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Luther's commentary on the
first twenty-two Psalms

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ON THE

FIRST TWENTY-TWO PSALMS

BASED ON DR. HENRY COLE'S TRANSLATION FROM THE ORIGINAL
LATIN. REVISED, ENLARGED, PARTS RETRANSLATED
AND EDITED IN COMPLETE FORM

BY

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DER WELT," ETC.

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to him, who comes with a fresh desire for information."
—Fuller.

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INTRODUCTION TO LUTHER'S WORKS IN ENGLISH

GOD'S BEST GIFT TO US IS A BOOK.

Dear reader, do you realize that the most precious gift of our heavenly Father to us, his children, is in the form of a book? In that book God has given us all that we need; outside of it he has promised us nothing. We are indebted alone to the goodness of God that we are able to read and that we have something really good to read. Through his servant Moses, God commanded the Israelites to preserve the book of the law in the ark of God and put it under the care of the Levites. It grew until it became our Bible, which means books or scriptures or writings. The Protestant-Teutonic nations appropriately called it the Word of God or God's Word, (in German Gottes Wort; in Scandinavian Gud's Ord). See Gen. 5:1; Exod. 17:14; 24:7; Num. 5:23; Deut. 17:18; 28:58; Josh. 8:34; 2 Kings 22:8-16; Neh. 8: 1-18; Ecc. 12:12; Ezek. 2:9; Rev. 5:1-10; 22:7-19.

THE BIBLE IS THE DIVINE LIBRARY.

Really the Bible is not only a book, it is a collection of 66 books, 39 books in the Old and 27 in the New Testament. Moses, the first divine writer, was also the first librarian of a library of five books, called the five books of Moses. It was larger than many think. Thus we see the idea of the library as well as that of the book is divine in its origin. To these five volumes by Moses, Joshua and Samuel added others. To the historical department was added the poetical by David and Solomon, and then followed the prophetic by Isaiah, Jeremiah and others. Under the new dispensation the word of God continued to be written, collected and preserved in the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles and Revelation. God used 40 different holy men during the long period of 1600 years to write this divine book or library. He alone gathered it, and He alone has preserved it. To His name alone be the praise! Since the Canon closed, the Holy Spirit has been in the church working through the Word of God, so that "of making many books there is no end" is true in our day as it was already in the time of Solomon.

OUR BIBLE AND THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE EAST.

The late German scholar, Professor Max Mueller, left coming generations the following beautiful and learned Christian testi-

mony as a precious heritage, when he said: — “In the discharge of my duties for 40 years as professor of Sanskrit in the University of Oxford, I have devoted as much time as any man living to the study of the Sacred Books of the East, and I have found the one key-note — the one diapason, so to speak — of all those so-called sacred books, whether it be the Veda of the Brahmins, the Puranas of Siva and Vishnu, the Koran of the Mohammedans, the Zend-Avesta of the Parsees, the Tripitaka of the Buddhists — the one refrain through all is **salvation by works**. They all say that salvation must be purchased, must be bought with a price; and that the sole price, the sole purchase-money, must be our own works and deservings. Our own holy Bible, our sacred Book of the East, is from beginning to end a protest against this doctrine.

“Good works are, indeed, enjoined upon us in that sacred Book of the East far more strongly than in any other sacred book of the East; but they are only the outcome of a grateful heart — they are only a thank-offering, the fruits of our faith. They are never the ransom money of the true disciples of Christ. Let us not shut our eyes to what is excellent and true and of good report in these sacred books, but let us teach Hindus, Buddhists and Mohammedans, that there is only one sacred Book of the East that can be their main stay in that awful hour when they pass all alone into the unseen world. It is the sacred Book which contains that faithful saying, worthy to be received of all men, women and children — that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”.

THE ISSUE BETWEEN THE ORIENT AND OCCIDENT.

These words of the learned German Professor, who has translated all the sacred books of the East into English, come from one who speaks with authority. They certainly put in the clearest language the fundamental issue between the Orient and the Occident, yea, the real issue in human history, past and future. We make an unpardonable blunder if we think that the Church of Christ will have fulfilled her mission in the Orient when she shall have destroyed all the idols of wood and stone. The battle is really not one with dumb material idols nor one of the sword, but it is a battle of the mind and soul — of books — of one sacred book of the East against all the other sacred books of the East. The battle was waged once in the Orient and once in the Occident. In the Orient the one Book apparently lost and was exterminated from the East by the cunning of Satan and the depravity of man. It found a refuge in the West where it was again powerfully attacked by the same everlasting enemies, but here however the one Book gained the victory. The arts of Satan and the wisdom of man were

put to flight, "and Jehovah caused his glorious voice to be heard", Is. 30:30. To God's Word and God's Spirit be all the praise. But they wrought through human agencies. God chose the battle field, the soldiers and the leader. The prophet of the West, whom God raised up for the occasion, was a poor monk who really "shook the world." His inspired or semi-inspired pen wrote so well that

LUTHER'S WRITINGS BECAME THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE WEST.

While reading so much about the sacred books of the East, the inquiry naturally arises what about the sacred books of the West, our half of the globe, where we live and labor? Has God given us no prophet? Has the Holy Spirit been withheld from one half of God's creation? Have we no talent and can we contribute nothing toward uplifting the race? Against such thoughts we naturally revolt. However little we may have we want to be self-conscious of what we have, for "he that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much". Luther's writings offer nothing new, they have made the one Book of the East, *The Book of the West*, and restored the true religion of the East to the West.

DANGER OF ORIENTAL LEAVEN SPREADING IN THE OCCIDENT.

But, alas! the West is in danger of being overwhelmed with Orientalism through world's fairs, immigration and importation of oriental ideas and customs, as Is. 2:6 says, it is being "filled with customs from the East". But all that is not so dangerous as the fact that the greater part of the so called Christian Church of the West is to-day dominated by the false teachings of the East. The whole Grecian or Russian Church, the world-embracing Roman Catholic Church and some of the Reformed denominations. Thus it seems the Christian Church may be taken captive into eastern bondage as the Jewish Church was. While some so called Lutherans may hold to the false teachings of the East, the Ev. Lutheran Church with its 70,000,000 adherents in the world enthuses more on justification by faith alone than on any other doctrine. Since apostolic times no literature has taught and defended this central truth of our sacred Book of the East as the writings of Luther, the greatest Christian prophet of the West. Because of this, and it cannot be put too strongly, because of this alone, we wish to do all in our power to develop a world-wide movement to translate, publish, sell, buy, read recommend and teach Luther's writings not only in English, but in every language.

THE WRITINGS OF PAUL AND LUTHER.

