

Exposition on Psalm 78

by St. Augustine

The Psalm is a call to the people of God to heed His law, understand the importance of faith and trust in Him, and put their hope in God.

Scripture: Exodus 19:8, 1 Samuel 4:19, 1 Samuel 5:6, Isaiah 40:6, Jeremiah 7:12, Romans 8:24, Romans 8:31, Philippians 3:8, Colossians 1:13

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Gods Wrath"

Description

St. Augustine preaches about the journey of the Israelites in the desert, highlighting their ungratefulness towards God despite His blessings and the consequences of their disobedience. He emphasizes the importance of faith, humility, and obedience in seeking God's grace and avoiding His wrath. The sermon delves into the symbolic meanings of the plagues inflicted on the Egyptians, the guidance of God through hope and fearlessness, and the rejection of idolatry. St. Augustine warns against the dangers of pride, unbelief, and disobedience, urging listeners to seek God with sincerity and faith.

Transcript

1. This Psalm does contain the things which are said to have been done among the old people: but the new and latter people is being admonished, to beware that it be not ungrateful regarding the blessings of God, and provoke His anger against it, whereas it ought to receive His grace....The Title thereof does first move and engage our attention. For it is not without reason inscribed, Understanding of Asaph: but it is perchance because these words require a reader who does perceive not the voice which the surface utters, but some inward sense. Secondly, when about to narrate and mention all these things, which seem to need a hearer more than an expounder: I will open, he says, in parables my mouth, I will declare propositions from the beginning. Who would not herein be awakened out of sleep? Who would dare to hurry over the parables and propositions, reading them as if self-evident, while by their very names they signify that they ought to be sought out with deeper view? For a parable has on the surface thereof the similitude of something: and though it be a Greek word, it is now used as a Latin word. And it is observable, that in parables, those which are called the similitudes of things are compared with things with which we have to do. But propositions, which in Greek are called προβλήματα, are questions having something therein which is to be solved by disputation. What man then would read parables and propositions cursorily? What man would not attend while hearing these words with watchful mind, in order that by understanding he may come by the fruit thereof?

2. Hearken ye, He says, My people, to My law Psalm 77:1. Whom may we suppose to be here speaking, but God? For it was Himself that gave a law to His people, whom when delivered out of Egypt He gathered together, the which gathering together is properly named a Synagogue, which the word Asaph is interpreted to signify. Hath it then been said, Understanding of Asaph, in the sense that Asaph himself has understood; or must it be figuratively understood, in the sense that the same Synagogue, that is, the same people, has understood, unto whom is said, Hearken, My people, unto My law? Why is it then that He is rebuking the same people by the mouth of the Prophet, saying, But Israel has not known Me, and My people has not understood? Isaiah 1:3 But, in fact, there were even in that people they that understood, having the faith which was afterwards revealed, not pertaining to the letter of the law, but the grace of the Spirit. For they cannot have been without the same faith, who were able to foresee and foretell the revelation thereof that should be in Christ, inasmuch as even those old Sacraments were significant of those that should be. Had the prophets alone this faith, and not the people too? Nay indeed, but even they that faithfully heard the Prophets, were aided by the same grace in order that they might understand what they heard. But without doubt the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven was veiled in the Old Testament, which in the fullness of time should be unveiled in the New. For, says the Apostle, they did drink of the Spiritual Rock following them, but the Rock was Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:4 In a mystery therefore theirs was the same meat and drink as ours, but in signification the same, not in form; because the same Christ was Himself figured to them in a Rock, manifested to us in the Flesh. But, he says, not in all of them God was well pleased. 1 Corinthians 10:5 All indeed ate the same spiritual meat and drank the same spiritual drink, that is to say, signifying something spiritual: but not in all of them was God well pleased. When, he says, not in all: there were evidently there some in whom was God well pleased; and although all the Sacraments were common, grace, which is the virtue of the Sacraments, was not common to all. Just as in our times, now that the faith has been revealed, which then was veiled, to all men that have been baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Matthew 28:19 the Laver of regeneration is common; but the very grace whereof these same are the Sacraments, whereby the members of the Body of Christ are to reign together with their Head, is not common to all. For even heretics have the same Baptism, and false brethren too, in the communion of the Catholic name.

3. Nevertheless, neither then nor now without profit is the voice of him, saying, Hearken ye, My people, to My law. Which expression is remarkable in all the Scriptures, how he says not, hearken thou, but, hearken ye. For of many men a people does consist: to which many that which follows is spoken in the plural number. Incline ye your ear unto the words of My mouth. Hearken ye, is the same as, Incline your ear: and what He says there, My law, this He says here in, the words of My mouth.

For that man does godly hearken to the law of God, and the words of His mouth, whose ear humility does incline: not he whose neck pride does lift up. For whatever is poured in is received on the concave surface of humility, is shaken off from the convexity of swelling. Whence in another place, Incline, he says, your ear, and receive the words of understanding. Proverbs 5:1 We have been therefore sufficiently admonished to receive even this Psalm of this understanding of Asaph, to receive, I say, with inclined ear, that is, with humble piety.

And it has not been spoken of as being of Asaph himself, but to Asaph himself. Which thing is evident by the Greek article, and is found in certain Latin copies. These words therefore are of understanding, that is, of intelligence, which has been given to Asaph himself: which we had better understand not as to one man, but as to the congregation of the people of God; whence we ought by no means to alienate ourselves. For although properly we say Synagogue of Jews, but Church of Christians, because a

Congregation is wont to be understood as rather of beasts, but a convocation as rather of men: yet that too we find called a Church, and it perhaps is more suitable for us to say, Save us, O Lord, our God, and congregate us from the nations, in order that we may confess to Your Holy Name.

Neither ought we to disdain to be, nay we ought to render ineffable thanks, for that we are, the sheep of His hands, which He foresaw when He was saying, I have other sheep which are not of this fold, them too I must lead in, that there may be one flock and one Shepherd: John 10:16 that is to say, by joining the faithful people of the Gentiles with the faithful people of the Israelites, concerning whom He had before said, I have not been sent but to the sheep which have strayed of the house of Israel.

Matthew 15:24 For also there shall be congregated before Him all nations, and He shall sever them as a shepherd the sheep from the goats. Matthew 25:32 Thus then let us hear that which has been spoken. Harken ye, My people, to My law, incline ye your ear unto the words of My mouth: not as if addressed to Jews, but rather as if addressed to ourselves, or at least as if these words were said as well to ourselves (as to them). For when the Apostle had said, But not in all them was God well pleased, thereby showing that there were those too in whom God was well pleased: he has immediately added, For they were overthrown in the desert: secondly he has continued, but these things have been made our figures....To us therefore more particularly these words have been sung.

