruised with affliction. Then all the Elect, that may be caught in that tribulation, call to mind these times when now the Church secures the peace of the faith, when she holds under the proud necks of heretics, not by the potency of her highness, but by the yoke of reason. They call to mind ourselves, who are passing quiet times of faith, who, though we be straitened in the wars [Alluding to the hostilities of the Lombards especially.] of the nations, yet are not driven to extremity in the sayings of Fathers. Thus blessed Job bearing a type of Holy Church, which is then found in these straits, and yet remembers herself of our tranquillity, as I said, describes the particulars of himself past, and tells the particulars destined to come to others, saying;

Ver. 2. Who would give me that I might be as in the months past? [x.] 17. For Holy Church being borne down with sorrows is to say many like things. For it shall be for her to be besieged with such great tribulations, as with great sighing to long for these times, which we undergo with great sorrow. So then let her say, let her say in the voice of blessed Job, Who would give me that I might be as in the months past? For because an appointed number of days has the name of 'months,' what else does he signify by the title of months, but the gatherings of souls? For days, while they are gathered in months, are removed away, because in this time as well Holy Church, while she gathers in souls shining bright with the light of truth, hides them in the interior depths. Sometimes also a month is put for perfection, as when the Prophet says, It shall be a month from a month; [Is. 66, 23] i.e. perfection in rest to those, to whom there may now be perfection in practice. So let her remember her perfection of old, let her bring back to mind with what preaching of hers, by souls gathered in, she carried off her gains, and being straitened by tribulations, let her say, Who would give me that might be as in the months of old? In which same months, who and what he was, he subjoins in telling over, saying;

Ver. 3. As in the days when God preserved me; when His lamp shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness. [xi.]

18. For then, persecution forcing thereto, she sees multitudes of the frail fall from her, whom now as a mother she cherishes as her little ones within the bosom of peace, and keeps close within the quiet cradles of faith, seeing that being mixed with the strong they are nurtured by the very tranquillity of the faith. But then many such are destined to fall, and through the bowels of charity, whatever it sustains in the damage of the little ones, the mind of the perfect laments that itself undergoes. For every damage of the weak is by compassion made to pass to the hearts of the strong, Whence it is said by Paul, Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? [2 Cor. 11, 29] For a man is perfect in such proportion as he perfectly feels the sorrows of others. Whence Holy Church, being brought to a pass by the weak ones falling at that time, shall say with right, As in the days when God preserved me; because herself she then accounts to fall in those, who now sees herself in these to be kept safe. And it is well said, When His lamp shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness. For by the term of a 'lamp' the light of Holy Scripture is represented, whereof the Shepherd of the Church himself saith, We have also the word of prophecy more sure;

whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in your hearts. [2 Pet. 1, 19] And the Psalmist saith, Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. [Ps. 119, 105] Now because our topmost part is the mind, the mind is rightly styled by the designation of 'head.' Whence it is said by the Psalmist, Thou hast anointed my head with oil. [Ps. 23, 5] As if he said in plain terms, 'Thou hast filled my soul with the fatness of charity.' And so now 'the lamp shines upon the head' of the Church, because the sacred Oracles enlighten the darkness of our minds, that in this darksome place of the present life, whilst we receive the light of the word of God, we should see what things are to be done. Now she 'walks by His light in darkness,' because the Holy Church Universal, though it penetrate not the secrets of another's thought, because as it were it does not know the face in the night, yet it sets the steps of good practice, being governed by the light of Heavenly Revelation. It goes on;

Ver.4. As I was in the days of my youth, when God was secretly in my tabernacle. [xii.]

19. As of each individual man, so is the age of Holy Church described. For she was a little one, when fresh from the birth she was unable to preach the Word of Life. Hence it is said of her, My sister is a little one, and she hath no breasts; [Cant. 8, 8] in this way, that Holy Church, before she made progress by accessions of virtue, was not able to yield the teats of preaching to the weak ones her hearers. But the Church is called 'adult' when being wedded to the Word of God, filled with the Holy Spirit, by the office of preaching she is with young in the conception of children, with whom by exhorting she travails, whom by converting she brings forth. Of this age of hers it is said to the Lord; The young maidens have loved Thee. [Cant. 1, 3] For all the Churches, which constitute one Catholic Church, are called young maidens, not now aged by sin, but young ones by grace, not barren by old age, but by the age of the soul fitted for spiritual fruitfulness. Accordingly then, when in those days being as it were enfeebled by a kind of old age she hath not strength to bring forth children

by preaching, she calls to mind the bygone fruitfulness, saying, As I was in the days of my youth.

Though after those days wherein she is borne down, yet, this notwithstanding, now at length towards the actual end of times, she is empowered with a mighty efficacy of preaching. For the Gentiles being taken in to the full, all the Israelitish people that shall then be found she draws into the bosom of the faith. Since it is written; Until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved. [Rom. 11, 25. 26. But before those times there shall be days, in the which she shall appear for a little while borne down by her adversaries, when too she remembers these days, saying,

As I was in the days of my youth; when God was secretly in my tabernacle.

20. What in this place do we take the 'tabernacle' for but the dwelling-place of the mind? Because by all that we do with taking thought, we dwell in the counsel of our heart. But whoever in silence thinks of the precepts of God, to him 'God is secretly in his tabernacle.' For he had seen the dwelling-place of his heart to be before the eyes of God, who said, And the meditation of my heart always in Thy sight. [Ps. 19, 14] For outward deeds are open to the eyes of men, but widely and incomparably more our interior and minutest thoughts are open to the eyes of God. For, as it is written, all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him. And oftentimes in the outward deed we are afraid to appear disordered before the eyes of men, and in the interior thought are not afraid of the regard of Him, Whom, whilst He sees all things, we see not. For we are much more discernible by God within than we are by men without. And hence all the Saints scan themselves both within and without on every side, and are in fear of either shewing themselves blameworthy outwardly, or wicked inwardly to the invisible seeing. It is hence that the living creatures, which are seen by the Prophet, are recorded to be 'full of eyes round about and within.' [Ez. 1, 18. &10, 12. Rev. 4, 6. & 8.

For he that orders his outward circumstances respectably, but disregards the inward, has eyes 'round about' but not 'within.' But all the Saints, because they at once scan their exterior ways round and round that they may furnish good examples in themselves to their brethren, and watchfully mark their interior ways, because they are providing themselves irreproachable for the regarding eye of the Interior Judge, are described as having eyes both 'round about and within;' and that they may please God, even more do they make themselves complete within their interior self, as it is said by the Psalmist as well of Holy Church, All the glory of her, the king's daughter, is from within. [Ps. 45, 13] But because she keeps her outward things also irreproachable, he added with justice concerning her; Clothed about in clothing of wrought gold with embroidery. That she should be at once beautiful to herself 'within,' and to others 'without,' both advancing herself by interior glory, and instructing others by the outward examples of deeds. Thus then let blessed Job say in himself, yea, let him say in the person of the Church Universal, When God was secretly in my tabernacle. For that he may make it evident how much he had advanced within, he tells, that 'God was

secretly in his tabernacle.' That he may also shew the deeds of righteousness to what extent he outwardly kept them, he adds;

Ver. 5. When the Almighty was yet with me; and when my servants were about me. [xiii.]

21. Now all that stand in awe of the divine precepts become God's 'tabernacle.' Hence as we have already said above, 'Truth' saith by Himself of the man that keeps His commandments, I and My Father will come and make Our abode with him. [John 14, 23] Contrariwise the wicked severally, whereas they do not aim at the things within, pour themselves forth without in the thoughts of their hearts. Whence it is said to them by the Prophet, Turn back to the heart within, O ye transgressors. [Is. 46, 8] And again, Woe to you that devise a vain thing. [Mic. 2, 1] Since in their actions they are afraid of men, whom they see with bodily sight, and God, Whom they do not see, they do not account to be present to them. Contrary whereunto it is said in commendation of a righteous person, seeing that he disregarded the king of Egypt, and obeyed the commandments of God, For he endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible. [Heb. 11, 27] For the wicked ruler of the earth he as it were saw not, in that he banished him from the eyes of the heart. But the King Invisible 'as seeing,' 'he endured,' because from the regarding of His fear he turned not aside the eye of the soul.

So Holy Church being taken then in great tribulations, when she sees many by evil imagining depart from God, surely she sees the tabernacle of their mind on God's departing to remain empty, and justly lamenting, she says, When God was secretly in my tabernacle. By which words, and not inappropriately, the feigning of religion is likewise bewailed, because there are those even now that aim not to be, but to seem Christians. These without question have God in public, not 'in secret.' But Holy Church desires to have God 'in secret,' because He regards those really faithful ones, whom He knows to be holding on to the life of faith with complete affection. Which same, as well also with reference to the external uprightness of her activity, saith, When the Almighty was yet with me: when my servants were about me. 'Servants' surely those are called, who do the bidding of the heavenly precepts. Whence the Lord saith by the Prophet, Behold I, and my servants which the Lord hath given me. [Is. 8, 18] And again in the Gospel, Servants [Pueri Vulg. The Greek diminutive hardly bears this.], have ye any meat? [John 21, 5] And so now 'the servants are round about her,' because in all nations almost there are found those that keep the commandments of heaven, and obey the rules of spiritual discipline. Which servants, too truly, shall then be lacking to do her service, when the wicked doers, that shall be found, despise her spiritual precepts. It goes on;

Ver. 6. When I washed my feet with butter. [xiv.]

22. Whereas we have already frequently said that Christ and the Church are one person, He, that is to say, the Head of that Body, and She the Body of that Head; these words are to be understood after the voice of the Head in one way, after the voice of the Body in another way. Whom then do we take for 'the feet' of the Lord, but the holy Preachers. Of whom He saith, And I will walk in them. [Lev. 26, 12] Thus 'the feet are washed with butter,'

because the holy Preachers are filled to the full with the fatness of good works. For, as we have already said above, scarcely is the mere preaching itself carried on without something being done wrong. For any man preaching is either drawn on into some slight indignation, if he is despised, or into some little glorying, if he is reverenced by those that hear him. Whence the Apostles too had their feet washed, that from any slight defilement contracted in the act of preaching itself they might be cleansed as from a sort of dust collected by a journey. And blessed James saith, My brethren, be not many masters. And a little after, For in many things we offend all. [Jam. 3, 1. 2. Thus 'the feet are washed with butter,' because the dust gathered by glory in preaching is steeped and cleansed by the fatness of good works.

Or otherwise 'the feet are washed with butter,' when the wages owing are paid to the holy Preachers by those that hear, and those whom the imposed labour of preaching exhausts, the richness of good practice exhibited by the disciples cheers; not that they preach for this that they may be fed, but that they are therefore fed, that they may preach; i.e. that they may hold up to preach; not so that the action of the preacher should pass into the aim of getting support, but that the ministering of support should be made subservient to the usefulness of preaching. Whence by good preachers it is not for the sake of the means of living that preaching is rendered, but for the sake of preaching that the means of living are accepted. And as often as what is wanted is bestowed on those that preach by those that hear them, they are not used to take delight in the benefit of the good things, but in the reward of those bestowing them. Whence it is said by Paul, Not because I desire a gift, but I desire fruit. [Phil. 4, 17. For the 'gift' is the actual thing that is bestowed; but the fruit thereof is if with a kindly disposition a thing be bestowed in the pursuit of the future recompense. So we receive the gift in the thing, the fruit thereof in the heart.

And because the Apostle was fed rather by the recompense of his disciples than by the benefaction, he avouches that he 'seeks not a gift,' but 'fruit.' Hence he straightway added, saying, But I have all and abound. Therefore 'the feet are washed with butter,' when the holy preachers, as we said, worn out by the actual preaching itself, are regaled with the good deeds of their hearers. For the weary 'feet' he had 'anointed with butter,' who heard, Because the bowels of the Saints are refreshed by the brother. [Philem. 7. With this 'butter the foot was anointed,' which was held fast in fetters, saying, The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus: for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain. [2 Tim. 1, 16] So then if by the voice of the Head we form our estimate of the words, we do rightly as has been said in taking 'the feet' for preachers.

23. But if we are to interpret these words in the voice of the Body alone, then the feet of the Church are the ministers of inferior works, which whilst they enforce the things that are without for necessary purposes, by the lowest ministration stick to the ground like feet. But they that are at the head, who are intent on the pursuit of instruction, ought with heedful care to question the hearts of the busied, and by the voice of frequent admonition to administer to them that pouring in of richness which they themselves as disengaged

receive, For because in one body the members are interested for one another reciprocally, just as our outermost parts are stayed up by their ministrations, so it is necessary that their interior parts should be filled by our pursuits. When then to persons devoted to the extremest offices the holy doctors preach the anointing oil of our Lord's Incarnation, they 'wash the feet with the butter' of utterance, Moreover the feet are accustomed to be lacerated by the mere ruggedness of the way; whence it is altogether difficult at once to go a journey in the earthly actions of this life, and not sustain any wounds at all from the exertion of the journey. And so when the rulers keeping watch call back to their heart within their hearers engrossed with exterior concerns, that they may ascertain what evil things they have committed amidst the very deeds allowed to be done, and that what they find out they may bewail, 'they wash the feet with butter;' because to the wounds of these persons they administer the ointments of penitence. Therefore let Holy Church being unspeakably afflicted remember how in the time of her peace she purified by the word of exhortation even the furthest members in herself, and let her say, When I washed my feet with butter.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] Which it is wonderfully interesting to view in the case of blessed Job, who amidst so many cares of property, so many interests for children, so many engagements of sacrifices, preached to his dependents, howsoever the very farthest, the good things of the life ensuing, that those he might inoculate touching heavenly things, who were working for him at earthly services. What do we Bishops say to all this, who to those committed to us care not to render the word of life, when a wedded husband, neither the secular garb, nor the management of large means were able to debar the office of preaching. [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] But saving the historical verity, let us now return to the words of Holy Church, who tells by blessed Job, i.e. by the mouth of a Member of her own, how great are the things that she shall suffer in the last time, when she remembers her past fortunes, when by that same richness of the word the life of those in action was cleansed. Who in more fully following out that same watchfulness of her preachers adds;

And the rock poured me out rivers of oil. [xv.]

24. That by the title of a rock Christ is denoted, the great Preacher avouches, saying, And that rock was Christ. [1 Cor. 10, 4] Which very 'rock' doth now 'pour out rivers of oil' for the use of Holy Church, because the Lord by speaking therein gives out the preachings of the interior anointing. 'From this Rock that river of oil issued forth,' the book of Matthew, the book of Mark, the book of Luke, and the book of John. In the several regions of this world for all the preachings she put forth, this 'Rock poured out' as many 'rivers of oil' by the mouths of the Apostles. As many times still 'a river of oil is poured out from this Rock,' as often as to the minds of the hearers, to be anointed by the Holy Spirit, those things are explained which are spoken concerning Christ in the old Books. And they are called 'rivers of oil,' because they run out and anoint; in which same he that is dipped is anointed, and he that is anointed is fattened within. Of which fatness doubtless it is that the Psalmist saith, Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness. [Ps. 63, 5] It may be that by the

designation of oil the actual anointing of the Holy Spirit is denoted, whereof it is said by the Prophet; And the yoke shall rot at the presence of the oil. [Is. 10, 27.

For 'the yoke doth rot at the presence of the oil,' because whilst we are anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, we are set free from the bondage of our captivity; and whereas the proud dominion of the evil spirit is thrown off, the yoke is broken in pieces, wherewith the necks of our liberty were borne down. Of this oil again it is written; A vineyard was made to my beloved on the horn, a child of oil. [Is. 5, 1. For 'a child of oil,' the faithful people is called, which is engendered to the faith of God by the interior anointing of the Holy Spirit. And so at that time let Holy Church, being borne down by countless sorrows, recal to remembrance the gifts of the Spirit and the marvellous preachings which are her's now, and let her bewail her own silence, saying, The rock poured me out rivers of oil. To which words he fitly subjoins;

Ver.7-10. When I went out to the gate of the city, and in the street they prepared me a chair? The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood. The princes ceased to speak, and laid the finger on the mouth. The rulers held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their mouth. [xvi.]

25. It was the custom of the ancients, that the elders should sit together in the gates, and judge the cases of those entering in, that so the people of the city might be the more peaceful, in proportion as it was not allowed to those at variance to enter in. Now we in revering the sacred history hold it certain that all this blessed Job did for the sake of the observance of just dealing, and we are led to the investigating the mysteries of the allegory. What then is denoted by 'the gate of the city' saving every good action, by which the soul enters in to the company of the heavenly Kingdom? Hence the Prophet saith; Thou, that liftest me up from the gates of death, that I may declare all Thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion. [Ps. 9, 13. 14. For 'the gates of death' are bad actions, which drag to destruction; but because 'Sion' is the word for 'a viewing,' 'the gates of Sion 'we interpret good actions, by which we enter into the Country Above, that we may view the glory of our King. But what is denoted by the seat but the authority of mastership. Now 'a street' in the Greek tongue is equivalent to 'breadth.' And so now Holy Church goes forth to the gate of the city, because that she may obtain access to the heavenly country, she puts herself out in holy actions.

For whom there is 'a seat prepared in the street,' because in the breadth of high authority she displays the freedom of her mastership. For she that proclaims with public announcement the right things she has a perception of as it were 'sits in the street on the seat,' in that she fears no one for her preaching, and oppressed by alarms for no man buries herself under silence. Does not she in public sit in command to teach, whom at one and the same time truth in perceiving and power in teaching bear up? But whilst he 'went forth to the gate, and sat in the street on the seat,' what was done by the light-minded, what by the grave, he adds, saying;

Ver. 8. The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood. [xvii.]

26. If we give heed to the history, the things that he said we believe, if to the allegory, we see the things that he foretold; for those use to be called 'young men' who are not burdened with any weightiness of counsels. But Holy Scripture is used to call those 'elders,' not who are ripe by amount of years alone, but by ancientness of character. Hence it was said by one that was wise; For venerable old age is not that of long time, nor counted by the number of years; but the understanding of a man is grey hairs, and a spotless life is old age. [Wisd. 4, 8. 9. Whence the Lord also rightly saith to Moses; Gather unto Me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest that they are elders of the people. [Num. 11, 16] In whom what else is required saving the old age of the heart, when such sort of persons are bidden to be chosen who are known to be elders? For if it were the old age of the body that were sought for in them, they might have been known by as many as they might have been seen by. But whereas it is said, whom thou knowest that they are elders of the people; doubtless it is clear that the old age of the mind and not of the body is told as fit to be chosen.

Thus now 'the young men see Holy Church, and hide themselves, and the old men rise up and stand,' because her activity and uprightness the immature are afraid of, the aged magnify. They that are light of mind flee, but the grave and perfect do homage to her by rising up to the merits of her life. Since the discipline thereof the perfect sort love, the imperfect ones blame. And so 'the young men see her and hide themselves,' because they are afraid to be detected in their hidden courses of conduct. But 'the elders rise up and stand,' because all the perfect make it appear by humility how much they have gained ground in good practice. But because he describes all this of his own people, let him describe as well how he is feared by foreign people.

Ver. 9, 10. The princes ceased to speak, and laid the finger on the mouth. The rulers held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat. [xviii.]

27. Who else in this place can be understood as leaders or princes, but the framers of heretical evil? Concerning whom it is said by the Psalmist, Strife was poured out upon their princes, and they led them aside in the pathless place, and not in the way. [Ps. 107, 40] For these identical persons, while they are not afraid to interpret the dispensation of God in a wrong sense, assuredly draw the common herds subject to them not into that way which is 'Christ,' but into 'a pathless place:' over whom 'strife also is lightly said to be poured out,' because by their statements they contradict mutually themselves. For Arius in receiving three Persons in the Divine Nature believed three Gods as well. Contrary to whom Sabellius taking up one God believed there was one Person. Between whom Holy Church unswervingly holding the right pathway of her preaching both in proclaiming one God, asserts against Sabellius three Persons, and in asserting three Persons, confesses against Arius one God. Again, because in sacred Revelation Manichaeus found virginity to be commended, he condemned marriage. But on the other hand Jovinian, because he knew marriages to be allowed, despised the pureness of virginity. Whence it takes place

that, heretics being always at cross purposes by a wrong apprehension, reciprocally their wickedness is at once in accordance with itself in sin, and at variance with itself in opinion.

But on the other hand Holy Church midway between the disputes of either side moves with composed peace, and knows so to receive the higher good, that she also knows to venerate [note: He probably uses this strong word on account of the sanctity of marriage] the lower, so that she should neither equal the highest to the lowest, nor again despise the lowest whilst she venerates the highest. And so now the rulers of heretical multitudes considering well the authority of Holy Church cease to speak, and as it were 'put the finger on their mouth,' whilst with false complaints they signify that they are restrained not by the reasoning of the voice but by the hand of power. 'The rulers hold their peace,' because those same persons who endeavour to draw after them the people going wrong, that they should not now dare to utter what is wrong, are checked at once by the weight of authority and the efficacy of reason. Whose 'tongue cleaveth to their throat,' because though they dare not to speak what is bad with an unrestrained utterance, yet they inwardly cover up in themselves all the things which they go to work to propound untrue against the true faith; therefore these times, the Church, being seized by the tribulation ensuing, calls to mind and laments, saying, When I went out to the gate through the city, and when they prepared me a seat in the street; the young men saw me and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up;

the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouths. The leaders held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat. As though she said in plain speech; 'When there was an opportunity given me to preach with a voice publicly raised, everyone who was not in subjection to the truth dreaded me.' For at that time, when Holy Church is weighed down by adversity, license of speech is afforded to all the bad preachers severally. Which Jeremiah beholding long while beforehand, saith, Even the sea-monsters bare the breasts; they give suck to their young ones. For what else does he designate 'monsters,' [lamiae] saving heretics bearing the face indeed of a human being, but the hearts of brute creatures through impiety? Which same then 'bare the breast,' when they freely preach their error. Then they 'give suck to their young' in that the misattached souls of the young ones, while they insinuate therein what is wrong, by nourishing they confirm in impiety. It follows;

Ver. 11. The ear hearing me, blessed me; and the eye seeing, gave witness to me. [xix.] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] 28. Whereas blessed Job avouches himself to be 'blessed by those that heard him,' and to 'have witness given to him by those that saw him,' what he was in speech and what in practice, we have shewn us. For neither is he henceforth perfect in practice, whom wickedness of the tongue still withstands, or praiseworthy in speech who does not exhibit in practice the thing that he utters. Therefore that blessed Job being found out by the reproaches of his own friends, might declare that he had both these, he shews himself to have been an object of veneration both to the persons bearing and the persons seeing him. Which if we refer to the voice of Holy Church, that man 'blesses her words,' who completes in practice the things he has heard.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] That person 'gives testimony to her,' who in patterns of life responds to her by living well. For he in a true sense sees Holy Church, whose life bears witness that he sees her. For to this end the righteousness of the good is seen within her, that all that see her may be corrected of their wickednesses. Not yet, then, does he see the good within the pale of Holy Church, who is not reformed from evil habits. But whence 'the testimony is rendered to him,' is shewn, in that he subjoins; Ver. 12, 13. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I comforted the widow's heart. [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] [xx.] 29. Great mercifulness these deeds are proofs of, to 'deliver the poor that crieth,' to minister aid to the 'fatherless,' to rescue one on the point to perish, to 'cheer the heart of the widow.' For above it was said what he put forth in respect of instruction. For he says; The ear hearing blessed me; but now he relates what he rendered in respect of mercifulness, saying, Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. Since the voice along with the deed of necessity accords with itself.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] These things blessed Job both exhibited to those under him, and thus notwithstanding represented them as destined to be exhibited by Holy Church. Who doth now unceasingly enact both one and the other, that is to say, that her children she should at once feed by speaking, and protect by shielding, so that she should at once by words replenish the good, and by her patronage defend them from the evil. Now it is well written; Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind. [Gen. 1, 11] Which really and truly happened in such a way, that it was a sign of something really and truly to happen, For by 'the earth' the Church is represented, which both regales us with the provender of the word, and keeps us safe by the shadow of her patronage; which both by speaking feeds and by aiding protects, so that she should not only bring forth the herb of refreshment, but also along with the fruit of the deed, the tree of protection.

[Historical Interpretation] 30. I see that it also deserves to be well considered by those who head the governments of the common herds, that in saying above, The young men saw me and hid themselves; he now affirms, I comforted the widow's heart. What great discipline of rule, that before his presence 'the young men' should 'hide themselves!' What great mildness of pitying that by him 'the widows' hearts should be cheered!' For there are some persons so severe that they lose even all gentleness of kindly affection, and there are some so mild, that they part with the lights of strict rule. Whence by all rulers both are with all diligence to be maintained, that neither in the rigorousness of discipline they abandon the loving-kindness of a mild disposition, not again in gentleness abandon severity of discipline, so that they may neither grow hard to the fellow-feeling of pitifulness, when they chastise the contumacious, nor enervate the strong arm of discipline when they cheer the hearts of the weak. Thus, then, let vigour of discipline control mildness, and mildness adorn vigour, and so let the one be recommended by the other, that neither vigour become hard, nor mildness unstrung.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

31. Now these works of pitifulness, which we have named above, Holy Church at once exhibits corporally, and ceases not to exhibit spiritually. For she 'delivers the poor that crieth,' when to the sinner imploring pardon she remits those sins which he has been guilty of. Since it is of such poor that it is said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [Matt. 5, 3] And the cry of such poor ones is the cry of those saying in the voice of the Psalmist, Let Thy tender mercy speedily prevent us; for we are made very poor. [Ps. 79, 8] Now she 'delivers the fatherless who hath no helper,' in that everyone who now flying the desires of a persecuting world, his old father the devil being dead, runneth to the bosom of Holy Church, finds therein the help of exhortation. It may be that by the title of 'the fatherless,' any believer may be understood even with reference to the death of a good father, of the sight of whom he is deprived for a while, though not deprived of solace. And 'the blessing' too 'of him that was ready to perish' comes upon her, when she anticipates the destruction of a sinner, and when by holy admonitions she brings him back from the pit of sin. Whence it is written; He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

[Jam. 5, 20] For if it is a thing of great recompense to rescue from death the flesh sooner or later to die, of what high merit is it to free the soul from death, to live without end in the heavenly country? Now 'the heart of the widow' she 'comforteth,' in that to each faithful soul he that describes the recompenses of the Lord, as it were recalls to remembrance the blessings of her husband. Unto Whom as the soul is spiritually united, He being dead, she is called 'a widow,' but is cheered by the declarations of Holy Church in consequence of His Resurrection. Great consolation therefore doth the heart of the widow receive, when the faithful soul learns by the words of the Church somewhat concerning the Coming of Him, to Whom she is spiritually united. It goes on;

Ver. 14. With righteousness was I clothed, and arrayed myself as with raiment. [HISTORICAL / MORAL INTERPRETATION] [xxi.] 32. Surely, when we are clothed with a garment, we are surrounded on every side, and so he is 'clothed with righteousness as with a garment,' who defends himself on every side with good practice, and leaves no part of his conduct naked to sin; for he that is just in some deeds and unjust in others, it is as if he covered over this side, and exposed that one naked; nor are those henceforth good deeds, which are defiled by other evil deeds springing up. For hence it is said by Solomon, He that offendeth in one thing, shall lose many that are good. [Eccl. 9, 18. Vulg.] Hence James saith, But whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he shall be guilty of all. [Jam. 2, 10] Which same sentence of his be himself diligently unfolded, when he added, For He that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. [Jam. 2, 11]

33. And so with the eyes of the heart stretched out roundabouts, watching must be enforced by us on every side. Hence it is rightly said by Solomon also, Keep thy heart with all watching, for out of it are the issues of life. [Prov. 4, 23] For going to say watching, he put first

all, without question that each one might scan himself diligently on this side and on that side, and as long as he is in this life know that he is set in pitched battle against spiritual enemies, lest the reward which he is making up by one set of actions, he should lose by another set, lest on this side he bar the door against the enemy, but on another side open an entrance. For if against plotting enemies a city be encompassed by a great rampart, be girt with strong walls, on every side defended by a sleepless watch, yet a single opening only be left therein undefended through neglect, from this quarter surely the enemy enters in, who seemed to be every way shut out. For that Pharisee who went up into the Temple to pray, with what fortifying he had begirt the city of his soul, let us hear. I fast twice in the week, he says, I give tithes of all that I possess. [Luke 18, 12] He that set out with I thank Thee, did, surely, employ extraordinary defences. But let us see where he left an opening undefended for a plotting enemy; Because I am not as this publican.

See how he opened the city of his heart to plotting enemies through self-exalting, which city he fruitlessly shut close by fasting and almsgiving. Vainly is all the rest defended, when one spot by which an entrance lies open to the enemy is not defended. He rightly gave thanks, but wrongly exalted himself above the publican. The city of his heart by being lifted up he betrayed, which by living abstemiously, and by giving alms, he guarded. The greedy appetite was subdued by abstinence, the gluttony of the belly was destroyed, a grasping inclination was got the better of, by bountifulness covetousness was kept down. With what great pains do we suppose this to have been done? But, alas! what a series of painful efforts being struck by one bad point fell to the ground! What great excellencies were killed by the sword of one sin! Whence it is needful with great diligence both always to be doing good things, and to keep ourselves heedfully in the thought of the heart from the very good things themselves, lest, if they uplift the mind, they be not good, which are enlisted not to the Creator, but to pride.

34. With reference to which particular we are not acting irregularly, if from the books, though not Canonical [Note: Cited by Cosin, Scholast. Hist. of Canon, c. viii. art. xcix. where some attempts at reconciling such statements with the decree of the Council of Trent are discussed. The same work contains a general review of authorities on the Canon of H. S. a subject too extensive for a mere note.], yet brought out for the edifying of the Church, we bring forward testimony. Thus Eleazar in the battle smote and brought down an elephant, but fell under the very beast that he killed. [1 Macc. 6, 46] Whom, then, does this one represent, whom his own victory bore down, but those persons who overcome bad habits, but by being lifted up are brought down under the very things they bring under? For it is as if he died under the enemy he lays low, who is lifted up by the sin that he subdues. Accordingly it deserves above every thing to be considered, that good points cannot avail, if bad ones that creep in unawares are not guarded against. All that is done perishes, if it be not heedfully preserved in humility. Hence too it is well said of the first parent himself; And the Lord put the man into the Paradise of pleasure, to work and to keep it. [Gen. 2, 15] For he 'worketh,' who does in act the good that is enjoined. But what he has wrought he keepeth not, whom that creepeth upon which is forbidden. Therefore let blessed Job, because he had

covered himself on every side with good practice, say, With righteousness I was clothed, and arrayed myself as with a garment. Where it is forthwith added,

And my judgment a diadem.

35. The judgments of the righteous are rightly compared to a 'diadem,' because by the gloriousness of great practice, they lead to a crown of rewarding. Which same judgments they carry on with themselves day by day in the interior, what they owe to God, what to their neighbour, they look to with quick discernment, and they kindle themselves with ardour to the doing of what is good, and rebuke themselves with severity for the evil things committed. Hence it is well said by Solomon as well; The thoughts of the righteous are judgments. [Prov. 12, 5] Since within they are brought back to their own hearts from all the tumult of the world, and then they mount the tribunal of the mind, and set before the eyes themselves, and their neighbour, and bring forward in the midst the rule of the Testament, wherein it is said, Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them. [Matt. 7, 12] They transfer into themselves the person of their neighbour, and heedfully mark what to themselves, had they been so circumstanced, they would justly have wished done or left undone, and so with strict justice and judgment, they try the cause of themselves and their neighbour by the tables of the Divine Law, in the court of the heart. Therefore it is well said, The thoughts of the righteous are judgments, because the very interior motion of their heart is itself as it were a kind of scales of judicial power. Which things being done, because they do not look for recompensing below, their judgments are rightly compared to 'a diadem.' For a diadem is set upon the upper part of the body; and so the judgment of the righteous is styled a 'diadem,' because they do not thereby covet to find their reward by it in things below and of this earth, but up above. It follows;

Ver. 15, 16. I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out. [xxiii.] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

36. Herein the mind of the reader might perchance put the question, wherefore it is that blessed Job reckons up his own virtue with so much particularity. For it is a mark of holy men to conceal the good things they may have done, lest it chance that they bring upon themselves the downfall of exaltation. Whence Truth saith by Itself, Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them. [Matt. 6, 1] It is hence, too, that in giving light to the two blind men sitting by the way-side, He charged them, saying, See that no man know it. [Matt. 9, 30] Of which persons it is thereupon said, that they 'departed and spread abroad the fame of Him throughout all that region.' Now it is a question for us to consider, what this means, that the Almighty Himself, unto Whom to have the will is the same thing as to have the power, both wished that His extraordinary powers should be kept secret, and notwithstanding by those that were illumined with sight as it were against His will He is made manifest.

Which is nothing else than that to His servants following after Him He gave an example, that of themselves indeed they should desire to have their extraordinary endowments kept

hidden from sight, and yet, that others might profit by their example, they should be brought to view against their will, and indeed by concealing their own achievements keep themselves safe, but whilst they are brought to view against their will, convey good examples on to their neighbours. So then let them be hidden in set purpose, and made public by necessity, and let the hiding of them be the safe keeping of self, and the making them public usefulness to others. Again, because it is written, Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but in a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, Which is in heaven. [Matt. 5, 15. 16. There are times when holy persons are compelled to do good things even in the presence of their fellow-creatures, or else to tell these very deeds of theirs to their fellow-creatures, but only to this end relating every thing, viz. that by those works not they themselves, but their Father, Which is in heaven, may be glorified. For whilst they preach things holy, the very preaching itself perhaps goes for nought, of those whose life is not known.

So they are forced to tell their own life, that they may be able to change the life of their hearers. And they relate their deeds that they may be held in veneration, and they seek to be venerated, that they may be listened to with awe. Since it is written; And when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them. [Ez. 1, 21] Because it is so that when the minds of the hearers take in the life of those that preach, surely they necessarily admire the force of the preaching as well.

37. Hence it is therefore that good preachers at once eschew honour on account of being set up, and yet wish to be honoured on account of being imitated. In the same way surely Paul the Apostle, when speaking to the disciples, at once flees honour, and yet shews how greatly he deserved to be honoured. For when he said to the Thessalonians; For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know; nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness: he adds going on; Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor of others, when we might have been, burthensome to you as the Apostles of Christ; But we were gentle among you. [1 Thess. 2, 5. 6. 7. Again to the Corinthians, avoiding honour he saith; For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus Christ's sake. [2 Cor. 4, 5] Which same however he seeing to be led aside from the track of the true faith by the persuasions of false apostles, with the greatest pains shews to them how much he was worthy to be held in reverence, saying, Howbeit whereinsoever any is bold, (I speak foolishly,) I am bold also. Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool,) I am more. [2 Cor. 11, 22. 23.

To which particulars he likewise adds how that to him the secrets of the third heaven also were set open, how that being caught up he even penetrated the mysteries of Paradise. See, how eschewing honour he proclaims himself the servant of the disciples. See how for the use of his hearers seeking honour, he advances the claims of his life above the false apostles. Since the great teacher acted with this view, that whilst he himself is seen and known for

what he was, both the life and the tongue of those that preached amiss might by comparison with him be made worthless. Therefore in a wonderful way he both exhibits the grace of humility, and seeks accessions of usefulness, so as both to proclaim himself a servant of the disciples, and prove himself better than the adversaries. He displays to the disciples what he had been vouchsafed of humility, he displays to the opponents what he had been vouchsafed of loftiness. He makes appear in opposition to adversaries what he had by gift, he makes appear to disciples what he remains in himself in thought, he makes known to opponents what he is presented without in practice. So holy men, when they are constrained to relate the good things that they do, do not lend themselves to exaltation but usefulness.

Whence to his friends, unjustly upbraiding him, and so not knowing the good things in him, blessed Job telling reveals them, that surely they might learn, not whilst upbraiding him to lift themselves up against his life, but holding their peace to copy the same. Though, as we have already often said above, the despair urged on him by those upbraiding him, forced him to recall his own deeds to remembrance. For amidst so many pains of wounding and words of despair, when he tells the things which he did, his mind as it were sunk down by words and wounds he sets anew to hope. So let him say the good things that he has done, that he may not be forced in the midst of so many evil things that he hears to despair of himself. I was eyes to the blind, feet was I to the lame.

38. When we are estimating the examples of holy practice, we ought first to mark what a right order is observed in relating them, so that first works of righteousness, next works of mercy should be described. For that man does well what is pitiful, who is taught first to observe what is just, so that the stream of mercy bestowed on our neighbours be brought from the fountain-head of righteousness. For there are many that in a manner render works of mercy to their neighbours, but do not abandon the deeds of unrighteousness, which same if they are anxious truly to shew mercy to their neighbours, ought first by living justly to have shewn pity to themselves. Whence it is written; Have mercy upon thine own soul by pleasing God. [Ecclus. 30, 23. (Vulg. 42)] He then that would pity his neighbour must needs derive the original of pitying from himself. For it is written; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. [Matt. 19, 19] How, then, is he pitiful to another by shewing mercy, who by still living unjustly becomes pitiless to himself? Whence it is also said by one that was wise; He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good? [Ecclus. 14, 5] Since for shewing forth mercy, that it may be rendered to the needy outwardly in perfection, two things necessary agree together, i.e. the man that is to give, and the thing to be given. But the man is by far and without comparison better than the thing.

And so he who gives up his outward substance to his neighbour in want, but does not keep his own life from doing evil, gives his estate to God, but himself to sin. The thing which is the lesser he offered to the Creator, and that which is the greater he reserved to wickedness. And so it is well said first by blessed Job, With justice I was clothed and arrayed myself as with a garment, and with my judgment as with a diadem: and is next added; I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. Because there is then in God's sight the offering of

true righteousness, when from the root of righteousness the branches of pitifulness proceed. But because in the very work of mercy itself the spirit is wont to be thought more of with the interior Judge than the thing done, observe that he declares that to 'the blind he had been eyes, to the lame feet.' For by saying these things assuredly he points out that both to the one he had held out a hand by himself, and that the other he bore up by carrying. From which it is gathered how greatly the bowels of his mercy were poured out upon the weak and needy. Whence it is added; I was a father to the poor.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] 39. Which same words if we refer to the utterance of Holy Church by a typical mode of interpretation, the same is 'eyes to the blind,' because she gives light by the Word, and the same 'feet to the lame,' because she stays them up by support. For by preaching she enlightens the blind, while the lame by helping she supports. For 'the blind' is he that as yet seeth not whither he is going, but 'the lame' is he who has not the power to go there where he sees. For frequently sin is committed either by ignorance or weakness, so that either the man knows not what he ought to desire, or cannot do every thing that he has the desire to do. Contrarily it is rightly said by the Psalmist, The Lord is my light and my salvation. [Ps. 27, 1] For because the Lord bestows both knowledge and force, at once in opposition to ignorance He is called 'Light,' and in opposition to weakness 'Saving Health.' It is hence that it is said of the wicked, Let their way he dark and slippery [Ps. 35, 6]; that is to say, that through the darkness they may not see where they should go, who even if they did see what was right, yet by reason of the slippery quality they should not be able to stand fast therein. And so the one sort through the slipperiness halt in the midst of good things, and the other sort through the darkness, are ignorant what good things to follow. Thus then Holy Church, being seized by tribulations at the end, calls to mind the old times when she was accustomed both to enlighten by teaching and to stablish by helping, and speak with the lips of her foregoing member, saying,

I was an eye to the blind, and a foot was I to the lame. 40. And whereas she has gathered together two Peoples in herself, viz. the Jewish and the Gentile, by the 'blind,' the Gentile People may also be rightly denoted, and by 'the lame' the Jewish. Since the Gentile People had as it were no eyes, because the Law not being received it saw not where it ought to have gone. But on the other hand the Jewish People having eyes was lame, because the Law indeed in knowing it held, but did not stretch forth the step of right practice therein. For if the Gentile People had not been blind, the Prophet would not say, The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. [Is. 9, 2] Again, if the Israelitish People had not gone lame to good practice, the Psalmist would never have said in the voice of the Lord, The strange children have lied to me: the strange children have waxed old, they have gone lame out of their paths. [Ps. 18, 44. 45.] Which doubtless is for this reason termed a lame People, in that it had not a sound step in practice, since it would not use both feet, while it admitted one Testament, and spurned the other. Which People when Holy Church receives coming to her, because to the same, already holding the Old Testament, she introduces the New Testament as well, for the directing the steps thereof, she as it were joins on another foot. Which faithful People of Holy Church still further adds aright, I was a father to the poor,

because surely the humble, who are called 'poor in spirit,' are begotten by her preaching. But it is necessary for us in all these particulars to weigh with exactness the actual words of the history. For he says;

Ver.16. I was a father of the poor, and the cause, which I knew not, I searched out. [xxiv.] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] 41. For very often men give much to the poor, not because they love those poor, but because if they do not give, they dread the indignation of the Judge Above; which persons, if they were not afraid of God, would have had no mind to give the things they possess. And indeed in good deeds it is the first step of beginners, that he who does not yet know how to love his neighbour as himself, nevertheless should yet henceforth begin to dread the judgments from Above. Thus because it is one thing to do a good deed by command and another to do it from affection as well, that the holy man may teach us the inward spirit of his practice, let him say, I was a father to the poor. For not a patron, or a neighbour, or an helper to the poor, but 'a father' he testifies that he had been; in this way, because by the great attentiveness of his charity he converted the purpose of mercy into the affection of nature, that he should look on those as children by love, whom he was the head of as a father by protecting. Therefore because the force of his mercy had copied nature, he records himself to have been a father to the poor. Where he likewise adds;

And the cause that I knew not, I most carefully searched out. [xxv.]

42. In which words we have to consider all the particulars how distinctly they are related, and that no profit is passed over by him. Since he is just in his actions, pitiful in his neighbours' infirmities, active in the concerns of the poor. For he that takes thought of the blessings of the eternal recompensing, must needs extend himself to every occasion of the repayment to follow after. For hence it is said by Solomon; He that feareth God, neglecteth nothing. [Eccl. 7, 18] Hence also Paul saith; prepared unto every good work. [2 Tim. 2, 21] But herein we ought to bear in mind that occasionally in our actions lesser good things are to be let pass for the usefulness of greater ones. Thus who could be ignorant that it has the merit of a good work to bury the dead: and yet Lo one, who had prayed to be let go in order to the burying of his father, it was said; Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. [Luke 9, 60] Thus the dutifulness of this service was to be made to give place to the office of preaching, because by the first he would be burying persons dead in the flesh in the earth, by the other he would be raising up persons dead in the soul to life. By the Prophet likewise it is said to the chiefs of the Synagogue; Seek judgment, relieve the oppressed. [Is. 1, 17] And yet Paul the Apostle says;

Set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the Church. [1 Cor. 6, 4] For he was kindling his hearers' hearts to the excellency of wisdom, to different kinds of tongues, to the investigating the mysteries of prophecy also, saying, Desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. But because they would not be capable of 'spiritual gifts,' if earthly matters had weighed them to the ground, he premised long before, saying, Set them to judge who are least esteemed in the Church. As though he said in plain words; 'they that are of least worth in the Church, and not enriched with any power of extraordinary gifts, let these only

judge concerning earthly matters, that by whom extraordinary good cannot be supplied, the lesser good may be.' Whom he at once styles 'contemptible,' and yet calls 'wise,' when he says; Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? [1 Cor. 6, 5] From which point what else is concluded but that they are to try earthly causes, who have received wisdom in things external? But they that have been enriched with spiritual gifts surely ought never to be entangled with earthly concerns, that while they are not compelled to manage the good things beneath, they may by being exercised be enabled to serve the interests of the good things Above.

43. But above every thing it needs to be looked to, that they who shine forth with spiritual gifts should never entirely abandon the affairs of their neighbours of weak condition, but that they should entrust the same to be managed by others, whom it is meet for. Whence also Moses appointed to the people seventy persons in the stead of himself, that in proportion as he buried himself out of the way of external causes he might with the greater fervour go into the things of the interior. And so it comes to pass, that those that are the highest advance more to Spiritual gifts, when things that are lowest do not trample on their minds, and again the persons that are the last in the Church do not live without good practice, while in matters external they find right things which they may do. For Holy Church is so compacted by a unity of the faithful, as our body is made one by the jointing of the limbs. Thus there are some members in the body which are subservient to beholding the light, others which are never parted from the contact of earth. Since the eye is set intent on the light, and that it may not be made blind, it is kept safe from the dust. But the foot then rightly discharges its office, when it does not shrink from taking on it the dust of the earth. Which same members of the body, however, are, by imparting their functions to one another, reciprocally united in one, so that the foot should run for the eyes, and the eye look out for the feet.

44. Thus, then, thus ought the members of Holy Church to be at once distinct in office and united in charity, that the highest persons may look out the way of those, who go at liberty in the concerns of earth, so that the foot may as it were walk by the light of the eyes, and again that whatever they execute, being busied with the affairs of earth, this they may apply to the use of the greater sort, so that the foot, whose way is looked out, may step not for itself only but for the eyes as well. And so whilst they suit one another by turns, by reciprocal ministering, in a wonderful way it is brought about, that whereas all the Elect, by bestowing labour on one another, do what they are able, those works too become their own, which they cannot do themselves.

45. But herein we ought to bear in mind, that when those are wanting, who might fitly minister to the exterior occasions of their neighbours, those too who are full of spiritual gifts ought to lower themselves to their inferiority, and, as far as they may with propriety be able, lend themselves with the condescension of charity to the earthly necessities of those persons. Nor should it weary the mind, if its perception, being ever intent on the contemplation of the spiritual, is sometimes as it were bent down, diminished in managing

the least concerns, when that Word, by Which all things created are held together, in order that He might benefit mankind, having taken to Him the nature of man, was willing to be 'made a little less than the Angels.' What wonder, then, if man for man's sake draws himself in, when the Creator of men and Angels for man's sake took upon Him the form of man? Not however that the perception is diminished when it is thus drawn in; because it penetrates the things above with more exact penetration, in proportion as with more abundant humility for the love of the Creator it does not even despise the things beneath. What is there that is unworthy of us or difficult, if we carry the mind above and below, when of the body we wash the face with the same hand, with which we shoe the foot? Therefore let blessed Job, because when he was doing great things he did not think the least things beneath him, let him say, And the cause that I knew not I very carefully searched out.

[HISTORICAL / MORAL INTERPRETATION]

46. Wherein I see it is to be noted, that for delivering sentence we should not ever be precipitate, that things not examined into we should not rashly judge, that any thing heard of a bad nature should not affect us, that what is reported every where about we should not credit without proving. Which same, without doubt, we shall be afraid of committing, if we consider the doings of our Creator with some degree of minuteness. For that very Creator, that He might withhold us from a precipitate delivery of sentence, whereas 'all things are naked and open to His eyes,' [Hev. 4, 13] yet refused to judge the evil deeds of Sodom when heard, in that He saith; Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is very great, and because their cry is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me; and if not, I will know. [Gen. 18, 20. 21. Thus God, Who is Almighty and knowing all things, wherefore does He before the proving seem to doubt, but in order to set forth to us an example of gravity, that the evil of our fellow-creatures we should never venture to believe before we prove it? Observe how by His Angels He comes down for the ascertaining of the evil, and immediately smites the culprits; and He That is patient, He Who is gentle, He, of Whom it is written; But Thou, Lord, judgest with tranquillity.

[Wisd. 12, 18] He, of Whom it is written again; The Lord is a patient Rewarder, [Ecclus. 5, 4] finding them involved in such enormous guilt, as it were overlooked patience, and would not await the day of Final Judgment for vengeance, but with the fire of judgment prevented them before the Day of Judgment. See, the evil He in seeming believed with difficulty when He heard it, but visited without backwardness when acquainting Himself He found it true; surely that He might give us an example that worse climes are both to be believed with difficulty, when they are heard, and to be punished more quickly when they are truly ascertained. For this heedfulness accordingly blessed Job entertaining anxious interest, saith, The cause that I knew not, I very carefully searched out. Which same words we may likewise apply not inappropriately in the voice of the Church to a typical way of interpretation. For that same Church by her elect members does when she judges the evil deeds of carnal men 'search out that, which she knows not,' in that the evil things which

she knows not in doing them, she searches out in correcting them in judgment. And so Holy Church, when she shall be cramped for a time by the villainy of the unjust, remembers, saying, The cause that I knew not, I very carefully searched out.

As though she said in plain speech; 'The evil that in mine Elect I knew not in doing, in wicked Men I did, by judging, chasten with severity.' And because She now bruises the devil by the power of her preaching, and carries off out of his mouth the soul of every one that she receives, he goes on in the words;

Ver. 17. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. [xxvi.] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

47. Oh what a spoil did 'he take from the mouth of the devil, when by converting she carried off Saul himself the spoiler; when still breathing threats he was on his way to Damascus, having received letters, and whereas by persecuting the faithful he was gathering prey for the devil, he was, by being made acquainted with the faith, himself gathered to Christ. [Acts 9, 12] As many times did the Church 'pluck the spoil out of the mouth of the wicked,' as often as by preaching she snatched off a soul from the gripe of error. For who can be more truly called a wicked one than the devil? whose 'jaws we break,' as often as by arguing against his deceits, we bring to light his secret contrivances. And so we 'pluck the spoil out of his teeth,' because the soul, which he had already bitten by breaking it to sin, by converting we recover to the saving health of life. Since by 'the jaws' are exhibited his hidden plots, while by the teeth the now open commission of sin. Of which same jaws and teeth it is said by the Psalmist; But God shall break their teeth in their mouth; the Lord shall break the jaw bones of the lions. [Ps. 58, 6] But the holy man declares Himself to 'break the jaws' first that he might afterwards be able to 'carry away the spoil from the teeth' of that one;

because we then truly snatch the prey from his teeth, when we first know how to break his jaws. For it is necessary first to bring to light the secret artifices of his contrivances, that afterwards we may be able to recover the soul of our hearer from open falling. The jaws of this wicked one the chief pastor of the Church himself did by preaching break in pieces, when he said, Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, stedfast in the faith. [1 Pet. 5, 8. 9. Against this 'lion' Holy Church, because she sees his plottings, guards the folds of the faith. Whose 'jaws she breaks' as often as she destroys the arguments of heretics, and as many times 'seizes the spoil out of his teeth,' as she by preaching converts a man from error. And because there shall then be many of the just, who reckoned that they would depart out of this world in the time of the Church's peace, blessed Job, while he tells his own case, likewise points out the voices of the just coming after him, saying;

Ver. 18. Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm. [xxvii.]

48. What else is set forth in this place by the title of a 'nest,' but the tranquil rest of the faith whereby every infirm soul is nourished? For that multitude of the good, which shall be overtaken by the times of persecution, thought to accomplish the days of its nourishings,

as in a nest, so in a place of repose. For except that Holy Church now nourished up the weak children severally in the nest of peace, the Psalmist would not say, Yea, the sparrow hath found her an house, and the turtle a nest where she may lay her young. [Ps. 84, 3] Since henceforth 'the sparrow hath found her an house,' because our Redeemer has entered into the Eternal dwelling-place of heaven. And 'the turtle hath found a nest,' because Holy Church, influenced by love of the Creator, makes use of frequent sighings, and as it were builds up a 'nest' for herself, i.e. the most peaceful rest of the Faith, wherein her growing children, like callow young, till they fly up to the regions above, she fosters, cherished warm in the bosom of charity. And so because there shall then be those, who thought in the time of peace to take their passage to the regions on high, i.e. to soar away from the nest, their voice is anticipated by the voice of blessed Job, when he says, Then I said, I shall die in my nest.

But because this same quietness of peace they promised themselves in a length of many days, he rightly subjoins, saying, And I shall multiply my days as a palm. For the palm advances slowly, but holds on long in greenness. But with many difficulties Holy Church comes to the firm standing of the Faith, and for the gathering together of very many she desires to be set the longer in the glory of that Faith. And so as 'a palm' she thought 'to multiply her days,' who on the crisis of sudden temptation emerging upon her, grieves for the boon of peace at once slowly gotten by the faithful, and quickly intercepted by the unbelievers.

49. Nor is it unfairly that the life of the righteous is likened to a 'palm,' in this respect, that the palm below is rough to be touched, and in a manner enveloped in dry barks, but above it is fair with fruit even to be looked at; below it is compressed by the enfoldings of its barks, above it is spread out in amplitude of beautiful greenness. For so is the life of the Elect, despised below, beautified above. Down beneath the one is as it were enfolded in many barks, in that it is straitened by innumerable afflictions. But on high the other is as it were spread out with the foliage of beautiful greenness in the amplitude of the rewarding. The palm too has another thing as well, by which it differs from all kinds of trees. For every tree holds, in its timber, large sized towards the ground, but in growing it is narrowed above, and in proportion as it is by degrees higher, it is rendered so much the minuter on high; but the palm sets out of less circumference from the bottom, and arises with wider timber towards the boughs and fruit; and that which goes on slender from the bottom grows up more huge to the top. Accordingly to what but earthly minds are other trees found to be like, expanded below, narrowed above? because surely all the lovers of this world are strong in the things of earth, but feeble in the things of heaven.

Thus for temporal glory they long to spend themselves even to death itself; and for the everlasting hope they do not though but a little hold on in exertion. For the sake of earthly gains they submit to any injuries, and for the sake of the heavenly reward they refuse to bear the insults even of the most trifling word. They are strong enough to stand before an earthly judge even a whole day through, but in praying in the presence of God they are tired even with the space of a single hour. Oftentimes they bear nakedness, abjectness [dejectionem],

hunger, for the sake of acquiring riches and honours, and they torment themselves with the stinting of those things, which they are in such haste to obtain; but from seeking with hearty endeavour the things that are above, they excuse themselves the more, in proportion as they imagine them to be more slowly paid back. So these as it were after the manner of the rest of the trees are wide spread below, narrow above, because they hold strong towards the parts below, but go off towards the parts above. But on the other hand by the character of palm trees the progressive life of the righteous is represented, who are never strong in earthly pursuits, and weak in heavenly ones, but exhibit themselves devoted to God with a farther and wider extension [longius atique distantius] than they remember to have been to the world.

For whereas it is said to certain persons by our Preacher, I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh; for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness; [Rom. 6, 19] without doubt there is a condescending to their infirmity, as though it were said to them in plainer terms; 'If ye cannot any way do more, at all events be ye such in the fruit of good works as ye were for long in the practising of bad habits, so that the holy freedom of charity may not possess you weaker persons, whom the habit of earthly pleasure possessed strong ones in the flesh.

50. But there are some who, while they aim at heavenly things, and forsake the pernicious doings of this world, by the littlemindedness of inconstancy fall away day by day from their setting out. To what but to the rest of the trees should I call these like, who never rise such persons above as they spring up below? For these when they are brought to conversion do not hold on such as they began; and as it were after the way of trees, they are of large size in the beginning, but they grow slight, because little by little through the accessions of the divisions of time they suffer the diminutions of the attainments of virtue. For imperceptibly heavenly desires fade away in them, and they who had proposed to themselves things vigorous and strong, achieve only weak and feeble ones, and whilst they progress by increase of age, grow as it were easy to be bent. But the palm, as has been said, is of vaster extent in the summit than it began with being from the root; because oftentimes the conversion of the Elect accomplishes more in finishing than it purposes on setting out; and if it begins the first things somewhat lukewarmly, it completes the last with more ardour; that is to say, it reckons itself to be always beginning, and therefore it lasts unwearied in newness. It was this constancy of the righteous that the Prophet regarding said, But they that trust in the Lord shall change their strength;

they shall take to them wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint. [Is. 40, 31] For they 'change their strength,' because they are earnest to be strong in spiritual practice, who were for long strong in the flesh. And they 'take to them the wings as of an eagle,' because by exercising contemplation they fly; 'they walk, and do not faint,' because they hold in the rapidity of their understanding, that they may condescend to the slower sort. But under all circumstances in proportion as the good things they receive

they gladly adapt to others, so much the more do they hold on themselves unchangeable in newness; and they that proceed small from the root of the beginning are consolidated as strong in the finishing of the topmost point. So then let blessed Job say in his own person, let him say in the voice of Holy Church in behalf of those whom in the time of peace she had owned, converted to herself, and imagined would persevere in good ways, Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm. For 'as a palm' she thought to 'multiply her days,' in that she supposed that the minds of the faithful would rise up stronger even to the very last.

For when the hearts of multitudes worn out with persecutions begin to turn soft, she henceforth grieves that those in her as it were tend to weakness, whom she used to admire for their having purposed strong things. And because in mind she is always intent upon spiritual knowledge, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 19. My root is opened beside the waters. [xxviii.] 51. For 'by the waters the root is opened,' when, for receiving the streams of truth, secretly the thought of the mind is spread out. For as we have already said in a former book, in Holy Writ by the term of 'the root' the hidden thought is used to be denoted. Therefore 'our root we open by the waters,' when to the Interior watering we stretch the thought of the secret heart. Which same words if we carry on to the voice of Holy Church, her 'root' must be taken for the very Incarnation our Redeemer itself. Which 'root is opened by the waters,' in that God Invisible by the assumption of His Manhood was laid open to the regardings of our sight. Since the Creator, Who was not able to be seen in the Godhead, took to Him from us that whereby He might by us be seen. So 'the root is opened by the waters,' because the Author of the human race by means of His human nature is manifested to human beings. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, And he shall be like a tree that is planted beside the runnings of waters. [Ps. 1, 3] For 'the runnings of waters' are the daily passings by of peoples dying off. And Truth saith concerning Itself, If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry? [Luke 23, 31] And so there 'is a tree beside the runnings of waters,' because, whilst putting forth fruit and the covering of His shade for us, the Creator appeared in the flesh, that by a rising again He might stay the human race, which by a falling off was day by day going on into death. It goes on;

And the dew shall stay on my harvest. [xxix.] 52. Understand, I said. For the harvest of Holy Church is not inappropriately taken to be, when perfect souls withdrawn from their bodies, like ripe crops cut away from the ground, are transported into the heavenly granaries; which same because it takes place not by our own power, but by heavenly grace vouchsafing it, he saith well, And the dew shall stay on my harvest. For the dew falls from above, but the harvest is gathered in from below. And so 'the dew stays on the harvest,' because grace coming from above causes it, that we should be meet persons to be gathered in from the world below. For by that same grace watering us from above, we bear the fruit of good practice. Whence also it is rightly said by Paul, But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace, which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain. [1 Cor. 15, 10] For if it be

enquired what is the dew coming from above, he tells us, By the grace of God I am what I am. If we look at the crop growing up beneath the dew, he says, And His grace was not in vain in me, but I laboured more abundantly than they all. It proceeds;

Ver. 20. My glory shall always be fresh, in me, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand. [xxx.]

53. Understand, I said; since all is joined on to the sentence above, that is introduced next in a continuous thread of discourse, when he says, Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the palm; and afterwards it is subjoined, My root is opened by the waters, and the dew shall stay on my harvest; my glory shall ever be fresh in me, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand. To all that know what is true it is clear, that to the old life qualities of evil are proper, to the new qualities of virtue. Thus it is hence that Paul saith, Putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man. [Col. 3, 9] Hence he says again, Our old man was crucified with him. [Rom 6, 6] Hence the Psalmist speaking in a type of man, as being caught in the midst of evil spirits, saith, I have waxed old amongst all mine enemies. [Ps. 6, 7] For unto fervour of mind, whether amidst spiritual enemies, or in the midst of our several carnal neighbours, in some degree by the mere habituation of living 'we wax old,' and the form of newness taken upon us we soil. Against which same oldness, however, if our earnest pains after heedfulness be daily on the watch, by praying, by reading, and living well we are renewed afresh;

because our life, while it is washed with tears, exercised in good works, drawn out by holy meditations, is without ceasing restored to its newness. Blessed Job then so tells his own case that he represents ours, because Holy Church, when she sees her faithful ones return to the transgressions of the old life, is forced to lament for those whom she sees lose the newness of the interior. Since the great Preacher says to his disciples, For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord? [1 Thess. 2, 19] And so Holy Church bewails her glory departed, when she sees her faithful ones return to the old life. Thus she says, I said, My glory shall always be made fresh; because those whom she believed were enlisted within her to the new life, she sees to be lending themselves to old desires.

54. Now by the name of a 'bow' in Holy Scripture, sometimes the plots of evil men, sometimes the Day of Judgment, while sometimes the actual sacred Oracles themselves are denoted. Since by a bow plots are denoted, as where it is said by the Psalmist, And have bent their bow, a bitter thing. [Ps. 64, 3] Moreover by 'a bow' the Day of the Last Judgment is denoted, as where it is said again by the same Psalmist, Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things, Thou hast made us to drink the wine of remorse, Thou hast given a token to them that fear Thee, that they may fly from before the bow. [Ps. 60, 3. 4.] For in a bow in proportion as the string is drawn out far, the arrow flies off the keener from it. Thus, yes, thus the Day of Judgment, in proportion as it is delayed for long that it should come, when it does come, the keener the sentence goes forth therefrom. But for this reason we are now stricken with sundry losses, in order that being amended thereby, we may then be found more prepared.

Whence it is there premised, Thou hast shewed Thy people hard things, i.e. the scourges of the present state, which are forerunners of the Day of Judgment, to follow far worse. Thou hast made us to drink the wine of remorse, so that earthly joys should be converted into tears. Thou hast given a token to them that fear Thee, that they may fly from before the bow. As though he said in plain terms; 'This is the season of mercy, that shall be the time of Judgment.' Thus by these scourges of this present time Thou dost betoken how Thou wilt then strike when Thou judgest not sparing, Who dost now strike so sharply when Thou sparest.

55. But sometimes by a 'bow' Holy Scripture is denoted as well. For that is the 'bow' of the Church, that is the 'bow' of the Lord, wherefrom like arrows striking, so do terrifying sentences come to the hearts of men. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, He hath bent His bow, and made it ready; He hath also prepared in it the vessels of death, He hath made His arrows for the burning ones. [Ps, 7, 12. 13. For the Lord hath 'bent His bow,' because to all sinners He hath set forth threats in sacred Revelation. In which same bow He 'prepares the vessels of death,' because according to the sentence of His Revelation, those that neglect to be reformed now, He condemns as reprobate. In which bow also He 'made His arrows for the burning ones,' because against those persons, whom He amends by terror, He sends forth the kindled sentences of words. Concerning this bow of the preachers it is declared by Isaiah; With arrows and with bows they enter in thither; [Is. 7, 24] in this way, because the holy Apostles came for the smiting the hardness of the Gentiles' life with the keen dartings of words. What then in this place is to be understood by the name of the bow but sacred Revelation? For by the string the New Testament, while by the bow the Old Testament, is understood. Now in a bow, when the string is drawn, the horn is bended:

so in this same sacred Revelation, when the New Testament is read, the hardness of the Old is rendered pliant. For to the spiritual and mild precepts of this, the rigidness of the letter of the other bends itself; because whilst the New Testament as it were by a kind of arm of good practice is drawn, in the Old Testament the claims of severity are relaxed. Nor do we improperly say that the string accords with the New Testament, which it is certain came out by the Incarnation of the Lord. And so as it were the string is drawn and the horns bent; because when in the New Testament the Incarnation of our Mediator is seen, the rigidness of the Old Testament is made to bend to a spiritual signification. Therefore the holy man says, I said, My glory shall always be fresh, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand.

56. 'A bow in the hand' is Holy Writ in the practising. For he holds 'a bow in his hand,' who performs by the practising the divine revelations which he learns by apprehension. Thus the 'bow is renewed in the hand,' in that whatever is learnt belonging to Holy Revelation by studying is fulfilled by living accordingly. Hence also Solomon when he was describing the strong warriors of the spiritual fight, says, All holding swords, being well instructed for wars. [Cant. 3, 8] For what is represented in Divine Writ by 'a sword,' Paul laid open by saying, And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. [Eph. 6, 17] Now Solomon saith not 'all having' but 'all holding swords;' surely because not only to know the word of

God is admirable, but likewise to do it. For he has but does not 'hold' a sword, who knows indeed Divine Revelation, but neglects to live according to it, and he cannot now any longer be 'well instructed to wars,' who never exercises the spiritual sword that he has. For he is altogether not equal to resist temptations, who by living badly puts it behind him to hold this sword of the word of God.

So then let Holy Church, which is weighed down by subsequent persecution, taking thought of the multitude of bad and the scarcity of good ones, by the accents of blessed Job foreannounce her own woes, saying, Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as a palm. My root is opened wide by the waters, and the dew shall stay on my harvest. My glory shall ever be fresh, and my bow shall be renewed in mine hand. Which same, whilst taking a view of all things, was never imposed on by a false hope. For they that be perfect now see many her supporters, but doubtless they reflect that on the crisis of temptation coming forth, the greater number of these become her enemies, who in the time of peace seem to be her citizens. But they do not despair of all in like manner, yet nevertheless it very frequently falls out that those persons, touching whom they had entertained more confident assurance as to the Faith, themselves become fiercer enemies of the Faith, so that they then see those acting against the sacred Oracles, by whose working they had thought to restore those same sacred Oracles to the benefit of preaching. Which same times, however, we lament have now already commenced, when we see numbers, set within the pale of the Church, who either refuse to practise what they understand, or this very sacred Revelation likewise disdain to see into and to know.

For turning away the hearing from the truth, they are turned to fables, whilst all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's. The written words of God every where found are presented to their eyes, but men disdain to acquaint themselves with these, scarce one seeks to know what he has believed. So then let the multitude of good men going before grieve to have their 'bow destroyed,' which same always thought to have sacred Revelation restored by the efforts of those coming after.

Book XX

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

VOLUME II - THE FOURTH PART. — BOOK XX. — The five concluding verses of chapter twenty-nine of the Book of Job — are more largely explained, together with the whole of chapter thirty, — chiefly on the subject of heretics and carnal persons distressing the Church.

[i] 1. ALTHOUGH all knowledge and all lore Sacred Scripture without all comparison far excels, to say nothing that it tells forth what is true; that it bids to the heavenly country; that it changes the heart of him that reads it from earthly desires to the embracing of things Above; that by its obscurer statements it exercises the strong, and by its humble strain speaks gently to the little ones; that it is neither so shut up, that it should come to be dreaded, nor so open to view as to become contemptible; that by use it removes weariness, and is the more delighted in the more it is meditated on; that the mind of him, who reads it, by words of a low pitch it assists, and by meanings of a lofty flight uplifts; that in some sort it grows with the persons reading, that by uninstructed readers it is in a manner reviewed, and yet by the well instructed is always found new; so then to say nothing of the weightiness of the subjects, it goes beyond all forms of knowledge and teaching even by the mere manner of its style of speaking, because in one and the same thread of discourse, while it relates the text, it declares a mystery, and has the art so to tell the past, that merely by that alone it knows how to announce the future, and the order of telling remaining unaltered, is instructed by the very self-same forms of speech at once to describe things done before, and to tell things destined to be done, just as it is with these same words of blessed Job, who while he tells his own circumstances foretels ours, and while he points out his own sorrows in respect of the phrase, sounds of the cases and occasions of Holy Church in respect of the meaning. For he says;

Ver. 21-23. They that heard me awaited my sentence, and listening kept silence at any counsel. They dared not to add any thing to my words, and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as the rain, and opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.
[ii] 2. For this awe of those under him we unquestionably believe to have been towards blessed Job. But as we have already often said, Holy Church being driven to extremities by

the inflictions of heretics or carnal persons, remembers the times past, in which all that is spoken by her is listened to with fear by the faithful, and lamenting the frowardness of her adversaries, she says, They that heard me awaited my sentence, and listening kept silence at my counsel. As though she expressed herself in plain speech, 'Not like these forward and swoln ones, who whilst they refuse to admit the words of truth, do as it were in teaching forestall the sentences of my preaching.' Whose disciples now 'intent upon her counsel keep silence,' because her words they dare not to impugn, but take on faith. For that they may be able to profit by these same words, they hear them, doubtless, not with a view to judge them, but to follow them.

3. Of whom it is rightly added, To my words they dared not to add any thing; surely because heretics, at that time when against her they are in liberty the most mischievous, free of all check, do 'dare to add something to her words,' in that they busy themselves as if to correct the rightness of her preachings. Which same still further adds touching the good hearers, And my speech dropped upon them.

4. By this dropping of speech, what else is understood but the measure of holy preaching? because it is requisite that the boon of exhortation be bestowed to each according to the capacity of his parts. And in respect of this that is said, To my words they dared not to add any thing; the reverential feeling of the persons hearing is extolled; but in respect of this, that is added, And my speech dropped upon them; the masters' distributing is pointed out. For one who teaches ought to look exactly, that he be not forward to preach more than is comprehended by the one who hears him. For it is his duty by contracting himself to let himself down to the infirmity of his hearers, lest whilst he speaks to little persons lofty things, which for that reason will not profit them, he be more minded to make a display of himself than to benefit his hearers. Now at the Lord's bidding, there are not only flagons but likewise, cups prepared for the table of the Tabernacle. [Ex. 25, 29. 37, 16.] For what is denoted by 'flagons' but ample preaching, and what by cups but the smallest and slightest speaking about God? Therefore on the table of the Lord there are both flagons and cups made ready, in this way because in the teaching of sacred Revelation there are not only to be set forth things great and mysterious that intoxicate, but also little and minute ones, which afford knowledge as it were in a tasting. So then let Holy Church being borne down in the last times remember this most discriminating disposal of hers, and let her say, And my speech dropped upon them.

5. Where too it is fitly added, They waited for me as the rain, and opened their mouth as for the latter rain. For the words of holy preaching we undergo as rain, when by true humility we learn the dryness of our hearts, that we may be watered by the draught of holy preaching. Whence also it is rightly said to God by the Psalmist, My soul is like earth without water to Thee. [Ps. 143, 6] The Prophet charges us to be bathed with these streams of teaching, saying, Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters. [Is. 55, 1] Who whilst in the final portion of the world we now receive the words of holy preaching, as it were 'open the mouth of the heart to the latter rain.' For if there were not in the heart 'a mouth,' the Psalmist

would not say, Crafty lips in heart, and with the heart they have spoken evil things. [Ps. 12, 2] The mouth of the heart, then, because we apply ourselves to the word of the preaching at the end, this, I say, we as it were open to the latter streams. Which same preaching came forth to us by the sacrifice of Him, Who says by the Psalmist, And the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

[Ps. 141, 2] For because our Redeemer at the end of the world underwent the violence of those that persecuted Him, Himself He 'gave an evening sacrifice for us.' Of this 'latter rain' it is elsewhere written, I will give you rain, both the early, and the latter rain. [Jer. 5, 24] For He 'gave the early rain,' because in the former period He bestowed on His Elect the knowledge of the Law. [Deut. 11, 14] He 'gave the latter rain,' because He caused the mystery of His Incarnation to be preached in the last days. Which same mystery because Holy Church ceases not to tell forth day by day, she waters the mouths of her hearers' hearts as it were by 'the latter rain.' It goes on;

Ver. 24. If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance fell not on the ground.

6. If we understand this according to the words of the history, it must be imagined that the holy man had shewn himself such to those under him, that even in laughing he was able to be feared. But whereas he relates above that he had been 'a father to the poor, and the comforter of the widows'; the case needs very great penetration to discriminate how and in what way in such terribleness of government there was likewise so much gentleness and mildness of pity there present. For without extraordinary gentleness of loving-kindness there was not this, viz. that he describes himself 'the father of the poor, and comforter of the widows'; whilst again without great severity he could not even when 'laughing' be feared: on which point what else are we taught, but that such ought to be the management of governance, that he who is in command should rule himself towards those under him by this measure, that both while laughing he may be feared, and when angered be loved, that neither excessive mirth should render him contemptible, nor unlimited severity make him hated? For oftentimes we break in pieces those under our charge when we maintain the energy of justice beyond what is just, which energy will surely now no longer be that of justice, if it do not keep itself under just control.

And often those under us we unloose from the fear of discipline, if to our rule we let go the reins of mirth, because whilst they behold us joyful as it were at our liberty, they are themselves boldly let loose to what they are not at liberty. But that the countenance of the ruler may even when joyful be feared, it is necessary that he should himself unceasingly fear the countenance of his own Maker. For credit then is with difficulty given to that mind as to gladness, which it is known by those under its charge chastens itself continually for the love of God. For he who with an unintermitted fever of spiritual desire seeks after things above, has this come into very great doubt concerning him, that he is sometimes glad of heart before men. And hence that same blessed Job was not long afterwards to say, For I always feared God as waves swelling over me. For he so feared his Judge as immediately

impending assaults of waves, now, now on the point to die. He then into whose mind the sadness of the fear of God had poured itself, rightly did those under him not believe his joyfulness; because they were forced not to believe him when he laughed, whose heart they knew what unremitting sadness possessed under the fear of his Creator.

7. That also may not unsuitably be understood after the history, which is next brought in directly; And the light of my countenance fell not on the ground. Since it is written; But the eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth. [Prov. 17, 24] And again it is said by the same Solomon, The wise man's eyes are in his head. [Eccl. 2, 14] Paul also said; The head of every man, is Christ. [1 Cor. 11, 3] So 'the wise man's eyes are in his head,' in that he is ever contemplating the works of his Redeemer that he should imitate them. So 'the light of his countenance fell not on the ground,' because those things that are of the earth he beheld not in concupiscence. [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

8. But whereas we have made out the outside of the history in brief, what lies concealed in the points belonging to mystical meaning let us consider well. That Christ and the Church are one Person, we have very frequently said already, and it oftentimes happens that the voice of the Head passes to the voice of the Body, and often that the voice of the Body passes over to the voice of the Head. For they that consist in one flesh, nothing hinders but that they also accord in one voice. So then let her say in the voice of the Head touching His Elect members, let the Church say, If I laughed on them they believed it not; since for God to 'laugh' is for the ways of the Saints to be made to prosper by His favour following them. As it is also expressed by common usage of those, whom in this world the caresses of good fortune accompany; 'The time smiled upon them.' Whence reversely it is called the wrath of God to be disabled from good practice. As it is written; Lest the Lord be angry, and ye perish from the right way. [Ps. 2, 12] If then the Lord is said to be 'angry' when men lose the way of righteousness, the Lord is rightly described as 'smiling' when our good works the favour of grace from Above accompanies on the way. But all the Elect so long as they are in this life never hold out to themselves the assurance of security.

For being at all times alive to suspicion against temptations, they dread the plottings of the hidden enemy, who even on temptation ceasing, are greatly disturbed even by the mere suspecting only. For oftentimes to many heedless security has proved great hazard, so that the plots of the crafty enemy they should be made acquainted with, not when tried, but when already laid low. For we have always to be on the watch, that the mind unceasing in its solicitude never be slackened in its heavenly bent, that abandoning what is painful, laid low in loose thoughts as in a kind of soft litters, the mind be not all undone and prostitute itself to that corrupter the devil on his coming. But the soul must always be gathered up for the encounter of the adversary, always there must be caution provided against secret snares. For hence the Prophet Habakkuk saith; I will stand upon my watch. [Hab. 2, 1] Hence again it is written; Set thee up a watch tower, make thee bitternesses, [thou that preachest glad tidings to Sion. (not in text)] [Jer. 31, 21] Hence it is said by Solomon, Happy is the man that always feareth; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. [Prov. 28, 14]

Hence he saith again; Every man hath his sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night. [Cant. 3, 8] The 'fears in the night' are the hidden snares of temptation.

But 'the sword upon the thigh' is watch on guard, keeping down the enticements of the flesh. So then that 'the fear by night,' i.e. secret and sudden temptation, may not creep upon us, it is always necessary that the 'sword' of watching placed thereon should press our thigh. For holy men are so assured touching hope, that nevertheless they are ever mistrustful touching temptation, as being those to whom it is said; Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with trembling: [Ps. 2, 11] so that by hope rejoicing should be produced, and by mistrust 'trembling.' In whose voice the Psalmist saith again, Let my heart rejoice that it may fear Thy Name. [Ps. 86, 11] Wherein it is to be noted, that he does not say, 'Let it rejoice that it may be assured'; but, 'let it rejoice that it may fear.' For they remember that though their course of conduct be made to succeed, they are still in this life, touching which it is said by that same Job; The life of man upon earth is trial. [Job 7, 1] They remember again that it is written; For the corruptible body presseth, down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth, down the mind, that museth upon many things.

[Wisd. 9, 15] They remember and they stand in fear, and they do not dare to promise to themselves in themselves assuredness, but being set between the joy of hope and the fear of temptation, they trust and they fear, they are heartened and they falter, they are assured and they are distrustful. Therefore it is well said by the voice of the elect member under a figure of our Head, If I laughed on them, they believed it not. Because our Redeemer as it were smiling on us we do not believe when His many gifts now bearing their testimony, we at once receive the boon of His favour, and yet still go faltering under His judgment for our own frailty.

9. Let us see how to Paul there is henceforth both a 'smiling' through grace from Above, and he himself still 'believes not' as it were through the fear of misgiving. Already the Lord as it were speaking to him from Heaven, and whilst opening his eyes inwardly, closing them outwardly, had displayed the power of His Majesty: already He had said to Ananias concerning Him; For he is a chosen vessel unto Me. [Acts 9, 15] Already he had been transported to the third heaven above himself. [1 Cor. 12, 2] Already carried into Paradise he had heard mystic words, which he might, not tell, and yet being still fearful he says, But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others I should be a castaway. [1 Cor. 9, 27] See how to Divine grace smiling on him he already trusts in respect of hope, and yet trusts not in respect of self-assurance. For that these words agree perfectly with the words of our Redeemer, those subjoined do also declare, when it is said, And the light of my countenance did not fall upon the earth. For what is styled 'the earth' but the sinner, to whom it was said by the first sentence; Earth thou art, and unto earth shalt thou return? [Gen. 3, 19] So 'the light of the Lord's countenance does not fall to the earth,' because the brightness of His Vision does not appear to sinners. Thus it is written; Let the ungodly man be removed away that he see not the glory of God. [Is. 26, 10]

For light would as it were fall upon the earth, if when He comes in the Last Judgment, He manifested the brightness of His Majesty to sinners.

10. But if we receive these words in the voice of Holy Church, we may not unsuitably understand that 'the light of her countenance does not fall upon the earth,' because to them that are busied in earthly courses she forbids to preach the highest mysteries of her contemplation. For what is strong she forbids to be spoken to the weak, lest whilst they hear things incapable of being comprehended, they be borne to the ground by the words of preaching by which they should have been lifted up. For the mere corporeal light, which illumines sound eyes, darkens weak ones, and whilst by weak seeing eyes the gaze is set on the brightness of the sun, there is very frequently darkness produced to them from light. Thus let Holy Church being borne down in the time of her persecution, but bearing in mind her foregoing discrimination, say, The light of my countenance did not fall upon the earth. But because these words we began to take as from her Head, let us in the Same still follow out what comes after. For it is added:

Ver. 25. If I was minded to go to them, I sat chief. [iv] 11. Because in the heart of lost sinners, the actions of the flesh are in the first place, and of the soul in the second, surely in their thoughts Christ 'sits' not 'first' but 'last.' But each of the Elect, because above all others they mind the things that are eternal, and if there be any things of a temporal kind, they manage them with an after and the least concern; to whom it is also said by the preceptress voice of Truth, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you; [Matt. 6, 33] in their heart the Lord 'sits first.' In which place it is fitly prefaced, If I had been minded to go to them. For because, as has been said, He doeth all things according to the counsel of His Will, not in answer to our desert, but because He is Himself so minded, the Lord enlightens us with His visitation. And so He both comes 'when He is minded,' and when He comes He 'sitteth first,' because both His Coming in our heart is gratuitous, and the longing of the desire of Him in the thought of our heart is not the same as the rest of our desires. It goes on;

And when I sat as a king with an army standing round, nevertheless I was the Comforter of those that mourned. [v]

12. The Lord 'sits as a king in the heart,' because He rules the clamouring motions of the heart in our thinking. For in the soul which He inhabits, whilst He stirs up the dull, bridles the restless, inflames the cold, tempers the inflamed, softens down the hard, and binds up the loose, by this mere diversity of thoughts, a kind of 'army,' as it were, 'stands around Him.' Or surely He 'sitteth as King with an army standing around Him,' because that King, whilst He presides over the minds of the Elect, a host of virtues surround. And He too is 'the comforter of those that mourn,' by that promise, by which He says, Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. [Matt. 5, 4] And again; I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you. [John 16, 22] But the things which we have delivered concerning the Head of Holy Church, there is nothing hinders us if we should apply to the voice of the same Church as well. For in her the

order of the teachers presides like a king, whom the crowd of her believing ones surrounds. Which same multitude of believers is also rightly called 'an army', [Exercitus] because it is unceasingly making ready day by day against the wars of temptations in the array of good works. The hearts of them that mourn Holy Church also comforts, whilst she considers the souls of the Elect borne down by the wofulness of the present pilgrimage, and gladdens them with the promise of the Eternal Country. Moreover she sees that the hearts of the faithful are stricken with divine dread, and those whom she sees have heard concerning God strict things that they should stand in fear, she likewise brings it to pass that they should also hear the gentleness of His pity, that they may have boldness.

13. For thus does Holy Church mix hope and fear to her believers, touching the pity and justice of the Redeemer, in the continued course of her ministry; so that they may not either heedlessly rely on Mercy, nor hopelessly dread justice. For with the words of her Head she cheers up those that are alarmed, saying, Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [Luke 12, 32] And again, those that are presuming she affrights, when she says, Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. [Mark 14, 38] Again, those that are in dread she cheers, saying, Rejoice, because your names are written inn heaven. [Luke 10, 20] But those presuming in themselves she affrights, when she says, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Those in dread she cheers when she says, My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me, and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My Hand. [John 10, 27. 28. But those presuming in themselves she affrights, saying, And shall skew great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very Elect. [Matt. 24, 24] Those in dread she cheers, when she says, But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. [vs. 13] The presuming she affrights, when she says, Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?

[Luke 18, 8] The fearing she cheers, when He says to the robber, To-day shall thou be with Me in paradise. But she frightens the presuming, when Judas falls from the glory of the Apostleship into the pit of hell. Concerning whom it is said, in the laying down of a declaration, I have chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil. [John 6, 70] One in dread she cheers, when she says, If a man put away his wife, and she go from him, and become another man's, shall he return unto her again'? Shall not that woman be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to Me, saith the Lord. [Jer. 3, 1] But one presuming she affrights, when she says; Why criest thou upon thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable. [Jer. 30, 15] One dreading she cheers, saying, From this time at least call me, My father, thou art the guide of my virginity. [Jer. 3, 4] But the presuming one she frightens, saying, Thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. [Ez. 16, 3] One in dread she cheers, when she says, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall from you; for I am holy, saith the Lord; and I will not keep anger for ever. [Jer. 3, 12] But one presuming she affrights, when she debars her prophet from interceding, in the words, Lift not up cry nor prayer for them;

for I will not hear in the time of their crying to me, in the time of their affliction: for though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my soul is not toward this people. [Jer. 14, 11] Thus her hearer's mind Holy Church both lifts up touching the lovingkindness of mercy, and disquiets touching the strictness of judgment, that in her preaching, whilst she rightly blends both, her Elect may neither presume on the score of righteousness set forth, nor despair on the ground of bygone iniquity.

[HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

14. Yet this which he says, And when I sat as a King with an army around, nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned, it is necessary for us to know that even taken according to the history it may very greatly edify the reader, if he considers well how with good rulers both authoritativeness of ruling and loving-kindness of consoling are mixed together. For he says; And when I sat as a King with an army around; see the authoritativeness of governance; nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned; mark the service of pitifulness. For discipline or mercy is much bared, if the one be maintained without the other. But towards their subjects there ought to be in the hearts of rulers both mercy giving comfort in justice, and justice dealing wrath with pitifulness. It is hence that to the wounds of that half-dead man, who was carried by the Samaritan into the inn, there is both wine applied and oil, that by the wine the wounds should be bitten, and by the oil they should be soothed; that so every one who has the charge over the healing of wounds may by wine apply the biting of strictness, and by oil the softness of pitying; that by the wine what is putrid may be made clean, and by the oil what is to be healed may be soothed.

Thus then gentleness is to be mixed with severity, and a certain qualifying process by both to be performed, that those under charge may not either be made sore by much sharpness, nor be relaxed by overmuch kindness. This surely that ark of the tabernacle betokens, in which along with the tables there are the rod and manna together; because when there is the knowledge of sacred Scripture in the breast of a good ruler, if there is the rod of severity, let there also be the manna of sweetness. Hence also David says, Thy rod and Thy staff comforted me. [Ps. 23, 4] For we arc stricken by the rod, and we are sustained by the staff. If then there be the strictness of the rod that it may smite, let there also be the comfort of the staff that it may sustain. So then let there be love, but not that softens, let there be vigour, but not that grates, let there be zeal, but not that storms to excess, let there be pitifulness that does not spare more than may be expedient. It is good to regard in the breast of Moses mercy united with severity. Let us see him loving pitifully and venting himself severely. Surely when the people of Israel before the eyes of God contracted an almost unpardonable offence, so that its Ruler heard, Get thee down; thy people have sinned;

[Ex. 32, 7] as though the Voice of God said to him, 'That people which has fallen in so great a sin, is henceforth no longer Mine,' and subjoined, Now therefore let Me alone, that My fury may wax hot against them, and that I may destroy them, and I will make of thee a great nation; once and again in behalf of the people that he was set over presenting himself as a bar to the assault of God in His indignation, he saith, Either forgive them this sin; or if

not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written. Let us reflect then with what bowels he loved that people, for whose life he begged to have himself 'blotted out of the book' of life. But yet this one who is tied and bound with such great love of his people, let us consider with what warmth of righteousness he is inflamed against its sins. For directly that by the first request he obtained pardon of the offence, that they should not be blotted out, coming to that people he says, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. And there fell of the people that day about twenty three thousand men. [Ex. 32, 27. 28.

See, he who begged for the life of all even with his own death, killed the life of a few with the sword. Within he burned with the fire of love, without he was inflamed by the warmth of severity. So great was his pitifulness, that he did not hesitate to offer himself to death in the sight of the Lord in their behalf, such was his severity, that those whom he had feared to have stricken by divine power, he did himself strike with the sword of judgment; he so loved those whom he was set over, that in their behalf he did not even spare himself, and yet the persons offending, whom he loved, lie so persecuted, that even when the Lord spared them, he laid them low. Both ways a forcible ambassador, both ways an incomparable mediator; the cause of the people he pleaded before God by prayers, the cause of God he pleaded before the people with swords. Within loving he withstood the wrath of God by entreating, without venting himself he consumed sin by smiting. He succours all quickly by the death of a few being manifested. Therefore Almighty God listened the sooner to His faithful servant dealing in behalf of the people, because He saw what he was of himself about to do upon the people in behalf of God. In the governance therefore of the people Moses blended both, that neither should discipline be lacking to mercy, nor mercy to discipline. Hence here also it is said answerably to either excellency;

And when I sat as a King with an army around, nevertheless I was a comforter of them that mourned. For to 'sit with an army around' is the vigour and discipline of governance, but 'to comfort the hearts of them that mourn' is the ministration of pitifulness.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] But because in the midst of all this it is necessary that the line of interpretation should fall back to the spiritual meaning, Holy Church when borne down by her adversaries in the last times, calls to mind the laws of her past governance, calls to mind too what great benefits of pitifulness she displayed to them that were afflicted. Whose discipline and mercy are then derided by the light of mind. And hence it is added; Chap. xxx. 1. But now they that are younger than I have me in derision. [vi] 15. All heretics when compared to the age of the Church Universal are fitly called 'younger' in time, because they went forth out of her, not she out of them. Whence it is rightly also said by John; They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. [1 John 2, 19] For 'they that are younger in time deride Holy Church,' when they that went out from her, set at nought the words of her instruction; concerning whom it is further added;

Whose fathers I would have disdained to set with the dogs of my flock. Who is the 'flock' of Holy Church saving the multitude of the faithful? Or who else are called 'the dogs' of this flock, but the holy Teachers, who became the guardians of those believers? Which same whilst in behalf of their Lord they cried aloud, given up to daily and nightly watchings, uttered, so to say, loud barks of preaching. Concerning whom it is said to that Church by the Psalmist, The tongue of Thy dogs from the enemies by the same. [Ps. 68, 23] Since there are some that being recalled from the worshipping of idols are made the preachers of God. So 'the tongue of the dogs' of the Church goeth forth from enemies, because the Gentiles that are converted the Lord makes even preachers. Whence the slowness of the Jews, who refused to speak in God's behalf by the Prophet upbraiding them is made matter of blame, where he says, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark. [Is. 56, 10]

16. Now we speak of the fathers of Heretics meaning those whom we style 'Heresiarchs,' by whose evil preaching, i.e. by the seed of speaking, the peoples following them were begotten in error. So then Holy Church 'disdains to set the fathers' of heretics 'with the dogs of her flock,' because the founders of erring tenets on trying she rejects, and contemns to number them among the true Fathers. Which persons though they seemed to have recalled some from the erroneousness of heathenism, to have trained the practices of some to the doing what is right, yet for this that they did not think right things of God, she does not 'set them with the dogs of the flock,' because she does not rank them with right preachers. For it is plain that Arius; Photinus, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Dioscorus, Severus, and numbers like to these, endeavoured by teaching and persuading to appear fathers. But their errors the Holy Church Universal trying with strict severity, does not 'number those persons among the keepers of' her flock,' whom she condemns as breaking up the unity of that flock. Of which same it is said to the Ephesians by the voice of Paul, For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. [Acts 20, 29] And because it sometimes happens that heretics in proportion as they fall away more into the erroneousness of misbelief, guard themselves the more fully in outward practising, so that they may appear to do great things above the rest of the world, the Holy Church Universal sets at nought all their works, which she observes do not come forth by the authority of faith. Whence also it is rightly added by the voice of blessed Job,

Ver. 2. The power of whose hands was nothing to me, and of life itself they were accounted unworthy. [vii]

17. 'Power in the hand' is greatness in practising. But 'the power of the hands' of Heretics is reckoned 'as nothing to' Holy Church, because she sees that, the true faith being lost, whatsoever they do it is of no merit. For the charity of God and our neighbour they forsake, who both imagine what is false concerning God, and by wrangling are separated from their neighbours. But 'the strength of the hands' without charity the great preacher bears witness is of no avail, in that he says, And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. [1 Cor. 13, 3] But sometimes Heretics perform signs and miracles as well, but in order that

they may here receive back the rewards of their chastening and abstinence, i.e. the praises, which they go after. And hence it is said by the voice of the Redeemer, Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. [Matt. 7, 22] By which same sentence what is there given to be understood, but that in man it is the humbleness of charity and not the signs of miraculous virtues that ought to be revered?

Whence Holy Church now, even if there be any miracles of heretics performed, sets it at nought, because she sees that these are no proof of holiness. Since the way to prove holiness is not to perform miracles, but to love every man as one's self; and concerning God to think what is true, and of his fellow-creature to think better things than of himself. For that true power lies in love, and not in the manifesting of a miracle, 'Truth' shews, Who says, By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another. [John 13, 35] For He Who says not, 'in this shall it be known that ye are My disciples, if ye shall perform miraculous signs,' but Who saith, 'if ye have love one to another,' plainly proves that it is not miracles but charity alone that proves the true servants of God. So the witness to the heavenly discipleship is the gift of brotherly charity. Which same love, because all heretics refuse to have, whilst they are divided from the Unity of the Church Universal, it is justly said concerning them; the strength of whose hands was nothing to me. And because to these same signs, that they set forth, they do not accord themselves by any humility, it is rightly added, And of life itself they were accounted unworthy. Or indeed, all heretics Holy Church declares unworthy of life itself, for this reason, because under the Name of Christ, they fight against the Name of Christ.

Of whom it is yet further added;

Barren by want and hunger. [viii]

18. All heretics, whilst in sacred Revelation they make it their aim to dive into secrets of God beyond what they are capable of, by their hunger become barren. For they do not seek those things, whereby they may train themselves to humility, may order their ways in tranquillity, keep patience, shew forth long suffering, but those alone which may prove them learned and talkers; they aim to know those things, by which they may seem to be in a special manner instructed. For they very often treat with boldness of the nature of the Divine Being, whilst, wretched as they are, they know not their own selves. And so they become 'barren by want and hunger,' because they desire to dive into those things, by which they should not bring forth the buddings of a good life. For the things which they dive into are beyond themselves. And whilst they make for that which they are unable to comprehend, they neglect to acquaint themselves with those things, by which they might have been instructed. Which same boldness of theirs the great Preacher rightly checks, saying, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly. [Rom. 12, 3] Hence Solomon says, Set bounds to thine own wisdom. [Prov. 23, 4] Hence

again he says, Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.

[Prov. 25, 16] For the sweetness of spiritual meaning he who seeks to eat beyond what he contains, even what he had eaten he 'vomiteth'; because whilst he seeks to make out things above, beyond his powers, even the things that he had made out aright, he forfeits. Hence he says again; As for one to eat much honey is not good, so he that would search out Majesty shall be crushed with, glory. [v. 27] For the glory of the Invisible Creator, which when searched into with moderation lifts us up, being dived into beyond our powers bears us down. Therefore heretics, because in proportion as they aim to be more completely filled by sublime perception, so much the more entirely they become empty, have it rightly said concerning them, barren by want and hunger. Since by unbounded attempts the more they go after the knowledge of heavenly acquaintanceship, the more they lose it.

19. But, on the other hand, they that in Holy Church are truly humble, and truly instructed, are taught touching heavenly mysteries, both some things when viewed to understand, and some things not understood to reverence, that so what they understand they may hold with reverence, and what they do not as yet understand they may look forward to with humility. Whence it is said to us by Moses, that in eating the lamb, that which remaineth of it we should burn, with fire; [Ex. 12, 10] for we 'eat the lamb,' when in understanding many particulars of the Lord's human Nature, we deposit them in the belly of the mind. Wherefrom there are some things left to us, which cannot be eaten; because many particulars still remain concerning Him, which can by no means be understood. Which same nevertheless are to be 'consumed with fire,' because the things which we are unable to understand concerning Him, we reserve with humility for the Holy Spirit. Which same humility very often reveals even those things to the perceptions of the Elect, which appeared to be things impossible to be understood. For the froward minds of heretics, whilst they proudly attribute understanding to themselves, as it were presume to deliver fixed decisions even touching what is unknown. Whence it comes to pass, that the self-elation itself which lifts them up in themselves within, should without drive them off from the truth, and that in the declarations of God they should hardly even comprehend the outward things, who thought that they had in an especial manner gone to the bottom of spiritual secrets. Whence it is also added here;

Ver. 3, 4. Who gnawed in solitude, being scurvy with calamity and misery, and chewed herbs and the barks of trees. [ix]

20. That is wont to be 'gnawed,' which cannot be eaten. Now heretics because they apply themselves to make out Scripture by their own power, assuredly never can comprehend it, which same whilst they do not make out, they, as it were, do not eat. And because, not being aided by grace from on high, they are unable to eat it, they as it were 'gnaw' it with certain efforts. Since they handle it outwardly, when indeed they endeavour but do not attain to the interior parts of it. Which same because they are separated from the society of the Church Universal, are mentioned as gnawing not any where, but 'in solitude.'

To which same 'solitude' that the false teachers draw their followers, Truth long before forewarned, saying, If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth. [Matt. 24, 26] And these are rightly recorded as 'scurvy with affliction and misery,' because they are despicable at once by the destructiveness of their practices, and the badness of their perceptions. Who do also 'eat herbs and the barks of trees,' because being kept off by the bar of self-exaltation, they are unable to perceive in sacred Revelation what is great and interior, but with difficulty discover therein a few things that are tender and exterior. Since by 'herbs' the plainer statements, and by 'the barks of trees' the exterior declarations of the Fathers are betokened.

Those then who seek to know those things, by which they may not at all be learned, but seem to be, whilst in the sacred volumes they do not from the heart's core search out the force of charity towards God and our neighbour, are as it were 'fed by the herb and the bark,' because they are either the lowest or the outer things which nourish the souls of those who carry themselves proudly. Or surely to 'eat herbs' is touching Holy Scripture to observe the least precepts, and to disregard the greater ones. Whom Truth rightly rebukes, saying, Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law. [Matt. 23, 23] Who do also 'eat the barks of trees,' because there are some who in the sacred volumes respect the outside of the letter only, nor keep in safety any thing belonging to the spiritual meaning, whereas they imagine that there is nothing more in the words of God, but that which they may hear on the outside. Which persons nevertheless the passion of vain glory possesses in all their errors, and the thirst after honour holds them captives, and generally by the very things that they speak they seek after nothing else but earthly profits. Concerning whom it is said by Paul, For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly. [Rom. 16, 18] Whence too it is rightly subjoined;

And juniper roots for their meat. [x]

21. For the juniper tree has prickles instead of leaves, for so bristly is that which they put forth, that like to thorns it is able to prick the person handling it. Now a thorn is all sorts of sin; because whilst it draws into self-gratification, as it were by pricking it wounds the soul. Whence it is spoken by the voice of one righteous and penitent, I was turned in my calamity, while the thorn is broken, [Ps. 32, 4] surely because the mind is turned to lamenting, that the prick of sin may be broken by repenting. But in another translation, the thorn is described not as 'broken' ['confringi'],' but 'fixed,' ['configi'] which same is not at variance with the same sense, because the mind of the penitent is brought to sorrow when the sin that has been committed is retained fixed fast in the recollection. What then is there denoted by the 'root of the juniper' saving avarice, from which the thorns of all the sins are produced? Concerning which it is said by Paul, For the love of money is the root of all evil. [1 Tim. 6, 10] For that springs up covertly in the mind, and brings forth openly the prickles of all sin in the practice. Which same prickles arising from this root the great preacher

immediately implies, when he subjoins, Which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

For he who spoke of 'many sorrows' made known as it were the prickles arising from this root. So by 'junipers' we understand sins, but by 'the root of junipers' what else do we understand, but avarice, i.e. the material of sins? So then because heretics in their words generally go after external gains alone, yet are not ignorant that they make up what is wrong, but do not abandon the preachings of error, whilst they wish to receive their emoluments as teachers, it is well said of them now by the voice of the holy man, and juniper roots for their meat, because whilst they think of avarice with all the faculties of their minds, they are as it were fed by that nourishment, wherefrom assuredly the prickles of sins ensuing are used to be produced. Which persons if ever in sacred Revelation they seemingly discover things with sagacity, which while they do not understand, they fancy make for their statements, they directly scatter these vociferating them to their wretched hearers, whom they covet not the souls of but the substance. Whence it is fitly brought in next,

Ver. 5. Who carrying these same off from the valleys, when they found each of then, ran to them with clamour. [xi] 22. They 'carry them off from the valleys,' because with a high spirit they gather them from the lowly sayings of the Fathers. Which same whilst they exult to have found making for their cause, they run to them with outcries, because every thing that they have a perception of, by the appetite of praise they strive to cry abroad to the ears of men. It goes on; Ver. 6. They shall dwell in the desert places of the torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the ground. [xii]

23. We give the name of 'torrents' to the brooks, that are gathered by the winter rains, which likewise at certain seasons are dried up. Thus with justice the framers of wrong doctrines are called 'torrents'; because being cold to the warmth of charity, they grow to a height in the deadness of the winter season; because they do not flow out with perpetual fulness, but by the pleadings of Catholics, as by summer suns, are dried up. And indeed the fabricators of wrong doctrines springing up against Holy Church, are already made an end of by the heat of truth, yet notwithstanding the things which they taught their disciples do not cease to maintain and to defend. Thus then they that follow the errors of those persons 'dwell in the desert places of torrents,' i.e. put their trust in the preaching of those, whose effusions are already by the answering and reasoning of Catholics dried up. Now what else do we take 'the caves of the earth' for, but the hidden preachings of heretics? For heretics meet together in secret conclaves in such sort, that the reverence, which they cannot invest their erring belief with by reason, they may by concealment, and that to weak souls the speech of pervertedness may appear more to be treated with awe in proportion as it is secret. Hence in Solomon the woman as a type of heresy persuades, saying, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.

[Prov. 9, 17] Which self-same secret preachings 'Truth' abhors, saying, Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not. And again; Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; Behold, he is in the secret

chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the East, and shineth even unto the West: so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. [Matt. 24, 23. 26. 27. So then that is 'in the secret chambers' there, which here is phrased in 'caves.' Thus heretics 'dwell in caves,' because they generally conceal their error by preachings in secret; that in the degree that they forbear to shew themselves to the more learned and wiser sort, they may the more irresistibly draw to them the uninstructed. Whence also the words are rightly brought in next; Or upon the gravel. For we call by the name of 'gravel' those very little stones which the water of the river draws along. Accordingly, the teachers of perverted doctrines 'dwell upon the gravel,' because they draw after them those minds of men which are not established with any stedfastness of gravity, which the streams of errors are as it were ever carrying from place to place.

And hence the great preacher, whereas he desired that his hearers should not be led by the chances of time, but that they might be established by firm gravity, charged them, saying, That we henceforth be no more like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine. [Eph. 4, 14] Thus Holy Church, being borne down by her adversaries for a space, when she sees the bold minds of those in error insulting over her, recalls to remembrance what the behaviour of those was, saying, They shall dwell in the desert places of torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the gravel. For because their wrong preaching, the fire of charity being gone, gained power by coldness of feeling, surely it 'dwelt in the desert places of torrents.' And because it was not open and at large, it 'lay hid' in caves. And because it held the people not fixed but lightly moved, it remained not upon the rock but 'upon the gravel.' Concerning which it is yet further added;

Ver. 7. Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under brambles. [xiii] 24. What do we understand by the name of 'brambles,' but those 'piercings' [§. 21] of sins, which we have already described above. Now because froward minds delight in wickednesses, which they should have bewailed, all heretics uplift themselves with vain joy in proportion as they gain power for worse acts; and they 'reckon there are delights under the brambles,' because they lift up the froward mind to joy, from the same cause that they bear the thorns of sins. For if ever they have been able to draw any one to their error, they plume themselves in glee; and by the same act, whereby they are daily heaping to themselves sins, even by ruining others, they exult that they are as it were leaders to righteousness. And so it is well said; Who rejoiced amongst the like, and reckoned that there are delights under brambles. For they drag all that they are able to their own destruction; and to be under sins, or to add offences to offences, they imagine their heaping up a superabundance of virtuous acquirements.

Ver. 8. They were children of fools, yea, children of base men; and in the earth not appearing at all. [xiv] 25. That is to say, the children of those, who were the masters of errors. So they are called 'children,' not as engendered by the seed, but by the imitating of those, who by teaching what is wrong were 'fools' in respect of ignorance, and by living wicked lives 'base men' in respect of conduct. Who are not allied to our Redeemer by any relationship of wis-

dom, or by any of life. Concerning which it is said by the voice of Solomon in commendation of Holy Church, Her husband is noble in the gates. [Prov. 31, 23] So these, because they followed the froward examples of those going' astray, were recorded as being 'the children of fools and of base men.' Now it is rightly subjoined, and on the earth not appearing at all. Because whilst they aim to appear something here, surely from the land of the living they are made outcasts.

26. But this which we have delivered in a type of heretics, nothing is at all in the way, if we understand it as well of persons froward and carnal, though set in the right faith. For neither does Holy Church account those only adversaries to her, who, as placed without, dissent from her faith, but those also who by living amiss inwardly stifle her life. So then let her, afflicted with the wofulness of adversity coming down upon her, survey how in the season of her prosperity, by the wickedness of evil-doers living within her even she was burthened. Let her consider that in due of the deserts of some, the life of all was not unjustly disturbed in her, and let her say, Who gnawed in solitude, scurvy with affliction and misery. As I before said in the first part of this work, the solitude of the interior is sometimes used to be understood in respect of the excellency of contemplation. But in this place, where 'solitude' is mentioned in the way of reproach, what else is there demonstrated but a barrenness of goodness? And hence, under the type of Judaea, Jeremiah mourns over the soul of the sinner, saying, How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! [Lam. 1, 1] But when it is said by blessed Job respecting the evil-doers, they gnawed in solitude, it is well to look at that also which is delivered by the Psalmist, His enemies shall lick the dust. [Ps. 72, 9]

27. For there are two sorts of men that lend themselves to their own ambition, i.e. one which always employs the flatteries of the tongue to serve to avarice, another which is bent on robbery by open force. For we 'gnaw' when we wear away any thing outwardly with strong effort. For there is 'licking' when that which cannot be eaten with ease is tasted by the lightness of the tongue being pressed upon it. All persons then who even under a guise of faith live wickedly, who long after what belongs to another, but are not any way able to seize upon the object that they long after, but try by flattering speeches, and as it were by the softening of sweetness, to carry off the things coveted, what else do they save 'lick the ground?' because the several things of earth, which they cannot by power, they strive to make away with by the softness of the tongue. But they who are sustained in this world by any degree of power, and whilst coveting the things of others, scorn indeed to cozen by deceit, because they are able even by unjust strength to fulfil what they have a mind for, the thing that they long for these persons do not 'lick' but 'gnaw'; because they demolish the life of their fellow-creatures by the forcibleness of power as by the effect of teeth.

So then let Holy Church regard the true riches of the Eternal Country, let her behold the throng of the citizens Above, let her discern in her Elect Children the culture of the mind, and the excellencies of countless virtues, and from these let her recall the eye of the mind to the life of the wicked, which is made void of all goodness, and by comparison with them let her see how and in what way that life is destitute of all virtuous attainments, because it

has abandoned the things on high, and coveted those beneath. Let her see how very often that thing which he longs for, if perchance he has power, he even seizes by violence. Let her see that she has long been subject to such persons as set within her pale, and that by their offences she has come even to the very jeopardy and hurts of the good too, and let her say, Who gnawed in solitude. As though she complained openly, saying, 'The things of others they would not gnaw, even by seizing them by violence, except they themselves first remained in their own interior solitary, and bare of the culture of virtues.' But she rightly explains the kind and sort of those, saying, Scurvy with affliction and misery. For unhealthy flesh, if it be overlooked to be heedfully taken care of, is by foulness growing over it worse pressed with disease, and whilst to the misfortune of sickness the wretchedness of neglect is superadded, heavier inconvenience is undergone by scurf arising.

28. Therefore Human Nature having been created aright, but having sunk into disease by the demerit of its own will, it fell into utter overthrow, because being pressed by countless necessities, it found nought in this life save that whereby it should be beaten down; but whereas those same necessities of our nature we generally minister to beyond what is advisable, and overlook the care of the soul, by the wretchedness of neglect we add to our infirmity the foulness of sin. For the necessities of nature are such as to have this in them fraught with the greatest danger, that often there is no discerning therein, what there is done relating to them in the aim at usefulness, and what in the evil of self-gratification. For very frequently occasion of beguilement being met with, whilst we render the things due to necessity we are doing service to the evil of self-gratification, if our self-excusing cloaks itself with the veil of infirmity before the eyes of discernment, and as it were hides itself under the countenance of discharging the useful. But to let loose the frailty of our nature by neglect is nothing else than to add misery to affliction, and by that misery to redouble the foulness of the vices. Whence holy men, in every thing they do, discriminate with the most earnest aim, that the frailty of their nature exact not from them more than is owed, and that under the cloak of necessity there grow not up in them the evil of gratification.

For they undergo one thing from infirmity, and another thing from the prompting of temptation, and being appointed as a kind of most equitable umpires between necessity and pleasure, they lift up the one by comforting, and bridle the other by keeping down. Whence it comes to pass, that even if they are exposed to the affliction of their infirmity, yet they never descend from neglect to the foulness of misery. For this mere thing, to be in affliction, is to be subject to the necessities of nature from the frailty of flesh still liable to corruption. Which same necessities he longed to get quit of, who said, Deliver me from my necessities. [Ps. 25, 17] For he knew that, for the most part, the sins of the pleasures break forth by occasion of necessities, and that he might not of his own will commit aught unlawful, he was busy to have that itself plucked up which he was subject to unwillingly in the roots. [An example of this case is found in St. Augustine's Confessions, B. x. ' 43'47.]

29. But on the other hand, the evil-minded take delight in those necessities of their corrupt state, because they force them back to serve the occasion of gratifications. For while

they minister to nature by recruiting their bodies with food, through the gratification of the palate they are swelled out in the glutting of delight. When they seek clothing for covering the limbs, they look out not only for things that may cover, but also may uplift, and against the numbness of cold not only what may defend by thickness, but likewise delight by softness; not only what may soothe the touch by softness, but also beguile the eyes by the colour. So then, to turn occasion of necessity to the use of pleasure, what other thing is it but to join the foulness of misery to his affliction? Thus let the Church, being borne down in the season of adversity, call to mind those by whose deserts she undergoes these things, and let her say, Who gnawed in solitude, scurvy with affliction and misery. They indeed would not be made foul by affliction, if they did not superadd to inherent necessities the misery of gratifications. Which same necessities we have earned by the offence of the first parent. But they who add misery to their affliction, from the torture of punishment, break forth into augmentations of guilt. But would that such persons, whilst they scorn to be changed for the better, did things wrong in such a way as not to proffer them to others as well.

Would that their own death only were enough for them, and that by their baneful persuasions they did not kill another's life likewise. For they grudge others being what they are not, they grieve for others to obtain the thing that they lose; for if by chance they perceive any good points springing up in the acts of others, they directly pluck them up with the hand of mischievous reviling. Whence too it follows, And they did eat herbs and the barks of trees.

30. For what is denoted by 'herbs,' but the life of those beginning well tender and close to the ground? and what by the barks of trees, but the outward deeds of those who henceforth seek after things aloft? For bad men, when they see persons beginning what is right, either by deriding or as if counselling them, offer opposition. But when they now think with themselves that certain persons are making way to the highest things, because they cannot wholly and entirely scatter to the winds their advancements, they divert those persons from some of their deeds. Thus then to 'eat herbs and the barks of trees,' is by pestilent persuasions as by a kind of teeth of their evil-mindedness to scatter to nought, whether the aims of those beginning aright, or the doings of persons now henceforth after the manner of trees making towards that which is above. The children of perdition 'eat herbs,' when by scoffing they consume the beginnings of the frail sort. Likewise they 'eat the barks of trees,' when with the hand of evil counsel they withdraw from the life of those growing rightly the covering of good deeds. Now these latter they strip like trees in particular actions, but those because like herbs they drag whilst despising them, they as it were eat what they tread under them. The strength of some now rising on high they in part make away with, but the tenderness of some even still placed below they utterly break in pieces. So then let him say, they eat herbs and the barks of trees, because by wicked mockings in some they broke up piecemeal external deeds, and in some hearts in hope growing lively.

31. Or surely to 'eat herbs' is to copy some things light and tender belonging to the ancient Fathers. Whilst to 'eat the barks of trees' is to practise their deeds so far as the outside,

but in these same works not to maintain a right intention. For there are some persons who, whereas they cannot obtain the glory of the present world by that world's courses of conduct, seek after a semblance of sanctity, assume the garb of reverence, long to appear imitators of the old Fathers, and some few things indeed, little and light, they do employ themselves upon, but their strong things, and such as come forth from the root of charity alone, they are indifferent to imitate. These truly 'eat herbs,' because they overlook what is great, and are filled with what is worthless. Yet very often they put in execution even some deeds seemingly more vigorous, but they do not hold a right intention in those same deeds. To which persons surely to 'eat the barks of trees' is to take to them the outward acts of the Elect, and not to have a good intention in good acts. For whilst for the sake of human applause they search out right deeds, but are indifferent to imitate the heart of those doing rightly, they are filled 'by the barks of trees' alone. For with all the desire they seek after the glory or abundance of the present life. Whence too it is rightly subjoined, And the root of junipers was their meat.

32. For being set within by faith, whilst they for the most part lend themselves to thoughts of avarice, they as it were 'eat' that, whereby in the final close of life the roughnesses of punishments are put forth. Which persons, while they do not long after the fruitage of divine revelation, but make themselves subservient for the going after things temporal, are never filled with the bread of wheat, but with the 'root of the juniper.' For the mere things springing up from what is beneath and lowest engross them, that they may prick them afterwards after the manner of the juniper by the hardness of recompensing, as by the sharpness of leaves. For whilst they despise God here, they are never made sensible what great evil it is that they do. For still they are 'eating the root of the juniper,' but how sharp the branches of this root are they do not give heed; because verily bad conduct now as it were in the root gives delight in sin, but afterwards as it were in the branches it pricks in punishment. Where also it is well subjoined; Who, carrying these same off from the valleys, when they found each one, did run thereto with clamour.

33. In comparison surely with things above, all the present life is a 'valley.' But these, because they know not to contemplate the heights of mountains, i.e. the strong deeds of the Saints, are always busied in the lowest gratification as in 'the valleys,' and when they find any gain, even of a slight acquisition, they run with clamouring, because they strive even by wrangling to make off with this, for 'upon each being found in the valley to run with clamour,' is on the occasions of cases arising to wrangle even for small payment. Now it very often happens that him, whom good conduct exhibits as holy, occasion of earthly advantage springing up puts to the proof. For you may see persons already employed on what is lofty, already in the practice of abstinence, already in the work of instruction, following after the patterns of the fathers that went before; but when they suddenly find the gain of the present life, as the fruit of the valley, they 'run thereto with clamour'; because the quiet of overlaid sanctity being broken through they spring forth to that.

34. It may be too that by 'herbs and the barks of trees' not only the deeds of the good are meant, as has been said before, but consolations and blessings in this life. For oftentimes Almighty God, when He enriches His Elect with interior gifts, uplifts them with external honours as well. And while He renders them objects of honour by advancing them above others, He exhibits them the wider as objects of imitation; and sometimes the evil-minded despise indeed the life of those, but long to attain their good success in this world. And so because they seek here below the flatteries of transitory comfort, they 'eat herbs'; because in their thoughts they dwell on the external glory of these persons, they 'chew the barks of trees'; and because in all these they minister to avarice alone with the entire bent of their mind, they are filled with the 'root of the juniper.' All which things they 'carry off from the valleys,' because from love of this low corruptible life they are made to burn with boundless lusts. And 'when they find each one, they run thereto with clamours,' because surely of the holy Fathers, whose merits they never seek to acquire, they are busy to lay hold of the posts and governments, and when they very frequently cannot attain these by quiet means, they even try it by bursting asunder the peacefulness of concord.

35. And for this that these are widely separated from the conduct of the Fathers going before, it is rightly subjoined; They dwelled in the desert places of torrents, and in the caves of the earth, or upon the gravel. For on the side of good we rightly take the 'torrents' for the holy preachers, who whilst in the present life they flow into us by divine effusions, are as it were collected by a concourse of waters in the winter season. Who also withdraw themselves on the summer sun appearing, because when the light of the Eternal Country shines forth, they will cease to preach. 'The desert places of these torrents' are the benefits of the life of time. For these they abandon, and betake themselves to the obtaining of heavenly gains. But all these that 'torrent' had forsaken who said; For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung. [Phil. 3, 8] But because the minds of the wicked seek to obtain those things in this life, which the righteous abandon despising them, they are related to 'dwell in the desert places of the torrents.' For those things which are unworthy of the Saints, those same long to win as great. But the 'caves of the earth' are wicked thoughts, in which they bury themselves from the eyes of their fellow-creatures. For as they are evil, they shun being seen by men, and whilst they pretend themselves something else than what they are, they conceal themselves in the lurking places of their conscience, as 'in caves of the earth,' which persons would not do all these things, unless they were hopeless of an eternal and substantial life, unless they set their mind in this uncertainty of the temporal state. Whence it is well added, Or upon the gravel.

36. For the 'gravel' is the present life, which by the mere failure of mutability, as by the impulse of a river, is unceasingly being brought to its end. Hence to 'dwell upon the gravel' is to attach one's self to the tide of the present life, and there to set the bent of the mind, where it cannot stablish the step by standing firmly. There is another circumstance 'in gravel,' which ought in no wise to be passed over in silence, namely, that when the foot is set upon the top of it, it slips by the mere rolling tendency thereof, and is made to roll down to the bottom. From which circumstance the life of the wicked is in nothing at variance, because

whilst for love of the world they set themselves to do some things lawful and respectable, they in a manner set the foot flat upon the top, but suddenly the foot slips to the bottom, because their course of conduct, whilst it ever seeks after more, descends even to what is wicked and unlawful. So then, when Holy Church meets with the crosses of this period, let her in remembrance have recourse to the life of the carnal, whom even in her prosperity she bore as adversaries to her, and by whose deserts it is that she suffers these things let her see and know, saying, They dwelled in the desert places of torrents, and in caves of the earth, and upon the gravel.

For because they are bared of the teaching of the Fathers, they are related to 'dwell in the desert places of the torrents'; because they cover themselves up in the hidden thoughts of the heart, they are related to 'dwell in caves of the earth'; whilst because they desire to fix their aim in the changeableness of the present state of being, they are related to 'dwell upon the gravel.' But would that such, seeing that sins when they tempt they have no mind to do violence to, even after they have been committed, cleansed them away by weeping: would that at all events, when done, they acquainted themselves with their evil deeds, 'and applied to the barren fig-tree the basket of dung, i.e. to the unfruitful soul the richness of lamenting.

37. But the mind of man has for the most part this thing proper to it, that as soon as ever it falls into transgression, it is still further removed from the knowledge of self. For this very evil, that it commits, inserts itself to the soul as a bar before the eye of reason. Whence it comes to pass, that the soul, being first encompassed by voluntary darkness, afterwards does not any longer even know the good it should seek. For the more it attaches itself to evil things, the less does it apprehend the good ones that it loses. Since the light of truth, because it minutely tries the offences of lost sinners, in the same degree that it is neglected when had, so does it, judging rigidly, allow it to be, that not even when lost it should be sought back, and when it is banished from the act, it departs from the perception; that that whereof the face, as it were, is slighted in practice, should now no longer have its very hinder parts appear in the remembrance. Thus, hence it is that lost sinners, whilst subject to sins to be lamented, rejoice; concerning whom it is said by Solomon, Who rejoice to do evil, and delight in the worst things. [Prov. 2, 14] Hence it is that occasions of lamentations they go through dancing; hence it is that the business of their death they carry on laughing. Whence here also it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 7. Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under the brambles. [xv]

38. 'They rejoice in the midst of the like,' because, surely, they give heed to the transitory things which they receive, and neglect to look at the lasting blessings which they lose. And whilst they are on fire with the love of things temporal, they are willingly ignorant of the true joy. Which same if they earnestly sought to acquaint themselves with, how greatly the delights which they seek after are to be wept for, they would see. But, while they are unconcerned to know what are better, they choose those alone for themselves, as the high-

est, which flatter the eyes in the visible by a fleeting beguilement. That is to say, they fix fast their heart, following after the visible, and rejoice so much the more outwardly, in proportion as they are without the remembrance of themselves inwardly. Yet, generally, there are mixed with their joys calamities, and by the actual things, by which they are filled with pride, they are scourged. For neither can they, without grievous inconveniences of anxieties, either seek when not possessed, or retain when sought, the temporal things that they desire; among their equals aim at superior glory; from inferiors exact respect beyond what is meet, and to superiors shew forth the same less than they ought; for the most part display the mastery by masterfulness; ever do what is wicked, and yet, that they may not have the credit of wickedness, guard themselves with dread. All these things surely sting the wretched persons, but those same stings they do not feel, from being overcome by the mere love of the things of time. And hence it is rightly said now, And reckoned there were delights under the brambles; because, being closely encompassed by the enjoyments of sins, from the affecting of the present life, how sharp the things they are that they undergo they are not aware.

39. Therefore they 'rejoice,' but 'under brambles'; because they delight in earthly things indeed, but yet, whilst they are unable to manage those same things of time without trouble, the wretched persons are stung by that same care which they are pressed by. They continue 'under the brambles,' and this very thing they account delight, because they at once endure hardships indeed from the love of the present life, but yet, being bound about by the absorption of over-great desire, they account the trouble of that endurance to be pleasure. Hence Jeremiah, rightly taking upon himself the likeness of all human conduct, complains in lament, saying, He has made me drunken with; wormwood. [Lam. 3, 15] For as we have already said before in a part above, any one drunk knows nothing what he is undergoing. But he that is made 'drunk with wormwood,' both has the thing that he has taken bitter, and yet does not understand that same bitterness which he is filled with. So the race of man, being by the right judgment of God left to themselves in their pleasures, and by those same pleasures consigned to voluntary sufferings, is 'drunk with wormwood'; because both these are bitter things which it endures for the love of this life, and yet that same bitterness, by the blindness of concupiscence, as by the insensibility of drunkenness, it remains ignorant of. For thirsting after the glory of the world, whilst it finds instead thereof numberless tribulations, what it drinks is bitter.

But because it took this too eagerly, from mere drunkenness it is not now able to discern the evil of that bitterness. For bad men, for the sake of the glory of this world, love tribulations even, and on account of it willingly lend themselves to all toils, and most devotedly submit their necks to the yoke of heavy labours. Which is well described by Hosea whilst prophesying, under the likeness of Ephraim, saying, And Ephraim is a heifer that is taught to love threshing. [Hos. 10, 11] For a heifer accustomed to the labours of threshing, very often, when loosed, returns even not forced to the same customariness of labour. So the mind of the wicked being devoted to the services of this world, and accustomed to the wearyings of temporal things, even if it be allowed to be freely at liberty to itself, yet is eager to submit

itself to earthly pains and toils, and seeks the usage [al. 'from usage'] of a wretched way of life, 'the threshing' of labour, that it should not be acceptable, even if it were allowable, to give over the yoke of worldly servitude. Which same yoke the Lord loosed from the neck of the disciples, when He said, And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness; and straightway added, and cares of this life; and so that day come upon you unawares.

[Luke 21, 34] And again, Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. [Matt. 11, 28] What is it for the Lord to call Himself 'meek and lowly' in preceptorship, save leaving behind the difficulties for exercising self-exaltation, to point out some plain ways of living well? But because the minds of the wicked are more pleased by what is harsh in self-exalting than by what is gentle in mildness and humility, they 'suppose there are delights under brambles.' For from love of the world they are ready to bear what is hard as things soft and delightful, whilst they try in this life to lay hold of the topmost pinnacles of affairs.

40. The Lord bids ceasing from the labours of the world, He prompts the sweetness of holy tranquillity, and yet the frenzied mind of the wicked is more rejoiced to obtain what is harsh in the carnal way than to hold what is mild in the spiritual way. It is more fed by the bitterness of wearisomeness than by the sweetness of tranquillity. Which the Israelitish people openly shews us in itself, which same, whilst it received the refreshment of manna from above, lusted after the flesh-pots, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, from Egypt. [Numb. 11, 5] For what is denoted by the 'manna,' but the food of grace, having a sweet savour, given from Above for the refreshment of the interior life to persons rightly free? And what by the 'flesh-pots,' saving carnal works, which are with difficulty to be dressed by the toils of tribulations, as by fires? What by 'melons,' but earthly sweets? What by 'leeks and onions,' which those who eat very often shed tears, excepting the hardness of the present life, which is both gone through by the lovers of it not without mourning, and notwithstanding is loved with tears? Therefore, forsaking 'manna,' together with melons and fleshmeats they sought leeks and onions, surely because bad minds despise the gifts of tranquillity, sweet by grace, and for the sake of carnal pleasures they covet the wearisome ways of this life, even though full of tears;

they scorn to have where they may rejoice in a spiritual manner, and ardently seek where they may even groan in a carnal way. So then, let Job with a truth-telling voice rebuke the madness of these persons, for no other reason than that by a perverted judgment they set the troubled before the tranquil, the hard before the gentle, the harsh before the mild, the transitory before the eternal, the suspicious before the assured. The madness of such let Holy Church call to remembrance, when she is encompassed with cruel adversities without, which persons she held within herself as if believers, but for long endured their life opposing the faith, and let her say, Who rejoiced in the midst of the like, and reckoned there were delights under brambles; surely, because the evil things that they do, they learnt by the badness of the wicked going before. Whence also it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 8. They were children of fools, yea children of base men.

41. It is right for us to know that some within the pale of Holy Church are styled 'fools,' but yet 'noble,' whilst others are 'fools' and 'base.' For they are called 'fools,' but cannot be 'base,' who contemning the wisdom of the flesh, desire foolishness that shall stand them in stead, and after the newness of the interior descent are exalted by the nobility of virtue, who set at nought the foolish wisdom of the world, and covet the wise foolishness of God. Since it is written, Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men. This 'foolishness' Paul charges ourselves to lay hold of, when he says, If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. [1 Cor. 1, 25] This 'foolishness' they that perfectly followed obtained to hear from the voice of Wisdom, Ye which have followed Me in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [Matt. 19, 28] Mark how by abandoning temporal things they purchased the glory of eternal power. Accordingly what is there more foolish in this world than to abandon one's own? And what more noble in the eternal world than to come with God as judges?

Verily the nobility of these judges is made mention of by Solomon bearing record, where this which I have already spoken before is said, Her husband is noble in the gates, when he sitteth among the senators of the land. [Prov. 31, 23] For noble above measure does he regard those, whom he calls 'senators.' This 'nobility' Paul had beheld in himself, when being united by the spirit to the relationship of the Creator, he said, Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device; [Acts 17, 29] i.e. we are styled 'the offspring of God,' not as being brought forth in His Nature, but as being by His Spirit both created by His Will and made anew by His adoption. So much the more then is each one lifted up to this nobility, in proportion as he is renewed in the image he has received to the likeness of That Being in a copy.

42. But contrariwise they are 'fools and base men,' who while, in following themselves, they flee from the wisdom Above, are lulled to sleep in their ignorance as in the vileness of an abject descent. For in proportion as they do not understand that for which they were made, in the same measure they lose the relationship of high birth vouchsafed then in the Likeness. So they are 'fools and base men,' whom the slavery of the soul withholds from the fellowship of the Eternal Inheritance. As it is written, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. [John 8, 34] And it is spoken by the voice of the great preacher, For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. [1 Cor. 3, 19] They then, who whilst they were wise in earthly things were held back from the interior nobility, were 'fools and base men' at once. Whose actions while very many imitate they are rendered 'the children of fools and base men,' and whilst they follow these in notions and practices, they are at once 'fools,' because they do not understand true wisdom, and 'base men,' because they are not renewed by any freedom of the Spirit. But these persons though they may practise the arts of the wicked, yet very often in this life occupy the places of the just, and they account themselves the children

of those, whose offices from lust of honour they outwardly discharge. Which persons holy correction recals to the knowledge of themselves, i.e. that being settled in bad desires, they should mind whose children they are. For they are not the children of those whose places they occupy, but whose deeds they execute: Therefore let it be rightly said, The children of fools and base men. Where it is fitly subjoined;

And on earth utterly not appearing. [xvii]

43. For as there are very many persons upon earth, and they are hidden from the knowledge of their fellow creatures by the lowness of their vile condition, as by a kind of overlaying of a cloak, so there are some in the Church, who whilst they submit themselves to the degradation of wicked deeds, are not known to the Divine sight. To which persons it is one day to be said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. So, 'to be on earth and appear' is in a right faith through the excellency of practice to display the nobility of the soul. 'To be on earth and utterly not appear,' is to be set fast in the Church indeed by faith, but to show forth nothing worthy of faith in practice. These then being within the pale of Holy Church, to the eyes of the Divine Being both 'appear' in respect of judgment, and yet do 'not appear' in respect of the deserts of a good life, because those things, which by confessing they hold, by living they do not shew forth. Concerning whom Paul saith, They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him. [Tit. 1, 16] These persons in Holy Church bear down rather than venerate the faith which they protest that they hold, whereas by her name they covet rather to secure their own profits than her's.

But the Elect, whilst they take care to preserve the deservingness of faith by right deeds, are brought near to the knowledge of their Maker even amidst the throngs of lost sinners. Which is well denoted in the Gospel by the woman suffering from the bloody flux. Concerning whom the Lord says, Who touched Me? Peter answered reasoning, Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? [Luke 8, 45. 46. But he obtained to hear the causes in true reason, when the Lord said to him, Somebody hath touched Me, for I likewise perceive that virtue is gone out of Me. See how the throng 'pressed' the Lord, but she only 'touched' Him, who came to Him in humility, because surely even many lost sinners in Holy Church by learning 'press' the truth, which same they neglect to 'touch' by living well. They 'press' and are far off, because by professions they follow Divine knowledge, by habits flee it. They 'press,' I say, and are far off, because by acting they contradict that faith, which by speaking they assert. As then we are instructed by this testimony, that by touching some do not 'touch' the Lord, so some are not 'seen' by the Lord, even when they are seen; because to His secret regards, and for the punishment of condemnation, they do appear, but for the claim of Election they do not appear.

Therefore let it be rightly said, And on earth utterly not appearing, because though the Church held them to the extent of seeming, yet those being within her the Creator did not see, in that He did not know them. Who in the season of peace for this reason maintain the faith to the extent of words, because they see that that faith flourishes generally. But when a sudden storm of adversity rises up against that Church, they are directly parted from her

by a public denial; and whatever they before held as if venerating her, they afterwards fight against the same as deriding her. Whence it is fitly added;

Ver. 9. And now am I their song, yea, I am become their byword. [xviii] 44. By which same words that time of Holy Church is set forth, when she is openly derided by the lost; when the wicked gaining ground, faith shall be for a reproach, and truth shall be for a ground of accusation. For so much the more contemptible shall each individual be in proportion as he may be more righteous; and the worse object of abhorrence, the more worthy object of praise. Therefore the Holy Church of the Elect in the time of calamity 'becomes a proverb' to the wicked, because when they see the good die by torments, they take their likeness of cursing from those. For in proportion as they see a passing death, but do not see a lasting life, so much the more in scoffing do they flee present ills, in proportion as by the understanding interiorly they do not reach to lasting goods. But the particulars that are subjoined because they are not involved in obscurer sorts of sentences, we must run through in brief, that we may be able to come the sooner to those parts, wherein we have to labour. It goes on;

Ver. 10. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face. [xix] 45. All the wicked 'fly far' from Holy Church, not by the paces of footsteps, but by the characters of practices; they fly far not in place, but desert, whereas, pride gaining ground, they contemn her with open upbraiding. For 'to spit in his face' is not only to detract from the good in absence, but to give the lie to each one of the just even in presence. And these then whilst the wicked by openly deriding set at nought, they as it were let out in insults upon them loose words, like streams of spittle running down. But Holy Church knows how to gain ground in sufferings, and in the midst of reproaches to maintain an honourable life; she is taught neither to be cast down by adversities, nor to glory in prosperity. She is instructed, in meeting prosperity, to lay low the mind in downcasting; she is taught, in meeting adversity, to lift up the soul to the hope of the height above. She knows how to ascribe her good things to the mercifulness of the Redeemer, she knows how to ascribe her evil things to the justice of the Judge, that both what is good she has by His bestowing, and what is bad she suffers by His permitting. And hence He immediately adds touching the Lord, saying,

Ver. 11. Because He hath opened His quiver and afflicted me. [xx] 46. What is denoted by 'the quiver' of God, but secret counsel? Now the Lord casts the arrow from the quiver, when from His secret counsel He sends forth an open sentence. For that any man is scourged, we know, but for what cause the scourge comes, we know not. But when after the scourge amendment of life follows, the actual power of counsel is itself disclosed as well. So the quiver shut is hidden counsel. But we are chastened by an open quiver, when by that which follows after the scourge, we see with what counsel we are stricken. When the Lord beholds sins, and yet does not move the hand to vengeance, He as it were holds the quiver shut, but by striking He shews, how greatly that displeased Him in us, which He bore long beholding it. Therefore let the Holy Church of the Elect being pressed by tribulations say, For He hath opened His quiver, and afflicted me. Which same on meeting with the insolent voices of her adversaries, when she sees that her preaching is not received, giving over the hardness of

some, restrains the words of her preaching. For reflecting that her persecutors are rendered worse at the voice of her exhortation, she rather prefers to hold her peace. And when she sees them persons unworthy to hear, she binds up her preaching with silence drawn over. Whence he fitly adds;

And put a bridle into my mouth. [xxi]

47. They were acquainted with 'a bridle put upon themselves' before certain persons, who said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. [Acts 13, 46] Holy men see 'the bridle' of silence put upon themselves with the hard hearts of lost sinners, when they say by the Prophet, How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? [Ps. 137, 4] Paul also charged 'a bridle to be put,' who enjoined the disciple, saying, A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth condemned of himself. [Tit. 3, 10] For holy teachers very often by lofty ken survey the hearts of those that oppose them, and when they see those hearts forsaken by God, afflicted and groaning they hold their peace. Doth not Solomon sometimes 'put a bridle' upon the teachers, who saith, Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee, [Prov. 9, 8] but if we hold our peace from rebuking for this reason, because we are afraid for the scorner's hates to rise up against us, we no longer seek God's profits, but our own. Wherein it requires to be known that sometimes when bad men are reproved they become worse. Them therefore we spare, and not ourselves, if from the love of those we cease from the rebuking of them.

Whence it is needful that we sometimes endure keeping to ourselves what they are, in order that they may learn in us by good living [al. 'by seeing'] what they are not. Therefore because Holy Church, who ever gives forth her words in a spirit of charity, sometimes also withholds them on the principle of charity, let her say, He hath put a bridle in my mouth. As though he confessed openly, saying, 'Because in some I did not see the advancement of preaching, from those I refrained assault, that my life at all events by patience they might be taught, whereas my words they would not by the preaching proffered consent to receive.' But very often this grieves us most in tribulations, that we meet with them from those, in whom we trusted with the love of kin. And hence it is added;

Ver. 12. At the right hand of the East my calamities on the spot arose. [xxii]

48. For 'calamities' would 'rise to the left,' if at the hand of any persons set without the pale of Religion, and openly denying Christ, she met with the adverse dealings of persecution. But when she undergoes from persons seemingly believers the trial of tormentings, it is as if calamities arose to her at the right hand, because they who are enlisted under Christ's name, assail Christ's name in her. For by the very usage of speech we speak of having as 'on the right' what we account as great, and as on the left that which we look down upon, which Zechariah openly teaches, saying, And he shewed me Jesus the high priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. [Zech. 3,

1. 2. Who that he might the more plainly shew this that he set before, added going on; And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Jesus was clothed with filthy garments. 'Jesus was [al. 'is spoken of as'] clothed with filthy garments,' because though He was a stranger to all sin, yet He came into the likeness of the flesh of sin. And to Him on His coming Satan stood on His right hand. For the Lord appeared to hold the Jewish People as great, and the Gentiles as nought.

But after that He appeared Incarnate, the Gentile world, which had been held as 'on the left' believed, whilst the Jewish People swerved aside to unbelief. Thus 'Satan stood on the right hand to Him'; because he carried off from Him that People, which had been for a long while beloved. But because that same Jewish people, being now lost, shall in the end one day believe, as the Prophet testifies, who says, The remnant shall be saved; [Is. 10, 21] the Lord removes Satan from His right hand, saying, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. And betokening the deliverance of that same people, he adds, because He hath chosen Jerusalem. Which same people because under the guidance of unbelief it let itself run down to the burnings of hell, but whilst it is brought back to faith, is set free from that same burning of everlasting fire, has it directly added there concerning it, Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?

49. So then as there for 'the right hand' the Jewish people is denoted, so in this place by the term of 'the right hand,' the faithful people of Holy Church is denoted. And hence the Judge that is to come 'shall set the goats on His left Hand, and the sheep on His right Hand.' But when these very persons too fret Holy Church in the time of adversity, who seemed to be of the faithful, surely 'calamities arise to her on the right hand.' Now rightly is this same called 'the right hand of the East'; since it is written of the Head itself of the same, The East is His Name. [Zech. 6, 12 Vul.] For seeing that the light springs from the East, He is rightly called 'the East,' by the light of whose righteousness the night of our unrighteousness is enlightened. So 'calamities arise to the right hand of the East'; because these likewise leap forth to persecution, who were supposed to be Elect Members of our Redeemer. Which same calamities he rightly declares 'arise on the spot,' because whereas they who persecute were not persons without her pale, evils are brought about by them suddenly and on the spot. But if 'the right hand' is a designation of those who are truly believers, 'calamities arise to the right of the East,' because on the crisis of persecution breaking forth, the righteous undergo the cruel assaults of the wicked. It follows;

Ver. 12. They overturned my feet, and oppressed with their footpaths as with waves. [xxiii]
50. What are denoted by the Church's 'feet,' but her outermost members? which while they lend themselves to earthly deeds, are able to be the sooner deceived by adversaries in proportion as they do not understand things on high. Therefore these 'feet adversaries overturn,' that is to say, when they draw her outermost members to the error of their doctrine. The 'feet overturned' cannot keep the way, in that all the weak being either persuaded by the promises of their persecutors, or affrighted by their threats, or broken by their tortures, swerve from the right path. Now 'the paths' of adversaries are rightly likened to waves,

when it is said, and they oppressed with their footpaths as with waves; in this way, because the life of the evil-minded, mischievous with wayward restlessness, comes down as a tempest for the overwhelming the ship of the heart, so to say. Concerning which same tempest it is said by Solomon, As a tempest passing, the wicked shall not be. [Prov. 10, 25] And when the weak man sees the froward flourishing, that man the wave of wretched imitation plunges into the sea of frowardness. It follows;

Ver. 13. They did away with my paths, they plotted against me, and prevailed, and there was not any to bring help. [xxiv]

51. Let blessed Job tell these things of evil spirits, i.e. of secret enemies. Let the Church Universal speak them of bad men persecuting, i.e. of open adversaries. For these 'do away with her paths,' when in the souls of certain weak ones they interrupt the ways of truth by crafty persuading. These in 'plotting prevail, when those, whom they cannot openly force to evil, they turn aside by pretending what is good, but that is very wonderful, which he subjoins, And there was not any one to bring help, when the Psalmist exclaims touching the help of God; A helper in seasons, in tribulation. And, Let them hope in Thee, who know Thy Name, for Thou, Lord, wilt not forsake those that seek Thee. [Ps. 9, 9. 10. And when it is written again, Did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded? or did any abide in His commandments, and was forsaken? Or whom did He ever despise, that called upon Him? [Ecclus. 2, 10] On what principle, then, is it now said; And there was not any to bring help, excepting that those, whom Almighty God loves for all eternity, He sometimes leaves for a time? Whence it is written; For a small moment have I forsaken thee, and with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid My face from thee for a moment, and with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee. [Is. 54, 7. 8. Hence too the Psalmist besought, saying, O forsake me not utterly.

[Ps. 119, 8] He then knew that he might be left for a little while with advantage, who prayed that he might not be 'utterly forsaken.' For the Lord by coming helps His Saints, by 'leaving' puts them to the proof, by gifts he establishes, by tribulations he tries. Whence too it is rightly said by one of Wisdom, For at the first she will walk with him by crooked ways, and bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline until she try him in his thoughts. [Ecclus. 4, 17] Since the soul of the righteous grace calls, trial puts to the question. And Almighty God allows the adversaries of His Elect to grow to a height in time, that the life of the good may be purified by the pitilessness of the bad.

52. Since the Lord would never suffer them to be hostile to the good except he also saw what great good they did. For whilst the unrighteous deal cruelly, the righteous are purified, and the life of the wicked is enlisted to the advantage of the innocent, in that this same both by bearing down it abases, and by abasing ever fashions to better. Hence too it is rightly said by Solomon; the fool shall be servant to the wise of heart. [Prov. 11, 29] And yet we often see the wise subordinate, and fools occupying the stronghold of dominion, wise men paying obedience in servitude, and fools lording it with tyrannical exultation. How then by the marking out of God's sentence is 'the fool servant to the wise,' when generally speaking

he keeps him down by the right of temporal dominion? But it is to be borne in mind, that whilst against the life of the wise man the fool being uppermost enforces the terribleness of power, whilst he wearies him out with labours, rends him with insults, such a person surely by burning he purges from all the rust of bad habits. Thus the fool even in ruling is 'servant to the wise,' in that by bearing him down he advances him to a better state.

In this way it is sometimes the case that over masters under age servants are set for the tutorage of discipline, they frighten, they bear hard upon them, strike them, yet do not at all cease to be servants, because they are appointed to this very end, that to their masters whilst progressing they should render service even by striking them. Therefore because the ills of the children of perdition purify whilst they torment the good, even the power of the wicked is enlisted to the welfare of the just. But very often the just when seized by tribulation account the hand of Him Who helps them slow, when the barbarity of those persecuting them wrings them somewhat too long. And the remedies of the deliverer indeed are quickened, but that which is done quickly by the deliverer, appears slow to him that is in grief. And when there is sought help to present itself to the supplicating voice, if it does not follow the voice directly, it is reckoned that it is wanting. Whence it is said now; And there was not any one to bring help. In which same utterance we have set forth the actual force of the suffering, because help from Above, though it is there as to the appointed providence of the protector, yet is thought to be wanting as to the quickened wishes of the sufferer. It follows;

Ver. 14. As by a wall being broken, and a door being opened, they rushed in upon me, and were rolled down to my miseries. [xxv]

53. What is in this place designated by the title of 'a wall,' but the Redeemer of the human race, concerning whom it is said by the Prophet for the edifying of Holy Church, There shall be set in her a wall and a bulwark? [Is. 26, 1] For that same Redeemer is 'a wall' to us, Who forbids the rushing of evil spirits to reach to our hearts. Who also set 'a bulwark' as well to our faith, because before that He shewed Himself in flesh, He sent prophets as preachers of His mystery. Since they are rightly entitled by the name of 'a bulwark,' ['antemurale'] because, whereas they preached the Lord coming after, they stood as it were 'before the wall.' But it is as if 'the wall were broken,' when by the promptings of the wicked, faith, which is in our Redeemer, is done away in the hearts of some. And when power is awarded to the perverse in this life, what else but 'a door' of error is opened? And so it is as if the wall being burst asunder and the door opened the wicked rush in upon the good, when power being received temporally, the corrupt set themselves to pull down the very defences of faith too in the hearts of some. Concerning whom it is fitly said; And were rolled down for my miseries; that is to say, because in the first instance to their own miseries. For except that by living corruptly they fell before to their own 'miseries,' they would never afterwards persuade others also to those miseries. But after their own the children of perdition are 'rolled down to our miseries' also, when to those evil things wherein they are themselves already involved, they draw persons as well who are linked to ourselves.

54. It is possible too that by the title of a wall may be understood the defence of discipline, as Solomon bears witness, who says, I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding. And lo, it was all grown over with nettles, and thorns had covered the face thereof; and the stone wall thereof was broken down. [Prov. 24, 30. 31.] For to 'pass by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding,' is to look into the life of any careless liver, and to take a view of his deeds. Which same 'nettles or thorns fill up,' because in the hearts of the careless, itching earthly desires and the prickles of bad habits sprout forth, since it is written, In desires is every one that is idle. 'The stone wall was pulled down,' i.e. the discipline of the Fathers was loosened from his heart. For because 'the stone wall being pulled down' he saw that discipline was loosened, he directly added in that place going on; Then I saw and laid it up in my heart; and by example I learned instruction. And therefore as it were the wall being burst the enemy enters in, when by the crafty persuading either of evil spirits, or of bad men, the defences of discipline in the heart are scattered away. But when the vigour of that same discipline is relaxed in the heart of the lost, in their eyes all the deeds of the good are had in contempt, and they account it nothing, whatever they see relating to virtues in the Elect. And hence it is added;

Ver. 15. I was reduced to nought. [xxvi] 55. For in the reckoning of the wicked we are 'brought to nought,' when those temporal goods, which they themselves love as chief, we do not retain in our bands. Because the promises from Above being disregarded they desire the things of earth, and if ever aught rises up in the mind of those persons in the way of longing after the Eternal world, it is quickly done away by transitory gratification springing up. And hence it is directly subjoined; As the wind thou didst take away my desire. Since the faithful People declares that itself suffers that, wherein those whom it loves it grieves should suffer. Thus 'the wind takes away desire,' when any transitory object does away the longing after Eternity. And hence it is yet further fitly subjoined; And as a cloud my health hath passed away. Since the cloud towers on high, but the breath of wind drives it into career. Thus, surely, then is it with the temporal good things of the wicked. They appear as it were by loftiness of honour to pass their time as on high, but they are daily driven on to the career of life as by a kind of blasts of their mortality. So 'health passes as a cloud,' because the glory of the wicked, in the degree that it is lofty, is not fixed. But after the desires and the courses of persons going weakly have been finished, the discourse is made to turn to the voice of the Elect, when it is forthwith introduced,

Ver. 16. But now my soul in mine own self is withered, and the days of affliction have taken hold upon me. [xxvii]

56. Since 'the soul' of the Elect 'withers now,' because it is afterwards made green in that eternal triumphing. 'Now, the days of affliction take hold upon them,' because the days of joy follow afterwards. As it is written, To him that feareth God it shall go well at the last. [Ecclus. 1, 13. 19. And again it is delivered touching the Church, And she shall laugh in the last day. [Prov. 31, 25] For now is the time of affliction to the good, that one day

exulting may follow them apart from tears. Hence it is elsewhere said by those, Thou hast humbled us in the place of affliction. [Ps. 44, 19] Since 'the place of affliction' is the present life, so the righteous here below, i.e. 'in the place of affliction,' are 'humbled,' because in the eternal life, i.e. in the place of delight, they are elevated. But when he said that 'the soul was withered,' he rightly put before too, in mine own self; because in our own selves, indeed, our soul is afflicted, but in God refreshed, and it is become far removed from the greenness of joy, in proportion as still being withheld from the light of the Creator, it draws back to itself. But then it attains to the greenness of true joy, when being lifted up by the grace of eternal contemplation it even transcends its very self. Now these particulars which we have run through by allegorical investigating, it is requisite that we hold in all points after the history as well.

Which particulars however I now for this reason pass over, because I am not unaware that they are plain to those that read them. Now in the days of final persecution, because there are many that are lost and a small number that are saved, for this reason the holy man, in the time of his suffering, both utters few particulars touching the good, and a great many touching the wicked. And hence he directly turns his words to the person of those who are brought to the ground, and so conveys his own circumstances, that the things he relates may accord with those that fall. Thus it follows;

Ver. 17. In the night season my bone is pierced with pangs, and they that eat me sleep not. [xxviii] 57. If we mark the history by itself, the case appears plain, because the body of the holy man, through the hollows of ulcers, a swarming multitude of worms was wounding. But if we dive into the mystery of the allegory, what are denoted by 'the bones,' but the strong ones severally in the body of Holy Church? Who, as it were, by their solidity hold together the members, while they bear with stedfastness the practices of those going weakly. But when the heat of the last tribulation is grown to a head against her, in the night season her bone is pierced with pangs; because sometimes being overcome with torments, even the very persons let themselves run off to faithlessness, who seemed to be keeping fast others to the faith. Therefore she says, In the night season my bone is pierced with pangs. As though she said in plain words, 'Pressed with the darkness of tribulation, they are so penetrated with affliction, that even the very persons, who had within me the firmness of strength, have now, as it were, a kind of piercing of fear.' And it is well said, And they that eat me take no sleep; because the evil spirits, that 'eat up' all the carnal out of the Church, know not how to rest from tempting in proportion as they are not burthened with any weight of flesh. But the persecutors of Holy Church, because they are very corrupt, would that they were few in number! It goes on;

Ver. 18. In, the multitude of them is my garment consumed, and they have bound me about as with the collar of my coat. [xxix]

58. If we give heed to the history, what else do we take 'the garment' of blessed Job for, but his body? whose 'garment indeed is consumed' when the flesh is put to torment. But according to the mystery of allegory, 'the garment' of Holy Church is the life of the faithful.

For as the whole Church together is 'the garment' of Christ so the faithful severally are accounted 'garments' of that same Church. For if Holy Church were not Christ's 'garment,' Paul surely would not say, That He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle; [Eph. 5, 27] i.e. neither in respect of sin 'having spot,' nor in respect of a double mind 'having wrinkle,' because both by righteousness she is clean, And by a single bent stretched. She then that is washed that she should not 'have spot,' and stretched that she should not 'have wrinkle,' assuredly is a 'garment.' Therefore as the clothing of Christ is the name given to the whole Church in general, so the clothing of the Church are the souls of the several persons which being converted from error, by believing that same Church, encircle her by attaching themselves with faithfulness to her. Concerning which same the Lord saith to that Church by the Prophet, As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely be clothed with them all, as with an ornament. [Is. 49, 18] But when the storm of cruel persecution arises, very many of the faithful are separated from the love thereof, who seemed to have themselves attached to her heartily. So then let her say, In the multitude of them is my garment consumed; because whilst there are many that torment, the greatest number are brought to an end, who were attached to her by the binding tie of love.

59. Now it is well added, And have bound me about as with the collar of my coat. Since 'the collar of a coat' encircles the neck of the wearer, but if the neck is tied up, the use of the voice and the puff of life is done for. Holy Church, then, do the children of perdition 'tie up as with a collar of a coat,' because they endeavour by their persecutions to put out in her the life of faith, and the voice of preaching. Since this thing her persecutors are in a special manner wont to essay, that before all things they may take away from her the word of preaching. And hence these persons who withstood the first beginnings of the holy faith told the Apostles beaten with rods, saying, Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine. [Acts 5, 28] So the body of Holy Church they had as it were girded with 'the collar of a coat,' who, the preachers being tied up, as it were pressing her neck, wished to shut up the way of the voice in her. But the several Elect are more ready to die in the time of their persecution than to hold their peace. Who whilst they are brought down in death in the body, are accounted despicable and mean by all the foolish and the carnal, because when the lost are unable to see what good things the Elect hold in the spirit, these whom they see brought to an end in the flesh, they account unhappy. And hence it is added;

Ver. 19. I was likened to mire, and became like dust and ashes. [xxx] 60. Since in the judgment of lost sinners the Holy Church of the Elect is 'likened to mire,' because it is trodden under and despised in time; it is 'compared to dust and ashes,' because while they do not see her interior good things, they calculate that she has been brought to those bad things alone, which they see brought to view in her in the body. But the faithful people of the Elect, while it sees many fall from itself, wishes, if it might obtain this, to have the times of its adversities reversed. Because the prayer of this people is delayed, its groaning is increased. Hence it is further added; Ver. 20. I will cry unto Thee, but Thou wilt not hear me; I stand, and Thou regardest me not. [xxxi]

61. Since Holy Church in the time of her persecution 'stands' by faith, and 'cries' by longings. But she is grieved that she is 'not regarded' as it were, when she sees her wishes under tribulations delayed. For by a high counsel, Almighty God, when His Saints are wrung tightly by the persecutions of adversaries, and when they cry with never ceasing entreaties that they may be set free, is wont to put off their voices in entreating Him, that their merits in suffering may be increased, in order that they may be the more heard in answer to merit, the more they are not heard quickly in answer to wishing. Whence it is elsewhere written, O my God, I cry in the day time, but Thou hearest not, and in the night season. [Ps. 22, 2] And the very usefulness itself resulting from the delay of hearing is immediately added, when it is there brought in directly, And not for foolishness to me. Since for redoubling the wisdom of the Saints it is beneficial, that what is prayed for they receive slowly, that by delay desire may increase, and by desire the understanding may be augmented. But when the understanding is stretched to the full, there is opened a more ardent affection thereof towards God. And the affection is made large for obtaining the things of heaven, in proportion as it was long suffering in expecting. Yet in the midst of these things grief prompts the patience of the Saints to utterance, and whilst being delayed they gain ground, they dread lest their powers failing they should being despised be rejected. It goes on;

Ver. 21. Thou art changed to cruel unto me; and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou opposest Thyself against me. [xxxii] [LITERAL INTERPRETATION] 62. The old translation is widely at variance with this sense, because what is spoken in this concerning God, is related in that of adversaries and persecutors. Yet because this new translation is said to have transferred every thing from the Hebrew and Arabic more truly, we should believe whatever is delivered in it, and the right way is that into the word of it our interpretation should search with exactness. Accordingly he says, Thou art changed to cruel unto me, and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou opposest Thyself to me. In Holy Scripture when any thing is said of God unworthy, the mind of the reader is affected, as if it were ever the case that any thing that is worthy were spoken of God. Since well nigh every thing that is spoken touching God, is by this alone henceforth unworthy, that it admitted of being spoken. But for Him to Whose praise the conscious faculty, being astounded, is not equal, when may the tongue by speaking suffice? But the Holy Spirit teaching to men that understand this same truth, how unutterable are the things above and the things of God, sometimes uses even those words concerning God, which amongst men are held as a fault, that from these things which seem unworthy of men, and yet are spoken concerning God, men should be admonished to know that neither are those things even worthy of God, which whilst they are accounted worthy among men, are thought worthy of God.

63. For God is called 'jealous,' as it is written, The Lord, his Name is 'jealous.' [Ex. 34, 14] He is called 'wroth,' whence it is written, The Lord was wroth against Israel. [Numb. 32, 13. The Lord is called 'repentant,' as where it is written, It repenteth Me that I have made man upon the earth. [Gen. 6, 7] And again; It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king over Israel. [1 Sam. 15, 11] He is entitled compassionate, as where it is written, Merciful and pitiful is the Lord, patient and full of compassion. [Ps. 86, 15. He is called 'foreknowing,' as

the Apostle saith concerning Him, For whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. [Rom. 8, 29] Whereas neither 'jealousy,' nor 'wrath,' nor 'repentance,' nor strictly speaking 'compassionateness,' nor 'foreknowledge,' can be in God. For all these particulars are derived into Him from human qualities, while there is a descending to words expressive of infirmity, that as it were a kind of steps being made for us, and set beside us, by the things which we see close to us, we may one time be enabled to mount up to the high things of Him. For He is said to 'feel jealous,' who guards the chastity of his wife with torment of mind. 'He is said to be 'wroth,' who is inflamed with heat of spirit against evil that deserves to be punished.

He is said to 'repent,' to whom that which he has done is displeasing, and contrarily by changing does some other thing. He is called 'compassionate,' who is moved with pity towards his neighbour. Now 'misericordia' ('commiseration') is so called from 'miserum cor,' ('a miserable heart,') for this reason, because each individual sees a person wretched, and sympathizing with him, while he is affected with grief of mind, he himself makes his heart miserable, that he may free from misery the man that he is set on. He is said to 'foreknow,' who sees each particular event before it comes, and that which is future foresees before it becomes present. How then is God described as being 'jealous,' Who in watching over our chastity, is not affected by any torment of mind? How is He 'wroth,' Who in taking vengeance on our evil ways is not stirred by any agitation of mind? How is He 'repentant,' Who what He has once done is never at all sorry that He has done? How is He 'commiserating,' Who has not ever a heart of misery? How is He foreknowing, whereas nothing but what is future can be foreknown? And we know that to God there is nothing future, before the Eyes of Whom things past there are none, things present pass not by, things future come not; seeing that all that to us was and will be is in His sight at hand, and all that is present He is able to know rather than foreknow.

And yet He is called 'jealous,' He is called 'wroth,' He is called 'repentant,' He is called 'commiserating,' He is called 'foreknowing,' that because He watches over the chastity of each individual soul, He should after man's method be called 'jealous,' though He be not touched by torment of mind. And because He smites sins, He is said to be 'wroth,' though He be not affected by any agitation of the spirit. And because Himself unchangeable He changes that that He is minded, He is said to 'repent,' though it is the thing He changes, not His counsel. And when He succours our misery, He is called 'commiserating,' though He succours the miserable, and has not ever a heart of misery. And because the things which to us are future He sees, which same however to the Same Being are always at hand, He is styled 'foreknowing,' though He does not in any way foresee the future, which He sees as present. For even whatsoever things are, in His Eternity are not therefore seen because they are, but therefore they are because they are seen. Whilst therefore there is a coming down to the words of our changeableness, by those, as being made a kind of steps, let him, who is able, mount up to the unchangeableness of God, that he may see One shewing jealousy, without jealousy, One wroth without wrath, One repentant without sorrow or repentance, full of commiseration without a miserable heart, foreknowing without foresight.

For in Him can neither the past nor the future be found, but all things changeable last unchangeably, and things, which in themselves cannot exist together, are all of them at once and together present to Him, and nothing that goes by passes away in Him, because in His Eternal Being, in an incomprehensible manner, all the rolls of ages whilst passing remain, whilst running a race stand still.

64. As then we understand Him 'jealous' without jealousy, 'wroth' without wrath, so He might by the holy man be also called 'cruel' without cruelty. Since he is called 'cruel,' who while smiting with severity spares not; that is to say that in this passage 'cruel' should be taken for one striking with severity, and not sparing the avenging of sin. Hence also Isaiah, when he saw the day of final Judgment was destined to come not henceforth with pardon but with rigour, says, Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath, and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and to destroy the sinners thereof out of it. [Is. 13, 9] Therefore the holy man, that he might declare that this same cruelty is more suited to himself than to God, says, Thou art changed to cruel unto me. As though he said in plain terms, 'Thou, Who hast in Thine own Self nought of cruelty, to me, whom Thou sufferest not to draw breath from persecution, Thou seemest cruel.' For so God is not capable of being cruel, just as He is not in the least degree capable of being changed.

But because in God there comes not either cruelty or changeableness at any time, whilst He says 'unto me,' he shews that he is sensible that God is in Himself neither 'cruel' nor 'changeable.' But because as concerns ourselves things prosperous and things adverse shift to and fro, in this that we ourselves are changed, we as it were imagine as concerns ourselves His mind changed. But He the same Being remaining unchangeable in Himself, in the thought of men's hearts comes to be felt now one way and now another, according to the character of their minds. For the light of the sun too, whereas it is not at all unlike to itself, seems to weak eyes harsh, but to sound eyes gentle; that is to say, by their changing, not by its own. Therefore as we before said, in saying, Thou art changed, he added unto me, that this very 'cruelty' and 'changing' might be not in the attributes of the Judge, but in the mind of the sufferer. Which he laid open by other words also, saying, And in the hardness of Thine hand Thou opposest Thyself to me. For 'the Hand' of the Lord is thought 'hard,' when being opposed to our will, that thing which displeases Him in us, it follows hard upon by striking; and He redoubles the strokes, when the soul of the sorrower looks for clemency.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] Which words, howsoever, according to the mystery of the allegory, suit well the words of Holy Church speaking in the accents of the weak, who very often reckon themselves to be smitten more than they fancy they deserve, and esteem as cruelty of the Judge the severity of the lancing howsoever most just, seeing too that when the wound of the sick man is cut away by the chirurgeon's steel, the operator is called cruel, who however by the hardness of the hand that cuts is opposed to the wound, but in concert with the health. It proceeds; Ver. 22. Thou liftedst me up, and as it were setting me upon the wind, thou dashedst me down strongly. [xxxiii]

65. Because the glory of the present life is seen as on high, but is not set firm by any stedfastness, one is as if he were 'lifted up and set upon the wind,' who rejoices in earthly prosperity, because the breath of fleeting happiness lifts him up only for this end, that it may in a moment prostrate him the worse below. For whereas Holy Church is high in honour with all persons, the weak ones in her, who rejoice in transitory successes, [Some read 'successibus,' others 'successionibus,' which last may mean 'advancements occurring in the change of things.'] whereunto do they seem lifted up but as set upon the wind? Because in the succeeding season of persecution, when the breath of prosperity is gone by, their 'lifting up' is brought to the earth in a moment, if instantly they learn by falling, that, whilst lifted up before they were seated upon the wind. Which very words in a peculiar manner accord with the person of the holy man also, not as to the thing that was, but as to the thing that seemed to be. For never had fleeting prosperity 'lifted up' his mind, which mind in the midst of such overflowing stores of good things he ever kept down by a wonderful weight of virtue.

But according to that which might have externally appeared, he who was little in his own eyes, was exalted in the eyes of others, and as it were 'placed upon the wind,' he was 'dashed down strongly,' because being buoyed up by outward goods, by the same means, whereby he was accounted to rise, he appeared to have fallen. Which same fall in the interior the holy man did not undergo, because no bad fortune throws down the man, whom no good fortune corrupts. For he who is attached to the truth, is in no degree brought under to vanity, because, whereas he has planted with a firm foot the bent of the thought within, all that is brought to pass in change without, reaches not in the least degree to the citadel of the interior. It goes on;

Ver. 23. I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living. [xxxiv] 66. In the preceding part of this work [Book xiii. §. 48 &c.] the point was treated of, that before the Coming of the Lord even the righteous did descend to the abodes of hell, though they were kept not in woes but in rest. Which thing we omit to prove by testimonies now, because we think it is already sufficiently proved there. This, then, that is said, I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living, is rightly suited to blessed Job even according to the history, whereas surely it appears that before the grace of the Redeemer even the just were carried to the caverns of hell. For the mere entering ['admissio'] of 'hell' is itself called 'the house of all living,' because no one came hither, who before the Advent of the Mediator did not pass by thereunto by the simple constitution of his state of corruption. No one came hither, who did not go on to the death of the flesh, by the steps of that same corruption belonging to him. Of which selfsame death it is evidently said by the Psalmist; What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? [Ps 89, 48] For though Elijah is related to have been transported to heaven, nevertheless he delayed, and did not escape death. For by the very mouth of Truth it is said; Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. [Matt. 17, 11] For he shall come to 'restore all things,' since for this end surely is he restored to this world, that he may both fulfil the functions of preaching, and pay the debt of the flesh.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] Which sentence however of the holy man suits the accents of Holy Church in the person of the weak sort, who hold the faith to the extent of the word of the lips, but contrary to the precepts of faith act the slave to their desires. For she says; I know that thou will deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living. For because she sees multitudes in her devoted to pleasures, and already foresees the destruction of those, she reflects that in the course of the present life they serve their desires indeed, but yet all are brought to the house of death, who in that same course live carnally. But there are some that are brought down into the pit of their gratifications, yet by the tears of repentance quickly recover the foot from below, which persons the strokes of smiting from Above cut rather for instruction than destruction. In the person of whom it is fitly subjoined;

Ver. 24. Howbeit Thou dost not put forth thine hand for the destroying of them; and if they are brought to the ground, Thou wilt save them Thyself. [xxxv] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] 67. In which words assuredly this ought to be perceived with penetration, that blessed Job, while he is telling his own circumstances transfers others into himself. [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] For he as it were in a special manner said of himself; Thou liftedst me up, and as it were setting me upon the wind dashedst me down with strength: I know that Thou wilt deliver me to death, where is the house appointed for all living; and yet he adds not concerning himself but others, Howbeit Thou dost not put forth Thine hand for the destroying of them. For whereas whilst speaking of himself in arguing, he subjoins cases applying to others, he shews how many he represents the persons of in himself. Accordingly the Lord 'puts not forth His hand for the destroying' of those that sin, when by striking He reforms from sins, and 'He saves those that are falling to the ground,' when those falling into transgression He wounds as to the health of the body; that being brought low outwardly they should arise inwardly, in order that lying prostrate in the body those should be brought back to the standing of the interior, who whilst standing outwardly lay low to the standing of the soul. It goes on;

Ver. 25. I wept of old over him that was in trouble; my soul suffered with the poor. [xxxvi] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] 68. Though it is true compassion to concur with the suffering of a fellow creature by bountifulness, yet sometimes when the several outward things are abundantly provided for us to bestow, the hand of him that gives finds the act of giving more quickly than the feeling does sorrow. Hence it is necessary for us to know that he gives in a perfect way, who together with that, which he reaches forth to the afflicted, takes in himself the feeling of the afflicted as well; that he should first transfer the suffering of the person sorrowing into himself, and then, to meet the sorrow of that person by the act of service render concurrence. For often, as we said before, the abundance of good things creates the bestower of a benefit, and not the excellence of compassion. For he, who perfectly compassionates the afflicted, generally even gives that to the persons in want, wherein he himself, if he gives it, is brought to shifts. And then the compassion of our heart is to the full, when we are not afraid to take upon ourselves the evil of want in behalf of a fellow creature, in order that we may set him free from suffering.

69. Which model of pitifulness in very deed the Mediator between God and Man gave to us. Who when He could have succoured us even without dying, yet was minded to come to the aid of mankind by dying, because plainly He would have loved us too little, except He took upon Him our wounds as well; nor would He exhibit the face of His love to us, unless the thing that He was to take away from us, He did Himself undergo for a time. For He found us subject to suffering, and mortal beings, and He, Who caused us to exist out of nothing, doubtless had the power to restore us from suffering even without death. But that He might shew how great the virtue of Compassion is, He deigned to become in our behalf what He would not have us to be, that He should take upon Him death temporally in His own Person, which death He should banish for evermore from ourselves. Could not He, while continuing invisible to us in the riches of His own Godhead, have been able to enrich us with wonderful powers? But that man might be brought back to the interior riches, God deigned to appear poor without. Hence also the great Preacher, that he might kindle to the kindness of bounty the bowels of our compassion, said, For our sakes He became poor, when He was rich. [2 Cor. 8, 9] Who speaks in this way also; Not that to others there should be a releasing, but to you tribulation.

[ib. v. 13] These things doubtless he brought in condescending to the weak, because some not having the strength to bear want, it is better borne to give less, than after one's bounty to murmur on account of straitness of poverty. For that he might kindle the minds of those that heard him to great affections for giving, a little while after he introduced the words, saying, But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly. [2 Cor. 9, 6] But we sometimes say that it is more to sympathize in heart than it is to give; because every one who perfectly sympathizes with one in want, reckons as less all that he gives. For except that good will surpassed the hand of a person in giving, that same great Preacher would not have said to the disciple, Who have begun before not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. [2, Cor. 8, 10] Since it is easy in good deeds to obey even against one's will. But this great excellence had appeared in the disciples, that the good that was enjoined them, they had been forward to even before.

70. Thus because the holy man knew that with Almighty God greater sometimes is the gift of the mind than of the benefit, let him say, I wept of old over him that was in trouble, and my soul compassionated the poor man. For in bestowing outward things, he rendered an object without himself. But he who bestowed upon his neighbour weeping and compassion, gave him something even from his very self. But on this account we say that compassion is more than the gift, because for the most part some sort of thing even he gives who does not entertain compassion, but never does he, who feels true compassion, withhold that which he sees to be necessary for his neighbour.

