

The Sermon on the Mount - Part 1

by St. Augustine

The Sermon on the Mount is a perfect standard of the Christian life, teaching us to be humble, meek, and merciful, and to seek the kingdom of heaven.

Scripture: Matthew 4:21, Mark 1:19, Luke 6:40, Romans 9:22, 1 Corinthians 1:10, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Galatians 6:1, 1 Thessalonians 3:10, Hebrews 10:5, Hebrews 11:3, 1 Peter 5:10

Topics: "Biblical Restoration", "Spiritual Wholeness"

Description

The preacher from Greek Word Studies delves into the meaning of 'katartízō,' which signifies fitting or joining together to mend or repair, restoring to a former condition. This term is used in various contexts in the New Testament and the Septuagint, emphasizing equipping, restoring, and making whole. The essence of 'katartízō' is to prepare, equip, and supply what is lacking, ultimately restoring individuals to their intended purpose and completeness, especially in the face of trials and suffering.

Transcript

EXPLANATION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE SERMON DELIVERED BY OUR LORD ON THE MOUNT, AS CONTAINED IN THE FIFTH CHAPTER OF MATTHEW.

CHAP. I.--1. If any one will piously and soberly consider the sermon which our Lord Jesus Christ spoke on the mount, as we read it in the Gospel according to Matthew, I think that he will find in it, so far as regards the highest morals, a perfect standard of the Christian life: and this we do not rashly venture to promise, but gather it from the very words of the Lord Himself. For the sermon itself is brought to a close in such a way, that it is clear there are in it all the precepts which go to mould the life. For thus He speaks: "Therefore, whosoever heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, I will liken unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." Since, therefore, He has not simply said, "Whosoever heareth my words," but has made an addition, saying, "Whosoever heareth these words of mine," He has sufficiently indicated, as I think, that these sayings which He uttered on the mount so perfectly guide the life of those who may be willing to live according to them, that they may justly be compared to one building upon a rock. I have said this merely that it may be clear that the sermon before us is perfect in all the precepts by which the

Christian life is moulded; for as regards this particular section a more careful treatment will be given in its own place.

2. The beginning, then, of this sermon is introduced as follows: "And when He saw the great multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying." If it is asked what the "mountain" means, it may well be understood as meaning the greater precepts of righteousness; for there were lesser ones which were given to the Jews. Yet it is one God who, through His holy prophets and servants, according to a thoroughly arranged distribution of times, gave the lesser precepts to a people who as yet required to be bound by fear; and who, through His Son, gave the greater ones to a people whom it had now become suitable to set free by love. Moreover, when the lesser are given to the lesser, and the greater to the greater, they are given by Him who alone knows how to present to the human race the medicine suited to the occasion. Nor is it surprising that the greater precepts are given for the kingdom of heaven, and the lesser for an earthly kingdom, by that one and the same God, who made heaven and earth. With respect, therefore, to that righteousness which is the greater, it is said through the prophet, "Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God:" and this may well mean that the one Master alone fit to teach matters of so great importance teaches on a mountain. Then He teaches sitting, as behoves the dignity of the instructor's office; and His disciples come to Him, in order that they might be nearer in body for hearing His words, as they also approached in spirit to fulfil His precepts. "And He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying." The circumlocution before us, which runs, "And He opened His mouth," perhaps gracefully intimates by the mere pause that the sermon will be somewhat longer than usual, unless, perchance, it should not be without meaning, that now He is said to have opened His own mouth, whereas under the old law He was accustomed to open the mouths of the prophets.

3. What, then, does He say? "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We read in Scripture concerning the striving after temporal things, "All is vanity and presumption of spirit;" but presumption of spirit means audacity and pride: usually also the proud are said to have great spirits; and rightly, inasmuch as the wind also is called spirit. And hence it is written, "Fire, hail, snow, ice, spirit of tempest." But, indeed, who does not know that the proud are spoken of as puffed up, as if swelled out with wind? And hence also that expression of the apostle, "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." And "the poor in spirit" are rightly understood here, as meaning the humble and God-fearing, i.e. those who have not the spirit which puffeth up. Nor ought blessedness to begin at any other point whatever, if indeed it is to attain unto the highest wisdom; "but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" for, on the other hand also, "pride" is entitled "the beginning of all sin." Let the proud, therefore, seek after and love the kingdoms of the earth; but "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

CHAP. II.--4. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall by inheritance possess the earth:" that earth, I suppose, of which it is said in the Psalm, "Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." For it signifies a certain firmness and stability of the perpetual inheritance, where the soul, by means of a good disposition, rests, as it were, in its own place, just as the body rests on the earth, and is nourished from it with its own food, as the body from the earth. This is the very rest and life of the saints. Then, the meek are those who yield to acts of wickedness, and do not resist evil, but overcome evil with good. Let those, then, who are not meek quarrel and fight for earthly and temporal things; but "blessed are the meek, for they shall by inheritance possess the earth," from which they cannot be driven out.

5. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Mourning is sorrow arising from the loss of things held dear; but those who are converted to God lose those things which they were accustomed to

embrace as dear in this world: for they do not rejoice in those things in which they formerly rejoiced; and until the love of eternal things be in them, they are wounded by some measure of grief. Therefore they will be comforted by the Holy Spirit, who on this account chiefly is called the Paraclete, i.e. the Comforter, in order that, while losing the temporal joy, they may enjoy to the full that which is eternal.

6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Now He calls those parties, lovers of a true and indestructible good. They will therefore be filled with that food of which the Lord Himself says, "My meat is to do the will of my Father," which is righteousness; and with that water, of which whosoever "drinketh," as he also says, it "shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life."

7. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." He says that they are blessed who relieve the miserable, for it is paid back to them in such a way that they are freed from misery.

8. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." How foolish, therefore, are those who seek God with these outward eyes, since He is seen with the heart! as it is written elsewhere, "And in singleness of heart seek Him." For that is a pure heart which is a single heart: and just as this light cannot be seen, except with pure eyes; so neither is God seen, unless that is pure by which He can be seen.

9. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." It is the perfection of peace, where nothing offers opposition; and the children of God are peacemakers, because nothing resists God, and surely children ought to have the likeness of their father. Now, they are peacemakers in themselves who, by bringing in order all the motions of their soul, and subjecting them to reason--i.e. to the mind and spirit--and by having their carnal lusts thoroughly subdued, become a kingdom of God: in which all things are so arranged, that that which is chief and pre-eminent in man rules without resistance over the other elements, which are common to us with the beasts; and that very element which is pre-eminent in man, i.e. mind and reason, is brought under subjection to something better still, which is the truth itself, the only-begotten Son of God. For a man is not able to rule over things which are inferior, unless he subjects himself to what is superior. And this is the peace which is given on earth to men of goodwill; this the life of the fully developed and perfect wise man. From a kingdom of this sort brought to a condition of thorough peace and order, the prince of this world is cast out, who rules where there is perversity and disorder. When this peace has been inwardly established and confirmed, whatever persecutions he who has been cast out shall stir up from without, he only increases the glory which is according to God; being unable to shake anything in that edifice, but by the failure of his machinations making it to be known with how great strength it has been built from within outwardly. Hence there follows: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

CHAP. III.--10. There are in all, then, these eight sentences. For now in what remains He speaks in the way of direct address to those who were present, saying: "Blessed shall ye be when men shall revile you and persecute you." But the former sentences He addressed in a general way: for He did not say, Blessed are ye poor in spirit, for yours is the kingdom of heaven; but He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:" nor, Blessed are ye meek, for ye shall inherit the earth; but, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And so the others up to the eighth sentence, where He says: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." After that He now begins to speak in the way of direct address to those present, although what has been said before referred also to His present audience; and that which follows, and which seems to be spoken specially to those present, refers also to those who were absent, or who would afterwards come into

existence.

For this reason the number of sentences before us is to be carefully considered. For the beatitudes begin with humility: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," i.e. those not puffed up, while the soul submits itself to divine authority, fearing lest after this life it go away to punishment, although perhaps in this life it might seem to itself to be happy. Then it (the soul) comes to the knowledge of the divine Scriptures, where it must show itself meek in its piety, lest it should venture to condemn that which seems absurd to the unlearned, and should itself be rendered unteachable by obstinate disputations. After that, it now begins to know in what entanglements of this world it is held by reason of carnal custom and sins: and so in this third stage, in which there is knowledge, the loss of the highest good is mourned over, because it sticks fast in what is lowest. Then, in the fourth stage there is labour, where vehement exertion is put forth, in order that the mind may wrench itself away from those things in which, by reason of their pestilential sweetness, it is entangled: here therefore righteousness is hungered and thirsted after, and fortitude is very necessary; because what is retained with delight is not abandoned without pain. Then, at the fifth stage, to those persevering in labour, counsel for getting rid of it is given; for unless each one is assisted by a superior, in no way is he fit in his own case to extricate himself from so great entanglements of miseries. But it is a just counsel, that he who wishes to be assisted by a stronger should assist him who is weaker in that in which he himself is stronger: therefore "blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." At the sixth stage there is purity of heart, able from a good conscience of good works to contemplate that, highest good, which can be discerned by the pure and tranquil intellect alone. Lastly is the seventh, wisdom itself--i.e. the contemplation of the truth, tranquillizing the whole man, and assuming the likeness of God, which is thus summed up: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." The eighth, as it were, returns to the starting-point, because it shows and commends what is complete and perfect: therefore in the first and in the eighth the kingdom of heaven is named, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" and, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:" as it is now said, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Seven in number, therefore, are the things which bring perfection: for the eighth brings into light and shows what is perfect, so that starting, as it were, from the beginning again, the others also are perfected by means of these stages.

CHAP. IV.--11. Hence also the sevenfold operation of the Holy Ghost, of which Isaiah speaks, seems to me to correspond to these stages and sentences. But there is a difference of order: for there the enumeration begins with the more excellent, but here with the inferior. For there it begins with wisdom, and closes with the fear of God: but "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." And therefore, if we reckon as it were in a gradually ascending series, there the fear of God is first, piety second, knowledge third, fortitude fourth, counsel fifth, understanding sixth, wisdom seventh. The fear of God corresponds to the humble, of whom it is here said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," i.e. those not puffed up, not proud: to whom the apostle says, "Be not high-minded, but fear;" i.e. be not lifted up. Piety corresponds to the meek: for he who inquires piously honours Holy Scripture, and does not censure what he does not yet understand, and on this account does not offer resistance; and this is to be meek: whence it is here said, "Blessed are the meek." Knowledge corresponds to those that mourn who already have found out in the Scriptures by what evils they are held chained which they ignorantly have coveted as though they were good and useful. Fortitude corresponds to those hungering and thirsting: for they labour in earnestly desiring joy from things that are truly good, and in eagerly seeking to turn away their love from earthly and corporeal things: and of them it is here said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after

righteousness." Counsel corresponds to the merciful: for this is the one remedy for escaping from so great evils, that we forgive, as we wish to be ourselves forgiven; and that we assist others so far as we are able, as we ourselves desire to be assisted where we are not able: and of them it is here said, "Blessed are the merciful." Understanding corresponds to the pure in heart, the eye being as it were purged, by which that may be beheld which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, and what hath not entered into the heart of man: and of them it is here said, "Blessed are the pure in heart." Wisdom corresponds to the peacemakers, in whom all things are now brought into order, and no passion is in a state of rebellion against reason, but all things together obey the spirit of man, while he himself also obeys God: and of them it is here said, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