Whence in this Psalm among other things there has been said, That another generation may know, sons who shall be born and shall arise. Moreover, if that death by serpents, and that destruction by the destroyer, and the slaying by the sword, were figures, as the Apostle evidently does declare, inasmuch as it is manifest that all those things did happen: for he says not, in a figure they were spoken, or, in a figure they were written, but, in a figure, he says, they happened to them: with how much greater diligence of godliness must those punishments be shunned whereof those were the figures?

For beyond a doubt as in good things there is much more of good in that which is signified by the figure, than in the figure itself: so also in evil things very far worse are the things which are signified by the figures, while so great are the evil things which as figures do signify. For as the land of promise, whereunto that people was being led, is nothing in comparison with the Kingdom of Heaven, whereunto the Christian people is being led: so also those punishments which were figures, though they were so severe, are nothing in comparison with the punishments which they signify.

But those which the Apostle has called figures, the same this Psalm, as far as we are able to judge, calls parables and propositions: not having their end in the fact of their having happened, but in those things whereunto they are referred by a reasonable comparison. Let us therefore hearken unto the law of God-- us His people-- and let us incline our ear unto the words of His mouth.

4. I will open, he says, in parables My mouth, I will declare propositions from the beginning Psalm 77:2. From what beginning he means, is very evident in the words following. For it is not from the beginning, what time the Heaven and earth were made, nor what time mankind was created in the first man: but what time the congregation that was led out of Egypt; in order that the sense may belong to Asaph, which is interpreted a congregation. But O that He that has said, I will open in parables My mouth, would also vouchsafe to open our understanding unto them! For if, as He has opened His mouth in parables, He would in like sort open the parables themselves: and as He declares propositions, He would declare in like sort the expositions thereof, we should not be here toiling: but now so hidden and closed are all things, that even if we are able by His aid to arrive at anything, whereon we may feed to our health, still we must

eat the bread in the sweat of our face; and pay the penalty of the ancient sentence Genesis 3:19 not with the labour of the body only, but also with that of the heart. Let him speak then, and let us hear the parables and propositions.

5. How great things we have heard, and have known them, and our fathers have told them to us Psalm 77:3. The Lord was speaking higher up. For of what other person could these words be thought to be, Hearken ye, O My people, to My law? Why is it then that now on a sudden a man is speaking, for here we have the words of a man, our fathers have told them to us. Without doubt God, now about to speak by a man's ministry, as the Apostle says, Will ye to receive proof of Him that is speaking in me, Christ? 2 Corinthians 13:3 in His own person at first willed the words to be uttered, lest a man speaking His words should be despised as a man. For it is thus with the sayings of God which make their way to us through our bodily sense. The Creator moves the subject creature by an invisible working; not so that the substance is changed into anything corporal and temporal, when by means of corporal and temporal signs, whether belonging to the eyes or to the ears, as far as men are able to receive it, He would make His will to be known. For if an angel is able to use air, mist, cloud, fire, and any other natural substance or corporal species; and man to use face, tongue, hand, pen, letters, or any other significant, for the purpose of intimating the secret things of his own mind: in a word, if, though he is a man, he sends human messengers, and he says to one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to his servant, Do this, and he does it; Luke 7:8 with how much greater and more effectual power does God, to whom as Lord all things together are subject, use both the same angel and man, in order that He may declare whatsoever pleases Him?...For those things were heard in the Old Testament which are known in the New: heard when they were being prophesied, known when they were being fulfilled. Where a promise is performed, hearing is not deceived. And our fathers, Moses and the Prophets, have told unto us.

6. They have not been hidden from their sons in another generation Psalm 77:4. This is our generation wherein there has been given to us regeneration. Telling forth the praises of the Lord and His powers, and His wonderful works which He has done. The order of the words is, and our fathers have told unto us, telling forth the praises of the Lord. The Lord is praised, in order that He may be loved. For what object can be loved more to our health? And He has raised up a testimony in Jacob, and has set a law in Jacob Psalm 77:5.

This is the beginning whereof has been spoken above, I will declare propositions from the beginning. So then the beginning is the Old Testament, the end is the New. For fear does prevail in the law. But the end of the law is Christ for righteousness to every one believing; Romans 10:4 at whose bestowing love is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us: Romans 5:5 and love made perfect does cast out fear, 1 John 4:18 inasmuch as now without the Law the righteousness of God has been made manifest.

But inasmuch as He has a testimony by the Law and the Prophets, Romans 3:21 therefore, He has raised up a testimony in Jacob. For even that Tabernacle which was set up with a work so remarkable and full of such wondrous meanings, is named the Tabernacle of Testimony, wherein was the veil over the Ark of the Law, like the veil over the face of the Minister of the Law; because in that dispensation there were parables and propositions. For those things which were being preached and were coining to pass were hidden in veiled meanings, and were not seen in unveiled manifestations.

But when you shall have passed over unto Christ, says the Apostle, the veil shall be taken away. 2 Corinthians 3:16 For all the promises of God in Him are yea, Amen. 2 Corinthians 1:20 Whosoever

therefore does cleave to Christ, has the whole of the good which even in the letters of the Law he perceives not: but whosoever is an alien from Christ, does neither perceive, nor has. He has set a law in Israel. After his usual custom he is making a repetition. For He has raised up a testimony, is the same as, He has set a law, and in Jacob, is the same as in Israel.

For as these are two names of one man, so law and testimony are two names of one thing. Is there any difference, says some one, between has raised up and has set? Yea indeed, the same difference as there is between Jacob and Israel: not because they were two persons, but these same two names were bestowed upon one man for different reasons; Jacob because of supplanting, for that he grasped the foot of his brother at his birth: Genesis 25:26 but Israel because of the vision of God.

Genesis 32:28 So raised up is one thing, set is another. For, He has raised up a testimony, as far as I can judge, has been said because by it something has been raised up; For without the Law, says the Apostle, sin was dead: but I lived sometime without the Law: but at the coming in of the commandment sin revived. Romans 7:8-9 Behold that which has been raised up by the testimony, which is the Law, so that what was lying hidden might appear, as he says a little afterwards: But sin, that it might appear sin, through a good thing has wrought in me death.