71. Which sentence surely is well suited to the accents of Holy Church, who while she sees persons afflicted in the tears of penitence, joins her own tears thereto by continual prayer, and sympathizes with the needy person as often as by the entreaties of her intercession she helps the mind bared of virtues. Since we lament over the afflicted sympathizing with

him, when we reckon the hurts of others as our own, and by our tears strive to cleanse away the sins of those guilty of transgression. In the doing which, indeed, we very often help ourselves more than we do those in whose behalf it is done, because before the Inmost Umpire, Who also breathes into us the grace of charity, he perfectly washes out his own several acts, who disinterestedly bewails those of others. Therefore let Holy Church, being seized in the time of the last persecution, recall to remembrance the good things which she has done in the time of peace, saying, I wept of old over him that was afflicted, and my soul compassionated the poor man. Who longing for the eternal delights of the interior light, yet still delayed, because she is beset with outward ills, may subjoin in the accents of the holy man;

Ver. 26. When I looked for good, then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there broke forth darkness. [xxxvii] 72. For the faithful people 'looks for good,' but receives evil, and it 'waits for light,' and meets with 'darkness,' because by the grace of the recompensing it hopes to be now already admitted to the joys of the Angels, and yet being delayed for a longer time here below, it is exposed to the hands of those that persecute it; and he who calculates to enjoy as quickly as possible the recompensing of the Light Eternal, is still forced to suffer here the darkness of his persecutors. Which same ills of those persecuting them would grieve them the less, if they arose from unbelievers and adversaries. But they torture the mind of the Elect the worse in proportion as they proceed from those, upon whom they were foreassuring good. Whence it is yet further added;

Ver. 27. My bowels boiled, and rested not. Since for 'the bowels' of Holy Church 'to boil' is for her to endure in the fierceness of persecution, these very persons too, whom she had before in the love of the faith carried as 'bowels.' Which same first acquainting themselves with her secrets, in the same proportion as they know where she suffers the greatest pain, to so much the worse degree never rest from the afflicting of her; which persons however even in the time of her peace she bears heavily with, because she takes thought of their ways as opposite to her own preachings. For she groans when she espies the life of those as unlike to herself. Concerning whom also it is fitly subjoined; The days of affliction prevented me. For the Holy Church of Elect persons knows that in the last persecution she shall suffer many ills, but 'the days of her affliction prevent her'; because even in the time of peace she bears within herself the life of the wicked with a heavy spirit. For though in the last days there follow the open persecution of the unbelievers, yet this same even before it comes to light, those in her who are believers to the extent of the word only by bad practices forerun. It goes on;

Ver. 28. I went mourning: without rage rising up, I cried out in the crowd. [xxxviii] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

73. I see that it is a thing to be carefully noted historically considered, that the holy man who a little before said, Thou hast lifted me up, added below, I went mourning. For by a wonderful arrangement at one and the same time there is wont to meet together in the courses of good men, at once without, the honour of the highest pitch, and within, the mourning of

afflicted abasement. Hence the holy man likewise, whilst lifted to a height by substance and by honours; 'went mourning'; for though this man the high credit of power displayed advanced above his fellow-creatures, yet inwardly he offered to the Lord by his mourning the secret sacrifice of a contrite heart. Since the sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit. [Ps. 51, 17] Now all the Elect are taught by inward reflecting to fight against the temptations of outward superiority. Which persons, if they set their heart to their outward good fortune assuredly would cease to be righteous. But because it cannot be that upon the mere grounds of the successes of fortune alone the heart of man should never be at all tempted with however slight a degree of pride, holy men strive hard within against their very good fortune itself; I do not say, lest in self exaltation, but lest in the love of that prosperity at all events they should be brought to the ground.

And it is most effectually to have been brought under this, to have surrendered the mind in a state of captivity to the desires thereof. But who that has a taste for earthly things, who that embraces temporal objects, would not look upon blessed Job as happy amidst so many circumstances of prosperity, when the health of the body, the life of his children, the preservation of his household, the completeness of his flocks, were all vouchsafed to him? But that in all these circumstances he did not take delight, he is his own witness, in that he says, I went mourning. For to the holy man still placed in this state of pilgrimage, all that is full of abundance, without the Vision of God, is destitution; because when the Elect see that all things are theirs, they lament that they do not see the Author of all things, and to them all this is too little, because there is still wanting the appearance of One. And in such sort does the grace of Heavenly Appointment exalt them without, that nevertheless, within, the sorrow of the instructress charity holds them under discipline. By which same they learn, that for the things which they receive outwardly, they should ever be the more humbled to themselves, should keep the mind under the yoke of discipline, should never by the liberty of power be made to break out into impatience. Whence also it is fitly subjoined, Without rage rising in the crowd, I cried out.

For it often happens that the tumults of seditious men provoke the spirit of their rulers, and by disorderly emotions they transgress the limit of their orderliness.

74. And very often they who are set at the head, except in the mouth of the heart they be held in with the bridle of the Holy Spirit, leap forth into the fierceness of enraged retribution, and as much as they are able to do, reckon themselves to be at liberty to do with those under them. For impatience is almost always the friend of power, and that power when evil it even rules over as subject to it. For what that same feels, power executes. But holy men bow down themselves much more to the yoke of patience inwardly, than they are above others outwardly, and they exhibit without the truer governance, in proportion as they maintain within more lowly servitude to God: and they for this reason often endure persons the more fully, the more they have it in their power to revenge themselves upon them, and lest they should ever pass over into things unlawful, they very often will not put in execution in their own behalf even what is lawful; they are subject to the clamours of those under

their charge, they rebuke in love those, whom they bear in mildness. Whence it is rightly said now, Without rage rising up in the crowd, I cried out; in this way, because against the clamours of the unruly the good have 'crying out,' but they have not 'rage,' because those whom they bear with gently they do not cease to teach.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] But these particulars which after the historical view we have delivered concerning one individual, it remains that we understand after the allegorical view concerning diverse Elect ones of Holy Church. For she too in her Elect 'goes mourning,' even in prosperous circumstances. For she accounts nothing truly prosperous to her, until the good, which she is preeminently seeking after, she may lay hold of. Since her faithful ones enjoy temporal peace indeed, but sigh evermore; they are honoured, and afflicted: because very often they are seen at the highest pitch there, where they are not citizens. She too 'rises in the crowd without rage, and cries out,' because she presses upon the life of the evil doers with the eagerness of right jealousy, not with the frenzy of rage. She is angry and loving, she deals wrathfully and is tranquil, that so her weak members she may reform by zealousness, and cherish in pitifulness. It goes on;

Ver. 29. I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches. [xxxix] 75. What is there denoted by the title of 'dragons,' but the life of evil minded men? Of whom also it is said by the prophet, They drew up the wind like dragons. [Jer. 14, 6] For all wicked men 'draw in wind like dragons,' when they are swoln with evil minded pride. But who are used to be understood by the designation of 'ostriches,' saving pretenders? For the ostrich has wings, but has not flight; because all pretenders have an appearance of sanctity, but the goodness of sanctity they have not. For those persons the appearance of good conduct adorns, but the wing of virtue never lifts them from the earth. So let the Elect people of Holy Church, because in the time of its peace it suffers within itself persons that are evil minded and pretenders, say the words, I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches. Which too in a special manner accords with the words of blessed Job, who to the highest pitch of great fortitude was a good man amongst bad. For no one is perfect who amidst his neighbours' evil things is not patient. For he who does not bear others' evil with composure, is by his impatience witness to himself that he is very far removed from the plenitude of goodness. For he refuses to be Abel, whom the malice of Cain does not exercise.

76. Thus in the threshing of the floor the grains are squeezed under the chaff; thus the flowers come forth between thorns, and the rose that smells grows along with the thorn that pricks. Thus the first man had two sons, but one was elect, the other refuse. The three sons of Noah too did the ark contain, but while two continued in humility, one went headlong into the mocking of his father. Two sons Abraham had; but one was innocent, the other the persecutor of his brother. Two sons also Isaac had, one saved in humility, while the other even before that he was born was cast away. Twelve sons Jacob begat, but of these one was sold in innocency, while the rest were through wickedness the sellers of their brother. Twelve Apostles too were chosen in Holy Church; but that they might not remain untried, one is mixed with them, who by persecuting should try them. For to a just man

there is joined a sinner together with wickedness, just as in the furnace to the gold there is added chaff along with fire, that in proportion as the chaff burns the gold may be purified. So then those are truly good men, who are enabled to hold on in goodness even in the midst of bad men; herein too it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the Spouse; As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

[Cant. 2, 2] Hence the Lord saith to Ezekiel And thou, son of man, unbelievers and overturners are with thee, and thou dwellest among scorpions. [Ez. 2, 6] Hence Peter magnifies the life of blessed Lot, saying, And delivered righteous Lot, when oppressed, from the wrongful conversation of the wicked. For to be seen and to be heard he was righteous, living among, those, who from day to day vexed the soul of the righteous man by wicked works. [2 Pet. 2, 7. &c. Hence Paul magnifies the life of his disciples, and in magnifying strengthens it, saying, In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding the word of life. [Phil. 2, 15. 16. Hence by John, the Angel of the Church of Pergamus is borne witness to in the words, I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith. [Rev. 2, 15] So then let blessed Job, that he may evince what firmness he is of, tell with whom he lived, saying, I was a brother to dragons, and a companion to ostriches. Because it would have been but little that he himself did good things, except that for the heightening of his goodness he likewise sustained what was evil at the hands of others. It goes on;

Ver. 30. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. [xl]

77. This we forbear to take account of after the history, for this reason, that the force of the speech appears from the pain of the suffering. But because, as we have already often said, blessed Job very frequently so relates things done, as to foretell things to be done, this excellently agrees with the accents of Holy Church, who in her weak members grievously feels the pain of the last persecution. And when others die off from her, all the stronger ones are wrung with sorrow. For her outward concern is earthly dispensing, but the interior is a heavenly charge. And so by the name of the 'skin' the weak are denoted, who now do service in her to exterior usefulness. While by the bones the strong are represented, in that in them the whole jointing of her body is cemented. And therefore because either being invited by bribes, or distressed by persecutions, many weak persons in her fall from the standing of faith, and themselves after they have fallen persecute her, what is it but that she suffers a 'blackness of her skin,' that in those very ones she should afterwards appear foul, in whom she before shewed fair. For whilst they who had been before accustomed to manage outward things aright, afterwards rage against the Elect of God, as it were 'the skin' of the Church has lost the hue of foregoing righteousness, in that it has come to the blackness of iniquity.

Which Jeremiah also bewails under the likeness of the principal metal, saying, How is the gold become dim; how is the fine colour changed? [Lam. 4, 1] The froward, therefore, when they go forth from her sacraments, very often take a place of honour amongst the children of perdition, so that the very persons should rage against Holy Church with authority, who as it were in knowing despise this Church more cruelly. And hence when he said, My skin

is black, he added, upon me; because those whom she before had as it were white as to the beautifulness of righteousness, she afterwards carries 'black' the worse. But when 'the skin' is turned to 'blackness,' the strong that are in her are consumed with jealousy of the faith. And hence he fitly subjoins; And my bones are dried up with heat. For in this way in the time before too that strongest bone of Holy Church, Paul, burned with a certain dryness of weariness, when he said to some persons on their falling; Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? [2 Cor. 11, 29] And so 'the skin is made black, and the bones are dried up with heat;' because while the weak leap forth to iniquity, all the strong are tortured with the fire of their zeal. It goes on;

Ver. 31. My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep. [xli]

78. Whereas the organ gives its sounds by means of pipes, and the harp by chords; it may be that by the 'harp' right practising is denoted, and by the 'organ' holy preaching. For by the pipes of an organ we not unsuitably understand the mouths of persons preaching, and by the chords of the harps the bent of those living aright. Which whilst it is stretched to another life by the afflicting of the flesh, it is as if the thin drawn chord in the harp sounded in the admiration of those beholding. For the chord is dried that it may give a suitable note on the harp; because holy men also chasten their body, and subject it to service, and are stretched from things below to those above. Moreover it is to be considered that the chord in the harp, if it be strung too little, does not sound, if too much, it sounds harsh; because doubtless the virtue of abstinence is altogether nothing if a man does not tame his body as much as he is able; or it is very ill ordered if he wears it down more than he is able. For by abstinence the imperfections of the flesh are to be done away, and not the flesh, and every one ought to rule himself with such great control, that both the flesh may not carry itself high for sin, and yet that it may be upheld in practice for the carrying out of righteousness.

It is a satisfaction herein to look at the great preacher, with what great skill of preceptorship the souls of believers like chords strung on the harp, one set by stretching the more, he draws fine, another by loosening from their stretch he preserves. For to some he says; Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness. [Rom. 13, 13] And again he says; Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth. [Col. 3, 5] And yet to the most beloved preacher he writes, saying, Drink no longer water, but use a little wine, for thy stomach's sake, and for thine often infirmities. [1 Tim. 5, 23] Thus those chords by drawing thin he stretches, lest by not being stretched they altogether give no sound. But this chord he abates of its stretching, lest whilst it is stretched more, the less it should sound.

79. But whether it be the holy preachers in the Church, or the simpleminded and temperate generally, as far as they are vouchsafed powers, they render to their neighbours in her the song of goodly exhortation. For both the wise sort severally keep discreetly on the watch to the fruit of preaching, and that they may draw others to life they ply themselves with a sound of mighty persuading; and they that appear to be of slower wit within her, by the mere merit of their lives, to the extent that they see that they are able, take upon them authority

of exhortation towards others, and cease not to draw to the heavenly Country those whom they are able. But Holy Church being borne down by the last persecutions, when she sees her words to be set at nought by the children of perdition, shapes the goodness of her love to lamentations alone, because surely she bewails those whom she is not able by exhorting to draw. Let her say then, My harp also is turned to mourning, and mine organ into the voice of them that weep. As though she avowed in plain words, saying, 'In the season of my peace, indeed, by some I preached little things after the manner of a harp, whilst by others things great and sounding after the manner of an organ;

but now 'my harp is turned into mourning and mine organ into the voice of them that weep,' because whilst I see myself to be despised I mourn over those who hear not the song of preaching.' Such things is Holy Church to do by certain persons in the end, these things has she already done by certain in her beginnings. For the first martyr Stephen endeavoured by preaching to benefit the Jews that persecuted him, which persons when he saw, notwithstanding, after the words of preaching to have flocked together to throwing stones, he prayed with his knees set fast, saying, Lord Jesus, lay not this sin to their charge. [Acts. 7, 60] How then was it to him who for long had told things both small and great, but that the melody of his 'harp and of his organ' was already mute, and they were 'turned into mourning,' because those whom he had not drawn in preaching, he wept for in loving? Which same Holy Church ceases not daily to do, because she already sees that the word of preaching is almost every where become mute. For some close their mouths from speaking, others scorn to hear right things. But the mind of the Elect whilst it sees the song of preaching to be stilled, returns groaning and in silence to lamentations.

Therefore let her say, My harp is turned into mourning, and mine organ into the voice of them that weep, because every elect person in proportion as the voice of holy preaching has been stilled, so much the more sorely does he bewail the woes of the Church.

Thus far blessed Job has described the evils that he underwent; but from this place he begins to relate with more particularity the good things that he did. Now the words of grief we have run through by an historical and allegorical explanation: but the deeds of virtuous qualities we in great measure hold according to the text of the history alone, lest if we draw these to the exploring of mysteries, we should perchance appear to be making void the verity of the deed.

Book XXI

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

VOLUME II - THE FOURTH PART. — BOOK XXI. — The thirty-first chapter of the Book of Job is explained to verse twenty-four, exclusive, and chastity, humility, and mercifulness being first commended, many particulars are especially taught relative to the avoiding of the occasion of sin.

[i] 1. The sense of Sacred Revelation requires to be weighed with so exact a balancing between the text and the mystery, that the scale of either side being adjusted, this latter ['hune,' which seems to agree with 'intellectus' referred to 'mysterium.'] neither the weight of over-curious scrutinizing should sink down, nor again the deadness of unconcern leave void. For many sentences thereof are pregnant with such a conception of allegories, that any one who strives to hold them after the history alone, is deprived of the knowledge of them by his indifference. But there are some that are so made subordinate to external precepts, that if a man desires to penetrate them with greater particularity, within indeed he finds nothing, whilst even that too which they tell of without, he hides from himself.

2. Whence it is well said also in historical relation by a method of representing; And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the almond and plane-trees, and pilled them in strakes, and when the bark was off, where they were stripped, the white appeared, and the parts that were whole remained green; and after this manner the colour was made variegated. [Gen. 30, 37-39] When it is further added, And he set them in the gutters in the watering-troughs, that when the flocks came to drink they should have the rods before their eyes, and should conceive in looking on them. And the flocks when they conceived looked on the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, spotted, and speckled. For what is it to set before the eyes of the cattle 'rods of green poplar, and of the almond and plane-trees,' but through the course Holy Scripture to furnish for an example to the people the lives and sentences of the Ancient Fathers, which same because by the testing of reason they are in a right line, are styled 'rods.' From which he 'peels the bark' in part, that in those which are stripped the inward whiteness may appear, and in part he keeps the bark, that just as they were outwardly, they should remain in greenness. And the colour of the rods is made pied, whereas the bark is in part stripped off, in part retained.

Since before the eyes of our reflection the sentences of the foregoing Fathers are placed, like pied rods, in which whereas we very often avoid the sense of the letter, we are as it were withdrawing the bark, and whereas we very often follow the meaning of the letter, we as it were preserve the bark. And when from those same the bark of the letter is removed, the interior whiteness of the allegory is brought to view, and when the bark is left, the green grown examples of the outward meaning are shewn. Which Jacob did well to 'set in the watering-troughs,' because our Redeemer set them in the books of the Sacred Lore by which we are inwardly watered. 'The rams mix with the sheep looking at these,' because our reasoning spirits when they are fixed in the earnest minding of those mingle themselves with the several particular actings, that they should begot such a progeny of works as they see examples of precepts going before in words, and the progeny of good practice may have a different colour, because both sometimes, the bark of the letter being removed, it sees what is within with acuteness, and sometimes, the covering of the history being preserved, it moulds itself well in the outward.

3. For because the Divine sentences require sometimes to be explored internally, and sometimes to be viewed externally, it is said by Solomon also, He that strongly presseth the udder for the drawing forth milk squeezeth out butter, and he that wringeth ['emungit,' al. 'emulget.'] violently draweth out blood. For we 'press the udder strongly,' when we weigh with minute understanding the word of Sacred Revelation, by which way of 'pressing whilst we seek 'milk,' we find 'butter,' because whilst we seek to be fed with but a little insight, we are anointed with the abundance of interior richness. Which, nevertheless, we ought neither to do too much nor at all times, lest while milk is sought for from the udder there should follow blood. For very often persons whilst they sift the words of Sacred Revelation more than they ought, fall into a carnal apprehension. For 'he draws forth blood, who wringeth violently.' Since that is rendered carnal which is perceived by an over-great sifting of the spirit. Whence it is requisite that the deeds of blessed Job, which he for this reason relates amidst the words of upbraiding friends, that his afflicted soul might not fall away in despair, we should examine into according to the weight of the history, lest if the mind explain these in a spiritual sense above what is necessary, from the udder of his words there be blood answering us instead of milk.

But if he does sometimes relate some things mystical in the relation of his works, it is necessary that the mind with quickened speed return to these considerations, whereunto as is given to be understood the very order of the person speaking itself bids that mind. For the holy man, after he had told the things that had been inflicted on him by the scourge of God, now by enumerating in order his own virtues makes it known what sort of person he was before the scourge, so constructing the history of his life, as to insert therein a something very rare which might be understood in an allegorical way, that both in a large proportion they should be historical facts that he records, and yet occasionally, by means of these same, he should rise up to a spiritual meaning. Thus with what strength he had bound up his exterior conduct from all falling by the training of inward safe-keeping, he tells, saying,

Ver. 1. I made a covenant with mine eyes that I should not even think upon a maid. [ii] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

4. Whereas the soul is invisible, it is in no degree affected by the delightfulness of things corporeal, except that, being closely attached to the body, it has the senses of that body as a kind of opening for going forth. For seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching, are a kind of ways of the mind, by which it should come forth without, and go a lusting after the things that are without the limits of its substance. For by these senses of the body as by a kind of windows the soul takes a view of the several exterior objects, and on viewing longs after them. For hence Jeremiah saith; For death is come up through our windows, and is entered into our palaces; [Jer. 9, 21] for 'death comes up by the windows and enters into the palace,' when concupiscence coming through the senses of the body enters the dwelling-place of the mind. Contrary whereunto that which we have often already said touching the righteous is spoken by Isaiah; Who are they that fly as clouds, and as the doves at their windows? [Is. 60, 8] For the righteous are said to fly as clouds, because they are lifted up from the defilements of earth, and they are 'as doves at their windows,' because through the senses of the body they do not regard the several objects without with the bent of rapacity, and carnal concupiscence does not carry those persons off without.

But he who through those windows of the body heedlessly looks without, very often falls even against his will into the delightfulness of sin, and being fast bound by desires, he begins to will what he willed not. For the precipitate soul, whilst it does not forecast beforehand, that it should not incautiously see what it might lust after, begins afterwards with blinded eyes to desire the thing that it saw. And hence the mind of the Prophet, which being uplifted was often admitted to interior mysteries, because he beheld the wife of another without heed, being darkened afterwards joined her to him without right. But the holy man, who as a kind of judge of greatest equity is set over the senses granted him in the body, as over subject officers, sees offences before they come, and closes the windows of the body as against a plotting enemy, saying, I made a covenant with mine eyes that I should not even think upon a maid. For that he might preserve the thoughts of the heart with chastity, he 'made a covenant with his eyes,' lest he should first see without caution what he might afterwards love against his will. For it is very greatly that the flesh drags downwards, and the image of a shape once bound on the heart by means of the eye is with difficulty unloosed by the hand of great struggling.

So then that we may not deal with things lascivious in thought we have need to take precaution because it is not befitting to look at what is not lawful to be lusted after. For that the mind may be preserved pure in thought, the eyes must be forced away from the wantonness of their pleasure, like a kind of ravishing unto sin. For neither would Eve have touched the forbidden free, except she had looked on it first without taking heed; since it is written, And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree delightful to look upon, and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat. [Gen. 3, 6] Hence, therefore, it is to be estimated with, what great control we who are living

a mortal life ought to restrain our sight towards forbidden objects; if the very mother of the living came to death through means of the eyes. Hence too under the voice of Judaea, who, whereas by seeing she coveted external things, parted with interior blessings, the Prophet says; Mine eye hath robbed mine heart. [Lam. 3, 51] For by lusting after things visible, she lost the invisible virtues. She, then, who lost the interior fruits by the exterior sight, did by the eye of the body endure the 'robbing of the heart.' Hence by ourselves, for safely keeping purity of heart, there ought also to be preserved the disciplining of the exterior senses.

For with whatever degree of excellency the mind may be enriched, with whatever amount of gravity it may be invigorated, yet the carnal senses ring outwardly with a something childish, and except they were restrained by the weight of interior gravity, and as it were by a sort of manly energy, they drag the soul unstrung to things loose and light.

5. Let us then see in what manner blessed Job kept in by a manly ['juvenili.'] vigour of wisdom all that the flesh might breathe of in him of loose and childish. For he says, I made a covenant with mine eyes, and because he quenched not only the doing but also the thinking of lust in himself, going on he added; that I should not even think on a maid. For he knew that lust has need to be checked in the heart, he knew by the gift of the Holy Spirit that our Redeemer on His coming would go beyond the precepts of the Law, and put away from His Elect not only lustful indulgence of the flesh, but also of the heart, saying, It hath been written, Thou shall not commit adultery? But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. [Matt. 5, 27. 28. For by Moses lust perpetrated, buy by the Author of purity lust imagined, is condemned. For hence it is that the first Pastor of the Church says to the disciples; Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope perfectly in the grace that is offered to you. [1 Pet. 1, 13] For to 'gird up the loins' of the flesh is to withhold lust from accomplishment, but 'to gird up the loins of the mind,' is to restrain it from the imagining thereof as well.

Hence it is that the Angel who addresses John is described as being 'girt above the paps with a golden girdle.' [Rev. 1, 13] For because the purity of the New Testament puts restraint upon lust of the heart likewise, the Angel who appeared therein, came 'girt' in the breast. Whom a golden girdle rightly binds, because whoever is a citizen of the country Above does not now forsake impurity from dread of punishment, but from the love of charity. Now the wickedness of lust is committed either in thought or deed. For our crafty enemy when he is driven away from the carrying out of the deed, makes it his business to defile by secret thought. Hence too it is said to the serpent by the Lord, Thou shall creep on the breast and belly. That is, 'the serpent creeps with his belly,' when the gliding enemy by the human members subject to him calls lust into exercise even to the fulfilling of the deed; but 'the serpent creeps with the breast,' when those whom he cannot pollute in the deed of lust, he does pollute in the thought. Thus one man now perpetrates lust in act of doing, to this man the serpent creeps by the belly.

But another man entertains it in the mind as to be committed, and to him the serpent 'creeps by the breast.' But because through the thought we are brought to the fulfilling

deeds, the serpent is rightly described first as 'creeping upon the breast,' and afterwards 'upon the belly.' Hence blessed Job because he maintained discipline even in the thought, by a single guarding mastered both 'the breast and belly of the serpent,' saying, I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even, think on a maid. Which same purity of heart whoever does not aim at acquiring, what else does he but drive away from himself the Author of that purity? whence blessed Job too directly adds;

Ver. 2. For what portion would God have in me from above, and what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high? [iii] 6. As though he said in plain words; 'If I defile, my mind in thought, I can never be the 'inheritance' of Him, Who is the Author of purity.' For the rest are no good things at all, if to the eyes of the secret Judge they be not approved by the testimony of chastity. For all the virtues lift themselves up in the sight of the Creator by reciprocal aid, that because one virtue without another is either none at all or the very least one, they should be mutually supported by their alliance together. For if either humility forsake chastity, or chastity abandon humility, before the Author of humility and chastity, what does either a proud chastity, or a polluted humility avail to benefit us? And so that the holy man might obtain to be owned by his Maker in the remaining particulars of good, keeping purity of the heart, let him say, I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even think on a maid. For what portion would God have in me from above, and what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high? As though he made the confession in plain words, saying, The Creator of the things on high refuses to own me for his possession, if in His sight my mind rots in the lowest desires.

7. But herein it should be known that that is one thing which the mind meets with from the tempting of the flesh, and another thing, when by consent it is tied and bound with gratifications. For very often it is struck by wrong thinking and resists, but very often when it conceives any thing wrong, it revolves this within itself even in the way of desire. And certainly impure thought never in the least defiles the mind when it strikes it, but when it subdues the same to itself by the taking delight. Thus it is hence the great Preacher says, There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. [1 Cor. 10, 13] For that is 'temptation common to man,' by which we are very often reached in the thought of the heart even against our will, because this, viz. that even things forbidden sometimes occur to the mind, this assuredly we have in our own selves derived from the burthen of human nature as subject to corruption. But henceforth it is devilish and not 'human' temptation, when to that which the corruptibility of the flesh prompts, the mind attaches itself by the consent. Hence again he says, Let not sin reign in your mortal body.

[Rom. 6, 12] For he forbad not that sin should 'be' in our mortal body, but that it should 'reign in our mortal body.' Because in flesh subject to corruption it may not 'reign,' but cannot help but 'be.' For this very thing to be tempted touching sin, is sin to it, which same because so long as we live, we are not perfectly and altogether without, holy preaching seeing that it could not wholly banish the same, took away from it its 'reign' from the dwelling-place of our heart, that the unlawful longing, though it very often secretly insinuate itself as a thief

in our good thoughts, at all events should not, if it should even win an entrance, exercise dominion. Accordingly the holy man in saying, I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I should not even think upon a maid, would not at all be understood, that sin did not touch his mind in thought, but that it never mastered him by the consent. For he defends his soul as the most entire possession of God against the adversary's making a prey of it, who directly subjoins, For what portion would God have in me from above, or what inheritance would the Almighty have from on high? As though he said in plain words; 'In my mortal flesh indeed I am subject to the constitution of corruption; but wherein do I serve the Maker, if to Him I do not defend my mind whole and entire from the consent to sin? It goes on;

Ver. 3. Is not destruction to the wicked? and estrangement to the workers of iniquity? [iv]

8. The speedy comforting of the good is the end of the wicked had regard to. For while by the destruction of those they see the evil that they escape, they account as light whatever of adversity they undergo in this life. So then let the lost sinners now go, and satisfy the desires of their gratifications; in the sentence of their end they are destined to feel that in living badly they were in love with death. But let the Elect be chastened with a temporary infliction of the rod, that strokes may reform from their wickedness those whom fatherly pitifulness keeps for an inheritance. For now the righteous man is scourged und corrected by the rod of discipline, because he is being prepared for the Father's estate of inheritance. But the unjust man is let go in his own pleasures, because temporal good things are supplied to him in the same degree that eternal ones are denied him. The unjust man, whilst running to a deserved death, enjoys pleasures unrestrained; inasmuch as the very steers too that are destined to be slaughtered are left in free pastures. But on the other hand the righteous man is restrained from the pleasantness of transitory gratification, because doubtless the steer too which is assigned to life for the purpose of labour, is held under the yoke. To the Elect, earthly good in this life is denied; because sick persons too, to whom there is a hope of their living, never have allowed them by the physician every thing they long for.

But to the lost sinners the good things are granted, which they long after in this life, because to the sick too who are despaired of there is nothing denied that they desire. So then let the righteous weigh well, what are the evils that await the wicked, and never envy their happiness which runs past. For what is there that they should admire about the joys of those, when both themselves are by a rough road making their way to the Country of Salvation, and those as it were through pleasant meadows to the pit? Therefore let the holy man say, Is not destruction to the wicked? and estrangement to the workers of iniquity? Which same term of estrangement ['alienatio.'] would have sounded harder, if the interpreter had retained it in the parlance of his own tongue. For what with us is called 'estrangement' is among the Hebrews termed 'anathema.' And so there will then be 'estrangement' to the wicked, when they see that they are an 'anathema' to the inheritance of the Strict Judge, because here they set Him at nought by wicked practices. So then let the wicked flourish, strange to the flowering of the Eternal Inheritance. But let the righteous look to themselves with discreet

attention, and in all their actions be in dread for that they are seen by the Lord. Whence it is fitly added directly;

Ver. 4. Doth not He see my ways, and count all my steps? [v]

9. What does he tell of by the title of 'ways' but ways of acting? Thus it is hence said by Jeremiah; Make your ways and your doings good. [Jer. 7, 3] But what do we understand by the name of 'steps,' but either the motions of men's minds or the advancements of merits? By which 'steps' indeed Truth calls us to Itself, saying, Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden. [Matt. 11, 28] For the Lord bids us 'come to Him' not surely by the steps of the body, but by the advances of the heart. For he Himself says, The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. [John 4, 21] And a little after, the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeketh such to worship Him. [ver. 23] Thus he implies that the steps are in the heart, when He both bids us that we should come, and yet declares that it is not at all by the motion of the body that we pass to other things. Now the Lord so 'views the ways' of each one, and so 'counts all his steps,' that by His Judgment not even the minutest thoughts or the very slightest words, which have become insignificant in our eyes from use, remain unexamined into. Thus hence He says, Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment:

and whosoever shall say to his brother, Boca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. [Matt. 5, 22] 'Raca' in the Hebrew speech is a word of interjection, which indeed shews the temper of one who is angry, but does not give forth a full word of anger. Thus anger without utterance is first blamed, then anger with utterance, but not yet shaped by a complete word, and at last also when it is said, Thou fool, anger is reproved, which, along with excess of the voice, is fulfilled by the perfecting of speech as well. And it is to be noted that He tells that by anger he is 'in danger of the judgment;' by a voice of anger, which is 'Raca,' 'in danger of the council,' and by a word of the voice, which is 'Thou fool,' in danger of hell fire. For by the steps of offence, the order of the sentence increased, because in 'the judgment' the case is still under examination, but in the council the sentence of the case is now determining, while 'in the fire of hell' the sentence, which proceeds from the council, is fulfilled.

And therefore because of human actions 'the Lord counts up the steps' with exact scrutiny, anger without the voice is made over 'to the judgment,' but anger in the voice 'to the council,' and anger in speech and voice to 'the fire of hell.' This exactness of His scanning the Prophet had beheld, when he said, O most strong, Great One, Mighty Lord of hosts is Thy Name, Great in counsel, and Mighty in work, for Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of Adam; to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his devices. [Jer. 32, 18. 19.]

10. Thus the Lord scans those ways with exact scrutiny, that in each one of us He should neither pass over those good points that there are for Him to recompense, nor leave without

rebuke the evil things, that are doubtless displeasing to Him. For hence it is that the Angel of the Church of Pergamos He at once commends in some things, and in some rebukes, saying, I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast My Name, and hast not denied My faith. [Apoc. 2, 13. 14. And a little while after; But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam. Hence it is said to the Angel of the Church of Thyatira, I know thy works, and thy charity, and faith, and service, and thy patience; and thy last works to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee; because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce My servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. [ver. 19. 20.

Observe how He records good things, nor yet lets go without penance evil things, that require to be cut off, surely because He so views the ways of each, and so takes account of their steps, 'counting them up,' that by exact counting He thoroughly estimates both how far each one is advancing to what is good, or how far, by deviating to what is evil, he may contravene his advances. For the increase of merits which is heightened by the aims of a good life, is very often held back by a mixture of evil, and the good which the mind builds up by practising it overthrows by committing other things. Whence holy men tie themselves up with greater nicety in the thought of the heart in proportion as they see that they are more searchingly scanned by the Judge Above. For they sift the mind through and through, they seek to find if they have done wrong in aught, that they may be rendered the more unblameable to the Judge, in proportion as daily and without ceasing they blame their own selves. Not, however, that they already derive from this circumstance the delights of security, because they see that they are beheld by Him, Who beholds in them those things as well, which they are not themselves able to see in themselves.

And indeed blessed Job among those of old lime maintained the life of perfectness, but because by the spirit of prophecy the stretch of his eye breaks forth to the Advent of the Redeemer, in that Redeemer's precepts he for himself reflects how many things belonging to perfection he is short of. Whence he also adds;

Ver. 5, 6. If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit, let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know mine integrity. [vi] [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

11. 'God to know' is said for His making us to know by a customary mode of our speech, who speak of 'a happy day,' by which it happens that we are made happy. For hence it is the Lord saith to Abraham, Now I know that thou fearest God. [Gen. 22, 12] For it is not that the Creator of the periods of time learnt any thing from time, but His knowing is His affording the knowledge to us by the instant of each particular case emerging. But who is there represented by the name of 'balances,' saving the Mediator between God and man? in Whom all our merits are weighed with an even scale, and in Whose precepts we find what we have short in our own life. Now we are weighed in these balances as often as we are incited after the examples of His life. Thus it is hence that it is written; Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example, that ye should follow His steps, Who did no sin, neither was

guile found in His mouth; Who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not. [1 Pet. 2, 21-23] Hence it is said by Paul, Let us run with patience the race that is set before us: looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, Who for the glory set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame. [Heb. 12, 1. 2.

Accordingly to this end the Lord appeared in the flesh, that the life of man he might by dealing admonitions arouse, by giving examples kindle, by suffering death redeem, by rising again renew. And so whereas blessed Job finds in himself nothing justly deserving to he blamed, he extends the eyes of the mind to the life of the Redeemer, which surpasses all things, that he may learn by that how much he comes short, where he says, If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know my simpleness. As though he said in plain speech; 'If I have ever done aught lightly, if ever mischievously, may the Mediator between God and man appear, that in His life I may read whether I myself am really and truly simple.' For as we have said, he who had surpassed the men of his own times, sought for the Mediator between God and man, that by being weighed in Him he might find out whether he truly maintained a life of simplicity.

Therefore let him say, Let Him weigh me in an even balance, and let God know my simpleness, which means, 'let Him cause me to know.' As though he made open confession, saying, 'As far as to the measure of man's life, I see now no points in myself deserving to be found fault with, but except the Mediator between God and man appear accompanied with the precepts of an exacter life, I discover not how much I am at variance with true simplicity.' Now the right order is observed if the foot be said first to have 'hasted on in vanity,' and afterwards 'in deceit.' For 'vanity' bears relation to levity, but 'deceit' to wickedness. And there are often persons, who are brought afterwards to things mischievous, because they do not in the first instance avoid what is light. It goes on;

Ver. 7. If my step hath turned out of the way. [vii] 12. So many times does 'the step go out of the way,' as our thought quits the way of the right, by the consenting of wandering. Now we as it were set as many 'steps out of the way,' as we are parted by bad desires from the delightfulness of the heavenly life. For as we have before stated, being still borne down by the load of corruptible flesh, we are not able to live in such a manner as that not any enjoyment of sin should be able to strike us. But it is one thing for the mind to be touched against its will, and another to be killed whilst consenting. But holy men guard themselves with more watchful solicitude in proportion as they take shame for being assaulted by the misdirected motions even of passing gratification. And hence it is yet further added;

And if mine eye hath followed mine heart. [viii] [HISTORICAL/MORAL INTERPRETATION] 13. See again how by the keeping of inward vigour he returns to the training of the outward members, that if the heart should perchance covet aught forbidden, the eye being kept down by the tutorage of discipline may refuse to look at it. For as it often happens that temptation is derived through the eyes, so sometimes being conceived inwardly it forces the eyes to do service to it outwardly. Thus very often an object is regarded by a mind in a state of innocence, but by that mere look the mind is pierced through by the sword of concupis-

cence. For it was not (as we have already remarked for the sake of illustration) that David in this way looked of purpose on the wife of Uriah, because he had entertained the desire of her; but rather he lusted after her for this cause, because he beheld her without caution. But it happens by an inquest of right recompensing, that he who employs the external eye carelessly, is not unjustly blinded in the interior eye. Now oftentimes concupiscence rules in the interior, and the mind being seduced, after the manner of a despotism requires the senses of the body to drudge to its occasions, and obliges the eyes to serve its pleasures, and so to say opens the window of light to the dark of blindness. Hence holy men, when they feel themselves to be assailed by a wrong enjoyment, by the tutorage of discipline they withhold the very eyes themselves by which the likeness of the shape is introduced into the mind, lest the sight acting the pander should do the bidding of unhallowed thought. Which same if it ever be forborne to be guarded with nice particularity, uncleanness of thought presently passes into execution. Hence too it is directly added;

And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands. [ix]

14. Thus the holy man, knowing well that very often wrong thought comes into the mind through the eyes, said a little above; I made a covenant with mine eyes that I would not even think on a maid. Reflecting likewise that sometimes it springs up in the mind, while on its springing up so the eyes wickedly do service to it, he says, If mine eye hath followed mine heart. As though he said in plain speech, 'Neither did I wish to see in general things I might long after, nor in looking did I ever follow after the things that I longed for.' So then let him say, If mine eye hath followed mine heart. Because even if his mind as being human ever did conceive aught unlawful, his eyes, bound down by the tutoring of higher discipline, it would not should follow it in things forbidden, and drudge to its service. Let us consider our own consciences with reference to these points, and what height this man was of let us see from the sunkenness of our own breast. See, if he did occasionally imagine things unlawful, because he speedily dispatched them within the depths of the heart with the sword of holy vigour, he suffered them not to reach so far as to deeds. Hence as we have set down before, he thereupon adds; And if any blot hath cleaved to my hands. For when does a blot cleave to the hands, i.e.

sin to the actions, which sin the censorship of discipline did not suffer to make progress in thought? For neither is sin permitted to issue into act, if it be despatched inwardly where it has its birth. But if there is not a speedy resisting of temptation springing up in the heart, it is strengthened by that very delay by which it is fed, and coming forth without in deeds, it is with difficulty able to be overcome, because the very mistress of the members, the mind within, it holds a captive. Now because the holy man had brought forward all the particulars conditionally, if had ever been guilty of these, he binds himself with a sentence of malediction, saying;

Ver. 8. Then let me sow, and let another eat; let my offspring be rooted out. [x] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION] 15. After the manner of Sacred Revelation we call it to 'sow' to preach the words of life. Thus it is hence the Prophet says, Blessed are ye that sow upon

all waters. [Is. 32, 20] For the preachers of Holy Church he saw to 'sow upon all waters' because they bestowed the words of life, like grains of heavenly bread, upon all peoples far and wide. But to 'eat' is to be filled to the full with good works. Hence Truth saith by Itself; My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me. [John 4, 34] So then, if the things that he gave forth, he forbore to do, he says; Then let me sow, and another eat. As though he said in plain words; 'What my mouth utters let not me but another man put in practice.' For the preacher who in his ways is at variance with his own words, sows going hungry what another may eat; because he is not himself fed by His own seed, when by wrong conduct he is made void of the rightness of his word. And because it very often happens that the disciples hear what is good to no purpose, when by the life of the master it is destroyed by the example of actions, it in rightly subjoined; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

16. For 'the offspring' of the teacher is 'rooted out,' when he who is born by the word, is killed by the example, because him whom the heeding tongue begets, heedlessness of the life kills. For neither should we pass over with an insensible mind, that in Solomon the woman killed in sleeping the child, whom she was used to suckle being awake; [1 Kings 3, 19] in this way, because masters awake indeed in knowledge, but asleep in life, upon their hearers, whom they nourish by the watches of preaching, whilst they neglect to do the things that they say, through the sleep of insensibility inflict death, and by neglecting overlay those whom they appeared to be feeding with the milk of words. Hence generally whilst they live themselves in a blameable way, they are at once unable to have disciples of a praiseworthy life, and endeavour to draw over the disciples of others to themselves, that so, whilst they shew themselves to have good followers, in the judgments of men they may excuse the evil things that they do, and as it were by the life of those under them cover their deathdealing negligence. Whence in that place the woman, because she had killed her own, sought for another's child. Yet the sword of Solomon discovered the true mother, because surely what man's fruit may live or what man's die, the wrath of the Strict Judge in the final Judgment brings to light. Where this too is to be regarded with a discreet eye, that the child is first bidden to be divided whilst living, in order that afterwards it may be restored to the mother only, because in this life the disciples' life is in a manner allowed to be divided, whereas it is sometimes the case that from that life one man is permitted to have merit with God, and another man to have praise with men.

17. But the feigned mother did not fear for him to be put to death, whom she did not bear; because masters that are presumptuous and unacquainted with charity, if they are not able to win the fullest character of praise from the disciples of others, hunt down their life with cruelty. For being set on fire with the firebrand of envy, they are not minded for those to live to others whom they see that they cannot themselves possess. Whence in that place the bad woman cries out, Let it be neither mine nor thine. [ib. v. 26] For as we said, those whom they do not see to be at their command for temporal glory, they grudge should live to others through truth. But the true mother is at pains that her child may at least be with a stranger woman and live, because genuine masters yield it that by their disciples others indeed should have the praise of preceptorship, if, this notwithstanding, those same

disciples do not lose wholeness of life. Through which same bowels of pitifulness this same true mother is known, because all tutorage is tested in the trial of charity, and she alone has earned to receive the whole, who as it were gave up the whole;

because the faithful rulers, for this that they not only do not envy others' praise derived from their own good disciples, but also implore for them usefulness for advancement, do themselves receive back the children at once whole and living, when in the Last Inquest from the lives of those they obtain the joys of perfect recompensing. These things we have delivered in few words out of course, that we might point out in what way the offspring of hearers is through the negligence of the teachers made to be extinct; because whosoever does not live according to that which he speaks, uproots by practice from the stedfastness of righteousness those whom he has begotten by speech. But blessed Job never by his way of acting put an end whilst sleeping to those whom by his preaching he had brought forth whilst awake; and therefore he says with confidence, Then let me sow and another eat, let my offspring be rooted out; which same still examining himself touching the defilement of bad practice, adds;

Ver. 9. If mine heart has been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door. [xi] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

18. Though it sometimes happens that the sin of fornication is not at all different from the guilt of adultery, seeing that Truth saith; Whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. [Matt. 5, 28] (For whereas an adulterer is called by the Greek word, 'moechus,' whilst not another man's wife but a woman is forbidden to be looked at, 'Truth' openly shews that by the mere look alone, when only one that is unmarried is vilely lusted after, adultery is perpetrated. Yet generally speaking the thing is differenced according to the situation or order of the person lusting, that is to say in this way, that purposed concupiscence in like sort defiles one in sacred orders, as the sin of adultery defiles that other. Nevertheless in persons not dissimilar, the same guilt of lust is made different, in whose case that the sin of fornication is distinguished from the guilt of adultery, the tongue of the great Preacher bears witness, who asserts amongst the rest, saying, Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers'shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. [1 Cor. 6, 9] For whereas he subjoins sentence to severally distinguished guilt, he shews how very greatly it differs from itself. By this then that is spoken, If my heart hath been deceived by a woman, the holy man is proved not even to have entertained a thought connected with the defilement of fornication. But by this that he adds;

Or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door, he openly makes known that he was clear of the guilt of adultery. But perchance a person may say to this, 'What does the holy man assert extraordinary about himself, if he did preserve himself clear not only from the guilt of adultery, but likewise from the defilement of fornication?' But we rate these things at little, if we fail to consider the times of his virtuous achievements. For there had not as yet gone forth for the restraining of the flesh the stricter monitorship of revealed grace, which not only blames wantonness of the body, but also of the heart. There had not as yet

gone forth the excellencies of chastity of numbers living in continence as patterns for our imitation, yet did blessed Job afford examples of purity, which he had not received. But by numbers even now after the prohibition of God there is impurity of the flesh committed. Accordingly it ought to be inferred from hence, seeing that so great an offence now even after the commandment is perpetrated in heavy matters, with what great praiseworthiness was abstinence kept before in heavy matters. And if he ever had done this thing, he prays for that sin to be turned into punishment to him, saying;

Ver. 10. Then let my wife be a harlot unto another, and let others bow down upon her. [xii] 19. And because it is generally the case that that thing which in the doing of, we do not well consider how heinous it is, in the suffering it we do consider this; the force of that atrocity which, if he were guilty, he declares that he himself ought to undergo, he makes plain by expressing it, saying; Ver. 11, 12. For this is an heinous crime; and the chiefest iniquity. For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and that rooteth out all increase.

There is this difference between 'sin' and 'crime,' that all crime is sin, but not all sin is crime. And in this life there are numbers without crime, but no one can be without sins. And hence the holy preacher, when he was describing a man worthy of the grace of the priesthood, never said, 'if any be without sin,' but if any be without crime. [Tit. 1, 6] But who can be without sin, when John saith, If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [1 John 1, 8] In which same distinction of sins and crimes it deserves to be considered, that occasional sins pollute the soul, while crimes slay it; whence blessed Job in characterizing the crime of lust says, It is afire that consumeth to destruction, in this way, that the heinousness of this atrocity not only stains to the length of defilement, but devours to the extent of destruction. And because howsoever many other good deeds there may be, if the enormity of lust is not washed out, they are overwhelmed by the immensity of this crime, he added going on, and rooting out all offsprings, for 'the offsprings' of the soul are good practices. Which soul, nevertheless, if the right order being reversed, the flesh exercises dominion over, all the things that are put forth well are consumed by the fire of lust.

For before the eyes of Almighty God the works of righteousness and of pitifulness are none at all, which are shewn to view unclean by the infection of corruptness. For what does it profit, if a man heartily ['pie'] compassionates the need of his neighbour, whilst he heartlessly ['impie'] destroys himself, being the habitation of God? So then if by purity of the heart the flame of lust be not quenched, any virtues whatever spring up in vain, as it is spoken by Moses; For a fire is kindled in Mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth, with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. For 'a fire consumes the earth and her increase,' when lust consumes the flesh, and all things done well thereby. For whatsoever comes forth belonging to the fruitage of righteousness, this, surely, the flame of corruption burns up. So, then, let him say, For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and that rooteth up all increase. Because if there be no stand made against the mischief of corruptness, even those things assuredly come to

nought, which seemed to be good. But some there are whom bad qualities are apt to bring down to humility, and good ones exalt to pride of heart. So then it is necessary for us to enquire, whether blessed Job in this extraordinary pureness of chastity was at the same time humble?

Now the holy man, whilst he held the highest range of virtues, plainly discourses what low thoughts he entertained of himself, when he subjoins,

Ver. 13. If I despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me. [xiii] 20. For he who did not refuse to be 'judged with menservants and maid-servants,' clearly shews that against no fellow-creature was he at any time swoln with pride in himself. But herein it is interesting to remark with what circumspection the holy man preserved his life in all respects. For not far above he said, The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to their throat. [Job 29, 8. &c.]While now he says; If I have despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me. Who might be able proportionately to view these high counterpoises of virtues in this holy man? In whom there is so great authority of governance that princes are bound to silence, such lowliness of heart, that 'maid-servants' are permitted to come to 'judgment' on an equal footing. See how in a wonderful way he appears in power superior to princes, in contest on a level with servants; in the assemblage of princes mindful of his office, in contest with domestics mindful of his creation. For he beholds himself a servant under the real Lord, and therefore he does not in loftiness of heart lift himself up above servants. And hence he adds directly;

Ver. 14. For what shall I do, when God riseth up to judge; and when He seeketh, what shall I answer Him? [xiv] 21. He who thinks on the Judge to come, is unceasingly day by day preparing the cases of his accounts for the better: he who views the Eternal Lord with trembling of heart, is forced to abate the rights of temporal lordship over those under him. For he considers well that it is nothing that he is set above others in time, when for the rendering account he is beneath Him, Who exercises dominion without end. For oftentimes transitory power hurries away the soul along the sleeps of self-exaltation. And because every one is lifted up in the degree that he sees that he is himself above any persons, it is needful that he ever have regard to Him, Who is above himself, that by the fear of Him, Who is above all things, he may keep down the growing inflation of mind within. For he knows who they are beneath himself, but let him consider under Whom he himself is, that by the considering of the true Lord, the swelling of counterfeit lordship may die off. Hence blessed Job, because he feared the Judgment of Him, Who is above all things, here comes to temporal judgment the equal of servants, saying, If I despised to submit to judgment with my man-servant or with my maid-servant, when they contended with me. For what shall I do, when God riseth up to judge? and when He seeketh, what shall I answer Him? Which

same, that he might always keep down the heart in humility, never in these servants sees that the condition is unlike to himself, but that the nature is common. Whence also he adds,

Ver. 15. Did not He Who made me in the womb make him? And did not One make us in the womb? [xv]

22. To persons possessed of power, the equality of creation kept in the thoughts is great goodness of humility. For all of us men are equal by nature, but it has been added by a distributive arrangement, that we should appear as set over particular persons. So then if we keep down from the imagination that thing which has accrued temporarily, we find out the sooner that which we are naturally. For very often the power vouchsafed presents itself to the mind, and deceives it by high-swoln thoughts. And so by the hand of lowliest reflection the inflation of self-exalting must be kept under. For if the mind in itself descends from the top of the height, it quickly finds the level of the equality of nature. For as we have before said, nature has begotten all of us men equals, but, the order of merits varying, the secret appointment sets some above others. But the very diversity, which has been added from defect, is rightly ordered by the judgments of God, that whereas every man does not go the way of life in a like way, one should be governed by another. But holy men, when they are in authority, do not look to the power of station in themselves, but to the equality of creation, nor do they rejoice to be above, but to be of use to their fellow-creatures. For they know well that our old fathers are recorded to have been not so much kings of men, as shepherds of flocks. And when the Lord said to Noah and to his sons, Be fruitful, and multiply, and, replenish the earth, He adds, and the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth. [Gen. 9, 1] For He says not 'be upon the men who were to be,' but, be upon every beast of the earth.

23. Since man is by nature set over the irrational animals, but not over the rest of mankind, and therefore it is said to him that he should be feared by the beasts and not by men; because it is to swell with pride against nature, to desire to be feared by an equal. Though very often even holy men desire to be feared by those under their charge, only however when they discover that by those their subjects God is not feared, that by dread of man at least they may fear to sin, who do not dread His judgments. Never then do they being set in authority swell with pride from this fear being sought, in that they seek therein not their own glory but the righteousness of those under their charge. For in this, viz. that they exact for themselves fear from persons living badly, they as it were rule not men but brute animals; because surely, in whatsoever respect those under authority are bestial, in that respect they ought also to be bowed down under fear.

24. But when there is wanting evil, that may have to be corrected, they rejoice, not for the eminency of power, but for the equality of constitution, and they not only shrink from being feared by them, but also from being honoured beyond what is necessary. Nor yet do they think that it is a light loss to humility which they undergo, if perchance for their merit they be reckoned by them of too much rank. It is hence that the chief Shepherd of the Church, when on Cornelius worshipping him, he saw honour offered him which was above

him, quickly refers to the equality of his creation, in the words, Stand up, I myself also am a man. [Acts 10, 26] For who does not know that man should be bowed down to his Creator, and not to man? Therefore because he saw that his fellow-creature humbled himself to him beyond what he ought, that the mind might not be made to swell beyond the boundaries of human nature, he owned himself to be 'a man,' that he might dash down the exaltation of the honour offered to him, by the equality of his creation being had an eye to. Hence the Angel, on being worshipped by John, owned himself to be a creature, saying, See thou do it not, I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren.

[Rev. 19, 10] Hence the Prophet, when he is caught away to see sublime things, is called 'Son of man,' that being carried to the heavenly scenes, he might remember that he was man. [Ez. 3, 1] As though the divine voice admonished him in plainer words, saying, 'Remember what thou art, lest thou be exalted by those things, whereunto thou art caught up, but moderate the loftiness of the revelation by the remembrance of thy creation.' So then from this it is to be gathered, with what remembrance of a common nature the swelling of earthly power ought to be kept under in the heart, if by the name of man's nature it is effected that elevation of the heart should not be engendered by heavenly mysteries. Which same human nature blessed Job effectually kept the recollection of at all times, in that he says, Did not He that made me in the womb, make him? And did not One fashion us in the womb? As though he said in plain words, 'Wherefore should not we be examined on an equal footing in the trial of any matter, who are made with equal conditions by the power of the Creator? But whereas we have made ourselves acquainted with the achievements of his chastity and of his humility, let us now acquaint ourselves with the deeds of his munificence. It goes on;

Ver. 16. If I have denied what they wished for to the poor, or have caused the eyes of the widow to wait. [xvi] 25. By these words the holy man is shewn not only to have ministered to the need of the poor, but also to their desire of having. But what if the poor wished those very things, which perchance it might not be for their good to receive? Is it that, because in Sacred Scripture the lowly are used to be called 'poor,' those only are to be accounted the things the poor wish to receive, which the humble seek? And surely it is required, that every thing should be unhesitatingly given that is asked for with true humility; i.e. whatsoever is begged for not from desire but from necessity. For it is to be henceforth very full of pride, to desire any thing beyond the limits of want. And hence it is said to persons asking with pride, Ye ask, and ye receive not, because ye ask amiss. [James 4, 3] Because then they are genuinely poor, who are not blown out through the spirit of pride; which same 'Truth', plainly represents, when He says, Blessed are the poor in spirit; [Matt. 5, 5] it is well said in this place by the holy man, If I have denied what they wished for to the poor. Because they that wish those things, which same it is clear are not expedient for them, by this alone, that they are overflowing with a spirit of pride, are not henceforth poor. But blessed Job, seeing that he called the humble 'poor,' refused not whatsoever the poor man was minded to receive from him, because every truly humble person did not even wish to have what it could not be that he ought to have.

26. But whereas he points out the bountifulness of his spirit, because he shews that he had met the poor to the wish, it is necessary that we enquire whether he had obscured the light of mercifulness by backwardness in the giving. Hence he subjoins; Or caused the eyes of the widow to wait. He would not have the widow that besought him 'to wait,' that not only by the gift, but likewise by the speediness of the gift he might increase the merits of good deeds. Hence it is written elsewhere; Say not unto thy friend, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee. [Prov. 8, 28] Now there are some that are used to bestow as much outwardly, but rejecting the favour of a life in common, they shrink from having the poor their fellows in domestic intercourse. Hence blessed Job, that he might teach not only that he had given much without, but also to his own presence had received all the needy in domestic intercourse, adds directly;

Ver. 17. Or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof. [xvii]
27. That is to say, reckoning that he prejudiced his pitifulness, if he ate alone what the Lord of all created in common. Which same fellowship of intercourse should be carried on within the domestic walls with those persons, by whom the rewards of eternal retribution may be promoted. Whence the holy man describes himself as having had not any indifferent person, but, for eating, the 'fatherless' as his companions. But these extraordinary bowels of pitifulness whether he had derived from himself, or obtained them by the grace of his Creator, let him make known. It proceeds; Ver. 18. For from my infancy compassion grew up with me, and from my mother's womb it came forth with me. [xviii]

28. For though commiseration was a thing at his own command, that it should gain growth with himself, yet it is plain that it was not a thing at his own command that it should 'come forth from the womb along with himself.' Therefore it is plain that he attributes nothing to his own goodness, in that surely he bears witness that he received this same by the gift of his creation. The good then which he implies that he had derived from his creation, it is assuredly plain that he tells to the praise of the Creator, shewing that it was from Him and no other that he had obtained that he should he pitiful, from Whom he obtained that he should be; because as by his own act he was not created in the womb, so neither by his own goodness was he full of pity from the womb. But it is to be taken thought of by us that he declares; it grew up with me. For there are some who as they grow to years, go off from innocency. But whilst to the Elect the age of the body increases without, within, if it may be allowed to say so, the age of virtue increases. It goes on;

Ver. 19, 20. If I despised any passing by, because he had no covering, and a poor man without clothing, if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep. [xix]

29. Because he did not despise the poor, he displayed the virtue of humility; and because he covered him, of pitifulness. For these two virtues ought to be so linked together, as to be even supported by reciprocal practice; that so neither humility, when it reverences a fellow-creature, should abandon the grace of free giving, nor pity, when it gives, be made to swell high. Thus towards the need of a fellow-creature, let pity sustain humility, humility

sustain pity, so that when thou seest one who is a sharer of thine own nature lacking the necessaries of life, thou shouldest neither through pitilessness cease to cover him, nor from pride cease to reverence him, whom thou dost cover. For there are persons who the moment they are entreated for necessaries by their brethren in need, afterwards intending to bestow gifts on them, first let loose words of insult against them. Which persons though in things they execute the office of pity, yet in words lose the grace of humility, so that for the most part it seems that they are now paying satisfaction for an injury inflicted, when after abuse they bestow gifts. Nor is it a thing of high practice, that they give the things that are begged for, because by the very boon of their giving they scarcely cover over that transgression of speech. To which persons is it well said by the book of Ecclesiasticus, To every gift give not the bitterness of an evil word. And again; Lo, a word is better than a gift?

and both are with a man that is justified, [Ecclus. 18, 15. 16. i.e. that a gift should be exhibited through pitifulness, and a good word bestowed through humility. But on the other hand, others are not forward to support their needy brethren with things; but only to cherish them with soft words. Which persons the holy preaching of James strongly rebukes, saying, If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body: what shall it profit you? [Jam. 2, 15. 16. Which persons the Apostle also admonishes, saying, My little children, Let us not love in word, neither in tongue: but in deed and in truth. [1 John 3, 18] For our loving affection must always be shewn forth at once by respectfulness of speech, and by the service of almsgiving.

30. But it has very great efficacy for taming down the pride of a person in giving, if when he gives earthly things, he considers with good heed the words of the Heavenly Master, Who says, Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. [Luke 16, 9] For if by the friendships of those we obtain everlasting habitations, assuredly we ought to reflect when we give, that we are rather offering presents to patrons, than bestowing gifts on the needy. Hence it is said by Paul, That now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, and their abundance also may be a supply for your want. [2 Cor. 8, 14] That is, that we may heedfully consider, that those whom we now see in need, we shall one day see in abundance, and we, who are beheld abounding, if we neglect to bestow alms, shall one day be in need. He then who now gives temporal support to the poor man, hereafter to receive from him everlasting supports, so to say, for fruit as it were cultivates land, which pays back more abundantly what it has received. It remains then that exaltation should never spring up by benefaction, since, surely, the rich by that which he bestows on the poor man, brings it to pass that he should not be poor for everlasting.

Accordingly, blessed Job, that he might carefully shew with what reflection humility and mercifulness were united together in him, says, If I despised any passing by, because that he had no covering, and a poor man without clothing: if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep. As though he said in plain words; 'In

the love of a fellow-creature, keeping down by one and the same appointments both the evil of pride and of unpitifulness; any one passing by both humbly, on beholding him, I despised not, and mercifully I warmed him. For whosoever lifts himself above him that he gives any thing to with the height of self-exaltation, achieves a greater offence by carrying himself proudly within than a recompense by giving alms without, and he himself is made bare of interior good, when in clothing the naked he, despises him, and so brings it to pass that he is rendered worse than his very own self, in proportion as he fancies himself better than his neighbour in need. For he is less in need who is without a garment, than he who is without humility.

Whence it follows, that when we see those who are sharers of our own nature without external things, we should reflect how many good things of the interior are wanting to ourselves, that so the thought of our heart may not exalt itself above the needy, in that it sees with an eye of penetration that we ourselves are the more really in want, in proportion as it is more inwardly.

31. And because there are some who cannot stretch the bowels of their compassion so far as to persons unknown to them, but pity those only whom they have learnt to pity by constancy of acquaintance, with whom, in fact, intimacy avails more than nature, whilst to particular persons they give things necessary, not because they are men, but because they are acquaintance, it is well said by blessed Job in this place; If I despised any passing by because that he had no covering. For to a fellow-creature unknown he shews himself compassionate, in that he calls him 'any passing by,' because, surely, with a pitiful mind nature has more avail than acquaintance. Since even every individual who is in want, by this mere circumstance, that he is a man, is not any longer unknown to him. It goes on; Ver. 21. If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself uppermost in the gate.

[xx]

32. It was the custom with those of old that the elders should sit at the gate to make out by judicial trial the quarrels of persons at strife, in order that the city, in which it was befitting that they should dwell in concord, they should never enter at variance. And hence the Lord saith by the Prophet, Establish judgment in the gate. [Amos 5, 15] In this place then what is set forth by the title of the 'gate' but that thing which was used to be done in the gate? For as we talk of the 'camp fighting' instead of this, that there is fighting from the camp, so judgment that used to be tarried on in the gate, is called 'the gate.' Thus he 'sees himself uppermost in the gate,' who sees that by the title of just dealing he is of the better side in judgment. Accordingly, blessed Job, because he did not even then put forth his hand against the fatherless, when even by the claim of justice he saw himself the better one, teaching to us the rule of fear, says, If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, even when I saw myself uppermost in the gale.

As though he said in plain words, 'Not even then had I the mind to enforce by power the interests of my own advantage against the fatherless, when I saw myself even by justice

the better one in judgment.' For holy men, when they are subject to matters of disputings with inferior persons, whilst they are afraid to bear heavily even in the least circumstances, never shun to be themselves pressed upon contrary to justice. For they know that all human justice is charged to be injustice, if it be judged strictly by God. Whence that thing which is at their command, they guard against exacting with passionateness, lest it chance that the Righteousness Above try their actions with exactness. But that they may be able to be found just in the Divine Inquest, very often before the judgments of men they suffer themselves to be borne hard upon even unjustly. Now in relating the lofty height of his life, they are many and wonderful things that blessed Job delivered. But because it very often happens that the human mind refuses to believe the good things that it does not know how to put in practice, he directly adds the sentence of a curse upon himself, if aught of those things which he had spoken he did not fulfil in act, saying,

Ver. 22. Then let my shoulder fall from its joining, and mine arm be broken in pieces along with its bones. [xxi] [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

33. Because bodily action is carried on by the shoulder and the arm, if the good things which he put forth with the lips he did not fulfil in deed, he wishes to himself 'the shoulder to fall,' and 'the arm to be broken in pieces.' As though he said in plain words, 'If the things that I said I refused to do, this very member of my body, which was given to me for working withal, may I lose, that surely that may fall from the body which I would not exercise to advantage.' But if this sentence of a curse is to be referred to a spiritual meaning, it is doubtless plain that the arm is joined to the body by the shoulders, and as by the arm good practice, so by the shoulder the knitting together of social life, is denoted. Whence too the Prophet, regarding the holy peoples of the Church universal, that should serve God in concord, says, And they shall serve Him with one shoulder. [Zeph. 3, 9] Herein then that he says, If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw myself above in the gate. He declares that he had preserved a wonderful force of patience, who declined not the being borne hard upon by the least considerable persons, no not when it was contrary to that which might justly be open to him. Which thing if he had not done, he adds, May my shoulder fall from its joint.

Because, undoubtedly, he who is indifferent to observe patience, soon gives up a social life from impatience. For 'the shoulder falls from its joining,' when the mind, not being able to bear aught of contradiction, abandons brotherly concord, and it is as if a member were severed from the body, when he who might do what is good is cut off from the general unity of all the good. For never can concord be preserved excepting through patience only. For frequently there arises in human conduct occasion whereby the minds of men are liable to be reciprocally separated from their union and affection. And except the mind prepare itself for the undergoing things that are contrary, surely the shoulder does not hold fast to the body. Thus hence it is that Paul says, Bear ye one another's burthens, and so ye shall fulfil the law of Christ. [Gal. 6, 9] Hence Truth says by Itself, In your patience ye shall possess your souls. [Luke, 21, 19]

34. Now upon the 'shoulder falling,' it is rightly subjoined, Let mine arm be broken in pieces with its bones; because without doubt all our practice, with whatsoever virtues it may seem to be accompanied, is undone, except that through the bond of brotherly love patience be preserved safe. For he foregoes to do good deeds of his own, who refuses to bear evil deeds of others. Since on being wounded by the heat of an angry spirit, a person recoils from loving, and when he does endure to be borne hard upon outwardly, he darkens himself inwardly by the light of charity being lost; nor does he now see where to stretch out the foot of good practice, who has lost the eye of love. But 'the shoulder of the holy man does not fall from its joining,' in this way, because his loving affection does not depart from the concord of social life through impatience. And his arm is not broken, because all his practice is preserved in the joining of the shoulder, i.e. in the binding together of charity. Now with what thought present to him he did these good things of such great magnitude, and kept himself from all bad ones, he adds, saying,

Ver. 23. For I always feared God like waves swelling over me, and I could not endure the weight of Him. [xxii] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

35. From the terror that belongs to such a likeness let us reflect what wonderful force of fear there was in the holy man. For when waves swelling hang over us from on high, and when they threaten that death, which they bring down, there is then no concern for temporal things with the voyagers, no enjoyment of the flesh is brought back to mind. Those very things as well they cast forth from the ship, for the sake of which they took long voyages; all things are brought into contempt to their mind by love of living. Accordingly he 'fears God as waves swelling over him,' who whilst he desires the true life, despises all things that here he carries possessing. For when caught by a tempest, we as it were cast out the freight of the vessel, when from the soul that is overborne we remove earthly desires. And it comes to pass that the vessel being lightened floats, which by being loaded was sinking, seeing that doubtless the cares that weigh down in this life, drag the mind into the depth. Which mind is borne so much the higher amidst the billows of temptations, in proportion as it is more heedfully emptied of thought of this world. But there is another circumstance also that ought to be viewed with a regardful eye relating to the tossing of the sea.

For when a storm arises, first slight waves, and afterwards greater billows are stirred up, finally the waves lift themselves up on high, and by their very height overturn all them that are at sea. Thus, thus surely does that last tempest of souls hasten that it may overwhelm the whole world. For now it shews us its beginnings by wars and havocs as by a kind of waves, and in proportion as we are daily made nearer to the end, we see heavier billows of tribulations rushing in upon us. But at the last all the elements being in commotion, the Judge from Above when He comes bringeth the end of all things, because at that time surely the tempest lifts the waves to the heavens. Whence too it is said, Yet a little while and I will shake not only the earth, but heaven also. Which same tempest because holy men regard with lively attention, they as it were dread 'the waves swelling over them' day by day, and by these tribulations, which strike the world, they forecast what things may follow.

30. Now it is well added; And I could not bear the weight of Him, because he who views with mind engrossed the coming of the final Judgment, sees doubtless that such great terror is impending as he not only dreads then to see, but even now dreads that he foresees beforehand. For by the beholding of that great terribleness the soul quivers with dread, and turning aside the eyes of its attention, it refuses to behold that which it foresees. Therefore it is well said, And the weight of Him I could not bear. Because the power of the Majesty Above when It comes to Judgment, and the terribleness of that great Inquest, when the mind by considering endeavours to make out, directly falling back to itself, it is afraid at its having found it out. But herein it is to be considered that blessed Job says these things concerning himself after having been pained and smitten. If then at all events for the advancement of his merits he was so stricken, who so feared, how is he to be stricken, who despises? How shall the judgments of God weigh down those who lift themselves up, if even those they weigh down for a time, who always dread these things in humility? How shall he be able to endure the weight of God, who contemns, if this same weight even he underwent under the rod, who foresaw in fear. Whence with the utmost earnestness we ought to dread that inquest of so great strictness.

Now it is plain that in this life, when he smites, if amendment follows the stroke, it is the discipline of a Father, not the wrath of a Judge, the love of One correcting, not the strictness of One punishing. And so by that very present scourge itself the eternal judgments ought to be weighed. For hence we ought with the greatest pains to reflect, how that anger may be borne that casts away, if that anger of His which purifies may scarcely now be borne.

Book XXII

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 XXII. — All that remained of chapter thirty-one of the Book of Job is explained, and submissiveness of mind, and moderation, patience, charity, and earnest interest for those under our charge, are especially commended.

[i] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] 1. That which has been often said by me already it is not troublesome for me to repeat many times, since the great Preacher too says, To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is necessary. [Phil. 3, 1] Blessed Job for this reason relates virtues achieved, because whilst caught between the words of rebuke and the wounds of the rod, he sees that his mind is being loosened from the assurance of hope. For he had heard from his friends upbraiding him that he had done numberless wicked things even, and lest his soul being driven hard by words and scourges simultaneously should break down into despair, by the recollection of his virtuous attainments he resets the same to hope, that it might never cast itself down in woe, in that if remembered that in the season of its repose it had done such lofty deeds. And so whereas we have told the reason of his purpose, it remains that we weigh with exactness his virtues so heard.

2. But this we are to have impressed upon us first of all, that he, who is supposed to be strong in any particular virtue is then really strong when he is not subject to evil habits in another quarter. For if he be under the dominion of evil habits in another thing, not even that is firm and solid wherein he was believed to stand fast. For each separate virtue is of less worth in proportion as the others are wanting. For very often it has happened to us to see some modest indeed but not humble, some seemingly humble but not pitiful, some seeming pitiful but not at all just, some in appearance just, but trusting in themselves rather than in the Lord. And it is certain that there is not even genuine chastity in the heart of him who lacks humility, since by pride corrupting him within he commits fornication, if from loving himself he departs from the love of God. Nor is that true humility that has not pitifulness joined to it, because that has no right to be called humility which refuses to bend itself to sympathy with the affliction of a brother. Nor is that true mercifulness which proves a

stranger to the right line of justice, for that which is able to be defiled by injustice, knows not assuredly how to have compassion on its own self. Neither is it real righteousness, which puts its trust not in the Creator of all things, but in itself perhaps, or in things created;

since while one withdraws his hope from the Creator, himself overturns to himself the order of the highest justice. And so one virtue without another is either none at all or but imperfect. For that (as it has seemed best to some persons) I may speak of the four first virtues, viz. prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice, they are severally so far perfect, in proportion as they are mutually joined to one another. But separated they can never be perfect. For neither is it real prudence which has not justice, temperance, fortitude, nor perfect temperance which has not fortitude, justice, and prudence, nor complete fortitude which is not prudent, temperate, and just, nor genuine justice which has not prudence, fortitude, and temperance.

3. Accordingly blessed Job, because he had not one without another, but the virtues united together in himself, going over them severally makes them known. For telling the excellences of chastity, he says, If mine heart have been deceived upon a woman. [c. 31, 9] And that he might shew that to that chastity the grace of humility was in no degree wanting, he adds after the rest, If I did despise to undergo judgment with my man servant. [v. 13] And that he might shew that to his humility, mercy was joined, he says a little after, If I have withheld the poor from their desire. [v. 16] And that he might shew that his mercy was descended from the root of justice, he promised a little above, saying, If I have walked in vanity, or if my foot hath hasted in deceit. [v. 5] And that it might be shown how alarmed he was at all things, how guarded towards all, he declares below, saying, For I always feared the Lord as waves swelling over me. Which same if whilst placed in prosperous circumstances, and buoyed up by the abundance of good things, he had placed hope either in his own doings, or in the good things about him on every side, assuredly he would not be just. But when did this holy man place hope in himself, who says in express terms, Lo, there is no help to me in myself? [c. 6, 13] What then now remains but that what feeling he held those very riches with, he should make known. Thus he says,

I have made gold my strength, or have said to bullion, Thou art my confidence. [ii]

4. We give the name of 'bullion' ['obryzum'] to gold in the rough. So then the holy man neither supposed 'gold' to be 'his strength,' nor that to him the 'bullion,' i.e. the mass of rude gold, was 'his confidence,' because resting his hope and satisfaction in the grace of his Creator alone, he sinned neither for the quantity of gold, nor yet in the kind thereof. For it would have been to have given up hope in the Creator, to have placed hope in the creature. But in uncertain objects that rich man had fixed his hope, who said, Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But the Voice Above rebukes this man, saying, Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided. [Luke 12, 19. 20. For the same night he was taken off, who had looked for long times in the abundance of good things to him, that in this way he who, whilst hoarding up means for himself, was looking forward a long

way, should never see the next day though but a single one. For it is in a manner to lay a foundation in running waters, to wish to settle an assurance of hope in things fleeting. For God for evermore standing still, all things pass away. What then is it to fly from One standing, but to attach ourselves to passing things.

For who ever being seized by the swoln eddies of running waters could himself remain fixed, the water racing on downwards? Whosoever then shuns to run to nought, it remains that he eschew that, that does run to nought, lest by that thing which he loves he be driven to go on into that which he avoids. For he that attaches himself to things slipping away, is surely drawn thither, where that is making its way, which he holds. And so it requires first to be looked to that a man love not things temporal, and next in those very temporal things, which he reserves to himself not for gratification, but for use, that he put not his confidence; seeing that by being united to objects running off the soul directly loses its own stay. For the wave of the present life draws away the man whom it lifts up; and he is wholly out of his senses, who is tossed adrift in the water, and yet tries to fix the sole of his feet. But there are very many who while they never place confidence in things transitory, yet when they are supplied to them in abundance for necessary purposes, are full of joy in secret feeling. Whence there is no doubt that every one is the less grieved that the things of eternity should be lacking, the more he is rejoiced that those of time are supplied to him;

and he who grieves the less that temporal things are wanting, looks the more surely that eternal ones should be his. Accordingly this joy derived from things of earth, blessed Job, while testifying that he had not, adds, saying,

Ver. 25. If I rejoiced over my great wealth, and because mine hand found much. [iii] 5. For holy men in the wofulness of this pilgrimage, because that Appearance of their Creator, which they long after, they are not yet suffered to contemplate at all, account all the fulness of the present life as destitution, because nothing out of God suffices the mind which really seeks after God; and it is very often the case that to such persons their very abundance itself becomes exceedingly burthensome, because this thing alone they bear as a grievance, that in hastening to their country they carry many things on the journey. Whence it comes to pass that these things they devotedly share with their neighbours who are in want, in order that while this one gets what he has not, the other may lay aside what he had too much of, that neither the fellow-traveller may walk empty, nor that man whom it might delay on the way an overgreat burthen weigh down. And thus the Elect never rejoice for their great abundance, which same for love of their heavenly inheritance they either in bestowing distribute out of their hands, or by contemning forsake. It follows;

Ver. 26'28. If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath secretly rejoiced, and I have kissed my hand with my mouth; which is an exceeding iniquity, and denial against the Most High God. [iv]

6. There is no doubt that both these two luminaries, which are commissioned to ministrations for man, are called 'the hosts of heaven.' Into the worshipping whereof we know that

numbers have fallen, as Scripture is witness; as where it is written, And worshipped all the host of heaven. [2 Kings 17, 16] And because the sun and moon are seen in one way for use, and in a different way for worshipping, in that way in which they are wont to be worshipped by their votaries blessed Job tells that he had never 'seen the sun and moon, neither had his heart rejoiced; nor had he kissed his hand with his mouth.' By which act of kissing what else but the gratefulness of adoration is set forth? which thing if he had ever done, he calls it 'the highest iniquity and denial of God.' But after that he had related of himself in passages above such great heights of virtuous qualities, what does he now tell so strange, if he shews that he had not 'adored the sun and moon?' Whence it deserves to be considered, that after he testifies that he had not had confidence in gold, nor had rejoiced in much riches, he is further led on to things of a higher pitch, that he might instruct so much the more, the more exactly he tells things touching himself. Thus he says, If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath secretly rejoiced.

What is called to 'see' in this passage, but to behold with desire? Whence the Psalmist saith, If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear. [Ps. 66, 18] Which iniquity, surely, could never be set forth in the mouth, if it were not 'regarded in the heart.' But it is one thing to see in the way of judgment, and another thing to see in the way of desire. Thus then blessed Job tells that 'the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in its brightness, he had never seen,' that he might shew that he had not sought after the appearance of the present light. As though after contempt of his earthly abundance, he plainly told us; 'why should I say, that I never at all rejoiced in gold, who in the very corporeal light itself never took delight? For holy men after that they set at nought all the enjoyments of the present life, in consideration of the sweetness of the light interior, turn away the mind from this light exterior as if from darkness; and they strive much with themselves within, that they be not carried away by the delightfulness of this light which shines outwardly. For if the visible light be incautiously delighted in, the heart is blinded to the invisible light, because in proportion as the soul is poured out in gazing out of itself, so much the more is it made to recoil in the interior regards.

Hence all the wise-hearted, that by their corporeal senses they may not too much fall away to things without, by continual effort gather themselves up within the interior self by the hidden discipline of self-guarding, that they may be found the more whole within, in proportion as they are the less poured forth without. Thus by this vigorousness of discipline he had bound himself up within the depths of his own heart, who in fleeing the desire of the outward life, said, The day of man I have not desired, Thou knowest. [Jer. 17, 16] The same, then, that by the Prophet is expressed, The day of man I have not desired, Thou knowest, this blessed Job declares concerning his own self in other words, viz. that he had not 'seen the sun when it shined, and the moon walking in its brightness,' and that he did not 'rejoice in these in the secret depths of his heart,' surely because he could not possibly 'rejoice' for those things which he 'saw' not in the desire of delighting.

[ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

7. But if these several particulars, which we have gone through, handling them according to the history, we also examine into in respect of the mysteries of allegory, what else do we in this place take the gold to be, saving the wit of a bright understanding? what 'fine gold' but the mind, which whilst it is fined clear by the fire of love, ever preserves in itself the brightness of beauty, by a daily renewal of fervour? For the mind knows not to wax old by inertness, which is bent by desire ever to be beginning. Thus it is hence that it is said by Paul, renewed in the spirit of your mind. [Eph. 4, 23] Hence the Psalmist, who had already reached to the height of perfection, said as if beginning, I said, now I begin; [Ps. 77, 10] in this way, because that, if we are not minded to flag and go off from good begun, it is very requisite that we should believe ourselves to be daily beginning. Nor is it at variance with the order of reason that we say that by 'gold,' man's wit is denoted; for as in ornamenting gold is laid under, that the order of the gems may be arranged above, so the bright talents of the Saints are humbly laid below the benefits of God, and receive the gifts of graces set out in order upon them.

And excepting that gold had a something of a like sort with wisdom, that wise man would never have said, Wisdom hidden from sight, and a treasure, that is not seen, what use is there in either? [Ecclus. 20, 50] Now holy men do not account 'gold' to be their 'strength,' because let them shine out with ever so great ability, they take thought that by their own powers they are nothing. And whilst they are powerfully able to see into all things, they desire first to understand themselves, that the light of their wit, like the sun, may first illumine the place where it arises, and afterwards all the other things to which it is made to open out in going on; lest if by applying themselves to know others they know not their own selves, the ray of the sun should there be darkened, where it rises. Accordingly, the goodness of their natural parts they apply to acquainting themselves with their own infirmity, and by acquaintance with their own infirmity they are the more effectually endued with power. And so the gold is not taken for 'strength,' if there is not confidence had in the wit wherewith they are endowed. Which Solomon rightly advising of saith, Put confidence in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not on thine own understanding. [Prov. 3, 5] So then let him say, If I have made gold my strength, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.

As though he avowed in plain terms; 'Neither what I really understood did I ascribe to my own parts, nor, if it chanced that I did any whit that was good, did I reckon such things primarily to my own mind:' who still more particularly telling us the humility of his heart, adds, saying,

Ver. 25. If I rejoiced over my great riches, and because mine hand had found very many things.

8. What do we fancy the 'great riches' so called in signification, but the abundant subtleties of counsels, which same 'the hand' of him that seeks 'finds,' in that the thought of him who deals thereunto produces them. For it was these 'riches' of wisdom that Solomon having before his eyes, saith, The crown of the wise is their riches. [Prov. 14, 24] Which same person, because it is not metals of the earth but understanding that he calls by the name

of 'riches,' thereupon adds by way of a contrary; But the foolishness of fools is imprudence. For if he called earthly riches 'the crown of the wise,' surely he would own the senselessness of fools to be poverty rather than imprudence. But whereas he added 'the foolishness of fools imprudence, he made it plain that he called prudence 'the riches of the wise.' These 'riches' of wisdom Paul viewing in himself and lowering his view by the thought of human infirmity, says, But we have this treasure in earthen vessels. [2 Cor. 4, 7] Accordingly we find much riches in ourselves, when in searching into the sacred oracles, we receive the gifts of abundant understanding, and therein see a number of things, yet not at variance with one another. But it is not safe rejoicing to learn in the pages of God things either forcible or many in number, but rather to keep safe the things that we learn. For he that understands aright, sees what by so understanding he owes as a debt. Since the more he is enlarged in perception, the more heartily he is tied and bound to fulfilling deeds. Whence Truth saith in the Gospel; For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. [Luke 12, 48]

9. Therefore let us reckon understanding given like borrowed money, because the more we have entrusted to us in lovingkindness, the more we are held debtors in practice; and it very often happens that the same money of understanding received, when it is bestowed upon hearers for usury, is lost except it be given in a cautious spirit. For neither should it be slightly regarded in the book of Kings, that while the sons of the prophets were hewing wood on the Jordan, to one of them his ax-head having slipped off the handle into the deep water, disappeared from sight. For the iron on the handle is the gift of understanding in the heart: but to cut down wood thereby is to rebuke persons doing wickedly. Which same sometimes whilst it is done loosely, whilst the downfall of vain-glory in that same knowledge vouchsafed us is not avoided, the iron is lost in the water, because understanding is made witless by undone practice, which same understanding assuredly we know to be given for this end, that before the eyes of the Giver it may be rendered back by good conduct. Whence it happened rightly that he who had lost the iron exclaimed, Alas, alas, my master, for it was borrowed.