12. Moreover, the one reward, which is the kingdom of heaven, is variously named according to these stages. In the first, just as ought to be the case, is placed the kingdom of heaven, which is the perfect and highest wisdom of the rational soul. Thus, therefore, it is said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:" as if it were said, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." To the meek an inheritance is given, as it were the testament of a father to those dutifully seeking it: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." To the mourners comfort, as to those who know what they have lost, and in what evils they are sunk: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." To those hungering and thirsting, a full supply, as it were a refreshment to those labouring and bravely contending for salvation: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." To the merciful mercy, as to those following a true and excellent counsel, so that this same treatment is extended toward them by one who is stronger, which they extend toward the weaker: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." To the pure in heart is given the power of seeing God, as to those bearing about with them a pure eye for discerning eternal things: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." To the peacemakers the likeness of God is given, as being perfectly wise, and formed after the image of God by means of the regeneration of the renewed man: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." And those promises can indeed be fulfilled in this life, as we believe them to have been fulfilled in the case of the apostles. For that all-embracing change into the angelic form, which is promised after this life, cannot be explained in any words. "Blessed," therefore, "are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This eighth sentence, which goes back to the starting-point, and makes manifest the perfect man, is perhaps set forth in its meaning both by the circumcision on the eighth day in the Old Testament, and by the resurrection of the Lord after the Sabbath, the day which is certainly the eighth, and at the same time the first day; and by the celebration of the eight festival days which we celebrate in the case of the regeneration of the new man; and by the very number of Pentecost. For to the number seven, seven times multiplied, by which we make forty-nine, as it were an eighth is added, so that fifty may be made up, and we, as it were, return to the starting-point: on which day the Holy Spirit was sent, by whom we are led into the kingdom of heaven, and receive the inheritance, and are comforted; and are fed, and obtain mercy, and are purified, and are made peacemakers; and being thus perfect, we bear all troubles brought upon us from without for the sake of truth and righteousness.

CHAP. V.--13. "Blessed are ye," says He, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." Let any one who is seeking after the delights of this world and the riches of temporal things under the Christian name, consider that our blessedness, is within; as it is said of the soul of the Church by the mouth of the prophet, "All the beauty of the king's daughter is within;" for outwardly revilings, and persecutions, and disparagements are promised; and yet, from these things there is a great reward in

heaven, which is felt in the heart of those who endure, those who can now say, "We glory in tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." For it is not simply the enduring of such things that is advantageous, but the bearing of such things for the name of Christ not only with tranquil mind, but even with exultation. For many heretics, deceiving souls under the Christian name, endure many such things; but they are excluded from that reward on this account, that it is not said merely, "Blessed are they which endure persecution;" but it is added, "for righteousness' sake." Now, where there is no sound faith, there can be no righteousness, for the just [righteous] man lives by faith. Neither let schismatics promise themselves anything of that reward; for similarly, where there is no love, there cannot be righteousness, for "love worketh no ill to his neighbour;" and if they had it, they would not tear in pieces Christ's body, which is the Church.

14. But it may be asked, What is the difference when He says, "when men shall revile you," and "when they shall say all manner of evil against you," since to revile is just this, to say evil against? But it is one thing when the reviling word is hurled with contumely in presence of him who is reviled, as it was said to our Lord, "Say we not the truth that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" and another thing, when our reputation is injured in our absence, as it is also written of Him, "Some said, He is a prophet; others said, Nay, but He deceiveth the people." Then, further, to persecute is to inflict violence, or to assail with snares, as was done by him who betrayed Him, and by them who crucified Him. Certainly, as for the fact that this also is not put in a bare form, so that it should be said, "and shall say all manner of evil against you," but there is added the word "falsely," and also the expression "for my sake;" I think that the addition is made for the sake of those who wish to glory in persecutions, and in the baseness of their reputation; and to say that Christ belongs to them for this reason, that many bad things are said about them; while, on the one hand, the things said are true, when they are said respecting their error; and, on the other hand, if sometimes also some false charges are thrown out, which frequently happens from the rashness of men, yet they do not suffer such things for Christ's sake. For he is not a follower of Christ who is not called a Christian according to the true faith and the catholic discipline.

15. "Rejoice," says He, "and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." I do not think that it is the higher parts of this visible world that are here called heaven. For our reward, which ought to be immoveable and eternal, is not to be placed in things fleeting and temporal. But I think the expression "in heaven" means in the spiritual firmament, where dwells everlasting righteousness: in comparison with which a Wicked soul is called earth, to which it is said when it sins, "Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt return." Of this heaven the apostle says, "For our conversation is in heaven." Hence they who rejoice in spiritual good are conscious of that reward now; but then it will be perfected in every part, when this mortal also shall have put on immortality. "For," says He, "so persecuted they the prophets also which were before you." In the present case He has used "persecution" in a general sense, as applying alike to abusive words and to the tearing in pieces of one's reputation; and has well encouraged them by an example, because they who speak true things are wont to suffer persecution: nevertheless did not the ancient prophets on this account, through fear of persecution, give over the preaching of the truth.