All agree that Paul is the greatest character in the Christian Church and that since Paul's time none equals Luther. The one was a Jew, "instructed according to the strict manner of the law", the other a Gentile of the Gentiles, born in due time. They agree perfectly and in their common doctrine alone the two divisions of the race may be united. Paul's writings are circulated over the earth in the Bible, and since no writer is more Pauline than Luther, his writings should follow Paul's everywhere, as the best commentary on Paul. The race, nation or nationality, that understands, believes, appropriates their central doctrine the best, will make the greatest progress in true culture and civilization, as is seen in the German, Scandinavian and English nations compared with others. The Scandinavians are the most universally Protestant nation, hence their average in Christian culture and civilization is the highest. The Catholic elements in the German and English nations lower their average.

THE WRITINGS OF MOSES, PAUL AND LUTHER.

We may take a broader view and say, as Moses was the greatest man in the Old Testament and Paul in the New, such is Luther in modern times. Moses, Paul and Luther form a trinity on the earth and in history whose unity can never be broken. If in the providence of God a man is raised up to give a clearer and stronger defense of the cardinal teachings of Moses and Paul on sin and grace, then will Luther disappear from this trinity, and not until then. As Moses and Paul live and bless humanity through their writings, so Luther will live and bless mankind through his words, which have been so faithfully handed down to posterity. The highest recommendation of Luther's writings are the writings themselves. The best we can do is to call attention to this fact. It is what he wrote and not what others wrote about him, that makes him Luther.

LUTHER AND BIBLE SOCIETIES.

While in London one place I especially desired to visit and that was the large building of the British and Foreign Bible Society. When we ascended the massive stairs there appeared a large oil painting, the largest in the building. It stood alone as it covered nearly the entire wall. It was not a scene from nature but the full stature of a man. Not of a noted Englishman as one might suppose, but of a foreigner. We had seen on the continent many statues and paintings of the German Reformer, but never did we see a finer painting of him, nor one in a more becoming and significant place than this painting here at the very entrance to

the greatest Bible Society in the world. There he stood as we see him everywhere with a single book in his hands, the holy Bible, and his eyes and head turned toward heaven in prayer that its central truths might be faithfully taught and defended. Luther knew that the Bible, "like a diamond, casts its luster in every direction; like a torch, the more it is shaken the more it shines; like a healing herb, the harder it is pressed, the sweeter is its fragrance". He was really the founder of Bible Societies. The Roman Catholic Church bitterly opposed them. The pope without the Bible and Luther with the Bible are going everywhere. The question is who shall dominate the civilization of the world?

LUTHER'S WRITINGS IN THE REFORMATION OF FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

Although in the Reformation period the University of Paris condemned Luther's writings and thus determined the destiny of France, yet he founded among his own "barbarian" countrymen a Protestant University System that leads the world in thought and places the Teuton race far in advance of the Latin. To-day a Lutheran Faculty of Theology teaches Luther's writings in the very University of Paris that condemned them. Likewise in England Luther's writings were opposed, even by the king with his own pen, yet large numbers of "Lutheran books" were imported into England as early as 1520, and some were early translated into English, extensively circulated and read with avidity. Before the English Bible and the Book of Common Prayer were printed "England was full of Lutheran books". At Oxford University Lutheranism was so strong in 1521 that cardinal Wolsey was entreated to check it. "Societies of those of Lutheran convictions" were organized at the University of Oxford in 1527 and of Cambridge in 1528. So many books of Luther were coming into Scotland that an act of parliament was passed in 1525 prohibiting vessels to land with books of Luther or his disciples upon pain of losing their cargo and the sailors themselves being imprisoned. Thus the English world once welcomed Luther's writings though opposed and we believe it will do so again.

LUTHER AND THE POPE IN AMERICA.

Why does the British Museum Library, the largest library in the English world, take such a pride in its Luther literature? Not for the sake of the Lutheran church, but for Luther's sake and England's sake. Because of Luther's relation to all the problems of England and of humanity. The Reformer has spoken almost on every subject and there is a growing desire to know just what he said. Should America fall behind England in its appreciation of the writings of the hero of the Reformation?

Although the United States has received more from Martin Luther, the father of modern civil and religious liberty, than from any other uninspired man, yet the pope of Rome, the strongest opponent of that liberty, has more influence in America than Luther. Every public library of our land should be supplied with his complete works in the original German, the classic language of Protestantism, and also with his complete works in English, as many do not read German. Give all Anglo-Saxons an opportunity to read the greatest Saxon in pure Anglo-Saxon!

The question has often been raised what is the foundation or center of our modern culture and civilization? Can it be localized? We answer yes, the Teutons, the Hanseatic Germans and the Viking Scandinavians in Europe and America dominate it and not the Latins, and Luther's writings have made the Teutons what they are. He is the ideal child of the Teutons and their ideal father. They moulded him before he moulded them. This is saying much, but not too much, to those who read Luther and not only about him. Germany, Scandinavia, England and America Germanica owe more to Luther's writings and those who believe his teachings than to the writings of all the popes and their followers: Neither the Slavic nor the Romance nations have a Patriot or a Church Father equal to the Teutonic, Protestant Luther.

LUTHER'S WRITINGS AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

More might be said as to the relation of Luther's writings to the teachings of the Bible and to the Teutonic world-culture, but space will not permit. Just a few words on the relation of those writings to the work of the Holy Spirit. "And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh", Acts 2:17. Where and when? In the Reformation. That was a work of the Holy Spirit through the Word. Nowhere in the Reformation do we see the work of the Holy Spirit more than in the writings of the great Gentile prophet of these last days. They were in part translated into all the languages of Europe and have ministered to the Protestant leaders of every nation. Wesley was converted by reading them, they inspired the Moravians in their foreign missions and John Bunyan preferred them to all books except the Bible. New Christian life came to Germany under Francke, to Sweden under Rosenius, to Norway under Hauge and to Denmark under Wilhelm Beck by circulating and reading Luther's teachings. The Holy Ghost testified of Christ in Luther's heart and he also bore witness. Do we not dishonor the Holy Spirit when we do not honor the best christian writings since the Apostles? If those writings were translated, published, sold,

bought, recommended and taught in all languages as in the time of the Reformation, we would see more of the power of the Holy Spirit in converting sinners and edifying saints in the Occident and in the Orient. Many see the work of the Holy Spirit only in their own hearts and lives or in their own congregation and synod, but not in the whole church and in the whole world of to-day or of the past through the testimony of his chosen servants, hence they have little faith and hope for his work in the future. While Luther was not inspired like Isaiah or John, yet he was inspired or semi-inspired and we are apt to give too little rather than too much honor to the Holy Ghost for the heritage of classic Protestant literature from his pen. We honor Luther most when we honor him who honored Luther and whom Luther honored, namely the Holy Spirit. The relation of the work of the Holy Spirit to the central teaching of the Bible and of Luther's writings is an interesting and important theme, as is suggested in the explanation of the third article of the Creed in the small catechism.