[2 Kings 6, 5] For the Elect have this proper to them, that if at any time a furtive sin of vain glory creep upon them in their knowledge, they speedily turn back into their heart, and whatever they find in themselves worthy of condemnation before the eyes of the strict Judge, they follow hard upon with tears. Who whilst weeping, not only heedfully scan the evil things they have been guilty of, but what good ones as well they ought to have paid back for the benefit vouchsafed them, because surely they the more fuel themselves sinners, in proportion as they are held debtors in the neglected good that they ought to have done. Rightly then did he who lost the iron cry out, Alas, alas, my master, for it was borrowed. As though he said, 'That by the undoing of negligence have I lost, which thing in order that I should pay it back by good works I received from the grace of the Lender.' But God never abandons the soul which owns itself in its sins in a true way. Hence too Elisha immediately on coming sends the wood down below, and raises the iron upon the surface, because surely our Redeemer regarding us with pity humbles the heart of a sinner, and fashions anew for

him the understanding, which he had lost. He sinks the wood, and lifts up the iron, because He chastens the heart, and restores the knowledge.

Whence it is well said in another translation, that he 'broke in pieces the wood' and cast it in, and so raised up the iron. For 'to break the wood in pieces' is to break up the heart from self-exaltation; to cast the wood below is to abase the uplifted heart in acquaintance with its own infirmity, as we said. And thereupon the iron is brought back to the top, because understanding returns for the service of the former mode of employment.

10. Therefore because the gift of understanding that is obtained, is with such numberless difficulties hardly kept safe (for there must be care taken that it be not deadened by inactivity, there must be care that in the exercising of practice it do not go out by the evil of self-elation,) holy men do not exult, when they learn the things for them to do, but when they do the things they have learnt. And if in understanding they congratulate themselves in the benefaction of the Giver, yet sorrowing they take thought of the debt of practice, that is to say, that they may discharge by conduct what has been advanced to them in knowledge. For he is a foolish debtor, who receives rejoicing the money lent, and never minds the time when he must pay it back. But the joy of receiving is abated, when with prudential foresight the appointed season for paying back is thought on as well. Therefore because just men in the things which they perceive by lively attention are not lifted up by assured rejoicing, let it be said aright, If I rejoiced over my great riches, and because my hand found very many things. As though it were put in plain words; 'Never did I account myself rich by righteousness in this respect, that I knew right things, which I ought to do, even many in number;

nor did understanding lift up the heart, because that the thought of the practice owed in debt kept down.' But it is to be borne in mind, that it very frequently happens that when a high pitch of understanding is received, the mind being very full of anxiety about itself is kept from the downfall of self-exaltation. But when the wonderful things it understands it begins to put in practice likewise, sometimes by the mere circumstance that it is made to display itself without, it slips, and glories that itself excels in its doings all the rest of the world. As, then, the 'gold' of understanding did not uplift blessed Job, so neither did the light of extraordinary practice either before the eyes of men lift him to a height. Hence too he fitly adds;

If I saw the sun when it shined. [vi]

11. Since 'the sun in brightness,' is good practice in outward manifesting. For it is written, Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven. [Matt. 5, 16] And again, Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning. [Luke 12, 35] For what in this passage is denoted by the 'sun shining,' is in the Gospel denoted by 'lamps burning.' For when good practice shines in the midst of faithless persons, 'a lamp burns' in the night, but when it shines out in the Church, 'the sun shines' in the day. For good practice if it be as yet such as bad men only wonder at, is

doubtless a 'lamp' in the night; but if it so makes way that it may be admired by the good and more perfect kind, then it is the sun in the day time. When good practice shines by the active life of the body, it is as if after the manner of a candle light shineth out of an earthenware vessel. But when by the excellence of the mind alone it is raised up in contemplation, it is as if after the manner of the sun light is seen coming from heaven. Therefore because blessed Job had told of himself many good things appertaining to hospitality and mercifulness, which same surely he knew as still the least, in proportion as done in the bodily way of doing;

recalling the eye of the mind to the topmost height of spiritual virtues, he remembered his own perfectness, and the light of examples which he gave to others in himself, he called 'the sun.' But there are some persons who when they do any good things, directly forget their wickednesses, and they fix the eye of the mind in the contemplation of the good practices which they exhibit; and henceforth account themselves holy, in the degree that amidst the good things that they do they shun the recollection of their evil deeds, in which perchance they are still entangled. Which same persons if with lively attention they marked the strictness of the Judge, would fear more for their evil things than exult for their imperfect good ones, would more look to it that for things that are still to be done they are held debtors, than that by practising some things they are already paying a portion of the debt. For neither is the debtor quit who pays back much, but who pays back all; nor does he attain to the prize of victory, who in a large proportion of the exhibition runs with speed, if on nearing the goal, in that which is left he goes off. Nor to persons going to any destined places does it avail when setting out to despatch a long way, if they are not at the same time able to achieve the whole of it.

We then who are seeking the Eternal Life, what else are we about but performing a kind of journeys, whereby we are hastening onward to our country. But what does it matter that we despatch so many, if the rest which remain for our arriving we neglect?

12. Thus after the manner of travellers we ought not ever to look how much way we have already gone through, but how much there remains for us to carry through, that by slow degrees that may become past and over, which is unceasingly and fearfully marked as still to be. Therefore we ought much more to survey what good things we have not yet done, than those good things which we are glad that we have already done. But human frailty has this belonging to it, that it is more attractive to it to look at that which pleases it in itself, than that which displeases it in itself. For the sick eye of the heart, while it dreads to be put to pains in its contemplation, as it were asks for a kind of bed of delight in the mind, where it may lie softly; and for this reason it makes out what benefits it has secured by the good things it has done, but what losses it sustains from those which it has left undone it is blind to. For it very often happens that even the Elect are tried by this evil, very often it is put to the hearts of those, that the several good deeds which they have done they should recall to mind, and exult now in the joyfulness of security.

But if they be really Elect persons, from that in which they are pleasing to themselves they turn away the eyes of the mind, and force down in themselves all joyfulness for the good things they have done, and for those which they perceive that they have never done they seek out sorrowfulness, they account themselves unworthy persons, and are almost the only ones that do not see the good things, which they afford in themselves to be seen for an example to all men. It is hence that Paul, when he was putting behind him the good things completed in himself, and thinking of those only still remaining, that had to be completed, said, I count not myself to have apprehended. [Phil. 3, 13] It is hence that in order that he might abase himself as to the good things he was doing, he set himself to recall to mind the evil things that were past, saying, Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious. [1 Tim. 1, 13]

13. And even if he at any time said, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; [2 Tim. 4, 7] we ought above every thing to turn our eye to the fact, that he brought the thing forward at that time when he knew that he was now about to depart out of the body. For he there premised, saying, For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. [v. 6] For then he recalled to his recollection the perfectness of his practice, when he now foresaw time for practising no more to be his as to a field of large extent. For as whilst we live we are bound to drive out of our recollection our good deeds, that they may not lift us up, so on our departure drawing nigh, we very often bring them again to our recollection, that so they may afford us confidence, and keep down despairing fear. Who though in reckoning up he related his good points to the Corinthians, was bent to confirm them, and not to make a display of himself. For that he paid no regard to the same good points in himself, he taught by the affliction of his own tempting being laid open, which being set forth, he added; Therefore I take pleasure in mine infirmities.

[2 Cor. 12, 10] So then that he might instruct the disciples, he told what was most high of himself, while that he might keep himself in humbleness, he had fixed the eye of his observation not in his virtues but in his weaknesses. Accordingly, holy men have this proper to them, that the good things they do they see indeed, yet when they have done them they turn away their eyes from the remembrance thereof. Whence it is rightly said by blessed Job, If I saw the sun when it shined. As though he said in plain speech; 'My practice, even when it afforded the light of examples to others, I minded not for the boon of foreassurance; because whilst I feared to be uplifted on the grounds thereof, I turned mine eyes away from regarding it.' It goes on;

And the moon walking in her brightness. [vii]

14. After the sun had been premised, he justly likewise added, 'the moon walking in her brightness,' because after good practice there follows the praiseworthy report whereby a name of renown is won in this night season of the present life. But if that be true which some think, that the moon through his hidden circuit receives illumination from the ray of the sun, so that she should be able to display light by the courses of the night, this supposition likewise is not at variance with the order of this representation. For fame gains its means

from good practice, and it spreads the esteem of applause like the brightness of light. There is also another thing in the moon, which may agree in likeness with fame spreading good. For the light thereof even in the season of darkness shews the road to persons going afoot, because both whilst the light of praise shines out from another's life, it lightens others for the exercising of good practice; and when the esteem of the one is seen in a clear light, to the other as it were going his way upon a journey the light of example is afforded. But it sometimes happens that the practice which is derived from the esteem of another man is framed with an aim not duly pure in the mind. For weak minds when they hear good things of others, sometimes kindle themselves to right practice not by the love of virtue, but the delightfulness of applause.

And indeed it is evident that as it is the nature of the sun that whatsoever things it touches it burns and dries up, so it is the property of the fire of the moon that whatever it touches, it burns indeed, but in so burning renders the thing moist. Thus then to a good life, some an affecting of good practice for the love of God kindles and inflames, whilst others the love of praise. But when we are set on fire with an affection to right practice, we are as it were dried up by the fire of the sun from the humidity of evil habits. While him whom the love of praise prompts to good practice, fame coveted touches like the moon, because his mind it at once inflames and unlooses. That is to say, it inflames him to the exercising of practice, but unlooses him to the desire of applause. Yet very often for the exercising of good deeds the examples of others influence us to good effect. And when we adopt the good of another's reputation with a humble mind, we either advance our own good things for the better, or change the bad to good; and when the brightness of fame from the life of our neighbour sheds its rays on ourselves, our mind, as we before said, which is guiding itself with a view to winning the way of virtue, sets the steps as it were in the light of the moon.

But as we make way by the esteem of another, so it very often occurs that if we give heed to the praises of our own fame, we are emptied of virtue, because when the mind is made to take delight in that which it sees to be held without concerning it, it loses sight of that, which it was panting for within.

15. Therefore because the understanding of knowledge did not corrupt the holy man, he held it beneath him to rejoice in his great riches. Now because the greatness of his practice did not puff him up, he 'saw not the sun when it shined;' and because neither did the credit of applause uplift 'him, he never' regarded the moon walking in its brightness.' For there are some persons who are brought down into self-exalting in the degree, that by a nice understanding they find out good things even that they do not do. These, surely, 'rejoice over great riches,' when by making out they discover any things of the highest, and by those self-same discoveries are spoilt in self-exaltation. But there are some persons whom understanding does not indeed uplift, but the practice set forth exalts, who whilst they regard their own doings in their own heart by shewing disdain, set the rest of the world in the background to themselves. These same, though they do not rejoice in great riches, yet 'see the sun when it shineth,' because upon the greatness of good practice alone, they as it

were swell themselves out despising others. And there are some whom not even their own practice uplifts, but when they begin to be commended by their fellow-creatures for that same good practice, being overcome by the mere applause of men, by themselves they view themselves as certain great ones in their own imagination, and are unbound from the safe keeping of the heart.

These, surely, though they refused to 'see the sun when it shineth,' yet 'behold the moon walking in its brightness;' because amidst the darkness of this world, while they fasten the mind on the brightness of their reputation, as it were by the light of the night they lose the grace of humility, and, whilst beholding the moon, they see not themselves, in that they begin to be blind to themselves, while they fix the eyes of the mind on transitory applause.

16. Now so is the progress of men, as we see the growths of trees to be. For the essence of the future tree is first in the seed, afterwards in the springing, and at last it is carried out into boughs. Thus then, surely the goodness of every one doing works grows up. For it is sown in understanding, it springs up in practising, and at last it is consolidated to the full width of great advancement. But when his understanding uplifts any one, the tree that might have sprung up rots in the seed. And when after good practice he is spoilt by the bane of self-exaltation, it is as if, having already sprung up, it withered. But when neither understanding nor practice corrupt, but its greatness growing up, when the applause of persons commending follows, and overturns from its seat the mind of him that doeth rightly, the tree has encountered the winds of the tongues, and all that had grown up strong in it, the tempest of fame has plucked up by the roots. For in proportion as the tree has risen higher to the regions above, forcibly does it feel the violence of the winds; because the more a man is lifted to a height in good practices, with so much the greater blast is he oppressed by the mouth of those that praise him. Therefore if the tree is still in the seed, there is need to fear lest it should be made rotten by the mere acquaintance with knowledge; if it has now already issued into a shoot, we have to be on our guard that the hand of self-exaltation touch it not, and parch it of the greenness of its conduct; but if it already lifts itself up on high with vigorous strength, it is very greatly to be dreaded lest the over strong wind of praise that is applied pluck it up from the roots.

17. But herein it is necessary to be borne in mind, that, to the end that we be not rooted up by immoderate praises, very often, by the marvellous regulating of our Ruler, we are allowed to be torn in pieces by calumnies even, that so when the voice of one commending lifts up the heart, the tongue of one calumniating should abase it, because the tree too oftentimes, which is so driven by the impulse of one wind as to seem now that it might well nigh be rooted out of its place, is set up again by a blast of another wind from an opposite quarter; and the tree which suffered bending from this side, is brought back from another to its standing position. And hence that tree, being deeply rooted, had as it were stood fixed amidst contending winds, which said, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report. [2 Cor. 6, 8] For it often happens that praise being unwonted brought home to the ears of the well doer, whilst it echoes in talkings without, engenders to the mind within a

kind of tempest in silence, and it comes to happen that this thing, that the soul is delighted by the applause of men, it does not easily display outwardly, but yet it feels the force of corruption in no slight degree inwardly. And there are some whom praise so puffs up that it forces them on even to words of self-exalting.

But some, as we said before, are ashamed to lay open this same thing, that they are lifted up, and their encomiums being heard by them they are exalted, but yet do not come forth to the extent of words of exaltation, and never shew openly that they delight in such things. Hence blessed Job, because he knew that he had not been arrogant not only at all in words, but also in the secret thought of the heart as well, after that he said, If I saw the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in its brightness; therefore added;

Ver. 27. And my heart rejoiced in secret. [viii]

18. By which same recording, what else is conveyed to us, but that there is need of great fear and circumspection, lest our mind at any time rejoice even in secret on the grounds of its commendations. For that man who looks on the greatness of his fame as 'the brightness of the moon,' and creates delight to himself in the secret of the heart, to whom but to the Maker did such a man prefer himself, by Whose gift he obtained it that he should practise aright, and yet in His benefit is made glad upon the favour of his own praise? For the honour of his Creator being disregarded, he is convicted of loving himself more, by the proclaims of whom he is so gladdened. Though sometimes even holy men rejoice in their own good repute; but when they reflect that through this good repute those that hear them advance to better things, they now no longer rejoice in their own reputation, but in the profiting of their neighbours; because it is one thing to seek marks of favour, and another thing to exult on the ground of advancement. Wherein it follows, that when it does not advance the welfare of the hearers, fame for credit should not lift up, but oppress our mind. For when we are commended by the witnessing of the human tongue, we are asked by a secret smiting what we think concerning our own selves.

For the uplifted soul, even when false good is told concerning it, exults, because it makes out in thought not how it lives with God, but how it makes itself known with men. For disregarding the judgment of Almighty God concerning itself, and only seeking after that of men, it is lifted up amidst the praises it hears, and the soul which had looked out for this alone is gladdened as if by the prize of its practice. But on the contrary if the heart be really humble, the good things that it hears of itself it either does not at all acknowledge, and is afraid that false things are said, or otherwise if it knows that they are really there to it, dreads lest they should be lost to the eternal recompensing of God, by this alone that it sees them to be published abroad to men; and it fears very greatly lest the hope of the future reward should be changed into the wages of transitory applause.

19. From which circumstance it takes place that the soul of the Elect is tortured by a great fire of their own praises, and by sorrowfulness of thought fined clear of all the rust of its inertness. For by heedful taking thought it is filled with fear lest either for those things,

in the which it is praised, and they do not exist, it should meet with a worse judgment of God, or for those things wherein it is praised, and they do exist, it lose the suitable reward. Whence it most commonly takes place that like as the unjust man is defiled by his praise, so the just person is purified by his praise reaching his ear. For when the good things he has done he finds out are put forward by men, he dreads, as has been said, the exact inquest of the Final Judgment upon himself, and full of affright flees to the conscience, and whatever there is therein worthy of blame, he corrects. For while he dreads to have his good things made known, fearing greatly the exactness of the Inquest to follow, if there be any hidden evil things in him, he cuts them away. For he is alarmed if he be not exhibited at least such to God, as he is held by men, neither is he satisfied that in that state in which he may have been made known to men he should continue to remain.

For already he reckons compensation as it were made to him for his good things, except he add thereto others also which are not known by men. Whence it is well said by Solomon; As silver is tried in the fining pot and gold in the furnace, so man is tried by the mouth of him that praises. [Prov. 27, 21] For silver and gold if it be refuse is consumed by the fire, but if proof, it is brought out by the fire. Thus surely is the mind also of him that worketh. For what sort of man he is, is shewn herein that he is praised; for if when his praises reach his ears, he is uplifted, what else was such an one but refuse gold or silver, whom surely the furnace of the tongue consumed? But if on hearing the marks of favour towards him, he returns to the consideration of the Judgment Above, and entertains fear lest he should be heavily charged for these things in the sight of the secret Arbiter, as it were by the fire of purifying he is made to grow to greatness and splendour, and from the same source whence he undergoes the burning of affright, he shines so much the brighter. Therefore blessed Job, because he never preferred himself on the ground of practice, says with confidence, If I saw the sun when it shined.

And because fame to his credit never diverted this man from the regarding of the Interior Judgment, he adds, And the moon walking in her brightness. And because he never suffered, not even in secret thought, that his mind should be mastered by the boon of his repute, he directly added, And if my heart rejoiced in secret. And because it very often happens that the unheeding mind, when it does not set itself against transitory applause, is drawn on even to this pass, that it praises itself what it does, to the condition which was set before it is in a manner fitly annexed ,

And have kissed my hand with my mouth. [ix]

20. For by the 'hand' doing is denoted, and by the 'mouth' speaking; as when it is said by Solomon, A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and it is labour to him to bring it to his mouth. [Prov. 19, 24] To the slothful man it is a labour to stretch his hand to his mouth,' because the slothful preacher has no mind to practise even the very thing that he says, Since to stretch the hand to the mouth, is to harmonize with his voice in practice. And so he 'kisses his hand with his mouth,' who praises the thing that he does, and by the testimony of his own speech awards to himself meritoriousness of practice. In which case who is there that

is despised, saving He Who bestows the very gifts for practising themselves? Whence it is well said by the great Preacher; And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

[1 Cor. 4, 7] Now holy men know themselves to be sprung since the fall of our first parent from a corruptible stock, and that not by their own goodness, but by grace from above preventing them they are changed to better wishes and works, and whatever of evil they find to be in them, they feel is earned by mortal derivation, but whatever of good they espy in themselves, they acknowledge as the gift of immortal grace, and they are made debtors to Him for the benefit vouchsafed, Who both by preventing vouchsafed to them to will the good that they willed not, and by following after vouchsafed them to be able to do the good which they will. Whence it is well said by John; And worshipped Him That liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord. [Rev. 4, 10] For 'to cast their crowns before the throne of the Lord' is to attribute not to themselves but to the Maker the victories of their conflicts, so as to refer the glory of praise to Him, from Whom they know themselves to have received powers for the conflict. And so blessed Job, because he so tells the good things that he had practised, that, nevertheless, he never attributes them to his own doing, but goes back to the praise of his Creator, denies that he had 'kissed his hand with his mouth.' As though he said in a plain way, 'I do not bring forward my deeds as mine own;

because he is proved to disown the grace of his Creator, whoever attributes to himself the thing that he does in practice.' And hence he adds directly;

Ver. 28. Which is the chiefest iniquity, and denial against the Most High God. [x] 21. For it is clear that he does deny Him, when setting at nought His grace, he claims to himself the powers of good practice. Which too is rightly called as well 'the chiefest iniquity' because every act of sin which is from infirmity destroyeth not hope, seeing that it asks forgiveness from the Judge Above. But presuming on our own goodness is so much the worse in desperateness, the further it is removed from humility. And when it ascribes the strength of practice to itself, it does not have recourse to the aid of the Maker, and it is brought to pass that the sinner perishes so much the worse, for that even this very thing, that he is a sinner, he is ignorant of. It follows; Ver. 29. If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found me.

[xi] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION] 22. That we are disciples of Almighty God, the keeping of charity is the only proof. For it is hence that Truth saith by Itself, By this shall all men know that ye are My Disciples, if ye have love one toward another. [John 13, 35] Which same love, if it really fills our heart, is wont to be exhibited in two ways; viz. if we at once love our friends in God, and our enemies for God. But it needs to be known that the love of our enemy is then really kept, when we are neither given up to suffering ['addicimur'] upon his advancement, nor rejoiced at his destruction. For very often in a semblance of love with reference to an enemy, the mind is deceived, and such an one it reckons that it loves, if it do not prove a foe to his life; but the efficacy of love either the promotion, or the fall of an

enemy, secretly and really puts to the proof. For on this point the mind of man knows not itself to the full, except that him whom he takes for an enemy to him, he finds whether by advancement or diminution to have changed the measure of his standing. For if he is given over to suffer by the prosperity, and rejoiced by the calamity of him who hates him, it is plain that he does not love him, whom he does not wish to be better; and him he persecutes, even when standing, in wish, about whoso fall he congratulates himself.

23. But herein it is needful to know that it very often happens that without charity being lost, both the destruction of an enemy rejoices us, and again his glory without any sin of envy saddens us, when both he falling to ruin, we believe that there are persons rightly set up, and he being advanced we dread very many being unjustly borne down. In which case neither does his diminution now lift up our mind, nor his aggrandisement give it over to suffer, if the right thought of our heart regard not what is done in the individual, but what is done by the individual towards others. But for preserving these things a scrutiny of the exactest discrimination is absolutely requisite, lest when we are carrying out our own hatred, we be deceived under the appearance of the utility to another. For if there were not to be any rejoicing at all for the death of an enemy, the Psalmist would never say, The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance on the ungodly. [Ps. 58, 10] For it is one thing to bear an ungodly man, and another thing to bear an enemy. For there are a great many enemies that are not ungodly, and there are some ungodly persons who seem not in any special manner enemies to us. But the mind of man accounts every one whom it bears as an enemy, to be ungodly and wicked as well, because the faults of that man spleen as his accuser heightens in its own thinking.

But with whatever wickednesses he may be sunk down, he little passes for wicked, if he is not felt to be an adversary. In which point there must be the distinguishing, that it is one thing wherein our enemy harms ourselves, and another thing wherein he harms himself and the rest of the world. For if he is good to others, perchance it may be that it is not without our fault that he is bad to us; nor should there be altogether a rejoicing in his ruin now, whoso hostile treatment it is certain we alone have undergone. But when the enemy of ourselves and a great many persons is destroyed, it must needs be that our heart should be glad for the escape of our neighbours, rather than for the destruction of our enemy.

24. For it is requisite that when an adversary perishes we should minutely consider both what we owe to the destruction of the sinner, and what to the justice of the smiter. For when Almighty God smites any bad man, there must be sorrowing in unison with the wretchedness of the ruined, and rejoicing in unison with the justice of the Judge, so that both the punishment of our neighbour dying should be a sorrow to us, and again the equity exhibited by God in judging should be an occasion of joy, that so we may neither prove enemies to a man in his perishing, nor be found unthankful to God in His judging. And so because he perfectly trod down all feelings of hatred in opposition, let blessed Job say, If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him. Who, that is to say, in loving even his enemy, whereas he sympathized with an adversary when

ruined, by that one's evil things was himself advanced to good, that this one should go on growing to loving-kindness by the same cause that the evil that he deserved had found that other. But because often there are persons who because they cannot with power, assail with cursing those whom they account enemies to themselves, in which persons it appears plain what evil things they would do if they could, who never cease to imprecate those which they cannot do, blessed Job exhibiting himself free from the sin of cursing as well, added, going on,

Ver. 30. Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. [xii] 25. For he would sin, if he were to desire that to be done by God, which he himself either could not at all be able to do, or if he could it would not be in any wise right. For they who assail an enemy with curses, what other thing do they wish God to do in his case, but what they are either unable or ashamed to do themselves? For they wish death to their enemy, which same even if they have the power, they are afraid to bring upon him; lest they should either be bound as guilty of murder committed, or shew themselves wicked even when they are. What then is it to say to God, 'Kill the man whom I hate,' but to cry out to him in audible accents; 'Do Thou that to mine enemy, which it is not proper for me to do towards him even as a sinner.' In which same words it is to be thought where had this person read, Love your enemies? [Luke 6, 27] where had he read, Bless, and curse not? [Rom. 12, 14] and again, Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing? [1 Pet. 3, 9] But the precepts of grace from above, not heard with the outward ears he observed, because the inspiration of the Holy Spirit wrote them in the heart of that man. To whom however it would have been but little that he loved those adversaries situated without, excepting he had to bear these also living within, and holding daily converse with him, even those of his household, as adversaries. Whence he adds,

Ver. 31. If the men of my tabernacle said not, O that we had of his flesh, that we might be satisfied! [xiii] [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION] 26. Which same sentence may also be taken in mystery of the voice of our Redeemer. For 'the men of his tabernacle' longed to be 'satisfied by his flesh,' i.e. whether the Jews in persecuting or the Gentiles in believing. For both the one set themselves as it were by consuming it to put an end to His Body, and the latter desire to satisfy their hungering soul with His flesh, by the daily sacrifice of His immolating. [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

But now following the gist of the history alone let us reflect with what strenuousness the mind of the holy man, full of concern for all things, is divided within and without; who to those acting unjustly had he either submitted in silence, or not withstood in righteous living, assuredly he would never have had them as adversaries. But hereby, that he kept the paths of life, he found hearty desires of his death. Adversaries he met with, shewing themselves outwardly, lurking inwardly. Now it is inferior goodness in a conflict for a man to see without evils that he has to get the better of, and not to have within aught that he may have to bear. But it is the praise of perfect greatness to meet hostile treatment, without bravely, and within mercifully. For there are some things in the actual common dealing of

those of a household, that cannot be corrected without sin in the corrector, and therefore when they either defile him who corrects them, or do not weigh heavily on him who does them, with a great skill of tutoring they require to be winked at, and by this very winking to be borne with, which same when put upon ourselves are the more quickly dismissed from our hearts, if we know our own misdemeanours against our neighbours. Whence it is well said too by Solomon; Take no heed to all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself also hast cursed others. [Eccles. 7, 21, 22] For whilst we reflect what we have been towards others, we are the less concerned that others should have proved such persons towards ourselves, because the injustice of another avenges in us what our conscience justly accuses in self. It proceeds;

Ver. 32. The stranger did not lodge in the street; but my door was open to the traveller. [xiv] 27. Whereas, Paul being witness, charily is described as patient and kind, by patience it bears with composure the ill turns of others, by kindness it also renders with mercifulness its own good ones. Whence blessed Job at once patiently bore those of his own household cursing him, and received to him kindly the travellers and strangers, to the first affording examples of morals, the other meeting with the succour of external things. For the holy man viewing by the Spirit of prophecy the Redeemer of mankind, also kept his pardoning words in practice, whereby He warns us, saying, Let go, and it shall be let go to you; give and it shall be given unto you. [Luke 6, 37] For our giving relates to the things which we have outwardly, but our letting go to the dismissing the grief, which we have inwardly contracted by the offence of another. But it requires to be known, that he who 'lets go' but does not 'give,' though he has not done to the full, yet has observed the better part of mercifulness. But he who 'gives' but never 'lets go' does not execute mercy at all; because by Almighty God the gift is not accepted from the hand, which is proffered by a heart tied and bound in wickedness.

28. For there is need for the soul that offers alms first to be made clean, because every thing that is given to God is reckoned according to the feeling of him who gives it. Therefore every stain of evil must be wiped clean from our interior man by the changing of the thought, because the offering has it not to appease the wrath of the Judge, except it be acceptable by the purity of him who offers it. Whence it is written; And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offerings; but unto Cain and to his offerings He had not respect. [Gen. 4, 4. 5. For it is not that sacred Revelation says that 'He had respect to the offerings of Abel, but to the offerings of Cain He had not respect;' but he first says, that He had respect to Abel, and afterwards subjoined, And to his offerings. And again he says that to Cain He had not respect, and next added, nor to his offerings. For according to the heart of the giver is the thing that is given received. Therefore not Abel by virtue of his offerings, but by virtue of Abel the gifts offered were well pleasing. For it is read that the Lord had regard first to the person who gave, before the things which he gave.

Hence blessed Job going on to tell us his bountifulness in the boon of hospitality did right in bringing forward first his patience and kindness towards enemies, how that he did not

'exult in the destruction of his enemy;' that he did not 'assail his persecutors with words of cursing;' that those enraged against him within, he bore with equanimity; and then at last he brought forward the bountifulness of his hospitality, that, namely, by the order of his relation being listened to, we might learn that exterior gifts are seasoned by the interior pureness of the heart, that the combination of his virtues might teach the reader what sort of person he ought to be in himself, when he administers external good to others.

29. But who would not account himself to be a holy man in the midst of such heights of his virtues? Who would not be in some measure tempted by his mere merits alone being so many in number, so that if at any time as being but man he went wrong, he would not have his transgression made known to men; and would account it as trivial if he did any thing wrong in lesser things; and would rather prefer to cover his offence by silence than disclose it by the voice of confession? For it often comes to pass that the mind being lifted up by virtuous attainments, when it knows that many good things are scattered abroad concerning it in the esteem of neighbours, does not wish it to be known, if there is any thing that it does deserving of blame. Which same darkness of mistaking the mind is for this reason exposed to, because high-swelling clogs the eye of the heart. Hence blessed Job, in the midst of so many distinguished achievements in virtues, who became so lofty in practice, in order to shew how lowly in mind he was, added directly;

If I covered my transgression as man, and did hide mine iniquity in my bosom.

30. For these are the proofs of true humility, both for a man to ascertain his own wickedness, and on being ascertained to discover it by the voice of confession; but on the contrary it is the accustomed evil practice of man's race, at once to commit sin keeping himself hidden from sight, and when committed to hide it by denying, and when brought home to him, to multiply it by standing up for it. For from that fall of the first man we draw these accessions of wickedness, from which we also draw the very original of sin. For thus he, when he had touched the forbidden tree, hid himself from the face of the Lord amidst the trees of Paradise. In which hiding, because surely he could not escape the eye of God, it is not the effecting of self-concealing that is related, but the affecting thereof is betokened. Who when he was charged by the Lord, how that he had touched of the forbidden tree, thereupon answered; The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. [Gen. 3, 12] The woman likewise on being asked, answered, saying, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. [v. 13] For to this end they were enquired of, that the sin, which by transgressing they had been guilty of, they might by confessing wipe out. Whence too the serpent, that prompter, inasmuch as he was not to be brought back to pardon, was not asked concerning the sin.

Thus man was asked the question 'where he was,' that he might review the offence committed, and by confessing it take knowledge how far he had departed from the face of his Creator. But both preferred to take to themselves the cordials of defence rather than of confession. And whilst the man was minded to palliate the sin through the woman, and the woman through the serpent, they added to the sin, which they endeavoured to vindi-

cate; Adam by indirectly glancing at the Lord, how that he had Himself proved the author of their sin, in that He had made the woman; and Eve in referring the sin to the Lord, Who had placed the serpent in Paradise. For they who had heard from the mouth of the devil deceiving them, Ye shall be as Gods; [v. 5] because they were not able to be like to God in Godhead, for the heightening of their error endeavoured to make God like to themselves in transgression. In this way then, whilst they set themselves to defend their guilt, they made the addition that the sin should be rendered more heinous when examined, than it had been when committed.

31. Hence now also the branches of the human race derive bitterness still from this root, so that when a man is charged home for the evil in him, he hides himself under words of self-defence, as under a kind of leaves of trees, and as it were flies the face of his Creator to a kind of darkened retreats of self-exculpation, whereas he has no mind to have that known that he has been guilty of. By which same concealment he has not hidden himself from the Lord, but the Lord from himself. For he manages that he should not see Him Who sees all things, not that he himself should not be seen. Contrarily to every sinner the first step now of enlightenment is the humility of confessing, in that he now refuses to spare himself, who does not blush to avow the evil that he has done, and he who by defending himself might have been laid open to be accused, by accusing himself defends himself most quickly. And hence to dead Lazarus, who was kept down by a great weight, it is not said, 'be thou restored to life;' but, Come forth, [John 11, 43] by which same rising again, which was carried on in the body of that man, it is signified in what way we ourselves rise again in the heart, i.e. when it is said to the dead man, Come forth;

that is to say, that man being dead in his sin, and through the mass of bad habit already buried, because he lies hidden from sight within his own conscience by wickedness, should go forth from himself without by confession. For to the dead man it is said, Come forth, that from the excusing and concealing of sin he may be called forth to come out to the accusing of himself with his own lips. Whence David the Prophet, in coming to life from that death of his great guilt, as it were went forth at the voice of the Lord, when being rebuked by Nathan he brought accusation of what he had done.

32. Therefore because this sin of concealing grew to a dreadful excess in the human race, blessed Job, when he was saying, If I covered my transgression, rightly inserted the words as man, because he sees that to be proper to man, which descends by the copying of our old parent. Whence it is fitly subjoined; And did hide mine iniquity in my bosom. For sacred Scripture is very often used to put the 'bosom' for the mind; as where in the voice of Holy Church it is said by the Psalmist of our persecutors, who are joined to us indeed in nature, but disjoined in life, And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom. [Ps. 79, 12] As though he said in plain speech; 'Let them receive that in their minds, which in raging against us they practise over our bodies, that whereas they punish us outwardly in part, they may themselves be punished inwardly to a complete degree.' And so because the 'bosom' is interpreted the privacy of the mind, to 'conceal iniquity in the bosom' is to hide

it in the recesses of the conscience, nor to uncover it by confession, but to veil it by defence. Contrarily James says, Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be saved. [James 5, 16] Solomon also says, He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. [Prov. 28, 13]

33. But herein it is necessary to be known that men very often both confess their sins and are not humble. For we know many who when no man charges them confess that they are sinners, but when perhaps they are rebuked for their sin, they seek the support of defence that they may not seem to be sinners; which persons, if, when they say the thing of their own accord, they did then with genuine humility see themselves to be sinners, when they are charged home by others would never deny that they are what they had confessed. In which case the tokens of true confession are, if when a man calls himself a sinner, he does not contradict another as well advancing that about him. For because it is written, The just man in the beginning is the accuser of himself; [Prov. 18, 17] he does not rather aim to appear a sinner, but a just man, when any one confesses himself a sinner, no man charging him. But when another inveighs against the evil that we have done, he proves the truth of confession. Which same if we defend in a proud spirit, it is clear that it is feignedly that of ourselves we called ourselves sinners. Whence it is above every thing to be taken care of that the evil things we have done, we both confess of our own accord, and do not deny them when others charge us home with them. For it is the evil of pride that the thing which a man as if by his own act deems it meet to confess about himself, this he should disdain to have said to him by others.

34. Thus blessed Job shewed what singular humility he was of, in that he both knew that he was living amongst adversaries, and yet was not afraid to disclose his offences with the voice of confession. But observe that above he tells his virtuous qualities, lower down he confesses his sin. For hence he clearly proves what truth he had spoken of the good in him, in that he would not hold his tongue concerning the evil. One while he points out his virtues, at another time transgressions; that he had both committed sin, and had not kept it silent, he makes plain. Whence it appears without all doubt what extraordinary purity he was of in the sight of Almighty God, who both avoided evil things that he should not commit them, and yet what things it did chance to him to commit he did not conceal from men; so that to him there should at once be the high credit of righteousness to have shunned sin, and the safe keeping of righteousness to have brought to light what he was not able to shun. Let this man seem to any one great in his virtues, to me without doubt he appears most grand even in his sins. Let those, who are so minded, admire in him the self-control of chastity, let them admire the faithfulness of justice, let them admire the bowels of pitifulness; I do not less admire in him the humblest confession of sins, than such lordly achievements of virtue.

For I know well that through the shame of infirmity it is generally a worse conflict, to bring to light the sins we have committed, than it is to avoid them not being committed, and each instance of evil, though it may be avoided with more vigorousness, is yet brought to view

with greater humility. Thus blessed Job, who whilst supported by so many great practices was not ashamed to confess his sin, shewed in the midst of his virtues, how humble he was. But because from true humility there ever springs secure authority, so that the soul should dread nothing without, in proportion as by the longing of self-elation it does not pant after the topmost height of affairs, the confession of sin having been set forth, it is rightly subjoined;

Ver. 34. Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of neighbours terrify me, and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door? [xvi]

35. It is great assuredness of heart to have nought of worldly concupiscence. For if the heart pants after attaining earthly things, it can never be secure and tranquil, because either things not possessed it desires, in order that it may possess them, or things obtained it is afraid for lest it should lose them, and whilst in adverse circumstances he dreads prosperous ones, so in prosperous circumstances he dreads such as are adverse, and he is tossed hither and thither as it were by a kind of waves, and is hurried about in various fashions by the changeableness of shifting affairs. But if once the mind is fixed with strong stedfastness in the longing after the Country Above, it is less distressed by the annoyance of earthly things. For from all outward commotions it seeks that its aim, like a kind of most secret retreat, and there attaching itself to the Unchangeable, [al. 'Unchangeably attached,' which however would be a hyperbolic expression. and mounting above all changeable things, by the mere calmness of its repose, while in the world, it is henceforth without the world. It goes beyond all things below by its stressing after the highest, and all the objects which it does not go after it feels itself by a certain liberty to get above, nor within is it subject to the tempest of things temporal, which it views without, for all earthly things which being longed after might have borne down the mind, being looked down upon lie beneath it.

Whence it is well said by the Prophet, Set a look out for thyself; [Jer. 31, 21] that whilst a man views things above, he may rise high above things beneath. Hence likewise Habakkuk says, I will stand upon my watch. [Hab. 2, 1] For he 'stands upon his watch,' who by wise policy of discipline, does not bow down beneath, but rises high above earthly desires, that while he aims at Eternity, which is ever stedfast, he should have beneath his feet every thing that passes by.

36. Yet because with whatever goodness the holy man has advanced, the infirmity of the flesh still outwardly bears him down whilst set in this life, as it is written, Though man walk in the image of God, yet he is disquieted in vain: [Ps. 39, 6] it very often takes place that he is at once disquieted without, and holds on not subject to disquietude within, and that he is liable to be 'disquieted in vain' comes from the infirmity of the flesh, though that he 'walks in the image of God' is from the excellency of the mind, in order that he should both be inwardly strengthened by the Divine aid, and yet be still pressed down without by the human burthen. Whence Habakkuk again has well delivered a single sentence serving for both particulars. For he says, And trembling entered into my bones, and my power [virtue] was disquieted underneath me. [Hab. 3, 16] As though he said; 'It is not my power, wherein

being transported above, I remain free from liability to disquietude, but it is my own power wherein I am disquieted below.' And so the same is free from disquietude above himself, and the same exposed to disquietude below himself; because he had mounted above himself, in so far as he was caught away to things on high; and he was beneath himself, in so far as he still dragged a remains into that which is below.

The same above himself is free from liability to disquietude, because he had now passed away into the contemplation of God: the same under himself is liable to be disquieted, because beneath himself he still remained a frail human being. The Prophet David according with this sentence saith; I said in the excess of my mind, All men are liars. [Ps. 116, 11] To whom the answer may be made; 'If every man, then thou too; and the sentence will henceforth be false, which thou being a liar hast uttered, because whilst thou art true-spoken, every man is not found out a liar.' But observe that it is prefaced, I said in the excess of my mind. And so by 'excess of the mind' he transcended himself even, when he determined about the character of man. As though he said in plain speech; 'I delivered a true sentence respecting the falseness of all men from the same cause, whereby I was myself above man;' being now so far himself a 'liar' as far as he was himself man, but so far altogether not a 'liar,' as 'by excess of the mind' he was above man.

37. Thus, therefore, thus all the perfect, though they are still subject to something disquieting from the infirmity of the flesh, ret already enjoy within the calmest privacy by the contemplation of the mind, so that whatsoever thing happens without, it should in nought disquiet them within. Whence blessed Job, exhibiting the security of a holy mind, after he had delivered so many announcements of the parts of virtue with reference to himself, following that which we have set before, added; If I feared at an exceeding great multitude, or the contempt of neighbours terrified me, and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door. As though he said in a plainer manner; 'While others were disquieted against me without, I myself remained in mine own self free from being disquieted within.' For what else ought we in this place to take 'the door' to be, but the mouth? For by this we as it were go forth, when with what words we are able, we disclose the secrets of our hearts; and what we remain within in the conscience, such we go forth without by the tongue.

38. But there are some persons who are altogether afraid to be despised, and lest they should chance to be judged as contemptible, aim to appear wise. These are driven to 'go forth out of the door,' because when assailed with insults, how great in themselves they lie buried from sight, they give out telling it. And when being overcome by impatience they put forth things about themselves, which were unknown, they as it were 'go forth by the door' of the mouth. And so blessed Job being about to say, that he had never 'gone forth out of the door of the lips,' justly set before; I kept silence; i.e. because agitated by impatience he would have gone forth out of the house of the conscience, if he had not known how to keep silence. For holy men, when they are under the trial of being perturbed, shun wholly and entirely to exhibit themselves to view, and when they cannot benefit those that hear them, they are willing by keeping silence to be even despised, lest they pride themselves upon the

exhibition of their own wisdom. And when they say any thing with good understanding, they seek not their own glory, but the life of their hearers. But when they see that they cannot by speaking gain the life of their hearers, by keeping silence they hide their own knowledge. For we hide to the imitating the life of the Lord, as to a kind of mark set before us.

For He Himself, because he saw that Herod sought not advancement, but that he desired to wonder at His signs or His knowledge, on being asked by him held His tongue, and because He kept silence with constancy, He went forth derided by him. For it is written; And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see Him of a long season, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by Him: [Luke 23, 8] where it is also added; Then he questioned with Him in many words, but He answered him nothing. [v. 9] But how greatly the Lord in holding His peace was despised, is shewn when the words are brought in there directly; And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him. [v. 11] Which same transaction we ought to hear and learn, in order that as often as our hearers desire to be made acquainted with things of ours, as things to be praised, and not to alter what is wrong of their own, we should altogether hold our peace; lest, if we speak the Word of God with the design of display, both the fault of those persons, which then was, should not cease to be, and our own fault, which was not, should be brought to pass.

39. A person will perhaps say,' How do we know with what feelings of the heart a man will hear?' But there are a number of things that bring to light the mind of him who hears; first and foremost, if our hearers both always praise what they hear, and never follow the thing that they praise. This vain glory of speaking the great Preacher had shunned, when he said, For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as from God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ. [2 Cor. 2, 17] For to 'corrupt the Word of God' is to think of Him otherwise than He is, or to seek from it not spiritual fruits, but the corrupt offspring of human praise. But 'to speak as of sincerity,' is not to seek for aught in Revelation beyond what behoves. Now he 'speaks as from God,' who knows that he himself hath not from himself, but that he hath received from God what he says. And he speaks 'before God,' who in all that he speaks seeks not human regards, but minds the presence of Almighty God, and who looks for, not his own glory, but the glory of his Creator.

But he who indeed knows well that he has himself received from God the thing that he speaks, and yet in speaking seeks his own glory, speaks 'as from God,' but not 'before God,' because Him he considers as absent, Whom he docs not set before his heart, when he preaches Him. But holy men at once 'speak as from God' and 'before God,' in that they both know that they have from Him the thing that they say, and they see that He is Himself present at their discoursings, their Judge and their Hearer. Hence it comes to pass, that whereas they know themselves to be set at nought by their neighbours, and that their words do not advantage the life of the persons hearing them, they hide from sight what great good-

ness they are of, lest if the speech delivered disclose the secret of the heart to no purpose, it should break forth into vain glory.

40. Therefore blessed Job in the midst of stubborn hearts not aiming to shine forth by the disclosure of his virtue, says, And if the contempt of neighbours terrified me and I did not rather keep silence, and went not out of the door. For he who being stedfast through humility never feared to be despised, him never did impatience master, that the tongue should cast him forth out of doors. When it is rightly put first, If I feared at an exceeding great multitude; that it might be seen and known what great constancy he was of, in this respect, because no number of men ever terrifies without, whom no rout of bad habits lays waste within. For in this life he who seeks nothing that has to do with prosperity, doubtless dreads nothing that has to do with adversity. [MYSTICAL INTERPRETATION]

41. Which same words if we carry on to a mystical meaning, we directly find therein the Redeemer's mode of practice. For He was not 'afraid at an exceeding great multitude,' Who smote with a single answer only His persecutors coming with swords and staves, saying, I am He. [John 18, 6] 'Him the contempt of His neighbours did not terrify,' Who, in freeing us from eternal punishments, received strokes on the face with a composed mind. 'He kept silence, and did not go forth out of the door,' Who in the very hour now of His Passion, when He was undergoing the weak conditions of humanity, refused to call into action the power of Divinity. For to the Mediator between God and man it would have been 'to go forth out of the door,' if when He was held as Man He had been minded to display the power of His Majesty, and by the mightiness of His Divinity to surmount the weak conditions of the flesh taken upon Him. For that He might die manifest to man, He remained hidden God. For had they known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory. [1 Cor 2, 8] And so He did not 'go forth out of the door,' Who even when questioned by Pilate kept silence;

and in the midst of the hands of the persecutors He both offered His Body to suffering, which He had taken upon Him in behalf of the Elect, and would not display to those that were against Him What He was. Whence also it is said by the Psalmist, They have made Me an abomination unto them, I was given up, and I went not forth. [Ps. 88, 8] For when He was despised because He appeared man, He would have 'gone forth,' if He had been minded to display His hidden Majesty. But because he brought infirmity to view, and hid power from sight, herein, that He remained unknown to His persecutors, to those persecutors He did not 'go forth.' Who, however, does 'go forth' to the Elect, because to those that seek for it, He discloses the sweetness of His Divine Nature. Whence it is said to Him by the Prophet, Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy people, that Thou mightest save Thine Anointed. [Hab. 3, 13] It goes on:

Ver. 35. Who would give me a helper that the Almighty might hear my desire. [xvii] [HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION]

42. The holy man after he related so many high achievements of the virtues in him, knowing well that he cannot attain to the things on high by his own deserts, seeks for a helper. And

whom verily does he fix his eye on but the Only-begotten Son of God, Who whereas He took upon Him human nature travailing in this mortal state, did give help? For He helped man, being made Man; that because to mere man there was no way open of returning to God, there should be made a Way of returning by means of The God-Man [Homo-Deus.]. For we were far removed from the Righteous and Immortal One, being mortal and unrighteous. But between the Immortal and Righteous One and ourselves the mortal and unrighteous, appeared the Mediator of God and man, mortal and righteous, Who might at once own death with mortals, and righteousness with God; that whereas by our things below we were far removed from things above, He might in Himself singly unite the things below with the things above, and that herein there might be a Way made for us of returning to God, in the degree that He joined ours beneath with His own on high. This One then blessed Job, in his personating of the whole Church, asks for as Mediator, who when he had said, Who would give me a helper, suitably added, that the Almighty might hear my desire.

For he knew that for the rest of Eternal deliverance, the prayers of man can never be heard excepting through his Advocate. Concerning Whom it is said by the Apostle John; If any one sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. [1 John 2, 1. 2. Concerning Whom Paul likewise saith; It is Christ Jesus that died for us, yea, rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us. [Rom. 8, 34] For, for the Only-begotten Son to 'intercede' for man, is to shew Himself Man in the presence of the Coeternal Father, and for Him to have besought for human nature, is to have taken upon Him that same nature in the loftiness of the Divine Nature. And so the Lord intercedes for us not with the voice but by the act of compassionating; because that which He would not should be condemned in the Elect, he set free by taking upon Himself. And so a helper is sought for, that 'the desire may be heard;' because except that the intercession of the Mediator were employed in our behalf, surely the accents of our prayers would remain silent to the ear of God.

43. Moreover it requires to be noted that it is not said, 'my prayers, but, my desire, that the Almighty might hear. For true beseeching does not lie in the accents of the lips, but in the thoughts of the heart. For the stronger accents in the deepest ears of God it is not our words that make, but our desires. For if we seek eternal life with the mouth, but yet do not desire it with the heart, in crying out we keep silence. But if we desire in the heart, even when we are silent with the mouth, in being silent we cry out. It is hence that in the wilderness the people clamour with their voices, and Moses is still to the clamouring of words, and yet whilst keeping still he is heard by the ear of divine Pity, whereas it is said, Wherefore criest thou unto Me? [Exod. 14, 15] Thus within in the desire is the secret cry, which does not reach to the ears of men, and yet fills the hearing of the Creator. It is hence that Anna going to the temple was silent indeed with the lips, and yet uttered so many accents of her desire. Hence the Lord says in the Gospel, Enter into thy chamber, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret, and thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

[Matt. 6, 6] For 'the door being shut he prays in his chamber,' who while his mouth is silent, pours forth the affection of the heart in the sight of the Pitifulness Above. And the voice is 'heard in secret,' when there is a crying out in silence by holy desires. Whence also it is rightly said by the Psalmist, The Lord hath heard the desire of the poor; Thine ear hath heard the preparing of their heart. [Ps. 10, 17] Now blessed Job in the subjoined words discloses whom he seeks for himself as a helper, in the 'hearing of his desire,' saying,

And that he himself who judgeth would write a book ! [xviii]

44. For because to the People still fearing, the Law was committed by the hands of a Servant, but upon the loving Children, the grace of the Gospel was bestowed by the Lord, Who as coming for our Redemption, instituted the New Covenant for us, but in examining as touching the precept of that Covenant one day cometh as Judge also, it is not requisite that by explaining it should be made clear, that He Who Judges is the Same Who writes a book. For Truth Itself says by Itself, The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. [John 5, 22] And so He will then be the Enacter of judgment Who is now the Composer of the 'book;' that He should then demand in strictness, what He now bids in mildness. For thus we see every day that masters set children the rudiments of their letters caressing them, but exact those of them dealing hardly with them; and what they give with gentleness, they require back with the rod. For now the precepts of Divine Revelation sound gentle, but they shall be to be thought harsh in the exacting of them. Now, there is a gentle warning of One calling, but then there shall come the strict justice of the Judge, because it is certain that no whit even of the very least commandment will pass without scrutinizing.

By which same it is apparent that He that 'judgeth is the Same That wrote the Book,' Which same 'Book' of the New Testament, that the Redeemer of man should Himself frame in His own Person at the last, the Prophet Ezekiel rightly tells forth, saying, And behold six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth toward the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn at his reins. [Ez. 9, 2] For what else is there denoted in the 'six men coming' but the six ages of mankind? [St. Gregory's division of ages, Him. in Ev. xix. §. 1. from Adam to Noah, Noah to Abraham, Abraham to Moses, Moses to Our Lord, and then to the end, will not suit this place. What is meant is probably that in St. Isidore of Seville, Etym. lib. v. c. 39. De Discretione temporum, where two more divisions are made, at David, and the Captivity. He compares these ages to the days of Creation. The same division is given in the beginning of his Chronicon. Who 'come from the way of the higher gate,' because from the state of Paradise as from the beginning of the world, they are unwound from the upper generations.

Which 'gate looks to the North' in this way, because the mind of man lying open to evil, except that, abandoning the warmth of charity, it had courted the numbness of the interior, would never have gone out to this breadth of mortality. And every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; because each particular generation being evolved by the several respective

ages, before the Coming of the Redeemer, had in its practice that wherefrom it took the punishment of condemnation. And one man among them was clothed with linen. Because our Redeemer deigned to have parents even of the priestly Tribe ['Tribu,' perhaps 'nation,' but Elizabeth, 'of the daughters of Aaron,' was a kinswoman of the Blessed Virgin. Luke 1, 5. and 36. after the flesh, he is described as coining 'clothed with linen.' Or, surely, because linen is from the earth, and is not like wool produced from the corruptible flesh, seeing that He derived the covering of His Body from a Virgin mother, and not by the corruptness of copulation, therefore He came to us 'clothed with linen.' And a writer's inkhorn at his reins. In the 'reins' is the hind part of the body. And because the Lord Himself after that He died for our sakes, and rose again, and ascended up into heaven, then wrote the New Testament through the Apostles, this man had an 'inkhorn at his reins.' For He Who after He departed framed the writing of the New Testament, as it were, carried an 'inkhorn' behind him.

Thus this 'inkhorn' he sees to hold fast to the man 'clothed with linen,' who says, And that the same who judges would write a book. But wherefore, blessed Job, desirest thou that a book should be written by Him, Who is Judge? It goes on;

Ver. 36. That I might bear it upon my shoulder, and put it round me like a crown. [xix] 45. To 'bear the book upon the shoulder,' is by practising to carry out Holy Scripture. And observe how orderly it is described both first as being 'carried on the shoulder,' and afterwards 'put round' him 'as a crown;' because, that is to say, the precepts of Sacred Revelation, if they be now borne in practice, afterwards set forth for us the crown of victory in the recompensing. But why does blessed Job beg for 'the book to be written by the Judge,' who was not able to attain to the times of the New Testament? But, as has been often said already, he uses the accents of the Elect, and in the personifying of them begs that, which he foresaw would benefit them in all respects. For he himself by the Spirit had for long had that book with him, which by the grace of Inspiration he had obtained, that both by living he should be made acquainted with, and by foreseeing he should announce.

But herein it requires to be known that when we take thought of the precepts of Sacred Revelation, and when we draw off the mind from love of the life of corruption, we as it were hasten on by a kind of footsteps of the heart, to the interior scene of things. Now no man, in abandoning things below, is directly made at the top; because for earning the title to perfection, whilst the soul is day by day being led forward on high, doubtless there is an attaining thereto as it were by a kind of steps of ascending. Whence in this place also it is fitly added; By my several steps I will declare it. [xx]

46. Since concerning these 'steps' of merits it is said by the Psalmist, They go from virtue to virtue. [Ps. 84, 7] Concerning these, again, regarding Holy Church he says; God is distinguished in her steps, what time He shall receive her. [Ps. 48, 3. not as V. For neither is there any attaining suddenly to things above, as has been said, but to the topmost pitch of virtuous attainments the soul is led on by accessions. For hence it is that the same Prophet saith again; I was exercised, and my spirit failed little by little. [Ps. 77, 3] What does he mean, then, that he says, my spirit, but the spirit of man, i.e. the spirit of exaltation?

And because by secret grace we advance to the love of God by a measure regulated from above, in proportion as virtue is daily increased in us by the Spirit of God, our own spirit proportionally goes off. Which spirit of error, because it is not at once cut clean away from us, is justly recorded to have 'failed little by little.' But we then make complete advance in God, when we have wholly and entirely fallen away from ourselves. Thus these measures of growing virtues by the words of the holy man are styled 'steps.' For every elect person sets out from the tenderness of his embryo in the first instance, and afterwards comes to firmness for strong and vigorous achievements.

Which thing Truth plainly shews in the Gospel, saying, So is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up he knoweth not how. Which same seed describing the growths of he adds; For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. The end of whose progress too he also makes to succeed, saying, But when it has brought forth the fruits from itself, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. [Mark 4, 26-29] Observe, by the voice of Truth the accessions of merits are marked out by the characters of fruits. For He says, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. Was not Peter still a 'blade' then, when by the mouth of a maid he was in a moment bent down by the blast of a single speech, already green indeed through devotedness, but still tender through infirmity. But he was found 'full corn in the ear' when he withstood the rulers persecuting him, saying, We ought to obey God rather than men. [Acts 5, 29] For he was found 'full corn in the ear' when, in the winnowing of persecution, he underwent such numberless wounds, but yet he was never made small after the manner of chaff, but continued whole grain.

For little by little in each several soul, so to say, the moisture of interior grace abounds, that the blade may grow into fruit. So let no one when he sees any neighbour still a 'blade' despair of the 'full corn.' Since from the leaves of the blades, which hang softly, flowing hither and thither, the rising grains of fruitage come to firmness.

47. Now the Prophet Daniel, whereas, when the Lord was speaking to him, he made it his business to tell us the posture of his body, did rightly represent those stages of merits. Thus he says; Yet heard I the voice of his words, and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I dismayed upon my face, and my face clave to the ground. And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees, and upon the joints of my hands. And he said, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent: and when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling; and he said unto me, Fear not. [Dan. 10, 9-12] Which same posture of his body, whilst he was listening to the words of one speaking inwardly, he would never set forth to us with so much pains, if he had known it to be void of mysteries. For in Sacred Writ not only what holy men say is prophecy, but also very often what they do. Thus the holy man, being pregnant with interior mysteries, by the posture of his body, likewise represents the power of the voice;

and by this that he first lay prostrate on the earth, by this that he afterwards set himself up on the joints of his hands and on his knees, by this that at last he stood fast erect indeed, yet trembling, he makes known to us in his own person all the order of our progress. For the words of God we hear 'lying on the ground,' when being settled in our sins, allied to earthly pollution, we are made acquainted with spiritual precepts from the voice of the Saints. At which precepts, we are as it were set up upon our knees and the joints of our hands, because withdrawing ourselves from earthly defilements, we as it were henceforth lift up our mind from things below. For as he wholly cleaves to the ground, who lies dismayed, so he who is bent down upon his knees and the joints of his fingers, his advancement commencing, is already in a great measure hung aloft from earth. But at the last by the voice of the Lord we stand there erect indeed, yet trembling, in that being perfectly lifted up from earthly objects of desire, the more fully we know the words of God, the more we are afraid. For he as it were still lies prostrate on the ground, who by desires after the earthly cares nothing to be lifted up to the heavenly.

But it is as if he being lifted up still 'rested upon his hands and knees,' who already forsakes some defilements, but does not yet withstand some earthly practices. But he now stands there present erect at the words of God, who perfectly lifts up the mind to things aloft, and scorns to be bent down by impure desires.

48. Now he rightly shews that he 'stood trembling;' because the scrutiny of interior exactness is the more fearfully dreaded, the more advanced the progress in respect thereto. Where it is fitly subjoined by the voice of God, fear not; because the more that we ourselves learn what we should have occasion to fear, the more we have infused in us from God by interior grace what may call for love, so that both our contempt little by little may pass away into fear, and fear pass away into charity; that wherein God when He seeks us, by contempt we withstand, and by fear flee from, both contempt and fear being one day set aside, we should be joined to Him by love only. For little by little we learn even the very fear of Him [The readings vary. The Ben. Editor seems not to have seen that noticed in the Italian reprint, which is also in the Merton and Trin. Coll. MSS. and others at Oxford, 'Eum timere didiscimus, eique vi solius &c.' 'we unlearn fearing Him, and are attached to Him by the force of love alone.'], to the love of Whom only we are attached. And thus as it were there being placed a kind of steps of our advance, the foot of the mind first by fear we set below, and afterwards by charity lift it to the heights of love, that from that wherewith a man is puffed up he may be checked, so that he fear, and from that, which he now dreads he may be lifted up, that he may have boldness. Now these steps of virtuous attainments it is no great labour to lay hold of, since there is the passing from one to another.

49. But the subject requires the nicest handling, when the mind strives to estimate in the case of one and the same virtue with what steps of advancement it is lifted up. For to mention the first elements of virtue, i.e. faith and wisdom, they cannot be severally gained, except we ascend thereto by marked and ordered methods as by a kind of steps. For faith itself which imbues us for taking in hand in a perfect manner what else there is good, very

often in its beginnings both totters and is firmly based, and it is now held most surely, and yet touching the assurance thereof there is still trembling under the effects of misgiving. For a part of it is received first, that it may be afterwards perfectly completed in us. For if there were not an advancing by a sure step in the mind of one who believes, the father of the child to be healed would not have said on being questioned, in the Gospel, Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief. [Mark 9, 24] And so he was still ascending upwards as to the faith which he had already received, who at one and the same time both cried out that he already believed and still doubled from unbelieving. Hence it is also that it said to our Redeemer by His disciples, Increase our faith, that that which had been already received in beginning, might by the accessions of steps arrive at perfection.

50. Moreover Wisdom herself, who is required to be the mistress of good works, is vouchsafed to the panting soul by degrees of increase, that surely the ascending thereto should be by the steps of wonderful regulation. Which some the Prophet Ezekiel well describes in a figurative relation, who concerning that man whom he had seen on a high mountain tells, saying, He measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the water up to the ancles; again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the water up to the knees; again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the water up to the reins. Afterward he measured a thousand, and it was a torrent that I could not pass over, for there swelled deep waters of a torrent, which could not be passed over. [Ez. 47, 3-5] For what is denoted by the number of a 'thousand,' but the fulness of the benefit vouchsafed? Thus the man who appeared 'measures a thousand cubits,' and the Prophet is led through the waters 'up to the ancles,' because our Redeemer, when to us on our being converted to Him He bestowed the fulness of a good beginning, bathed the first treadings of our practice by the gift of spiritual wisdom. For the water's reaching up to the ancle is our henceforth maintaining the treadings of longed-for righteousness by wisdom being vouchsafed to us.

Again, he 'measures a thousand cubits,' and the Prophet is led through the water 'up to the knees,' because when the fulness of good practice is bestowed, our wisdom is increased even to this degree, that there is not henceforth any bending in bad deeds. Thus it is hence said by Paul, Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight steps with your feet. [Heb. 12, 12] Thus 'the water reaches to the knees,' when the wisdom that is is obtained perfectly braces us to uprightness of good practice. And again, he 'measures a thousand,' and the Prophet is 'led through the water up to the reins' in this way, because the fulness of good practice then grows to a height in us, when the wisdom vouchsafed has killed in us as far as it is possible all the gratification of the flesh as well. For except the gratification of the flesh was seated in the reins, the Psalmist would never have said, Burn my reins and my heart. [Ps. 2, 26] Therefore the water comes up 'to the reins,' when the sweetness of wisdom destroys the very incitements of the flesh too, so that the burnings of the flesh that might have scorched up the soul are cooled down. And he still further 'measured a thousand,' 'and it was a torrent which the Prophet could not pass,' of which he also says, Because there swelled deep waters of a torrent, which could not be passed over.

For perfectness of practice having been received, we come to contemplation; in which same contemplation while the mind is carried up on high, being uplifted it sees in God that the thing that it sees it cannot fathom, and as it were it touches the water of the torrent, which it cannot pass through, because at once it beholds in gazing what it may be pleased to behold, and yet is not able perfectly to behold that very thing that it pleases. And so the Prophet sooner or later comes to the water 'which he cannot pass through,' because when we are at last brought to the contemplation of wisdom, the mere immensity thereof, which by itself lifts man to itself, denies the human mind a full acquaintance, so that it should at once by touching love this wisdom, and yet never by passing through penetrate it.

51. Thus blessed Job called these, increasings of virtues by the title of 'steps,' because he saw them to be in distinct divisions, bestowed on men by gift from above; seeing that by them only do we ascend so as to come to the attaining of heavenly things. And so in making mention of the Sacred Book, i.e. of Divine Revelation, he says; By my several steps I will declare it, in this way surely, because he really ascends to the teaching of God, who has broken forth to the attaining thereof by the steps of holy practice. And he as it were 'by his several steps declares the book' who proves that he has been vouchsafed the knowledge of it not in respect of words only, but also of deeds. Whence it is yet further added; And as to a prince I will offer it. For every thing that we offer, we hold in our hands. And so 'unto the Prince' coming to Judgment 'to offer the book' is to have held the words of His precepts in our behaviour. It proceeds;

Ver. 38'40. If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain: if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof; let the thistle grow for me instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley. [xxi] [ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION]

52. For what is it for the 'land to cry,' for 'the furrows to weep,' and to have 'eaten one's own fruits buying them?' To whom is it necessary to buy what is his own? who has heard 'the land crying?' Who has seen 'the furrows weeping?' And whereas the furrows of the land are always of the land, why is it that by a separate declaration it is both said that the land did not cry, and that the furrows thereof did not weep along with it? For whereas a furrow of the earth is nothing else but earth, it does not need the accounting of much difference, that he adds; And along with it the furrows thereof weep. In which same point because the order of the history falls to the ground, the mystical meaning displays itself to us, the doors as it were being now set open. As though it exclaimed in plain speech; 'Whereas ye know that the reasonableness of the letter has dropped dead, doubtless it remains that ye should fall back to me without misgiving. For every one who either by private right rules a domestic household, or for the common advantage is set over faithful multitudes, herein that he possesses the rights of government over the faithful committed to him, what else does he but hold the land to cultivate it?

Since it is for this end that each individual is advanced above the rest, by Divine distribution, that the mind of those under him, like land subdued, may be made fruitful by the seed of

his preaching. But 'the land crieth against' its possessor, if it chance that against him, who is set at the head, either a private family, or Holy Church utters any just murmur. Since for 'the land to cry,' is for those under charge to grieve with reason against the injustice of him who rules them; where it is rightly subjoined, And along with it the furrows thereof weep. For the land even when not cultivated by any works generally produces something of sustenance for the service of man, but when ploughed it bears fruits to superabundance. And there are some persons, who 'not being cleft by any ploughshare of reading, or any of exhortation, do yet of themselves produce some good things, though but the least, like land not yet ploughed up. But there are some who for always hearing and retaining, applying themselves to holy preachings and meditations, as it were cleft with a kind of ploughshare of the tongue, as to the former hardness of the heart, receive the seed of exhortation, and by the furrows of voluntary chastening render the fruits of good practice. But it is very often the case that those who are set at the head do things unjust, and it comes to pass that the very persons injure those under them, who were bound to do them good.

Which when uninstructed persons see, being enraged they murmur against their ruler, and yet do not by sympathy grieve violently for their neighbours. But when these who are already broken in pieces by the plough of reading, and dressed for the fruitage of practice, see innocent persons borne down even in the least things, they are forthwith turned by sympathy to tears of sorrow, because they bewail as their own the things that their neighbours suffer unjustly. For the perfect, whereas they are ever affected with regard to what is spiritual, are taught to lament for the bodily hurts of others, so much the more in proportion as they are now instructed not to lament for their own. And so every one who is set in authority, if he executes what is bad in the case of those under him, 'the earth crieth against him and the furrows weep,' because against his injustice the uninstructed peoples indeed break out in accents of murmuring, while all the perfect severally chasten themselves in tears for his wicked practice, and for what the inexperienced cry out and do not grieve, those under authority of a more tried life bewail and hold their peace. And so for 'the furrows to bewail along with the land crying out,' is by that thing whereas the multitude of the faithful complains with justice against the ruler, for persons of a more fruitful life to be brought to tears of sorrow.

Thus the furrows are both of the earth, and yet are distinguished from the term of 'the earth,' because those in Holy Church, who cultivate their mind with the labour of holy meditation, are as much better than the rest of the faithful, in proportion as by the seeds received they render more abundant fruits of deeds. And there are some who being set over holy peoples obtain the payments of livelihood by the bountifulness of the Church, but do not pay the ministrations of exhortation that are due. In opposition to whom the example of the holy man is yet further subjoined aright, when it is directly added by him;

If I have eaten the fruit thereof without money. [xxii]

53. For to 'eat the fruit of the land without money' is to receive indeed our charges from the Church, but not to yield to that Church the price of preaching. Of which same preaching

it is said by the voice of the Creator, Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. [Matt. 25, 27] And so he 'eats the fruits of the earth without money,' who receives the Church's benefits for the service of the body, but does not pay to the people the ministry of exhortation. What do we pastors say to these things, who while we are the forerunners of the Advent of the Strict Judge, take upon us the function of a herald indeed, but devour the Church's supplies with dumb mouths? We exact all that is owed to our own body, but we do not pay back what we owe to the soul of those committed to our charge. Mark how the holy man, tied down by so many pledges in this world, in the midst of numberless employments, was free for the pursuit of preaching. And he never 'ate the fruits of the earth without money,' because surely he paid back the word of good warning to those under his charge, from whom he received the fruit of bodily serving.

For this every one who is set over the people owes to Almighty God, he who is set over many, and he who is set over a smaller number, that he should in such sort exact the due ministration from those subject to him, that he may himself mind with heedful regard what of warning he at all times owes. For all we who subject to the appointment of the Creator are joined amongst ourselves by a vicarious ministry in obedience to our true Lord, what else are we but servants to one another? Whereas, then, he who is subordinate serves in obeisance, assuredly it remains that he who is set over him should serve to the word. Whereas he who is subordinate yields obedience to orders, it is required that he who is at the head should bestow the care and concern of solicitude and of pity. And so it comes to pass, that whilst we studiously endeavour to serve one another now by charity, we may one day rule together with the true Lord in common rejoicing. But there are some, who herein, that they discharge the office of preaching, grudge others the good that they have, and so do not any longer have it in a true sense. To whom it is rightly said by James, But if ye have bitter envying among yourselves, and strife in your hearts, this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. [James 3, 14. 15.

Hence here also when it is said, If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, it is rightly subjoined;

Or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof. [xxiii] 54. For they are the 'tillers' of the land, who, being placed in a lower situation, with what earnestness they are able, with the best practice that they can, cooperate in the grace of preaching to the instructing of Holy Church. Which same 'husbandmen of this land' not to afflict, is this, viz. not to envy their labours; that the ruler of the Church, while he vindicates to himself alone the right of preaching, should not, by envy gnawing him, gainsay others also that preach in a right way. For the religious mind of the pastor, because it seeks not its own glory but the glory of the Creator, desires to have all that it does aided by all persons. For the faithful preacher wishes, if it might be brought to pass, that the truth which he is not able to give utterance to alone, the mouths of all should sound out. Whence when Joshua would have withstood the two who remained in the camp and prophesied, it is rightly said by Moses, Enviest thou for my sake?

Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them! [Numb. 11, 29] For he was willing for all to prophesy, in that he envied not others the good that he had. Thus because blessed Job introduced all those things as under suspension, and if he had not done them, binds himself with the sentence of cursing, it goes on;

Ver. 40. Let the thistle grow for me instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley. [xxiv]

55. As though he said in plain words; 'If I have done aught unjust towards those under me, if I have exacted the debts due to me, and have not myself paid what I owed, if I have envied others the executing of good practice, for the good things which refresh for ever and ever, may evil things that sting be repaid me in the Judgment.' Since 'instead of the wheat there springs up the thistle, and instead of barley the thorn,' when in the final Retribution, wherefrom the recompensing of our labour is looked for, the piercing of pain is met with. And observe, that as barley is different from wheat, though both regale, so the thorn differs from the thistle, though either be a thing that pricks, because the thistle is softer, and the thorn always the harder as to pricking. Thus he says, Let the thistle grow instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley. As if he said plainly and openly; 'I know indeed that I have both done great good acts and lesser ones; and if it is not so, may lesser evils match me for my great good acts, and the greater evils for the lesser good ones.' Though this may also be understood in another sense. For in 'wheat' there is denoted in spiritual action which regales the mind, but in 'barley' the disposal of earthly things.

Wherein while we are often forced to serve the weak and carnal, we as it were prepare their food for the beasts of burthen, and the very practice of our deeds after the manner of barley has somewhat of a mixture of chaff. And it very often happens, that the ruler who is set at the head, while he enforces what is unjust against those under his charge, while he cheers not the good with any soothing, whilst, that which is more grievous, all those acting rightly he distresses out of envy, still some good things he sometimes does, as if he sowed corn, and mixed in the disposing of earthly things at times not in the passion of avarice, but for the use of the carnal, and so looks for the fruit of that labour as a crop of barley. But the several persons under his charge, in consideration of this, that they are borne hard upon in the chief things, cannot feel joy in his lesser good things; because neither is this practice well pleasing in the sight of God, which is defiled by the injustice of other practice, nor yet is the very disposal of earthly things believed to be undertaken for the service of those under his charge, when he who is over them is seen to pant with avarice.

Whence it happens that even in answer to the few good things themselves, which they see to be done in the midst of a multitude of evil ones, they give back not praises but groans, and that those that go weakly murmur, while they take thought that that which they see is not a thing of pure practice. And so he says, If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have afflicted the soul of the tillers thereof: let the thistle grow instead of wheat, and the thorn instead of barley. As if he said plainly, 'If the great things which I owed I have not needfully performed,

may I receive the prickings of murmuring from those under me, even with reference to the good that I have done. If I have omitted to set forth what might cheer, may their tongue springing forth into complaint with justice pierce me.'

56. Wherein it requires always to be minded with heedful consideration, that neither they that are set at the head offer examples of bad practice to those under them, and kill the life of those by the sword of their evil doing, nor they that are subject to the control of another presume to judge lightly the deeds of their rulers, and from this, that they utter murmurs touching those who are placed over them, set themselves not against a human appointment but against that Divine Appointment, which disposes all things. For to those it is said, And as for My flock they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet: they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet. [Ez. 34, 19] For 'the sheep drink what is fouled with the feet,' when those under charge for example of living seek after things, which the persons over them severally corrupt by bad practice. But on the other hand these persons hear from those in command; And what are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord. [Ex. 16, 8] For he that murmurs against power established over him, it is plain reproves Him Who gave that power to man.

At length, God vouchsafing it, we have explored those sentences of blessed Job, full of mystical force, in which he made answer to the words of his friends. Now it remains that we come to the words of Elihu, which are to be weighed with so much the graver caution, in proportion as they are also put forward through the boldness of youth with a hotter spirit.

Book XXIII

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

VOLUME III - THE FIFTH PART. — BOOK XXIII. — The thirty-second chapter, and the thirty-third, as far as the twenty-second verse, are expounded; in which, while Job keeps silence, Eliu, a younger person, enters on many right and sound topics, though not rightly, or with sound intention.
[i]

1. It is necessary for me to repeat the preface of this work, as often as I divide it into separate volumes, by making a pause in my observations, it order that when it is again begun to be read, the subject of the Treatise may be at once brought afresh to the memory; and that the edifice of teaching may rise the more firmly, the more carefully the foundation is laid in the mind, from considering the first beginning of the subject. Blessed Job, known to God and himself alone in his state of tranquillity, when he was to be brought before our notice, was smitten with a rod, in order that he might scatter more widely the odour of his strength, the more sweetly he gave forth his scent, as spices, from the burning. He had learned in his prosperity to rule over his subjects with gentleness, and to guard himself strictly from evil. He had learned how to use the things he had got: but we could not tell whether he would remain patient under their loss. He had learned to offer daily sacrifices to God for the safety of his children, but it was doubtful, whether he would also offer Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving when he was bereft of them. For fear then that sound health should conceal any defect, it was proper that pain should bring it to light. Permission then to practise temptation against the holy man is given to the crafty foe.

But he, in seeking to destroy his goods which were known to many, brings to light the virtue of patience also which was lying hid, and whom he believed he was pressing hard by his persecutions, he magnified him by his scourges, and far extended him in example. And he exercised with great skill the permission he had received. For he burnt his herds, destroyed his family, overwhelmed his heirs, and, in order to launch against him a weapon of severer temptation, he kept in store the tongue of his wife: that thus he might both lay low the bold and firm heart of the holy man with grief, by the loss of his goods, and pierce it through with a curse, by the words of his wife. But by the many wounds he inflicted in his

cruelty, he unintentionally furnished as many triumphs to the holy man. For the faithful servant of God, involved in wounds and reproaches at one and the same time, both endued with patience the sufferings of the flesh, and reproved with wisdom the folly of his wife. The ancient enemy, therefore, because he was grieved at being foiled by him in his domestic trials, proceeded to seek for help from abroad. He summoned, therefore, his friends, each from his own place, as if for the purpose of displaying their affection, and opened their lips, under the pretence of giving consolation.

But, by these very means, he launched against him shafts of reproach, which would wound more severely the heart of him who securely listened to them, inasmuch as they were inflicting an unexpected wound beneath the cover of a friendship which was professed and not observed. After these, also, Eliu a younger person is urged on even to use insult, in order that the scornful levity of his youth might at all events disturb the tranquillity of such great gentleness. But against these many machinations of the ancient enemy his constancy stood unconquered, his equanimity unbroken. For at one and the same time he opposed his prudence to their hostile words, his conduct to their doings. Let no one then suppose that this holy man (although it was expressly written of him after his scourging, In all these things Job sinned not with his lips [Job 1, 22]) sinned afterwards, at least, in his words in his dispute with his friends. For Satan aimed at his temptation, but God, Who had praised him, took on Himself the purport of that contest. If any one, therefore, complains that blessed Job sinned in his words, what else does he do, but confess that God, Who pledged Himself for him, had been the loser.

2. But since the ancient fathers, like fruitful trees, are not merely beauteous in appearance, but also profitable through their fertility, their life must be so considered by us, that when we admire the freshness of their history, we may learn also how fruitful they are in allegory, in order that, since the smell of their leaves is pleasant, we may learn also how sweet is the taste of their fruits. For no one ever possessed the grace of heavenly adoption but he who has received it through the knowledge of the Only-begotten. It is right then that He should shine forth in their life and words, Who so enlightens them that they may be able [mereantur] to shine. For when the light of a candle is kindled in the dark, the candle, which causes other objects to be seen, is first seen itself. And so, if we are truly endeavouring to behold the objects which are enlightened, it is necessary for us to open the eyes of our mind to that Lightening which gives them light. But it is this which shines forth in these very discourses of blessed Job, when the shades of allegory too have been driven away, as though the gloom of midnight had been dispelled, a bright light as it were flaming across them. As when it is said, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in my flesh I shall see God.

[Job 19, 25] Paul had doubtless discovered this light in the night of history, when he said, All were baptized in Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual meat, and all drank the same spiritual drink. But they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them, but the Rock was Christ. [l Cor. 10, 2-4] If then the Rock represented the Redeemer, why should not blessed Job suggest the type of Him, since he signified in his suffering Him

Whom he spake of in his voice? And hence he is not improperly called Job, that is to say, 'grieving,' because he sets forth in his own person the image of Him, of Whom it is announced long before by Isaiah, that He Himself bore our griefs. [Is. 53, 4] It should be further known, that our Redeemer has represented Himself as one Person with Holy Church, whom He has assumed to Himself. For it is said of Him, Which is the Head, even Christ. [Eph. 4, 15] And again it is written of His Church; And the body of Christ, which is the Church. [Col. 1, 24] Blessed Job therefore, who was more truly a type of Christ, since he prophesied of His passion, not by words only, but also by his sufferings, when he dwells on setting forth the Redeemer in his words and deeds, is sometimes suddenly turning to signify His body;

in order that, as we believe Christ and His Church to be one Person, we may behold this signified also by the actions of a single man.

3. But what else is signified by his wife, who provokes him to words of blasphemy, but the depravity of carnal men? For placed, with yet unreformed manners, within the pale of the Holy Church, they press harder on those of faithful lives, the nearer they are to them; because when they cannot as being faithful be avoided by the faithful, they are endured as a greater evil, the more inward it is. But his friends, who while pretending to advise, inveigh against him, represent to us heretics, who under the pretence of advising, carry on the business of leading astray. And thus while speaking to Job on behalf of the Lord, they hear His reproof; because all heretics in truth while endeavouring to maintain God's cause, do in fact offend Him. Whence also it is properly said to them by the same holy man, I desire to reason with God, first shewing that ye are forgers of lies, and followers of corrupt doctrines. [Job 13, 3. 4. It is plain then that they typify heretics, since the holy man accuses them of being devoted to the profession of false doctrines. And since Job is by interpretation grieving, (for by his grief is set forth either the passion of the Mediator, or the travails of Holy Church, which is harassed by the manifold labours of this present life,) so do his friends also by the very word which is used for their names set forth the nature of their conduct.

For Eliphaz signifies in Latin 'contempt of God;' and what else is the conduct of heretics than a proud contempt of God by the false notions they entertain of Him? Bildad is interpreted 'oldness alone.' And well are all heretics termed oldness alone, in the things they speak of God, since they are anxious to appear preachers, not with any honest intention, but with an earnest desire after worldly honour. For they are urged to speak not by the zeal of the new man, but by the evil principles of their old life. Sophar too is called in Latin 'dissipation of the prospect,' or a 'dissipating of the prospect.' For the minds of the faithful raise themselves to the contemplation of things above: but when the words of the heretics endeavour to draw them aside from the right objects of contemplation, they do their best to dissipate the prospect. In the three names then of Job's friends, there are set forth three cases of the ruin of heretics. For did they not despise God, they would never entertain false notions respecting Him; and did they not contract oldness, they would not err in their estimate of the new life; and unless they marred the contemplation of the good, the divine

judgments would not have reproved them with so strict a scrutiny, for the faults which they committed in their words. By despising God then, they keep themselves in their oldness: but by remaining in their oldness, they obstruct the view of them that are right by their crooked discoursing.

4. After these also, Eliu, a younger person, is joined to them in their reproaches of blessed Job. In his person is represented a class of teachers, who are faithful, but yet arrogant. Nor do we easily understand his words, unless we consider them by the help of the subsequent reproof of the Lord. Who is he that involves sentences in unskilful words? [Job 38, 2] for when He uses the word 'sentences,' but does not immediately subjoin of what nature they are, He intends the word without doubt to be understood favourably. For when 'sentences' are spoken of, unless they are said to be bad, they cannot be understood in a bad sense. For we always take the word in a good sense, if no unfavourable addition is made; as it is written, A slothful man seems wiser in his own opinion than seven men uttering sentences. [Prov. 26, 16] But by its being said that his sentences are involved in unskilful language, it is plainly shewn that they were uttered by him with the folly of pride. For it is a great unskilfulness in him, to be unable to express himself with humility in what he says, and to blend with sentiments of truth the words of pride.

5. For the nature of every thing that is said can be distinguished by four different qualities. If, for instance, either bad things are said badly, good things well, bad things well, or good things badly. A bad thing is badly said, when wrong advice is given; as it is written, Curse God, and die. [Job 2, 9] A good thing is well said, when right matters are rightly preached; as John says, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. [Matt. 3, 2] A bad thing is well spoken, when a fault is adduced by the speaker, simply to be reproved; as Paul says, The women changed their natural use into that which is against nature. [Rom. 1, 26] In which place he subjoined too the execrable doings of men. But he related these unseemly things in a seemly way, that by telling of things unbecoming, he might recal many to the practice of what is becoming. But a good thing is ill spoken, when what is proper is brought forward with an improper object; as the Pharisees are reported to have said to the blind man who had received his sight, Be thou His disciple; [John 9, 28] for they said this for the express purpose of reproaching him, not as wishing what they said; or as Caiaphas says, It is expedient that one man should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not. [John 11, 50] It was a good thing which he said, but not with good view; for while he longed for His cruel death, he prophesied the grace of redemption. And in like manner Eliu also is reproved for saying right things in a wrong way: because in the very truths which he utters he is puffed up with arrogance. And he represents thereby the character of the arrogant, because through a sense of what is right he rises up into words of pride.