CHAP. VI.--16. Hence there follows most justly the statement, "Ye are the salt of the earth;" showing that those parties are to be judged insipid, who, either in the eager pursuit after abundance of earthly blessings, or through the dread of want, lose the eternal things which can neither be given nor taken away by men. "But if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" i.e., If ye, by means of whom the nations in a measure are to be preserved [from corruption], through the dread of temporal persecutions

shall lose the kingdom of heaven, where will be the men through whom error may be removed from you, since God has chosen you, in order that through you He might remove the error of others? Hence the savourless salt is "good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men." It is not therefore he who suffers persecution, but he who is rendered savourless by the fear of persecution, that is trodden under foot of men. For it is only one who is undermost that can be trodden under foot; but he is not undermost, who, however many things he may suffer in his body on the earth, yet has his heart fixed in heaven.

17. "Ye are the light of the world." In the same way as He said above, "the salt of the earth," so now He says, "the light of the world." For in the former case that earth is not to be understood which we tread with our bodily feet, but the men who dwell upon the earth, or even the sinners, for the preserving of whom and for the extinguishing of whose corruptions the Lord sent the apostolic salt. And here, by the world must be understood not the heavens and the earth, but the men who are in the world or love the world, for the enlightening of whom the apostles were sent.

"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid," i.e. [a city] founded upon great and distinguished righteousness, which is also the meaning of the mountain itself on which our Lord is discoursing. "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel measure." What view are we to take? That the expression "under a bushel measure" is so used that only the concealment of the candle is to be understood, as if He were saying, No one lights a candle and conceals it? Or does the bushel measure also mean something, so that to place a candle under a bushel is this, to place the comforts of the body higher than the preaching of the truth; so that one does not preach the truth so long as he is afraid of suffering any annoyance in corporeal and temporal things?

And it is well said a bushel measure, whether on account of the recompense of measure, for each one receives the things done in his body,--"that every one," says the apostle, "may receive the things done in his body;" and it is said in another place, as if of this bushel measure of the body, "For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again: "--or because temporal good things, which are carried to completion in the body, are both begun and come to an end in a certain definite number of days, which is perhaps meant by the "bushel measure;" while eternal and spiritual things are confined within no such limit, "for God giveth not the Spirit by measure."

Every one, therefore, who obscures and covers up the light of good doctrine by means of temporal comforts, places his candle under a bushel measure. "But on a candlestick." Now it is placed on a candlestick by him who subordinates his body to the service of God, so that the preaching of the truth is the higher, and the serving of the body the lower; yet by means even of the service of the body the doctrine shines more conspicuously, inasmuch as it is insinuated into those who learn by means of bodily functions, i.e. by means of the voice and tongue, and the other movements of the body in good works.

The apostle therefore puts his candle on a candlestick, when he says, "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I preach to others, I myself should be found a castaway." When He says, however, "that it may give light to all who are in the house," I am of opinion that it is the abode of men which is called a house, i.e. the world itself, on account of what He says before, "Ye are the light of the world;" or if any one chooses to understand the house as being the Church, this, too, is not out of place.

CHAP. VII.--18. "Let your light," says He, "so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." If He had merely said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works," He would seem to have fixed an end in the praises of men, which hypocrites seek, and those who canvass for honours and covet glory of the emptiest kind. Against such parties it is said, "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ;" and, by the prophet, "They who please men are put to shame, because God hath despised them;" and again, "God hath broken the bones of those who please men;" and again the apostle, "Let us not be desirous of vainglory;" and still another time, "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Hence our Lord has not said merely, "that they may see your good works," but has added, "and glorify your Father who is in heaven:" so that the mere fact that a man by means of good works pleases men, does not there set it up as an end that he should please men; but let him subordinate this to the praise of God, and for this reason please men, that God may be glorified in him. For this is expedient for them who offer praise, that they should honour, not man, but God; as our Lord showed in the case of the man who was carried, where, on the paralytic being healed, the multitude, marvelling at His powers, as it is written in the Gospel, "feared and glorified God, which had given such power unto men." And His imitator, the Apostle Paul, says, "But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed; and they glorified God in me."

19. And therefore, after He has exhorted His hearers that they should prepare themselves to bear all things for truth and righteousness, and that they should not hide the good which they were about to receive, but should learn with such benevolence as to teach others, aiming in their good works not at their own praise, but at the glory of God, He begins now to inform and to teach them what they are to teach; as if they were asking Him, saying: Lo, we are willing both to bear all things for Thy name, and not to hide Thy doctrine; but what precisely is this which Thou forbiddest us to hide, and for which Thou commandest us to bear all things? Art Thou about to mention other things contrary to those which are written in the law? "No," says He; "for think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

CHAP. VIII.--20. In this sentence the meaning is twofold. We must deal with it in both ways. For He who says, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil," means it either in the way of adding what is wanting, or of doing what is in it. Let us then consider that first which I have put first: for he who adds what is wanting does not surely destroy what he finds, but rather confirms it by perfecting it; and accordingly He follows up with the statement, "Verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one iota or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." For, if even those things which are added for completion are fulfilled, much more are those things fulfilled which are sent in advance as a commencement. Then, as to what He says, "One iota or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law," nothing else can be understood but a strong expression of perfection, since it is pointed out by means of single letters, among which letters "iota" is smaller than the others, for it is made by a single stroke; while a "tittle" is but a particle of some sort at the top of even that. And by these words He shows that in the law all the smallest particulars even are to be carried into effect. After that He subjoins: "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven." Hence it is the least commandments that are meant by "one iota" and "one tittle." And therefore, "whosoever shall break and shall teach [men] so,"--i.e. in accordance with what he breaks, not in accordance with what he finds and reads,--"shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;" and therefore, perhaps, he will not be in the kingdom of heaven at all, where only the great can be. "But whosoever shall do and teach [men] so,"--i.e. who shall not break, and shall teach men so, in accordance

with what he does not break,--"shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." But in regard to him who shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven, it follows that he is also in the kingdom of heaven, into which the great are admitted: for to this what follows refers.