A WORD IN BEHALF OF LUTHER TO LUTHERANS.

To the 7,200 pastors, 12,000 churches and 10,000,000 adherents of the Ev. Lutheran Church in the United States, with their 135 colleges and academies and 160 periodicals, this may seem unnecessary. As we profess intelligently and conscientiously to bear the name of this Teuton of the Teutons, the greatest prophet of the West, let us grasp the full meaning in it. Let us not forget the rock whence we were hewn! Is it not time that his writings be given their deserving place? Inspired by what non-Lutherans have done and will do to translate and circulate Luther in English, will we not do our part, for the sake of our pastors, congregations and schools of the future, all of which will be English?

MORE LUTHERISM IN LUTHERANISM AND PROTESTANTISM.

A careful examination of the bibliography of some 3,000 volumes under the word Luther in the catalog of the British museum library raises the question what Englishman did more for England than Luther, as the Scandinavians and Finns say, what Scandinavian has done more for us than the German Reformer? It is a high compliment to Luther, if not to Lutherans, that nearly all those English translations of Luther were made by scholars who were not Lutherans. There is a difference between Lutherism and Lutheranism, as there is between Calvinism and Calvinisticism, if I may coin a word from the adjective of the proper noun. The Germans and Scandinavians are more fortunate in their names; they say, "Lutherthum" and "Lutherdom" or "Lutherismus". It is safer to be disciples of Luther than of any disciple of Luther."

The very word Calvinism suggests at once an appeal direct to the writings of Calvin, while Lutheranism suggests the teachings of disciples of Luther, or of Lutherans. In this respect the Reformed Church honors her founder more than the Lutheran Church does her leader, though her boast is that she does not bear his name.

LUTHER'S WRITINGS THE COMMON HERITAGE OF PROTESTANTISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

The mere fact the restored apostolic church was called after his name by his enemies has unjustly made Luther in the eyes of many a sectarian, narrow personality, when the truth is, no broader or more catholic, apostolic character is found in modern history. He is greater than any denomination or nationality. Lutheranism, Protestantism and Christianity in their future struggles will find next to the Bible their greatest support and defense in the writings of Luther.

LUTHER'S WRITINGS ARE GROWING MORE POPULAR.

One reason Luther's works have not been issued in English is that some have thought and advocated that only a few of his works were worthy of translation. Such persons do not know Luther, or the needs of our own times. Rome, religious fanaticism, and ignorance of the Word of God, should continually hear his voice. The complete editions of Luther appeared in German as follows: 1, "Wittenberg Edition, 1539—1559; 2, Jena, 1555—1558; 3, Altenburg, 1661—1664; 4, Leipsic, 1729—1740; Walch, 1740—1753; 6, Erlangen, 1826—1857; 7, Kaiser or Weimar, since 1883; 8, St. Louis Walch, since 1883. In the 16th century, two editions; in the 17th one; in the 18th two, but in the 19th century three and they the best three. Thus Luther is growing more popular in the best educated nation in the world. He is one prophet who is honored in his own country. When we think what an influence these eight editions have had upon the life and the scholarship of the German people, we realize what the English world has lost by never having even one set of Luther's works complete. Dr. Cole started in 1823 with limited resources to issue several volumes, which were the means of bringing a lady in Scotland to a knowledge of the truth, who furnished the money to issue other volumes, but in the midst of his labor this faithful servant of Christ was called to his reward. If those who are blessed by reading Luther in their vernacular, contributed toward the issuing of other volumes, as this Scotch lady did, we would have all of Luther instead of a little part of him in English, and one complete edition after another would follow as in the German, and this would be an inspiring example to other nations.

LUTHER'S WRITINGS IN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES.

During three annual visits to nearly all of the 156 Lutheran educational institutions in America I learned to know their libraries, and the state of things existing there is no honor to the church nor to the institutions. Only two colleges have library buildings, the Steensland memorial library of St. Olaf, Northfield, Minn., and the Zimmerman memorial library, Wittenberg, Springfield, Ohio. In not one can all the 30 volumes of Luther's works in English be found. Many did not know what volumes had been translated. In a Lutheran college and theological seminary I recently sought in vain for a set of Luther's works in the original, and was told that there was not a set in the whole synod, and the synod numbered over 10,000 communicant members. This suggests the question, should not synods discuss the importance of circulating Luther's writings. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Give heed to reading," 1 Tim. 4:13. But what can the English Lutheran Timothees read of their spiritual father? Why build a machine shop or a work shop without machinery and tools. Let us examine Luther's writings and take to heart what he said on the library. Alas! Protestant schools have forgotten that Luther was the most renowned university professor of his age, and a large proportion of his writings were addressed to students.

Some pastors and laymen who are loud in their public praise of the Lutheran church and of Luther, and sunday school libraries with hundreds of volumes, possess not a single book written by Luther, and very little about him. Truly there is no greater need than more Lutherism in our English Lutheranism. Institutions, schools and congregations, with charter and constitution pledging them to teach and defend the doctrines Luther taught and defended, must be exhorted and urged as Lutherans to purchase Luther's works in the only language they understand, (and then they often will not). Yet they would not change their name and constitution under any consideration. They may think they have found a better way to honor their name and gain the end of their charter. Their libraries are filled with second and third class literature, an abundance of trash and hash, at a great outlay of cash, and yet they do not complain.

THE MAGNETIC ATTRACTION OF GERMANY, WITTENBERG AND LUTHER.

Some advocate we cannot be satisfied with translations and need not go to Germany for scholarship. Even those who are indebted to German scholarship for nearly all they have talk thus. German patriotism has become world-wide, and is growing, and as the

Kingdom of God on the earth is not among angels, or birds or cattle, but among human beings, who have formed different nationalities, we may well honor those nationalities whom God has honored. The Scandinavian countries, whose universities rank next to the German, and all other European Protestants, have been going to Germany for their education and theology ever since the Reformation. This will continue, and as all America is following, it is impossible to turn the current. Where should we Protestants go, except to our own fatherland, the birthplace, the battlefield, the historic center and the classic land of Protestantism? What Jerusalem is to the Jew and Rome is to the Catholic, that the little university village of Wittenberg is to the Protestant in general and to the Lutheran in particular. Let us honor our father and mother, even if they be German, and translate more faithfully the best they have written or may write. The Protestant universities of Germany, founded by Luther, are working out problems that will be a blessing to all mankind, and they promise to be a great defense of Luther's Bible and Luther's writings in the coming battles with Orientalism. Luther's writings will interest us more in the mission of Luther's fatherland in the world.