6. But what is meant by the Divine Voice directing that the three friends should be reconciled by seven sacrifices, while it leaves Eliu only beneath the reproof of a single sentence; except it be that heretics, when bedewed with the superabundance of Divine grace, sometimes return to the unity of Holy Church? This is excellently set forth by the very reconcili-

ation of the friends, for whom nevertheless blessed Job is directed to pray. Because in truth the sacrifices of heretics cannot be acceptable to God, unless they be offered for them by the hands of the Church Catholic, that they may gain a healing remedy by her merits, whom they used to smite, by attacking her with the shafts of their reproaches. And thence is it that seven sacrifices are said to have been offered for them, because whilst they receive on confession the Spirit of sevenfold grace, they are atoned for, as it were, by seven oblations. Wherefore in the Apocalypse of John, the whole Church is represented by the sevenfold number of the Churches: [Rev. 1, 11] and hence is it that Solomon speaks thus of Wisdom, Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars. [Prov. 9, 1] The heretics then on their reconciliation express, by the very number of the sacrifices, their own former character, since it is only by their returning that they are united to the perfection of sevenfold grace. But they are properly represented as having offered for themselves bulls and rams.

For in a bull is designated the neck of pride, in a ram the leading of the flocks that follow. What then is the offering of bulls and rams on their behalf, but the destruction of their proud leadership, that they may think humbly of themselves, and not seduce any longer the hearts of the innocent to follow them? For they had started aside with swelling neck from the general body of the Church, and were drawing after them the weakminded, as flocks following their guidance. Let them come then to blessed Job, that is, let them return to the Church, and offer bulls and rams to be slaughtered for a sevenfold sacrifice, who in order to be united to the Church Catholic, by the coming in of a spirit of humility, have to put an end to whatever swelling thoughts they before used to entertain from their haughty leadership.

7. But Eliu (by whom are designated those lovers of vain-glory who, living within the pale of the Church, scorn to state in a humble way the sound views which they hold) is not directed to be reconciled by sacrifice. For those who are proud, and yet faithful, because they are already within the pale, cannot be brought back by seven sacrifices. Yet the divine wisdom reproves these people in the person of Eliu, and blames in them not their sentences of truth, but their temper and language of pride. But what is the meaning of the reproof, except that the chiding of the divine severity chastens them with scourges as placed within the Church, or by a righteous judgment leaves them to themselves? For such as these preach the truth within the Church, but, in the judgment of God, deserve to hear an unfavourable sentence, because by the sound truths which they state, which are not their own, they seek not the glory of their author, but their own credit. We must therefore carefully weigh this passage, in which it is said by the Divine Voice respecting Eliu, Who is he? An interrogation of this kind is but the beginning of a reproof. For we say not, Who is he, except of a person of whom we are ignorant. But God's ignorance is the same as His rejection: whence He will at the end say to some whom He rejects, I know you not whence you are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.

[Matt. 7, 23] To ask then of this haughty man, Who is he? what is it but plainly to say, I know not the haughty? that is, In the excellence of My wisdom I approve not of their doings,

because, by being puffed up by human praise, they are bereft of the true glory of eternal reward. By not rejecting then his sentiments, but blaming the person who uttered them, He plainly teaches, as it were saying, I know what he says, but I know not the speaker: I approve of whatever is stated in accordance with truth, but I acknowledge not him who is elated by the truths he utters.

8. But to shew more plainly how disgracefully Eliu falls away in boastfulness of pride, we ought in the first place to set forth the character of a sound teacher; that from the straightness of this standard the deformity of his distortion may be clearly manifested. Every spiritual preacher then of the Church Catholic carefully examines himself in every thing he says, lest he should be elated with the sin of pride on account of his sound preaching; lest his conduct should be at variance with his words; lest that very peace which he preaches in the Church he should lose in his own person, by sound speaking and evil living. But it is his chief endeavour against the calumnious rumours of the adversaries to defend his conduct by his preaching, and to adorn his preaching by his life. And in all this he seeks not his own glory, but that of His Maker; and considers that every gift of wisdom he has received for the purpose of preaching, as bestowed not for his own deserts, but through the intercessions of those for whom he speaks. And thus while he casts himself down, he rises higher and higher; because he doubtless makes greater progress in gaining his own reward, by ascribing to the merits of others the good gifts he is able to exercise. He counts himself unworthy of all men, even when he lives more worthily than all together.

For he is aware that the good qualities which are known to the world at large, can hardly exist in him without great peril. And though he feels himself to be wise, he would wish to be really wise without appearing so: and is especially afraid of that which is spoken of and gets abroad. And he seeks, if possible, to be silent, from perceiving that silence is safer for many, and considers that they are happier, whom a lower part in Holy Church conceals in silence; and though, in defence of the Church, he takes on himself of necessity the duty of speaking, because he is urged by the force of charity, yet he seeks with earnest longing the rest of silence. The one he maintains as a matter of wish, the other he exercises as a matter of duty. But of such ways of speaking the proud are ignorant. For they speak not because causes arise, but seek for them to arise in order that they may speak. Of such Eliu is now a type, who in what he says sets himself up beyond measure, through the sin of pride. When the words then of blessed Job were ended it is added, These three men ceased to answer Job, because he seemed just in his own eyes. [Job 32, 1]

In the expression, because he seemed to be just in his own eyes, the author of this sacred history intended to refer to the opinion of Job's friends, and did not himself accuse him of being puffed up with pride. It follows: Ver. 2. And Eliu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram, was wroth and indignant. [ii]

9. The names either of himself, or of his parent, of his ii. home, or kindred, furnish a mark of his own conduct. For Eliu being interpreted means, 'That my God,' or, 'God the Lord.' By whom, as we said to you, is designated the sound faith of proud men placed within the

Church. Whence this very name of his is suited to them also. For though they live not according to the commandments of the Lord, they yet recognise God as their Lord, because in the truth of His flesh they realize also the form of the Godhead, as is said by the Prophet, Know ye that the Lord He is God. [Ps. 100, 3] But Barachel, signifies when interpreted, 'The blessing of God,' but Buzite, 'contemptible.' And either of these expressions is well suited to proud preachers: because in the eloquence of their speech they enjoy the blessing of Divine Grace, but in their proud manners they shew that it is to be despised. For the gifts which they have received they render contemptible, by not knowing how to use them rightly. But he is fitly said to be also of the kindred of Ram. For Ram signifies 'lofty.' For lofty is the assembly of the faithful, which despises the low and abject things of this life. Lofty are they who can say with Paul, Our conversation is in heaven. [Phil. 3, 20] Eliu therefore is said to be 'of the kindred of Ram,' because every haughty preacher within the bosom of the Church Catholic, is united to the holy People in the verity of the faith, however he may be separated from them in conduct by the sinfulness of his pride. It follows,

But he was angry against Job, because he said he was just before God. Moreover against his friends was he wroth, because they had not found reasonable answers, but had merely condemned Job. [iii] 10. It must be carefully observed, that he blames blessed Job for professing himself just before God, but his friends because in condemning him they gave no reasonable reply. For it is plainly inferred, from these marks, that in him are characterized the lovers of vain glory. For he convicts Job of presuming on his righteousness, his friends of making a foolish answer. For all lovers of vain glory, while they prefer themselves to all other, accuse some of folly, others of obtaining what they do not deserve: that is, they consider some to be ignorant, others to be evil livers. And though they may justly accuse of heresy all who are external to the Church, yet they despise those who are within for the meanness of their life, and pride themselves against the one from high notions of their sound faith, against the others as if from the merits of their good living. But Eliu is well said to reprove at one time blessed Job, and at another time his friends: because the lovers of vain glory, living at times within the pale of Holy Church, both crush her opponents by preaching the truth, and oppose the customs of the same Holy Church in boasting of their preaching. They overwhelm the opponents of the Church by the power of their words, they oppress Holy Church by the way in which they utter them. They assail the one by preaching the truth, the other by their sin of pride. It follows,

Ver. 4, 5. Elihu therefore waited while Job was speaking, because they who were speaking were his elders. But when he had seen that the three were not able to answer, he was very wroth. [iv]

11. Though Holy Church is unquestionably older than her adversaries, (for they went forth from her, not she from them, as is said of them by John, They went out from us, but they were not of us, [1 John 2, 19]) yet Eliu is properly described as having been younger than these same adversaries. Because in truth after the contests which arose with heretics, haughty men began to have place in the Church, puffed up with the pride of learning. For when more

grievous contests commenced with the enemy, there were certainly required some subtle dart-points of thought, oppositions of arguments, and a more involved research of words. And while men of glowing genius invent these weapons to suit the circumstances, they are frequently puffed up with pride, and (as is generally the case in the sin of pride) they are themselves made to fall by the same subtle meanings with which they assail the foe, while in what they think aright concerning God, they seek not God's glory, but their own. And hence is it that though Eliu says many things aright, he is yet reproved by the Divine voice, as though he had stated errors. But when it is said that Eliu waited while Job was speaking, because they who were speaking were his elders, it is plain that he observed this respect to blessed Job not out of reverence for him, but for his friends; because, namely, haughty men though dwelling within Holy Church, despise that very body which they defend;

and it is commonly the case that they pay greater respect to the abilities of those who are wise to an evil purpose, than to the simple life of the innocent; and that they shew greater regard to the eloquence of those without, than to the deserts of those within. And this, though they are opposed to both in opposite ways, as differing from the one in the soundness of their opinion, and from Holy Church in the perverseness of their character. It proceeds,

Ver. 6, 7. And Eliu the son of Barachel, the Buzite, answered and said, I am younger in age, but ye are more ancient. I therefore held down my head, and feared to shew you my opinion. For I was hoping that greater age would speak, and that a multitude of years would teach wisdom. 12. All these words, which are uttered by him through swelling pride, must be rather glanced at by the way than expounded more attentively. For whatsoever is deficient in solid gravity, needs not any elaborate exposition. But I think I need only suggest in a few words, that Eliu was more wise, as long as he remained silent on account of his age, but that in despising a multitude of years in others, and setting himself above them, he shewed plainly his childish folly. For both greater age speaks, against his opinion, and wisdom is taught by multitude of years. Because, though length of life does not confer intelligence, yet it gives it much exercise by constant practice. It follows,

Ver. 8. But, as I see, there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth understanding. [vi]

13. He would be right in saying this, did he not arrogate to himself this same wisdom above all others. For it is no slight [Ben. 'prava,' a misprint for 'parva.'] condemnation for a man to boast within himself of that advantage which is given to him in common with others, to know whence he has received a good gift, and to know not how to use the good he has received. For there are four marks by which every kind of pride of the arrogant is pointed out, either when they think that they possess any good quality from themselves, or if they believe that it is given them from above, yet that they have received it in consequence of their own merits, or unquestionably when they boast of possessing that which they have not, or when they despise others, and wish to appear the sole possessors of what they have. For he boasted that he possessed his good qualities from himself, to whom it is said by the Apostle, But what hast thou which thou didst not receive? why dost thou glory, as if thou

hadst not received it? [1 Cor. 4, 7] Again, the same Apostle warns us not to believe that any gift of grace is given us for our precedent deserts, when he says, By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, but it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any one should boast. [Eph. 2, 8. 9.

Who says also of himself, Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and contumelious: but I obtained mercy. [l Tim.1, 13] For in these words he plainly declares, that grace is not given according to desert, when he taught us both what he deserved of himself for his evil deeds, and what he obtained by God's benevolence. But again, some persons boast that they have that which they really have not, as the Divine Voice speaks of Moab by the Prophet; I know his pride and his arrogance, and that his virtue is not according to it. [Jer. 48, 30] And as is said to the Angel of the Church of Laodicea, Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. [Rev. 3, 17] Some again wish, in contempt of others, to appear to be the sole possessors of the good qualities which they have. Whence also the Pharisee went down from the temple without being justified, because by ascribing to himself as if in a singular manner the merit of good works, he preferred himself to the suppliant publican. [Luke 18, 9-14] The holy Apostles also are warned against this sin of pride;

for on returning from their preaching, and saying with pride, Lord, even the devils are subject to us through Thy name, [Luke 10, 17] to keep them from rejoicing in this singular gift of miracles, the Lord at once replied to them, saying, I beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven. For he had himself said with special pride, I will exalt my throne above the stars of heaven, I will sit in the mount of the covenant, in the sides of the north; I will be like the Most High. [Is. 14, 13. 14. And the Lord, in order to bring down pride in the hearts of His disciples, related with wondrous wisdom the judgment of downfal, which the prince of pride himself underwent, that they might learn, from the author of pride, what they had to apprehend from the sin of haughtiness. In the fourth kind of pride then, namely, the boasting of the sole possession of any thing it possesses, the mind of man equally suffers a fall. But it is in this that it approaches more closely to a resemblance of Satan, because whoever rejoices at the singular possession of any good thing, whoever wishes to appear more exalted than others, plainly imitates him who in despising the blessing of the society of Angels, and placing his seat at the north, and proudly desiring to be like the Most High, endeavoured by his evil longing to shoot up to some singular preeminence.

Eliu then, though confessing that wisdom is given by God, yet falls in this species of pride, so as to rejoice that he is wiser than others, and foolishly to pride himself on possessing, as it were, a singular advantage. Which he points out in the words which follow, when he says,

Ver. 9, 10, 11. Old men are not wise, neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore I will say, Hearken to me, I will shew you my wisdom. For I waited for your words, I heard your wisdom, whilst ye were disputing in words: and as long as I thought that ye said something, I considered. [vii] 14. As far as regards the literal meaning, Eliu proves to us,

when he speaks, how proudly he remained silent. For when he says, For I waited for your words, and I was thinking that ye would say something, he plainly shews that he remained silent, while the aged were speaking, rather with the desire of judging, than with the wish of learning from them. Though these expressions are even a better description of the conduct of proud men, who, when at length brought within Holy Church, are accustomed on looking at her opponents, to consider not so much the years of their age, as the intention of their words. For however older the heretics may be than these same haughty men, they boldly overbear those persons in whose words they reprove false doctrine. It follows,

Ver. 12, 13. But, as I see, there is no one of you who can convince Job, and reply to his words. Lest ye should perchance say, We have found out wisdom; God hath cast him down, not man. [viii] 15. Heretics, from the fact that they are wont to appear contemptible even to men, when they behold Holy Church reverenced by well-nigh all nations, endeavour to impugn the opinion entertained of her by every possible objection; and say that she enjoys all abundance of temporal goods, because the gifts of eternal rewards are taken from her. Eliu meets the objections of such people, by saying, Lest ye should perchance say, We have found out wisdom; God hath cast him down, not man. As if they who are found within the Church, but are yet faithful, should say against the heretics, Because ye see that the Church stands high in this world, through the high opinion of men, ye must believe that God hath not cast her aside. For her Redeemer well knows how to administer comfort to her as she is travelling on in this her journey, and to keep in store for her the rewards of heaven, when she arrives at her eternal home. In vain then do ye assert that God hath cast her down, and not man, when ye behold her venerated by almost all men; because the aid of worldly distinction is conferred on her in order that she may be assisted thereby in manifold ways to gain also the rewards of heaven. It follows,

Ver. 14. He spake nothing to me, and I will not reply to him according to your word. [ix] 16. What is meant by his saying, He spake nothing to me? For does holy Church, when she detects haughty men within her, ever omit to instruct and reprove them by preachers of righteousness? She exercises these duties, and ceases not to exercise them daily. But let Eliu, who had heard blessed Job speaking openly, say, He spake nothing to me; because doubtless, all haughty men, though they hear indeed the words of Holy Church, yet pretend that they are not addressed to them, when they make light of correcting the sin of pride. Nor do they think that they are reproved for their pride, for they look on themselves as humble; and they also make light of reproof, when they count themselves much wiser even than their reprovers. But in saying, I will not answer him according to your words, he well says that he does not answer blessed Job with their speeches. For proud men within the pale of Holy Church reply against her, but yet not as heretics who are without. For they oppose her not by false teaching, but by evil living, because they do not think unworthily of God, as do heretics, but more highly than is necessary of their own selves. It follows,

Ver. 15. They were afraid, they answered no more, they removed speech from themselves. The friends of Job are well said to have been afraid of the words of Eliu, since frequently

proud defenders of the Church, though they do not observe due order in what they say, yet confound the adversaries by the very virtue of their words. It follows, Ver. 16. Because therefore I have waited, and they have not spoken, they have stood, and have answered no more. [x] 17. Wise men are accustomed to make it the limit of their speaking, to speak so far as to silence their adversaries. For they wish not to display their own powers, but to put down the teachers of heresy. But after it is said of the friends of Job, They were afraid, they answered no more, they removed speech from themselves, Eliu subjoins and says, I have waited, and they have not spoken; they have stood, and have answered no more. Even when they are already silent, he yet multiplies his words, because, being an arrogant man, and representing the character of the arrogant, he is in haste not merely to refute the arguments of his opponents, but to display his own wisdom. Whence it also follows,

Ver. 17. I will also answer my part, and I will display my knowledge.

For every proud man considers this to be his part, if he does not so much possess, as make a show of, knowledge. For all proud men are anxious not to possess knowledge, but to make a display of it: against whom Moses well says, Every vessel which hath not a cover nor binding over it shall be unclean. [Numb. 19, 15] For the covering or the binding is the reproof of discipline, and every one who is not kept under by it is rejected as an unclean and polluted vessel. And was not Eliu a vessel without a cover, who had considered it to be his part to make a show of the wisdom which he possessed? For he who lays himself open by his desire of display, and is not covered by the veil of silence, is polluted as a vessel without cover or binding. But holy preachers consider that they are performing their part, if they rejoice in themselves at their own wisdom within, and if they outwardly keep back others from error. Nor do they so far go out of themselves in speaking, as to place the delight of their mind in an outward display of eloquent language. But they meditate on the benefits of wisdom in the secret of their heart, and there rejoice when they perceive it; and not when they are obliged to make it known amidst the snares of so many temptations.

Although when they make known the good which they receive, yet charity steps in, and they rejoice at the progress of their hearers, and not at their own display. But the arrogant on gaining any knowledge think that they have gained nothing, if it so happens that they keep it concealed. For they place their happiness no where but in the praise of men. It is hence that the foolish virgins are said to have taken no oil in their vessels; [Matt. 25, 3] because such as be arrogant, if perchance they keep themselves from any vices, cannot confine to their own consciences the credit of the glory. But Paul had taken oil in his own vessel, who said, Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience. [2 Cor. 1, 12] To carry then an empty vessel, is with a heart empty within to seek for the judgment of men's lips from without. Because Eliu, then, when seeking for glory from without, has not oil within his vessel, he well says, I will answer my part, and I will display my learning. And in the words which follow he shews what are his sufferings, from vain-glory raging within, saying,

Ver. 18'20. I am full of words, the spirit of my womb constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as new wine without a vent, which bursts in sunder new vessels. I will speak, and will take breath awhile; I will open my lips and answer. [xi]

18. When boastful men observe that holy preachers speak eloquently, and are reverenced for their eloquence, they frequently imitate the loftiness of their language, and not their useful intention. They are far from loving what the others desire, but are especially anxious to gain great renown amongst men. For it is frequently the case that wise men, when they find that they are not listened to, impose silence on their lips. But frequently when they see that the sins of the ungodly gain strength when they are silent, and cease to reprove, they endure a kind of violence in their spirit, so that they burst forth in language of open reproof. And hence when the Prophet Jeremiah had imposed on himself silence in preaching, saying, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name; he immediately added, And there was made as it were a burning fire in my bosom, and shut up in my bones: and I was wearied, not being able to bear it; for I have heard the insults of many. [Jer. 20, 9] For, seeing that he was not listened to, he wished to hold his peace; but when he beheld evil increasing, he no longer persisted in the same silence. For when he ceased to speak without, from being wearied of speaking [Comma after 'locutionis,' as the rhythm and the sense both require.], he felt a flame kindled within him by the zeal of charity.

For the hearts of the just burn within them, when they behold the deeds of the ungodly gain strength from not being reproved, and they believe that they are themselves partakers in the guilt of those, whom they allow, by their own silence, to go on in iniquity. The prophet David, after he had imposed silence on himself, saying, I have set a guard upon my mouth, while the sinner stood against me. I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silence even from good things: [Ps. 39, 1] in the midst of his silence blazed forth with this zeal of charity, when he

immediately subjoined; My sorrow was renewed, my heart grew hot within me, and in my meditation a fire shall flame out. [Ps. 39, 3] His heart grew hot within him, because the flame of charity refused to burst forth in words of admonition. The fire burned in the meditation of his heart, because his reproof of the ungodly had ceased to flow on with the chiding of his lips. For the zeal of charity tempers itself with wonderful consolation, as it gains strength, when it bursts forth in words of reproof against the deeds of the ungodly, in order that it may not cease to reprove the faults which it cannot amend, lest it should convict itself of partaking in their sins, by consent of keeping silence. 19. But because certain vices frequently assume the guise of virtues, as, for instance, lavishness wishes to appear like pity, stinginess like frugality, cruelty like justice; in like manner, a desire for empty glory, being unable to keep itself within the bounds of silence, inflames like the zeal of charity, and the powerful desire of ostentation impels a person to speak without restraint, and the desire of display breaks out, as if with the wish of offering advice. For it cares not what good it can effect by its speaking, but what show it can make: nor is it anxious to correct the evil which it beholds, but to display the good which it feels. Hence Eliu also, swollen by

the spirit of pride, and unable to keep himself within the barriers of silence, says, I am full of words, the spirit of my womb constraineth me; behold, my belly is as new wine without a vent which bursts in sunder new vessels. [ver. 18]

20. If we must understand this passage spiritually, by 'belly' he means the secret recesses of the heart. But by new wine is understood the warmth of the Holy Spirit, of which the Lord says in the Gospel, They put new wine into new skins. [Matt. 9, 17] For when the Apostles were filled suddenly therewith, and were speaking in every tongue, it was said by the Jews, who knew not the truth and yet bare witness to it, These men are full of new wine. [Acts 2, 4] But by vessels we understand not inappropriately either consciences which are weak from their very estate of humanity, or certainly those earthly vessels of our bodies; of which the Apostle Paul says, We have this treasure in earthen vessels. [2 Cor. 4, 7] But because Eliu, as we before observed, was so puffed up and swollen with pride, as though he were kindled within, to speak through the grace of charity, by the fire of the Holy Spirit, compares the spirit, which he felt within him when silent, to new wine without a vent. And he well says, Which bursts asunder new vessels, because the fire of the Holy Spirit is scarcely kept in by the new life, much less by the old. The new wine then bursts asunder new vessels, because by its violent heat it is too much even for spiritual hearts. I will speak, and I will take breath a little; I will open my lips and answer.

[ver. 20] He well says, I will take breath, for as it is a distress to the holy to behold wickedness, without amending it; so is it a heavy distress to the boastful, if they do not display the wisdom they possess. For they can scarcely endure the violence which boils within them, if they are rather behindhand in making known every thing which they think. And hence, when any good deed is taken in hand, all pride on account of it must first be overcome in the heart, lest, if it should proceed from the root of a bad motive, it should bring forth the bitter fruits of sin.

21. These then, who are as yet engaged in a contest with their sins, ought never to undertake to rule over others by exercising the office of preaching. And this is the reason, why, according to the command of the Divine dispensation, the Levites serve the tabernacle from their twenty-fifth year, but from their fiftieth become the guardians of the sacred vessels. [Numb. 8, 24] For what is meant by the five and twentieth year, when youth is in its full vigour, but the contests against each separate sin? And what is expressed by the fiftieth, in which is signified also the rest of the Jubilee, but the repose of the mind within, when the contest has come to an end? But what is shadowed forth by the vessels of the tabernacle, except the souls of the faithful? The Levites, therefore, serve the tabernacle from their five and twentieth year, and take charge of the vessels from their fiftieth, to shew that they who endure, through pleasurable consent, the contest with sins which still assault them, should not presume to take the charge of others: but that when they have been successful in their contests with temptations, by which they are assured of inward tranquillity, they may then undertake the care of souls. But who can perfectly subdue these assaults of temptations,

when Paul says, I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin?

[Rom. 7, 23] But it is one thing boldly to endure contests, another to be unnerved by them and overcome. In the first case virtue is kept in exercise, to secure it from being puffed up; in the other, it is quite quenched that it cease to be. He then who knows how to endure with boldness the temptation of the contest, even when he feels its shock, sits on high in the lofty citadel of peace. For he sees that the assaults of sin are, even when within him, subject to his power, since he does not yield his consent to them, from being overcome by any pleasure. It follows:

Ver. 21, 22. I will not accept the person of man, I will not equal God to man; for I know not how long I shall continue, or whether after a while my Maker may take me away. [xii] 22. Most judiciously he does not make God equal to man, since he knows not how long he may continue, or when in the judgment of God be taken away. And he well says, After a while my Maker may take me away; for however long is the period of the present life, it is short, from the very fact, that it is not enduring. For that which is confined within circumscribed limits has no claim to be considered lasting. But in the midst of these sentences which he utters, based on solid truth, he again bursts out into words of pride, saying, Chap. xxxiii. ver. 1, 2. Wherefore, Job, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold, I have opened my

mouth; let my tongue speak in my throat. [xiii] 23. Let us consider from what a height of pride he comes down in admonishing Job to listen to him, in saying that he had opened his mouth, in promising that his tongue would speak in his throat. For the teaching of the boastful has this peculiarity, that they cannot modestly suggest what they teach, and cannot communicate in a right manner the truths they hold rightly. For they make it plain by their words that they fancy themselves, when teaching, to be seated on some lofty eminence, and that they look upon their hearers as standing far beneath them, as on lower ground, as persons whom they hardly deign to address, not in the tone of advice, but of authority. Well does the Lord address them by the Prophet, But ye ruled them with austerity and power. [Ez. 34, 4] For they rule with austerity and power, who are eager to correct 'those under them, not by calmly reasoning, but to bend them by the severity of command.

24. But sound teaching, on the other hand, the more earnestly avoids this sin of pride in thought, the more eagerly it assails with the shafts of its words the teacher of pride himself. For it takes heed lest it be rather preaching him by a haughty demeanour, whom it assails with holy words in the hearts of its hearers. For it endeavours to state in its words, and to set forth in its doings, humility, which is the mistress and mother of all virtues, in order that it may enforce it on the disciples of truth more by its conduct than by its words. Whence Paul in speaking to the Thessalonians, as if he had forgotten the height of his own Apostleship, We became as children in the midst of you. [1 Thess. 2, 7] Whence the Apostle Peter, when saying, Ever ready to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, [1 Pet. 3, 15] asserted that in the science of teaching the manner of one's teaching is to

be strictly attended to, by subjoining, But with modesty and fear, having a good conscience. [ib. 16] But in that which the Apostle Paul says to his disciple, These things exhort and teach with all authority; [1 Tim. 4, 11] he does not recommend the tyranny of power, but the authority of his life. [Tit. 2, 15] For that is enjoined with authority which is practised before it is advised.

For when conscience makes the tongue falter, it detracts from the authority of one's talking. He did not recommend him therefore the authority of haughty words, but the confidence of good conduct. Whence it is said of the Lord, He was teaching as having authority, not as the Scribes and Pharisees. [Matt. 8, 29] For He alone in a singular and peculiar manner spoke with sound authority, because He had committed no sins from infirmity. For He possessed that from the power of His Godhead, which He has bestowed in us through the sinlessness of His Manhood.

25. For we, because we are feeble men, when we come to speak of God to our fellows, should first of all call to mind our own nature, and thus consider from our own infirmities in what order we should offer advice to our weakly brethren. Let us consider then that we are either now such as some of those whom we are correcting, or were heretofore such, though by the operation of Divine Grace we are so no longer: that in humility of heart we may correct them with greater forbearance, the more truly we recognise ourselves in the persons of those whom we correct. But if we are neither now such, nor have been such as those still are whom we are anxious to improve; for fear our heart should perchance be proud, and should fall the more fatally by reason of its very innocence, let us recal to our eyes the other good qualities of those whose faults we are correcting. If they have not any such, let us fall back on the secret judgments of God. Because as we have received this very good, which we possess, for no deserts of our own; so is He able to pour on them the grace of power from above, so that though roused to exertion after ourselves, they may be able to outstrip even those good qualities which we received so long before.

For who could believe that Saul, who kept at his death the raiment of those that were stoning him, would surpass Stephen who had been stoned, by the honour ['meritum' (or service)] of the Apostleship. Our heart ought then to be first humbled by these thoughts, and then the sin of offenders should be reproved. But as has been often said, Eliu is shewn to be unacquainted with this mode of speaking, who is puffed up in his words, by the haughtiness of pride, as if by the power of a kind of authority, saying, Wherefore Job hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold I have opened my mouth, let my tongue speak in my throat.

26. To speak in the throat is to speak softly, and not to vociferate loudly. In which words he designates haughty men living within holy Church. For these are said to speak as if in the throat, when they do not clamour against the adversaries who are without, but reprove some within the bosom of holy Church, as if they were neighbours and placed near them. But haughty men often make a show of avoiding that very pride, which they entertain; and while they do all things so as not to escape the notice of any one, they privately mention them

to particular persons, in order that they may boast not merely of their sense of wisdom, but also of their contempt of arrogance before men. Whence it is now said, Let my tongue speak in my throat. As if it were plainly said, Behold, I whisper that which I think wisely against thee. But they sometimes break out into such a height of impudence, as, when others are silent, to be accustomed to praise their own sayings. Whence he subjoins,

Ver. 3. My words are from my simple heart, and my lips shall speak a pure sentence. [xiv] 27. To say that speech is simple, is a praise of great weight. But because the haughty possess it not, they assert the more anxiously that they possess it, in order that they may be heard with less apprehension. And they declare that they are going to speak with pure intention, because they are afraid of their wicked duplicity being discovered. But they often also blend together truth and falsehood, that their falsehood may be the more speedily believed, from its being discerned that they speak the truth. Because then Eliu both said that he would speak with pure intention, and by calling his words 'sentences' ushered them in with applause, he subjoins the same 'sentence' which he promised, saying, Ver. 4. The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

[xv]

28. Intending to subjoin truth, he first uttered boastful words, and being about to state the sound opinions he held, he first made known how huge was his swelling. The minds of the arrogant are doubtless so very mad, that even in what they think rightly, they are disfigured by the deformity of their pride. And hence even their sound opinions do not instruct their hearers, because in truth they lead them by their haughty sentiments not to reverence but to despise them. And when words of folly are blended with wise sayings, even their wisdom is not kept in mind, because their folly is despised by him who hears it. For hence it is said by Moses, A man who suffers a running of seed shall be unclean. [Lev. 15, 16] For what are our words but seed? And when this is poured forth in due measure, the mind of the hearer, as the womb of her who conceives, is made fruitful for an offspring of good works. But if it escapes at improper times, polluting him that emits it, it loses its generating power. For if words were not seed, the Athenians would never have said of Paul, as he was preaching to them, What would this word-sower ['seminiverbius] say? [Acts 17, 18] of whom Luke says, He was the chief speaker. [Acts 14, 12] Seed, then, which is intended for the purpose of procreation, when it escapes in an improper manner, pollutes the other members:

and speech also, by which learning ought to be implanted in the hearts of the hearers, if uttered out of due order, brings disgrace even on the truths it utters. And hence Eliu also pollutes even the truths he is able to entertain, when he is ignorant of what he is saying, or to whom he is saying it, and suffers, as it were, discharge of seed, when he employs his tongue, which is fitted to answer useful purpose, in words of empty sound. But he speaks in proper order of his being made, and receiving life. For he says, that he was made by the Spirit, and that he received life by the breath of God. For it is written of Adam when created, He breathed into his face the breath of life, and man was made into a living soul.

[Gen. 2, 7] But let us listen whether he proceeds properly with what he has well laid down. It follows,

Ver. 5. If thou canst, answer me, and stand before my face. [xvi]

29. Behold how in relating the true order of his creation, he suddenly bursts forth into the pride of haughty arrogance, and, in other words, repeats the same statement, by saying, Ver. 6, 7. Behold, God made me as well as thee, and I am also formed of the same clay; yet let not my wonder terrify thee, and my eloquence be burdensome to thee. What then is meant by Eliu acknowledging the order of his true creation, and not knowing the limits of proper speech? What by his putting himself on a level with Job when created, and setting himself above him when about to speak? What but this, that though haughty men remember that they are equal in nature to other men, yet that through the pride of knowledge they do not deign even to believe that they have even their equals [The text seems scarcely grammatical, but the sense cannot be far from what is given.]: and that though they compare themselves with them, in the condition of their nature, they place themselves above them from pride in their wisdom. They decide that though they were made equal by birth, yet they have not continued so, in their way of life. And from their not being equal to them as it were in their way of life, they count it a greater marvel that they were equal to them when they were born.

And hence Eliu says, when inflated with pride, Behold, God made me as well as thee, and I also was formed from the same clay; yet let not my wonder terrify thee, nor my eloquence be burdensome to thee. For it is peculiar to the arrogant, that they always believe, even before they speak, that they are going to say some wonderful thing, and that they anticipate their own words by their own admiration, because, with all their acuteness, they are not sensible how great a folly is their very pride. We must observe also that Paul, when he was giving the Hebrews some striking warnings, subjoined, I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of consolation, for I have written to you in few words. [Heb. 13, 22] But Eliu uttered empty words, and afterwards added, as if for consolation, Let not my wonder terrify thee, nor my eloquence be burdensome to thee. The one called his sayings the word of consolation, the other called them eloquence, and a marvel. Behold, how different in taste are the fruits which spring forth from diverse roots of thought. The one thinks humbly of his high qualities, the other exalts himself without reason on his scanty endowments. What then is specially to be observed in all this, but that those who are about to rise, think themselves low, and that they who are soon to fall, ever stand on high ground? As Solomon bears witness, The heart is exalted before destruction, and is brought low before honour. [Prov. 16, 18] It follows,

Ver. 8. Thou hast spoken then in mine ears, and I have heard the voice of thy words. And subjoining the very words, he says, Ver. 9’11. I am clean, and without spot of sin, and there is no iniquity in me, because He hath found complaints in me, therefore He hath counted me as His enemy, He hath placed my feet in the stocks, He hath guarded all my ways. And in answer to these words which he said blessed Job had spoken, he immediately states his

own opinion, saying, Ver. 12. This is the thing then in which thou art not justified. [xvi] 30. Blessed Job had indeed truly said, that he had been scourged without any fault. [Job 27, 6] For he said of himself exactly what the Lord had said of him to the devil, Thou hast moved Me against him to afflict him without cause. [Job 2, 3] But Eliu did not believe, that his fault doing nothing in it, he could be scourged as a matter of grace. For he did not know that by his scourgings his fault was not corrected, but his merits increased, and because he had said that he had been scourged without any fault, he reproves him in these words, saying, This is the thing then in which thou art not justified. For it is the special fault of the arrogant, to be more eager to convict, than to console; and to consider that whatever sufferings they see befal men, have befallen them solely from their sins. They know not how to enquire deeply into the secret judgments of God [some Mss. add 'Dei.'], and humbly to investigate that which they cannot understand: for while pride at their knowledge raises them on high, it frequently casts them down from the secret investigation of God's judgments.

31. For suffering of mind is an impediment in the way of truth: because while it puffs us up, it obscures our view. For if these persons ever seem to acquire wisdom, they feed, as it were, on the husks of things, and not on the marrow of their inmost sweetness; and with their brilliant abilities, they frequently reach only to the outside of things, but know not the savour of their inward taste; for, in truth, though sharp-sighted outwardly, they are blind within. Nor do they form such a notion of God, as tastes secretly within, but such as when thrown outward gives a sound. And though they gain in their understanding a knowledge of some mysteries, they can have no experience of their sweetness: and if they know how they exist, yet they know not, as I said, how they savour. And so it is frequently the case, that though they speak boldly, yet they know not how to live up to what they profess. Whence a certain wise man well said, May God, grant me to speak these things according to my sentence. [Wisd. 7, 15] For sentence is derived from sense ['sententia,' 'sensu.']. And a man who wishes not merely to speak from outward knowledge, but to feel and experience what he says, is anxious to give utterance to the truths he holds, not as a matter of mere knowledge ['scientia'], but of real feeling ['sententia']. But the mind of haughty men does not penetrate the meaning of its own words;

because by a righteous judgment it is driven away from the inward taste of things, and is wrecked by that applause which it desires from without. But real knowledge influences without elating; and makes those whom it has filled, not proud, but sorrowful. For when any one is filled therewith, he is in the first place anxious to know himself: and conscious of his own state, he acquires thereby a greater savour of strength, the more truly sensible he is of his own weakness therein. And this very humility opens to him more widely the pathway of this knowledge, and when he beholds his own weakness, this very knowledge opens to him the hidden recesses of sublime secrets; and pressed down by this knowledge, he is made more subtle to press forward into things hidden. Eliu then does not in the scourgings of blessed Job discover their true reason, because he knows not how to search for it with humility: and being more ready to reproach than to console, he says, It is in this thing, then, that thou art not justified.

32. We must observe further, that blessed Job said that his foot was placed in the stocks, [Job 13, 2] but that he never said that he was clean, in the way in which is objected to him, or free from sin, or without spot, and iniquity. But Eliu, in his desire to reprove austerely what has been said, falsely added what had not been said. For they who are ever eager to reprove and not to encourage, frequently state many falsehoods in their reproofs. For in order to appear clever in reproving, they frequently invent statements, for the sake of reproving them, and, being eager, as horses, to run their course of ostentation, they clear the way for assailing those who are subject to them by inventing charges of iniquity. It must be understood besides, as I said above, that haughty men often blend forcible words with their words of boasting, and that sometimes they do not consider how they live, but studiously weigh what they teach. Of such Eliu is a specimen in the present case, who is not so anxious to live well, as to teach well. Since then he speaks, though arrogantly, yet with knowledge, let us pass over the pride of his conduct, and consider the solidity of his teaching. After all these boastful words, then, he begins at length to display his knowledge, and says,

Ver. 12. I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. [xviii]

33. Some one may perhaps observe, Who knows not that, even without being told it? But no wonder if this remark is believed to be of little value, if it is not considered in the very root of its meaning. He was speaking to one who had been scourged, who had both felt the blows of smiting, and was ignorant of the reason of them. And therefore he remarked, I will answer thee, that God is greater than man; that man, when scourged, yet considering that God is greater than himself, may submit himself to the judgment of Him, to Whom he has no doubt he is inferior, and may believe that that which he suffers from his superior is just, even though he does not know the grounds of its justice. For whoever is smitten for his sins, unless he murmurs and struggles against it, begins at once to be a righteous man, from not impugning the justice of Him who smites him. For man is created inferior to God, and returns to the order of his creation, when he submits himself to the equity of his Judge, even when he cannot comprehend it. It is therefore well said, I will answer thee, that God is greater than man, in order that on considering the power of the Creator, the swelling of the mind may cease to rage, through the thought of the condition in which it was created. Whence David the Prophet, when compelled by the weight of the blows to burst forth into extravagant words, says on bringing himself back to the consideration of his own origin, I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, since Thou hast made me. [Ps. 39, 9] For he considered in what rank he was created, and learned the justice of the blow; for He Who kindly created him who as yet was not, surely smote him only with justice when he was now in being. It follows.

Ver. 13, 14. Thou contendest against Him, because He hath not replied to thee to all thy words. God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing a second time. [xix]

34. It is natural to the afflicted heart, when it beholds any thing going contrary to its wishes, to wish to gain an answer, if possible, by the voice of God, why things are in this way, and

not in that: to consult God in this whole matter under debate, and to acquiesce on learning the meaning of His reply. But Eliu, foreseeing that the Lord was composing holy Scripture, for the purposes of replying therein to the open or secret enquiries of all men, says, Thou contendest against Him, because He hath not replied to all thy words. God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing a second time. As if he were to say, God does not reply in private speaking to the hearts of men one by one; but fashions His word in such a manner, as to satisfy the enquiries of all men. For if we look for our own cases one by one, we are sure to find them in the teaching of His Scriptures; nor is there need to seek for a special answer from the voice of God, in our own special sufferings. For there a general reply is given to all of us in our own special sufferings: there the conduct of those who go before is a model for such as come after. To take one instance out of many. We are labouring under some suffering or annoyance of the flesh.

We wish perhaps to know the secret reasons of this suffering or annoyance, in order that we may be comforted in our trial from the very knowledge. But because no special reply is given to us one by one, concerning our own special trials, we betake ourselves to holy Scripture. And there is it that we find what Paul heard when tried by the infirmity of the flesh. My grace is sufficient for thee; for strength is made perfect in. weakness. [2 Cor. 12, 9] And this was spoken to him in his own peculiar suffering, that it might not be spoken to us one by one. We have heard therefore in holy Scripture the voice of God to Paul in his affliction, in order that we may not seek to hear it one by one, for our own private consolation, if perchance we are afflicted. God does not then reply to all our words, because He will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing again; that is, He has provided for our instruction, by what He stated to our fathers in holy Scripture. Let the teachers then of Holy Church, let even these men of arrogance, announce, (on beholding some within her sinking from faintheartedness,) that God does not reply to all our words, that God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing twice. In other words, He does not now satisfy the doubts and perplexities of individual men by the voice of the Prophets on every side, or by the ministry of Angels.

Because He includes in holy Scripture whatever can possibly befal each one of us, and has provided therein for regulating the conduct of those who come after, by the examples of those who have gone before.

35. But yet this remark, God will speak once, and will not repeat the same thing twice, may be understood in a deeper meaning; that the Father begat His Consubstantial, Only-begotten Son. For God's speaking is His having begotten the Word. But for God to speak once, is for Him to have no other Word beside the Only-begotten. And hence it is fitly subjoined, And He will not repeat the same thing twice, because this very Word, that is, the Son, He begat not otherwise than only-begotten. But in that He says not, 'He spake,' but 'will speak,' using, namely, not the past tense but the future, it is plain to all, that neither past nor future time is appropriate to God. Any tense is therefore the more freely used in speaking of Him, since no one is used with strict truth. But any tense whatever could not be freely used, if one at least could be used properly. It is allowable then for any tense to

be boldly used in speaking of God, since no one is strictly proper. For the Father begat the Son without regard to time.

36. And who can worthily speak of that ineffable nativity, that the Coeternal is begotten from the Eternal, that He who existed before all ages begat His Equal, that the Son was not posterior to Him Who begat Him? We can marvel at these things, but it is beyond our power to look into them. But to be able to wonder at that mighty nativity is in a certain degree to see it. But how do we see that which we do by no means comprehend? But we must borrow an instance from the habits of the body to illustrate the feelings of the mind. If any one is lying down in a dark place, with his eyes closed, and the light of a candle suddenly flashes before him, his eyes, though closed, are so struck by the very approach of the light, that they open. Why are they thus affected, if they saw nothing when closed? And yet it was not any thing perfect which they could see when closed. For if they had seen the whole object perfectly, why should they when opened seek for something to look at? And thus, thus are we, when we endeavour to behold ought of the incomprehensible nativity. For even in this, that the mind is struck with surprise at the shining, and sees in a manner what it is not able really to see, it beholds as if in darkness the power of the light with closed eyes [Here the older Edd. have a passage which Ben.

omits, as it is not in the MSS. 'For Eliu says, God speaketh once; but David, looking to the nativity of the only-begotten Word, says, God spake once.' For since the only-begotten Son and Word of the Father is both called 'Born' in respect of perfection, and in respect of eternity is even said to be in birth; Holy Scripture useth to say freely of God that He 'hath spoken,' and 'speaketh.' For in that He begat the Word perfect, God 'hath spoken,' and in that He ever begetteth, He surely 'speaketh;' though this which we called 'perfect' we do not say with strictness. for that which is not effected (factum) cannot be strictly said to be 'perfected,' (perfectum. But we express His fullness with a somewhat straitened form of speech; as also of the Father the Lord saith, Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect, (Matt. v. 48) It looks like a note on the former paragraph, which may have been written at the foot of the page.]. But because the secret admiration of the Divine Nature is not easily made known to minds which are occupied with worldly desires, he very fitly suggests the way in which God speaks to us, by saying,

Ver. 15. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when sleep falleth upon men, and they sleep on their bed. [xx]

37. What is meant by the word of God being made known to us in a dream, except that we do not learn the secret things of God, if we are kept awake by worldly desires? For in a dream the outward senses are at rest, and inward objects are discerned. If we wish then to contemplate things within, let us rest from outward engagements. The voice of God, in truth, is heard as if in dreams, when, with minds at ease, we rest from the bustle of this world, and the Divine precepts are pondered by us in the deep silence of the mind. For when the mind is at rest from outward employments, the weight of the Divine precepts is more fully discerned. It is then that the mind penetrates, in a more lively manner, the words

of God, when it refuses to admit within the tumult of worldly cares. But a man is awake to little good purpose, when the turmoil of worldly business gives him unusual disturbance. For the crowd of earthly thoughts, when it clamours around, closes the ear of the mind. And the voice of the presiding judge is less plainly heard in the secret tribunal of the mind, the less the sound of tumultuous cares is kept still. For a man when distracted is not fully equal to attend to both together. But while he seeks for inward instruction, but so as yet to be engaged in outward employments; by opening his ear to things without, he becomes deaf within.

Moses, when living amongst the Egyptians, was, as it were, awake, and so when dwelling in Egypt he did not hear the voice of God. [Ex. 2, 11. 12. But after that he had fled into the desert, after the slaughter of the Egyptian, and dwelt there forty years, he fell asleep as it were from the disquieting tumults of worldly desires; and therefore it was vouchsafed him ['meriut'] to hear the voice of God, because the more indifferent he became through Divine grace to outward objects of desire, the more was he really awake to discern truths within. And again, when appointed to rule over the people of Israel, he is taken up into the Mount, to learn the precepts of the Law, and is preserved from tumults without, that he might penetrate into mysteries within. [Ex. 19, 3]

38. And hence is it that holy men, who are obliged by the necessity of their employments to engage in outward pursuits, are ever studiously betaking themselves to the secrets of their hearts; and there do they ascend the height of secret thought, and learn (as it were) the Law in the Mount: when they put aside the tumults of worldly business, and ponder, on the height of their thought, the sentence of the Divine will. And hence is it that the same Moses frequently retires to the Tabernacle on doubtful points; and there secretly consults God, and learns what certain decision to come to. For to leave the crowd, and retire to the Tabernacle, is to put aside the tumults of outward objects, and to enter into the secret recess of the mind. For the Lord is there consulted, and we hear inwardly and in silence, what we must do openly and without. This course wise rulers daily pursue; when they are aware that they cannot settle doubtful points, they betake themselves to the secret recesses of their mind, as if to a kind of tabernacle. By looking into the Divine Law, they consult the Lord, as it were before the Ark. And what they first hear in silence, they afterwards make known to the world in their conduct. For in order that they may engage in outward employments without injury to themselves, they constantly take care to withdraw to the secrets of their heart.

And they thus hear the voice of God, as it were, in a dream, while they withdraw themselves in the thoughts of their mind from the influence of carnal things. Hence is it that, in the Song of Songs, the Bride who said, I sleep, and my heart is awake, [Cant. 5, 2] had heard the voice of the Bridegroom in dreams. As if she were saying, While I give my outward senses rest from the anxieties of this world, I have a more lively perception of inward truths, when my mind is unemployed. I am asleep to outward things, but my heart is awake within,

because, when I am insensible as it were to outward objects, I have a keen apprehension of inward secrets.

39. Well then says Eliu, that God speaketh by a dream; and fitly did he add, In a vision of the night. For a vision of the night usually presents itself to the contemplation of the mind under certain images. But we perceive objects more plainly by daylight, we see less quickly in a vision of the night. And because all holy men, as long as they are in this life, behold the secrets of the Divine Nature only under certain resemblances, (since they do not, as yet, gain a clearer sight of them as they really are; after Eliu had said that God speaks to us in a dream, he rightly adds, in a vision of the night. For 'night' is this present life, and as long as we are in it, we are covered with a mist of uncertain imaginations as far as the sight of inward objects is concerned. For the Prophet was sensible that he was held by a certain mist in his sight of the Lord, when he says, My soul longed for Thee in the night. [Is. 26, 9] As if he were to say, I long to behold Thee in the obscurity of this present life, but I am still surrounded by the mist of infirmity. David also wishing to avoid the gloom of this life, and waiting for the brightness of the true light, says, In the morning I will stand before Thee, and will see.

[Ps. 5, 3] He who longs for the approach of morning, in order to behold God, perceives that he can still see but imperfectly, in the night. But because, as we said, sleeping is ceasing from outward action, Eliu rightly adds, When sleep falls upon men. And because holy men, when unemployed in outward action, rest within the chambers of their mind, he fitly subjoins, and they sleep on their bed. For holy men to sleep in their bed, is for them to take rest in the chamber of their mind. Whence it is written, The saints shall exult in glory, they shall rejoice in their beds. Let it be said then that God speaks once to us through a dream in a vision of the night, when sleep falls upon men, and they sleep in their bed. [Ps.149, 5] Because we then doubtless discern the secrets of the Godhead, when we withdraw ourselves into the chambers of our minds from the tumultuous desires of this world. But because, as we have already frequently said before, the turmoil of worldly business closes the ear, and the rest of secret contemplation opens it, he properly subjoins,

Ver. 16. Then He openeth the ears of men, and teaching, instructeth them with discipline. [xxi] 40. For when they are dead to outward objects, they hear with open ears the causes which come before their inward judgment. And when they consider minutely with themselves either their open punishments, or their secret judgments, they cease not to afflict themselves with tears. Whence it is well said, And teaching, He instructeth them with discipline, because to a mind which reflects and wounds itself with penitence, the sorrows of compunction are like the stripes of a blow. Whence Solomon also rightly uniting together the force of these kinds of blows, says, The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil, and blows in the secret parts of the belly. [Prov. 20, 30] For by the blueness of a wound he implies the discipline of blows on the body. But blows in the secret parts of the belly are the wounds of the mind within, which are inflicted by compunction. For as the belly is distended when filled with food, so is the mind puffed up when swollen with wicked thoughts. The

blueness then of a wound, and blows in the secret parts of the belly, cleanse away evil, because both outward discipline does away with faults, and compunction pierces the distended mind with the punishment of penance. But they differ from each other in this respect, that the wounds of blows give us pain, the sorrows of compunction have good savour. The one afflict and torture, the others restore, when they afflict us. Through the one there is sorrow in affliction, through the other there is joy in grief. But because the very act of compunction wounds the mind, he not unfitly calls it discipline.

41. For there are four modes in which the mind of a righteous man is strongly affected by compunction: when he either calls to mind his own sins, and considers Where He Hath Been; or when fearing the sentence of God's judgments, and examining his own self, he thinks Where He Shall Be: or when, carefully observing the evils of this present life, he reflects with sorrow Where He is; or when he contemplates the blessings of his heavenly country, and, because he does not as yet enjoy them, beholds with regret Where He Is Not. Paul had called to mind his former sins, and was afflicting himself by the sight of what he had been, when he said, I am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. [1 Cor. 15, 9] Again, from carefully weighing the Divine sentence, he was afraid that it was bad for him in prospect, when he says, I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perchance, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway. [l Cor. 9, 27] And again, he was considering the evils of this present life, when he said, While we are in this body, we are absent from the Lord: [2 Cor. 5, 6] and, I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me captive to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am!

who shall deliver me from the body of this death? [Rom. 7, 23] And again, he was considering the blessings of his heavenly country, when saying, We see now through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know, even as also I am known. [1 Cor. 13, 12] And again, We know that if our earthly house of this habitation be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [2 Cor. 5, 1] And looking at the blessings of this house, he says to the Ephesians, That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who have believed. [Eph. 1, 18. 19. But blessed Job, considering the evils of this present life, says, The life of man upon the earth is a temptation. [Job 7, 1] Whence David says, Every man that liveth is altogether vanity; and though man walketh in the image of God, yet will he be disquieted in vain. [Ps. 39, 6] But again, on contemplating his heavenly home, and weighing the evils in which he then was, and considering the good things which he did not as yet enjoy, he says, Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged; [Ps. 120, 5] and, I said in my fear, I am cast out from the sight of Thine eyes.

[Ps. 31, 22] Being raised up in an ecstasy, which our translators properly interpreted fear, he saw that he was cast out from the sight of the eyes of God. For after beholding that inward light, which flashed within his mind with bright rays through the grace of contemplation,

he returned to himself; and discerned, by the knowledge he had gained, either the blessings which were there, of which he was deprived, or the evils with which he was here surrounded. For no one is able to look on the ills of life as they really are, if he is unable by contemplation to gain a taste of the blessings of the eternal country. Whence also he knew that he had been cast out of the sight of the eyes of God. For when he was raised up in a trance, he saw that which, when he fell back on himself, he lamented that he could not of himself behold.

42. For that compunction with which it dispels all bodily imaginations which crowd upon it, and annoy it, and with which it strives to fix the eye of the heart on the very ray of the boundless light, is wont in truth more deeply to affect a perfect mind. For these appearances of bodily figures it has attracted to itself within, through infirmity of the flesh. But when it is completely filled with compunction, it is here specially on its guard, lest the imagination of circumscribed vision should delude it, when it is searching after truth; and it rejects all imaginations which present themselves to it. For since it has fallen, by their means, beneath itself, it endeavours to rise above itself, by escaping from them: and after it has been distracted, in an unseemly manner, by many objects, it endeavours to gather itself again together; that prevailing by the mighty power of love, it may contemplate one single and incorporeal Being.

43. And hence it is admitted, at times, to taste some unusual savour of sweetness within, and is suddenly in a measure refreshed, when breathed on by the glowing Spirit; and is the more eager, the more it gains a taste of something to love; and it desires that within itself, which it feels to taste sweetly within, because it has in truth, from the love of its sweetness, become vile in its own sight; and after having been able, in whatever way, to enjoy it, it has discovered what it had hitherto been without it. It endeavours to cling closely to it, but is kept from approaching its strength, by its own remaining weakness; and because it is unable to contemplate its purity, it counts it sweet to weep, and, sinking back into itself, to make its bed in the tears of its own weakness. For it cannot fix the eyes of its mind on that, of which it has only taken a hasty glance within; because it is compelled by its own old habits to sink downwards. It meanwhile pants and strives and endeavours to rise above itself, but sinks back, overpowered with weariness, into its own familiar darkness. But because a mind thus affected, has to endure itself as the cause of a stubborn contest against itself, and because all this controversy about ourselves causes no small amount of pain, when we are engaged in it, whatever pleasure may be blended therewith;

Eliu, after having said that God speaks to us in a dream, and that our ears are opened by His words, calls this same opening of the ears a discipline, and with good reason. Because the more the sound of inward wisdom by the grace of its secret inspiration bursts forth upon us, the more does it affect us with distress. For no one would outwardly lament that which he is, if he had not been able to perceive within, that which as yet he is not. For on seeing that we ourselves were created aright, but that we were deceived by giving a fatal consent to the persuasions of the devil, we observe in our own case, that what we made ourselves is one thing, and what we were made is another: that by nature we were sound, but that we

became corrupted through our own fault. And therefore when we are pinched by conscience, we seek to escape from what we ourselves have done, that we may be refashioned after the pattern in which we were first made. Whence it fitly follows,

Ver. 17. That He may withdraw man from the things that he has done, and may deliver him from pride. [xxii] 44. For what has man done of himself but sin? And it is written, Pride is the beginning of all sin. [Ecclus. 10, 13] It is rightly said, then, that when man is withdrawn from what he has done, he is freed from pride. To transgress the commands of our Creator by sin, is to be haughty against Him; because a man casts off, as it were, the yoke of His authority, to Whom he scorns to submit by obedience. On the other hand, he who wishes to avoid what he has done, calls to mind what he was made by God: and humbly returns to the order of his creation, when flying from his own deeds, he loves himself as he was at first created by God. But because eternal glory is obtained, and eternal punishments are avoided, by this wisdom, it is appropriately subjoined,

Ver. 18. Rescuing his soul from corruption, and his life from passing to the sword. [xxiii] 45. For every sinner, in consequence of his corruption by sin here, is compelled to pass thither to the sword of punishment; that he may be justly punished in that world, by the very sins in which he delighted in this. We must observe therefore, that God, speaking to us in a dream, delivers us first from corruption, and afterwards from the sword: because in truth He delivers the 'life' of that person from avenging punishment there, whose mind He here withdraws from the allurement of sin. Nor has he any thing to fear there from the sword of judgment, whom the pollution of guilt has not here corrupted after his amendment. It is well said then, Rescuing his soul from corruption, and his life from passing to the sword. For to pass from corruption to the sword, is, after the commission of sin, to arrive at the punishments which have to be endured. It follows,

Ver. 19. He chastens him also with pain upon his bed, and makes all his bones to waste away. [xiv]

46. By bed, or pallet, or couch in holy Scripture, is understood, sometimes carnal pleasure, sometimes a resting in good works, sometimes temporal rest; for what is meant by what our Lord said in the Gospel to a certain one who was healed, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house, [Matt. 9, 6; Mark 2, 11; Luke 5, 24] except that bodily pleasure is signified by bed? And he is specially commanded, when restored to health, to carry that on which he had lain when sick, since every one, who still delights in sin, lies overpowered with fleshly pleasures. But he carries that, when healed, on which he had lain when sick, because when rescued by Divine assistance from his sins, he afterwards endures the insults of that very flesh, in the indulgence of which he used to rest content. But again, by bed, or couch, is designated a resting in good works. Whence the Apostle Peter says, in the Acts of the Apostles, Aeneas, may the Lord Jesus Christ make thee whole; arise, and make thy bed. [Acts 9, 34] For what is meant by rise, but leave off the sins which thou hast committed? and what by make thy bed, but engage in those means of grace, in which thou oughtest to rest? So that by rising he was to forsake what he had done, and by making his bed, find after

what he should have done. And both these points the Prophet briefly sums up, in saying, Turn aside from evil, and do good.

[Ps. 37 27] For to turn aside from evil is to rise from that whereon he lay; but to do good, is to make ready those works that win reward, in which he should rest. But he who turns aside from evil, but does not as yet do what is good, has risen from that whereon he lay, but has not yet made for himself a place wherein he is to rest. And again, bed, or couch, is taken for temporal rest; as it is written, Thou hast turned all his bed in his sickness. [Ps. 41, 3] For when any one, worn out by secular cares, is urged on by Divine grace to forsake the toilsome ways of this world, he is wont to consider how to avoid the attractions of the present life, and to rest from its labours. He presently seeks for himself the station of rest which he desired, and wishes to find a place of cessation from all his labours, as though it were a kind of bed. But because a man while still in this life, in whatever situation, cannot in the secresy of any retirement whatever live without temptations; the pain of temptation is found to press more heavily on that spot, which is contrived for the sake of rest. Whence it is well said by the Prophet, Thou hast turned all his bed in his sickness.

As if he were to say, All that he has here contrived for himself for the sake of rest, Thou hast by secret judgment converted to his disturbance. And this is so ordained by the merciful design of God, in order that, in the season of his sojourning, the life of the Elect may be exposed to confusion.

47. For our present life is the road by which we journey on to our home ['patriam']: and we are harassed here by frequent disturbances, in the secret judgment of God, expressly that we may not love our road instead of our home. For some travellers, if they see by accident some pleasant meadows on their road, are wont to delay, and to turn aside from the straight path on which they have entered. And the beauty of the road delays their steps, while it affords them pleasure. The Lord then makes the way of this world rugged to His Elect, who are journeying towards Him: in order that no one when enjoying the rest of this present life, as if it were some beauteous road, might take greater pleasure in prolonging the journey than in speedily arriving at its end; or forget, when delighted by the way, what he used to long for in his home. But because all the rest, which we have happened to secure for ourselves in this world, is liable to disturbance, it is well said, He chastens him also with pain upon his bed, that is, He disturbs us in the rest of this world, either by the stings of temptation, or by the affliction of the scourge. For if the mind of man has been engaged in virtuous pursuits for ever so short a time, without temptation, it is often, in consequence of those very pursuits, in which it is tranquilly engaged, soon elated by those very virtues, which it is endeavouring to multiply within, from being conscious of the progress it is making. It is therefore exposed to the assaults of temptations, by the merciful dispensation of our Ruler, that thus pride, at the advance it is making, may be checked within it. Wherefore after he had said, He chastens him also with pain on his bed, he fitly subjoined, And makes all his bones to waste away.

48. By bones in holy Scripture we understand virtues; as it is written, The Lord keepeth all his bones; not one of them shall be broken. [Ps. 34, 20] Which is specially understood not of the bones of the body, but of the powers of the mind. For we know assuredly, that the bones of many Martyrs were broken in a bodily sense, and the persecutors of the Lord broke the bones of that thief, [John 19, 32] to whom it was said, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise, [Luke 23, 43] as well as those of the other thief on the cross. When He chastens us then with pain on our bed, He makes all our bones to waste away; because when we are assailed with the scourge of temptation, in that rest which we secure for ourselves from this world, we, who might perhaps have been puffed up by our virtues, are brought low by being sore vexed at the knowledge of our infirmity. For when we are advancing as we wish towards God, if no temptation checked our progress, we should believe that we were persons of some strength. But since the Divine dispensation thus deals with us, in order that we may remember our infirmity when tempted, because we forget it when we are advancing, we learn when we advance what we are by the divine gift; and in our temptation what we are by our own strength.

But this temptation would in truth entirely hurry us away, did not heavenly protection keep us up. But it strikes us without breaking, it presses on us without moving us, it staggers, but does not cast us down: that we may feel that it is all owing to our own weakness that we are shaken, but that it is the gift of God that we stand firm. But because a soul which is conscious of any good quality in itself, frequently revels in a kind of delight, on calling its virtues to mind, and is bloated as it were by congratulating itself on its own fulness, it is well said that the bones waste away under the assault of temptation. Because while our own weakness is ascertained by the questionings of temptation, all that, as it were, bloated and florid self-congratulation on our own strength, is dried up by the sudden pain of anxiety. And we who, on weighing our good deeds, believed them to be of some value, when smitten somewhat more heavily are afraid that we are about to perish immediately. It is then that all satisfaction at our goodness is changed into fear of punishment. We then discover ourselves to be guilty, though, but just before, we believed ourselves to be saints. Our mind wastes away, our eyes become dull, all the prosperity which used to smile on us vanishes away; the light itself is loathsome, and the darkness of sorrow alone spreads itself over the mind.

We see nothing to please us, every thing which comes before us is full of sorrow. Whence it also properly follows,

Ver. 20. His bread becomes abominable to him in his lips, and to his soul the food which before it desired. [xxx] 49. As if he were to say in so many words; A mind under affliction believes that every thing which used easily to satisfy, and give it pleasure, is turned into bitterness. For by bread is understood in holy Scripture sometimes the Lord Himself, sometimes spiritual grace, sometimes the instruction of divine teaching, sometimes the preaching of heretics, sometimes sustenance for this present life, sometimes the agreeable-

ness of worldly pleasure. The Lord is signified by bread, as He Himself says in the Gospel, I am the living Bread, Who came down from heaven. [John 6, 51]

Again, by bread is understood the grace of spiritual gifts, as is said by the Prophet, Who stoppeth his ears, that he should not hear of blood, and shutteth his eyes that he should not see evil, he shall dwell in high places, his high place shall be the munitions of rocks, bread is given to him. [Is. 33, 15. 16. For what is to close his ears, not to hear blood, except to refuse consent to those persuasive sins which spring from flesh and blood? or what to close his eyes, not to behold evil, but to disapprove of every thing which is contrary to uprightness? Such an one will dwell in high places; for though the flesh still confines him to things below, he has already fixed his mind on things above. His high place is the munitions of rocks, because he who tramples beneath his feet his longings for worldly conversation, raises himself to his heavenly country by the patterns of the fathers who have gone before. And because he is satisfied with spiritual grace through the gift of contemplation, it is rightly subjoined, Bread is given him; that is, he enjoys the refreshment of spiritual grace, because he has raised himself above the goods of the world, by hoping for those of heaven. Hence also the Lord says of Holy Church by David, I will satisfy her poor with bread; [Ps. 132, 15] because the humble-minded who dwell therein are filled with the refreshment of spiritual gifts.

Again, by bread is set forth the instruction of heavenly doctrine, as is said by the Prophet, Ye who dwell in the land of the South, meet with bread him that is flying away. [Is. 21, 14] For they dwell in the land of the South who, placed within Holy Church, are breathed upon by the love of the Spirit from on high. But he is flying, who is wishing to escape from the evils of this world. He then who dwells in the land of the South, should meet with bread him that is flying; that is, he who is already full of the Holy Spirit within the Church, should console with words of instruction the man who is endeavouring to escape from his evil ways. To meet with bread him that is flying, is surely to offer the food of sound doctrine to one who is in fear of eternal punishments, and at one while to restrain his pride by fear, and at another to comfort his fears by encouragement. But because by bread is not unfitly understood the refreshment of holy Scripture, it is said by the same Prophet to the Jews who looked only to the letter, Wherefore do ye spend your money, but not in bread. [Is. 55, 2] As though he were saying, Ye consider the holy words, but not for refreshment, because while ye carefully guard the outward letter alone, ye lose that richness of inward refreshment which results from the spiritual meaning.

Whence it is properly subjoined in that passage, And your labour for that which satisfieth not.

But again by bread is designated the preaching of heretics; as by Solomon the woman who typifies the congregation ['ecclesiae'] the heretics, and calls together the foolish, says, Eat ye gladly bread in secret. Or, as is written in our translation, Stolen waters are sweeter, and hidden bread is more pleasant. [Prov. 9, 17] For there are some heresies which are afraid to preach their views openly, and give a greater flavour ['condiunt'] to their words in the minds of the weak the more they keep them back, as if through greater reverence. Whence

it is not improperly said, Eat ye gladly bread in secret. For the secret words of the heretics are more relished by miserable hearts, the more they are not possessed by them in common with other people.

But again, by bread is understood the support of this present life; as Jacob, on his way to Laban, says, O Lord God, if Thou shalt have given me bread to eat, and raiment to put on. [Gen. 28, 20] And as the Lord says in the Gospel to the crowds which were following Him, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. [John 6, 26] For they had been filled of the seven loaves. And in their persons the Lord expresses His detestation of those within Holy Church, who approaching to the Lord by holy ministrations, do not by those ministrations seek to gain higher virtue, but only sustenance for this present life: nor do they think what example they should imitate in their conduct, but what gains they may obtain so as to be satisfied. For to follow the Lord from being filled with the loaves, is to have gained temporal support from Holy Church. And to seek the Lord not for the miracles' sake, but for bread, is for people to be eager for religious offices, not for the sake of increasing their virtues, but of acquiring a means of support.

Again, by bread is understood the agreeableness of human pleasure. Whence the Prophet Jeremiah said, while lamenting the abandoned habits of the congregation; All her people sighs and seeks for bread; they have given all their precious things for food to revive the soul. [Lam. 1, 11] For the people sighs and seeks for bread, whilst the wicked multitude of men is afflicted, because it is not satisfied, to its heart's desire, with the pleasantness of the present life. And it gives all its precious things for food, because it bows down the virtues of its mind to the desire of transitory pleasure. And it endeavours to revive the soul: because it strives to satisfy its own perverse desires. And hence he immediately well adds in the words of that elect multitude, See, O Lord, and consider, that I am become vile. For the People of God becomes vile, when, as the number of the ungodly increases, it engages, in their persons, not in high and heavenly employments, but in worthless and worldly pursuits.

50. What else then does Eliu mean by bread, but the pleasures of this life? For after having stated the power of temptation, he immediately subjoined, His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired: because, in truth, all the sweetness he used before to enjoy from the prosperity of his life, afterwards becomes bitter by the power of temptation. For sometimes whatever joy, and whatever virtue seemed to smile on him, is suddenly lost through fear of temptation, and the sorrowful mind, as if deprived of these very virtues, is possessed by grief alone. For when it is assailed somewhat more violently by the force of temptation, because it cannot put forth the strength of its usual courage, it laments for it as if it were already lost; and feeling itself emptied of itself, it learns its own weakness, from this its emptiness. And thence it is immediately broken off, as it were, from every pleasure, and loathing the dainty morsels of former delight, takes its fill of that grief which alone it eagerly desires. For every one, when success in holy living smiles favourably on him, is full of mirth: and this very mirth refreshes the mind like pleasurable food. But when he is assailed more sharply by imminent temptation, all

joy is through the loathing of grief rejected by his mind, though it used before to rejoice as though fully satisfied with that very joy. Because then a man, when tempted, casts out from the mouth of his heart all pleasurable food, and nothing else gives him pleasure but knowing and lamenting himself, it is well said, Bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired.

51. But, as we said before, we are allowed to be thus tempted under the government of the secret dispensation, in order that we, who by the Divine gift are making progress in virtue, may call to mind what we are by our own natural infirmity: and that all who produce the deeds of virtue, from having received of the gift, may offer the sacrifice of humility from a remembrance of our own weakness. But sometimes, after we have increased in strength, not only are we assailed by sins, but chastised by scourges. But when we are assailed by sins, we are dealt with by a merciful dispensation, to keep us from being elated by those virtues, in which we are making progress. But when we are scourged with the rod, we are warned, by the chastisement of evil, not to be led away with the blandishments of the world. Whilst our sins tempt us, they bring low the virtues, which are gaining strength within us; whilst scourges try us, they root out the pleasures of this world which are rising in our heart. We learn by our sins, which tempt us, what we are of ourselves; by the scourges, which smite us, what we should avoid in this world. We are restrained by the one from inward pride, we are kept back by the other from desiring any thing without us. As long then as we are in this life, we must needs be scourged by the rod, and at times tempted by our sins.

For both in the tortures of the scourge, and in our struggle with our sins, not only does our weakness become known to us, but we learn also what progress we have made in virtue. For no one, when at rest, is conscious of his powers. For if there is no contest, no opportunities arise for making trial of our virtues. He who boasts of his bravery in peace, is but a short-sighted warrior. Since then the quality of our strength is often made known by sufferings of the rod, Eliu appropriately adds, saying,

Ver. 21. His flesh shall waste away, and his bones which were covered shall be laid bare. [xxvi]

52. For when every outward pleasure is worn away by the pressure of the rod, the bones of inward firmness are laid bare. For what is meant in this place by the word flesh, but fleshly pleasure itself? Or what by bones, but the virtues of the soul? The flesh therefore wastes away, and the bones are laid bare, because while carnal pleasure is brought to nought by the reproof of scourges, those sturdy virtues are laid open, which had long been concealed, as it were, beneath the flesh. For no one learns what progress he has made, except in adversity. For in prosperity, the evidences of strength cannot be discerned. Whence it is written elsewhere, The Lord commanded His loving kindness in the day time, and declared it in the night. [Ps. 42, 8] Because, in truth, it is in tranquil rest that each man obtains the grace of the heavenly gift, but it is in trouble and adversity that he gives proof how much he has received. Let our flesh then waste away, that our bones may be laid bare. Let us be smitten with the reproofs of a father, that we may know what progress we are making. For

by the scourge of the Lord the rankness of carnal pleasure is worn down, but the bones of our virtues are laid bare. Our outward beauty is tarnished by this world's sufferings, but that which was concealed within is made manifest.

For when the Apostles had been scourged, they were directed to speak no more in the Name of Jesus. [Acts 5, 40, 41] But they rejoiced with exceeding joy, that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the Name of Jesus: and they confidently replied to their adversaries, We ought to obey God rather than man. [Acts 5, 29] See how the strength of their faith shone forth more vigorously in adversity. See how the soundness of the flesh was cut through, but the bones of their virtues were laid open. It is hence said of them by Wisdom, God proved them, and found them worthy for Himself. [Wisd. 3, 5] For, though tried by the blows of adversity, they are found worthy by the laying bare of their bones. For that the trial of their scourging is here meant, is plainly declared by what follows, As gold in the furnace He tried them, and received them as a victim of a burnt offering. [ib. 6] Because, then, each man's strength is made known only by adversity, it is well said, His flesh shall waste away, and his bones which were covered shall be laid bare. For the flesh wastes away, while every thing which is perishable and weak is worn away by the scourge. The bones are laid bare, while by these means our latent strength is also made manifest.

As we have before said, not merely is the strength of our resolution made known, but also the weakness of our nature laid bare, by the very trials of adversity; and every one shews indeed under trial the progress he has made through God, but also confesses under the very inflictions of the scourges, how weak he is in himself; because not only are the bones laid bare, but the flesh also wastes away. It is appropriately subjoined,

Ver. 22. His soul shall draw near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers. [xxvii]

53. For the soul of every just man when tempted is said to draw near to corruption, when, for fear his virtue should elate him, he is compelled by the rod to feel what he is in his own natural infirmity. He approaches, in truth, to corruption, because he learns that by his own strength he is not far from destruction, in order that he may ascribe not to himself but to the Lord, that he is far from that destruction. But he approaches to the destroyers, because he sees that, through the infirmity of the flesh, he is very near to sins which cause death: and from these he is the farther removed by the Divine goodness, the more he is conscious that by his own deserts he is very near them. By contemplating his own condition, David had drawn near to corruption, when he said, Remember, Lord, that we are dust; as for man his day is grass. [Ps. 103, 14. 15. Paul also had, by contemplating his own infirmity, approached the destroyers, when he said, I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched wan that I am I who shall deliver me from the body of this death? [Rom. 7, 23. 24.

To approach then to corruption, and to the destroyers, is for a man, on considering the infirmity of our human nature, to see that he is a sinner, as far as concerns his deserts, and that he possesses, of his own strength, no ground of boasting ['arrogantiam'] in himself. For

what are we, when bereft of the protection of our Maker? a protection which is considered to be less necessary, if always enjoyed. But it is withdrawn, generally, for our good, that it may be shewn to a man's own self how worthless he is without it. The hand of God, then, which bears us up, even when we know it not, in prosperity, brings us to a true knowledge of ourselves in adversity. And when we begin to fall, from being deprived of it, we are yet supported by its aid. It is a warning to us, that we are trembling to our fall, and His protection, that we remain stedfast.

54. Let no one consider then that he has any real virtues, even if he is able to display any resolution: since, if Divine protection leave him to himself, he is suddenly unnerved and overpowered in that very point in which he used to boast that he was standing firm. For what is meant by the man of God, when directed to prophesy against the altar at Samaria, exerting in the king's presence the authority of bold speaking, by his miraculously withering the extended arm of the rash king, which he afterwards restored to health of his tender pity? by his refusing when invited, to eat in his house, because he kept the commands of the Lord, which forbade him to eat by the way? But yet he was afterwards seduced to eat on the same way, and perished when he had eaten. [1 Kings 13, 1-34] What do we gather from an accurate examination of this matter, what (if I may so speak) do we fear and suspect, except that he was perhaps silently boasting in himself that he had put contempt on the king in obeying the commands of the Lord? Hence it was that he was soon shaken from his inward stedfastness, and that sin stole on him in his work, from the same source as pride sprang up in his heart; in order that he might learn when deceived by the false prophet, that it was not of his own strength that he had withstood the commands of the king.

But he rightly received the sentence of death from the mouth of that very person, by whose seduction he had turned away from the precept of life, in order that he might receive the true announcement of his punishment, from the same quarter by which he had through carelessness admitted a fault. Because then the grace of God more especially guards and instructs each of His Elect, at the very time when He seems to smite and forsake them, let it be rightly said, His soul shall approach to corruption, and his life to the destroyers; that so the more he is led by adversity to consider that he is in his own strength nigh unto death, he may, in all cases in which he has acted with resolution, have surer ground of life, by flying to the protection which comes from trust in God.

Book XXIV

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

VOLUME III - THE FIFTH PART. — BOOK XXIV.

The last eleven verses of the thirty-third chapter and the eighteen first verses of the thirty-fourth chapter are expounded, and striking truths are taught concerning Christ the Mediator, contemplation, the course of conversion, and the pastoral office. [i] 1. It was in speaking of the power of the Divine dispensation, that Eliu observed of the sufferings of each of the Elect, saying, His soul will draw nigh to corruption, and his life to the destroyers. And in speaking of the trials of a single person, he shews in what condition of trial the whole human race is placed; and in mentioning what specially befals individuals, he plainly intimates what takes place generally in all. For he so described the temptation of certain persons, taken in themselves one by one, that the temptation of all men in a body might be also understood thereby. For the whole body of the Elect suffers in this life under the pain of this labour. He therefore immediately introduced a general remedy to cure this general malady, saying,

Ver. 23, 24. If there shall be an Angel, speaking for him one of like things to shew the righteousness of man, he will pity him. [ii]

2. For who is this Angel, but He who is called by the Prophet, The Angel of mighty counsel? [Is. 9, 6. lxx.] For because to declare is called 'evangelize' in Greek, the Lord in announcing Himself to us is called 'Angel.' [as Is. 63, 9] And he well says, If there shall be a messenger [or Angel] speaking for him; [Rom. 8, 26] because, as the Apostle says, He even intercedes for us. But let us hear what he says for us; One of like things. It is the way with medicine to cure disease sometimes by similar, sometimes by contrary, remedies. For it has frequently been wont to cure the hot by warm, and the cold by cold, applications; and on the contrary, the cold by warmth, the hot by cold. Our Physician then, on coming to us from above, and finding us oppressed with such great diseases, applied to our case something of a like, and something of a contrary, nature. For He came to us as Man to men, but as a Just One to those who were in sin. He agreed with us in the truth of His nature, He differed from us in the power of His righteousness. For sinful man could not be amended, except by God. But it was necessary that He who was healing him, should be an object of sight; in order that He

might amend our former sinful lives, by setting a pattern for us to imitate. But it was not possible that God could be seen by man; He therefore became man, that He might be seen. The Holy and Invisible God appeared therefore as a visible man, like ourselves; that while He seemed to be of like nature, He might teach us by His holiness. And while agreeing with our condition in verity of nature, He might put a stop to our sickness by the might of His skill.

3. Because then the Lord, when coming in the flesh, did not bear our guilt for His own fault, nor our punishment as a matter of necessity, (for untainted by spot of sin, He could not be involved in our condition of guilt, and therefore voluntarily underwent our death, when He so willed, every kind of necessity lying beneath His feet ['calcata'],) it is rightly said, that that messenger speaks, in behalf of man when tempted, 'one of like things,' because He was neither born as other men, nor was like them in His dying, or His rising again. For He was conceived, not by the cooperation of natural intercourse, but by the Holy Spirit coming on His Mother. [Luke 1, 35] And when born He proved the fecundity of His Mother's womb, though preserving its virgin purity. But again, we all die when we do not wish it; because we are constrained through the sinfulness of our nature to pay the debt of punishment. But He, from having no admixture of sin, did not submit to any punishment as a matter of necessity. But because He subdued our guilt by triumphing over [al. 'condemning'] it, He underwent our punishment out of pity for us; as He Himself says, I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it again. [John 10, 18] Who had also said before, No one taketh it from Me; but I lay it down of Myself. But again, He was not raised again like other men;

because our resurrection is deferred to the end of the world, while His was celebrated on the third day. And we indeed rise by Him, for He rises by Himself. For He Who was God needed not, as we, to be raised up by any one else. In this then does His resurrection differ from ours, that we do not rise again of ourselves, as He did. For since we are simply men, we need some superior assistance to enable us to rise. But He as God displayed the same power of raising [Oxf. Mss. 'resuscitationis.' edd. 'rising.'] again with the Father and the Holy Spirit, though He alone in His human nature had experience of it. Because then the Lord, though truly born, truly dead, and truly raised again, differs from us, in all these points, in the greatness of His power, but agrees only in the verity of His nature, it is well said that that Messenger speaks for us one of like things. For since He surpasses us in all His doings with His immeasurable power, yet in one point, the verity of His nature, He does not differ from us.

4. He speaks in our behalf to the Father, through that in which He shews Himself to be like us. For His speaking or intercession is His proving Himself to be very Man for man's sake. And well, when he had said, He says one of like things, he immediately added, that he might declare the righteousness of man. Because, if He had not become like unto men, man would not appear just before God. For He announces our righteousness, by the very fact 'that He deigned to take on Himself our infirmity. [Heb. 2, 16, 17] For that fatal persuasion

had polluted us all with the infection of sin from our very origin; [Gen. 3, 3] and there was no one who, in speaking to God in behalf of sinners, could appear free from sin; because an equal guilt had involved all alike who were created from the same lump. Therefore the Only-begotten of the Father came to us, and assumed our nature without committing sin. [Rom. 5, 12] For it was requisite that one who could intercede for sinners should be free from sin, because doubtless He could not wipe away the infection of others' guilt, if He had to bear His own. It is well said then, that in appearing in our likeness He announced righteousness to men. For He proved Himself, in interceding for sinners, to be so righteous a Man as to merit forgiveness for others. It follows,

Ver. 24. He will pity him, and will say, Deliver him from going down to corruption; I have found a way to propitiate for him. [iii]

5. The Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, shews mercy on man, by having assumed the form of a man. Through this compassion He says to His Father on behalf of redeemed man, Deliver him from going down to corruption. For as we before said, His saying, Deliver him, is His shewing forth man's nature free by taking it upon Him. For by that flesh which He assumed, He proved the freedom of this also which He redeemed. This ransomed flesh is, in truth, ourselves, who are fettered by the consciousness [al. 'condition.'] of our guilt. But by the righteousness ['aequitate.'] of so mighty a Redeemer are we set free, as He says Himself, If the Son hath set you free, ye shall be free indeed. [John 8, 36] And in behalf of this ransomed man it is well said, That he go not down to corruption. For it had been said above, His soul shall draw near to corruption. It is declared afterwards, That he go not down to corruption. As if He were to say, Because he is aware, from a sense of his infirmity, that he is not far from corruption, therefore let him not descend to the death of corruption. For he would rightly go down to corruption, if he were to consider that by his own strength he was far removed from it. But because he has approached thereto with humility, he ought to be mercifully delivered therefrom;

that the more he confesses he is weak by nature, he may be the more strengthened against the sins which assail him. For whoever extols himself above his proper condition, is weighed down by the very burden of his pride, and plunges himself the lower, the more he has rushed into the sin of pride, and has separated himself far from Him Who is truly exalted; [Luke 14, 11] and he sinks the more to the bottom, from the very fact, that he considered himself in union with the highest; as is said by the Prophet to the soul which exalts itself, The more beautiful thou art, go down, and sleep with the uncircumcised. [Ez. 32, 19] For every one who neglects to consider the hideousness of his infirmity, but looks through haughtiness of pride to the credit of his virtue, sinks the lower, from his being more beautiful. Since from priding himself on his merits, he falls into the lowest depths of destruction, on account of the very qualities, for which he considered himself worthy of honour. And he descends and sleeps with the uncircumcised, because he perishes in eternal death with other sinners. Because then this man humbly confessed that he was near to corruption, it is well said

of him, Deliver him from going down to corruption; in order that he may the more escape punishment, from his not turning his eyes towards what is wrong.

But because there was no one for whose merits the Lord could have needs been reconciled to us, the Only-begotten of the Father, taking on Himself the form of our infirmity, alone appeared just, in order that He might intercede for sinners.