CHAP. IX.--21. "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven;" i.e., unless ye shall fulfil not only those least precepts of the law which begin the man, but also those which are added by me, who am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. But you say to me: If, when He was speaking above of those least commandments, He said that whosoever shall break one of them, and shall teach in accordance with his transgression, is called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but that whosoever shall do them, and shall teach [men] so, is called great, and hence will be already in the kingdom of heaven, because he is great: what need is there for additions to the least precepts of the law, if he can be already in the kingdom of heaven, because whosoever shall do them, and shall so teach, is great? For this reason that sentence is to be understood thus: "But whosoever shall do and teach men so, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven,"--i.e. not in accordance with those least commandments, but in accordance with those which I am about to mention. Now what are they? "That your righteousness," says He, "may exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees;" for unless it shall exceed theirs, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever, there fore, shall break those least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called the least; but whosoever shall do those least commandments, and shall teach men so, is not necessarily to be reckoned great and meet for the kingdom of heaven; but yet he is not so much the least as the man who breaks them. But in order that he may be great and fit for that kingdom, he ought to do and teach as Christ now teaches, i.e. in order that his righteousness may exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. The righteousness of the Pharisees is, that they shall not kill; the righteousness of those who are destined to enter into the kingdom of God, that they be not angry without a cause. The least commandment, therefore, is not to kill; and whosoever shall break that, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall fulfil that commandment not to kill, will not, as a necessary consequence, be great and meet for the kingdom of heaven, but yet he ascends a certain step. He will be perfected, however, if he be not angry without a cause; and if he shall do this, he will be much further removed from murder. For this reason he who teaches that we should not be angry, does not break the law not to kill, but rather fulfils it; so that we preserve our innocence both outwardly when we do not kill, and in heart when we are not angry.

22. "Ye have heard" therefore, says He, "that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the gehenna of fire." What is the difference between being in danger of the judgment, and being in danger of the council, and being in danger of the gehenna of fire? For this last sounds most weighty, and reminds us that certain stages were passed over from lighter to more weighty, until the gehenna of fire was reached. And, therefore, if it is a lighter thing to be in danger of the judgment than to be in danger of the council, and if it is also a lighter thing to be in danger of the council than to be in danger of the gehenna of fire, we must understand it to be a lighter thing to be angry with a brother without a cause than to say "Raca;" and again, to be a lighter thing to say "Raca" than to say "Thou fool." For the danger would not have gradations, unless the sins also were mentioned in gradation.

23. But here one obscure word has found a place, for "Raca" is neither Latin nor Greek. The others, however, are current in our language. Now, some have wished to derive the interpretation of this expression from the Greek, supposing that a ragged person is called "Raca," because a rag is called in Greek rakos; yet, when one asks them what a ragged person is called in Greek, they do not answer "Rata;" and further, the Latin translator might have put the word ragged where he has placed "Raca," and not have used a word which, on the one hand, has no existence in the Latin language, and, on the other, is rare in the Greek. Hence the view is more probable which I heard from a certain Hebrew whom I had asked about it; for he said that the word does not mean anything, but merely expresses the emotion of an angry hind. Grammarians call those particles of speech which express an affection of an agitated mind interjections; as when it is said by one who is grieved, "Alas," or by one who is angry, "Hah." And these words in all languages are proper names, and are not easily translated into another language; and this cause certainly compelled alike the Greek and the Latin translators to put the word itself, inasmuch as they could find no way of translating it.

24. There is therefore a gradation in the sins referred to, so that first one is angry, and keeps that feeling as a conception in his heart; but if now that emotion shall draw forth an expression of anger not having any definite meaning, but giving evidence of that feeling of the mind by the very fact of the outbreak wherewith he is assailed with whom one is angry, this is certainly more than if the rising anger were restrained by silence; but if there is heard not merely an expression of anger, but also a word by which the party using it now indicates and signifies a distinct censure of him against whom it is directed, who doubts but that this is something more than if merely an exclamation of anger were uttered? Hence in the first there is one thing, i.e. anger alone; in the second two things, both anger and a word that expresses anger; in the third three things, anger and a word that expresses anger, and in that word the utterance of distinct censure. Look now also at the three degrees of liability,--the judgment, the council, the gehenna of fire. For in the judgment an opportunity is still given for defence; in the council, however, although there is also wont to be a judgment, yet because the very distinction compels us to acknowledge that there is a certain difference in this place, the production of the sentence seems to belong to the council, inasmuch as it is not now the case of the accused himself that is in question, whether he is to be condemned or not, but they who judge confer with one another to what punishment they ought to condemn him, who, it is clear, is to be condemned; but the gehenna of fire does not treat as a doubtful matter either the condemnation, like the judgment, or the punishment of him who is condemned, like the council; for in the gehenna of fire both the condemnation and the punishment of him who is condemned are certain. Thus there are seen certain degrees in the sins and in the liability to punishment; but who can tell in what ways they are invisibly shown in the punishments of souls? We are therefore to learn how great the difference is between the righteousness of the Pharisees and that greater righteousness which introduces into the kingdom of heaven, because while it is a more serious crime to kill than to inflict reproach by means of a word, in the one case killing exposes one to the judgment, but in the other anger exposes one to the judgment, which is the least of those three sins; for in the former case they were discussing the question of murder among men, but in the latter all things are disposed of by means of a divine judgment, where the end of the condemned is the gehenna of fire. But whoever shall say that murder is punished by a more severe penalty under the greater righteousness if a reproach is punished by the gehenna of fire, compels us to understand that there are differences of gehennas.