LUTHER'S WRITINGS AND THE SCANDINAVIAN AMERICANS.

As Luther on the Psalms has never been translated by the Scandinavians, and as their literature on the Psalter, strange to say, is rather meager, I take special pleasure, as an English professor of theology in a Scandinavian seminary, in making this permanent contribution to the exegetical and devotional literature of the Swedish, Norwegian and Danish American Lutherans, who in their native tongues have no access to this fundamental work of "the mightiest post-apostolic master in Israel." As work in the class room was the occasion that Luther's first original publication on the Psalms appeared, so the duties in the seminary last year in teaching the exegesis of the Psalms with the help of Luther and Delitzsch, brought the conviction that agitation must give place to action. Since none of Luther's works are needed more for immediate use in the school and the home than his commentary on the Psalter, it therefore appears first in our series, though I preferred to hold the manuscript for a few improvements. As the most Germans will read Luther in the original, we must look to the Scandinavian and English Lutherans for encouragement. Therefore those volumes that are not accessible to the Scandinavians and Americans will be issued first.

LUTHER'S WRITINGS AND THE ENGLISH LUTHERANS.

Considering their age and strength few of Luther's writings are

found in the homes of English Lutherans. Germans and Scandinavians willingly become Americanized but they justly protest against being Anglicized, either in the Episcopal or Non-Conformist direction. How can pastors and members, synods and schools enthuse over Luther and the Lutheran church and not over Luther's writings? The real Luther can not be separated from his writings, as Moses and Paul can not from theirs. In America the young say our greatest hope is in English, and the old reply thoughtfully, there is also our greatest danger. That danger grows less in proportion as both are dominated by Luther's writings.

WHO CAN DEVELOP AN APPETITE TO READ LUTHER?

Our professors, pastors, sunday school teachers and church members; our congregations, societies, synods, schools and church papers. Will it pay for them to do so? Perhaps not in dollars and cents. But it will pay all concerned in many ways. It is not enough to translate, publish, and sell the books. The great task is to develop the appetite to read them. To recommend Luther's writings to Lutherans is like recommending the Bible to Christians. It is not a question whether Lutheran homes will have books or no books, but will their books be Lutheran or un-Lutheran. The latter will be the inevitable result unless the church bestirs herself. She should first introduce Luther himself into her homes.

LUTHER'S WRITINGS AND FUTURE REFORMERS.

Again, we should circulate Luther's writings because of their vital relation to the future development of Protestantism. The constant danger in Protestantism has always been two false tendencies, the one leading to high church ritualism, ceremonialism and formalism, back to Romanism, and the other leading to irreverent, radical fanaticism and all manner of excesses. There is no better antidote against either than the writings of the Reformer or reformers. To the Romanists they were too radical and to the ultra-reformers too conservative. Therefore the Reformation under Luther was not only a Reformation of Romanism, but it was a sound Reformation of all the Reformations before his day, which contained so many elements of weakness and error that they themselves needed a reformation.

The many reformations in the East and the West since Luther's day foreshadow an endless number of coming reformations, sects and schisms, so that we have occasion to fear these future reformers as much as Romanism, because they do not hold firmly to the central teachings of Moses, Paul and Luther. To the future reformers in the Orient and the Occident we warmly recommend the translation and study of the sacred writings of the greatest Reformer in the Christian Church.

LUTHER'S WRITINGS AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

In the 16th century, European society, being without the teachings of the Bible, was dominated by humanism, a culture derived from the heathen classics of the Latins and Greeks, and unrest reigned everywhere, when as Dr. Schaff says, "The Protestant Reformation assumed the helm of the liberal tendencies and movements of the reawakened life of the century, directed them into the channel of Christian life and saved the world from a disastrous revolution. It was negative and destructive towards error and positive and constructive towards truth. It was conservative and progressive." Our unprecedented material prosperity and the elimination of the Christian element from all popular education seem to threaten America with a like disastrous revolution, and until God raises up a better refuge to which to flee, let us hold firmly to the writings that saved the world from one such disaster. As the Bible is the only book that will solve the social problem of the world, the classic writings of Protestantism deserve careful consideration in the future struggles of humanity.

WHAT WILL THE CIRCULATION OF LUTHER'S WRITINGS ACCOMPLISH?

1st. They will help us to understand our Sacred Book of the East and thus help us to hear the glorious voice of Jehovah's grace. About 80 of the 107 volumes of Luther's works were written to explain and enforce the teachings of Bible passages.

2d. As they are the best sacred writings of the West they prove that the best sacred writings of the Orient and Occident agree, and that they have a common enemy. As the East gave us the Bible, we should gratefully give it back to the East accompanied with the best Protestant defense of its teachings.

3d. They will strengthen the Protestant bulwark against Romanism as no other writings can do.

4th. They will help us to appreciate the rich heritage of our Protestantism, in the Protestant school, family and state.

5th. They will be a valuable contribution to Homiletics, and Exegetics, which to-day need Luther as a corrective.

6th. They will be a check to high church ritualism, ceremonialism, and formalism.

7th. They will teach the excesses of the Non-Conformists that there is a more excellent way.

8th. They will help to unite all the Teutons of the world and teach them their true mission among other nations.

9th. They will fortify us against social disasters and lead us to a sure refuge, if it come as in the Reformation.

PREFACE.

HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT TO TRANSLATE LUTHER INTO ENGLISH.

In 1881—2 while traveling through the European countries to gather the latest material for "Lutherans In All Lands", an opportunity was naturally afforded to study an intimately related subject, "Luther In All Lands". It was found that since the Reformation some of his writings had been translated in all civilized languages, that they were gaining in favor and that no better work could be done than to encourage Lutherans in all lands to do their utmost to have Luther's writings translated into all languages. En route to Egypt and Palestine in 1898—9. I made a second tour through the European countries in order to publish at Leipsic in the Reformer's mother tongue at the opening of the 20th century a new book, illustrating Luther's explanation of the third article of the Apostles' Creed, entitled "Die Lutherische Kirche der Welt". In the midst of this work God gave me the opportunity to examine

LUTHER'S WRITINGS IN THE LARGEST ENGLISH LIBRARY.