6. And the Messenger, when speaking in behalf of this ransomed man, well says, I have found a way to propitiate for him. As though the Mediator between God and man were plainly to say, Because there was no one to appear before God as a righteous intercessor in behalf of man, I have made Myself a Man, to gain propitiation for mankind; and in manifesting Myself as a Man, I found a way of justly propitiating for him. And because the Lord, in taking on Him infirmity, when He endured our punishment in His death, reversed our corruption by His rising again, that Messenger fitly subjoins the sufferings of our mortal state, and shews pity on them, saying, Ver. 25. His flesh is consumed by punishments, let him return to the days of his youth. [iv] 7. For when that first man fell from God, we were driven from the joys of Paradise, and were involved in the miseries of this mortal life; [Gen. 3, 23. 24.] and we feel, by the pain of our punishment, what a grievous fault we committed by the persuasion of the serpent. For having fallen into this state, we have found nothing, out of God, except affliction. And because we have followed the flesh, through the sight of the eyes, we are tortured by that very flesh which we preferred to the commands of God. For in it we daily suffer sorrow, in it torture, in it death; that the Lord by a marvellous economy might convert that, by which we committed sin, into a means of punishment; and that the severity of punishment might spring from the same source as that which had given rise to sin; so that man might be disciplined to life by the bitter suffering of that very flesh, by the pride of delighting which he had drawn near to death.

8. Since then the human race was oppressed by the innumerable sufferings of this life in the flesh, but both the guilt and punishment of our sin were blotted out by the coming of our Redeemer, let it be said of redeemed man, His flesh is consumed with punishments; let him return to the days of his youth. As if he were to say, Through the punishment of his mortality, he is cast down, as it were, by the age of his old condition; let him return to the days of his youth; that is, let him be renewed in the integrity of his former life, that he may not remain in the state in which he has fallen, but return on his redemption to that for the enjoyment of which he was created. For Holy Scripture is frequently accustomed to put youth for newness of life. Whence it is said to the Bridegroom on his approach, The young damsels have loved Thee: [Cant. 1, 3] that is, the souls of the Elect, renewed by the grace of Baptism, which do not yield to the practices of the old life, but are adorned by the conversation of the new man. For he in truth was bewailing the age of the old man which was wasting away in the midst of sins, who says, I have become old amongst all mine enemies: [Ps. 6, 7] and some one also on the other hand, advising a person to rejoice in virtue, says, Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth.

[Eccles. 11, 9] As though he were saying, Let each man who is strong rejoice in his renewal; that is, let him place his joy not in the pleasures of his old life, but in the virtue of his new conversation. But since we are brought back to this strength of new life, not by our own powers, but by the mediation of the Redeemer, let the Messenger say, in interceding for this man under the rod, Let him return to the days of his youth. And because, as our Redeemer intercedes to the Father in our behalf, we ourselves shake off the torpor of our former life, and are inflamed with a thirst for prayer, it is well added of ransomed man,

Ver. 26. He shall pray unto God, and He will he favourable unto him. [v] 9. He says that the Messenger implores first, and man afterwards; for did not the Lord first intercede with the Father through His Incarnation, and pray for our life, our insensibility would never rouse itself to ask for those things which are eternal. But the entreaty of His Incarnation came first, that our awakening from sloth might afterwards follow. But because the light of truth bursts forth with secret joy in our hearts, after temptations, and frequently after great griefs, it is rightly added of this man thus tempted, and imploring God, And he shall see his face in exultation. [vi]

10. It was stated above, how God bears us down ['afficit'] by manifesting Himself to us. But it is now stated how He cheers us, while He thus makes Himself known. For a man hath compunction in one sort, when on looking within he is frightened with dread of his own wickedness, and in another when on looking at heavenly joys he is strengthened with a kind of hope and security. The one emotion excites tears of pain and sorrow, the other tears of joy. For it is called exultation ['jubilum'], when joy unspeakable is conceived in the mind, a joy which can neither be concealed, nor yet expressed in words. It betrays itself however by certain motions, though not expressed in any suitable words. And hence David the Prophet, on seeing that the souls of the Elect conceive a joy too great for them to bring out in words, declares, Blessed is the people that knoweth exultation. [Ps. 89, 15] For he says not 'that speaketh,' but 'that knoweth,' because exultation can be known in the understanding, though it cannot be expressed in words. For that which is too high for feeling, is felt therein. But since the mind of him who feels it is scarce sufficient for its contemplation, how can the tongue of the speaker suffice to tell of it? Because, then, when the light of truth pierces our hearts, it makes us at one time full of sorrow, from its display of strict justice, and delights us at another by disclosing inward joys: after the bitternesses of temptations, after the sorrows of tribulations, it is fitly subjoined, He shall see his face in exultation.

11. For the fire of tribulation is first darted into our mind, from a consideration of our own blindness, in order that all rust of sins may be burnt away. And when the eyes of our heart are purged from sin, that joy of our heavenly home is disclosed to them, that we may first wash away by sorrow that we have done, and afterwards gain in our transports a clearer view of what we are seeking after. For the intervening mist of sin is first wiped away from the eye of the mind, by burning sorrow; and it is then enlightened by the bright coruscations of the boundless light swiftly flashing upon it. At which sight, seen after its measure, it is

absorbed in a kind of rapturous security; and carried beyond itself, as though the present life had ceased to be, it is refreshed in a manner by a kind of new being. The mind is then besprinkled with the infusion of heavenly dews from an inexhaustible fountain. It there discerns that it is not sufficient for that enjoyment, to which it has been hurried, and from feeling the truth, it sees that it does not discern how great that truth is. And it counts itself to be further removed from this truth, the nearer it approaches to it, because unless it beheld it in a certain degree, it would never feel that it was unable really to behold it.

12. The effort therefore of the mind is driven back, when directed towards it, by the bright encircling of its boundless nature. For filling all things with itself, it encircles all things; and our mind does not expand itself to comprehend that boundless object which encircles it, because the imperfection of its own circumscribed state keeps it within narrow bounds. It accordingly falls back at once to itself, and having seen as it were some traces of truth before it, is recalled to a sense of its own lowliness. But yet this unsubstantial and hasty vision, which results from contemplation, or rather, so to speak, this semblance of a vision, is called the face of God. For we, who recognise a person by his face, not unnaturally call the knowledge of God, His face. Whence Jacob says, after he had struggled with the Angel, I have seen the Lord face to face. [Gen. 32, 30] As though he were to say, I know the Lord, because He Himself has deigned to know me. But Paul declares that this knowledge will take place most completely in the end, when he says, Then shall I know, even as I am known. [1 Cor. 13, 12] Because then, after the contests of labours, after the waves of temptations, the soul is often caught up in rapture, in order that it may contemplate a knowledge of the Divine Presence, (a Presence which it can feel, but which it can never fully enjoy,) it is well said of this man who is tempted, after his many labours, He will see His face in exultation. But because the more a man contemplates heavenly things, the more does he amend his earthly doings, after the grace of contemplation he fitly adds the righteousness of his doings.

And He will render to man his righteousness. [vii] 13. It is called our righteousness, not as being of ourselves, but as made ours by the Divine bounty: as we say in the Lord's prayer, Give us this day our daily bread. [Matt. 6, 11] See we both call it ours, and yet pray for it to be given us. For it becomes ours, when we receive it: but yet it is God's, because it is given by Him. [Luke 11, 3] And it is therefore God's, as of His gift, and it becomes truly ours, by virtue of our accepting it. It is in this way then that God in this place renders to man his righteousness: not that which he had of himself, but that which he received, having been so created as to have it; and in which, having fallen, he would not continue. God therefore will render to man that righteousness unto which he was created, that he may take delight in clinging to God, that he may dread His threatening sentence, that he may no longer trust the alluring promises of the crafty serpent.

14. For our ancient enemy ceases not daily to do the very same thing which he did in Paradise. For he endeavours to pluck out the words of God from the hearts of men, and to plant therein the false blandishments of his own promising. He day by day softens down the

threatenings of God, and invites to the belief of his false promises. For he falsely promises temporal blessings, to soften down in men's minds those eternal punishments which God threatens. For when he promises the glory of this life, what else does he do but say, Taste, and ye shall be as gods? [Gen. 3, 5] As if he said plainly, Lay hold on worldly desires, and appear lofty in this world. And when he endeavours to remove the fear of the Divine sentence, what else does he say but the very words he used to our first parents, Why hath God commanded you that ye should not eat of every tree of paradise? [Gen. 3, 1] But because man has, by the Divine gift, recovered on his redemption that righteousness, which he lost long since after his creation, he exerts himself more vigorously against the allurements of crafty persuasion, because he has learnt by experience how obedient he ought to be; to the Divine command. And him whom sin then led to punishment, his own punishment now restrains from sin: in order that he may be the more fearful of offending, the more, through the fear of punishment, he blames the evil he has done. Whence it follows,

Ver. 27. He will look on men, and will say, I have sinned. [viii]

15. He would not know himself to be a sinner, if he had not righteousness. For no one detects his own deformity, except when he has begun to be upright. For he who is altogether deformed, cannot perceive what he really is. But he who is conscious that he is a sinner, has begun in some measure to be righteous; and from being righteous, blames his conduct when yet unrighteous. And by this accusation of himself he begins to cleave to God; when, passing a righteous sentence against himself, he condemns that in himself, which he perceives to be displeasing to Him. This man then, having regained his righteousness, exclaims, I have sinned. And the expression which precedes deserves notice, He will look on men; and it is then subjoined, and will say, I have sinned. For some persons know not that they have sinned, because they do not observe men. For were they to observe men, they would more readily acknowledge how much they had fallen beneath men by sin. And though Holy Scripture is sometimes accustomed to put 'men' for those who savour the things of men, as the Apostle says, For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, immediately subjoining, Are ye not men? [l Cor. 3, 3] Yet sometimes it calls those 'men,' whom reason distinguishes from the beasts, that is, whom it shews to be unaffected by the bestial influence of passions. To whom the Lord says by the Prophet, Ye, the flock of My pasture, are men.

[Ez. 34, 31] For the Lord in truth feeds them, whom carnal pleasure does not affect as it does the beasts. But, on the other hand, they who yield to the desires of the flesh, are no longer called men, but beasts. As is said by the Prophet of some who were dying in their sins, The beasts rolled in their dung [E.V. The seed is rotten under their clods. [Joel 1, 17] For for beasts to rot in their dung, is for carnal men to finish their life in the filth of lust. For they are said to be no longer men, but beasts, of whom it is said by the Prophet, Every one was neighing after his neighbour's wife; [Jer. 5, 8] and of whom another Prophet says, Their flesh is as the flesh of asses, and their issue the issue of horses. [Ez. 23, 20] And hence it is said by David, Man, when he was in honour, did not understand, he has been compared

to senseless beasts, and made like to them. [Ps. 49, 20] Since then those are called men, who are supported by reason and justice, and those are termed irrational animals, who are slaves to carnal pleasure, it is well said of this penitent, He will look on men, and will say, I have sinned. As though it were said, He beholds the examples of holy men, and considering himself in comparison with them, he discovers that he is sinful.

For if a person is desirous of most completely learning his real character, he ought no doubt to look at those who are different from himself: that from the comeliness of the good he may measure the extent of his own deformity, by that of the goodness he has left. For by those who possess every good quality in abundance, he rightly considers of what he is in want. And he beholds in their beauty his own deformity, which he is able to endure within himself, but not to perceive. For a man who wishes to judge of darkness ought to look at the light, in order to see by it what to think of that darkness, by which he is prevented from seeing. For if a sinner looks at himself, without having learnt the character of the righteous, he in no way comprehends himself to be a sinner. For he cannot really see himself; for not knowing the brightness of the light, what else, on looking at himself, does he behold but darkness? We ought then to look at the conduct of the righteous, in order to gain an accurate knowledge of our own. For what they seem to be, is proposed as a kind of model for our imitation.

16. The life of good men is a living study; whence the same righteous men are not undeservedly termed books in the language of Scripture; as it is written, The Books were opened, and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Books. [Rev. 20, 12] For the Book of Life is the very sight of the approaching Judge. In this are written as it were, all His commands, for whoever beholds it, soon understands by the testimony of conscience what he has omitted to do. The Books also are said to be opened, because the conduct of just men, in whom the commands of heaven are seen impressed in act, is then made manifest. And the dead were judged out of those things which are written in the Books; because in the conduct of the righteous, which is set forth, they read as in an open book the good which they refused to do themselves, and are condemned on comparison with those who did it. In order therefore that each one then beholding them may not lament his own omissions, let him now observe in them what he should imitate. And this the Elect do not cease to do. For they study the conduct of their betters, and leave off their more depraved course of conduct.

17. And hence in the Song of Songs it is said to Holy Church by the voice of the bridegroom, Thy two breasts are like two twin kids of the she goat, which feed among the lilies, until the day breathe, and the shadows incline. [Cant. 4, 5. 6. For what are the two breasts, except the two peoples coming from Jewry and from among the Gentiles, who are implanted in the body of Holy Church, by the purpose of wisdom, upon the secret of the heart. And they who are elected from these people, are compared to the young of the she-goat, because they are conscious through their humility that they are weak and sinful; but if any obstacles meet them in the way of worldly impediment, as they are hastening on by the power of love, they bound over them, and with the leaps of contemplation climb to the knowledge of heavenly

things. And in order to do this, they study the examples of the Saints who have gone before. Whence they are said to feed amongst the lilies. For what is meant by lilies, but the conduct of those who say with all truth, We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ? [2 Cor. 2, 15] The Elect, therefore, in order to gain strength to attain the highest eminence, feed themselves to the full by beholding the sweet-scented and pure life of the just.

They even now thirst to know the Lord, they burn with the fires of love, to be satiated with the contemplation of Him. But because they are unable to do so while still in this life, they feed meanwhile on the examples of the fathers who preceded them. And hence the time of their feeding on the lilies is appropriately defined by the words, Until the day breathe, and the shadows incline. For as long as we are passing along the shades of this mortal state, till the dawn of the eternal day, we need to be refreshed with the examples of the righteous. But when the shade of this temporal corruption has inclined, when this mortal state has passed away, because we behold the light of the day itself within us, we do not seek to be kindled with the love of it by the examples of others. But now, since we cannot as yet behold it, it is specially necessary for us to be roused by looking at the conduct of those who have followed it perfectly. Let us see then how beauteous is the activity of those who pursue their course, and learn how disgraceful is the sloth of the sluggish. For as soon as we behold the conduct of the virtuous, do we condemn ourselves with the punishment of confusion within. Shame presently assails the mind; soon does guilt condemn us with just severity: and we are sore displeased even with that, in which perchance we still disgracefully feel pleasure.

18. Whence it is well said by Ezekiel, Son of man, shew the temple to the house of Israel, that they may be confounded by their iniquities, and measure the fabric, and blush for all that they have done. [Ez. 43, 10, 11] For the temple of God. is shewn to the children of Israel to their confusion; when it is shewn to sinners to their confusion, with what great sanctity the soul of each righteous person shines forth, which God inhabits by His inspiration; in order that they may see therein the good which they slight, and blush in themselves at the evil which they commit. But to measure the fabric, is accurately to weigh the conduct of the righteous. But while we measure the fabric, we must needs blush at all that we have done: because the more accurately we consider and enquire into the conduct of the good, the more severely do we reprove in ourselves all our iniquity. But the Prophet is rightly told, to shew the temple. For since a sinner makes shifts not to consider the righteousness of the just, he should learn it at all events by the voice of the preacher. But to shew the temple to sinners, is to relate the deeds of the virtuous to those who refuse to consider them of their own accord. They then, as we said, who desire to attain to the highest eminence, must necessarily always attend to the progress of their superiors, in order that they may condemn their own fault with greater severity, as they behold in them a higher object of admiration.

19. But why do we say this of sinners, when we see the workers of righteousness themselves also carried forward with so high a dispensation? For one receives the gift of wisdom, and yet reaches not the grace of extraordinary abstinence. Another is endowed with great power

of abstinence, but yet is not enlarged in the loftiest contemplation of wisdom. Another is able to foresee all future events by the spirit of prophecy: but yet cannot alleviate the evils of present annoyance, by the gift of healing. Another by the gift of healing alleviates the evils which immediately annoy us, but yet, from not possessing the spirit of prophecy, is ignorant of the future. Another is able to give liberally to the indigent much of what is his own, but yet cannot boldly confront the evil doers. Another boldly confronts evil doers, in God's behalf, but yet refuses to give all his goods to the needy. Another by already constraining himself even from idle talk, subdues the wantonness of the tongue, but yet does not trample down the emotions of anger which still rise within him. Another now perfectly controls his rising passion, but still allows his tongue full range in pleasantry. What is it then, that this man needs that good quality, in which another is strong, and that another, though powerful in many ways, yet sighs for the lack of those excellencies, which he observes others abundantly enjoying?

Except it be that we are so dealt with by a marvellous dispensation, that by means of this which another enjoys, and this man has not, the one may be shewn to be superior to the other: so that the more a man considers, from the virtues which he has not, that he is inferior to those that possess them, he may the more eagerly advance towards humility. And thus it comes to pass, that while they behold in each other something to admire, their separate virtues both keep them from loftiness of pride, and kindle in them a desire after greater progress. For we prepare ourselves with great anxiety to undertake our own improvement, when we observe in others that virtue which we have not ourselves. Whence the prophet Ezekiel, when he had described the flying animals, subjoined, And I heard behind me a voice of a great commotion, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord, from His holy place, and the sound of the wings of the living creatures, striking one against the other. [Ez. 3, 12, 13] For what must we understand by the wings of living: creatures, but the virtues of the Saints? For when they despise the things of earth, they rise on their wings to heaven. Whence it is rightly said by Isaiah, They who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall lake wings as eagles.

[Is. 40, 31] The flying creatures then strike one another with their wings, because the minds of the Saints, in their desires after heavenly things, are urged on by the mutual consideration of each other's virtues. For a man strikes me with his wing, who kindles me with desire of better things by the example of his own holiness. And I strike with my wing the next living creature, if ever I present to another person a good deed for him to imitate.

20. But since we have said that the conduct of holy men is signified by these living creatures, let us raise our eyes to the light, and consider attentively with what mutual beating of their wings they excite each other. For Paul, when he surpassed the carefulness of other holy men, by labouring more vigorously in preaching, that he might keep himself from pride, and nourish his strength in the bosom of humility, declares in remembrance of his former cruelty, and on contemplating the innocence of all the Apostles, For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of

God. [l Cor. 15, 9] And yet the chief ['primus,' 'principatus.'] of these same Apostles, as though in forgetfulness of the preeminence conferred on him, as if he were endowed with less wisdom, admires the wisdom which was in Paul, saying, As our most beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood. [2 Pet. 3, 15. 16. Lo, Paul admires innocence in the Apostles; lo, the chief of the Apostles admires wisdom in Paul.

What then is this, except that holy men who mutually prefer others to themselves, from a consideration of their virtues, as flying animals touch each other with the stroke of their wings, in order that they may excite each other to higher flights, the more humbly they observe something in each other to admire? We must therefore infer from hence how anxiously we, who are lying in the lowest depth, should study the lives of those who are our superiors; if even they, who have already arrived at 'such a height of sanctity, are ever looking out for something to admire and imitate in others, in order that by walking in humility they may advance to greater things.

21. But of these things the reprobate are ignorant: for they ever fix their eyes on the lowest objects. And if ever they come into the way of the Lord, they proceed not to trace the footsteps of those who are better, but always to look at the examples of those who are worse than themselves. Nor do they look at the conduct of those to whom they may humbly consider themselves inferior, but of those to whom they may proudly prefer themselves. For they look at those who are worse than themselves, to whom they boast that they are preferable, and therefore they cannot advance to better things, because they consider it sufficient for them that they surpass the very worst. Wretched men! they go on in their way, and yet look backward. In their hope indeed they do as it were put a foot before; but in looking to evil examples they turn their eyes behind them. They are anxious to appear upright, but take a crooked standard by which to find that they are such. For if they wish to know themselves as they really are, they should look at the examples, not of those who are worse, but of such as are better, than themselves. And therefore they are not conscious that they are sinners, because they do not look at 'men.' For were they to look at men, they would discover how far removed they were from good men, by their sins. Of this penitent then, who considers the examples of good men, in order to make it clear to himself how grievously he has departed from goodness, it is well said,

Ver. 27. He will look on men, and will say, I have sinned, and have truly done wrong, and I have not received as I deserved. [ix] 22. Those even who do not believe that they have sinned, generally confess themselves sinners. For it is frequently the case, that men openly confess themselves sinners, but on hearing a true account of their sins, when other persons attack them, they boldly defend themselves, and endeavour to appear innocent. Every one, then, of this character, if he says that he has sinned, speaks untruly; inasmuch as he proclaims himself a sinner not from the inmost heart, but in words only. For since it is written, The just man in the beginning accuseth himself [E.V. He that is first in his own cause seemeth

just.], [Prov. 18, 17] he wished to gain credit, not to be humbled, by confessing his sin: he desired, by accusing himself, to appear humble, without being so. For did he really wish to be humble, by confessing his sin, he would not attack others when convicting him of the commission of it. The righteous then, in passing sentence on his own conduct, knows from the bottom of his heart, by the examples of holier men, that he really is what he professes to be. For he says, I have sinned, and have truly done wrong. And adds further of the very pain which he is enduring, and have not received as I deserved.

23. For every one when under the rod, thinks still less of his sins, if he considers that he has been smitten either as, or more than, he deserved. But this man, because the more he considers the examples of greater men, the more strictly does he weigh and test himself, acknowledges that he was smitten less than he deserved. Because he sees, from their righteousness, how heinous is the guilt of his own erring, and does not feel his suffering to be severe, from having learned to pass a severe sentence on his own conduct. But it is very easy for a man, when suffering nothing on account of his sins, to confess himself a sinner. We fearlessly call ourselves unrighteous, when we feel no vengeance for our unrighteousness. For in a time of tranquillity we call ourselves sinners, but when chastened for these very sins, by the blow which falls on us, we murmur. Punishment then puts us to the test, whether we truly acknowledge our fault. Let a righteous man then, from regarding his fault severely, say, even under the rod, I have not received as I deserved. It follows,

Ver. 28. For he hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction. [x] 24. Because when Divine Grace goes before us in good works, our free will follows it, we, who yield our consent to God Who delivers us, are said to deliver ourselves; and hence Paul when saying, I laboured more abundantly than they all, [1 Cor. 15, 1] for fear he should seem to ascribe his labours to himself, immediately added, Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. For since he had followed with his free will the preventing grace of God in him, he properly adds, with me, that he might neither be unthankful for the Divine gift, nor yet remain a stranger to the merit of free-will. But of him, who by gaining a knowledge of himself consented to Him Who set him free, he rightly says [al. 'it is rightly said.'], He hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction. It follows,

But that it should live, and see the light. That is to say, the light of truth, which he could not see when dead in heart. Or certainly, because the Lord has said, I am the Light of the world, [John 8, 12] even the dead also shall behold the light, when all the ungodly shall have seen Him coming to judgment in the form of Manhood. But he lives, or beholds the light at that time, who has the eyes of his heart set free, and beholds Him in the form of the Godhead. It follows, Ver. 29. All these things God worketh three times with every man. [xi]

25. Of this man tempted and beaten by the scourge it had been said before, His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and his soul hath drawn nigh to corruption, and his life to the destroyers. [ver. 22] But it was subsequently added, He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him, and he will see His face with joy; and he hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live, and behold the light. [ver.

26] In these expressions, then, now collected and accumulated together, the bitterness of sorrow precedes, the joy of security comes after. And it is presently added, All these things God worketh three times with every man. As if he were to say, What I have said once of one person only, takes place three times in every person. But we must carefully consider what are these three times, wherein each man is affected with anxiety and sorrow, and is immediately after sorrow called back to the security of joy. For, as I before said, he had stated above, that grievous sorrow first depresses ['afficit'] us, and that great delight raises us up afterwards. If we watch then attentively, we find that these three stages of sorrow and joy succeed each other, in the mind of each of the Elect, in these following ways, that is to say, in his conversion, his temptation, and his death.

26. For in that first occasion of conversion, which we have mentioned, great is the sorrow of a man, when, from considering his own sins, he wishes to burst the fetters of worldly cares, and to walk in the way of God along the course of a secure conversation, to cast aside the heavy burden of temporal anxieties, and to bear the light yoke of the Lord, in a bondage akin to freedom. For as he thinks on these things, there occurs to his mind that old familiar carnal pleasure, which, from having become inveterate, binds him the closer, the longer it has held him; and is the more loath to permit him to escape. And then what pain is there, and what anxiety of heart, when the Spirit calls him on one side, the flesh calls him back on the other, his love for his new life invites him on the one hand, his old depraved habits assail him on the other: on the one side he glows with longings for his heavenly country, and on the other has to bear in himself that desire of the flesh, which pleases him to a certain degree, even against his will? Of a man thus embittered it is rightly said, His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and his soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.

But because Divine Grace does not suffer us to be long exposed to these difficulties, it bursts the chains of our sins, and leads us quickly by its consolation to the liberty of our new life; and the joy which succeeds makes up for the former sorrow. And thus the mind of every one when converted rejoices the more on attaining its wishes, the more it remembers the pain it has endured in its endeavours after them. Unbounded is the joy of the heart: because in its hope of security it now draws near to Him, Whom it desires; so that it can rightly be said of it, He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him, and he shall see His face with joy. Or without question, He hath delivered his soul from going onwards to destruction, but that it should live, and see the light.

27. But for fear a man should believe himself holy immediately on his conversion, and security should overthrow him, whom the contest with pain could not overpower, he is permitted, in the dispensation of God, after his conversion, to be wearied with the assaults of temptations. The Red sea was already crossed by his conversion, but enemies still oppose him to the face while in the wilderness of this present life. We leave already our past sins behind us, as the Egyptians dead on the shore. But destructive vices still assail us, as fresh enemies to obstruct the way on which we have entered to the land of promise. Our former

offences, as enemies who were pursuing us, have been already laid low by the power of God alone. But the assaults of temptations meet us to our face like fresh enemies, to be overcome with our own endeavours also. Conversion in truth produces security: but security is commonly the parent of negligence. To keep security from generating carelessness, it is written, My son, in coming to the service of God, stand in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation. [Ecclus. 2, 1] For he says, not for rest, but for temptation, because our enemy is the more eager to conquer us as long as we are in this life, the more he discerns that we are rebelling against him. He cares not to buffet those, of whom he perceives that he can hold quiet possession.

But he is excited the more vehemently against us, inasmuch as he is expelled from our hearts, as if from the rightful possession of his own habitation. It was this, which the Lord, in a kind of economy, typified in His own person. For he did not permit the devil to tempt Him till after His Baptism: suggesting to us thereby as a kind of sign of our own future conversion, [Matt. 4, 1] that His members would have to endure more severely the wiles of temptation, after they were beginning to advance Godwards. After the first occasion then of sorrow and joy, which every one feels in his endeavour after conversion, does this second time succeed. Because a man is assaulted with the attack of temptations, in order that he may not become relaxed by the carelessness of security. And he is generally welcomed with great sweetness of consolation, at the beginning of his conversion, but he experiences afterwards the severe labour of probation.

28. There are in truth three states of the converted; the beginning, the middle, and the perfection. But in this commencement they experience the charms of sweetness, in the mid-time the contests of temptations, but in the close the plenitude of perfection. Sweets then are first their portion, to comfort, afterwards bitternesses to exercise, and at last transcendent delights to confirm them. For every man too first soothes his bride with sweet blandishments, though he tries her when now united to him, with sharp reproofs, and possesses her, when she is proved, with thoughts of security. And hence also the people of Israel, on being summoned out of Egypt, when God betrothed Himself to the sacred marriage of the soul, was vouchsafed at first, in the place of pledges, the allurement of miracles; but, after marriage, is exercised with trials in the wilderness, and after trial, is confirmed in the land of promise with the plenitude of virtue. It first then tasted in the miracles that which it was to seek for; afterwards it was tried by hard trial, to prove whether it could keep safely what it had tasted; and at the last it also deserved to obtain a fuller enjoyment of that, which it had kept safe when put to the test of suffering. A gentle commencement therefore thus soothes the life of every convert, a rugged course proves it in the way, and afterwards full perfection gives it strength.

29. For converts are frequently granted either the most perfect tranquillity in the flesh, or the gifts of prophecy, or the preaching of doctrine, or signs and wonders, or the grace of healing, immediately on their first commencement. But after this they are harassed by the severe trials of temptations, from which, when they first began, they believed themselves

entirely free. And it is thus ordained in the dispensation of Divine Grace, to keep them from being assailed with sharp temptations at their first beginning. For, if bitter temptations were to befal them at the first, they would fall back with ease on the sins they bad abandoned, as having removed but a little distance from them. For they would be again involved from their very nearness, in the sins they first despised. Whence it is also written, When Pharaoh had let the people go, the Lord led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, which is near, thinking lest perhaps they would repent, if they had seen war rising up against them, and might return to Egypt. [Ex. 13, 17] War [read 'bella'] then is removed out of the way of those who were coming out of Egypt: because, to those who leave the world, there is presented at first a kind of tranquillity, lest from being alarmed in the tenderness of their first beginning, they should return, through fear, to that world from which they have escaped. They feel, then, first the sweetness of security, they are first nurtured in quietness and peace.

But having tasted this sweetness, they endure more patiently the contests with temptations, as they have found in God a higher object of affection. Whence also Peter is first led up into the mountain, first beholds the brightness of the Lord's transfiguration, [Mat.17, 1] and then is afterwards suffered to be tempted by a maid who questioned him; [Mat.26, 69] in order that, having become conscious of his state by his weakness under trial, he might recur with sorrow and love to the sight which he had beheld; and that, when the wave of fear was sweeping him onwards to the ocean of guilt, there might be an anchor of former sweetness, to keep him back. But the struggles with temptations frequently last as long, as the allurements on the first commencement. But frequently there is greater pleasure given at first, and less trial in the season of labour: and frequently again less pleasure at first, and greater trial in the time of labour. But a disproportionate perfection of strength never succeeds the labour of temptation: because every one is rewarded with the plenitude of perfection, according to the result of the contest. But a convert commonly fails, from believing that he has received the confirmation of perfection, when he is welcomed with certain gifts of grace, in the sweetness of his first beginning: and, from not knowing that they are only the comforts given to beginners, he regards them as the consummation of fulness.

Whence it happens, that if assailed by any sudden storm of temptation, he suspects that he is overlooked by God, and lost for ever. But if he were not to place such full reliance on his first commencement, he would, when still prosperous, be preparing his mind for adversity, and would afterwards resist the assaults of sin with the more firmness, as having also foreseen them with greater sagacity. For, by foreseeing these evils, he bears them with greater calmness. But though he foresees, he does not at all decline the contest with them, for the course of our journey is not brought to a close without going through the dust of temptation.

30. But every convert is generally assailed with such temptations, as he never remembers to have been attacked with, before the grace of conversion: not because this same root of

temptation did not then exist, but because it did not shew itself. For the mind of man, when engaged with numberless thoughts, frequently remains in a manner unknown to itself, so as to be quite ignorant of what it is suffering: for while it is distracted with many matters, it is diverted from the inward knowledge of itself. But if it desires to have leisure for thinking upon God, and lops off the branches of distracting thought, it then beholds without obstruction, that which springs forth from the inmost depths of the flesh. For if a thistle is growing in the road, it is crushed by the feet of those who journey along it, and its surface is worn away by the constant passing of travellers, so as not to appear. But though the thorns do not shew themselves above and bear fruit, yet the root still remains concealed beneath. But if the feel of travellers have ceased to bruise and tread it down, whatever living power remained buried in the root soon rises to the surface, and shews itself. It advances in its growth, and comes into view by the thorns that it bears. So also in the heart of the worldly minded, some secret root of temptations seems to grow up with difficulty;

for placed as it were in the pathway of daily life, it is crushed by the feet of thoughts which pass over it, and is so trodden down by countless cares, as if by many travellers, as not to be seen. But if the crowd of anxieties is removed by the grace of conversion from the pathway of the heart, so that no importunity of business wears, nor any tumultuous thoughts oppress it, then that which was before concealed is discerned, then the thorn of temptation, springing from the root of sin, freely inflicts its wound. But the hand of the righteous so acts against it, that, as far as may be, it is not covered and concealed, but torn up by the very roots. But till this is done, this thorn so troubles the mind of every convert, that he frequently feels as if nearly overwhelmed by sudden temptation, and fears that its wound has been inflicted with fatal effect to the very quick.

31. But these assaults of temptation are frequently prolonged when they become common, and become, not sharper, but of longer duration. And then they cause less pain, but do more hurt: for the longer they keep hold of the mind, the less terrible do they become, the more usual they are. The mind therefore, when involved in these trials, is distracted here and there, and is confused by the manifold assaults of temptations, and frequently, when summoned from one point to another, it knows not which assailing sin to oppose, or which first to assault itself. It is hence frequently the case that, while rebellious sins severely torture, while they drive to the very brink of desperation the mind of the person who withstands them, a convert is afraid of this very heavenward path, which he chooses as a remedy, and that he stumbles, as it were, when brought to the summit, who used to stand more firmly at the bottom. But he is so hard pressed by the movements of temptations, which rage around him, that it may be rightly said of him, His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired; [ver. 22] or without question, His soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.

But because God in His mercy suffers us to be proved by our temptations ['probari reprobari'], not to be cast away, (as it is written, But God is faithful, who does not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to es-

cape, that ye may be able to bear it, [1 Cor. 10, 13]) He speedily succours us with the aid of consolation, assuages the rising pangs of temptations, and calms with inward peace the emotions of the thoughts which rise up against Him. And then the mind soon derives great delight from its hope of heaven, on beholding the evil, which she had endured, overpowered. So that of this man tempted and delivered it may be justly said, He shall see His face with joy; and, He hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live and behold the light. When these two stages then, that is of conversion and probation, have been passed in sorrow and in joy, there yet remains the third, whose sorrow he has still to fear, and whose pleasures he has to obtain.

32. For after the struggle of conversion, after the pain of probation, there still remains a hard temptation; because he cannot arrive at the joys of perfect liberty, without the debt of human nature is first paid. But every convert, being careful and anxious for himself, ceases not to consider secretly with himself, with what strictness the eternal Judge is coming, and he daily looks forward to his own end, and before the approach of such severity of justice, considers what account he will have to render for his conduct. For though he has avoided all evil deeds, which he could tell to be such, yet as having to come before a strict Judge, he is the more afraid of those faults, of which he is not conscious in himself. For who can understand how many evils we commit every instant, by the irregular motions of our thoughts? For it is easy enough to avoid deeds of wickedness, but very difficult to cleanse the heart from unlawful thoughts. And yet it is written, Woe to you who think on that which is unprofitable. [Mic. 2, 1] And again, In the day when the Lord shall Judge the secrets of men, [Rom. 2, 16] after having said before, Their thoughts mutually accusing or excusing one another. [ib. 15] And again, Crafty lips in heart, and in heart they have spoken evil. [Ps. 12, 2] And again, For in your heart ye work iniquity on the earth.

[Ps. 58, 2] But when the soul has once forsaken the stability of eternity, and has sunk down to the instability of temporal things, it is obliged against its will to endure, in endeavouring to rise, that fluctuation of alternating emotions, which it sought of its own accord when willing to fall. And thus it is punished by its former pleasures, because it endures, as converted, the labour of the contest, in the very same things in which it sought while perverted the delight of pleasure. And frequently that very sin, which they skilfully detect in themselves, and of whose grievous guilt they are conscious in the sight of God, steals into the thoughts of the Elect against their will. And though they are ever afraid of a strict judgment for all these things, they then especially dread it, when on coming to pay the debt of nature, they see that they are drawing near the severe Judge. And their fear is the more acute, the nearer their eternal retribution approaches. But no empty imagination from the fancy of the thought flits at that time before the eyes of the heart: because when every thing else has been removed, they think of themselves only, and of Him, Whom they are approaching. Their fear increases, as the retribution of righteousness approaches nearer. And as the dissolution of the flesh is hastening on, the more the strict judgment comes, as it were, within their reach, the more mightily is it dreaded by them.

And though they never remember to have passed over the things they know, they are yet afraid of those sins of which they are ignorant. Because, namely, they are unable fully to understand, and pass sentence on themselves, and, as their end draws nigh, they are harassed by more subtle fear. Whence our Redeemer, approaching His dissolution, and maintaining a resemblance to His members, fell into an agony, and began to pray at greater length. For what could He be asking for Himself when in agony, Who used, when on earth, to confer heavenly gifts with power? But on the approach of death, He represented in His own person the struggle which exists in our minds; who suffer a violent fear and dread, on approaching, through the dissolution of the flesh, to the eternal judgment. Nor is a man's mind at that time unseasonably alarmed, when it finds, after this brief state of being, that it must remain unchanged for ever.

33. For we consider, that we have by no means been able to pass through the course of this present life without guilt. We consider also, that even what we have done creditably, is not exempt from a degree of guilt, if we are judged without mercy. For who of us can surpass or even equal the doings ['pietate'] of the fathers who have gone before us? And yet David says, Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. [Ps. 143, 2] Paul when saying, I am conscious of nothing to myself, cautiously added, Yet am I not hereby justified. [1 Cor. 4, 4] James says, For in many things we offend all. [James 3, 2] John says, If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [1 John 1, 8] What will then the planks do, when the columns tremble? Or how will the shrubs remain unmoved, if even the cedars are shaken with the whirlwind of this fear? The soul then even of the righteous is frequently disturbed with the dread of punishment, as it approaches the dissolution of the flesh. And though it may have lasted some tranquillity in this life, it is staggered when the instant of its death comes on; so that it may be rightly said of him, His bread becomes abominable to him in his life, and to his soul the food which before it desired. Or certainly, on account of the punishment of fear, that which is there subjoined, His soul hath drawn near to corruption, and his life to the destroyers.

34. But because the souls of the righteous are frequently purified, through the mere fear of death, from every trifling pollution, and enjoy the pleasures of eternal recompense from the very moment of the dissolution of the flesh; nay very often they rejoice at the sight of the inward recompense, even before they are stripped of the flesh; and because even while paying the debt of their old nature, they enjoy the satisfaction of the new gift, it is therefore rightly said, He shall see His face with joy. Or certainly, He hath delivered his soul from going onward to destruction, but that it should live and see the light. The soul of the righteous beholds the face of God with joy, because it feels so much of inward happiness, as it can scarce contain even when taken up to God. It therefore lives there and beholds the light, because it fixes its spiritual gaze on the rays of the eternal sun. It lives there and beholds the light, because having trampled under foot all the vicissitudes and shadows of mutability, it clings to the reality of eternity. And by clinging thus to Him Whom it beholds, it attains to a resemblance of His unchangeableness, and as it gazes at the unalterable nature of Him Who made it, it assumes it to itself. For that which has fallen through its

own act into a state of change, is transformed to an unchangeable condition by beholding the Unchangeable.

Eliu therefore, because he first spoke of the bitterness of sorrow, and afterwards of the joy of consolation, fitly added of this man thus afflicted and thus delivered, All these things God worketh three times in every man, that is to say, in conversion, in probation, and in death. For in these three states, a man first suffers under sharp pangs of sorrow, and is afterwards comforted by great pleasures of security. But because the mind of each of the Elect suffers in each of these three stages, that is, in the pain of conversion, the trial of probation, or the dread of dissolution, and is purified and set free by this very suffering, it is appropriately added,

Ver. 30. That he may recal their souls from corruption, and enlighten them with the light of the living. [xii] 35. For that is the light of the dying which we behold with our bodily eyes. But they who still live for this world, are in darkness in the light of the dying. But they are enlightened with the light of the living, who despising the light of the world, return to the splendor of the inward brightness, that they may live in that place where they may see, by feeling it, the true light, where light and life are not different from each other, but where the light itself is life also; where the light so encircles us from without as to fill us within; and so fills us within, as, being itself uncircumscribed, to circumscribe us without. They are enlightened therefore with this light of the living, which they behold at that time the more clearly, the more purely they now live by its aid.

36. Eliu has uttered great and very powerful words. But it is a characteristic of every boastful person, that, while giving utterance to truths and mysteries, he suddenly blends with them, through pride of heart, some foolish and proud expressions. For he endeavours to please the world without, in that which he thinks with truth; and is soon despoiled of the truth, just as through haughtiness of pride he goes back from what is inward. For, because he seeks to be approved of outwardly as a man of learning, he loses inwardly the fulness of wisdom, in which he was instructed. Whence also Eliu, (who, as we have often said, represents the arrogant,) having put forth many profound and wise sayings, as soon as he has uttered these sentiments of truth and mystery, is elated by being puffed up with pride at his wisdom. And as his pride rightly deserved, his feeling soon vents itself in empty words. For he subjoined, saying,

Ver. 31'33. Attend, O Job, and hearken unto me, and hold thy peace while I speak. But if thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak: for I wish thee to appear just. But if thou hast not, hearken unto me; hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom. [xiii]

37. He shews what opinion he has of himself by this expression in which he says, Attend, O Job, and hearken unto me, and hold thy peace while I speak. For it is enormous pride to exact respect from one's elder, and to impose silence on one better than one's self. But because holy preachers, when reproving others, frequently turn back to their own inmost thoughts, through the grace of humility, and seek to ascertain if perchance they are mis-

taken, in the very thing which they reprove, and give those, whom they reprove, the liberty of stating, in their own behalf, whatever they think more just, haughty men also sometimes wish to imitate this plan. For putting aside, for a while, their pride in words, they seek for a justification of those whom they reprove, if perchance they are able to find one. Not because it is their real feeling, but they wish to set themselves off by a show of humility. For they are afraid of appearing to be proud and haughty, because they are so. Whence Eliu immediately subjoined, saying, But if thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak, for I wish thee to appear just. But because he did not say this sincerely, he did not wait to hear that which he had asked for. For he added immediately, But if thou hast not, hear me; hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom. For those who sincerely seek to hear what is just, patiently wait to hear what they seek for.

But Eliu, because he did not sincerely put forth the words of request, did not allow his question to be answered, but immediately burst forth with that, of which he was full within, and shewed how he stood in his own eyes, by saying, Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom. For when proud men say any thing which has a humble sound, they do not long remain in the semblance of this same humility. If they perchance ask to have an answer, they immediately avoid being instructed, by beginning to speak; because the desire of display which springs up from its root in the heart soon checks the words which they had spoken superficially. And they soon prove that this form of humility, which they have assumed in appearance only, is foreign to their character, by being unable any longer to maintain it. Behold how Eliu, when he seeks to learn righteousness, offers to teach it. Behold how his tongue, in seeming to enquire for what is just, had spoken in humble strain. But it was soon unable to restrain his swelling consciousness of pride. For he added immediately. Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.

But because haughty men are puffed up by swelling pride in what they say, and placed, as it were, on high, assume the appearance of learned men, just as if their words were poured forth from heaven by a kind of condescension, over undeserving persons, a verse is rightly inserted by the writer of this history, in order to observe,

Chap, xxxiv. 1. Eliu also pronounced and said these things likewise. [xiv] 38. For what is meant by this word 'pronounced' but the puffing up of pride? in order that his words, which spring from the deep root of pride, might come forth as it were with a degree of majesty and distinction. It is thus in truth that all men of arrogance are wont to speak. For they bring forth with a kind of assumption that which they believe they have gained a special understanding; and perhaps are preaching humility at the very time, when they are giving an example of haughtiness by being puffed up with pride. And hence it is that their preaching cannot remain consistent with itself; for by their perverse pride they impugn that truth, which they disseminate when they speak properly. For they impart their words to their humble auditors, not as if entering into their feelings, but as if barely condescending to them. For they consider that they are exalted on high, and, as if they were far superior, they hardly deign to turn towards their hearers, from their high eminence, a glance of doctrine.

But the words of the just spring, on the other hand, from the root of humility, in order to be able to bear the fruit of piety: and they impart whatever sound advice they can, not by boasting, but by sympathising with others. For, by words of love, they so put either themselves into the place of their hearers, or their hearers into theirs, as if their hearers were teaching by their aid that, which they are being taught, and they were learning from their hearers that, which they are putting forth and teaching themselves. Let us hear then what Eliu says, representing as he does the boastful, and commencing with the display of pronouncement. It follows,

Ver. 2, 3. Hear my words, O ye wise men, and listen to me, ye learned. For the ear trieth words, and the throat discerneth meats by the taste. [xv] 39. As if he were to say, as the ear does not discern meats, nor the throat words, so a fool does not understand the sentence of the wise. Hear therefore what I say, ye wise and learned, who can understand the meaning of what has been said. Let us see then how great is his pride, who imagines that his words can be fitly heard only by the wise. But the true preacher of wisdom says, I am a debtor both to the wise, and to the unwise. [Rom. 1, 14] But the arrogant, on the other hand, in his preaching looks only for the ears of the wise. And this not because he preaches for the purpose of making men wise, but he seeks for wise men, in order that he may proudly display his sentiments. For, as was said before, he does not seek to instruct them, but to display himself. Nor does he consider how righteous those that hear him become, but how learned he appears, when listened to by the learned. But since no one would listen to the preaching of the proud, if they did not throw in some semblance of humility; Eliu, after having extolled himself with swelling words, again condescends, as it were, to put himself on a level of equality; saying,

Ver. 4. Let us choose to us judgment, and let us see among ourselves what is the best. [xvi] 40. But we easily learn, by considering the words which follow, whether he sought for this judgment from humility of heart. It follows, Ver. 5, 6. For Job hath said, I am just, and God hath subverted my judgment. For in judging me there is falsehood: and mine arrow is violent without any sin. He complains that Job had spoken these things, [See chap. 27, 2] which the words of the sacred history prove on examination that he had never said. But he, who had sought for a judgment on equal terms, proceeds to promulgate a sentence from a fault of his own invention. For it follows, Ver. 7, 8. What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water, who goeth with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men?

Behold, in seeking a judgment, he has pronounced a judgment; and after his own allegation, without waiting for any statement of blessed Job, he condemned him as deserving of condemnation from his intercourse with the wicked. For he says, What man is like Job? That we may be sure to understand, No one. And he subjoins, Who drinketh up scorning like water. For water, when drunk, is so liquid a draught, that it is not kept from being swallowed by any clamminess that it has. But to drink up scorning as water, is to mock God without any impediment in one's thoughts, so that no fear opposes the pride, which the tongue or the mind displays. But how far this judgment of his upon blessed Job errs from the roadway

of truth, we learn from that solemn declaration of God, in which He says to the devil, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth? [Job 1, 8] Behold how Eliu declares him to be a sinner beyond comparison, whom the Truth pronounces to be righteous beyond comparison. But it is the peculiar way with haughty preachers, that they are more desirous of strictly reproving their hearers even when distressed, than to cherish them in a kindly manner. For they study more to chide and reprove faults, than to encourage goodness with praise. For they are anxious to appear superior to other people, and they are better pleased when anger raises their feelings than when charity brings them down. They ever wish to find something, to smite sharply with reproof. Whence it is written, In the mouth of the, foolish is a rod of pride, [Prov. 14, 3] because in truth he knows how to smite sharply, but not to sympathize with humility.

41. Holy preachers are also accustomed to reprove their hearers with sharp words, and to rage with strict severity against their sins: as it is written, The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened deep. [Eccles. 12, 11] But their words are rightly called nails, since they do not know how to handle gently the sins of offenders, but how to pierce them through. Were not the words of John nails, when he said, O generation of vipers, who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come'? [Matt. 3, 7] Were not the words of Stephen nails, when he said, Ye have always resisted the Holy Ghost? [Acts 7, 51] Were not the words of Paul, when he said, O senseless Galatians, who hath bewitched you? [Gal 3, 1] and again when saying to the Corinthians, For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man? [1 Cor. 3, 3] But it is necessary for us to look carefully: for when righteous preachers observe on the other hand any good deeds in those whom they reprove, with what just consideration do they proceed to use these same words of reproof. Behold! Paul, when instructing the Corinthians, and seeing them guilty of the sin of schism, began by saying, I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God, which is given you in Christ Jesus, that in every thing ye are enriched by Him. [l Cor.

l, 4, 5] He praised them much in saying, that they were enriched in Christ in all things. And, lo! he again multiplies his soothing expressions, by saying, In all utterance, and in all knowledge, as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. [1 Cor. 5, 6] He said, the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, as though they had carried out in their conduct, what they had learned from his teaching. And he subjoined just after, in summing up their praises, So that nothing is wanting to you in any grace, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. [1 Cor. 1, 7] I pray thee, O Paul, inform us what art thou aiming at by these numerous words of favour? And, lo! it follows shortly after, But I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you. For it hath been signified unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. [l Cor. l, 10. 11. Of which contentions he afterwards added, saying, For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man? [1 Cor. 3, 3] See with what praises he comes down to plain words of reproof; see with how gentle a hand of kindness he has opened the way for strict rebuke in the hearts of his hearers.

For he first endeavoured to bind the arms of the proud by the bands of blandishments, in order to cut afterwards into the sore of their pride with the knife of correction. The Corinthians in truth possessed qualities which deserved praise, and such also as deserved reproof. The skilful physician then first caressed with praises the sound limbs about the wound, and afterwards pierced with a blow the putrid cavity of the wound. This rule of teaching has its weight with holy preachers on either side, so that they favour and cherish what is right, and cut off with punishment what is wrong.

42. But frequently holy preachers too strike severely. But it is one thing when justice urges on, another when pride puffs up. The righteous, when severely correcting, do not lose the grace of inward sweetness. For they frequently adopt the harshness of strict vigour, in order to keep in check the disorderly passions of the wicked, but they melt within with the fire of charity, and glow with affection towards those, against whom they are raging with severe reproof. And they humble themselves moreover beneath them in the secret of their heart within, while they seem to scorn and chasten them in the sight of men with the sharp stings of punishment. But they frequently both despise by not despising them, and despair by not despairing, in order that they may lead them to fear, and to shrink back the more speedily from sin, the more they point out to them that the pit of destruction is, as it were, nearer to them. But they frequently also point out their own faults to their disciples, in a kind of graceful temperament, in order that they may hear and learn, how strictly they censure themselves for their own conduct. But they regulate themselves with such judgment, as not to be severe within, even when they exalt themselves; nor again, when humbling themselves, outwardly remiss: for they keep up humility in their discipline, and discipline in their humility.

Paul maintained discipline, when saying to the Corinthians, For whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal, and walk according to man? [1 Cor. 3, 3] But even when maintaining discipline he lost not his humility; because he began by deprecation, saying, I beseech you, brethren, by the mercy of God, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you. [1 Cor. 1, 10] Again he maintained humility, when, on speaking somewhat more at length than perhaps he had wished to the same Corinthians, he reproves himself, saying, I am become a fool. [2 Cor. 12, 11] Yet in this humility he did not give up discipline, since he immediately 'added, Ye have compelled me. He exhibited an instance of great humility, when he said to his disciples, For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord; and ourselves your servants through Christ. [2 Cor. 4, 5] But he lost not in this humility the justness of discipline, for he says to the same, offending, What will ye? shall I come to you with a rod? [1 Cor. 4, 21] and so on. Holy preachers therefore well know how to regulate their skill in teaching by moderation on either side, and when they detect the faults of offenders, they have the art to reprove severely at one time, and humbly to deprecate at another.

But when haughty men seek to imitate them, they adopt from them their sharp words of reproof, but know not how to adopt from them with sincerity the entreaties of humility.

For they are better able to be terrific, than gentle; and they learn accordingly reasons for setting themselves up, though they neglect to learn humility. And since they do not know how to admonish offenders with gentleness, from their habit of being over severe in angry invective, they let themselves loose even against good doers. And this Eliu, as representing such persons, does not comfort Job, but reproves him, saying, What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning as water, who goeth with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men. And because pride is ever a stranger to truth, he presently launches out even in falsehood, saying,

Ver. 9. For he hath said, A man will not please God, even though he run with Him. [xvii] 43. But that he never said so, every one acknowledges who reads the words of blessed Job. But yet what wonder, that he who speaks for the sole purpose of proudly setting himself off, invents something to find fault with in another person? For how can he adhere to 'truth in his words of reproof, whom pride of mind within removes far away from the same truth? It follows, Ver. 10. Therefore hearken unto me, Ye men of understanding. Behold again that, puffed up by pride and haughtiness, he seeks for those only who are able to follow him, by understanding him properly; and thus bursts out with what he was thinking of, saying, Ver. 10, 11. Let unmercifulness ['impietas'] be far from God, and iniquity from the Almighty: for the work of a man shall He render unto him, and will restore to them according to the ways of every man.

[xviii]

44. He well said, that iniquity or unmercifulness is not in Almighty God. But that which he added is by no means always the case in this life, namely, that He renders to each man according to his work, and according to his own ways. [see Rev. 22, 12. 2 Cor. 5, 10.] For both many who commit unlawful and wicked deeds He prevents of His free grace, and converts to works of holiness: and some who are devoted to good deeds He reproves by means of the scourge, and so afflicts those who please Him, as though they were displeasing to Him. As Solomon bears witness, saying, There are just men to whom many things happen, as though they had done the deeds of the wicked; and there are wicked, who are as secure as though they had the deeds of the just. [Eccles. 8, 14] God doubtless so ordains it of His inestimable mercy, that both scourges should torture the just, lest their doings should elate them, and that the unjust should pass this life at least without punishment, because by their evil doings they are hastening onwards to those torments, which are without end. For that the just are sometimes scourged in no way according to their deserts, is shewn by this very history which we are considering. For the same blessed Job had not been scourged for any fault, who was praised by the attestation of the Judge Himself before the smarting of the scourge. Eliu therefore would speak more truly, if he had said, That there is not unmercifulness and iniquity in God, even when He seems not to render to men according to their own ways. For even that which we do not understand, is brought forth from the righteous balance of secret judgment. But because haughty preachers, when they scatter

abroad many follies, also frequently utter many things that are true and solid, Eliu rightly subjoins,

Ver. 12. For truly God will not condemn without cause, nor will the Almighty subvert judgment. [xix] 45. The Lord said to the devil, Thou hast moved Me against him to afflict him without cause. [Job 2, 3] But Eliu says, That the Lord will not condemn without cause. A statement which is believed to be at variance with the words of Truth, unless weighed with careful consideration. For to condemn is one thing, to afflict another. He afflicts therefore in some respect without cause, but does not condemn without cause. Had He not afflicted Job in some respect without cause, since sin was not blotted out, but merit increased thereby? For He cannot condemn without reason, inasmuch as condemnation cannot take place partly for a certain purpose: since it punishes at the end all the ungodliness which any one has here committed. Nor does Almighty God subvert judgment: because, although our sufferings seem to be unjust, yet they are rightly inflicted in His secret judgment. It follows,

Ver. 13. Whom else hath He appointed over the earth, or whom hath He placed over the world which He hath made? [xx] 46. In order, namely, that thou mayest understand, No one. For He governs indeed by Himself the world which He created by Himself: nor does He need the aid of others in governing, Who needed it not for creating. But these points are brought together, in order that he might plainly point out, that if Almighty God does not neglect to govern by Himself the world which He created, He most certainly governs aright that which He created aright; that He does not order in unmercifulness that which He fashioned in mercy; and that He Who provided for their being before they were made, does not forsake them after their creation. Because then He is present to rule, Who was the First Cause at their creation, He therefore does not omit to take care of us. Whence also he fitly subjoins,

Ver. 14. If he hath directed his heart towards Him, He will gather to Himself his spirit, and his breath. [xxi] 47. The heart is crooked, when it seeks for things below. It is made straight when it is raised to things above. If a man therefore direct his heart to the Lord, the Lord draws to Himself his spirit and his breath. He uses, namely, spirit for inward thoughts, but breath, which is drawn through the body, for outward actions. For God, then, to draw the spirit and breath of man to Himself, is for Him so to change us both within and without, to turn towards Him in our desires, that nothing outward may any longer please the mind, and that the flesh (even if it wishes it) may not endeavour to attain any inferior object; but that the whole man may have its inward desires kindled towards Him from Whom it springs, and may bind itself closer to Him without, by self-control. Whence also he fitly subjoins,

Ver. 15. All flesh shall fail together, and man shall return to ashes. [xxii] 48. For all flesh fails together, when it is no longer a slave to its own emotions; because the spirit presiding therein restrains all its waverings, and destroys as it were with the sword of Its severity all evil which lived therein. Jeremiah had, in truth, slain himself with this sword of discipline, when he said, After Thou hadst converted me, I did penance, and after Thou hadst shewed to me, I smote my thigh. [Jer. 31, 19] For what is understood by the thigh, but carnal

pleasure? And what his saying, After Thou hadst shewed unto me, I smote my thigh, except that after he spiritually beheld heavenly things, he extinguished every infirm carnal desire which used to live in him: that as heavenly objects opened upon him, he might feel less pleasure in those inferior things which he had possessed? For the more a man begins to live to things above, does he begin to die to things below. For as far as concerns the love of carnal doings, the whole flesh of Paul had perished together, when he said, I no longer live, but Christ liveth in me. [Gal. 2, 20]

49. Eliu also properly subjoined in this place, And man shall return to ashes. For every one who is involved in sin, forgets his mortal condition, and while he is still puffed up with pride, remembers not that he is earth. But when, after the grace of his conversion, he is touched with the spirit of humility, what does he call to mind that he is, but ashes? David had already returned to ashes, when he said, Remember, Lord, that we are dust. [Ps. 103, 14] And Abraham had returned to ashes, saying, I will speak to my Lord, though I am dust and ashes. [Gen. 18, 27] And though death had not yet dissolved their living flesh unto earth, yet in their own opinion they were that, which they foresaw without doubt they were about to be. Hence it is said in another place, Thou wilt take away their breath, and they will fail, and will return to their dust. [Ps. 104, 29] But what is meant by their breath, but the breath of pride? Let their breath then be taken away, that they may fail; that is, feel themselves to be nothing in themselves, when the breath of pride is withdrawn. And let them return to dust, that is, let them be humbled by their infirm condition. It is on account of this very dust, to the recollection of which those are recalled who consider themselves, that it is said by Wisdom, The righteous shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds.

[Wisd. 3, 7] For holy men while they mix with sinners, kindle them by the fire of their example, and reduce to ashes all their brilliancy. For consumed by the flame of holiness, they discern themselves, on looking at the infirmity of their condition, to be nought but ashes. So that when loosened from the hardness of their pride they may use the words before quoted, Remember, O Lord, that we are dust. It is well said then that when God draws the breath of a man to Himself, all flesh will fail together, and man will return to ashes. These words of Eliu are true and important. But he betrays in the words which follow that he was soon wickedly puffed up by that which he thought rightly, saying,

Ver. 16. If then thou hast understanding, hear what is said, and listen to the voice of my words. [xxiii]

50. All haughty men have this peculiarity, that when they perchance entertain any acute sentiment, they soon launch out in consequence into the sin of pride, that they despise the opinion of every one else in comparison with their own, and prefer themselves in their own judgment to the merits of others. It is the fate of these wretched men, to be more in the dark the more they see; for while they look at subtleties, they overlook themselves; and the more acutely they perceive their wisdom, the more fatally do they fall through pride. But they would look into subtleties to some use, if in what they bring forward they were to see

themselves. For Eliu said above, If thou hast any thing to say, answer me; speak, for I wish thee to appear just. [Job 33, 32] But now he says, If thou hast understanding, hear what is said. See how his pride gradually advances in increase of expression. He doubted above whether blessed Job could bring forward what was just. He now makes it a question if he can even hear what is said. He said there, If thou hast any thing to say, answer me. As though he were to say, Say something, if at least thou wilt be able to speak worthily. But here he says, If thou hast understanding, hear what is said. As though he said plainly, Hear me, if thou wilt be able to hear worthily.

These are the daily declensions which take place in the heart of the wicked, by which they are unceasingly sinking to worse; because while they carelessly neglect smaller faults, they break out wickedly into greater. It had already resulted from his pride that he doubted whether blessed Job could say what was just. But through neglecting to watch this fault in himself, he arrived at greater wickedness: so as not only to doubt that he could possibly say what was just, but even to despair of his understanding himself when speaking what was just. Wherefore the sin of pride must be cut up at once by the very roots, that when it springs up secretly it may be cut off vigilantly, so that it may not gain vigour by growth, or strength by habit. For it is a hard matter for a man to detect in himself inveterate pride, because in truth, the more we suffer under this sin, the less do we see of it. For pride is generated in the mind exactly as darkness in the eyes. For the wider it spreads itself, the more does it contract the light. Pride then grows up gradually in the heart, and when it has extended itself wider and wider, it closes entirely the sight of the mind which suffers from it, so that the captive mind can both suffer from the haughtiness of pride, and yet be unable to behold that under which it suffers.

But because haughty men, as we have said, sometimes hold sound views in an unsound way, and know how to invent good arguments, but scorn to state them aright; Eliu, after the haughty pride with which he had said, If thou hast understanding, hear what is said, subjoins, saying,

Ver. 17. Can he be healed that loveth not judgment? How dost thou so much condemn him that is just? [xxiv] 51. He uttered a proper sentiment, but it ought not to have been uttered to blessed Job. For in every thing which is said we must by all means consider, what is said, to whom it is said, where it is said, how it is said. But Eliu considered only what he was saying, but did not consider to whom he was saying it. For blessed Job loved judgment, since he knew how to weigh his causes carefully with the Lord. Nor had he condemned Him that is just: but humbly enquired, when involved in grief, why he had been smitten when without sin. He loves judgment, whoever examines his own ways minutely, and enters into the secret chambers of his heart, and there considers what the Lord bestows on him, and what he owes to the Lord. But how had blessed Job not acted thus, who used to offer such frequent sacrifices in expiation for his sons, even on account of their thoughts? Because then Eliu said, that he that loveth not judgment cannot be healed, accusing blessed Job of

not loving judgment, and of having condemned Him who is just, he immediately subjoins the righteousness of that same righteous One, that is, the Lord, saying,

Ver. 18. Who saith to a king, Apostate: who calleth leaders ungodly. [xxv]

52. We know often that most of those who rule exact an inordinate degree of dread from their subjects, and that they wish them to venerate them not so much for the Lord's sake, as in the Lord's place. For they exalt themselves with pride of heart within, and despise all under them in comparison with themselves, nor do they advise them with condescension, but oppress them with authority: because, in truth, they set themselves up with lofty thoughts, and do not acknowledge themselves to be equal with those over whom they happen to rule. Against this pride it is said in the Book Ecclesiasticus, Have they appointed thee a ruler? Be not lifted up, but be among them as one of them. [Ecclus. 32, 1] This pride the Lord also reproving by the Prophet in shepherds, saith, But ye ruled over them with austerity and with power. [Ez. 34, 4] For the good advice which they offer to their subjects, they bring out as ordering, rather than as advising with them: for the very reason, that to say any thing to them as if they were on equal terms, they consider a degradation. For they rejoice in their singular preeminence, and not in the equality of their creation. But because the Lord carefully considers those swelling hearts of rulers, it is well said against them, Who saith to a king, Apostate. For every haughty ruler falls into the sin of apostasy, as often as, through pleasure at his ruling over men, he rejoices in his peculiar distinction.

For he considers not under Whom he himself is, and exults over his equals, for that he is as it were not their equal. But whence is it that this root of evil springs up in the heart of rulers, unless it be in imitation of him, who, having scorned the society of angels, said, I will ascend above the height of the clouds, and will be like the Most High? Since then every ruler, as often as he prides himself on ruling over others, is cut off, by falling into pride, from dependence on the Chief Ruler of all: and, because when he despises his equals who are subject to him, he does not acknowledge the supreme dominion of Him under Whom all are equal; it is rightly said, Who saith to a king, Apostate.

53. But since by domineering over others they lead their subjects to impiety by the example of their pride, it is fitly subjoined, Who calleth leaders ungodly. For they would lead them into the way of piety, if they did but present a pattern of humility to the eyes of their subjects. But he is an ungodly leader, who diverges from the path of truth, and who, when falling headlong himself, invites his followers to the precipice. He is an ungodly leader who points out the way of error by setting examples of pride. Paul was afraid of being an ungodly leader, when he brought down the loftiness of his power, saying, Not seeking glory of men, neither of you nor yet of others, when we might have been a burden as the Apostles of Christ, but we became as children in the midst of you. [1 Thess. 2, 6] He had become as a child in the midst of them, because he was afraid lest he should set example of pride, if he claimed, among his disciples, the honour due to his high station. He was afraid, in truth, lest if he were to seek for himself the power of pastoral authority, the flock committed to him should follow

him along precipitous places, and lest he, who had undertaken an office of piety, should be leading to ungodliness those who followed him.

54. It is therefore necessary for a person in high place to take special care what example he sets his subjects, and to know that he is living for all those, over whom he knows he is placed. He should be especially watchful not to pride himself on his being set above others, lest he should exact too immoderately the privileges of rightful authority, lest the rule of discipline should be converted into the severity of pride, and lest by the power he possessed of restraining his subjects from wickedness, he should pervert the more the hearts of those who behold him; and lest (as was before observed) he should become a leader of impiety by means of his pious office. A man, however, ought not to undertake to guide others, who does not know how to lead them in holy living; lest he, who has been appointed to reprove others' faults, shall himself commit the sin which it was his duty to cut off. Let rulers therefore take special care to live for themselves and those under them: to hide in the bosom of their mind the good which they do, and yet furnish thereby an example of good behaviour for the benefit of those who follow them; to correct the faults of their subjects by doing judgment, and yet not pride themselves at the severity of this same punishment; to be content with slightly reproving certain faults, and yet not to relax the bonds of discipline by this lenity;

to overlook, and bear with other evils, and yet not to suffer them to make head by their overlooking them. These things are laborious, and, unless Divine grace support, hard to keep. But it is rightly said by the Book of Wisdom of the coming of the strict Judge, Horribly and speedily will He appear, for a very sharp judgment shall be to them who are in high places. [Wisd. 6, 5] Since therefore people too commonly launch out into pride from the power of rule, and pride itself is counted as an impiety by the strict Judge, it is well said by Eliu of the Lord, Who calleth leaders ungodly. For when they are proud of their authority, they lead by their example those under them to impiety.

55. A person then who is appointed to rule over men, must be especially careful, within the secret chambers of his mind, to preside in the seat of humility. And when others stand before him without, as he gives his sentence, he should with watchful eye behold Him, before Whom he is hereafter to stand to be judged for these very matters: that so he may behold Him with greater confidence, when he has seen Him, the more anxiously he trembles now before Him, Whom he does not behold. Let him consider then, that he who is hardly able perhaps to satisfy so strict a Judge for his own soul, has, from his ruling over so many subjects, so many souls (so to speak) singly to answer for to Him, at the time for rendering his account. And if this thought continually penetrates the mind, it crushes all the swelling of pride. And a careful ruler will be called neither an apostate king, nor an ungodly ruler, the more anxiously he regards the power he has received not as an honour, but as a burden. For he that is well pleased at being a judge now, feels no pleasure at beholding the Judge then. For the faults which are committed from the desire of obtaining power, cannot be numbered. But authority is then alone properly exercised, when it is held not in love of it, but in fear.

And in order that it may be properly administered, necessity, and not our own desire, should, in the first place, impose it on us. But it neither ought to be abandoned through fear when once undertaken, nor, again, embraced as an object of desire; for fear a person should, as if by reason of humility, be guilty of greater pride, in contemning and shrinking from the course of the Divine dispensation: or should cast off the yoke of his Heavenly Ruler, the more his own private authority over others gives him pleasure. When power then is possessed it must not be greedily loved, but patiently endured; in order that then, at the judgment, it may be a light burden to our comfort, as we know it now for a service which is heavy to be borne.

Book XXV

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

VOLUME III - THE FIFTH PART. — BOOK XXV.

In explanation of the thirty-fourth chapter from the nineteenth to the thirtieth verse, the punishments of the reprobate, and the secret judgments of God are discussed. [i] 1. The very mode of man's creation shews, how far he surpasses all things beside. For the reason which has been conferred on man proclaims how far a rational nature surpasses all things which are deficient in either life, or sense, or reason. And yet, because we close our eyes to inward and invisible objects, and feast them on those which are seen, we most commonly esteem a man, not for what he is in himself, but from what is accidental to him. And since we do not look at what a man is in himself, but what he can do, in our acceptance of persons we are influenced, not by the persons themselves, but by what accidentally belongs to them. And thus it comes to pass, that even that person is inwardly despised by us, who is outwardly held in honour; for whilst he is honoured for that which is about him, he is, from his own doings, placed low in our judgment. But Almighty God examines the conduct of men, solely on the nature of their deserts, and frequently inflicts severer punishment, from the very fact, that He has here given greater opportunities of serving Him. As the Truth Itself bears witness, saying, To whom much is given, of him much will be required. [Luke 12, 48] Whence it is now well said by Eliu, (ver. 19.) Who accepteth not the person of princes, and hath not regarded a tyrant, when disputing against the poor.

[ii] 2. But by prince, or tyrant, may be understood every proud person; but the humble may be designated by the poor. He does not regard then a tyrant, when disputing against the poor, because He declares that He knows not, in the judgment, any proud men who now oppress the life of the humble, saying, I know you not, whence ye are. [Luke 13, 25] And because He thus destroys him, when He wills, by His power, as He created him, when He willed, by His power, is fitly added in argument, For they are all the work of His hands. And it is immediately added, Ver. 20. Suddenly shall they die, and the people shall bow down at midnight, and pass away. [iii]

3. However long it be before the ungodly are taken out of this life, they are taken away suddenly, and at an instant, since they know not how to foresee their end by thinking on it.

That is sudden to any one, which he has not been able to think of beforehand. That rich man was taken away suddenly, who left the barns which he was preparing, and found the place of hell, which he was not looking for. He was employing his soul in thinking in one direction, he parted with it in another by his sentence. He fixed his thoughts on one object when alive, he experienced another when he was dying. For he left those temporal things, which he had long engaged in, and he found eternal things which he did not look for. Whence, in consequence of this his blind ignorance, it is well said to him by the Divine sentence, This night do they require thy soul of thee. [Luke 12, 20] For that soul was taken away by night, which was lost in blindness of heart. That was taken away by night, which refused to enjoy the light of consideration, in order to foresee what it would suffer. Whence the Apostle Paul rightly says to his disciples who are thinking on future things, But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and children of day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. [l Thess. 5, 4. 5.

For the day of death seizes as a thief in the night, when it casts out the souls of foolish men, which do not look onward to the future. Whence it is here also fitly subjoined, And the people shall bow down at midnight, and pass away. They bow down and pass away at midnight, who are brought low and swept away by the darkness of their negligence. They will then be bowed down by the sentence of the Judge, who now refuse to bend with humility of heart. But the Elect bow themselves of their own accord in humility, that they may not be bowed down against their will in death. Whence is it said to Holy Church, of the converted children of her persecutors, The sons of them who humbled thee, shall come bending to thee. [Is. 60, 14]

4. And he says properly of dying peoples, not that 'they will pass along,' but pass away, because simply by living in the world we are daily coming to an end, and we pass along this present life, as though wearing a track in a road. But that men live subject to death, is a kind of journeying deathwards. And every day we pass of our life, we are approaching as it were on our journey by as many steps to the appointed spot. But the very increase of our years, is a wearing them away; for the length of our life begins to be not so much as it was at first. But the first man was so fashioned, that, as time passed on, he remained stationary, so as not to journey on together with it. For he remained still, as the moments hasted away; since he did not approach to the end of his life, through the increase of his days. And he stood the firmer, the closer he clung to Him who is ever stationary. But after he touched the forbidden thing, having offended his Creator, he began to pass onward together with time. Having lost, namely, the stability of an immortal condition, the stream of mortal being engulphed him. And, while borne along by youth to age, and by age to death, he learned, as he journeyed on, what he was when he remained stationary. And because we are sprung from his stock, we retain, like shoots, the bitterness of our root.

For because we derive our origin from him, we inherit his course of life, at our birth, so that every moment of every day that we live, we are constantly passing away from life, and the length of our life decreases by the very means by which it is believed to increase. Since then

we are daily proceeding, as our years increase, to the issue of death, it is well said of the dying, not that they pass along, but pass away. For they pass along, even while they live, but pass away, as they die. It follows,

And they will take away the violent without hand. [iv] 5. Thou understandest, 'The divine judgments.' But they will take him away without hand, who was violent with his hand. They will take him away without hand, because, namely, he is snatched away, by the violence of a sudden death, invisibly, who used visibly to spoil others. He beheld those whom he spoiled, but beholds not him who hurries him away in death. The violent therefore is taken away without hand, because he both beholds not his spoiler, and yet is hurried along. And there follows him a severer sentence, the longer great forbearance is extended [al. 'was first granted.'] to him when sinning: because the severity of God punishes a sinner the more strictly, the longer it has borne with him. But it is frequently the case, that while the Divine mercy is waiting for sinners, they plunge into greater blindness of heart. Whence it is written, Knowest thou not that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up for thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God? [Rom. 2, 4. 5.] Observe, then, that while the man of violence is spoiling those whom he is able, is oppressing the weak, and indulging a long time all his sinful desires; because he is not smitten at once, and because his punishment is deferred to the end, his most wicked conduct is believed not to be observed by God. After then he had spoken of his death, he immediately rightly added concerning the Lord,

Ver. 21. For His eyes are over the ways of men, and He considers all their steps. [v]

6. For He was then believed not to observe them, while this man of violence was committing, unpunished, all the wickedness he could. God was supposed not to behold the deeds of the ungodly, because He was delaying to condemn them justly; and His great forbearance was regarded as a kind of carelessness. The wicked also himself believed that he was not observed by God in the commission of sin, as often as he sinned without being punished. To whom it is said by a certain wise man, Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath happened to me? [Ecclus. 5, 4] He does not wish to correct the wickedness, for which he has not suffered the punishment it deserved: and the more mercifully he is spared, the more sinfully is he urged on to wickedness: and, despising the long-suffering of the Divine forbearance, he has added to his faults, from the very circumstance that should have led him to correct them. As is said by this very Job, God gave him a place for repentance, but he misuses it in his pride. [Job 24, 23] Frequently, also, because he does not suffer immediately the punishment he deserves, he considers that his conduct is not displeasing to God. Let him go then now, and launch forth presumptuously into every kind of blasphemy. Let him take his fill of his sinful pleasures; let him spoil others' goods, and satiate himself with the oppression of the innocent.

And, because he is not yet smitten, let him consider that his ways are not observed by God, or, what is worse, that they are approved of by Him. There will fall on him, full surely,

there will fall on him, a sudden and everlasting blow. And he will then acknowledge, that every thing is observed by God, when he sees himself condemned, by an unexpected death, in retribution for all his guilt. He will then open, in his torment, the eyes which he long kept closed in sin. He will then perceive, that the righteous Judge has observed every thing, when he is now unable, by perceiving it, to escape the due deserts of his sins. The ungodly, then, who is long spared, is swept away suddenly, because the eyes of the Lord are over all the ways of men, and He considereth all their steps. As though he were to say, Because He does not at last leave those sins unpunished, which He long looks on with forbearance. For, behold! He has suddenly swept away the violent man, and his sins which He endured with patience, He has cut off with punishment. Let no one say then, when he beholds any ungodly man heaping up sin without restraint, that God does not notice the conduct of men. For he who is long tolerated, is swept away suddenly.

7. But he calls the steps of men, either our separate actions on which we are engaged, or the alternating motives of our inmost thoughts, by which, as if by steps, we either depart far from the Lord, or approach near to Him by holiness. For the mind approaches by so many steps nearer to God, as it makes progress in so many holy emotions. And, again, it departs so many steps further from Him, as it becomes depraved by so many evil thoughts. Whence it is frequently the case that, though the emotion of the mind does not come forth in action, yet the sin is already perfected, by reason of the guilt itself of the thought. As it is written, Hand in hand, the wicked shall not be innocent. [Prov. 11, 21] For hand is wont to be joined with hand, when it rests at ease, and no laborious employment exercises it. Hand therefore in hand, the wicked shall not be innocent. As though he were saying, Even when the hand rests from sinful deeds, yet the wicked, by reason of his thoughts, is not innocent. Because then we know that not merely our actions, but even our thoughts, are strictly weighed, what will befal us for our walking in wicked action, if God judges so minutely the steps of the heart? Behold, no man witnesses the secret courses of our mind, and yet, in the sight of God, we are making as many steps, as many affections as we put in motion.

We fall before Him, as often as we stumble away from the straight path by the foot of unstable thought. For unless this frequent stumbling of our minds increased in His sight, He would not in truth exclaim by the Prophet, Put away the evil of your thoughts from before Mine eyes. [Is. 1, 16] But speaking thus, He witnesses that He cannot endure, as it were, the intensity of our secret wickedness. But it cannot be hidden from Him, because, namely, every unlawful thought which is conceived in secret by us, is thrust offensively before His sight. For, as it is written, all things are naked and open to His eyes. [Heb. 4, 13] Whence it is here also properly subjoined,

Ver. 22. There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they who work iniquity may be hid. [vi] 8. What did he intend to designate by darkness but ignorance, and what by the shadow of death, except oblivion? For it is said of the ignorance of certain persons, Having their mind obscured with darkness. [Eph. 4, 13] And it is written again

of the oblivion which comes on us at death, In that day all their thoughts shall perish. [Ps. 146, 4] Since then whatever is thought of during life is utterly consigned to oblivion by death, oblivion is a kind of shadow of death. For as intervening death puts an end to the doings of life, so does intervening forgetfulness destroy that which existed in the memory. It is rightly, therefore, called its shadow, inasmuch as it is modelled upon it, as it were, while it imitates its power in lulling the senses to rest. But, since God is neither unacquainted with men's evil thoughts, nor forgetful of their evil deeds, (except indeed they are blotted out of His sight by penitence,) it is appropriately observed, There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they who work iniquity may be hid. As though he were to say, No one is hidden from His judgment, for this reason, that it is impossible for Him either not to behold what we do, or to forget what He beholds.

9. Although 'darkness,' or 'the shadow of death,' can be understood likewise in another sense. For every change is a kind of resemblance of death. For that which changes any thing, cuts it off, as it were, from what it was before: that so it ceases to be what it was, and begins to be what it was not. Because then the true Light, our Creator, I mean, is obscured by no vicissitude of change, and overshadowed by no defects in His own nature; but it is His nature to shine forth unchangeably, darkness and the shadow of death are said not to exist in Him. Wherefore it is written elsewhere, With Whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning. [James 1, 17] And hence again, Paul the Apostle says, Who only hath immortality, and dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. [l Tim. 6, 16] But since we all know that both the soul of man and angelic spirits were created immortal, why is God alone said by the Apostle to have immortality, unless it be that God alone truly dies not, since He alone is never changed?

10. For the soul of man would not fall, if it had not been changeable. And, banished also from the joys of Paradise, if it were not capable of change, it would never return to life. But, in endeavouring to return to life, it is compelled to bear with its defects, from its alternation and change. Because then it was fashioned out of nothing, it is of itself ever sinking beneath itself, unless kept up by the hand of its Maker to a condition of holy desire. Since then it is a creature, it has a downward tendency. For it considers, that of its own strength, it is able only to fall headlong; but it holds firmly to its Creator, with the hand of love, lest it should fall, until it passes over to unchangeableness, and lives really immortally, because unchangeably. 11. The Angelic spirits also were made changeable by nature, so as to fall of their own accord, or to stand from their own will. But, because they humbly chose to cling to Him, by Whom they were created,* they overcame the changeableness which was in them, by remaining immutably at the firm, so that they deservedly rose above the liability to change, to which they would have been subject in the order of their nature.

[*Note: Ben. here notes that after the words 'they were created,' one Vatican Ms. is quoted as adding, 'They received from the vision of their Ruler that they should abide in themselves without falling. Hereby, however, their wonderful method of standing is formed, in that while they know what they can do of their own stedfastness, they consider what they owe

to the government of their Ruler. And the more easily they see that they, as changeable, can fall, the more close do they draw themselves, that they may not fall, to the love of their Ruler. Of their own stedfastness, they know they may still tumble down headlong, but they hold them fast by their Creator with the hand of love, that they may not fall.']

Since then it is the property of the Divine Nature alone, not to suffer the shades of ignorance and change, let it be justly said, There is no darkness, and there is no shadow of death, where they, who work iniquity, may be hid. For the more unchangeably that eternal light shines, which is God Himself, the more piercingly does It see, and It is neither ignorant of what is hid, since It penetrates all things, nor does It forget the things It has penetrated, because It lasts on without change. And consequently, as often as we conceive in our mind any unworthy thought, so often do we sin in the light. Because It is present to us though not present to It; and when we walk wickedly we offend against It, from which we are deservedly far away. But, when we believe that we are not seen, we keep our eyes closed in the sun light: that is to say, we conceal Him from ourselves, not ourselves from Him. Let us then, now while we are able, blot out our evil thoughts, and more evil deeds, from the sight of the eternal Judge. Let us recal to the eyes of our heart whatever evil we have committed through the sin of presumption. Let not our weakness flatter itself, and handle itself delicately in those sins, which it calls to mind. But the more it is conscious to itself of evil, let it be the more kindly severe against itself. Let it set before itself the future judgment, and whatever sins it is conscious must be severely smitten by the sentence of the Judge, let it mercifully smite in itself by the penitence of conversion. Whence, after the punishment of this man of violence has been described, it fitly follows,

Ver. 23. For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment. [vii]

12. This verse requires the greater discussion, the more painful is that which it speaks of, if it is neglected. Here doubtless that judgment is not designated which punishes by eternal retribution, but that which, conceived by the mind, cleanses through our conversation [al. 'conversion.']. For whoever is afraid of being condemned by the first of these does not desire to approach near it. By its being said then, For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment, it is pointed out at once that there is a kind of judgment, which is at last desired even by the damned and reprobate. And what is that, but this of which Paul the Apostle speaks, For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged? [l Cor. 11, 31] and of which it is said by the Prophet, There is no judgment in their goings, [Is. 59, 8] and of which David says, The honour of a king loveth judgment, [Ps 99, 4] namely, that he who now knows God by Faith, should carefully judge what he owes Him in his works. Whence it is written again, Be judged before the Lord, and wait for Him. [Job 35, 14] He in truth is judged before the Lord, who beholds the Lord in his heart, and examines into his conduct with anxious enquiry, beneath His presence. For a man waits for Him the more confidently, the more he daily examines his life with suspicion. For he, who comes to His final judgment, is no longer judged before Him, but by Him. Of this judgment also the Lord speaks by the

Prophet to the forgetful soul, Put Me in remembrance, that we may plead together; tell me, if thou hast any thing, that thou mayest be justified. [Is. 43, 26]

13. For the mind of every one ought anxiously to enquire into its pleas before God, and the pleas of God against itself. It should weigh carefully either what good things it has received from Him, or what an ill return it has made for His goodness by wicked living. And this the Elect never cease to do day by day. Whence Solomon well says, The thoughts of the righteous are judgments. [Prov. l2, 5] For they, approach the secret chambers of the Judge, in the recesses of their own heart; they consider how sharply He smites at last, Who long patiently bears with them. They are afraid for the sins which they remember they have committed; and they punish by their tears the faults which they know they have perpetrated. They dread the searching judgments of God, even in those sins, which they perchance cannot discover in themselves. For they see that that is observed by Divine Power, which they, through human weakness, do not see in themselves. They behold the severe Judge, Who strikes a heavier blow the slower He is in coming. They contemplate also the assembly of the holy Fathers seated with Him in judgment, and blame themselves for having slighted either their words or their examples. [2 Cor. 6, 2] And, in this secret chamber of inward judgment, constrained by the sentence of their own conscience, they chasten with penitence, that which they have committed through pride. For they there count over whatever comes against, and assails them.