25. Indeed, in the three statements before us, we must observe that some words are understood. For the first statement has all the words that are necessary. "Whosoever," says He, "is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment." But in the: second, when He says, "and whosoever

shall say to his brother, Raca," there is understood the expression without cause, and thus there is subjoined, "shall be in danger of the council." In the third, now, where He says, "but whosoever shall say, Thou fool," two things are understood, both to his brother and without cause. And in this way we defend the apostle when he calls the Galatians fools, to whom he also gives, the name of brethren; for he does not do it without cause. And here the word brother is to be understood for this reason, that the case of an enemy is spoken of afterwards, and how he also is to be treated under the greater righteousness.

CHAP. X.--26. Next there follows here: "Therefore, if thou hast brought thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." From this surely it is clear that what is said above is said of a brother: inasmuch as the sentence which follows is connected by such a conjunction that it confirms the preceding one; for He does not say, But if thou bring thy gift to the altar; but He says, "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar." For if it is not lawful to be angry with one's brother without a cause, or to say "Raca," or to say "Thou fool," much less is it lawful so to retain anything in one's mind, as that indignation may be turned into hatred. And to this belongs also what is said in another passage: "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." We are therefore commanded, when about to bring our gift to the altar, if we remember that our brother hath ought against us, to leave the gift before the altar, and to go and be reconciled to our brother, and then to come and offer the gift. But if this is to be understood literally, one might perhaps suppose that such a thing ought to be done if the brother is present; for it cannot be delayed too long, since you are commanded to leave your gift before the altar. If, therefore, such a thing should come into your mind respecting one who is absent, and, as may happen, even settled down beyond the sea, it is absurd to suppose that your gift is to be left before the altar until you may offer it to God after having traversed both lands and seas. And therefore we are compelled to have recourse to an altogether internal and spiritual interpretation, in order that what has been said may be understood without absurdity.

27. And so we may interpret the altar spiritually, as being faith itself in the inner temple of God, whose emblem is the visible altar. For whatever offering we present to God, whether prophecy, or teaching, or prayer, or a psalm, or a hymn, and whatever other such like spiritual gift occurs to the mind, it cannot be acceptable to God, unless it be sustained by sincerity of faith, and, as it were, placed on that fixedly and immoveably, so that what we utter may remain whole and uninjured. For many heretics, not having the altar, i.e. true faith, have spoken blasphemies for praise; being weighed down, to wit, with earthly opinions, and thus, as it were, throwing down their offering on the ground. But there ought also to be purity of intention on the part of the offerer. And therefore, when we are about to present any such offering in our heart, i.e. in the inner temple of God ("For," as it is said, "the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are;" and, "That Christ may dwell in the inner man by faith in your hearts") if it occur to our mind that a brother hath ought against us, i.e. if we have injured him in anything (for then he has something against us whereas we have something against him if he has injured us, and in that case it is not necessary to proceed to reconciliation: for you will not ask pardon of one who has done you an injury, but merely forgive him, as you desire to be forgiven by the Lord what you have committed against Him), we are therefore to proceed to reconciliation, when it has occurred to our mind that we have perhaps injured our brother in something; but this is to be done not with the bodily feet, but with the emotions of the mind, so that you are to prostrate yourself with humble disposition before your brother, to whom you have hastened in affectionate thought, in the presence of Him to whom you are about to present your offering. For thus, even if he should be present, you will be able to soften him by a mind free from dissimulation, and to recall him to goodwill by asking pardon, if first you have done this before God, going to him not with the slow

movement of the body, but with the very swift impulse of love; and then coming, i.e. recalling your attention to that which you were beginning to do, you will offer your gift.

28. But who acts in a way that he is neither angry with his brother without a cause, nor says "Raca" without a cause, nor calls him a fool without a cause, all of which are most proudly committed; or so, that, if perchance he has fallen into any of these, he asks pardon with suppliant mind, which is the only remedy; who but just the man that is not puffed up with the spirit of empty boasting? "Blessed" therefore "are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Let us look now at what follows.

CHAP. XI.--29. "Be kindly disposed," says he, "toward thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come Out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." I understand who the judge is: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." I understand who the officer is: "And angels," it is said, "ministered unto Him:" and we believe that He will come with His angels to judge the quick and the dead. I understand what is meant by the prison: evidently the punishments of darkness, which He calls in another passage the outer darkness: for this reason, I believe, that the joy of the divine rewards is something internal in the mind itself, or even if anything more hidden can be thought of, that joy of which it is said to the servant who deserved well, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" just as also, under this republican government, one who is thrust into prison is sent out from the council chamber, or from the palace of the judge.

30. But now, with respect to paying the uttermost farthing, it may be understood without absurdity either as standing for this, that nothing is left unpunished; just as in common speech we also say "to the very dregs," when we wish to express that something is so drained out that nothing is left: or by the expression "the uttermost farthing" earthly sins may be meant. For as a fourth part of the separate component parts of this world, and in fact as the last, the earth is found; so that you begin with the heavens, you reckon the air the second, water the third, the earth the fourth. It may therefore seem to be suitably said, "till thou hast paid the last fourth," in the sense of "till thou hast expiated thy earthly sins:" for this the sinner also heard, "Earth thou art, and unto earth shall thou return." Then, as to the expression "till thou hast paid," I wonder if it does not mean that punishment which is called eternal. For whence is that debt paid where there is now no opportunity given of repenting and of leading a more correct life? For perhaps the expression "till thou hast paid" stands here in the same sense as in that passage where it is said, "Sit Thou at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool;" for not even when the enemies have been put under His feet, will He cease to sit at the right hand: or that statement of the apostle, "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet;" for not even when they have been put under His feet, will He cease to reign. Hence, as it is there understood of Him respecting whom it is said, "He must reign, till He hath put His enemies under His feet" that He will reign for ever, inasmuch as they will be for ever under His feet: so here it may be understood of him respecting whom it is said, "Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing," that he will never come out; for he is always paying the uttermost farthing, so long as he is suffering the everlasting punishment of his earthly sins. Nor would I say this in such a way as that I should seem to prevent a more careful discussion respecting the punishment of sins, as to how in the Scriptures it is called eternal; although in all possible ways it is to be avoided rather than known.