In England I became interested in studying the influence of Luther's writings among the Non-Conformists, as we are apt to view the Lutheran movement in England only from the standpoint of the Episcopal Church. While studying Luther in the British Museum Library of London, the best place in the world to study him, I was no less surprised than pleased to have handed me a quarto double column catalog devoted exclusively to the literature of Martin Luther, about 3,000 volumes in different languages. This was a part of the catalog of the British Museum Library. The equal of this Luther literature is not to be found in Germany, Scandinavia or America. There are prospects, however, of it being duplicated in some leading libraries in the United States. At once two of the best theological second-hand book dealers were engaged to purchase all the copies of these rare books possible, and during the last three years quite a collection has been gathered, which will be offered for sale. Brethren in America, who saw some of these works, remarked:—"these books ought to be re-translated and re-issued. You are known to the church as an ecumenical Lutheran and you ought to agitate the matter. It ought to be the work of all synods and nationalities and not of

one or two." As there was nothing I would rather agitate than this, a beginning was made. But the coldness, indifference and discouragements were so many and so great, that my judgment said, it is best to drop the whole matter. However my heart represented this and in the name of God and for the sake of his church, encouraged by a few from every synod and nationality, this volume marks the beginning of a movement, the success of which will largely depend upon the

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and what they do in helping to circulate the edition. From Dr. Henry Cole, the best and most voluminous English translator of Luther, it is in place to quote the following here, "We want, in God's great and righteous cause, in our time, a few wealthy and good Josephs of Arimathea, Matt. 27:57, to supply the poverty of God's poor, James 2:5, and the covetousness of the world's rich, Ps. 119:36." May this quotation help to issue Luther's works in America as it did in England! Often \$25,000 to \$100,000 are raised for a fine church edifice whose influence is confined to a small locality. Why can not at least one like sum be raised to translate, publish and circulate over the English world, Luther's works? Lutheran benevolence can not be directed to a better cause.

OUR TRANSLATIONS OF LUTHER'S WORKS

will be based on the new Kaiser or Weimar critical edition in the original Latin and German, with reference to the Erlangen, the Walch and the St. Louis-Walch editions. About one third of Luther's works were written in Latin and the English translations will be from the original Latin and not from the German translation of the Latin. The aim is to produce a complete, faithful, critical but popular edition, and therefore the best features of the different German editions will be appropriated. The texts and numerous passages of Scripture will be quoted from the American Revised Edition of the Bible of 1901. Instead of giving the variations of the Latin Vulgate text, from which Luther wrote his Latin books, in the original Latin in (—), as in the St. Louis-Walch, a literal English translation of those variations will be given in (—). Special care has been taken to compare the proof texts. The verse and not only the chapter, as in the Erlangen Edition, is given. In this the St. Louis-Walch Edition was very helpful.

THE MECHANICAL MAKE-UP OF THE VOLUMES.

Much attention has been given to the mechanical execution of the volumes, as to size, type, paper and binding, in order to secure all in uniform binding. Seven of the eight editions of Luther in German are in large, bulky quarto and folio volumes. The

volumes in the Erlangen edition are more handy but a little small, therefore we adopted the most popular size of American books. For convenience, practical use and completeness it will compare favorably with any German edition.

THE BEST TRANSLATIONS ARE NOT TOO GOOD.

As we cannot have Luther in English after the idiomatic German style, we will try to give the complete, pure sense of Luther in the best, neatest, most elegant and most readable idiomatic English yet attempted. In order to secure the best results we will first thoroughly revise and reissue a few of the best of the translations by Dr. Henry Cole, as they are out of print and scarcely known in America. Dr. Cole says his design in using the labors of others "was not to avoid trouble; for it was as much labor to transcribe, and to modernize the orthography, etc., as it would have been to retranslate." While Cole's translations are deficient, yet they are the best, and by retranslating some parts, by adding the many portions he omitted and by carefully revising his work, good results will be obtained, though the labor be as great as a new translation. However even some of Cole's works will be retranslated.

BETTER HAVE LUTHER IN "POOR ENGLISH" THAN NOT HAVE HIM AT ALL.

True, it is not easy to translate Luther. However his voice would be heard more in the English world to-day had the difficulties in translating him not been exaggerated, and had not the translations been so severely and unjustly criticized that few have courage to undertake the task. All such should read what Luther wrote to the polished Erasmus, when he said, I am a barbarian and write barbarously, but consider, not how I write, the style, but what I write, the thought. We had better have this thought in poor English than not have it at all. To all who want to know Luther's spirit and teachings, the "poor English" cry will be no barrier. All the translators of Luther did the best they could and we are very grateful for their labors. In our staff of collaborators the aim will be to secure scholars who will not merely transvert words from one language into another, but will trans-convey the mind and trans-fuse the spirit of Luther into classic English. Here it is not only necessary to know the languages perfectly from which and into which you translate, but the translator of the Reformer must possess his faith and spirit, his religion and worship. We want Luther and not the translator in English.

**ENGLISH SHOULD BE THE FIRST LANGUAGE TO
TRANSLATE LUTHER'S COMPLETE WORKS.**

While eight editions of all of Luther's works have appeared in German, they have never been issued complete except in German. More, however, has been translated into English than into Scandinavian or any other language, which is due to the high appreciation of Luther in the British empire. As this appreciation is growing in England and America, and as Calvin has been translated into English in 52 volumes, why should not the English people be the first to complete a translation of all the volumes of the greatest Reformer? The late German editions are sold at high prices, but not too high, considering the work and money invested, and the discounts are consequently low. Hence in this respect the **first** edition in English can not do differently. To advance subscribers, however, liberal terms will be made according to the number of copies ordered, afterwards the discounts must be small unless new editions are called for. The volumes will cost from \$1.50 to \$2.50 each retail, neatly printed on good paper and well bound, sent direct from the bindery to the advance subscribers, upon receipt of the price when notified the volumes are ready for delivery.

TOPICAL AND TEXTUAL INDEX OF LUTHER'S WRITINGS IN ENGLIS.

Many years may be required to complete the work and to the impatient critic it may be said, the volumes will improve as the work progresses. Therefore we will be thankful for any criticisms or suggestions mailed to us direct. At present we are in position to furnish to public and private libraries twenty five volumes of Luther's works in English, though not all new and of uniform binding. It is all important to issue a good topical and textual index to Luther in English, so that not only preachers, but everybody may readily find what Luther said on any subject or any passage of scripture. It may not be a Luther concordance but it will be made as helpful to scholars as possible, like the index of the Erlanger Edition.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION TO THE PSALMS

The Name. In Hebrew there is no general name for the Psalms. Names of parts were applied to the whole. Thus Tephilloth, prayer-songs or prayers from Psalm 72:20; Tehillim, praise-songs, as the element of divine praise pervades all the Psalms; Shir, song, denotes the joyful song of praise; Mizmor, applied to 65 Psalms, means "to adorn to the Lord". The word Psalm is from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, from "psallein", to touch or strike a cord, to play, not to sing, except among those who took its usage from the Septuagint. Stringed music is the natural accompaniment of such poetry as proceeds from an immediate gush of feeling.