Romans 7:13 But He has set a law, has been said, as though it were a yoke upon sinners, whence has been said, For upon a just man law has not been imposed. 1 Timothy 1:9 It is a testimony then, so far forth as it does prove anything; but a law so far forth as it does command; though it is one and the same thing. Wherefore just as Christ is a stone, but to believers for the Head of the corner, while to unbelievers a stone of offense and a rock of scandal; so the testimony of the Law to them that use not the Law lawfully, 1 Timothy 1:8 is a testimony whereby sinners are to be convicted as deserving of punishment; but to them that use the same lawfully, is a testimony whereby sinners are shown unto whom they ought to flee in order to be delivered....

7. How great things, he says, He has commanded our fathers, to make the same known to their sons? Psalm 77:5. That another generation may know, sons who shall be born and shall rise up, and they may tell to their sons Psalm 77:6. That they may put their hope in God, and may not forget the works of God, and may seek out His commandments Psalm 77:7. That they may not become, like their fathers, a crooked and embittering generation: a generation that has not guided their heart, and the spirit thereof has not been trusted with God Psalm 77:8.

These words do point out two peoples as it were, the one belonging to the Old Testament, the other to the New: for in that he says, he has implied that they received the commandments, to make them known to their sons, but that they did not know or do them: but they received them themselves, to the end that another generation might know, what the former knew not. Sons who shall be born and shall arise. For they that have been born have not arisen: because they had not their heart above, but rather on the earth.

For the arising is with Christ: whence has been said, If you have arisen with Christ, savour ye the things which are above. Colossians 3:1 And they may tell them, he says, to their sons, in order that they may put their hope in God....And may not forget the works of God: that is to say, in magnifying and vaunting their own works, as though they did them themselves; while God it is that works, in them that work good things, both to will and to work according to good will. Philippians 2:13 And may search out His commandments....The commandments which He has commanded.

How then should they still search out, whereas they have already learned them, save that by putting their hope in God, they do then search out His commandments, in order that by them, with His aid, they may be fulfilled? And he says why, by immediately subjoining, and its spirit has not been trusted with God, that is, because it had no faith, which does obtain what the Law does enjoin. For when the spirit of man does work together with the Spirit of God working, then there is fulfilled that which God has commanded: and this does not come to pass, except by believing in Him that does justify an ungodly man.

Romans 4:5 Which faith the generation crooked and embittering had not: and therefore concerning the same has been said, The spirit thereof has not been trusted with God. For this has been said much more exactly to point out the grace of God, which does work not only remission of sins, but also does make the spirit of man to work together therewith in the work of good deeds, as though he were saying, his spirit has not believed in God. For to have the spirit trusted with God, is, not to believe that his spirit is able to do righteousness without God, but with God.

For this is to believe in God: which is surely more than to believe God. For oftentimes we must believe even a man, though in him we must not believe. To believe in God therefore is this, in believing to cleave unto God who works good works, in order to work with Him well....

8. Lastly, The sons of Ephrem bending and shooting bows, have been turned back in the day of war Psalm 77:9. Following after the law of righteousness, unto the law of righteousness they have not attained. Romans 9:31 Why? Because they were not of faith. For they were that generation whereof the spirit has not been trusted with God: but they were, so to speak, of works: because they did not, as they bended and shot their bows (which are outward actions, as of the works of the law), so guide their heart also, wherein the just man does live by faith, which works by love; whereby men cleave to God, who works in man both to will and work according to good will. For what else is bending the bow and shooting, and turning back in the day of war, but heeding and purposing in the day of hearing, and deserting in the day of temptation; flourishing arms, so to speak, beforehand, and at the hour of the action refusing to fight? But whereas he says, bending and shooting bows, when it would seem that he ought to have said, bending bows and shooting arrows....Some Greek copies to be sure are said to have bending and shooting with bows, so that without doubt we ought to understand arrows. But whereas by the sons of Ephrem he has willed that there be understood the whole of that embittering generation, it is an expression signifying the whole by a part. And perhaps this part was chosen whereby to signify the whole, because from these men especially some good thing was to have been expected....Although set at the left hand by his father as being the younger, Jacob nevertheless blessed with his right hand, and preferred him before his elder brother with a benediction of hidden meaning. Genesis 48:14 ...For there was being figured how they were to be last that were first, and first were to be they that were last, Matthew 20:16 through the Saviour's coming, concerning whom has been said, He that is coming after me was made before me. John 1:27 In like manner righteous Abel was preferred before the elder brother; so to Ismael Isaac; so to Esau, though born before him, his twin brother Jacob; so also Phares himself preceded even in birth his twin brother, who had first thrust a hand out of the womb, and had begun to be born: so David was preferred before his elder brother: 1 Samuel 16:12 and as the reason why all these parables and others like them preceded, not only of words but also of deeds, in like manner to the people of the Jews was preferred the Christian people, for redeeming the which as Abel by Cain, Genesis 4:8 so by the Jews was slain Christ. This thing was prefigured even when Jacob stretching out his hands cross-wise, with his right hand touched Ephrem standing on the left; and set him before Manasse standing on the right, whom he himself touched with the left hand. Genesis 48:14

9. But what that is which he says, they have been turned back in the day of war, the following words do teach, wherein he has most clearly explained this: they have not kept, he says, the testament of God, and in His law they would not walk Psalm 77:10. Behold what is, they have been turned back in the day of war: they have not kept the testament of God. When they were bending and shooting bows, they did also utter the words of most forward promise, saying, Whatsoever things the Lord our God has spoken we will do, and we will hear. Exodus 19:8 They have been turned back in the day of war: because the promise of obedience not hearing but temptation does prove. But he whose spirit has been trusted with God, keeps hold on God, who is faithful, and does not suffer him to be tempted above that which he is able; but will make with the temptation a way of escape also, 1 Corinthians 10:13 that he may be able to endure, and may not be turned back in the day of war....Therefore these men have been thus branded: a generation, he says, which has not directed their heart. It has not been said, works, but heart. For when the heart is directed, the works are right; but when the heart is not directed, the works are not right, even though they seem to be right. And how the crooked generation has not directed the heart, has sufficiently been shown, when he says, and the spirit thereof has not been trusted with God. For God is right: and therefore by cleaving to the right, as to an immutable rule, the heart of a man can be made right, which in itself was crooked....