31. But let us now see who the adversary himself is, with whom we are enjoined to agree quickly, whiles we are in the way with him. For he is either the devil, or a man, or the flesh, or God, or His commandment. But I do not see how we should be enjoined to be on terms of goodwill, i.e. to be of one heart or of one

mind, with the devil. For some have rendered the Greek word which is found here "of one heart," others "of one mind:" but neither are we enjoined to show goodwill to the devil (for where there is goodwill there is friendship: and no one would say that we are to make friends with the devil); nor is it expedient to come to! an agreement with him, against whom we have declared war by once for all renouncing him, and on conquering whom we shall be crowned; nor ought we now to yield to him, for if we had never yielded to him, we should never have fallen into such miseries. Again, as to the adversary being a man, although we are enjoined to live peaceably with all men, as far as lieth in us, where certainly goodwill, and concord, and consent may be understood; yet I do not see how I can accept the view, that we are delivered to the judge by a man, in a case where I understand Christ to be the judge, "before" whose "judgment-seat we must all appear," as the apostle says: how then is he to deliver me to the judge, who will appear equally with me before the judge? Or if any one is delivered to the judge because he has injured a man, although the party who has been injured does not deliver him, it is a much more suitable view, that the guilty party is delivered to the judge by that law against which he acted when he injured the man. And this for the additional reason, that if any one has injured a man by killing him, there will be no time now in which to agree with him; for he is not now in the way with him, i.e. in this life: and yet a remedy will not on that account be excluded, if one repents and flees for refuge with the sacrifice of a broken heart to the mercy of Him who forgives the sins of those who turn to Him, and who rejoices more over one penitent than over ninety-nine just persons. But much less do I see how we are enjoined to bear goodwill towards, or to agree with, or to yield to, the flesh. For it is sinners rather who love their flesh, and agree with it, and yield to it; but those who bring it into subjection are not the parties who yield to it, but rather they compel it to yield to them.

32. Perhaps, therefore, we are enjoined to yield to God, and to be well-disposed towards Him, in order that we may be reconciled to Him, from whom by sinning we have turned away, so that He can be called our adversary. For He is rightly called the adversary of those whom He resists, for "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble;" and "pride is the beginning of all sin, but the beginning of man's pride is to become apostate from God;" and the apostle says, "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

And from this it may be perceived that no nature [as being] bad is an enemy to God, inasmuch as the very parties who were enemies are being reconciled. Whoever, therefore, while in this way, i.e. in this life, shall not have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son, will be delivered to the judge by Him, for "the Father judgeth no man, but hath delivered all judgment to the Son;" and so the other things which are described in this section follow, which we have already discussed.

There is only one thing which creates a difficulty as regards this interpretation, viz. how it can be rightly said that we are in the way with God, if in this passage. He Himself is to be understood as the adversary of the wicked, with whom we are enjoined to be reconciled quickly; unless, perchance, because He is everywhere, we also, while we are in this way, are certainly with Him. For as it is said, "If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there."

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." Or if the view is not accepted, that the wicked are said to be with God, although there is nowhere where God is not present,--just as we do not say that the blind are with the light, although the light surrounds their eyes,--there is one resource remaining: that we should understand the adversary here as being the commandment of God.

For what is so much an adversary to those who wish to sin as the commandment of God, i.e. His law and divine Scripture, which has been given us for this life, that it may be with us in the way, which we must not contradict, lest it deliver us to the judge, but which we ought to submit to quickly? For no one knows when he may depart out of this life. Now, who is it that submits to divine Scripture, save he who reads or hears it piously, deferring to it as of supreme authority; so that what he understands he does not hate on this account, that he feels it to be opposed to his sins, but rather loves being reprov'd by it, and rejoices that his maladies are not spared until they are healed; and so that even in respect to what seems to him obscure or absurd, he does not therefore raise contentious contradictions, but prays that he may understand, yet remembering that goodwill and reverence are to be manifested towards so great an authority?

But who does this, unless just the man who has come, not harshly threatening, but in the meekness of piety, for the purpose of opening and ascertaining the contents of his father's will? "Blessed," therefore, "are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." Let us see what follows.

CHAP. XII.--33. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." The lesser righteousness, therefore, is not to commit adultery by carnal connection; but the greater righteousness of the kingdom of God is not to commit adultery in the heart. Now, the man who does not commit adultery in the heart, much more easily guards against committing adultery in actual fact. Hence He who gave the later precept confirmed the earlier; for He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it. It is well worthy of consideration that He did not say, Whosoever lusteth after a woman, but, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her," i.e. turneth toward her with this aim and this intent, that he may lust after her; which, in fact, is not merely to be tickled by fleshly delight, but fully to consent to lust; so that the forbidden appetite is not restrained, but satisfied if opportunity should be given.

34. For there are three things which go to complete sin: the suggestion of, the taking pleasure in, and the consenting to. Suggestion takes place either by means of memory, or by means of the bodily senses, when we see, or hear, or smell, or taste, or touch anything. And if it give us pleasure to enjoy this, this pleasure, if illicit, must be restrained. Just as when we are fasting, and on seeing food the appetite of the palate is stirred up, this does not happen without pleasure; but we do not consent to this liking, and we repress it by the right of reason, which has the supremacy.