The Contents. 1st. Here we are throughout on the territory of feeling and on strictly religious territory. 2nd. All the Psalms are Songs of Israel, appointed to be used in the services of the sanctuary. 3rd. They are such songs as had been composed under the special co-operation of the Holy Spirit. They do not present any new doctrine, they rest upon the Pentateuch, the historic Word of God, and are "the heart's echo to the spoken Word of God." Their value consists in that they give us an insight into the heart of the Old Testament saints and into the hidden wonders of the true religion. Their buoyancy and freshness, their simplicity, their consoling and elevating character, from Moses to Nehemiah, and the fact that they compose a part of the Word of God, give them a distinction above our church songs.

Their Threecfold Division. 1st. Psalms that proceed from a spirit chiefly moved and actuated by joy, in lively admiration of God and in gratitude for his goodness. 2nd. Psalms that proceed from a depressed and mournful frame of mind, variations of the "Lord, have mercy on us," which alternates with the hallelujah in the lives of the saints. 3rd. Psalms that proceed from a more quiet reflective state of mind, religious, moral or didactic Psalms, designed to instruct.

The History of Psalmody Poetry. The fact that more than one half of the Scriptures of the Old Testament are poetical in their form makes the Old Testament a book of poems. Since poetry and music are as old as the race, the Bible gives us the oldest samples, some even before the flood, as follows: Gen. 4:23-24; 9:25-27; 27:27-29; 49:1-27; Ex. 15:1-18; Num. 6:22-26; 10:35-36; 21:14-15, 17-18 and 27-30; Num. 23 and 24 chs.; Deut. 32 and 33 chs.; Josh. 10:13; Judges 5 ch.; 1 Sam. 2 ch. Hence Hebrew poetry was born with the nation in the age of Moses. No book of the Bible is more rooted in the Pentateuch than the Psalms. Samuel laid the foundation for the prosperity of Psalmody poetry by his religious revival and reformation, and especially by his schools of the prophets. David's talents were called forth by his cross or persecution and by his ascension to the throne, when he assigned poetry a prominent place in the worship of the sanctuary, and he is considered the author of 80 Psalms.

The Book of Psalms is composed of the following five books: Ps. 1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150; which are the copy and the echo of the five books of the law or the Thora. Each of the first four books concludes with a doxology, and the place of the fifth doxology is Ps. 150. The composition of the Psalter extends over 1,000 years of the national life, and runs parallel with the Scriptures from the Pentateuch to Malachi. It was the Hymn Book of the Hebrew Church, and like the Pentateuch it was used in divine worship.

The Poetic Structure of the Psalms. If we expect to find our ideas of rhyme and meter in early Hebrew poetry we will be disappointed. The versification of the poetry of all other nations is *verbal*, that of the Hebrews *real*. In our poetry the versification depends on the *words* and *sound* instead of *simply on the thought*. In the Hebrew poetry all this is reversed. The pause in the progress of the thought determines the point at which the verse or line must end. Hence Hebrew poetry can easily be translated verse for verse and line for line. The relation is in the *sense*, not in the sound. It is a relation not

of words but of things, called by Lowth parallelism. There are (1) synonymous, (2) antithetic, and (3) synthetic or constructive parallelisms. See Henstenberg and Delitzsch.

I can do no better than add a few testimonials from leading scholars in the Church as to the value of the Psalter.

"What the heart is in man, that the Psalter is in the Bible." John Arndt, who explained the Psalms in 450 sermons.

"The Psalter is the first hymn-book of the Church and will outlive all other hymn-books. It is still the Common Prayer and Hymn-Book of the Christian Church, as it was that of the Jewish Church." Phillip Schaff.

"Not only was it used more than any other part of the Old Testament, by the writers of the New, but it is, in a special sense, the peculiar inheritance of the Christian Church through all its different branches"; and "if we descend from churches to individuals, there is no book which has played so large a part in the history of so many human souls." Stanley.

"In consequence of the Reformation the rose garden of the Psalter also began to diffuse its odours as in the renewed freshness of a May morning, and German hymns, born again out of the Psalter, resounded from the shores of the Baltic to the foot of the Alps, with all the fervor of a renewed first love. Rendered into imperishable hymns, the old Psalms passed once more into the congregational singing of the German as well as of the Scandinavian Lutheran Church." Delitzsch, the motive of whose life was to make the Old Testament better known to the Christians and the New Testament to the Jews.

"In Luther, who began his academical lectures in 1513 with the Psalms, there is combined the experimental depth of the Fathers with the Pauline recognition of the doctrine of free grace, the knowledge of which was restored by means of him to the Church. In respect to experimental, mystical, and yet healthy knowledge of the meaning of Scripture, he is incomparable. His exposition of the Psalms, especially of the penitential Psalms and of Psalm 90, are superior to all previous

works on the subject, and will always remain a mine of wealth for future laborers." Delitzsch.

"Melanchton in his preface to certain expositions addressed to students says: Luther's services in this province (the Psalms) will be appreciated by all who will diligently compare them with the ancient expositions, and especially with the best ones. It is for you especially (students) to recognize Luther's fidelity and industry, and to make it your endeavor to bring to the reading of these expositions a pure heart, and to repress human opinions and prejudices — in brief that you read the writings of Christ under the guidance of Christ.

"Where can a pastor find a treasure comparable to these volumes of Luther in the elucidation of the Divine Psalter?" Dr. E. J. Wolf.

Luther began his university career by giving lectures on the writings of David and Paul, the pillars of his theology. As early as 1513 his exposition of the seven Penitential Psalms was published in Latin. His first original work in German, which appeared in March or April of 1517, was an exposition of the same Psalms. In 1516 he wrote a preface to his first issue of that remarkable book, German Theology. Thus it is clear that Luther's labors started in leading sinners to Christ rather than in opposing the Pope. A full knowledge of his early study in the Psalms gives us a new and a more correct view of Luther's life, which in many respects resembled David's. That study was a fit introduction to the reformatory Theses, which enjoin true evangelical repentance. Luther himself wrote, "there is no book of the whole Bible, in which I have been so much exercised as in the Psalms." The above is the best recommendation of his commentary on the Psalms.

In closing I wish to make grateful acknowledgement of valuable assistance received from E. F. Bartholomew, D. D., English Professor in the Swedish Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill.