10. And they forgot His benefits, and the wonderful works of Him which He showed to them; before their fathers the wonderful things which He did Psalm 77:11. What this is, is not a question to be negligently passed over. Concerning those very fathers he was speaking a little before, that they had been a generation crooked and embittering....What fathers, inasmuch as these are the very fathers, whom he would not have posterity to be like? If we shall take them to be those out of whom the others had derived their being, for example, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, by this time they had long since fallen asleep, when God showed wonderful things in Egypt. For there follows, in the land of Egypt, in the plain of Thanis Psalm 77:12: where it is said that God showed to them wonderful things before their fathers. Were they perchance present in spirit? For of the same the Lord says in the Gospel, for all do live to Him. Luke 20:38 Or do we more suitably understand thereby the fathers Moses and Aaron, and the other elders who are related in the same Scripture also to have received the Spirit, of which also Moses received, in order that they might aid him in ruling and bearing the same people? Numbers 11:17 For why should they not have been called fathers? It is not in the same manner as God is the One Father, who does regenerate with His Spirit those whom He does make sons for an everlasting inheritance; but it is for the sake of honour, because of their age and kindly carefulness: just as Paul the elder says, Not to confound you I am writing these things, but as my dearly beloved sons I am admonishing you: 1 Corinthians 4:14 though he knew of a truth that it had been said by the Lord, Call ye no man your father on earth, for One is your Father, even God. Matthew 23:9 And this was not said in order that this term of human honour should be erased from our usual way of speaking: but lest the grace of God whereby we are regenerated unto eternal life, should be ascribed either to the power or even sanctity of any man. Therefore when he said, I have begotten you; he first said, in Christ, and through the Gospel; lest that might be thought to be of him, which is of God....Accordingly, the land of Egypt must be understood for a figure of this world. The plain of Thanis is the smooth surface of lowly commandment. For lowly commandment is the interpretation of Thanis. In this world therefore let us receive the commandment of humility, in order that in another world we may merit to receive the exaltation which He has promised, who for our sake here became lowly.

11. For He that did burst asunder the sea and made them go through, did confine the waters as it were in bottles Psalm 77:13, in order that the water might stand up first as if it were shut in, is able by His grace to restrain the flowing and ebbing tides of carnal desires, when we renounce this world, so that all sins

having been thoroughly washed away, as if they were enemies, the people of the faithful may be made to pass through by means of the Sacrament of Baptism. He that led them home in the cloud of the day, and in the whole of the night in the illumination of fire Psalm 77:14, is able also spiritually to direct goings if faith cries to Him, Direct my goings after Your word. Of Whom in another place is said, For Himself shall make your courses right, and shall prolong your goings in peace through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose Sacrament in this world, as it were in the day, is manifest in the flesh, as if in a cloud; but in the Judgment it will be manifest like as in a terror by night; for then there will be a great tribulation of the world like as it were fire, and it shall shine for the just and shall burn for the unjust. He that burst asunder the rock in the desert, and gave them water as in a great deep Psalm 77:15; and brought out water from the rock, and brought down waters like rivers Psalm 77:16, is surely able upon thirsty faith to pour the gift of the Holy Spirit (the which gift the performance of that thing did spiritually signify), to pour, I say, from the Spiritual Rock that followed, which is Christ: who stood and cried, If any is thirsty, let him come to Me: John 7:37 and, he that shall have drunk of the water which I shall give, rivers of living water shall flow out of his bosom. John 4:14 For this He spoke, as is read in the Gospel, John 7:39 to the Spirit, which they were to receive that believed in Him, unto whom like the rod drew near the wood of the Passion, in order that there might flow forth grace for believers.

12. And yet, they, like a generation crooked and embittering, added yet to sin against Him Psalm 77:17: that is, not to believe. For this is the sin, whereof the Spirit does convict the world, as the Lord says, Of sin indeed because they have not believed on Me. John 16:9 And they exasperated the Most High in drought, which other copies have, in a place without water, which is a more exact translation from the Greek, and does signify no other thing than drought. Was it in that drought of the desert, or rather in their own? For although they had drank of the rock, they had not their bellies but their minds dry, freshening with no fruitfulness of righteousness. In that drought they ought the more faithfully to have been suppliant unto God, in order that He who had given fullness unto their jaws, might give also equity to their manners. For unto him the faithful soul does cry, Let my eyes see equity.

13. And they tempted God in their hearts, in order that they might seek morsels for their souls Psalm 77:18. It is one thing to ask in believing, another thing in tempting. Lastly there follows, And they slandered God, and said, Shall God be able to prepare a table in the desert? Psalm 77:19. For He smote the rock, and the waters flowed, and torrents gushed forth: will He be able to give bread also, or to prepare a table for His people? Psalm 77:20. Not believing therefore, they sought morsels for their souls. Not so the Apostle James does enjoin a morsel to be asked for the mind, but does admonish that it be sought by believers, not by such as tempt and slander God. But if any one of you, he says, does lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who does give to all men abundantly, and does not upbraid, and it shall be given to him: but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. James 1:5-6 This faith had not that generation which had not directed their heart, and the spirit thereof had not been trusted with God.

14. Wherefore the Lord heard, and He delayed, and fire was lighted in Jacob, and wrath went up into Israel Psalm 77:21. He has explained what he has called fire. He has called anger fire: although in strict propriety fire did also burn up many men. What is therefore this that he says, The Lord heard, and He delayed? Did He delay to conduct them into the land of promise, whither they were being led: which might have been done in the space of a few days, but on account of sins they must needs be wasted in the desert, where also they were wasted during forty years? And if this be so, He did then delay the people, not those very persons who tempted and slandered God: for they all perished in the desert, and their children journeyed into the land of promise. Or did He delay punishment, in order that He might first satisfy

unbelieving concupiscence, lest He might be supposed to be angry, because they were asking of Him what He was not able to do? He heard, then, and He delayed to avenge: and after He had done what they supposed He was not able to do, then anger went up upon Israel.