There do they crowd before their eyes every thing they should weep for. There do they behold whatever can be searched out by the wrath of the severe Judge. There do they suffer as many punishments as they are afraid of suffering. And, in the sentence thus conceived in the mind there is present every agency which is needed for the fuller punishment of those convicted by it. For the conscience accuses, reason judges, fear binds, and pain tortures. And this judgment punishes the more certainly, the more inward is its rage; because it does not come to us from any thing without. For when any one has begun to enter on this business of examination against himself, he is himself the prosecutor who arraigns, he is himself the accused who is arraigned. He hates himself, as he remembers himself to have been: and in the person of his present self persecutes his former self. And a contest is raised by a man in his mind against himself, bringing forth peace with God. This struggle of the heart the Lord required, when He said, by the Prophet, I attended and hearkened: no man speaketh what is good, there is no one that doth penance for his sin, saying, What have I done? [Jer. 8, 6] He was appeased by this struggle of the heart, when He spake to His Prophet, of King Ahab, reproving himself, saying, Hast thou seen Ahab humbled before Me?

therefore because he hath humbled himself for My sake, I will not bring the evil in his days. [1 Kings 21, 29]

14. Since then it is now in our power to undergo an inward judgment of our mind against ourselves, let us examine and accuse our own selves, and torture our former selves by penitence. Let us not cease to judge ourselves, while it is in our power. Let us carefully attend to what is said, For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment.

For it is a property of reprobates to be ever doing wrong, and never to repent of what they have done. For they pass over, with blinded mind, every thing that they do, and do not acknowledge what they have done, except when they have been punished. But it is the custom of the Elect, on the other hand, to examine daily into their conduct from the very first springs of their thoughts, and to drain to the bottom, whatever impurity flows forth from thence. For as we do not notice how our limbs grow, our body increases, our appearance changes, our hair turns from black to white, (for all these things take place in us, without our knowing it,) in like manner is our mind changed from itself, by the very habit of anxiety every moment of our life; and we do not perceive it, unless we sit down to carefully watch our inmost condition, and weigh our advances and failures day by day.

For in this life, to stand still, is, in itself, to go back, as it were, to our old state, and when the mind is left undisturbed, it is overpowered by an old age, as it were, of torpor: because by neglecting itself, and by losing insensibly its proper strength, it wastes away, unknown to itself, from the appearance of its former power. Whence it is said by the Prophet, under the character of Ephraim, Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knew it not, but even gray hairs are sprinkled on him, and he himself was ignorant of it. [Hos.7, 9] But when the mind enquires into itself, and examines itself carefully with penitence, it is renewed from this its old nature, by being bathed with tears, and kindled with grief; and, though it had been well nigh frozen with the chill of age, it glows afresh by a supply of the zeal of inward love. Whence the Apostle Paul warns his disciples, who were growing old by contact with this mortal life, saying, Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. [Eph. 4, 23]

15. But both the examples of the Fathers, and the precepts of holy Scripture, assist us much in acting thus. For if we look at the doings of the Saints, and lend an ear to the Divine commands, the sight of the one and the hearing of the other inflames us. And our heart is not benumbed with torpor, when it is urged on by imitation of them. Whence it is well said to Moses, The fire on the altar shall always burn, which the priest shall feed, putting wood on it every day in the morning. [Lev. 6, 12] For the altar of God is our heart, in which the fire is ordered always to burn: because it is necessary that the flame of love should constantly ascend therefrom to God. And the priest should put wood thereon every day, lest it should go out. For every one who is endowed with faith in Christ, is made specially a member of the Great High Priest, as Peter the Apostle says to all the faithful, But ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood. [1 Pet. 2, 9] And as the Apostle John says, Thou hast made us a kingdom and priests to our God. [Rev. 1, 6] The Priest therefore feeding the fire on the altar, must place fuel on it every day;

that is, every faithful person must never cease to collect together in his heart as well the examples of those who have gone before, as also the testimonies of Holy Scripture, that the flame of love may not be extinguished within it. For to make use of, either the examples of the Fathers, or the precepts of the Lord, in exciting our love, is, as it were, to supply fuel to the fire. For since our new life within daily grows old, by its very converse with this world, fire must be fed by a supply of wood, so that while it wastes itself away by the habits of our

own condition, it may revive by means of the examples and testimonies of the Fathers. And it is there rightly ordered, that wood should be thrown on every day in the morning. For these things are not done, unless when the night of blindness is extinguished. Or certainly, because the morning is the first part of the day, every one of the faithful must put aside the thoughts of this life, and consider in the first place, that he must enkindle by every means in his power, that zeal which is even now as it were failing within him. For this fire on the altar of the Lord, that is, on our heart, is speedily extinguished, if it is not carefully renewed by an application of the examples of the Fathers, and the testimonies of the Lord.

16. But it is rightly subjoined in this place, And when the burnt offering is placed upon it he shall burn the fat of the peace offerings. [Lev. 6, 12] For whoever kindles within himself this fire of love, places himself upon it as a burnt offering, because he burns out every fault, which wickedly lived within him. For when he examines the secrets of his own thoughts, and sacrifices his wicked life, by the sword of conversion, he has placed himself on the altar of his own heart, and kindled himself with the fire of love. And the fat of the peace offerings smells sweetly from this victim: because the inward fatness of new love, making peace between ourselves and God, emits from us the sweetest odour. But since this self-same love continues inextinguishable in the heart of the Elect, it is there fitly subjoined, This is that perpetual fire, which shall never go out on the altar. [Lev. 6, 13] This fire in truth will never go out on the altar, because the glow of love increases in their minds even after this life. For it is the effect of eternal contemplation, that Almighty God is loved the more deeply, the more He is seen.

17. But that we are delivered from the depths of this life, when aided by the Divine warning, and the examples of those who have gone before, is also well signified by Jeremiah the Prophet being lowered into a well; [Jer. 38, 11] for ropes and old rags are let down, in order to raise him out of it. For what is typified by the ropes but the precepts of the Lord? For since they both bind us fast, and snatch us away when involved in evil doings, they tie, as it were, and draw us, they confine and raise us up. But for fear he should be cut, when bound, and dragged by the ropes, old rags are at the same time lowered down: because the examples of the old fathers strengthen, that the Divine commands may not alarm us. And, by comparing ourselves with them, we presume that we are able to do that, which we shrink from, through our own weakness. If then we are anxious to be raised from the depth, let us be fastened with ropes, that is, let us be bound by the precepts of the Lord. But let old rags also be placed between, for the ropes to be held better by their means: that is, let us be supported by the examples of those of old times, that the subtle precepts may not, as they raise up, wound us who are infirm and timid.

The Apostle Paul used to apply, as it were, some old rags, when he adapted the examples of the ancients to his spiritual precepts, in order to raise up his disciples, saying, The righteous had trial of mockings and scourging, moreover also of bonds and imprisonments: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. [Heb. 11, 36, 37] And shortly after, Having therefore so great a cloud of witnesses placed over us,

laying aside every weight, and the sin which surrounds us, let us run with patience to the contest set before us; [Heb. 12, 1] and again, Remember those who are placed over you, who have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith imitate, looking to the end of their conversation. [Heb. 13, 7] He had, namely, in a former passage, lowered ropes, as it were, while announcing spiritual precepts. But afterwards he applied old rags, as it were, when mentioning the examples of ancestors.

18. Roused then by the voices of so many precepts, and aided by the comparison of so many examples, let us turn back to our hearts, and examine carefully all our doings. And let us blame whatever within us offends against the will of Divine rectitude, in order that this very accusation may excuse us with our strict Judge. For we are the more quickly acquitted in this judgment of our conscience, the more strictly we regard ourselves as guilty. And we must not omit the opportunities which are afforded us for this purpose, because, after the season of this life, there is no time for so doing. For it is not, indeed, said without reason, For it is no longer in the power of man to come near to God for judgment. For we are reminded of what we cannot do then, in order that we may not neglect, now, what we can do. But behold, engagements occupy our minds, and, from their constant contact with us, turn away the eye of our mind from self consideration. For our mind is distracted by those visible things, which it beholds, and when it is employed outwardly, it forgets what is going on in itself within. But the Divine voice pierces it with its terrible sentences, like so many nails, to keep it vigilant; that man may, at least when startled with fear, tremble at the secret judgments hanging over him, which he pretends not to see, when overwhelmed by torpor.

For, as we said above, the mind is weighed down, by being fatally accustomed to the habits of the old life, and is lulled as in sleep on these outward objects which it beholds; and after having once wasted its strength in seeking after visible things without, it has lost all its power for contemplating invisible things within. Whence it is now necessary that the mind which is detached by visible objects, should be smitten with invisible judgments, and that, since it has laid itself low by its evil indulgence in these outward objects, it should seek, at least when smitten, that which it has forsaken. But behold, Holy Scripture transfixes drowsy hearts with a kind of dread, in order that they may not cling to those things which come to nothing without, but which have eternally ruined them within. It points out to us what is decreed by the secret sentence, in order that these outward things may not be too much thought of. It informs us what is doing above us with regard to us, in order that we may turn the eyes of our heart from these outward and temporal objects, to the secret of the inward disposal. For after much had been said, concerning the punishment of the wicked, there is suddenly introduced the secret judgment, mercifully and justly passed upon us: how some lose that which they appeared to hold fast, and some receive that which others deservedly lose. For he says,

Ver. 24. He shall break in pieces many and without number, and shall make others to stand in their stead. [viii]

19. This is daily occurring. But because the end of both parties is not seen as yet, it is less dreaded. For the reprobate never acknowledge their fault, excepting when under punishment. And because punishment is deferred, the fault is made light of. But they fall from a state of righteousness, and others, on their fall, obtain the place of life. But they think not of their fall, since they do not consider the death which awaits them for ever. For did they but turn their eyes to what they are about to suffer there, they would tremble at what they are doing here. But it is plain to all that Almighty God will make a public enquiry at that final ordeal, so as to give up some to torments, and admit others to a participation of the heavenly kingdom. But that is now daily taking place by a secret, which is then made manifest by a public, judgment. For either searching, or ordering, the hearts of men, one by one, with justice and mercy, He casts forth some of them to outward pursuits, and leads others on to those which are within. He inspires these to seek for inward joys, and leaves those to think, for their pleasure, on outward things. He raises the mind of these to heavenly objects, and immerses the pride of the others in the basest desires. But the hearts of other men are shut up from human sight, and it is not known who is rejected;

since the thoughts of each man cannot be penetrated. For oft times, though the heart be evilly disposed, the deliberation of thought has not been carried into effect, and a man is perhaps still constrained within by habit, who already wanders abroad in his mind. But such an one, whoever he be, fell in the sight of the inward Judge, as soon as he departed in desire from seeking for things within. But others, sometimes, after a course of evil living, revive, with sudden affection, to a hope of heaven, and they who had dissipated themselves by sinful conduct, bring themselves back, by self reproof, to the bosom of inward repentance. And men still looking back to this conduct, think them still to be such, as they knew them to be in behaviour. But they themselves, on the other hand, by the examination of strict consideration, attack their former life as they remember it to have been; and it is known what they were, but what they have now begun to be is not known. In both then of these classes it is frequently the case, that both they who in the judgment of men seem to stand, are already fallen in the sight of the Eternal Judge: and that those who are still fallen before men, already stand firm in the sight of the Eternal Judge. For what man could suppose that Judas, even after the ministry of the apostleship, would lose his portion in life?

And who would believe, on the other hand, that the thief would find a means of life even at the very instant of his death? But the Judge secretly presiding, and discerning the hearts of these two persons, mercifully established the one, and justly crushed the other. He cast forth the one with severity, He drew the other within of His mercy. And hence in announcing even by His Prophet, that some would fall and others be raised up at the time of His passion, He well says, I mingled My drink with weeping. [Ps. 102, 9] For drink is drawn in from without, but weeping pours out from within. For the Lord then to mingle drink with weeping, is for Him to draw some within, from outward things, and to cast off others from an inward to an outward condition. He shall break in pieces, then, many and without number, and shall make others to stand in their stead.

20. But, as was said before, this breaking is first wrought within, in order to its being afterwards displayed without. By this breaking the outward parts of some sometimes appear to be still sound, while the inward parts have already rotted away. For it is written, Before ruin the heart is exalted. [Prov. l6, 18] They are smitten then on the very point in which they are proud. Whence it is written, I have broken their heart which committeth fornication, and which departeth from Me. [Ez. 6, 9] For to delight outwardly in forbidden objects, is to commit fornication within. But this very pride of the haughty man is a great crushing of his heart. For he falls from the integrity of sound health, just as he is puffed up with pride, on account of any virtue. For proud men despise God, and, forsaking the glory of the Creator, seek their own. And, for them to have lost the support of their superior, and to have sunk back on themselves, is for them to have already fallen. They are crushed too because, having abandoned the things of heaven, they seek the earth. For what greater crushing can there be, than, having forsaken the Creator, to seek the creature, having forsaken the joys above, to be eager only for things below? Whence it is well said by the Prophet, But He humbles sinners even to the earth.

[Ps. 147, 6] For when they have lost heavenly things, every thing which they thirst after is earthly, and while they endeavour to seem greater, that which they seek after is of less value. Of whom it is well said by Jeremiah, Departing from Thee they shall be written in the earth. [Jer. 17, 13] But it is said on the other hand of the Elect, Rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. [Luke 10, 20] This crushing, then, first steals on in the mind, in order that it may afterwards advance in outward act. It shakes first the foundation of the thoughts, in order to smite afterwards the fabric of conduct. We must labour therefore with the greatest care, in order that it may be avoided in the place where it takes its rise. For it is written, Keep thy heart with all watchfulness, because life proceedeth from it. [Prov. 4, 23] And it is written again, From the heart proceed evil thoughts. [Matt. 15, 19] We must watch, therefore, within, lest the mind should fall, when it is exalted. Let us guard within all that we do without. For, if once the rottenness of pride has eaten into the marrow of the heart, the empty husk of outward appearance speedily falls. But we must observe, that, while some are said to receive strength to stand firm, when others fall, the number of the Elect is shewn to be fixed and definite.

Whence it is said also, to the Church of Philadelphia, through its Angel, Hold fast that which thou hast, that another take not thy crown. [Rev. 3, 11]

21. By this announcement then, in which it is said, that the life of some is exalted, and that of others is crushed, both the hope of the humble is cherished, and the pride of the haughty brought low: since those can forfeit the good qualities of which they are proud, and these enjoy the good things, which they were despised for not possessing. Let us tremble, then, at the blessings we have received, and not despair of those who have not yet obtained them. For we know what we are to-day; but we know not what we may become after a little while. But these persons whom, perchance, we despise, can begin late, and yet surpass our conduct, by their more fervent zeal. We must fear, therefore, lest he should rise, even on

our fall, who is now derided by us, who are standing firm: although, indeed, he knows not how to stand firm himself, who has learned to ridicule him, who is yet unsteady. But the Apostle Paul, enforcing this dread of heavenly judgments, into the hearts of his disciples, says, Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. [l Cor. 10, 12] But by saying, He breaketh in pieces, and by adding immediately, without number, he desired either to express the number of the reprobate, which surpasses the amount of human calculation; or he, certainly, wished to point out, that all who perish are not reckoned in the number of the Elect, and that they are therefore innumerable, as running beyond the number.

Whence the Prophet, on beholding that as many, at this period of the Church, believe only in appearance, as it is doubtless certain exceed the number and amount of the Elect, declares, They are multiplied above number. As though he were saying to many who are entering the Church, Even those come to the faith in appearance only, who are excluded from the number of the kingdom, because in truth they surpass by their multiplicity the number of the Elect. Whence also it is said by the Prophet Jeremiah, The city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Ananehel, even to the gate of the corner, and it will go forth beyond the standard of measure. [Jer. 31, 38] For no one in truth is ignorant that Holy Church is the city of the Lord. But Ananehel is interpreted the grace of God, and two walls meet together in a corner. The city of the Lord is said therefore to be built from the tower of Ananehel, even to the gate of the corner: because Holy Church, beginning from the loftiness of Divine grace, is built up, as far as to the entrance of both peoples, namely, Jew and Gentile. But because, as its members increase, reprobates also are included therein, it is fitly added, And it will go forth beyond the standard of measure: because it is extended even to those who, transgressing the standard of justice, are not within the number of the heavenly measure.

Whence it is said also to the same Church by Isaiah, For thou shall spread forth on the right hand, and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles. [Is. 54, 3] For it is extended in so great a multitude of Gentiles, to the right hand, when it admits some to be justified. And it is extended to the left also, when it admits into itself some who will even remain in sin. On account of this multitude, which lies beyond the number of the Elect, the Lord says in the Gospel, Many are called but few are chosen. [Matt. 20, 16] But, because some are crushed, while others are chosen, in consequence of the deserts of the sufferer, and not from the injustice of Him who punishes, (for God is not unjust, Who inflicteth wrath [Rom. 3, 5]) it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 25. For He knoweth their works, and therefore will He bring night on them, and they shall be crushed. [ix]

22. It is specially to be understood, that every sinner is, in two ways, crushed in the night; either when he is struck by the suffering of punishment from without, or when he is blinded by a secret sentence within. He falls at night, when he loses for ever the light of life, by the last judgment. Whence it is written, Bind him hands and feet, and send him into outer darkness. [Matt. 22, 13] For he is then sent of force into outer darkness; because he is now blinded of his own will with darkness within. But, again, the sinner is crushed at night,

when, condemned by the overthrow of former sinners, he finds not the light of truth, and knows not what he ought to do for the future. For every sin, which is not speedily wiped out by penitence, is either a sin, and a cause of sin, or else a sin, and the punishment of sin. For a sin which penitence does not wash away, soon leads on, by its very weight, to another. Whence it is not only a sin, but a sin, and a cause of sin. For, from that sin, a succeeding fault takes its rise, by which the blinded mind is led on to endure greater bondage from another. But a sin which arises from a sin, is no longer merely a sin, but a sin, and a punishment of sin.

Because Almighty God obscures, by a just judgment, the heart of a sinner, that he may fall into other sins also, through desert of his former sin. For the man whom He willed not to set free, He has smitten by forsaking him. That, then, is not improperly called the punishment of sin, which, in consequence of a just blindness having been inflicted from above, is committed by way of punishment for former offences. And it is the result of a system, ordained indeed above, but thrown into confusion by men's wickedness below, that a preceding sin is the cause of that which follows, and, again, a subsequent sin the punishment of that which precedes it. This seed, as it were, of error, Paul had clearly observed in the unbelieving and unstable, when saying, Who when they had known God, glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their thoughts. [Rom. l, 21] But he immediately added that which sprang up from this seed of error, saying, Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their own heart unto uncleanness, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. [Rom. l, 24] For because, though knowing God, they wittingly committed the sin of pride, they are also so blinded as not to be aware of the sin they are committing. And they who are unwilling to follow their own understanding in sin, that is the cause of sin, are deprived of the light of understanding in sin, that is the punishment of sin.

The pitfal of subsequent sins is covered over by the demerits of former sins, in order that he, who knowingly commits sin, may afterwards fall, even unwittingly, in other sins.

23. It is provided, in fact, that some faults are smitten with other faults, in order that their very growth in sin may be the punishment of sinners. For because Almighty God grants time for repentance, which human wickedness perverts, nevertheless, to the practice of its own iniquity, our guilt is doubtless permitted to increase by the just judgment of God, in order that it may be heaped up, for Him to strike it at last a heavier blow. For hence the Apostle Paul says again of certain persons, To fill up their sins alway. [1 Thess. 2, 16] Hence it is to John by the voice of the angel, He that hurteth let him hurt still, he that is filthy let him be filthy still. [Rev. 22, 11] Hence David says, Add iniquity unto their iniquity, that they may not enter into Thy righteousness. [Ps. 69, 27] Hence again it is said of the Lord by the same Psalmist, Suggestions ['Immissiones'] by evil angels He made a way for the path of His anger. [Ps. 78, 49. 50. For the Lord justly permits the heart which has been weighed down by former demerits, to be deceived also by the subsequent persuasions of malignant spirits, for, when it is deservedly led into sin, its guilt is increased in its punishment. Whence also

the Lord is said to have made a way for His wrath out of a path. For a way is broader than a path.

But to make out of a path a way for His wrath, is, by strictly judging to extend the causes of His wrath, that they who refused, when enlightened, to act rightly, may, when justly blinded, still so act as to deserve a greater punishment. Hence it is said by Moses, The sins of the Amorites are not yet full. [Gen. 15, 16] Hence the Lord says by the same Moses, For their vine is of the vineyard of Sodom, and their stock is of Gomorrah. Their grape is a grape of gall, and the cluster of bitterness is in them. Their wine is the fury of dragons and the rage of asps, which cannot be healed. Are not all these things stored up with Me, and sealed up in My treasures? In the day of vengeance I will repay them. [Deut. 32, 32-35] How many of their sins has He revealed, and yet He immediately subjoins, In the time when their foot shall have stumbled. Behold, their most abominable misdeeds are described, and yet for the day of vengeance, their subsequent fall is looked forward to, whereby their faults are to be heaped up to the full. They already have enough to deserve punishment; but their sin is still suffered to increase, in order that, sinning, a heavier punishment may torture them. Sin, the cause of sin, already deserves punishment; but it is still deferred, in order that sin, the punishment of sin, may supply an increase of suffering.

24. But frequently one and the same sin is also a sin such as is both a punishment, and a cause of sin. We shall make this more plain, by bringing forward some instances. For unrestrained gluttony excites the fulness of the flesh to the heat of lust. But lust, when committed, is frequently concealed either by perjury or murder, for fear it should be punished by the vengeance of human laws. Let us suppose to ourselves then, that a man has given the reins to his gluttony, that, being overcome by his gluttony, he has committed the sin of adultery, that being detected in adultery, he has secretly murdered the husband of the adulteress, lest he should be brought to judgment. This adultery then, standing between gluttony and murder, springing from the one, and giving being to the other, is a sin, and both the punishment, and the cause of sin also. It is in truth a sin of itself, but the punishment of sin, because it has increased the guilt of gluttony; but it is the cause of sin, because it also gave birth to the subsequent murder. One and the same sin, then, is both the punishment of the preceding, and the cause of the subsequent, sin: because it both condemns past sins, while it adds to their amount, and sows the seeds of future sins, to deserve condemnation.

Because then the eye of the heart is blinded by previous sins, that blindness which confuses the mind of the sinner, by condemning him for his former offence, is properly designated 'night:' because by this the light of truth is concealed from the eye of the sinner. It is therefore well said, For He knoweth their works, and therefore will He bring night on them, and they shall be crushed. Because, as has been often observed, they doubtless commit previous offences, in order that they should be involved again in sin by the darkness which follows, so that they are now as unable to behold the light of righteousness, as they were unwilling to behold it when they were able. But the Lord is said to bring night on them,

not because He Himself brings on the darkness, but because He does not enlighten in His mercy the darkened hearts of sinners. So that His having blinded men in the night is His not having willed to deliver them from the gloom of blindness. It follows,

Ver. 26. He hath smitten them as ungodly men, in the place of beholders. [x]

25. In holy Scripture the word 'as,' is wont to be used, sometimes for resemblance, sometimes for reality. For it is for resemblance, as when the Apostle says, As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing: [2 Cor. 6 10] but for the reality, as John says, We beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father. [John 1, 14] But in this passage it makes no difference, whether it is put for resemblance, or reality: for, in whatever way it is taken, the evil life of the wicked is plainly signified. But holy Scripture specially calls unbelievers 'ungodly.' For sinners are distinguished from ungodly by this difference, that though every ungodly man is a sinner, yet every sinner is not ungodly. For even a man who is godly in the Faith can be called a sinner. Whence John says, If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. [1 John 1, 8] But a man is properly called 'ungodly' who is estranged from the holiness of religion. For of such the Prophet says, The ungodly shall not rise up in the judgment. [Ps. 1, 5] But Holy Church is called the place of beholders. For people rightly assemble therein, in order that the True Light, which is God Himself, may be seen. Whence it is said to Moses, There is a place by Me, and thou shall stand upon a rock, when My Majesty passeth by. [Ex. 33, 21. 22. And shortly afterwards, I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back parts.

[ib. 23. For, by the place, is typified the Church, but by the rock, the Lord, but by Moses, the multitude of the people of Israel, which did not believe, when the Lord was preaching upon earth. It stood, therefore, on the rock, beholding the back of the Lord, as He was passing by: because in truth having been brought into Holy Church, after the Passion and Ascension of the Lord, it obtained a knowledge of the faith in Christ, and beheld the back parts of Him, Whose presence it had not seen. Let it be said, then, of those whom Divine Vengeance finds within Holy Church, still persisting in their iniquities; let it be said of these, whose conduct Paul describes thus, Who confess that they know God, but in words they deny Him: [Tit. 1, 16] let it be said of these, He hath smitten them as ungodly in the place of beholders. For they were standing in that place, where they seemed to see God. They loved darkness in that very place, where the light of truth is beheld. And although they had had their eyes opened in faith, yet they kept them closed in their works. Whence it is also well said of Judaea, Her watchmen are blind, because, namely, they did not behold in works that which they saw in profession. Whence it is written also of Balaam, Who falling hath his eyes open. [Num. 24, 16] For, falling in works, he kept his eyes open in contemplation.

In like manner these also, who open their eyes in faith, and who see not in works, who are placed, from their appearance of piety, within the Church, are found, by their ungodly conversation, without the Church. Of whom it is well written in another place, I saw the ungodly buried, who when they were alive, were in the holy place, and were praised in the city, as men of just works. [Eccles. 8, 10]

26. But the very tranquillity of the peace of the Church conceals many under the Christian name, who are beset with the plague of their own wickedness. But if a light breath of persecution strikes them, it sweeps them away at once as chaff from the threshing floor. But some persons wish to bear the mark of Christian calling, because, since the name of Christ has been exalted on high, nearly all persons now look to appear faithful, and from seeing others called thus, they are ashamed not to seem faithful themselves; but they neglect to be that which they boast of being called. For they assume the reality of inward excellence, to adorn their outward appearance: and they who stand before the heavenly Judge, naked from the unbelief of their heart, are clothed, in the sight of men, with a holy profession, at least in words.

27. But some persons maintain the faith in their inmost heart, but are not careful to live faithfully. For they assail in their conduct that which they reverence in profession. And it frequently happens that they lose, by Divine judgment, even that which they wholesomely believe, through the wickedness of their lives. For they unceasingly pollute themselves by wicked deeds, and do not believe that the vengeance of just judgment can fall in retribution upon this conduct. And frequently, when they neglect to live strictly, they fall into unbelief, even when no one persecutes them. For they who do not believe that a strict judgment is hanging over them, who imagine that they can sin, without being punished for it; how can they either be, or be called, faithful? For to believe that due punishment cannot be inflicted on their unrepented wickedness, is to have lost their faith. Because then they scorn to maintain works worthy of faith, they lose even the faith which they seemed to possess. And the language of destroying enemies over these is fitly mentioned by the Prophet, under the character of Jerusalem. For it is said by them, Make her void, make her void, even to the foundation thereof. [Ps. 137, 7] For Paul says, Other foundation can no man lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus.

[l Cor. 3, 11] Destroying enemies, then, make Jerusalem bare, even to the foundation, when evil spirits, having first destroyed the edifice of good works, draw away also the firm foundation of religion from the hearts of the faithful. For works are built on faith, as a building on a foundation. To have laid bare then even to the foundation, is, after having overthrown good works, to have scattered the strength of faith. Hence also it is said to Judaea by Jeremiah, The sons also of Memphis and Taphnis have polluted thee even to the head. [Jer. 2, 16] For to be polluted even to the head, is, after a habit of evil deeds, to be corrupted in the very sublimity of the faith. For when abandoned spirits involve the soul of any one in wicked works, but cannot pollute the integrity of his faith, they pollute, as yet, the inferior members, as it were, but reach not to the head. But whoever is corrupted in the faith, is at once defiled even to the head. For a malignant spirit reaches, as it were, from the inferior even to the higher members, when, defiling the outward conduct, it corrupts with the disease of unbelief the pure loftiness of the faith. Because then all these things are hidden from the eyes of men, but are open to the sight of God, and many die, without faith, in this abode of faith itself, let it be rightly said, He hath smitten them as ungodly men, in the place of beholders.

For they exhibit themselves, before men in the Church, as godly persons, but because they cannot escape the Divine judgments, they are smitten as ungodly. And it tends to increase their punishment, that each of them, having been thrown together with the faithful in the Church, wittingly despised the verity of the faith. And a heavier punishment follows them, as the knowledge of good living also attends them in the examples of righteous men. For the righteous and faithful brethren who are now set before them, are so many witnesses to assail them in the coming judgment. They know, therefore, that which they neglect to follow. Whence it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 27. Who departed from Him, as it were on purpose. [xi]

28. For we must understand that a sin is committed in three ways. For it is perpetrated either through ignorance, or infirmity, or of set purpose. And we sin more grievously from infirmity than through ignorance, but much more grievously of set purpose than from infirmity. Paul had sinned from ignorance, when he said, Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, because 1 did it ignorantly in unbelief. [1 Tim. 1, 13] But Peter sinned through infirmity, when the single word of a damsel shook in him all that strength of faith, which he had spoken of to the Lord, and when he denied, with his voice, the Lord Whom he held firm in his heart. [Matt. 26, 69. and 33. But because a sin of infirmity or ignorance is wiped away the more easily, as it is not wilfully committed, Paul amended by knowledge the points on which he was ignorant: and Peter strengthened the root of faith which was moved, and, as it were, withering away, by watering it with his tears. [Ib. 75. But those persons sinned intentionally, of whom the Master Himself said, If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. [John 15, 22] And a little after, They have both seen, and hated, both Me and My Father. [Ib. 24] For not to do good is one thing, to hate a teacher of goodness another:

as it is one thing to sin from precipitancy, and another thing to sin deliberately. For a sin is often committed from precipitation, which yet is condemned on thought and deliberation. For it frequently happens that a man through infirmity loves what is right, and cannot perform it. But to sin deliberately is neither to love nor to do what is good. As it is therefore sometimes a heavier offence to love sin than to commit it, it is, in like manner, more sinful to hate righteousness, than not to have performed it. There are some then in the Church, who so far from doing good, even persecute it, and who even detest in others, what they neglect to do themselves. The sin of these persons is in truth not committed from infirmity or ignorance, but of intention alone: because, namely, if they wished to do what is right, and were unable, they would at least love in others, what they neglect in themselves. For were they but only to wish for it themselves, they would not hate it when done by others. But because they despise in their lives, and persecute with severity the very same good qualities which they know and hear of, it is rightly said, Who departed from Him of purpose. Whence also it is rightly subjoined,

And would not understand any of His ways. [xii] 29. For he says not, they understand not through infirmity, but they would not understand; because men frequently also despise the knowledge of those things, which they are too proud to do. For since it is written, The servant that knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes, and the servant which knew his Lord's will, and did not according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes, [Luke 12, 47. 48.] they consider that their ignorance secures impunity for their sin. But they are doubtless overwhelmed with the darkness of pride alone, and therefore discern not, because it is one thing to have been ignorant, another to have refused to learn. For not to know is only ignorance, to refuse to learn is pride. And they are the less able to plead ignorance in excuse, the more that knowledge is set before them even against their will. Whence it is said by Solomon, Doth not wisdom cry, and prudence put forth her voice, standing on the top of lofty places, above the way, in the middle of the paths? [Prov. 8, 1. 2.] We might perhaps be able to pass along the way of this present life, in ignorance of this Wisdom, if She had not Herself stood in the corners of the way.

30. If It had wished to be concealed, it would have been necessary to search after It. But after It has publicly displayed the mysteries of the Incarnation, after It has exhibited to the proud a pattern of humility, It placed Itself, as it were, in the middle of the way as we were passing along it; in order, namely, that we might strike against that which we are unwilling to look for, and touch and stumble over that which we neglect to observe as we are passing by it. Let it be said then, And they would not understand any of His ways. For the way of Incarnate Wisdom is every action which He did in time. His ways are the courses of life, which He has laid down for those who are coming to Him. He has marked out as many ways for those who come to Him, as many patterns as He has set forth of holy living. The Prophet had beheld His ways of humility, when he sighed, saying, I will exercise myself in Thy commands, and I will consider Thy ways. [Ps. 119, 15] Hence again it is said of every righteous man who takes care to walk after the pattern of the Lord. The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord, and he desireth greatly His way. [Ps. 37, 23] Because then all haughty men despise the doings of the Lord's humility, it is rightly said, They would not understand His ways.

For these ways are mean in appearance, but are to be reverenced in understanding; since that which is seen in them is one thing, that which is looked for is another. For what else does it present in this life to the eyes of beholders, but degradation, spitting, insults, and death? But we pass through this lowliness to the highest glory. By these disgraces, which precede, eternal and glorious things are promised to us. Haughty men then have seen the ways of the Lord, but have refused to understand them, because by despising the mean appearance they present in themselves, they have lost the sublime promises which they offer. To understand, then, the ways of the Lord, is both to endure humbly what is transitory, and steadily to wait for that which is to abide; in order that, after the pattern of the Lord, coeternal glory, which is purchased by temporal disgrace, may be sought for, and that a person may not fix his mind on that which he suffers here, but on that which he looks for. Haughty men, then, have kept

their eyes closed to these things, because while they pride themselves on the glory of this present life, they have not seen the loftiness of the Lord's humility. For humility discloses to us the light of understanding, pride conceals it. For it is a kind of secret blessing of a holy life: and the mind attains to it the less, the more it is puffed up:

because it is driven away from it, the more madly it is inspired. It follows,

Ver. 28. That they might cause the cry of the needy to come to Him, and that He might hear the voice of the poor. [xiii]

31. For when these men are proud, they who are oppressed by their pride, cry aloud to God. Or certainly, it is said that they have caused the cry of the poor to come to God, because, on their fall, the poor, that is, the humble in spirit, are appointed in their room. And because this has taken place on their fall, they are said to have done it themselves: by the very same mode of expression with which we say that a camp fights, because men fight out of it. Or certainly, because every thing which has been stated above, can also be referred to the rulers of the Church, who give up the office of preaching, and are involved in worldly business, on occasion of exercising authority, it is fitly subjoined, That they might cause the cry of the needy to come to Him, and that He might hear the voice of the poor. For certainly while, from being engaged in worldly cares, they abandon the duty of preaching, they compel the flock which is under them to burst out into clamorous complaint. So that each of those under them complains, as if justly, of the conduct of the pretended pastor, why doth he hold the place of a teacher, who doth not exercise the office? Although, by 'the pride of mighty men,' the haughtiness of the Jews, and by 'the cry of the poor,' the longings of the Gentiles, are perhaps more appropriately typified.

Just as by the rich man feasting sumptuously, [Luke 16, 19-31] as the Truth Itself witnesses, the Jewish people is designated, which makes use of the fulness of the Law, not for the needful purpose of salvation, but for the pomp of pride, and which does not refresh itself moderately with the teaching of the commandments, but makes a boastful display of them. And by the wounded Lazarus, (which is by interpretation, 'Assisted,') is set forth the condition of the Gentile people, whom the Divine assistance exalts the more, the less it relies on the resources of its own strength. And he is described as poor and full of wounds, because the Gentile world has, with humble heart, laid open the confession of its sins. For as in a wound the venom is drawn towards the skin from within, so, in like manner, while secrets are disclosed by the confession of sin, evil humours, as it were, break forth from the inmost parts of the body. When they sin then, the cry of the poor is heard; because, while the Jews are proud against God, the prayers of the Gentiles are come up to God. Whence also, from his awe at those boundless and unfathomable judgments, he does not care to discuss them with reasoning, but to venerate them with admiration, and says,

Ver. 29. For when He giveth peace, who is there to condemn? since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him? [xiv]

32. Let no one then discuss, why the Gentile world lay so long in unbelief, while the Jewish people was yet standing, and why the sin of unbelief overthrew the Jewish people, as the Gentile world rose to belief. [Rom. 11, 20] Let no one discuss, why one is drawn on, as of a free gift, and the other repelled according to its deserts. For if thou art surprised at the adoption of the Gentiles, When He giveth peace, who is there to condemn? If thou art startled at the loss of the Jews, Since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him? So the counsel of supreme and hidden power becomes the satisfaction of evident reason. Whence also the Lord in the Gospel says, when speaking on the subject of this matter, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father. [Matt. 11, 25] And He immediately adds, as a kind of reason for this concealment and revealing, For so it hath seemed good before Thee. [Matt. 11, 26] In which words, in truth, we learn a pattern of humility, that we may not rashly presume to discuss the Divine counsels concerning the call of the one and the rejection of the others. For after He had mentioned both points, He did not at once give a reason, but said that it was thus well pleasing to God;

pointing out, namely, this very point, that that cannot be unjust, which has seemed good to the Just One. Whence also He says, when paying the labourers in the vineyard, on equalling in compensation those who were unequal in work, and when he who had toiled longest asked for greater pay, Didst thou not agree with Me for a penny? I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own? [Matt. 20, 13-15] In all things then which are outwardly disposed by Him, the righteousness of His secret will is an evident cause of reason. Let it be said therefore. For when He giveth peace, who is there to condemn? since He hath hidden His face, who is there that can look on Him? And because God judges the least, in the same way as the greatest, things, and the doings of individuals, as those of all men, it is fitly subjoined, Both over a nation, and over all men.

[xv] 33. As if we were plainly directed to observe, that this judgment which is spoken of over a single nation, is also exercised over all men, by an invisible examination; so that one man is secretly elected, and another rejected, but no one unjustly. This then which we see happening in the greatest cases, let us also anxiously fear in ourselves separately. For the Divine judgments are displayed in the same manner over a single soul as over a single city; and again in the same way over a single city, as over a single nation: and over a single nation, as over the whole multitude of the human race. Because the Lord is as attentive to particular persons, as though unconcerned with the world at large; and again so directs His attention to all at once, as though unconcerned with individuals. For He Who fills all things with His dispensation, rules by filling them, and when ordering one single thing, is still present in all, and again, when ordering the world at large, is present with each individual; in fact, works all things without moving, by the power of His own nature. What marvel, then, that He, when intent on any thing, is not confined to it, Who works still at rest? Let it be said then that He exercises this searching judgment both over a nation, and over all men. Because he has passed then from species to genus, he now turns himself from genus to species, and shews what Judaea properly deserves, saying,

Ver. 30. Who maketh a man that is a hypocrite to reign for the sins of the people. [xvi]

34. For Judaea was unwilling that the true King should reign over it, and therefore obtained a hypocrite, as its merits demanded. As the Truth Itself says in the Gospel, I have come in My Fathers name, and ye received Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. [John 5, 43] And as Paul says, Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved, therefore God shall send them the operation of error, that they should believe a lie. [2 Thess. 2, 10. 11. In that, then, which is said, Who maketh a man that is a hypocrite to reign for the sins of the people, may be designated Antichrist, the very chief of all hypocrites. For that seducer then pretends to sanctity, that he may draw men away to iniquity. But he is permitted to reign for the sins of the people, because, in truth, they are preordained to be under his rule, who are foreseen before all ages to be worthy of being his subjects, who by their subsequent sins, claim to be placed under him by antecedent judgments. That Antichrist then reigns over the ungodly arises not from the injustice of the Judge, but from the sin of the sufferer. Although most of them have not beheld his sovereign power, and yet are enslaved to it, by the condition in which their sins have placed them. Because they, doubtless, reverence even him by their evil lives, whom they do not see tyrannizing over them.

Are not they his very members, who seek by a shew of affected sanctity to seem what they are not? For he in a special manner assumes a false guise, who though a lost man, and an evil spirit, falsely announces himself to be God. [2 Thess. 2, 4] But they unquestionably now come forth from his body, who conceal their iniquities under the cloak of sacred honour, in order to seek to seem to be that in profession, which they refuse to be in their doings. For since it is written, that whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin, [John 8, 34] the more freely they now commit the sins which they desire, the more strictly are they bound down to his service. But let no one who suffers such a ruler, blame him whom he suffers: because his being subject to the power of a wicked ruler was doubtless of his own desert. Let him therefore rather blame the fault of his own evil doings, than the injustice of his ruler. For it is written, I will give thee kings in Mine anger. [Hos. 13, 11] Why then do we scorn their being set over us, whose authority over us we endure from the anger of the Lord? If then we receive rulers, according to our deserts, from the wrath of God, we infer from their conduct, what to think in our estimate of ourselves. Although even the Elect are frequently placed under the reprobate. Whence also David for a long time endured Saul.

But it is proved by the subsequent sin of adultery, that he then deserved to be thus heavily oppressed by the cruelty of him who was set over him. [2 Sam. 12, 11]

35. The characters, then, of rulers are so assigned according to the deserts of their subjects, that frequently they who seem to be good are soon changed by the acceptance of power. As holy Scripture observed of the same Saul that he changed his heart with his dignity. Whence it is written, When thou wast little in thine own eyes, I made thee the head among the tribes of Israel. [1 Sam. 15, 17] The conduct of rulers is so ordered with reference to the characters of their subjects, that frequently the conduct of even a truly good shepherd becomes sinful, in

consequence of the wickedness of his flock. For that Prophet David, who had been praised by the witness of God Himself, who had been made acquainted with heavenly mysteries, being puffed up by the swelling of sudden pride, sinned in numbering the people. And yet, though David sinned, the people endured the punishment. [2 Sam. 24, 1-17] Why was this? Because in truth the hearts of rulers are disposed according to the deserts of their people. But the righteous Judge reproved the fault of the sinner, by the punishment of those very persons, on whose account he sinned. But because he was not exempt from guilt, as displaying pride of his own free will, he himself endured also the punishment of his sin. For that furious wrath which smote the people in their bodies, prostrated the ruler of the people by the pain of his inmost heart. But it is certain that the deserts of rulers and people are so mutually connected, that frequently the conduct of the people is made worse from the fault of their pastors, and the conduct of pastors is changed according to the deserts of their people.

36. But because rulers have their own Judge, subjects must be very careful not to judge rashly the conduct of their rulers. For the Lord Himself did not without a reason scatter the money of the changers, and overthrow the seats of them that were selling doves, [Matt. 2l, 12] signifying doubtless that He judges the conduct of people by their rulers, but that He examines into the doings of rulers in His own person. And yet even those sins of subjects, which are put off from being judged, or which cannot be judged by rulers, are doubtless reserved for His judgment. Therefore whilst all is done in good faith, it is a worthy part of virtue, if whatever is in a superior is tolerated. Yet it ought to be humbly suggested whether any thing which displeases can be amended. But great care must be taken that an inordinate maintenance of justice does not degenerate into pride: lest humility, the mistress of what is right, should be lost, while what is right itself is loved without due caution; lest a man should slight him as his superior, whom he may perhaps happen to blame in some part of his conduct. But the mind of subjects is trained to guard its humility against this swelling pride, if its own weakness is constantly watched. For we neglect to examine honestly our own strength, and because we believe ourselves stronger than we really are, we consequently judge those severely who are set over us.

For the more we neglect to know ourselves, the more clearly do we see those whom we endeavour to blame. These are the several evils which are often committed by subjects against their rulers, and by rulers against their subjects. Because both rulers consider all their subjects to be less wise than themselves, and subjects, again, judge the conduct of their rulers, and think that they could do better, if they perchance possessed the power. Since it is frequently the case that rulers see less judiciously what is to be done, because the mist of pride obscures their sight, and that a subject, when raised to high power, sometimes does the very same thing, which he used to complain of when a subject; and that, having committed the very faults which he has condemned, he is ashamed at all events that he condemned them. As rulers then must take care that their higher position does not puff up their minds, with a notion of their singular wisdom, so must subjects be careful not to be offended at the conduct of their rulers.

37. But even if the conduct of rulers is justly blamed, yet it is the duty of subjects to pay them respect, even when they displease them. But thou must carefully observe not to be anxious to imitate a person whom it is necessary for thee to reverence, and not to scorn to reverence him whom thou despisest to imitate. For the narrow path of rectitude and humility must be so maintained, that, though offended with the reprehensible conduct of their rulers, the mind of subjects may not depart from observing respect for their office. Which is well set forth in Noah when drunk, the nakedness of whose secret parts his sons came and covered with averted looks. For we are said to be averse from that which we reprobate. What is meant then by his sons' coming with averted looks, and covering the shame of their father with a cloak thrown over their backs, except that good subjects, while offended with the misdeeds of their rulers, nevertheless conceal them from others? They bring a covering with averted looks, because judging the deeds, and reverencing the office, they do not wish to behold the sin which they conceal.

38. But there are some, who if they have made ever so small a beginning in spiritual conversation, on observing that their rulers fix their thoughts only on worldly and temporal objects, begin to blame the disposition of supreme Providence as if they were improperly appointed to rule, since they set an example of worldly conversation. But these persons, from not being careful to keep themselves from censure of their rulers, (as their fault justly demands,) proceed to blame even the Creator. For His dispensation is understood to be more right by the humble, for the very same reason that it is not judged to be right by the proud. For because the power of office cannot be exercised without our engaging in worldly cares, therefore Almighty God, in His marvellous dispensation of mercy, frequently imposes the burden of rule on hard and laborious hearts; in order that the tender minds of spiritual men may be released from worldly cares: in order that the one may be more safely concealed from the bustle of the world, the more willingly the others employ themselves in worldly anxieties. For hard are the ways of worldly slavery, in the discharge of a burden that has been undertaken even for the good of others.

39. And frequently, as has been said, as the Merciful God tenderly loves His own, so does He anxiously conceal them from outward employments. For often the father of a family appoints his servants to that work, from which he releases his delicate ['subtiles.'] sons; and his sons are comely and free from annoyance, from the fact that the servants are defiled with dust. And how properly this is ordered in the Church by Divine appointment is signified by the very construction of the tabernacle. For Moses is commanded by the voice of God to weave curtains of fine linen, and scarlet, and blue, for the covering of the Holy of Holies within. And he was ordered to spread, for the covering of the tabernacle, curtains of goats' hair, and skins, to sustain the rain, and wind, and dust. What then do we understand by the skins and goats' hair, with which the tabernacle is covered, but the gross minds of men, which are sometimes, hard though they be, placed on high in the Church by the secret judgment of God? And because they are not afraid of being employed in worldly concerns, they must needs bear the winds and storms of temptation which arise from the opposition of this world. But what is signified by the blue, scarlet, and fine linen, but the life of holy

men, delicate, but brilliant? And while it is carefully concealed in the tabernacle under goats' hair and skins, its beauty is preserved entire.

For in order that the fine linen may shine, the scarlet glitter, and the blue be resplendent with azure brilliance, the skins and the goats' hair endure the rains, the winds, and the dust from above. They then who advance in great excellence within the bosom of holy Church, ought not to despise the doings of their rulers, when they see that they are engaged in the business of the world. For that they penetrate in safety into secret mysteries, is owing to the help of those who buffet with the storms of this world from without. For how would the fine linen retain the grace of its brightness, if the rain were to touch it? Or what splendour and brightness would the scarlet or blue display, should the dust light on, and defile them? Let the strong texture of the goats' hair, then, be placed above, to resist dust; the brightness of the blue, fitted for ornament, be placed beneath. Let those who are engaged in spiritual pursuits alone, adorn the Church. Let those guard her, who are not wearied even with the labours of the world. But let not him who now gleams with spiritual brightness within Holy Church, murmur against his superior, who is employed in worldly business. For if thou glitterest securely within, like scarlet, why dost thou blame the goats' hair with which thou art protected?

40. But some persons enquire, why it is that [perhaps 'complain because.'], while rulers are engrossed in worldly concerns, solely for the benefit of those under them, many in the Church are made worse by their example. For who can deny that this is very true, when he sees worldly concerns more anxiously attended to by pastors, than heavenly objects? But this is not unjust, if, as we said before, the circumstances of rulers are ordered in accordance with the deserts of those under them. For the sins, which they commit secretly and wilfully, demand a bad example to be set them by their pastors: in order that by a righteous judgment the haughty man, who departs from the way of God, may stumble, through the guidance of his pastor, in the way in which he is walking. Whence it is said by the Prophet also, with the zeal of one who is announcing, not with the wish of one who is cursing, Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not, and ever bow Thou down their back. [Ps. 69, 23] As if he were to say, Let those who are appointed to mark out, as it were, the courses of human actions, not enjoy the light of truth, in order that their subjects, who follow them, may be bent down by the burden of their sins, and lose entirely their state of uprightness. And this we know was unquestionably the case in Judaea, when, at the coming of our Redeemer, the multitude of the Pharisees and Priests closed the eyes of their mind against the True Light, and the people, walking after the example of its rulers, wandered in the darkness of unbelief.

41. But it can be reasonably asked, How it is said in this place that the Lord makes the hypocrite to reign, when by the Prophet He complains especially of this thing, saying, They have reigned, but not of Me: they have become princes, and I know them not? [Hos. 8, 4] For, who that thinks rightly, can say that the Lord does that of which He knows nothing? But, because God's knowledge is approval, His ignorance is disapproval. Whence He says to some whom He rejects, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of

iniquity. [Luke 13, 27] And sometimes God's doing a thing, is His allowing in His anger that which He forbids to be done. Hence He asserted that He hardened the heart of the king of Egypt, because He, in truth, allowed it to be hardened. In a marvellous manner then does God make hypocrites to reign, and knows them not. He makes them, by suffering; He knows them not, by rejecting them. Whence it is necessary, with reference to every thing, which is desired in this life, that the Inner [i.e. the Divine] Will should be first enquired into. And when the ear of the heart is anxious to catch Its sound, let it know that It speaks, not in words, but in deeds. When then a post of authority is offered, it is necessary for a man first to question with himself, whether his conduct is suited to the place, whether his doings are at variance with the distinction it confers; lest, perchance, the just Ruler of all should, afterwards, not regard his prayers in tribulation, because He knows not his very entering on that high office, which is the source of all his tribulation.

Book XXVI

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

VOLUME III - THE FIFTH PART. — BOOK XXVI.

The holy Doctor expounds the seven last verses of the thirty-fourth chapter, the whole of the thirty-fifth, with the first twenty-one verses of the thirty-sixth chapter; and launches out, at very great length, into both allegorical and moral meanings. [i] 1. Haughty men are wont to display this peculiarity in what they say, that, when they know that they have said any thing in a praiseworthy manner, they then enquire of their hearers, whether they have by chance said any thing out of the way. And this they do, not because they doubt of what they say, but because, namely, they seek for approval, in the judgment of their hearers. For the object of their enquiry will be easily discovered, if when any one praises their good qualities, he also blames their faults. For it is certain, that as they are puffed up by praises, so are they inflamed by reproofs; and when they see that they are blamed, even justly, by any one, they seek at once in their faults for materials of self-defence. How then do they humbly doubt of their own good qualities, who even perversely endeavour to defend their bad ones? For he is really humble in his good doings, who does not defend himself in his evil ones. For he who is reproved for his faults, and fires up against the words of his reprover, when he hesitates, as if humbly, in speaking of his good qualities, seeks, by his words of humility, for compliments, and not for instruction. Eliu therefore, as representing the conduct of the haughty, after having stated many spiritual and sublime sentiments, behold, assumes in words an appearance of humility, and under a kind of show of being his disciple, addresses blessed Job with a fair proposal, saying,

Ver. 31, 32. Because I have spoken to God, I will not hinder thee also. If I have sinned, teach thou me; if I have spoken iniquity, I will add no more. [ii]

2. As it is frequently the case, that even wicked men say what is right, Eliu called to mind that he had made a little before many noble statements, and therefore confidently enquired of him if perchance he had erred. For he would not have thus asked, if he had believed that he had erred. For, as I said, it is a craft peculiar to the boastful to be eager to enquire about their erring, when they know that they have not erred. And, again, they disdain to make this enquiry, and to be convicted of error, whenever they plainly foresee that they have done

wrong. For they seek not to be, but to appear, humble, and they assume an appearance of humility, by then making the enquiry, when they are praised the more from the very enquiry itself. But, because it is very difficult for the pride, which reigns in the heart, not to break out in the voice, if the hearers of these haughty men wait for a while, and consider their sayings in silence, the words, which follow, too soon make manifest their hearts. For they cannot continue long in that guise of humility, which they assume in appearance only. For to haughty minds humility is lofty; and when they endeavour to climb up to its beauty they stumble, as if from abrupt and rugged paths, with the weary steps of their mind. For that which they wish to appear is foreign to them: and they cannot therefore long cling close to its resemblance.

They count it a heavy burden, when they bear it only in appearance, and they suffer a kind of constraint in their heart, till they cast it aside. Because in truth they are slaves to the habit of pride, which fatally rules over them, and are compelled by its authority to shew what they are, so that they cannot appear, for any time, that which they are not. Whence Eliu also, after he requested to be informed of his error, after he promised that he would no longer speak iniquity, suddenly broke out, from an appearance of humility, into words of proud arguing. For he added, saying,

Ver. 33. Doth God require it of thee, because it hath displeased thee? [iii]

3. As though he were saying, I am about to give reasons, in the sight of God, why my iniquity is now blamed by thee, though it is plain that it is not required of thee in judgment. When good men are unrighteously assailed by the world, they appeal to the judgment of heaven. Whence also it is said by the same blessed Job, Behold, my witness is in heaven, and He Who knoweth me is on high. [Job 16, 19] And because they especially desire to please Him, they seek for the witness of Him only. Wicked men also, because they forsake the life of the just, but sometimes imitate their words, when reproved for their misdeeds adopt that, as a ground of defence, which the righteous urge, as an evidence of their purity. Whence it has become already a custom with them, when any one blames them for their doings, to seek the judgment of God rather than of men. For, even when they know that they will be condemned by God, they are not afraid of being judged by Him, and are ashamed of being judged by men. They prefer, therefore, the greater, which they fear not, in order to be able to avoid the less, of which they are ashamed. For it is written, Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

[Rom. 14, 12] Because then the condemnation of every one is then manifest, the ungodly now gather from it, that, even the wicked conduct of every one is out of danger, that the righteous should now refute and expose that conduct, with which, it is plain, he has no concern in the judgment. But the consciences of the holy consider on the other hand, that a great reward is conferred on them, when they are now convicted of some of their unlawful deeds. For, they set it before the eyes of their heart, that the strict judgment of God will then be more surely mitigated towards them, the more severely it is now anticipated by the reproofs of man. And they consider as a gain the temporal wrath upon them, by which they

know well that they can escape the wrath eternal. Let Eliu, therefore, (as representing all haughty men, and choosing rather to be smitten with eternal severity, than to be reproved in this life,) say, Doth God require it of thee, because it hath displeased thee? But since those who speak first in a dispute are usually more to blame than those who reply, he subjoins,

For thou didst begin to speak, not I. [iv] 4. He believed himself to be so far innocent, in as much as he burst forth only on being struck, being doubtless ignorant that innocence is not defended on the score of time, but on that of reason. For what support does it give to his defence, that, though he did not revile him when silent, when he began properly, he replied to him revilingly? But after he displays himself in words of pride, lo, he again conceals himself under the pretext of a demand, and proceeds to say, But if thou knowest any thing better, say on. Although, while he does not say, because thou knowest better, but, If thou knowest any thing better, say on, it was itself too proud of him, that he had doubted of the knowledge of his superior. But he signified that he had exhibited his humility, in having given blessed Job an opportunity of speaking. But, as was before stated, that every thing in the doings of the proud, which is concealed by a covering of words, is brought to light, when the boastful purpose again breaks forth, Eliu speedily made known, with what purpose he required blessed Job to speak. For it follows,

Ver. 34, 35. Let men of understanding speak to me, and let a wise man hear me. But Job hath spoken foolishly, and his words sound not of discipline. [v]

5. Lo, how he lays open that, which he was cherishing within, when, as if humbly, he allows blessed Job to speak; saying, Let men of understanding speak to me. For if blessed Job were to presume to speak, he would have disdained him, as though he could not understand his words. And, because he considered that blessed Job was unworthy not only to speak with, but even to hear, him, he immediately added, Let a wise man hear me. As if he were to say, This man is unfairly permitted to speak, who is not worthy even to hear the words of wise men. And he presently shews plainly, how contemptibly he thinks of him, saying, But Job hath spoken foolishly, and his words sound not of discipline. He believed that blessed Job had spoken without discipline, because he said, that he had been just in his doings. Eliu would perhaps be speaking truly, if the Author of discipline had not Himself agreed with what blessed Job had said of himself. For Job asserted that he had been scourged undeservedly, whom God declared also to have been smitten without reason. What haughtiness then did the voice of the sufferer utter, which did not at all differ from the sentence of the Smiter? Those persons are inconsiderately humble, who, whilst they avoid pride, ensnare themselves in falsehood. Nay rather, they shew pride in their falsehood; because they set themselves up against the truth, which they abandon. For he, who states of himself good qualities, which are true, when necessity compels, the more closely is united to humility, the more he adheres also to truth. Was not Paul humble, when from zeal for the truth against false Apostles, he related to his disciples so many bold deeds concerning himself? For he would doubtless be an enemy of truth, if, by concealing his own good qualities, he had allowed the preachers of errors to gain strength.

But because proud men, in that they haughtily examine the sayings of the righteous, consider rather the surface of the words, than the order of the matters, Eliu believed that the sentiments of blessed Job had not sounded of discipline. But since the asperity of haughty men extends sometimes as far as to the severity of cursing, he immediately, as if speaking to God, subjoins against blessed Job, Ver. 36. My Father, let Job be tried even to the end. [vi]

6. Lo! how he lifts up even in words of cursing, that which he had before conceived of the swellings of arrogance. But he would perhaps wish for the force of a merciful probation, if he had believed that he had stood firm in probation. In order then that the malice of his cruelty may openly appear, he prays, that he may still be tried by scourges, who he complains had already fallen during his scourges. He first stated what he thought, in order that what he wished might be more plainly understood. He requires him to be still smitten, whom he accuses of having sinned already under the hand of the Smiter. These are wishes peculiar to the haughty, to pray that the lives of those who are suffering may be more severely examined, because the more just they are in their own eyes, the more hardened are they in others' sufferings. For they know not how to take to them the feeling of the other's infirmity, and to feel pity for their neighbour's weakness, as they do for their own. For since they think highly of themselves, they do not at all condescend to the humble. Eliu believed that blessed Job had been smitten for his sin, and therefore believed that no bowels of compassion were to be shewn to him, even in the midst of so many sorrows.

But when men, who are truly holy, behold any one smitten, even for his faults, though they reprove some of his inordinate doings, yet they sympathize with some of his sufferings; and they are so skilled in keeping down swellings, as yet to know how to relieve wounds, in order that when their hardnesses are softened, their infirmities may be strengthened. But because, on the other hand, haughty men have no bowels of love, they not only do not sympathize with the righteous when suffering, but moreover afflict them, under pretence of proper reproof, and they either exaggerate trifling faults, if there are any in them, or pervert by wrong construction those points which are really good.

7. Although even holy teachers are frequently wont to exaggerate the vices of offenders, and from some outward signs to dive into secret faults, in order from the smallest defects to discover greater. Whence it is said to Ezekiel, Son of man, dig in the wall. Where he presently subjoined, And when I had digged in the wall, there appeared a door; and He said unto me, Go in, and see the most wicked abominations that they do here. And I went in and saw, and behold every likeness of creeping things, and the abominations of animals, and all the idols of the house of Israel, were painted on the wall. [Ez. 8, 8-10] For by Ezekiel is represented the person of rulers; by the wall the hardness of subjects. And what is the digging into the wall, except laying bare hardness of heart by sharp reproofs? For when he had dug into it, there appeared a door; because when hardness of heart is opened by sharp reproofs, a kind of door appears, through which all the secret thoughts of the person, who is reproved, can be seen. Whence it also well follows in that place, And He said to me,

Go in, and see the most wicked abominations which they do here. A person enters as it were to behold abominations, who on examining certain signs which appear outwardly, so penetrates the hearts of those under him, that all their unlawful thoughts are made plain to him. Whence he added, And I went in and saw;

and behold every likeness of creeping things, and the abomination of animals. By reptiles are especially understood worldly thoughts: but by animals, those which rise a little above the earth, but still seek for the rewards of an earthly recompense. For reptiles cling to the earth with the whole of their body, but though animals are in their belly suspended from the earth, yet they are by the appetite of gluttony ever bending to the earth. Reptiles therefore are within the wall, when thoughts which are never elevated from worldly desires, are revolved in the mind. Animals also are within the wall, when if any just and becoming thoughts are conceived, they subserve the pursuit of worldly gains and honours, and of themselves indeed they are already suspended, as it were, from the earth, but by their ambition, they still bring themselves down to the basest objects, as by gluttonous desire. Whence it is also well subjoined, And all the idols of the house of Israel were painted on the wall. For it is written, And covetousness which is idolatry. [Col. 3, 5] After the animals, therefore, the idols are properly described, because, though they arise themselves, as it were, from the earth by becoming conduct, yet they bring themselves down to the earth again by dishonourable ambition. But it is well said, Were painted; because while the appearances of outward objects are drawn inward, whatever is thought in imagination is painted, as it were, on the heart.

8. We must therefore observe, that first a hole, and afterwards a door, is seen in the wall: and that then at last the secret abomination is laid open: because, doubtless, the signs of every sin are first observed without, next the door of detected iniquity is laid open; and then at last all the evil is disclosed, which is lurking within. Therefore even holy teachers are wont to examine severely into minute points, in order to arrive at greater hidden faults, from outer faults at the very surface. They utter words of sharp reproof, in order to root out the thorns of deadly thought, and when they act thus, they rage with the love of charity, and are not puffed up with the swelling of pride. For they are ready to die for those, whom they afflict as if raging even to the death. In their thoughts they retain this affection, while they assume persecution in appearance. They insinuate sound truths in their preaching, they announce and warn against evils, and do not as Eliu pray for, and desire them. They are sometimes so prompt in reproof against those committed to their care, as though they had nothing of calmness: but are so tranquil in affection, as though no warmth could kindle them. For they greatly fear, that if they should cease to reprove the wicked, they would be punished themselves for their damnation. And when warmed into words of reproof, they unwillingly have recourse to them, but yet prepare them, as a defence for themselves, before their strict Judge.

9. Whence it is said again also to the same Ezekiel, Son of man, take thee a brick, and thou shall place it before thee, and thou shall describe on it the city Jerusalem, and thou shalt

build munitions, and heap up a mound, and set a camp against it, and place battering rams around it. And take thou an iron pan, and thou shalt place it as an iron wall between thee and the city. [Ezek. 4, 1-3] For whom does Ezekiel represent, but rulers? And to him it is said, Take thee a brick, and thou shall place it before thee, and thou shalt describe on it the city Jerusalem. For holy teachers take to themselves a brick, when they lay hold of the earthly heart of hearers, in order to instruct it. And they place this brick before them, because they guard it with the entire attention of their anxiety. And they are ordered also to describe the city Jerusalem thereon, because they earnestly endeavour in their preaching to shew to earthly hearts, how great is the vision of heavenly peace. And it is well said to him also, And thou shalt set in array the siege against it, and thou shall build munitions. For holy teachers set the siege in array against the brick, on which the city Jerusalem is described, when they shew to an earthly mind, now seeking after its heavenly country, what an opposition of sins assails it in the season of this life.

For when it is pointed out, how each separate sin lays ambush against the mind, the siege is set, as it were, against Jerusalem by the voice of the preacher. But because they suggest not only how sins lay wait and assault the mind, but also how virtues, when guarded, strengthen it, it is rightly subjoined, And thou shall build munitions. For a holy preacher builds munitions, when he ceases not to teach what virtues oppose what vices. And because the contests of temptation frequently become stronger as virtues increase, it is still rightly added, And thou shalt heap up a mound, and set a camp against it, and place battering rams around it. For every preacher raises up a mound, when he points out the mass of increasing temptation. And he raises a camp against Jerusalem, when he points out to the right disposition of his hearers the circumventions of the crafty enemy, as snares which are beyond their understanding. And he places battering rams around, when he makes known the stings of temptations which surround us on every side in this life, and pierce through the wall of virtues.

10. Where it is well added, And take thee an iron pan, and thou shalt place it as an iron wall between thee and the city. For, by the pan is set forth parching, and by the iron, strength. But what so parches and tortures the mind of a ruler and teacher as zeal for the Lord? Whence also Paul was burned by the parching of this pan, when saying, Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? [2 Cor. 11, 29] And because whoever is kindled with a zeal for God against sinners, is constantly protected by a strong guard within, in order that he may not be condemned for neglecting his charge of preaching and ruling, it is well said, Thou shall place it as an iron wall between thee and the city. For the iron pan is placed as an iron wall between the Prophet and the city, because when teachers now display a resolute zeal, they hold afterwards the same zeal, as a strong bulwark, between themselves and their hearers; that they may not then be given up to punishment, if they have been now negligent in reproof. The same Prophet heard that he was to hold this pan between himself and his hearers, when the voice of God addressed him before, saying, If thou hast announced to the wicked, and he have turned not from his wickedness, and from his evil way, he himself shall die in his wickedness, but thou hast delivered thy soul.

[Ez. 3, 19] Paul had placed this pan, as a wall between himself and his disciples, when saying, I am pure from the blood of all of you: for I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God. It is, therefore, necessary that teachers should seek to be burned up now with ardent zeal, that they may not be compelled to suffer torments in the fire of hell for the sloth of negligence.

11. But we owe one duty to those who are unrighteous and subject to us, and another to those who are righteous and not subject to us. For fear should enkindle us to reprove those, and to take good care of the accounts we have to render. But the thought of equity should incline us to reverence these. But haughty men, because they know not this kind of discretion, exhibit the same conduct to those who are righteous, and not subject to them, as they see good preachers display towards those who are unrighteous, and subject to them. And when they unjustly launch out into warmth of invective, they venture even on words of malediction. For, because they do not love their neighbours as themselves, they cease not to wish for their neighbours that, which they are afraid of befalling themselves. Whence Eliu, venting his secret hatred in open malediction, exclaims, O my Father, let Job be tried even to the end, cease not from the man of iniquity. He calls him a man of iniquity, whom God, by a testimony from on high, pronounces righteous above all men. And because many things are still subjoined, from this want of discrimination, I think that they must be run through briefly. For sayings, which are wanting in weight, do not require any careful exposition. It follows,

Ver. 37. Who hath added blasphemy upon his sins. [vii] 12. He accuses him of having deserved scourges for his sins, and of having sinned after the scourges. But the Lord judges far otherwise, Who both asserts that he was scourged without reason, and conferred on him double goods, after his scourges. Blessed Job, then, is proved to have spoken without sin, whom rewards follow after his speech. Because, therefore, Eliu, when speaking in the Lord's defence, thinks of blessed Job differently from the Lord, he is at variance with the truth, while multiplying, as it were, his words in behalf of the truth. It follows, Let him be bound meanwhile amongst us, and then let him provoke God to judgment with his words. [viii] 13. As though he were saying, Let him know from our assertion, that he is by no means able to bear the examination of God. And, because haughty men strive to say not only foolish, but also many, things, the verse which follows is frequently well introduced respecting him.

Chap. xxxv. Ver. 1. Eliu therefore spake these words again. [ix] 14. Every one, who says many things, is anxious to be always beginning, in his speech, in order, by this very beginning, to keep his hearers in suspense, so that they may be the more attentively silent, the more they expect, as it were, to hear some new thing. But Eliu, finishing one subject, begins another without delay, in order that his loquacity may be continued without limit, by beginnings being constantly joined on. It follows, Ver. 2. Doth thy thought seem right to thee, that thou saidst, I am more righteous than God. [x]

15. Every one observes, who reads the text of the history, that blessed Job did not say that he was more righteous than God. But he says, Let Him put forth equity against me,

and my judgment shall come to victory. [Job 23, 7. Vulg. Examining namely his life, and not knowing the reasons of his smiting, as has been often observed, he believed that he was scourged for the sake of washing away his sins, and not of increasing his merits. And he was therefore confident, that his judgment would come to victory, because he found in himself no fault, for which he deserved to be smitten. Which thing indeed the Lord also said of him to the devil; Thou hast moved Me against him, to afflict him without cause. [Job 2, 3] What had he sinned then, by speaking thus, who, unknowingly, agreed, in these words, with the divine and secret sentence upon himself? Or what harm is there, if, in the judgment of men, our words differ, on the surface, from the exactness of truth, when, in that on which they turn in the heart, they are closely joined to, and agree with, it. ['cordis cardine'] The ears of men consider our words to be such as they sound outwardly, but the divine judgments hear them as they are uttered from our inmost heart. Among men, our heart is judged of from our words, but with God, our words are judged of from our heart.

Whilst blessed Job, then said without, that, which God said within, he justly uttered every thing which he said, inasmuch as he, piously, did not differ from the Inner sentence. Although in that which he said, filled by the spirit of Prophecy, Let Him put forth Equity against me, and my judgment shall come to victory, he might be looking for the presence of our Redeemer. For He, Who is the Virtue and the Wisdom of the Father, may be, not improperly, considered as His Equity. Whence it is written, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification. [1 Cor. l, 30] And because, namely, God has placed this Equity against sinners who fly from Him, by exhibiting It Incarnate, He recalled them at once from their iniquity; and, in that judgment in which it found the Equity of God opposing its ways, mankind has overcome its ancient opponent. It follows,

Ver. 3. For thou saidst, that which is right doth not please thee, or what will it profit thee, if I shall have sinned. [xi] 16. If the whole course of the book is attended to, blessed Job is proved to have said none of these things. But haughty men, as we have also said before, are wont to have this peculiarity, that while they go on in violent invective, they also speak falsely in their inveighing, and that, when they cannot justly blame the things which exist, they reprehend, in their falsehood, those which do not exist. It follows, Ver. 4. I will therefore answer thy words, and thy friends with thee. In his former saying, he mentioned culpable words, as if those of blessed Job, and derived from them matter for his remarks. But, in the words which follow, he examines, with great acuteness, that, which he craftily invented as matter to speak upon. And the sentiments which follow are powerful, but are not applicable to the character of blessed Job; and the shafts of this reproof strike him the less, the more unjustly they are launched against him. It follows,

Ver. 5'7. Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou. If thou hast sinned, what wilt thou hurt Him? If thine iniquities have been multiplied, what wilt thou do against Him? If, moreover, thou hast acted justly, what wilt thou give Him, or what will He receive of thy hand? [xii]

17. Although these words ought not to have been said to blessed Job, who knew greater truths, yet the things, which are said, are true, namely, that neither do our sins hurt God, nor our good deeds assist Him. Whence he followed, and added, (ver. 8. Thine iniquity will hurt a man that is like thee, and thy righteousness will profit the son of man. But amongst these things we must carefully notice that which he says, Look into the heavens, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou. For from speaking in this way he doubtless signifies, that Job should consider, how much less he could either benefit, or injure, God by his conduct, since he could neither benefit, nor injure, the loftiness of the heaven, or of the sky. For although we can understand by the heaven, or the sky, the heavenly powers, who are ever steadily gazing on the sight of the Godhead, (in order that, when we behold that the angelic spirits are still far distant from us, we may acknowledge how far we are distant below, from the Creator and Lord of spirits Himself,) yet nothing prevents our understanding by them in this place the material substance of heaven and sky. For if we look attentively at outward things, we are recalled by their very means to inward things. For the wonderful works of the visible creation, are the footsteps of our Creator. For we cannot as yet behold Him Himself;

but we are yet tending to a sight of Him, if we admire Him in these things which He has made. We call, therefore, the creation His footsteps, because we journey onwards towards Him by-following up those things which proceed from Him. Whence Paul says, The invisible things of Him are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead. [Rom. 1, 20] Whence also it is written in the Book of Wisdom, For by the greatness and beauty of the creatures the Maker of them can be intelligently seen. [Wisd. 13, 5] For to our mind, which is through sin scattered abroad, God is not as yet made known within, as He really is. But while He sets before us from without the beauty of His creation, He gives us, as it were, certain hints, and shews what to follow within. He leads us on wonderfully by these same outward forms to inward things, He intimates with boundless admiration what He is, by shewing us these marvels without, which are not Himself. For hence it is written of Wisdom, She sheweth herself cheerfully unto them in the ways, and meeteth them in all forethought. [Wisd. 6, 16]

18. For the works of the creation are, when considered, ways to the Creator. For when we see these things, which are made, we admire the power of their Maker. In these ways we are met by Wisdom, with all forethought, because the power of our Maker is set before us, to be enquired into, in every thing, which appears to have been wonderfully wrought. And wherever the soul turns itself, if it looks attentively, it finds God in the very same objects, through which it forsook Him; and again acknowledges His power, from a consideration of those objects, for the love of which it abandoned Him. And it is recalled, when converted, by those things, by which, when perverted, it fell. For we make efforts to rise on the very spot where we fell, and in rising, we place, as it were, the hand of consideration on the spot, where, falling with the foot of slippery love, we were lying prostrate through neglect. But because we have, by visible things, fallen from invisible, it is right that we should again strive, by visible things, to reach invisible; in order that what was to the soul a fall to the

bottom, may be a step in turn to the summit, and that it may rise by the same paces by which it fell: while, as was before said, those objects, rightly considered, recal us to God, which, when improperly chosen, separated us from Him.

Eliu, therefore, in order to apply the force of consideration, and to shew from bodily objects, how far higher is God than man, well observed, Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou. For we learn from these created and corporeal objects, how far we are distant from the loftiness of our Creator: because, by every thing which we behold, we are warned to be humble; in order that the beauty of the creature, when considered, may be, as it were, a kind of lesson to our mind. Let him say then, Look unto the heaven, and see, and behold the sky, that it is higher than thou. If thou hast sinned, in what wilt thou hurt Him? If thine iniquities have been multiplied, what wilt thou do against Him? If, moreover, thou hast acted justly, what wilt thou give Him, or what will He receive of thy hand? As if he were saying, Understand from the very creatures, which thou seest by thy bodily senses, to be higher than thyself, how far thou art removed from the loftiness of the Divine Power, and conclude, from this thy consideration, that thou canst neither benefit God by thy good living, nor, again, injure Him by thy evil deeds.

19. But if, as we before said, we understand the superior Powers by 'heaven,' or the 'sky,' Eliu, in these words, warns us to consider, that, because the angelic spirits themselves cannot fully contemplate the power of our Creator, (though it is certain that they are higher than ourselves, as not having fallen into the lowest depths,) we should hence infer, how far we are inferior to God, who are beneath even those sublime creatures, who are yet far His inferiors. As if he were to say, Lo ! how widely thou art separated from the loftiness of the Godhead, from Whose might even those powers shrink in their humility, who surpass thee with immeasurable loftiness; and how far inferior thou art to the Most High, who discernest that thou art inferior to those, who are inferior to Him. But, by pointing out the highest objects, he brings to an equality, and says,

Ver. 8. Thine iniquity will hurt a man, who is like thee, and thy righteousness will profit the son of man. [xiii] 20. The iniquity of man hurts him, whom it pollutes by perversion. And, again, our righteousness profits him, whom it converts from his wickedness. For those things cannot either hurt, or profit, which cannot either corrupt from what is good, or change from what is evil. The powers above, then, cannot be either hurt, or profiled, because they have already received to be free from change. But they who are involved in earthly desires, cannot consider these things. For it is difficult for minds, which are scattered abroad, to return to themselves; because evil ways detain them, more pleasurably, when once ensnared, the more every thing, which pleases them, is therein permitted. For no wall of discipline stands in the way to confine them, no punishment of retribution is looked forward to, to frighten them. But, when the eyes of the heart are closed, the soul is plunged the more surely into the lowest abyss, as it is shut out from the highest objects, and commits temporal sins more fearlessly, the more obstinately it despairs of eternal blessings.

21. But that wickedness of the reprobate, separating the life of the Elect, as corn from the chaff in threshing, oppresses, that it may purify. For the wicked, whilst they afflict the good, release them the more from the desires of this world; because, while they heap on them many cruelties here, they compel them to hasten heavenwards. Which is well signified by the Jewish people, when Moses was summoning, and king Pharaoh raging against, them. For Moses was then sent to call them, when Pharaoh had been already urged to oppress them by hard labours: in order that the one, while summoning, might draw away, as it were, the minds of the Israelites disgracefully clinging to Egypt, and the other might urge them on, as it were, while raging: and that the people, which was disgracefully held in bondage, might be moved, either by being invited by blessings, or driven by sufferings. [Ex.16, 3] This occurs daily, while the reprobate are allowed to rage against the Elect, when heavenly rewards have been announced to them; in order, that, if we neglect to go forth, when called, to the land of promise, we may be compelled at least by raging oppressions; and, that this Egypt, that is, our present life, which oppressed us, when flattering, may aid, when pressing, us: and that, that which, when cherishing, crushed us with the yoke of bondage, may shew the way of liberty, while it tortures. This is the special reason, why the righteous are allowed to be afflicted by the wicked, in order, namely, that while they hear of future blessings to desire, they may also suffer present evils to shudder at; and that, while love invites, torture may drive them to an easier escape. Whence Eliu, going on to speak of the same sufferings of the Elect, under the oppressions of the reprobate, says,

Ver. 9. They will cry out, by reason of the multitude of oppressors ['calumniatores.' 'wrongful clamants.'], and will wail on account of the force of the arm of tyrants. [xiv] 22. We can rightly term all the ungodly 'oppressors,' not those only, who spoil our outward goods, but those, also, who endeavour by their wicked habits, and by the example of their reprobate life, to scatter our inward treasures. For those go about to attack the things, which are without us, but these seek to prey on us within. The one cease not to rage with love for our goods, the other with hatred of our virtues. The one envy what we possess, the others the way we live. The one desire to spoil our outward goods, because they like them, the others are busy in squandering our inward goods, because they dislike them. As the life, then, of our habits is superior to the substance of our goods, he is the greater oppressor, who assaults our virtues, by wicked conduct, than he who injures our goods, by violently oppressing us. For though he has withdrawn nothing from our support, yet he has set before us examples of perdition. He has inflicted on us, therefore, a heavier oppression, since he has roused our heart, when quiet, by temptation. And though he has not persuaded us to the works of his conduct, he has yet imposed on us a contest of temptation. We suffer therefore a heavy oppression from his life, because, doubtless, we suffer that within, which we must overcome with difficulty. And because the life of the wicked abounds in this world, to torture us, it is well said, They will cry out by reason of the multitude of the oppressors.

23. But because they sometimes endeavour to extort even by unrestrained violence, that which they cannot persuade by words, it is rightly subjoined, And will wail on account of the force of the arm of tyrants. For whoever compels us, by his example, to live wickedly, uses

in our case, as yet, the voice of the oppressor. But whoever desires to frighten us also, when persuading us to sin, now rages against us with the arm of tyranny. For, to recommend vices by one's conduct, is one thing, to enforce it by terrors, is another. When we look then at patterns of evil doing, we hear, thus far, as it were, the noise of the oppressor; but when we are by force compelled to sin, we endure at once a tyrant in our heart. ['vi cogimur']

24. But the minds of the strong, which are stedfastly fixed in God, despise all these assaults, the more they discern that they rise up against the commands of their Creator. For waiting for the rewards of eternity, they gain strength from their adversities, because, as the fight grows strong, they doubt not that a more glorious victory awaits them. Thus while the desires of the Elect are kept down, they make progress by adversity, just as the fire is blown back by the blast, in order to increase, and gains strength by the means, by which it appears to be extinguished. For we shew in this way, with what great desire for God we are inflamed, if we pass over to Him, not merely by tranquil and smooth, but even through rugged and hard paths. For hence the Prophet says, Who hath made my feet like harts' feet. [Ps.18, 33] For, when a hart climbs mountain ridges, it passes over, with a bound, whatever rugged places it beholds, whatever spots, entangled with briars, oppose themselves, and rises up to higher ground, without any obstacle to its course. So also the minds of the Elect leap over, with the bound of contemplation, whatever they see obstructing, or opposing them in this world, and, despising the thorns of worldly anxieties, raise themselves, like hinds, to things above. Hence he says again, And by my God, I shall pass over a wall.

[Ps. 18, 29] For 'a wall' is every thing thrown in our way, 'that we pass not over to Him, Whom we love. But we pass over a wall, when we trample down, for love of our heavenly country, whatever things have, in this world, been placed in our way. Hence the Lord says, by the same Prophet, to a struggling soul; I heard thee in the hidden place of the tempest, I proved thee at the waters of contradiction. [Ps. 81, 7] For it is 'the hidden place of the tempest,' when the waves of tempting thoughts swell up in the contrite heart, when the tumults of worldly cares dash themselves against the zeal of holy love. He is heard, then, in the hidden place of the tempest, because this very agitation of tribulation, is the cry of suppliants. But, because there are never entirely wanting such, as endeavour to advise evil to those who are seeking for good, the waters of contradiction are opposing people. And because our desire is then proved, when it is opposed by any adversity, it is rightly said, I have proved thee at the waters of contradiction. By these efforts of virtues, then, the strong make progress, from adversity: but the weak, if any obstacles have been placed against them, often languish in their desires, and, when assaulted by mighty tribulation, fail from cowardice. Whence Eliu, inflicting on blessed Job reproaches for his cowardice, having first mentioned the oppressions of the wicked, proceeds immediately to speak of the cowardice of the weak, saying,

Ver. 10. And He said not, Where is God, Who made me? [xv] 25. It is the practice of Holy Scripture, to pass suddenly from the singular to the plural, and to turn itself from the plural to the singular. Whence Eliu, when saying, They will cry and wail, did not subjoin, They

said not, Where is God? but, He said not, Where is God? For, coming from the plural to the singular, he suddenly passed over to the person of each of the weak. Perhaps because that is better discerned by individuals, which is heard spoken of them individually: so that each of them returns to his own heart, and blames in himself that, which is stated of each man one by one. He, therefore, retained the singular number, saying, He said not, Where is God, Who hath made me? For, whoever is crushed by the tribulation of adversities, does not look at Him, by Whom He was made. For He, Who made that, which was not, leaves it not, when made, without guidance: and He Who made man mercifully, does not permit him to be tormented unjustly. Nor does He carelessly suffer that, which is, to perish, Who also created that which was not, that it might be. When we ask, then, the cause of our tribulation, and perhaps too slowly discover it; there is this consideration, we can suffer nothing unjustly, because if, God being our Creator, we exist, who before were not, God being our Ruler, we, who are, are not unjustly afflicted. It follows,

Who hath given songs in the night. [xvi]

26. A 'song in the night' is joy in tribulation; because, though afflicted with worldly oppressions, we yet now rejoice in the hope of eternity. Paul was announcing songs in the night, saying, Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation. [Rom. 12, 12] David had taken up his song in the night, who was saying, Thou art my hope from the oppression which hath surrounded me, my Exultation, deliver me from those who surround me. [Ps. 32, 7] Lo! he calls oppression 'night,' and yet amidst his straitnesses, he calls his Deliverer, his Exultation. There was 'night' indeed without, in the encompassing of oppressions, but 'songs' were resounding within, from the consolation of joy. For, because we cannot return to eternal joys, except through temporal losses, it is the whole object of Scripture, that the hope of the joys, which will abide, should strengthen us, amid these passing adversities. Whence also the Prophet Ezekiel witnesses, that he had received a book, in which were written, lamentations, a song, and woe. [Ezek. 2, 10] For what is signified by this 'book,' except the words of God? For since they enjoin on us tears and sorrow, lamentations are said to be written therein. They contain also a song and woe; for they so set forth joy from hope, as yet to announce oppression and difficulties in this present life. They contain a song and woe, because though we seek for what is sweet there, it is yet first necessary for us to endure bitternesses here.