J. N. LENKER.

Sunbury, Pa., Sept. 9, 1902.

LUTHER'S PREFACES.

Preface to the Revised Edition of the German Psalter, A.D. 1531.

The Psalter has been lauded and loved by many holy fathers above the other books of the Scripture; and, indeed, the work itself doth sufficiently praise its author. Nevertheless, we also must utter our praise and thanks for it.

In past years there was handed about almost nothing but a multitude of legends of saints, passionals, lives of saints; and the world was so filled with them, that the Psalter lay under the seat, and in such great darkness, that not one psalm was rightly understood; nevertheless, it shed abroad such an excellent precious fragrance that all pious hearts drew devotion and power even from the unknown words; and the book was therefore dear to them.

For my part, I think that a finer book of lives and legends of the saints has never appeared in the earth, nor ever can appear, than the Psalter. For if one were to desire that out of all the lives, legends, and histories, the best were picked out and brought together and set forth to the best advantage; why, the book thus produced would be just the Psalter we now have. For here we find, not what one or two saints only have done, but what the Head himself of all the saints has done, and what all the saints still do: how they are affected towards God, towards friends, and towards foes; how they bear themselves and act in every sort of peril and tribulation: — and all this, besides the divine wholesome doctrines and precepts of all sorts to be found in it.

Yea, the Psalter ought to be precious and dear, were it for nothing else but the clear promise it holds forth respecting Christ's death and resurrection, and its prefiguration of his kingdom and of the whole estate and system of Christianity; insomuch that it might well be entitled a Little Bible, wherein

everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended, and compacted into a fine *enchoridion* or Hand Manual. It seems to me as if the Holy Ghost had been pleased to take on himself the trouble of putting together a short Bible, or book of exemplars, touching the whole of Christianity or all the saints; in order that they who are unable to read the whole Bible, may nevertheless find here almost the whole sum comprehended in one little book.

But above all, there is this excellent quality and virtue in the Psalter, that whereas other books prate much about the deeds of the saints but say very little about their words, the Psalter is the very paragon of books, yielding a most sweet fragrance to the reader; since it relates not only the deeds of the saints (or as editions render it: what Christ and all the saints have done), but also their words — how they spake and prayed to God, and do yet speak and pray: insomuch that the other legends and lives, in comparison with it, hold forth to us mere dumb saints, whereas the Psalter sets before us right valiant, living saints.

And verily a dumb man, when you compare him with one who speaks, is no better than a man half dead. Of all that a man does, there is nothing more potent or more excellent than speech; since it is by the faculty of speech that man is chiefly differenced from other animals, rather than by his form or his other works. For indeed a block can, by the graver's art, receive the form of a man; and a beast can see, hear, smell, sing, walk, stand, eat, drink, fast, thirst and suffer hunger, frost and a hard bed every whit as well as a man.

Moreover, it is not the poor every-day words of the saints that the Psalter expresses, but their very best words, spoken by them, in deepest earnestness, to God himself, in matters of utmost moment. Thus it lays open to us not only what they say about their works, but their very heart and the inmost treasure of their souls; so that we can spy the bottom and spring of their words and works, — that is to say, their

heart, — what manner of thoughts they had, how their heart did bear itself, in every sort of business, peril, and extremity. This is what neither is done nor can be done by the legends and lives of the saints, which boast of nothing but their works and miracles. For I cannot know how a man's heart is affected, although I should see or hear tell of ever so many excellent works he has done.

And as I had much rather hear a saint speak than behold his works; even so would I yet much rather spy his heart and the treasure in his soul, than hear his words. And this the Psalter enables us to do most plentifully with respect to all the saints; so that we can be certain as to how their hearts were affected, and what was the tenor of their words, both towards God and man.

For a human heart is like a ship on a wild sea tossed by the four winds of heaven. Here it is smitten with anxiety and the dread of future destruction; there it is driven with dismay and sadness by reason of present evils. Now, there is a soft breath of hope and presumption of future welfare; again, there is a breeze of security and gladness in present possessions.

Now winds like these make a man earnest in his words, make him open his heart and utter its secrets. For one who is shut up in fear and necessity will discourse of calamity very differently than one who swims in gladness; and one who swims in gladness will discourse and sing of gladness very differently than one who is shut up in fear. It does not come from the heart, as the saying is, when a mourner laughs and a frolicker weeps; that is, the bottom of his heart is not uncovered nor utters itself at all.

What is the Psalter, for the most part, but such earnest discourse in all manner of such winds? Where are finer words of gladness than in the Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving? There thou lookest into the hearts of all the saints as into fair and pleasant gardens, yea, as into the heavens, and seest

what fine, hearty, pleasant flowers spring up therein, in all manner of fair gladsome thoughts of God and his benefits. And again, where wilt thou find deeper, more plaintive, more sorrowful words of grief than in the Psalms of Complaint? There thou lookest again into the hearts of all the saints, as into death, yea, as into hell. How they are filled with darkness and gloom by reason of the wrath of God! So also, when they discourse of fear and hope, they use such words, that no painter could so pourtray, nor any Cicero or orator could so express the fear or hope.

And, as I said, the best of all is, that these words of theirs are spoken before God and unto God; which puts double earnestness and life into the words. For words that are spoken only before men in such matters, do not come so mightily from the heart; are not such burning, living, piercing words. Hence also it comes to pass that the Psalter is the Book of all the Saints; and every one, whatsoever his case may be, finds therein psalms and words which suit his case so perfectly, that they might seem to have been set down solely for his sake; in such sort that anything better he can neither make for himself, nor discover, nor desire. One good effect of which, moreover, is that if a man take pleasure in the words here set forth and find them suit his case, he is assured he is in the communion of the saints, and that all the saints fared just as he fares, for they and he sing all one song together: particularly, if he can utter them before God even as they did; which must be done in faith, for an ungodly man relishes them not.

Finally, in the Psalter we find such safety and such well-assured guidance, that in it we can without danger follow all the saints. For other exemplars and legends of dumb saints bring forward works which it is impossible to imitate; and many more works do they bring forward which it would be dangerous to imitate, and which commonly engender sects and parties, seducing and withdrawing men from the communion

of the saints. But the Psalter protecteth thee from parties and keepeth thee in the communion of the saints: for it teacheth thee how thou mayest, in gladness, and fear, and hope, and sorrow, cherish the same temper and speak the same words, as all the saints have cherished and spoken.