15. Lastly, when both these things have been briefly touched, afterwards he is evidently following out the order of the narrative. Because they believed not in God, nor hoped in His saving health Psalm 77:22. For when he had told why fire was lighted in Jacob, and anger went up upon Israel, that is to say, because they believed not in God, nor hoped in His saving health: immediately subjoining the evident blessings for which they were ungrateful, he says, and He commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of Heaven Psalm 77:23. And He rained upon them manna to eat, and gave them bread of Heaven Psalm 77:24. Bread of angels man did eat: dainties He sent them in abundance Psalm 77:25. He brought over the South Wind from Heaven, and in His virtue He led in the South West Wind Psalm 77:26. And He rained upon them fleeces like dust, and winged fowls like the sand of the sea Psalm 77:27. And they fell in the midst of their camp, around their tabernacles Psalm 77:28. And they ate and were filled exceedingly; and their desire He brought to them: they were not deprived of their desire Psalm 77:29. Behold why He had delayed. But what He had delayed let us hear. Yet the morsel was in their mouths, and the anger of God came down upon them Psalm 77:30. Behold what He had delayed. For before He delayed: and afterwards, fire was lighted in Jacob and anger went up upon Israel. He had delayed therefore in order that He might first do what they had believed that He could not do, and then might bring upon them what they deserved to suffer. For if they placed their hope in God, not only would their desires of the flesh but also those of the spirit have been fulfilled. For he that...opened the doors of Heaven, and rained upon them manna to eat, that He might fill the unbelieving, is not without power to give to believers Himself the true Bread from Heaven, which the manna did signify: which is indeed the food of Angels, whom being incorruptible the Word of God does incorruptibly feed: the which in order that man might eat, He became flesh, and dwelled in us. John 1:44 For Himself the Bread by means of the Evangelical clouds is being rained over the whole world, and, the hearts of preachers like heavenly doors, being opened, is being preached not to a murmuring and tempting synagogue, but to a Church believing and putting hope in Him. He is able also to feed the feeble faith of such as tempt not, but believe, with the signs of words uttered by the flesh and speeding through the air, as though it were fowls: not however with such as come from the north, where cold and mist do prevail, that is to say, eloquence which is pleasing to this world, but by bringing over the South Wind from Heaven; whither, except to the earth? In order that they who are feeble in faith, by hearing things earthly may be nourished up to receive things heavenly....

16. But as to unbelievers, being a crooked and embittering generation, as it were, while the morsel was yet in their mouths, the anger of God went up upon them, and it slew among the most of them Psalm 77:31: that is, the most of them, or as some copies have it, the fat ones of them, which however in the Greek copies which we had, we did not find. But if this be the truer reading, what else must be understood by the fat ones of them, than men mighty in pride, concerning whom is said, their iniquity shall come forth as if out of fat? And the elect of Israel He fettered. Even there there were elect, with whose faith the generation crooked and embittering was not mixed. But they were fettered, so that they might in no sort profit them for whom they desired that they might provide from a fatherly affection. For what is conferred by human mercy, on those with whom God is angry? Or rather has He willed it to be understood, how that even the elect were fettered at the same time with them, in order that they who were diverse both in mind and in life, might endure sufferings with them for an example not only of righteousness, but also of patience? For we have learned that holy men were even led captive with sinners for no other reason; since in the Greek copies we read not ■ νεπ■δισεν, which is fettered; but συνεπ■δισεν, which is rather

fettered together with.

17. But the generation crooked and embittering, in all these things sinned yet more, and they believed not in His wonderful works Psalm 77:32. And in their days failed in vanity Psalm 77:33. Though they might, if they had believed, have had days in truth without failing, with Him to whom has been said, Your years shall not fail. Therefore, their days failed in vanity, and their years with haste. For the whole life of mortal men is hastening, and that which seems to be longer is but a vapour of somewhat longer duration.

18. Nevertheless, when he slew them they sought Him: not for the sake of eternal life, but fearing to end the vapour too soon. There sought Him then, not indeed those whom He had slain, but they that were afraid of being slain according to the example of them. But the Scripture has so spoken of them as if they sought God who were slain; because they were one people, and it is spoken as if of one body: and they returned, and at dawn they came to God Psalm 77:34. And they remembered that God is their Helper, and the High God is their Redeemer Psalm 77:35. But all this is for the sake of acquiring temporal good things, and for avoiding temporal evil things. For they that did seek God for the sake of temporal blessings, sought not God indeed, but things. Thus with those God is worshipped with slavish fear, not free love. Thus then God is not worshipped, for that thing is worshipped which is loved. Whence because God is found to be greater and better than all things, He must be loved more than all things, in order that He may be worshipped.

19. Lastly, here let us see the words following: And they loved Him, he says, in their mouth, and in their tongue they lied unto Him Psalm 77:36. But their heart was not right with Him, and they were not counted faithful in His Testament Psalm 77:37. One thing on their tongue, another thing in their heart He found, unto whom the secret things of men are naked, and without any impediment He saw what they loved rather. Therefore the heart is right with God, when it does seek God for the sake of God. For one thing he desired of the Lord, the same he will require, that he may dwell always in the House of the Lord, and may meditate on the pleasantness of Him. Unto Whom says the heart of the faithful, I will be filled, not with the flesh-pots of the Egyptians, nor with melons and gourds, and garlick and onions, which a generation crooked and embittering did prefer even to bread celestial, Exodus 16:3 nor with visible manna, and those same winged fowls; but, I will be filled, when Your glory shall be made manifest. For this is the inheritance of the New Testament, wherein they were not counted faithful; whereof however the faith even at that time, when it was veiled, was in the elect, and now, when it has already been revealed, it is not in many that are called. For many have been called, but few are elect. Matthew 20:16 Of such sort therefore was the generation crooked and embittering, even when they were seeming to seek God, loving in mouth, and in tongue lying; but in heart not right with God, while they loved rather those things, for the sake of which they required the help of God.

20. But He is Himself merciful, and will become propitious to their sins, and He will not destroy them. And He will abound to turn away His anger, and He will not kindle all his anger Psalm 77:38. By these words many men promise to themselves impunity for their iniquity from the Divine Mercy, even if they shall have persevered in being such, as that generation is described, crooked and embittering; which has not directed their heart, and the spirit thereof has not been trusted with God: with whom it is not profitable to agree. For if, to speak in their words, God will perchance not destroy no not even bad men, without doubt He will not destroy good men. Why then do we not rather choose that wherein there is no doubt? For they that lie to Him in their tongue, though their heart does hold some other thing, do think indeed, and will, even God to be a liar, when He does menace upon such men eternal punishment. But while they do not deceive Him with their lying, He does not deceive them with speaking the truth. These words therefore of

divine sayings, concerning which the crooked generation does cajole itself, let it not make crooked like its own heart: for even when it is made crooked, they continue right. For at first they may be understood according to that which is written in the Gospel, that you may be like your Father who is in the Heavens, who makes His sun to rise upon good men and evil men, and rains upon just men and unjust men. Matthew 5:45 For who could not see, how great is the long-suffering of mercy with which He is sparing evil men? But before the Judgment, He spared then that nation in such sort, that He kindled not all His anger, utterly to root it up and bring it to an end: which thing in His words and in the intercession for their sins of His servant Moses does evidently appear, where God says, Let Me blot them out, and make you into a great nation: Exodus 32:10 he intercedes, being more ready to be blotted out for them than that they should be; knowing that he is doing this before One Merciful, who inasmuch as by no means He would blot out him, would even spare them for his sake. For let us see how greatly He spared, and does still spare....