But if consent shall take place, the sin will be complete, known to God in our heart, although it may not become known to men by deed. There are, then, these steps: the suggestion is made, as it were, by a serpent, that is to say, by a fleeting and rapid, i.e. a temporary, movement of bodies: for if there are also any such images moving about in the soul, they have been derived from without from the body; and if any hidden sensation of the body besides those five senses touches the soul, that also is temporary and fleeting; and therefore the more clandestinely it glides in, so as to affect the process of thinking, the more aptly is it compared to a serpent.

Hence these three stages, as I was beginning to say, resemble that transaction which is described in Genesis, so that the suggestion and a certain measure of suasion is put forth, as it were, by the serpent; but the taking pleasure in it lies in the carnal appetite, as it were in Eve; and the consent lies in the reason, as it were in the man: and these things having been acted through, the man is driven forth, as it were, from paradise, i.e. from the most blessed light of righteousness, into death--in all respects most righteously.

For he who puts forth suasion does not compel. And all natures are beautiful in their order, according to their gradations; but we must not descend from the higher, among which the rational mind has its place assigned, to the lower. Nor is any one compelled to do this; and therefore, if he does it, he is punished by the just law of God, for he is not guilty of this unwillingly. But yet, previous to habit, either there is no pleasure, or it is so slight that there is hardly any; and to yield to it is a great sin, as such pleasure is unlawful.

Now, when any one does yield, he commits sin in the heart. If, however, he also proceeds to action, the desire seems to be satisfied and extinguished; but afterwards, when the suggestion is repeated, a greater pleasure is kindled, which, however, is as yet much less than that which by continuous practice is converted into habit. For it is very difficult to overcome this; and yet even habit itself, if one does not prove untrue to himself, and does not shrink back in dread from the Christian warfare, he will get the better of under His (i.e. Christ's) leadership and assistance; and thus, in accordance with primitive peace and order, both the man is subject to Christ, and the woman is subject to the man.

35. Hence, just as we arrive at sin by three steps,--suggestion, pleasure, consent,--so of sin itself there are three varieties,--in heart, in deed, in habit,--as it were, three deaths: one, as it were, in the house, i.e. when we consent to lust in the heart; a second now, as it were, brought forth outside the gate, when assent goes forward into action; a third, when the mind is pressed down by the force of bad habit, as if by a mound of earth, and is now, as it were, rotting in the sepulchre. And whoever reads the Gospel perceives that our Lord raised to life these three varieties of the dead. And perhaps he reflects what differences may be found in the very word of Him who raises them, when He says on one occasion, "Damsel, arise;" on another, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise;" and when on another occasion He groaned in the spirit, and wept, and again groaned, and then afterwards "cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth."

36. And therefore, under the category of the adultery mentioned in this section, we must understand all fleshly and sensual lust. For when Scripture so constantly speaks of idolatry as fornication, and the Apostle Paul calls avarice by the name of idolatry, who doubts but that every evil lust is rightly called fornication, since the soul, neglecting the higher law by which it is ruled, and prostituting itself for the base pleasure of the lower nature as its reward (so to speak), is thereby corrupted? And therefore let every one who feels carnal pleasure rebelling against right inclination in his own case through the habit of sinning, by whose unsubdued violence he is dragged into captivity, recall to mind as much as he can what kind of peace he has lost by sinning, and let him cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ." For in this way, when he cries out that he is wretched, in the act of bewailing he implores the help of a comforter. Nor is it a small approach to blessedness, when he has come to know his wretchedness; and therefore "blessed" also "are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

CHAP. XIII.--37. In the next place, He goes on to say: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should go into hell." Here, certainly, there is need of great courage in order to cut off one's members. For whatever it is that is meant by the "eye," undoubtedly it is such a thing as is ardently loved. For those who wish to express their affection strongly are wont to speak thus: I love him as my own eyes, or even more than my own eyes. Then, when the word "right" is added, it is meant perhaps to intensify the strength of the affection. For although these bodily eyes of ours are turned in a common direction for the purpose of seeing, and if both are turned they have equal power, yet men are more afraid of losing the right one. So

that the sense in this case is: Whatever it is which thou so lovest that thou reckonest it as a right eye, if it offends thee, i.e. if it proves a hindrance to thee on the way to true happiness, pluck it out and cast it from thee. For it is profitable for thee, that one of these which thou so lovest that they cleave to thee as if they were members, should perish, rather than that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

38. But since He follows it up with a similar statement respecting the right hand, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should go into hell," He compels us to inquire more carefully what He has spoken of as an eye. And as regards this inquiry, nothing occurs to me as a more suitable explanation than a greatly beloved friend: for this, certainly, is something which we may rightly call a member which we ardently love; and this friend a counsellor, for it is an eye, as it were, pointing out the road; and that in divine things, for it is the right eye: so that the left is indeed a beloved counsellor, but in earthly matters, pertaining to the necessities of the body; concerning which as a cause of stumbling it was superfluous to speak, inasmuch as not even the right was to be spared. Now, a counsellor in divine things is a cause of stumbling, if he endeavours to lead one into any dangerous heresy under the guise of religion and doctrine. Hence also let the right hand be taken in the sense of a beloved helper and assistant in divine works: for in like manner as contemplation is rightly understood as having its seat in the eye, so action in the right hand; so that the left hand may be understood in reference to works which are necessary for this life, and for the body.

CHAP. XIV.--39. "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement." This is the lesser righteousness of the Pharisees, which is not opposed by what our Lord says: "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is loosed from her husband committeth adultery." For He who gave the commandment that a writing of divorcement should be given, did not give the commandment that a wife should be put away; but "whosoever shall put awa

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