The Lord was preaching a song and woe to His disciples, when He was saying, These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation. [John 16, 33] As though He were plainly saying, May you have an inward refreshment and consolation from Me, because cruel and heavy oppression will befal you from the world without. Because then, every feeble person, when oppressed, has, by reason of his great weakness of heart, but faint hope of joy, and, when suffering adversities without, forgets that, in which he used to rejoice within, it is well said, He said not, Where is God Who made me, Who hath given songs in the night? For, were he to say these words, he would moderate the violence which he suffers, and, by the lasting good he was seeking within, would consider, that the transitory pain he endures, is not intolerable. It follows,

Ver. 11. Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven. [xvii] 27. The beasts of the earth are they, who seek the lowest things, from the habit of a carnal life. But the fowls of the heaven are they, who search into lofty things, with the eagerness of a proud curiosity. These degrade themselves, by their conduct, below what they are in themselves; these exalt themselves, by their enquiries, beyond what they are able. The pleasure of the flesh casts down those to the very bottom, the lust of curiosity exalts these, as it were, in things above them. To those it is said by holy Scripture, Be ye not as the horse, and the mule, which have no understanding. [Ps. 32, 9] The proud labour of these is blamed, when it is said, Seek not out the things that are higher than thou, neither search the things that are above thy strength. [Ecclus. 3, 21] To those it is said, Mortify your members which are upon the earth, fornication, lust, evil concupiscence. [Col. 3, 5] To these it is said, Let no man deceive you through philosophy and vain deceit. [Col. 2, 8] God teaches us, therefore, more than the beasts and the fowls of the air, because, while we understand what we are, neither does the infirmity of the flesh cast us down, nor does the spirit of pride raise us up. We do not, by sinking down, fall beneath the lowest things, nor are we puffed up, by pride, as to those above us. For he, who falls in the flesh, is overcome by the appetite of beasts, but he, who is exalted in mind, is raised up, like the fowls, as if with the wing of lightness.

28. But if we keep strict watch, that both humility of mind and chastity of body be preserved, we soon know that the one is preserved by the other. For pride has often been to many a seed-plot of lust; for, whilst their spirit raised them, as it were, on high, their flesh plunged them in the lowest depths. For they are first secretly raised up, but afterwards they fall openly; for while they swell in the secret motions of the heart, they fall with open lapses of the body. Thus, thus, elated, they required to be smitten with righteous retribution; in order that, since they set themselves above men by pride, they might be brought down, by their lust, even to a resemblance of beasts. For, man when he was in honour, understood not, he hath been compared to the senseless beasts, and made like them. [Ps. 49, 20] For the wing of knowledge had raised them, as it were, on high, of whom Paul said that which we before mentioned; Because, when they had known God, they glorified Him not as God, or gave Him thanks, but became vain in their thoughts. [Rom. 1, 21] But how they fell into bestial and more than bestial pleasure, he added, saying, God gave them up to the desires of their hearts, unto uncleanness. [ib. 24. Lo!

the flesh overwhelmed those, whom boastful learning had raised up, and, from the flying of birds, they fell beyond the appetite of beasts, and sank beneath themselves, by the very means by which they appeared to rise above themselves. We must take heed then, and the mind must be kept, with all care, from the swelling of pride. For our thoughts fly not in vain, before the eyes of God; and no moments of time pass in thought, without an abiding of retribution. God then beholds what elates the mind within; and therefore permits that which is to bring it down to gain strength without. That which is afterwards to be struck down without by the pollution of lust, is first raised up within us. Open punishment, namely, follows a secret fault, in order that our inward evils may be punished, by those from without,

and that the heart, which was secretly pulled up, may fall openly. For hence it is said by Hosea, against the Israelites, The spirit of fornication is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord. [Hos. 5, 4] Who, in order to shew that the cause of lust sprung from the sin of pride, proceeded to say, And the pride of Israel will answer to his face. [ib. 5] As if he were saying, The sin, which through pride of mind lurked in secret, openly replied by the lust of the flesh. Wherefore the cleanness of chastity is to be preserved, by guarding humility.

For, if the spirit is piously humbled before God, the flesh is not raised unlawfully above the spirit. For, the spirit holds the dominion over the flesh, committed to it, if it acknowledges the claims of lawful servitude to the Lord. For if, through pride, it despises its Author, it justly takes on itself a contest with its subject flesh. Whence also that first disobedient one, as soon as he had sinned through pride, covered his shameful parts. [Gen. 3, 7] For, because his spirit had put an insult on God, it soon experienced the insult of the flesh. And, because it refused to submit to its Creator, it lost its right over the subject flesh, which it used to rule: in order, namely, that the confusion of its own disobedience might redound upon itself, and that it might learn, when vanquished, what it had lost through pride.

29. Let no one, then, after he has begun to aim at things above him, consider, if overcome by carnal pleasure, that he is only then defeated, when he is openly overpowered. For, if the poison of lust frequently springs from the root of pride, the flesh then triumphed, when the spirit was secretly proud. The soul then fell, as to the beginning of its fault, into the wantonness of beasts, when, by raising itself, like the fowls, it soared higher than it ought. For it is hence, that long-maintained continence is suddenly broken through, hence, that virginity, though preserved even to old age, is frequently violated. For, since humility of heart is neglected, the righteous Judge despises even chastity of body, and at last proclaims, by an open sin, those to be reprobates, whom He endured in secret, though long ago rejected. For he, who has suddenly lost a long-treasured good, has retained, in himself within, another evil, from which a further evil has suddenly burst forth, by which he was, even then, estranged from God, though he shewed that he cleaved to Him by cleanness of body. Because, therefore, pride of mind leads to the pollution of the flesh, the heart of the reprobate is, from the flight of birds, plunged into the wantonness of beasts. But holy men, that they may not be carried down into the whirlpool of lust, through bestial appetite, carefully guard the thoughts of their mind from the flight of pride; and, that they may not sink, through folly, into the lowest depths, humbly keep down all their high notions. It is therefore rightly said, Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven. Thou understandest, 'this he also said not.'

30. He says, therefore, that he does not remember in tribulation, that he is superior to the beasts, and to the fowls. As if he were to say, Every one who is weak, does not strengthen himself when in perturbation, because he does not moderate himself, when in tranquillity; and he therefore knows not how to endure adversities, because, when prosperous, he knew not how to keep himself down in thought from the flight of birds, nor to raise up the motions

of his flesh from the gluttony of beasts. But this was the more unfitly said to blessed Job, as his life is wonderfully kept in the mean, between things high and low. But it can also be understood in another way; Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of heaven. For as the life of men, still subject to the motions of the flesh, is signified by the word 'beasts;' so is the pride of haughty spirits set forth by the appellation 'fowls;' in order that earthly men may be designated by 'beasts,' but the devils by 'fowls.' Whence, when the Lord said that the seeds had fallen by the way side, He adds, The fowls of the air came and devoured them up; [Matt. 13, 4] signifying doubtless by fowls, the powers of the air.

31. But because holy persons neither follow the lowest examples of men, nor, again, are deceived by the subtlety of devils, they rise, by the virtue of their instruction, both above the beasts of the earth, and the fowls of heaven. For they are taught more than the beasts of the earth, because they despise whatever can be desired below: and they are instructed more than the fowls of the air, because they understand all the stratagems of unclean spirits. They are taught above the beasts of the earth, because they seek not any thing, which passes away in this life. They are instructed more than the fowls of the air, because they trample down even now, by the merits of their life, the powers of the air, which they still tolerate through the infirmity of the flesh. Paul had been already taught above the beasts of the earth, when saying, For many walk; and shortly afterwards, Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, who savour of earthly things. But our conversation is in heaven. [Phil. 3, 18-20] And again he knew that he was instructed above the fowls of the air, when he said, Know ye not that we shall Judge angels? [1 Cor. 6, 3] He perceived that the beasts were beneath him, because, namely, though still dwelling on earth, he was trampling down the habits of men, who engage in grovelling pursuits.

And again he had surpassed the flying of fowls, by the dignity of his merits, because, when now about to enter heaven, he was not ignorant that we would judge Angels. In the one he was treading under the basenesses of the impure, in the other the loftinesses of the proud. For the minds of holy men despise all transitory objects, and behold every thing that is proud, and every thing that passes away, sink beneath them. And placed on a lofty eminence, they see all things the more subject to them, the more truly they submit themselves to the Author of all; and they transcend all things, just as they prostrate themselves in true humility before the Creator of all things. Let him say then, Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and instructeth us more than the fowls of the heaven. As if he were saying, The weak man, overcome by his cowardice, said not thus, and therefore the adversity of temptation smote him: because in the season of tranquillity he did not overcome all these transitory objects, by any perfection. For he would not dread the adversities of this life, if he had trampled even its prosperity under foot, by the merit of his perfection. It follows,

Ver. 12. There they will cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of evil men. [xviii]

32. There; namely, in tribulation: as it is written on the other hand of joy, The children of thy servants shall inhabit there. [Ps. 102, 28] But it seems doubtful whether he says,

Because of the pride of evil men He will not hear, or, they will cry because of the pride of evil men. But it can be better understood, if they are rather said not to be heard, than to cry out, because of the pride of evil men. For, that they cry out, because of the pride of evil men, is already stated, in the verse in which it is said, They will cry out by reason of the multitude of the violent. [ver. 9] Something is therefore suggested to us in this verse, to be attended to a little more minutely. Because often, when the oppressed have cried out, they deserve indeed to be heard, for their own sake; but yet their desires are deferred, on account of the pride of their oppressors. For the Just God allows His own people to be oppressed in their worldly goods, and the malice of the violent sinfully to increase; in order that, while the life of these is wasted away in purification, the wickedness of those may be consummated. But it frequently happens, that the righteous, when involved in tribulation, enjoy, even in this life, heavenly consolation, which they do not ask for in this life. For they wish to be saved not for their own sakes, but for the salvation of their adversaries;

in order that, while Almighty God delivers them, by working a kind of miracle, from their boundless dangers, He may manifest His might, even to their persecutors; and may deliver the adversaries for eternity, by the same means, as He rescues His own people in this world. As the Prophet also, taking up the language of martyrs, says, Deliver me, because of mine enemies. [Ps. 69, 18] As if he were saying; For myself indeed, I seek not to be delivered from temporal tribulation; but yet I wish to be delivered, on account of my adversaries; in order that, while my life is seen to be miraculously preserved, the hardness of my enemies may be converted at the very sight of the miracles. As the Lord then frequently rescues the life of His own people, in this world, for the conversion of His enemies, so does He frequently not listen to the cry of His own people, for the sake of the condemnation of their persecutors; in order, namely, that they may add to their guilt, from the fact that they wickedly rejoice that they have prevailed. For they, who despise invisible things, can sometimes be moved by visible miracles. But frequently no visible miracle is worked in behalf of the righteous, because their adversaries do not deserve to be invisibly enlightened. Let it be said then, There will they cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of evil men.

As if he were saying, The guilt of the oppressors prevents His hearing the voice of the oppressed: and the righteous are not visibly rescued, because the unrighteous do not deserve to be invisibly saved. Hence it is again said by the Prophet, When he shall see the wise dying, the simple and the foolish shall perish together. [Ps. 49, 10] For those, whom they behold dying visibly, they do not believe can live invisibly, and they add to the guilt of their unbelief, as they despair of eternity, when they behold the death of the faithful. The violent, then, fail the more fatally, from the very fact, that they outwardly prevail against the life of the innocent. And the inmost Truth drives them forth the more from Itself, the more It suffers them to work their will, in this world, against those who are Its own.

33. Whoever, then, persecutes the life of the good, is then condemned with more fearful vengeance, when he is opposed by no adversity; and he is then exposed to the risk of more fearful wrath, when he prosecutes successfully his sinful desires. Because, namely, the

vengeance of the Divine Judgment has given up, by reserving for future punishment, him, whom It has here not cared to oppose in his wickedness. For hence the Lord says by the Prophet, I gave them up according to the desires of their heart, and they will go on in their own wills. [Ps. 81, 12] Hence it is said again, The rod of God is not upon them. [Job 21, 9] Hence also it is written of their chief himself, He will do, and prosper. [Dan. 8, 12] Hence again it is said of the same person, And craft shall be guided aright in his hand. [ib. 25] For craft is guided aright, in the hand of Antichrist, because he is not hindered by any adversity, in this world, from fulfilling that, which he has purposed against the good. Hence again it is said by Solomon, The prosperity of fools shall destroy them. [Prov. 1, 32] It is, then, a manifest token of perdition, when subsequent success favours much-wished for iniquities, and when no obstacle hinders that, which a perverse mind has conceived. For frequently, while the wishes of sinful men are delayed, they are changed, and, while they feel the difficulty of performing an evil action, they learn its guilt;

and they, who are thwarted at first against their will, shrink afterwards, of their own accord, from that which they had conceived. Because then the Lord, when He forsakes the wicked, allows them to prevail, and, because the wickedness of the proud is perfected, by the same means, as the long-suffering of the humble is consummated, let it be rightly said, There will they cry, and He will not hear, because of the pride of wicked men. It follows,

Ver. 13. For God will not hear without reason, and the Almighty will behold the causes of men one by one. [xix]

34. We must observe that two points are stated: both that He does not hear without reason [or, 'in vain,' (with different punctuation.)] him, who cries to Him, and yet regards his sufferings; and pretends not to hear his cry, and still is not ignorant what each one suffers. Let no one, then, who is not speedily heard, believe that he is not cared for by God's providence. For our desires are often heard, because they are not speedily granted: and that, which we wish to be soon fulfilled, is the better prospered by the very delay. Our prayer is frequently made good, the more it is deferred; and when our request is, in appearance, neglected, our wishes are more fully carried out in the depth of our thoughts. As the seeds of harvest are firmly compressed by frost, and spring up in greater number, to bear produce, the slower they come forth to the surface. Our desires, therefore, are deferred, in order that they may make progress; they make progress, in order to gain strength for that which they are about to enjoy: they are exercised in the contest, in order that greater rewards may be heaped on them, in recompense. The labour of the contest is protracted, in order that the crown of victory may become greater. When the Lord, then, does not speedily hear His own people, He draws them to Himself, just as He is believed to repel them.

For He is, in truth, our spiritual Physician, and cuts out the infection of vices, whose existence within us He utterly reprobates. He extracts the poison of corruption with the knife of tribulation; and the more He pretends not to hear the cries of His patient, the more is He providing for the ending of his sickness. For hence the Prophet exclaims, O my God, I will cry through the day, and Thou wilt not hear; and in the night, and not to my folly. [Ps.

22, 2] As if He were saying, It tends not to my folly, that Thou dost not hear me, when I cry to Thee, day and night, without ceasing; because Thou trainest me the more in heavenly wisdom, by seeming, as it were, to desert me in my temporal affliction. Hence also he says, A helper opportunities, in tribulation. [Ps. 9, 9] Intending to speak of tribulations, he first mentioned opportunities; because we are frequently bruised by tribulation, and yet it is not a fit season for our being assisted according to our desire for deliverance. Let it be said then, For God will not hear without reason, and the Almighty will behold the causes of men one by one. But because some persons are frequently broken down by this very delay of assistance, he fitly subjoins,

Ver. 14. Even when thou shall say, He doth not consider, judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him. [xx]

35. For perhaps when our cry seems to be disregarded, the hope, which was in our heart, is weakened, and we believe that assistance from above will fail us, because we are too slow in asking: and we lament that the unavenged wrongs we are enduring are almost disregarded by God. But when this storm of despair agitates us, our disordered mind sooner takes shelter in the harbour of hope, if it weighs accurately its causes with the Lord; if it recals to its memory His favours, if it does not artfully excuse in itself the evils it has returned for His goodness; if it balances what it has justly deserved, and what it has received of His mercy; if it actively ['vivaciter'] searches its own conduct; if, examining all its doings in God's sight, it conceals not itself from itself; if it remembers that it was brought into being, which before was not; if it reflects that though it was lying in darkness, it was illumined, and raised up. Bringing then all these points together in itself, while it considers the blessings it has received, it blames not the ills it is suffering; and, strengthened with the consolation of so many gifts, it is not crushed with despair. Because, when it calls to mind past mercies, it derives hope for the future. Let him say therefore, Even when thou shall say, He doth not consider, judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him.

As though he were to say, When God is believed not to regard, because He is slow in shewing compassion, enter into thy most secret thoughts, and there undertake the judgment of thy cause before His eyes, and discern both what thou hast conferred on Him, by thy conduct, or what thou hast mercifully received. And then thou returnest to the confidence of hope, when thou art ashamed at the mercies of such great goodness: so that thou mayest confidently look for Him in adversities, Whom thou rememberest to have been gracious to thee, even after thine offences. For thou hadst reason to hope for assistance from above, even though no favours had preceded. And thou must feel sure that God does not unjustly reject man, whom He mercifully created.

36. We must consider, therefore, how dangerous it is to behold past gifts, and to despair of future: how dangerous, if in this storm of tribulations, we suffer shipwreck from despair, bound as we are to the harbour of hope by the boundless ties of past favours. Let it then be said rightly, Judge thyself before Him, and wait for Him. For he who judges not himself before God, does not wait for Him when afflicted. For he despairs that assistance can

hereafter come from Him, Whose preceding kindnesses He does not admit: and when he forgets those that are past, he is deprived also of a bounteous supply of subsequent blessings. But behold, while we are afflicted, while we patiently wait for the grace of consolation, the wicked break out into greater wickedness, and proceed the more in adding to their iniquities, as they are left unpunished. And yet the Almighty mercifully bears with sinners, and grants them time for repentance, which He converts, if they are not converted, into an evidence of greater guilt; He patiently restrains the wrath, which at length He pours out irrevocably.

Whence it is fitly subjoined,: Ver. 15. For He doth not now bring on His fury, nor severely punish wickedness. [xxi]

37. For God in truth bears a long while with him, whom He condemns for ever; and forbears now to bring on His wrath, because He reserves it to be poured forth, hereafter, without end. For suffering is here the portion of the Elect, in order to their being trained for the rewards of their heavenly inheritance. It is our portion to receive stripes here, for whom an eternity of joy is reserved. For hence it is written, He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. [Heb. 12, 6] Hence it is said to John, I rebuke and chasten those whom I love. [Rev. 3, 19] Hence Peter says, It is time, that judgment must begin at the house of God. [1 Pet. 4, 17] Where he immediately adds with astonishment, But if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that believe not the Gospel of God? For the severity of God permits not sins to remain unpunished; but the wrath of judgment commences with our punishment here, in order that it may cease to rage at the damnation of the reprobate. Let the reprobate proceed then, and accomplish the desires of their pleasures, with unpunished iniquity: and let them feel no temporal scourges, since eternal punishments await them. But their unpunished wickedness, is well signified by the sin of Ham: to whom it was said by his father, Cursed be thy son Canaan, a servant shall he be to his brethren. [Gen. 9, 25] For Canaan was the son of Ham. And what is signified by his son Canaan receiving the sentence of punishment, when Ham offended? What is meant by his being smitten, not in himself, but in his posterity, except that the sins of the reprobate go on unpunished in this world, but are smitten hereafter? Let it be said then, For He doth not now bring on His fury, nor severely punish wickedness.

38. But it must be noticed, that he inserted the word 'severely;' for, although He patiently endures some wickednesses, yet some He punishes even in this life: and He sometimes begins to smite even here, what He intends to destroy with eternal damnation. Therefore He smites some sins, and leaves some unpunished: for, if He were to be severe with none, who would believe that God regarded the doings of men? And again, if He were to smite all of them here, for what reason would the last judgment still remain? Some are, therefore, smitten, in order that we may tremble at the attentive care of our Ruler over us. But some are still left unpunished, in order that we may feel that judgment still remains. It is well said then, He doth not severely punish sin: because while some small portion of iniquity is punished, the sentence of eternal judgment is even now foretasted by unconverted souls.

39. All this then that Eliu says is right, if it were said rightly. For he knows what he ought to say, but knows not to whom he is speaking. For the things which he said are true, but are out of place, in reproving blessed Job; because he the less needed this reproof, as he had not sinned, even from any cowardice. But, because the pride of haughty men is often an occasion of virtues for the righteous, blessed Job is so dealt with in the secret judgment, in order that, after the scourges of punishments, he may gain strength also, by the words of the arrogant. For, lo! the more he is despised by the minister of pride, the more is he comforted by the truth teaching him within. For, after Eliu knew that he had said so many powerful words, he disclosed what pride he bore within, and despised blessed Job, by thinking highly of himself, saying;

Ver. 16. Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain, he multiplieth words without knowledge. [xxii] 40. By introducing these words, he doubtless asserts, that blessed Job both knew nothing, and had said much; and, though he introduces his own opinions loquaciously, he accuses him of the fault of loquacity. But this seems also to be a peculiar fault of the arrogant, that they believe the much, which they have said, to be little, and the little, which is said to them, to be much. For, because they always wish to speak their own words, they cannot hear the words of others; they think that they suffer violence, if they do not pour forth their own immoderate opinions more immoderately. And, although blessed Job was silent at his words, yet Eliu finds cause for invective, in the speech, in which he had replied to his friends; in order to get himself larger space of his silence, and that he himself might answer many things, he asserts that he had multiplied words. For he immediately begins the commencement of a tedious speech, and endeavours to commence, as though he had as yet said nothing at all. Whence it is subjoined,

Chap. xxxvi. Ver. 1, 2. Eliu also added, and spake thus; Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee. [xxiii] 41. He had already said much, and hopes that he will be borne with yet a little longer; because, namely, haughty men consider that they suffer a heavy loss, if they confine their skill by speaking within brief limits. For they believe, that they shew themselves to be more learned, the more they have been able to lay open their minds in multiplicity of much speaking. But, because they frequently perceive that the respect of silence is not paid to them, they mention, at times, the power of the Lord, from Whom they seem to be speaking; and, under pretence of Him, they exact that silence for themselves, which they by no means deserve; and, while in appearance they bring God forward, when exacting a hearing for themselves from reverence for Him, they strive more to display themselves, than to set forth His doings. Whence also Eliu subjoins, saying,

Ver. 2. For I have yet somewhat to speak on God's behalf. Because holy teachers sometimes frequently repeat any things they state rather obscurely, in order to instil these hidden sayings into the hearts of their hearers, by the language of repetition; haughty men also wish to imitate this practice, and the things they have said they repeat in an insolent manner, not because they seek to insinuate the subjects into the hearts of their hearers, but because they wish to appear eloquent in their judgment. Whence Eliu subjoining, says, Ver. 3. I

will repeat my knowledge from the beginning. But because, on the mention of knowledge, his pride of heart hath displayed itself in his voice, he is plainly discovered to be a haughty person, if he does not quickly conceal himself by some disguise. Whence in concealing his own arrogance, he immediately introduces the righteousness of the Lord, and says,

And I will prove my Maker just. In order that, while he speaks as if in behalf of God's righteousness, whatever escapes from him arrogantly, may be excused in the judgment of man. It follows, Ver. 4. For truly my words are without falsehood. [xxiv]

42. Even righteous men, when they see that they cannot be understood by their feeble hearers, are frequently wont to praise the things they say. Not because they are eager for their own praise, but to inflame their hearers with an anxious desire of listening to them; in order that, while they are uttered by their voice, they may be embraced, with more ardent affection, by the hearts of their hearers. Whence Paul, when he had spoken to the Corinthians things wonderful and many, says, Our mouth is opened unto you, O ye Corinthians, our heart is enlarged. [2 Cor. 6, 11] But haughty men, while they know not the heart of the good, and imitate only their words, from time to time, are hurried forward in praising what they say, not because the listlessness of their hearers displeases them, but because they eagerly please themselves. They imitate and feign the voice of the righteous, but know not the power of their voice. They see what the righteous put forward, but know not what they seek for. For, when holy teachers set forth the praise of their preaching, they raise, as it were, the hearts of their hearers from grovelling thoughts, by the hand of their voice; in order that, having been suddenly roused, they may run, as if to meet the words which follow, and may hold them the more firmly in the embrace of their understanding, the more they had loved them, by the voice of their praiser, even before they beheld them.

But, as I said, haughty men know not these things. For since that, which they seek for, is without, they cannot feel what is desirable within. For it is written of the Church of the Elect, All the glory of her, the daughter of kings, is from within. [Ps. 45, 13] And the wise virgins are said to carry oil in their lamps. [Matt. 25, 4] Whence it is said by the voice of the Saints, Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience. [2 Cor. 1, 12] But haughty men, because they have no testimony of their conscience before God, seek the testimony of another's voice before men; and, when they slowly obtain it, they burst forth into shameless praise of themselves. For if they find not the applause of men, which they eagerly look for, they themselves speak in praise of their own wisdom. Whence also Eliu adds, saying,

And perfect knowledge shall be proved to thee. [xxv] 43. He doubtless felt that he was about to utter great things, but he could not conceal his lofty estimate of himself, in his swelling heart; and therefore preceded by his praises his sound opinions; because he would be already indeed guilty in God's judgment, if he had merely felt in silence great things of himself. For we are by no means safe, before the searching examination of the Truth, even though we have nothing in ourselves which deserves blame, in the judgment of men. For, frequently, when careless in our thoughts, we are assaulted by the pride, which yet we suppress in silence. But unless our secret pride is extinguished, by awakened repentance, in the chamber

of the heart, in which it takes its rise; all the merit of our conduct is extinguished before our strict Judge. We must, therefore, hence consider, with what great punishment that pride will be condemned, which is cherished till it is boldly uttered, if even that is inexcusable which springs up secretly in the heart. We must consider also with what power that pride reigns within, which is so far encouraged, as not to be ashamed even to break forth without. Because then Eliu felt great things, he could not humbly control himself, he maintained the loftiness of knowledge, he spurned the grace of humility. And while following after the gift by which he desired to speak well, he lost the grace by which he might have lived well. For knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. [1 Cor. 8, 1] But let him now state that right thing, which he still knows not how to speak rightly. For, after he had breathed forth the proud thoughts of his mind, in words of pride, he added a noble sentiment, saying,

Ver. 5. God rejecteth not the mighty, though He Himself is mighty. [xxvi]

44. Some things in the course of this mortal life are hurtful in themselves, some are such from circumstances. Some are hurtful of themselves; as sins and wickednesses. But some things are, now and then, hurtful from circumstances, as temporal power, or the bond of wedlock. For marriage is good, but those things which grow up around it, through the care of this world, are evil. Whence Paul says, He that is with a wife, thinketh of the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. [l Cor. 7, 33] Whence also, recommending to certain persons a better course, he dissuades them from marriage, and says, But this I say, not that I may cast a snare on you, but for that which is comely, and which may give you power to pray to the Lord without impediment. [ib. v. 35] While that then which is not hurtful is retained, something hurtful is commonly committed from attendant circumstances: as frequently we journey along a straight and clear road, and yet we are entangled by our clothes in briars which grow by its side. We do not stumble in a clear road, but something grows by the side to wound us. For great is that temporal power, which, from being well administered, has its special reward from God: and yet sometimes from being preeminent over others, it swells with pride of thought.

And while all things for its use are at its service, while its commands are speedily fulfilled, according to its wish, while all its subjects praise its good deeds, if there are any, but do not oppose its evil doings with any authority, while they too commonly praise, even that which they ought to blame; the mind, being led astray by those things that are beneath it, is raised above itself, and while it is encircled with unbounded applause without, is bereft of truth within. And, forgetting itself, it scatters itself after others' speech, and believes itself to be really such, as it is spoken of without, and not such as it ought to see itself to be within. It despises those beneath it, and does not acknowledge them to be its equals in order of nature, and believes that it has exceeded those also in the merits of its life, whom it has surpassed by the accident of rank. It considers that it is far wiser than all those, than whom it sees itself greater in power. For it places itself in truth on a lofty eminence, in its own opinion, and, he that is confined within the same natural condition as others, scorns

to look on them as his equals, and is in this way led even to resemble him, of whom it is written, He beholdeth every high thing, and is a king over all the children of pride;

[Job 41, 34] and of whose body it is said, A generation, whose eyes are lofty, and their eyelids are raised up on high. [Prov. 30, 13] It is led to a resemblance of him, who aiming at singular loftiness, and scorning a life in company with angels, says, I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the Most High. By a marvellous judgment, then, it finds the depth of downfal within, whilst it raises itself without, in loftiness of power. For a man is in truth made like an apostate angel, when he disdains to be like his fellow men. Thus Saul grew up, from meritorious humility, into swelling pride, by his height of power. He was in truth raised up in consequence of his humility, and rejected through his pride: as the Lord bears witness, Who says, When thou wast little in thine own eyes, did not I make thee the head of the tribes of Israel? [1 Sam. 15, 17] Before he attained to power he had seen that he was little, but supported by temporal authority he no longer saw himself to be so. For preferring himself, in comparison with others, he counted himself great in his own judgment. But marvellously, when little in his own sight, he was great in the sight of the Lord, and when great in his own sight, in the Lord's sight he was little.

The Lord forbids us, by His Prophet, to be great in our own sight, saying, Woe unto you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own sight. [Is. 5, 21] And Paul admonishes us not to be great in our own opinions, saying, Be not wise in your own conceits. [Rom. 12, 16] While the mind then is puffed up, through the number of those that are subject to it, it falls into the lust of pride, the very height of its power pandering to it.

45. But for this and that not to be good is one thing, for any not to know how to use the good aright is another. For power is good in its proper place, but it requires careful conduct in a ruler. He therefore exercises it aright, who has learned both how to retain, and how to overcome it. He exercises it aright, who knows how to raise himself, by its means, above his faults, and, with it, to keep himself down on a level with others. For the mind of man is frequently elated, even when not supported by any power. How much more then does it exalt itself, when power joins itself unto it? And yet it is prepared to correct the faults of others with due punishment. Whence also it is said by Paul, For he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. When then the administration of temporal power is undertaken, a person must watch with the greatest care, in order to learn how to select from it what is of use, and to withstand its temptations, and to feel himself, even with it, on an equality with others, and yet, by his zeal for revenge, to set himself above those who do wrong. We gain a fuller knowledge of this discretion, if we look also at some instances of ecclesiastical power.

Peter then, though holding the Chief power ['principatum'] in the Church by Divine authority, refused to be reverenced unduly by Cornelius, who was a righteous man, and was prostrating himself before him, and acknowledged himself to be but his equal, saying, Arise, do it not, I myself am also a man. [Acts 10, 26] But on discovering the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, he soon displayed with what great power he had risen above others. [Acts 5, 1-11]

For by a word he smote their life, which he detected by the searching of the Spirit; and called to mind that he held within the Church the chief power against sinners, which, when the honour had been violently thrust on him, he refused to acknowledge before his righteous brethren. In the one case holiness of conduct deserved a communion of equality, in the other his zeal for vengeance displayed his rightful power. Paul did not acknowledge that he was superior to his righteous brethren, when he said, Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. [2 Cor. 1, 24] And he immediately added, For by faith ye stand. As if he were saying, We have not dominion over your faith, for this very reason, because ye stand by faith. For we are your equals, in a case where we know that you are standing firm. He seemed not to know that he was superior to his brethren when he said, We have made ourselves as little ones among you;

[1 Thess. 2, 7] and again, And ourselves your servants through Jesus Christ. [2 Cor. 4, 5] But when he discovered a fault, which needed correction, he immediately remembered that he was their master, and said, What will ye? shall I come to you with a rod? [1 Cor. 4, 21]

46. A high place is therefore rightly discharged, when a ruler exercises his authority rather over sins, than over his brethren. For nature has made us all equal; but that some are committed to others to rule over them, it is not nature, but their own fault which places them beneath. Rulers, therefore, ought to raise themselves above the vices, on account of which they are placed above others: and, when they correct offenders, they should attend carefully to smite their faults with discipline, by the right of their power, but, by guarding their humility, to acknowledge, that they are equal with those very brethren, who are corrected. Although it is frequently even right, that we should, in our secret thought, prefer those, whom we correct, to ourselves. For their faults are smitten, through us, with the vigour of discipline, but, in the faults we ourselves commit, we are not wounded by any one, with an attack of even a word. We are, therefore, the more indebted to the Lord, the more we sin without punishment from man. But our discipline the more exempts those under it from Divine punishment, the more it leaves not their faults unpunished here. We must maintain then both humility in our heart, and discipline in our work.

And we must, meanwhile, keep careful watch, lest the rights of discipline should be relaxed, while the virtue of humility is unduly guarded, and lest, while a ruler humbles himself more than is becoming, he should be unable to bind beneath the bond of discipline the life of his subjects. Let us outwardly, then, keep up that office, which we undertake for others' benefit. Let us keep, within, the estimate we entertain of ourselves. But yet even those committed to us may properly learn, by some evidences which break forth, that we are such to ourselves within, in order to see what to dread from our authority, and to learn what to imitate from our humility. Having maintained the authority of our office, let us return unceasingly to our heart, and assiduously consider, that we are created on an equality with others, not that we have been temporally placed above others. For the more eminent is our power outwardly, the more ought it to be kept down within, lest it should overpower our

thought, lest it should hurry the mind to be delighted with it, and lest the mind should soon be unable to control that power, to which it submits itself from desire of authority.

47. David had well learned to govern his kingly power, who used to overcome, by humbling himself, all pride at this power, saying, O Lord, my heart is not exalted. [Ps. 131, 1] And who subjoined, to increase his humility, Nor mine eyes lofty. And added, Neither have I walked in great things. And examining himself still further, with most searching enquiry, Nor in wonderful things above me. And drawing forth also all his thoughts from the bottom of his heart, he subjoins, saying, If I have thought not humbly, but if I have exalted my soul. Lo! he frequently repeats the sacrifice of humility, offered from his inmost heart, and, by again and again confessing, ceases not to offer it, and brings it before the eyes of his Judge, by repeatedly speaking of it. What is this? and how had he learned, that this sacrifice was pleasing to God, which he was offering, in His sight, with so great a repetition of words? Except that pride is ever wont to attend on the powerful, and that haughtiness is almost always associated with prosperity; because also abundance of humour often causes the hardness of a tumour.

48. But it is very wonderful, when humility of manners reigns in the hearts of the lofty. Whence we must consider, that whenever powerful persons think humbly, they attain to an eminence of strange, and, as it were, far distant virtue: and they rightly appease the Lord, the more readily, with this virtue, because they humbly offer Him that sacrifice, which the powerful can scarcely meet with. For it is a most difficult art of living, for a man to possess a high place, and to keep down boasting; to be indeed in power, and yet not to know that he is powerful; to know that he is powerful, for conferring favours, not to know all the power he possesses for requiting wrongs. It is therefore rightly said of such, God rejecteth not the mighty, though He Himself is mighty. For he, in truth, desires to imitate God, who administers his lofty power with a view to the benefit of others, and is not elated with his own praises; who, when placed above others, desires to serve, and not to rule over, them. [prodesse, pr'esse] For it is swelling pride, and not position of power, which is to blame. God confers power, but the wickedness of our mind causes haughtiness at our power. Let us take away, then, what we have contributed of our own, and those things, which we possess of God's bounty, are good. For because not lawful power, but wicked deeds are condemned, it is fitly subjoined.

Ver. 6. But He saveth not the wicked, and giveth judgment to the poor. [xxvii] 49. Holy Scripture is frequently wont to call the humble, 'poor.' Whence they are mentioned in the Gospel, with the addition, 'spirit,' when it is said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. [Matt. 5, 3] For, because riches visibly manifest the powerful, those are poor in their own sight, who are not puffed up in their own minds. But he calls those 'wicked,' who are either cut off from the piety of the faith, or who else contradict themselves, by their wicked habits, in that which they faithfully believe. Because then Almighty God condemns pride of wickedness, not loftiness of power; after it was said, God rejecteth not the mighty, though He is Himself mighty; it is rightly subjoined, But He saveth not the wicked,

and giveth judgment to the poor. That is, He destroys the proud, but sets free the humble, by His judgment. Or certainly He gives judgment to the poor, because those who are now wickedly oppressed, then come themselves as judges over their oppressors.

50. There are in truth two classes, namely, of the Elect and the reprobate. But two ranks are comprised in each of these classes. For some are judged and perish; others are not judged and perish. Some are judged and reign; others are not judged and reign. They are judged and perish, to whom it is said in our Lord's declaration, I hungered, and ye gave Me not to eat; I thirsted, and ye gave Me not drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye covered Me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited Me not. [Matt. 25, 42. 43. To whom it is before said, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. [ib. v. 41] But others are not judged in the last judgment, and yet perish. Of whom the Prophet says, The ungodly do not rise again in the judgment. [Ps. 1, 5] And of whom the Lord declares, But he that believeth not is judged already. [John 3, 18] And of whom Paul says, They who have sinned without the Law, shall perish without the Law. [Rom. 2, 12] Therefore even all unbelievers rise again, but to torment and not to judgment. For their case is not then examined; because they come into the presence of their strict Judge, with the condemnation already of their own unbelief. But those, who retain their profession of faith, but have not works in accordance with it, are convicted of sin, in order to their perishing.

But they, who have not enjoyed even the sacraments of the faith, do not hear the reproof of the Judge at the last ordeal; for, condemned already by the darkness of their own unbelief, they do not deserve to be condemned by the open reproof of Him, Whom they had despised. Those hear at least the words of the Judge, because they have retained at least the words of His faith. These hear not in their condemnation the sentence of the eternal Judge: because they would not retain their reverence for Him even in words. Those perish by the Law, because they have sinned under the Law; whilst no mention of the Law is made to these, in their condemnation; because they made no effort to have any thing of the Law. For a prince, who administers an earthly commonwealth, punishes in different ways a citizen, who offends at home, and an enemy who makes war abroad. In the first case, he considers his rights, and condemns him in language of just reproof. But against an enemy he wages war: he wields instruments of destruction, and inflicts the tortures his wickedness deserves. But he does not enquire what the law provides for his offence. For it is not necessary for him to be destroyed by Law, who could never be held by the Law. Thus, therefore, in the last judgment, both a lawful reproof smites him down, who has departed in his conduct from that which he held in profession;

and he is destroyed without a judicial sentence, who is not held by the law of faith.

51. But of the class of the Elect, some are judged and reign. As those, who wipe away with their tears the stains of their life, who, atoning their former misdeeds by their subsequent conduct, conceal from the eyes of their Judge, with the cloak of alms deeds, whatever unlawfulness they may have ever committed. To whom, when placed at His right hand, the Judge

says at His coming, I hungered, and ye gave Me to eat. I thirsted, and ye gave Me to drink. I was a stranger, and ye took Me in, naked, and ye covered Me; sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came to Me. [Matt. 25, 35. 36. To whom he speaks before, saying, Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. [ib. v. 34] But others are not judged, and yet reign; as those, who surpass even the precepts of the Law in the perfection of their virtues; because they are by no means satisfied with fulfilling that which the Divine Law enjoins on all, but with surpassing eagerness desire to perform more, than they would learn from general precepts. To whom it is said by the voice of the Lord; Ye which have left all and have followed Me, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His Majesty, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

[Matt. 19, 28] And of whom the Prophet says, The Lord will come to judgment with the. elders of His people. [Is. 3, 14] And of whom Solomon, when speaking of the Bridegroom of holy Church, observed, saying, Her husband is noble in the gates, when he sitteth with the elders of the land. [Prov. 31, 23] These, therefore, are not judged in the last judgment, and yet reign, because they come as judges together with their Creator. For, leaving all things, they performed, from ready devotion, more than they heard ordered in general terms. For that, which the rich young man heard, was said by a special command to the more perfect, and not generally to all, Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come and follow Me. [Matt. 19, 21] For if a general command bound all persons under this precept, it would be at once a fault for us to possess any thing of this world. But a general direction to all persons in Holy Scripture is one thing, a command specially to the more perfect is another. These then are rightly not bound by the general judgment, who in their conduct have far surpassed even general precepts. For as they are not judged, and yet perish, who, from the persuasion of unbelief, scorn to be bound by the Law; so, they are judged not, and yet reign, who, from the persuasion of godliness, advance even beyond the general precepts of the Divine Law.

Hence is it, that Paul, far surpassing even special precepts given him, performed more in deed, than he received by the appointment of permission. For when he had received, that preaching the Gospel he should live of the Gospel, he both communicated the Gospel to his hearers, and yet refused to be maintained at the expense of the Gospel. [l Cor. 9, 14. 15. Why then should he be judged in order to reign, who received a less obligation, but found out a higher mode of life? Let it be said then rightly, He giveth judgment to the poor: because, the more they are despised, by this world, for their great humility, the more do they then rise up, with greater height of power, to the seats which have been assigned them. Whence it also follows;

Ver. 7. He will not withdraw His eyes from the righteous, but establisheth kings on the throne for ever, and there are they exalted. 52. For God is perhaps believed to have withdrawn His eyes from the righteous, because they are here wounded by the injustice of the unrighteous, and are unavenged. But He then more regards His servants, when the in-

iquity of their persecutor unjustly afflicts them. For, beholding what they here humbly endure, He doubtless even now looks forward to the recompense He is there mercifully to bestow on them. He does not therefore withdraw His eyes from the righteous. Behold how the one groans in his humility; the other is proud, and flourishes in his wickedness. The one bruises his heart, the other is exalted with pride at his iniquity. Which then of these is far withdrawn from the sight of God, the one who has suffered injustice, or the one who has inflicted it on the sufferers? The one, who has kept hold of Divine grace, amid the gloom of sorrow, or he who, amidst external pleasure, has lost the light of righteousness within?

[xxviii]

53. But holy men are properly termed 'kings,' in the language of Scripture; because having been raised above all the motions of the flesh, at one time they control the appetite of lust; at another, they moderate the heat of avarice; at one time, they bow down the boastfulness of pride; at another, they crush the suggestion of envy; at another, they extinguish the fire of passion. They are 'kings' then, because they have learned not to give way to the motions of their temptations, by consenting to them; but to gain the mastery, by ruling over them. Since, therefore, they pass, from this power of authority, to the power of retribution, let it be rightly said, He establisheth kings on the throne for ever. For they are wearied for a time, by ruling themselves, but they are placed for ever on the throne of the kingdom of eternal elevation; and they there receive the power of justly judging others, just as they are here unskilled in unjustly sparing themselves. For it is hence said in another place; Until righteousness be turned into judgment. [Ps. 94, 15] Paul says of himself and his fellows; That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. [2 Cor. 5, 21] Righteousness, then, is turned into judgment, because they, who now live righteously and blamelessly, then obtain the power of judging others.

Hence the Lord says to the Church of Laodicea, To him that hath overcome I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I have overcome, and have sat with My Father on His throne. [Rev. 3, 21] The Lord asserts, that He had sat as a conqueror with His Father on His throne, because after the struggles of His passion, after the reward of His resurrection, He pointed out more clearly to all, that He was equal to the Power of the Father, and He made it known that He was not inferior to Him by having trampled under foot the sting of death. Hence He says to Mary, who did not as yet believe that He was like His Father, Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father. [John 20, 17] For, for us to sit on the throne of the Son, is for us to judge with the authority of the Son Himself. For, because we derive, from His virtue, the power of judgment, we sit, as it were, on His throne. Nor is it inconsistent, that He declares, in another place, that His disciples will come on twelve thrones, and that here He says, that they will sit on His throne. [Matt. 19, 28] For, by twelve thrones is set forth the universal judgment, but by the throne of the Son, the special preeminence of judicial power.

One and the same thing then is designated by twelve thrones, and by the single throne of the Son, because, namely, the universal judgment is undertaken, by the intervention of our Mediator. Let it be said then, He establisheth kings on the throne for ever.

54. But by suitably subjoining 'for ever,' he suggests, what he plainly means. For if he were speaking of the throne of an earthly kingdom, he would not have added 'for ever:' since they who seize hold of that throne, are placed in it, not for ever, but only for a time. But he properly subjoined, And there they are exalted. As if he were suggesting to the mind of his hearer, saying, Because they are here brought low, they are there raised up. For to holy men this is a place of humiliation, as that is to be one of exaltation. Whence it is written in another place, Thou hast humbled them in the place of affliction. [Ps. 44, 19] For this present life is a place of affliction. They then, who are journeying to their eternal home, now despise themselves in the place of affliction for a time, that they may then be truly exalted in the place of joy. It follows:

Ver. 8, 9. And if they shall be in chains, and bound with the cords of poverty, He will shew them their works, and their wickednesses, because they have been violent. [xxix] 55. The chains of bondage, are the very detention of their present pilgrimage. Paul had seen, that he was bound by these chains, when he was saying, I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. [Phil. 1, 23] He perceived that he was bound with the cords of poverty, when, beholding the true riches, he entreated them also for his disciples. That ye may know what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the Saints. [Eph. 1, 18] But after this it is rightly added, He will shew them their works, and their wickednesses, because they have been violent. For when, by loving, we learn more of heavenly glory, we then feel the sins we have committed to have been more burdensome. Whence also Paul, after having felt the grace of heavenly things, found that what he had believed to be in him a zeal for virtue, was but wickedness; saying, Who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. [l Tim. l, 13] Or certainly, when saying, But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. [Phil. 3, 7] Whence it is also fitly subjoined,

Ver. 10. He will open also their ear, to correct them, and will speak to them that they return from iniquity. [xxx] 56. To 'open the ear from iniquity,' is to lay open the understanding of knowledge. But a man is reproved, and his ear opened, when he feels within him a desire after eternal goods, and acknowledges the sins which he has outwardly committed. But temporal punishment can also be understood by the chains and cords of poverty. For they who hear not the words of their Ruler, are frequently warned by the blows of the Smiter; in order that punishments, at least, may lead them onwards to good desires, whom rewards do not invite. Whence it is said by the prophet, Bind with bit and bridle the jaws of those who do not draw near to Thee. But if they despise even scourges, it is plain that they there feel the sufferings of heavier punishments, the more they here trample down the grace of greater consideration. Whence also it follows,

Ver. 11, 12. If they shall hear and observe Him, they shall fulfil their days in good, and their years in glory; but if they shall not hear, they shall pass away by the sword, and shall be consumed with folly. [xxxi]

57. By 'good,' is designated right conduct, but by 'glory,' heavenly recompense. They, then, who study to obey the Divine commands, fulfil their days in good, and their years in glory. Because they pass the course of this life in right deeds, and perfect their consummation by a blessed retribution. But if they shall not hear, they shall pass away by the sword, and shall be consumed in their folly. For vengeance smites them in tribulation, and the end shuts them up in folly. For there are some, whom not even torments keep back from their abandoned habits. Of whom it is said by the Prophet, Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; Thou hast scourged them, and they have refused to receive correction. [Jer. 5, 3] And of whom it is said under the figure of Babylon, We have cured Babylon, and she is not healed. [Jer. 51, 9] Of whom it is said again, I have slain and destroyed My people, and yet they have not returned from their ways? [Jer. 15, 7] These sometimes become worse by the scourge, because, when attacked by pain, they are either more hardened in their contumacious obstinacy, or, what is worse, launch out into even the exasperation of blasphemy. It is well said, then, that they pass away by the sword, and are consumed with folly; for through their scourges, they increase those sins, which they ought, in consequence of them, to correct. And they both feel even here the punishments of the blow, and do not escape there the sufferings of righteous retribution. For it is the infatuation of folly that iniquity so fetters them, that not even punishment keeps them from offending. It follows,

Ver. 13. Hypocrites and crafty men provoke the wrath of God. [xxxii] 58. When mentioning hypocrites, he appropriately subjoins, 'and crafty.' For unless they are crafty in wit, they cannot consistently make pretence of that which they wish to appear. For there are certain faults, which are easily perpetrated even by those of duller sense. For any one even of dull understanding is able to swell, for instance, with pride, to be eager with the desires of avarice, and to yield to the assaults of lust. But a person is unable to carry on the falsity of simulation, unless he is one of more subtle wit. For whoever is such, is distracted in truth by constant observation, in watching two points; so as to skilfully learn, both to conceal what he really is, and to make a show of what he is not; to suppress his real faults, and to display unreal goods; not to boast himself openly of that, which he seems to be; and to pretend often to decline glory, in order to obtain the greater glory. For, because he cannot attain it by pursuing it before the eyes of men, he generally studies to secure it by shrinking from it. These things then do not at all suit the simple; for if they do, they are no longer simple.

59. But when mentioning hypocrites and crafty men, he very properly added, not that they deserve, but that they provoke the wrath of God. For to sin even through ignorance, is to deserve the wrath of God. But wilfully to contradict His commands, to know what is good, but to make light of it, to be able and yet unwilling to do good, is to provoke it. For these are darkened within by the commission of iniquity, and are whitened outwardly by

their display of righteousness. To whom it is declared by the voice of the Lord, Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which appear to men beautiful without, but are within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. [Matt. 23, 27-18] They preserve, then, in outward display, that which they assail in their inward conduct. But, by thinking evil within, they increase those sins, which they conceal outwardly, by assuming another character. They cannot therefore now have any excuse, before the strict Judge, from ignorance; because, while they display every kind of sanctity before the eyes of men, they are a witness against themselves, that they are not ignorant how to live aright. Let it be rightly said then, Hypocrites and crafty men provoke the wrath of God. But he adds what befals them at last, saying,

Ver. 13. Neither shall they cry, when they are bound. [xxxiii] 60. Every wicked person, who, though he is wicked, does not seek to appear holy, when smarting under the infliction of the scourge, is not ashamed to confess that he is wicked. But a wicked person, who intercepts the judgments of men by a shew of sanctity, even when he is smitten with the rod, shrinks from exposing his iniquity, because he has been accustomed to appear holy. But if he is ever hard pressed, he scarcely confesses, even superficially, that he is wicked; because he is confounded at disclosing his inward character by sincere confession. But we are, as it were, free, when we are not chastened by any reproofs; but we are 'bound,' when we are constrained by the blows of the rod. We cry, then, the more loudly when bound, the more sincerely we confess our sins, when placed beneath the blow. For devout confession is a loud cry in the ears of God. Because then the blows of the rod, even when they chastise hypocrites, do not bring them to honest confession; (for they shrink from being discovered to be sinners, because they were counted holy in the opinion of all men;) though the scourges now smite them to the utmost, though they are aware that they are being led on to eternal punishments, they yet wish to remain the same in the opinion of men, as they had always studied to display themselves. Though smarting, then, even under the blow of the extremest suffering, because they neglect to put forth an honest confession, even when afflicted, they scorn, as it were, to cry out, even when bound. It is well said then, Neither shall they cry, when they are bound.

61. Although it can be understood in another way also. For every one, who, although he is wicked, fears not to be called holy by men, though he blames himself as wicked, in his secret thought, yet when he begins to hear of himself frequently as righteous, loses that which he used to hold of himself within. For he pours forth his heart without; and because he willingly receives a false testimony of himself without, he does not enquire what he should think of himself within. Whence it comes to pass, that he seeks even for the solaces of empty praise, if they are wanting, and that, forgetting what he is, he seeks to appear what he is not. While they who are such, then, pretend to be righteous in the judgment of men, and display their praiseworthy actions to the eyes of beholders, they are dealt with justly in secret, so that, the more they endeavour to deceive others, the more are they even themselves deceived as to themselves within. For they lose all eye for anxiously searching

into their own state. For they excuse themselves from searching into, and examining their own conduct, but believe themselves to be the persons they are said to be; and they consider themselves to be holy, not because they so live, but because they are so called. But they neglect God's searching judgment, and to look into themselves; for they rest their belief in their merit on the testimony of another's mouth.

But when they are smitten by a sudden blow, they are unable either to confess that they are wicked, or to discover themselves as they really are: because, namely, they believed themselves to be holy from the profession of men. It is well said, then, Neither shall they cry, when they are bound. For they trust, with vain hope, that they are coming before their heavenly Judge, such as they know they appeared in the sight of men. And the wretched men do not find themselves out, even in the midst of torments; and, while they look for the testimony of untrue praise, they lose the remedy of true confession. They are said even to be bound, and yet to cry not; for, overcome by the importunity of human applause, the wretched men consider themselves holy, even when they are dying in sins. To whom it is well said by the Prophet, Return ye transgressors to your heart. [Is. 46, 8] For were they to return to their heart, they would pour out themselves in words of outward profession. For what is nearer to us than our heart? What is nearer to us, than that thing which is within us? And yet, when it is distracted with wicked thoughts, our heart wanders far away from us. The prophet then sends the transgressor a long way, when he compels him to return to his heart: for the more he has distracted himself with outward things, the more does he hardly find out the means of returning to himself.

But since, because the mind of hypocrites is diverted from the single consideration of eternity, it is ravaged by the inundation of manifold thoughts, it is rightly subjoined,

Ver. 14. Their soul shall die in a tempest. [xxxiv]

62. For they were seeming to live as if in calm, when they were taking care to rejoice in the credit of holiness. But their soul, which used to rejoice in the fatal tranquillity of human praise, dies by a sudden tempest. For most commonly an unexpected tempest suddenly produces a change in all the calm blandishment of the air, and danger cannot be avoided, inasmuch as it could not be foreseen. Whence hypocrites, who neglect to watch over their conduct, are said to die in a tempest. For the sudden whirlwind of an inward shock casts them forth hence, whom the pride of outward applause exalts on high; and, while they embrace in their praise that which they are not, they suddenly find in vengeance what they are. But it is well said by Solomon, As silver is proved in the fining-pot, and gold in the furnace, so is a man proved by the mouth of him that praiseth him. [Prov. 17, 3] For praise of one's self tortures the just, but elates the wicked. But while it tortures, it purifies the just; and while it pleases the wicked, it proves them to be reprobate. For these revel in their own praise, because they seek not the glory of their Maker. But they who seek the glory of their Maker, are tortured with their own praise, lest that which is spoken of without, should not exist within them;

lest, if that, which is said, really exist, it should be made void in the sight of God by these very honours; lest the praise of men should soften the firmness of their heart, and should lay it low in self-satisfaction; and lest that, which ought to aid them to increase their exertions, should be, even now, the recompense of their labour. But when they see that their own praises tend to the glory of God, they even long for and welcome them. For it is written, They may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. [Matt. 5, 16] They make themselves, therefore, a path for men to follow, as often as they manifest any thing in themselves, by which God can be recognised; because they seek not to attract the praises of men to themselves, but wish they should pass on, through their means, to the glory of their Maker. But haughty men prostitute their effeminate hearts to human praise, because they are corrupted by self-love. Of whom it is said in another place, Men shall be lovers of their own selves. [2 Tim. 3, 2] But of this very corruption of theirs it is here fitly subjoined,

And their life among the effeminate. [xxxv] 63. For, if they were living as men, transitory praise would not infect them with any corruption. Whence the Prophet persuades the Elect, saying, Do manfully; and let your heart be strengthened. For when saying, Do manfully, he immediately subjoined, and let your heart be strengthened. As if he desired to secure the sex of the heart. For the mind of a luxurious man is corrupted, if it is delighted with transitory objects. The life of hypocrites then perishes among the effeminate, because it is found to be corrupted with the luxury of praise. But in another translation, [LXX.] it is not rendered, Their life among the effeminate, but, Let their life be wounded by angels. But though these expressions differ in words, they agree in sense; for angels wound the life of the effeminate, when the messengers of truth assail it with the shafts of holy preaching. Because we have heard then what occurs in the damnation of the reprobates, let us hear what follows, respecting the deliverance of the humble.

Ver. 15. He will deliver the poor from his straitness. 64. The poor is delivered from his straitness, when any humble person is set free from this affliction of his pilgrimage. For he is here oppressed with even continual tribulations, in order that he may be excited to seek for the joy of real consolation. Whence it follows also, And will open his ear in tribulation. To open the ear in tribulation, is to open the hearing of the heart, by the affliction of blows. For when we despise commands, we are treated with a merciful severity, in order that we may fear the rod. Tribulation then opens the ear of the heart, which this world's prosperity often closes. For it is said by Solomon, The turning away of the little ones shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. [Prov. 1, 32] It follows, Ver. 16. He will therefore bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place.

[xxxvi]

65. Every one who forsakes the way of life, and casts himself down into the darkness of sins, plunges himself, as it were, into a well or pitfall. But if, through long commission he is also so weighed down by a habit of sin, as to be unable to rise upward, he is pent in, as it were, in the narrow opening of a well. Whence David the Prophet entreats in the person of sinners,

saying, Let not the tempest of water drown me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the well press its mouth upon me. [Ps. 69, 15] For a tempest of water has, as it were, hurried away him, whom the iniquity of evil doing has moved from stability in goodness. But if it has not yet prevailed by long custom, it has not overwhelmed. He has already fallen into a well, who has done that, which the law of God forbids. But if long custom does not yet weigh him down, the well has not contracted its mouth. He escapes therefore with greater ease, the less closely he is pent in by habit. Whence the prophet Jeremiah, when beholding that Judaea had been overwhelmed, through long habit, by iniquities, bewails himself in his lamentations, under her person, and says, My life is fallen into a well, and they have placed a stone over me. [Lam. 3, 53] For one's life falls into a pit, when it is denied with the pollution of iniquity.

But a stone is placed over, when the mind is also consumed by sin, through long habit, so that, though willing to rise, it is quite unable to do so, because the weight of evil habit presses on it from above. But because it submits to the power of God, and is brought back to the large room of good deeds, after the confinement of evil habit, it is said, He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place. For he is safely brought from a narrow opening into a broad place, who, after having borne the yoke of iniquity, is brought back by penitence to the liberty of good works.

66. For it is, as it were, the narrowness of a confined opening, to wish, and yet to be unable to rise from an overpowering evil habit; to tend, in desire, to things above, but yet still to remain in deed in things below, to advance in heart, but not to follow in act, and to endure one's self as a kind of self-contradiction within one's self. But when a soul, proceeding thus, is assisted by the hand of grace to raise it up, it arrives from a narrow opening to a broad place: because, having overcome its difficulties, it performs the good works which it desires. The prophet David had beheld the enclosure of a narrow opening, when he said, Thou hast delivered my soul from necessities, and hast not shut me up into the hands of the enemy. [Ps. 3l, 7. 8.] But he found that he had been brought safely into a broad place, when he added, Thou hast set my feet in a large room. [ibid.] For our feet are firmly placed in a large room, when we journey to those good things which are fitted for us, and are not impeded by any difficulty. For we are proceeding, as it were, through a wide place whither we please, because we are not hard pressed by any difficulties placed in our way.

67. But Eliu would say this rightly, if his opinion were but suitable to blessed Job. For he believed, that he had been scourged for his faults, and therefore decided that he had fallen into a narrow opening. For with the heavier blows he beheld him afflicted, with the more abominable iniquities he believed him to be weighed down; being surely ignorant that his scourges were an increase of his merits, not a punishment for his sin. But when he declares that he had fallen into a narrow opening, he proceeds, as it were, to speak more fully of the profound depth in which Job is plunged: and says, And which hath no foundation beneath it. [xxxvii]

68. Every sin has no foundation; because it has no subsistence in its own proper nature. For evil has no substance. But that which any how exists, unites with the nature of good. The narrow opening is said, then, to have no foundation beneath it, because the pollution of sin has no power of subsisting by itself. But since foundation is derived from fundum, (bottom,) we may without impropriety understand that 'foundation' is put for bottom, as hearing is derived from ear, and yet the ear itself is frequently designated by the word hearing. When speaking then of a narrow opening, he added, as wishing fully to describe the profound abyss, And which hath no foundation (or bottom) beneath it. For the infernal pit swallows up him, whom iniquity hurries away. But the infernal pit is rightly believed not to have a bottom; because every one who is swept away by it, is devoured by the boundless profound. For the Prophet, wishing to describe fully its boundless immensity, says, The infernal pit hath enlarged its soul, and hath opened its mouth without measure. [Is. 5, 14] As therefore that is said to be enlarged without measure which attracts very many to itself, so it is not improperly believed to be deep, and without a bottom, because it absorbs, as it were, into the boundless abyss of its immensity those, whom it receives into itself. And therefore when saying, He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening into a broad place, he fitly subjoined, And which hath no foundation beneath it. As if he were saying, He will bring thee safely from a narrow opening, which has no bottom under it. For since it is through sin that we tend to the pit, He brings safely from a narrow opening him whom He delivers from sin. But him whom He rescues from the narrow opening, He withdraws from the depths of hell.

69. Though it can also be understood in another sense. For as he who is plunged into a well, is confined in the bottom of it; so would the mind fall in, and remain, as it were, at the bottom, if, after having once fallen, it were to confine itself within any measure of sin. But when it cannot be contented with the sin into which it has fallen, while it is daily plunging into worse offences, it finds, as it were, no bottom to the well into which it has fallen, on which to rest. For there would be a bottom to the well, if there were any bounds to his sin. Whence it is well said in another place, When a sinner hath come into the lowest depth of sins, he contemneth. [Prov. 18, 3] For he puts by returning, because he has no hope that he can be forgiven. But when he sins still more through despair, he withdraws, as it were, the bottom from the well, so as to find therein no resting place. It follows,

But the rest of thy table shall be full of fatness. [xxxviii] 70. The rest of the table, is the refreshment of inward satiety: which is said to be full of fatness, because it is set forth with the delight of eternal pleasure. The Prophet was hungering after the feasts of this table, when saying, I shall be satisfied, when Thy glory shall be manifested. [Ps. 17, 15] He was thirsting for the cups of this table, when saying, My soul thirsted for the living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God? [Ps. 42, 2] Eliu, therefore, wishing to console the temporal sufferings of blessed Job, by an eternal compensation, promises him, as if freely, from himself, that which was justly due to him as his desert, saying, But the rest of thy table shall be full of fatness. It follows, Ver. 17. But thy cause hath been judged as the cause of the ungodly, thou shall receive thy cause and judgment.

[xxxix] 71. The cause of the good, is righteousness. And their cause is judged, as the cause of the ungodly, because their righteousness is here smitten with fatherly correction, that they may be taught to exercise greater vigilance, not only by the injunction of commands, but by the infliction of blows. But they receive their cause and justice, because from that righteousness, with which they now live, they hereafter ['tune'] shine forth in the height of judicial power; so that they are then able to judge all things the more powerfully, the more strictly all their conduct is now judged. But these points, which blessed Job ever maintained with stedfast faith, Eliu mentioned, as if he were making some new promise. For haughty men have these peculiarities: they falsely exaggerate what is wrong, and if ever they state that which is good, they bring it forward as something unknown. Whence it comes to pass that they venture to teach those who are wiser than themselves, because, namely, they believe that they alone are acquainted with such subjects. But when they condescend to any words of consolation, they consider that they have been at once degraded, and by the harshness of proud reproof, they reestablish, as it were, their ability; in order that they who seemed to have condescended in soothing speech ['blandientes testes' Ben. 'testes' seems a misprint.], may be dreaded when reproof has suddenly sprung up. Whence also Eliu immediately added, saying,

Ver. 18-21. Let not then anger overcome thee, to oppress any one, neither let the multitude of places bow thee down. Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all the mighty in strength. Prolong not the night, that people may go up for them. Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery. [xl]

72. In most manuscripts we find 'gifts;' ['donorum'] in a few, however, but more ancient, we find 'places.' ['locorum'] But since the expression, Let not the multitude of gifts turn thee aside, needs no explanation, we have thought good that that expression should be rather expounded, which seems to be explained with some slight difficulty. But the pride, which uttered these words, proves of how great haughtiness they are. But, because we have said that Eliu is a type of the arrogant, and blessed Job of the Elect, if we examine them more accurately, we demonstrate how appropriate they are even now to haughty men within the Church. Holy men wonder at the doings of others, even when trifling, but make light of their own doings, even when great. But haughty men, on the other hand, make light of other persons' doings, even when great, and wonder at their own even when trifling, and generally think well of their own misdeeds, but cease not to think ill of the good qualities of others. For while they seek their own glory, they are mischievously desirous, that whatever virtue is performed by others, should be scarred with the brand of iniquity, and a weighty deed of goodness they pervert into a taint of guilt. For frequently, when they behold the wicked severely punished by the Church, they unjustly make a kind of complaint that the innocent are afflicted, and they miscall the splendour of its discipline by the appellation of iniquity.

Whence Eliu, representing the arrogant, as if admonishing Job, says, Let not anger overcome thee, to oppress any one. For whatever is done by Holy Church with the censure of

discipline, haughty men consider as an emotion of anger. And because, from their desire of human praise, they are ever anxious to appear kind, they consider that none should be corrected with strictness and severity. Whence also, as was before observed, they consider that those are oppressed, whom they see restrained from sin, against their will, even by righteous rulers.

73. But the Lord having been the cause that Holy Church has grown up with a height of religious power in all parts of the world; they assail, and ascribe to sinful pride this very temporal power, which it exercises rightly. Whence Eliu subjoins, saying, And let not the multitude of places bow thee down. As if it were said by the tongue of haughty men to Holy Church herself, preserving her humility more in prosperity. Because thou art every where regarded with the reverence of faith, beware that thou art not elated with the power ['fascibus,' al. 'fastibus'] this reverence bestows. For they behold certain persons, who under the guise of religion, are puffed up with the sin of pride: and the fault which they justly blame in these, they unjustly bring forward as a charge against all. Not at all considering, namely, that there are those within her, who know how to exercise temporal power aright, though yet despising it, and to love and look forward to eternal objects with full desire; who can discharge the high office which has been committed to them, and carefully fulfil their duty of inward humility; so that neither do they neglect all care for the office they have undertaken, on account of their humility; nor, again, does their humility swell into pride by reason of their office. And if there are perhaps some within her, who serve not God, but their own glory, under pretext of religion, yet she endeavours either severely to correct them, if possible;

or, if otherwise, to endure them with patience. And she either, in correcting them, embraces them as her children, or, through tolerating, is harassed by them as her enemies. For she knows that the life of the just is wounded by their pride; she knows that whatever sin is committed through the wickedness of such persons is brought forward as a charge against her. But she is the less afraid of bearing the blame of others' sins, since she is aware that even her Head endured such wrongs as this. For it is written of Him, And He was numbered with the wicked. [Is. 53, 12] Of Him it is said again, He Himself hath borne our weaknesses, and He Himself hath carried our sorrows. [Mark 15, 28; Is. 53, 4] Let haughty men then pursue their course, and by their estimate of the wicked, vex the life of the innocent. The Church of the Elect knows how to tolerate the deeds of the one, and the words of the others: and to convert the minds of the wicked by bearing with them. And even though they are not able to be converted, yet she patiently endures their disgrace. For she considers that it tends to secure her a twofold reward, that she is scorned without for the merits of those, by whose life she is wounded even within.

74. But it must be observed that he does not say, Let not the multitude of places elate thee, but, Let not the multitude of places bow thee down. For every one who is raised up in this world, is turned aside by his very exaltation; because when he exalts himself outwardly, he falls within. Eliu, therefore, beholding the fall of a heart in its pride, says, And let not the

multitude of places bow thee down. As if it were said to Holy Church, by the voice of haughty men, Take heed, thou art not diverted from thy inward intention, if thou art exalted by the veneration of the whole world. It follows, Ver. 19. Lay down thy greatness without sorrow, and all the mighty in strength. [xli]

75. Whom else do we understand by the mighty of Holy Church, except those, who both by their lofty attempts, and by successful designs have strength to overcome the desires of this world? Its greatness therefore consists in the life of its mighty ones; because it is then rendered more glorious, when its Elect contend, even to the death, with constant resolution, in defence of the Faith. Haughty men, therefore, when Apostles have been withdrawn from this world, and Martyrs withdrawn also to heavenly places, because they perhaps perceive that more learned and powerful rulers are greatly wanting, suspect that they have remained the only ones within the Church. And hence, while they prefer themselves, they insult, under pretence of advising, her, and say, Lay down thy greatness without sorrow, and all the mighty in strength. As if they said in open reproaches, 'Be not confident, that thou possessest greatness, for, since the old fathers have been taken away, thou hast no longer any in whose life thou canst boast.' They say these things in truth, as not knowing that Almighty God does not leave His Church without proper government. For when He summons the strong to their reward, He strengthens, in their place, the weak for the contest: when He rewards the one by bearing them away, He supplies to the others strength for their labours, for Him to recompense. Of whom it is said to the same Holy Church, Instead of thy fathers, children are born to thee; thou shall make them princes over all the earth. [Ps. 45, 16] For those who are afterwards preferred, are appointed to supply the virtue of the old fathers, because also when aged trees are felled, tender shoots grow up in the place of their strength. But haughty men believe not that they are strong, whom they knew at one time to be weak: and they disdain to reverence those when changed, whom they remember to have been contemptible.

76. But since they see that the more righteous are few, and the ungodly the largest body therein, just as in threshing the fruits, the quantity of the chaff is greater; they despise even the life of the righteous from their estimate of the wicked. They see in truth that some of its rulers, supported by temporal power, revel in the pride of that power. They see that that reverence for religion, which their fathers preserved [so old Mss. al. 'sowed'] to this world by dying, these sweep away, by exulting in worldly joys; and consider that they are mighty, but not with strength. For while they are supported by temporal power, they are strengthened, as it were, by a kind of weakness. For the stronger they are without, the more are they bereft of all the might of strength within. And therefore it is said to her by haughty men, Lay down the mighty in strength. As if it were plainly said, They once clung to thee, truly strong, who maintained, in their lives, that which they taught in words. But now they who are thy rulers, are mighty in appearance, not in strength. For they cease not to set themselves forth as worthy of honour, but are the more weak and contemptible, the more they are afraid that respect for their honour is set aside, in comparison with the truth.

Haughty men rightly think thus of most persons, but plunge headlong into the sin of pride, the more they suppose all persons whom they behold above them, to be such. For the evil conduct of the many ought not to lead them to form an opinion of all. For although those whom they know, and decide upon, are wicked; yet some, whom they know not, are holy. For now is the season of threshing, and the grains are, as yet, concealed beneath the chaff. No fruit then will be expected from the threshing floor, if that alone, which is seen on the surface, is supposed to be therein. Because, therefore, they despise those whom they behold, and sneer at those, whom they know, being put in the place of the old fathers, it is fitly subjoined,

Ver. 20. Prolong not the night, that people may go up for them. [xlii] 77. As if the arrogant openly said; Act not so in the darkness of thy ignorance, as to substitute a host of infirm persons in the place of the strong. For by the name 'people' [Lat. 'peoples'] are designated those, who, given up to the common practice, live without restraint in all that they desire. But to 'prolong the night, that people should go up in the place of the strong,' is, if it is caused by negligence, that the unlearned and weak occupy the place of the learned and strong. People go up in the place of the strong, when they who have learned to live wickedly, obtain the place of pastors. And this would be rightly said, if it were spoken humbly. For haughty men, even when they give good advice, exercise their wicked over-bearingness ['superstitionis.' vide Ducange]. For, as was before stated, they more desire to smite with reproof, than to cherish with consolation. Whence it is presently subjoined,

Ver. 21. Decline not to iniquity; for thou hast begun to follow this after misery. Haughty men in truth call this the misery of the Church, because they suspect that its main body is despised by God: and they scorn it with loftier pride, the more they suspect that it is utterly despised by God. Having given rapidly a figurative exposition of these words, we must now gather their moral meaning; that, having learned the figure of the Church, which we believe to be generally described, we may learn what we may specially gather from these words in each single case. He says therefore, Ver. 18. Let not, therefore, anger overcome thee, to oppress any one. [xliii] [MORAL INTERPRETATION]

78. Every one, who is required to correct the vices of others, ought first of all to look carefully into himself; lest, while punishing others' faults, he himself should be overcome by his zeal for punishment. For furious anger, under the guise of justice, frequently ravages the mind; and while it seems to rage with zeal for righteousness, it gratifies the fury of its wrath, and considers that it justly performs, whatever its anger wickedly dictates. Whence also it frequently transgresses the due limits of punishment, because it is not restrained by the measure of justice. For it is right, that when we correct others' faults, we should first measure our own; that the mind should first cease to glow with its own warmth, should first control within itself the impulse of its zeal with calm moderation ["quitate']; lest we should sin ourselves, in the correction of sin, if we are hurried on with headlong fury to punish offences, and lest we, who are deciding on, and punishing, a fault, should commit one by

punishing it immoderately. For there follows not the correction, but rather the oppression of the delinquent, if, in punishment, our anger extends further than the offence deserves.

For, in the correction of faults, anger ought to be under the control of the mind and not its master, so as not to take the lead in the execution of justice, as though imposing a command, but to follow after, as though obeying directions, and to carry out, as if employed, the sentence which has been made known to it, and not go first as if an employer. It is well said therefore, Let not anger overcome thee, to oppress any one. Because, namely, if he, who is endeavouring to correct, is overcome by anger, he oppresses before he corrects. For, whilst he is more inflamed than he ought to be, he rushes unchecked into enormous cruelty, under the pretence of just punishment. And this is frequently the case, for this reason, because the hearts of rulers are too little intent on the love of their Creator alone. For whilst they desire many things in this life, they are distracted with countless thoughts. And when they suddenly discover the faults of their subjects, they are unable to judge them aright, in agreement with God; because they cannot suddenly bring back to the height of severity, their hearts which have been scattered abroad in transitory cares. They therefore discover less readily, when excited, the balance of moderation for the punishment of sins, the less they seek for it in their season of tranquillity.

Whence, when Eliu was saying, Let not anger overcome thee to oppress any, in order to express that the causes of injustice and of overpowering anger were the same, he immediately added,

And let not the multitude of places bow thee down. [xliv]

79. We are turned aside into as many places, as are the cares with which we are distracted. For as the space of the body is the place of the body, so is each intention of thought the place of the mind. And if, while it is impelled hither and thither, it is pleasingly occupied with any delightful thought of its own, it is, as it were, put to rest in a certain place. For as often as, overcome by weariness, we are led from thought to thought, we migrate, as it were, with weary mind from place to place. As many thoughts then as spring up and dissipate the unity of good intention, so do as many places bend down the loftiness of the mind. For the mind would stand upright, if it always clung close to that one thought to which it ought. The mind would stand upright, if it did not, by its countless motions, prostrate itself in fluctuating change. But when it now takes up these things, and now passes off to others, it is turned aside, as it were, from its state of uprightness through a multitude of places; and while it extends itself through many things, it detaches itself from that one intention, to which it ought to adhere. But yet this habit of change has become a nature to us ever since the guilt of the first sin. For when the mind endeavours to stand in itself, it is somehow or other drawn away from itself, without knowing it.

For the soul of man is diverted by an impulse of disgust, from every object to which it directs its thoughts. But whilst it eagerly seeks for subjects to think upon, and suddenly loathes those it has thought upon, it teaches us, that that which does not continue at rest, wherever

placed, depends on something elsewhere. For it does, in truth, depend on Him, by Whom it was created. And because it was made to seek after God alone, and since every thing which it seeks beneath Him, is less than He; that which is not God, justly does not satisfy it. Hence it is that it is scattered hither and thither, and turns away, as we said, under the impulse of loathing, from every object. For being eagerly desirous of satisfaction, it seeks a place wherein to rest; but it has lost that One, Whom it might have had to its satisfaction. Whence it is now led through many objects, that it may be satisfied with their variety at least, since it cannot be satisfied with their quality.

80. But holy men watch themselves with careful observation, so as not to be separated, through changeableness, from the object of their thoughts; and, because they desire to be ever the same, they carefully confine themselves to the thought with which they love God. For, in the contemplation of their Creator, they are about to obtain this, that they enjoy always the same stability of mind. No changeableness then dissipates them; because, namely, their thought ever continues without any difference in itself. They endeavour, therefore, now to imitate that, with labour, which, afterwards, they receive with joy as a gift. To this unchangeable state had the Prophet attached himself by the virtue of love, when saying, One thing I have asked of the Lord, this I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord. [Ps. 27, 4] To this unity Paul had adhered in his intention, when saying, But one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I follow after for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ. [Phil. 3, 13, 14] For, if there is any human weakness in their hearts, a severe examination speedily checks it, and when their thought wanders as if childishly, they are soon kept in restraint by manly correction. Whence it is, that they collect at once their distracted mind; and fix it, as far as they are able, in one single thought. Because then the position of the mind is bent down by the changeableness of thoughts, it is rightly said by Eliu, Let not the multitude of places turn thee aside.

81. But frequently, while the mind of a righteous man stands firm in the stronghold of its resolution, while it recovers itself from every dispersion of change, and keeps down whatever superfluously arises within; it is smitten by the very glory of its own rectitude, and is raised up with the pride of presuming on itself. For he who performs great deeds, though he may think humbly of himself, yet knows that his doings are great. For, if he knows not that they are great, he doubtless keeps but little watch over them. And while he neglects to watch them, he either makes less progress in them, or loses them altogether. Whilst then it is necessary to know our good deeds, in order to guard them; from the very knowledge of them, a way is opened to our pride, and the hand of sin, by whose ravages they are to be snatched away, is admitted to the heart of him who does them. But it is brought about by a marvellous dispensation, that our Creator suffers a mind which is elated by prosperity, to be smitten with sudden temptation; in order that it may, in infirmity, behold itself more truly, and may descend, already improved, from that haughtiness of pride, which it had assumed from its virtues. Whence it is now rightly subjoined;

Ver. 19. Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all the mighty in strength. [xlv]

82. For the motions of the heart are mighty, when they feel only those things which are virtuous. But we lay down our greatness and our mighty motions, when we are compelled, by the assaults of sin, to consider what we are. We lay aside our mighty motions, when we are no longer raised up by our virtue, but when, by consenting to sin, we are fearful of being overwhelmed by that infirmity, with which we are assaulted. For the mind has great confidence in itself, when it sees that its strength is adequate to its wishes. It arrogates at once to itself the assurance of sanctity, and thinks that it is now equal even to all the heights of virtues, which it has conceived in thought only. But when a temptation suddenly arises and pierces it through, it utterly confounds those lofty thoughts, which had sprung up from its virtues. For an unexpected enemy enters, as it were, an unsuspecting city; and the necks of haughty citizens are smitten with a sudden stroke. There is nothing then at that time but continual lamentation, whilst the captured city of the mind is, by means of slaughter, bereft of the glory of its great ones. Whence it is now said, Lay down thy greatness without tribulation, and all who are mighty in strength. As if it were plainly said, Repress all the pride thou hadst conceived within, at thy good deeds, and lay down those mighty motions of the heart, which thou hadst from thy just doings;

because thou now considerest, in the assault of adversity, how vainly thou before entertainedst high thoughts of thyself in thy pride. Which greatness, it is said, must be laid aside without tribulation, doubtless, because when humility makes progress through temptation, that very adversity, which secures the mind from pride, is itself prosperous. But yet this is not effected without great tribulation, when the tranquil mind is assailed by the inroads of temptations, as if by a sudden enemy. For, when the adversity of temptation forces itself into the mind, it produces therein a kind of darkness, and confounds, with the gloom of its bitterness, that soul which had long been enlightened, within itself, by the radiant sweetness of its virtues. Whence it is also fitly subjoined;

Ver. 20. Prolong not the night, that people should go up for them. [xlvi] 83. For the night is indeed prolonged, when the sorrow, that springs from temptation, is not ended by the rising up of consolation. The night is protracted, because the sorrow of the mind is prolonged by confused thoughts. For whilst the mind, placed in temptation, considers that it is driven away from the former solidity of its virtue, it is blinded by superinduced sorrows, as by a kind of gloom. And its eye is closed to every ray of joy, whilst it anxiously trembles, lest it should entirely lose that which it had before begun to be. Whence it is also well said, that, in this night, people go up in the place of the strong; because, namely, in this sorrow of temptation, instead of bold emotions, unworthy and manifold thoughts spring up in the heart. For whilst it sees, in this perturbation, that it has already almost lost that which it had been, it heaps up in itself countless waves and tumults. At one time it sorrows that it has lost its tranquillity; at another, it is afraid lest it should fall into evil deeds. At one time it calls to mind on what a height it had stood, at another, it observes in what a depth of vices

it is lying, by means of its pleasure. At one time it prepares itself to recover its strength, at another, as though already defeated and crushed, it despairs that it can recover it.

84. When such manifold thoughts then come forth over the convicted mind, people, as it were, rise and press it down in the night. Which people the Prophet had doubtless presumed he could overcome, not by himself, but by the aid of the Divine protection, when he was saying. My Protector, and in Him will I hope, subduing people under me. [Ps. 144, 2] For people are subjected to holy minds, when foolish thoughts start away from them, at the presence of strict severity; so as not to hurry them through headlong fancies, but, subjected to reason, humbly to cease from the heart. Hence, therefore, the mind which used, in prosperity, to presume greater things of itself, endures, when placed in temptation, the tumults of hope and despair, it is now well said, Prolong not the night, that people should go up for them. As if it were openly said, Disperse at once the darkness of sorrow, when involved in temptation, lest thou, who hadst thought highly of thyself in tranquillity, shouldest overwhelm thyself more fatally in trouble also, with the gloom of thy thoughts. Which Eliu would properly say, if, however, he knew to whom he was saying it. For these sayings are the less suited to blessed Job, the more deeply all things are known by him. But because, as we have often said, haughty men fall even into insulting words of reproaches, while they presume to teach those, whom they ought not, it is added;

Ver. 21. Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery. [xlvii] 85. He follows iniquity after misery, who, after the evils which he endures for his correction, inflames himself, in his glowing heart, with the torches of impatience. Which Eliu believed that blessed Job had done, having heard him speak in bold words, when in the midst of scourges: being ignorant, namely, that every thing which he said, he uttered not from the sin of impatience, but from the virtue of truth, who did not, even when justifying himself, differ from the sentence of the inward Judge. But we must greatly consider how, when saying, Decline not to iniquity, he immediately subjoined of this very iniquity; For thou hast begun to follow this after misery. 86. What is this, that, while he forbids him to decline to it, he condemns him for it, at once, as if he had already declined to it; except that arrogant men wish rather to appear judges, than consolers? Whence also, they sometimes smite, with severe sentences, those faults, which they suspect have arisen in the heart. And, before the fault of the offenders is certain, severe invective of words is brought forward; and a person is struck by their sentence, before any thing appears, to be smitten.

87. Although even just men commonly oppose, by reproof, wicked and secret thoughts; but, when any preceding doings make plain these thoughts, they frequently root out from the hearts of their hearers, by the hand of reproof, those sins which have not shewn themselves. But then they perceive that they are already following from others, which precede. For as physicians of the body discern that some diseases have already appeared, but heal others, that they may not appear; so do holy teachers sometimes restore to health the wounds they have discovered, and sometimes so deal with men's minds that they are not wounded. In whom we must carefully observe, that as they generally reprove known faults with severity,

so do they speak against doubtful thoughts, even with calmness. The undoubted they chastise with blows: the doubtful they ward off by taking precautions. But because arrogant men know not their rule of discrimination, they wound, with the shafts of their sentences, known and unknown, certain and uncertain faults alike. Whence it is now said by Eliu, Take heed that thou decline not to iniquity, for thou hast begun to follow this after misery. But because the remarks which follow are drawn out with longer allegation, we conclude this book with this close, that it may not be too immoderately extended.

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.