21. In the second place, that we may not seem to do violence to divine words, and lest in the place where there was said, He will not destroy them, we should say, But hereafter He will destroy them: concerning this very present Psalm let us turn to a very common phrase of the Scripture, whereby this question may be more diligently and more truly solved. Speaking of these same persons a little lower down, when He had made mention of the things which the Egyptians because of them had endured, He says,...And He led them unto the mount of His sanctification, the mount which His right hand won. And He cast out from their face the nations, and by lot distributed to them the land in the cord of distribution. If any one at these words should press a question upon us, and should say, How does he make mention of all these things as having been bestowed upon them, when the same persons were not led into the land of promise, as were delivered from Egypt, inasmuch as they were dead? What shall we reply but that they were spoken of, because they were the self-same people by means of a succession of sons?...

22. And He remembered that they are flesh, a spirit going and not returning Psalm 77:39. Therefore calling them and pitying them through His grace, He called them back Himself, because of themselves they could not return. For how does flesh return, a spirit walking and not turning back, while a weight of evil deserts does weigh it down unto the lowest and far places of evil, save through the election of grace?...For thus also is solved this no unimportant question, how it is written in the Proverbs, when the Scripture was speaking of the way of iniquity, all they that walk in her shall not return. Proverbs 2:19 For it has been so spoken as if all ungodly men were to be despaired of: but the Scripture did only commend grace; for of himself man is able to walk in that way, but is not able of himself to return, except when called back by grace.

23. I say then of these crooked and embittering persons, How often they exasperated Him in the desert, and provoked Him to wrath in the waterless place! Psalm 77:40. And they turned themselves and tempted God, and exasperated the Holy One of Israel Psalm 77:41. He is repeating that same unbelief of theirs, of which He had made mention above. But the reason of the repetition is, in order that there may be mentioned also the plagues which He inflicted on the Egyptians for their sakes: all which things they certainly ought to have remembered, and not to be ungrateful. Lastly, there follows what? They remembered not His hands, in the day when He redeemed them from the hand of the troubler Psalm 77:42. And he begins to speak of what things He did to the Egyptians: He set in Egypt His signs, and His prodigies in the plain of Thanis Psalm 77:43: and He turned their rivers into blood, and their showers lest they should drink Psalm 77:44, or rather, the flowings of waters, as some do better understand by what is written in Greek, τ■ ■μβρ■μᾶτα, which in Latin we call scaturigines, waters bubbling from beneath. He

sent upon them the dog-fly, and it ate them up; and the frog, and it destroyed them Psalm 77:45. And He gave their fruit to the mildew, and their labours to the locust Psalm 77:46. And He slew with hail their vineyards, and their mulberry trees with frost Psalm 77:47. And He gave over to the hail their beasts of burden, and their possessions to the fire Psalm 77:48. He sent upon them the anger of His indignation, indignation and anger and tribulation, a visitation through evil angels Psalm 77:49. He made a way to the course of His anger, and their beasts of burden He shut up in death Psalm 77:50. And He smote every first-born thing in the land of Egypt, the first-fruits of their labours in the tabernacles of Cham Psalm 77:51.

24. All these punishments of the Egyptians may be explained by an allegorical interpretation, according as one shall have chosen to understand them, and to compare them to the things whereunto they must be referred. Which we too will endeavour to do; and shall do it the more properly, the more we shall have been divinely aided. For to do this, those words of this Psalm do constrain us, wherein it was said, I will open in parables my mouth, I will declare propositions from the beginning. For for this cause even some things have been here spoken of, which that they befell the Egyptians at all we read not, although all their plagues are most carefully related in Exodus according to their order, so that while that which is not there mentioned we are sure has not been mentioned in the Psalm to no purpose, and we can interpret the same only figuratively, we may at the same time understand that even the rest of the things which it is evident did happen, were done or described for the sake of some figurative meaning. For the Scripture does so do in many passages of the prophetic sayings....In the plagues therefore of the Egyptians, which are in the book which is called Exodus, where the Scripture has been especially careful, that those things whereby they were afflicted should be all related in order, there is not found what this Psalm has, and He gave to the mildew their fruits. This also wherein, when he had said, and He gave over to the hail their beasts, he has added, and their possession to the fire: of the beasts slain with hail is read in Exodus; Exodus 9:25 but how their possession was burned with fire, is not read at all. Although voices and fires do come together with hail, just as thunderings do commonly accompany lightnings; nevertheless, it is not written that anything was given over to the fire that it should be burned. Lastly, the soft things which the hail could not hurt, are said not to have been smitten, that is, hurt with hard blows; which things the locust devoured afterwards. Also that which is here spoken of, and their mulberry trees with hoar-frost, is not in Exodus. For hoar-frost does differ much from hail; for in the clear winter nights the earth is made white with hoar-frost.

25. What then those things do signify, let the interpreter say as he can, let reader and hearer judge as is just. The water turned into blood seems to me to signify a carnal view of the causes of things. Dog-fly, are the manners of dogs, who see not even their parents when first they are born. The frog is very talkative vanity. Mildew does hurt secretly, which also some have interpreted by rust, others black mould: which evil thing to what vice is it more appropriately compared, than to what does show itself least readily, like the trusting much in one's self? For it is a blighting air which does work this secretly among fruits: just like in morals, secret pride, when a man thinks himself to be something, though he is nothing. Galatians 6:3 The locust is malice hurting with the mouth, that is, with unfaithful testimony. The hail is iniquity taking away the goods of others; whence theft, robberies, and depredations do spring: but more by his wickedness the plunderer himself is plundered. The hoar-frost does signify the fault wherein the love of one's neighbour by the darkness of foolishness, like as it were by the cold of night, is frozen up. But the fire, if here it is not that which is mentioned which was in the hail out of the lightning clouds, forasmuch as he has said here, He gave over their possession to the fire, where he implies that a thing was burned, which by that fire we read not to have been done--it seems to me, I say, to signify the savageness of wrath, whereby even man-slaying may be committed. But by the death of beasts was figured, as far as I judge, the loss of

chastity. For concupiscence, whereby offspring do arise, we have in common with beasts. To have this therefore tamed and ordered, is the virtue of chastity. The death of the first-born things, is the putting off of the very justice whereby a man does associate with mankind. But whether the figurative significations of these things be so, or whether they are better understood in another way, whom would it not move, that with ten plagues the Egyptians are smitten, and with ten commandments the tables are inscribed, that thereby the people of God should be ruled? Concerning the comparing of which one with the other, inasmuch as we have spoken elsewhere, there is no need to load the exposition of this Psalm therewith: thus much we remind you, that here too, though not in the same order, yet ten plagues of the Egyptians are commemorated, forasmuch as in the place of three which are in Exodus and are not here, to wit, lice, boils, darkness; other three are commemorated, which are not there, that is to say, mildew, hoarfrost, and fire; not of lightning, but that where-unto their possession was given over, which is not read of in that place.

26. But it has been clearly enough intimated, that by the judgment of God these things befell them through the instrumentality of evil angels, in this wicked world, as though it were in Egypt and in the plain of Thanis, where we ought to be humble, until there come that world, wherein we may earn to be exalted out of this humiliation. For even Egypt in the Hebrew tongue does signify darkness or tribulations, in which tongue, Thanis, as I have observed, is understood to be humble commandment.

Concerning the evil angels therefore in this Psalm, while he was speaking of those very plagues, there has been something inserted, which must not be passed over cursorily: He sent upon them, he says, an infliction through evil angels. Now that the devil and his angels are so very evil, that for them everlasting fire is prepared, no believer is ignorant: but that there should be sent by means of them an infliction from the Lord God upon certain whom He judges to be deserving of this punishment, seems to be a hard thing to those who are little prone to consider, how the perfect justice of God does use well even evil things.

For these indeed, as far as regards their substance, what other person but Himself has made? But evil He has not made them: yet He does use them, inasmuch as He is good, well, that is, conveniently and justly: just as on the other hand unrighteous men do use His good creatures in evil manner. God therefore does use evil angels not only to punish evil men, as in the case of all those concerning whom the Psalm does speak, as in the case of king Achab, whom a spirit of lying by the will of God did beguile, in order that he might fall in war: 1 Kings 22:20 but also to prove and make manifest good men, as He did in the case of Job.

But as far as regards that corporal matter of visible elements, I suppose that thereof angels both good and evil are able to make use, according to the power given to each: just as also men good and evil do use such things, as far as they are able, according to the measure of human infirmity. For we use both earth and water, and air, and fire, not only in things necessary for our support, but also in many operations superfluous and playful, and marvellously artificial. For countless things, which are called μηχανήματα, are moulded out of these elements scientifically employed.

But over these things angels have a far more extended power, both the good and the evil, though greater is that which the good have; but only so far as is commanded or permitted by the will and providence of God; on which terms also we have it. For not even in these cases are we able to do all that we will. But in a book the most unerring we read that the devil was able even to send fire from Heaven, to burn up with wonderful and awful fierceness so great a number of the cattle of a holy man: Job 1:16 which thing no one of the faithful would dare perchance to ascribe to the devil, except it were read on the authority of Holy

Scripture.

But that man, being by the gift of God just and firm, and of godly knowledge, says not, The Lord has given, the devil has taken away: but, The Lord has given, the Lord has taken away: Job 1:21 very well knowing that even what the devil was able to do with these elements, he would still not have done to a servant of God, except at his Lord's will and permission; he did confound the malice of the devil, forasmuch as he knew who it was that was making use thereof to prove him. In the sons then of unbelief like as it were in his own slaves, he does work, Ephesians 2:2 like men with their beasts, and even therewith only so far as is permitted by the just judgment of God.

But it is one thing when his power is restrained from treating even his own as he pleases, by a greater power; another thing when to him power is given even over those who are alien from him. Just as a man with his beast, as men understand it, does what he will, and yet does not indeed, if he be restrained by a greater power: but with another man's beast to do something, he does wait until power be given from him unto whom it belongs. In the former case the power which there was is restrained, in the latter that which there was not is conceded.

27. And if such be the case, if through evil angels God did inflict those plagues upon the Egyptians, shall we dare to say that the water also was turned into blood by means of those same angels, and that frogs were created by means of the same, the like whereunto even the magicians of Pharaoh were able to make by their enchantments; Exodus 8:7 so as that evil angels stood on both sides, on the one side afflicting them, on the other side deceiving them, according to the judgment and dispensation of the most just and most omnipotent God, who does justly make use of even the naughtiness of unrighteous men? I dare not to say so. For whence was it that the magicians of Pharaoh could by no means make lice? Exodus 8:18-19 Was it not because even these same evil angels were not suffered to do this? Or, to speak more truly, is not the cause hidden, and it does exceed our powers of inquiry? For if we shall have supposed that God wrought those things by means of evil angels, because punishments were being inflicted, and not blessings being bestowed, as though God does inflict punishments upon no one by means of good angels, but by means of those executioners as it were of the heavenly wrath; the consequence will be that we must believe that even Sodom was overthrown by means of evil angels, and that Abraham and Lot would seem to have entertained under their roof evil angels; the which, as being contrary to the most evident Scriptures, far be it that we should think. It is clear then that these things might have been done to men by means of good and evil angels. What should be done or when it should be done does escape me: but Him that does it, it escapes not, and him unto whom He shall have willed to reveal it. Nevertheless, as far as divine Scripture does yield to our application thereto, on evil men that punishments are inflicted both by means of good angels, as upon the Sodomites, and by means of evil angels, as upon the Egyptians, we read: but that just men with corporal penances by means of good angels are tried and proved, does not occur to me.

28. But as far as regards the present passage of this Psalm, if we dare not ascribe those things which were marvellously formed out of creatures, to evil angels; we have a thing which without doubt we can ascribe to them; the dyings of the beasts, the dyings of the first-born, and this especially whence all these things proceeded, namely, the hardening of heart, so that they would not let go the people of God. Exodus 4:21 For when God is said to make this most iniquitous and malignant obstinacy, He makes it not by suggesting and inspiring, but by forsaking, so that they work in the sons of unbelief that which God does duly and justly permit. Ephesians 2:2 ...Moreover, those evil manners which we said were signified by these corporal plagues, on account of that which was said before, I will open in parables my mouth, are

most appropriately believed by means of evil angels to have been wrought in those that are made subject to them by Divine justice. For neither when that comes to pass of which the apostle speaks, God gave them over into the lusts of their heart, that they should do things which are not convenient, can it be but that those evil angels dwell and rejoice therein, as in the matter of their own work: unto whom most justly is human haughtiness made subject, in all save those whom grace does deliver. And for these things who is sufficient? 2 Corinthians 2:16 Whence when he had said, He sent unto them the anger of His indignation, indignation and anger and tribulation, an infliction through evil angels; for this which he has added, a way He has made for the path of His anger Psalm 77:50, whose eye, I pray, is sufficient to penetrate, so that it may understand and take in the sense lying hidden in so great a profundity? For the path of the anger of God was that whereby He punished the ungodliness of the Egyptians with hidden justice: but for that same path He made a way, so that drawing them forth as it were from secret places by means of evil angels unto manifest offenses, He most evidently inflicted punishment upon those that were most evidently ungodly. From this power of evil angels nothing does deliver man but the grace of God, whereof the Apostle speaks, Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love: Colossians 1:13 of which things that people did bear the figure, when they were delivered from the power of the Egyptians, and translated into the kingdom of the land of promise flowing with milk and honey, which does signify the sweetness of grace.

29. The Psalm proceeds then after the commemoration of the plagues of the Egyptians Psalm 77:51 and says, And He took away like sheep His people, and He led them through like a flock in the desert Psalm 77:52. And He led them down in hope, and they feared not, and their enemies the sea covered Psalm 77:53. This comes to pass to so much the greater good, as it is a more inward thing, wherein being delivered from the power of darkness, we are in mind translated into the Kingdom of God, and with respect to spiritual pastures we are made to become sheep of God, walking in this world as it were in a desert, inasmuch as to no one is our faith observable: whence says the Apostle, Your life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3:3 But we are being led home in hope, For by hope we are saved. Romans 8:24 Nor ought we to fear. For, If God be for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31 And our enemies the sea has covered, He has effaced them in baptism by the remission of sins.

30. In the next place there follows, And He led them into the mountain of His sanctification Psalm 77:54. How much better into Holy Church! The mountain which His right hand has gotten. How much higher is the Church which Christ has gotten, concerning whom has been said, And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Isaiah 53:1 Psalm 77:55. And He cast forth from the face of them the nations. And from the face of His faithful. For nations in a manner are the evil spirits of Gentile errors. And by lot He divided unto them the land in the cord of distribution. And in us all things one and the same Spirit does work, dividing severally to every one as He wills. 1 Corinthians 12:11

31. And He made to dwell in their tabernacles the tribes of Israel. In the tabernacles, he says, of the Gentiles He made the tribes of Israel to dwell, which I think can better be explained spiritually, inasmuch as unto celestial glory, whence sinning angels have been cast forth and cast down, by Christ's grace we are being uplifted. For that generation crooked and embittering, inasmuch as for these corporal blessings they put not off the coat of oldness, Did tempt yet, and provoked the high God, and His testimonies they kept not Psalm 77:56: and they turned them away, and they kept not the covenant, like their fathers Psalm 77:57. For under a sort of covenant and decree they said, All things which our Lord God has spoken we will do, and we will hear. Exodus 19:8 It is a remarkable thing indeed which he says, like their fathers: while throughout the whole text of the Psalm he was seeming to speak of the same men as it were, yet

now it appears that the words did concern those who were already in the land of promise, and that the fathers spoken of were of those who did provoke in the desert. They were turned, he says, into a crooked, or, as some copies have it, into a perverse bow Psalm 77:58. But what this is does better appear in that which follows, where he says, And unto wrath they provoked Him with their hills Psalm 77:59. It does signify that they leaped into idolatry. The bow then was perverted, not for the name of the Lord, but against the name of the Lord: who said to the same people, You shall have none other Gods but Me. Exodus 20:3 But by the bow He does signify the mind's intention. This same idea, lastly, more clearly working out, And in their graven idols, he says, they provoked Him to indignation.

32. God heard, and He despised: that is, He gave heed and took vengeance. And unto nothing He brought Israel exceedingly Psalm 77:60. For when God despised, what were they who by God's help were what they were? But doubtless he is commemorating the doing of that thing, when they were conquered by the Philistines in the time of Heli the priest, and the Ark of the Lord was taken, and with great slaughter they were laid low. This it is that he speaks of. And He rejected the tabernacle of Selom, His tabernacle, where He dwelled among men Psalm 77:61.

He has elegantly explained why He rejected His tabernacle, when he says, where He dwelled among men. When therefore they were not worthy for Him to dwell among, why should He not reject the tabernacle, which indeed not for Himself He had established, but for their sakes, whom now He judged unworthy for Him to dwell among. And He gave over unto captivity their strength, and their beauty unto the hands of the enemy. The very Ark whereby they thought themselves invincible, and whereon they plumed themselves, he calls their virtue and beauty.

Lastly, also afterward, when they were living ill, and boasting of the temple of the Lord, He does terrify them by a Prophet, saying, See ye what I have done to Selom, where was My tabernacle. Jeremiah 7:12 And He ended with the sword His people, and His inheritance He despised Psalm 77:62. Their young men the fire devoured: that is, wrath. And their virgins mourned not Psalm 77:63. For not even for this was there leisure, in fear of the foe. Their priests fell by the sword, and their widows were not lamented Psalm 77:64.

For there fell by the sword the sons of Heli, of one of whom the wife being widowed, and presently dying in child-birth, 1 Samuel 4:19 because of the same confusion could not be mourned with the distinction of a funeral. And the Lord was awakened as one sleeping Psalm 77:65. For He seems to sleep, when He gives His people into the hands of those whom He hates, when there is said to them, Where is your God? He was awakened, then, like one sleeping, like a mighty man drunken with wine.

No one would dare to say this of God, save His Spirit. For he has spoken, as it seems to ungodly men reviling; as if like a drunken man He sleeps long, when He succours not so speedily as men think. 33. And He smote His enemies in the hinder parts Psalm 77:66: those, to wit, who were rejoicing that they were able to take His Ark: for they were smitten in their back-parts. 1 Samuel 5:6 Which seems to me to be a sign of that punishment, wherewith a man will be tortured, if he shall have looked back upon things behind; which, as says the Apostle, he ought to value as dung.

Philippians 3:8 For they that do so receive the Testament of God, as that they put not off from them the old vanity, are like the hostile nations, who did place the captured Ark of the Testament beside their own idols. And yet those old things even though these be unwilling do fall: for all flesh is hay, and the glory of man as the flower of hay. The hay has dried up, and the flower has fallen off: Isaiah 40:6-7 but the Ark of the Lord

abides for everlasting, to wit, the secret testament of the kingdom of Heaven, where is the eternal Word of God. But they that have loved things be

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