To sum up; wouldest thou see the Holy Christian Church portrayed in living form and color, as it were in miniature? Open the Psalter. Thus thou shalt have before thee a fine, bright, spotless mirror, that will shew thee what kind of thing Christianity is. Yea, thou shalt therein find thine own self, and the right "know thyself"; God himself also and all his creatures.

Let us, therefore, take heed also to thank God for such unspeakable benefits, and to receive, use and discipline ourselves in them, to the praise and honour of God, in order that we bring not upon ourselves wrath by our unthankfulness. For, formerly, in the time of darkness, what a treasure it had been esteemed if men had been able rightly to understand one psalm, and to read or hear it in plain German; and yet they were not able. Blessed now are the eyes which see the things that we see, and the ears which hear the things that we hear! And yet take heed, — alas we already see, that we are like the Jews in the wilderness, who said of the manna, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." It behooves us to mark what is written in the same place, how they were plagued and died; in order that the same may not befall us.

To this end, may the Father of all grace and mercy help us through Jesus Christ, our Lord: to whom be blessing and thanks, honour and praise, for this German Psalter, and for all his innumerable, inexpressible gifts, for evermore; Amen, Amen!

*Preface to the Edition of the Psalter published at Neuburg
on the Danube in 1545.*

Every Christian who would abound in prayer and piety ought, in all reason, to make the Psalter his manual; and, moreover, it were well if every Christian so used it and were so expert in it as to have it word for word by heart, and could have it even in his heart as often as he chanced to be called to speak or act, that he might be able to draw forth or employ some sentence out of it by way of a proverb. For indeed the truth is, that everything that a pious heart can desire to ask in prayer, it finds here psalms and words to match so aptly and sweetly, that no man — no, nor all the men in the world — shall be able to devise forms of words so good and devout. Moreover, the Psalter doth minister such instruction and comfort in the act of supplication; and the Lord's Prayer, that the one helpeth us finely to understand the other, and the two together make a pleasant harmony.

Not only, therefore, ought the books of devotion formerly in use to be forbidden and done away with, being little else than unchristian lies and abuses, and that even in their best parts, wherein our Lord's Passion is indeed introduced, not however for the edification of faith, but only to be shamefully abused for temporal gain, but care ought to be taken that no new prayers break in again. For already it looks as if everybody were beginning to compose Prayers, and Paraphrases of the Psalter, according to his own devotional feeling, and were seeking thus to have his work famous and in general use in the Church and amongst the Christian people; just as if the Psalter and the Lord's Prayer had been some wretched trifling thing. If care be not taken to keep within measure, the Psalter and Lord's Prayer will come to be despised as before. I admit that some of these new compositions are good; but it is to be presumed that the Psalter and Lord's Prayer are better, yea, the best. One who hath learned to

pray them aright, hath learned to pray well, far above all prayers, especially since the Psalter has now, by God's grace, been rendered into intelligible German.

I have heard the story of a godly person to whom the Lord's Prayer was so dear that he would ever pray it with tears in his eyes, for deep devotion. A well meaning bishop, thinking to improve the man's devotion, took from him the Lord's Prayer, and gave him a multitude of other good pious prayers; but thereupon he lost all devotion, and was fain to let those pious prayers go their ways and resume the Lord's Prayer. In my opinion, any man who will but make a trial in earnest of the Psalter and the Lord's Prayer, will very soon bid the other pious prayers adieu, and say, Ah, they have not the sap, the strenght, the heart, the fire, that I find in the Psalter; they are too cold, too hard, for my taste!

Our Blessed Lord, who hath given us the Psalter and Lord's Prayer and taught us to use them in prayer, grant us also the Spirit of prayer and of grace, that with gladness and earnest faith we may pray mightily and without ceasing; for it is necessary for us to do this. So hath he commanded, and so will He have it at our hands. To Him be praise, honour, and thanks, for ever. Amen!

LUTHER'S DEDICATION TO THE ELECTOR OF SAXONY.

JESUS.

Martin Luther, to the most illustrious Prince and Lord, Frederic, Archmarshal of the Holy Roman Empire, Elector, Duke of Saxony, Marquis of Meissen, Landgrave of Thuringia, his most gracious Patron, sendeth greeting.

Prudently and rightly do they act who dedicate and inscribe their studies and monuments of genius to illustrious persons; because in this way they procure for their works both authority and protection against those aims of malignity which are sure to be levelled at them: for such is the state of human affairs, that the more excellent things are, the more they are exposed to envy and to the shafts of the malevolent. Whence it comes to pass, that laudable literature and all the productions of genius and erudition, which are without doubt some of the best things, and things worthy the particular and serious attention of man, stand not a little in need of their Mecænas, their Augustus, and also of their Ulysses, who may strike their Thysrites with his ivory sceptre. Some also procure the sanction of the names of illustrious persons, that they may thereby immortalize those names, and hand down to the records of fame the individuals to whom they make their dedication, with the view that posterity may be led to love their virtues, and that many may be animated by the examples thus held before them in such praises.

Others again do it from the motive to express thereby their thanks, and thus in some degree make a return for benefits received, and leave behind them a testimony of their gratitude to those by whom they have been treated with kindness,

But, most illustrious Prince, neither of these motives answers my design. For, in the first place, I am aware that none of the productions which proceed from me deserve a patron; and so far, it is fortunate that I know my deficiency. Even if I could produce that which should be worthy of the sanction of a patron's name, yet I should by no means be anxious to put it under a patron's protection. Nay, as soon as I learned from the Holy Scriptures how terror-filled and perilous a matter it was to preach publicly in the church of God, and to speak in the midst of those whom you know will in the last day be your judges, for the present false accusers I fear not thus, and indeed in the presence of God, the beholder of all things, in the sight of angels, and in the sight and hearing of all creatures who incline their ears to the word of God (for it is right to believe that all things honor the word of God by which they were created, except man and satan, who have become deaf through ingratitude). For indeed I had no greater desire than that I might remain silent, yea that a sponge might erase all that I had in my poor foolish way published abroad. For it is a momentous and awe inspiring matter to render an account unto God for every idle word. Nor does he now keep me in the ministry of the Word, but by an overruled obedience to a will above my own, that is, his divine will; for, as to my own will, it always shrunk from this ministry, nor is it fully reconciled unto it to this hour.

In the next place, what fame, what praise, what immortalizing of a name, can your most illustrious Highness hope from me? being yourself a Prince, who not only by all those other endowments that exalt a Prince, but also by a distinguished love of learning and learned men, have procured to yourself that name and glory, that, instead of wanting an Appion to immortalize your name, you yourself immortalize the name of an Appion, and of all who attempt to give you celebrity? Who is there that knows not that Prince Frederic has given

an example to all princes, by his patronage and promotion of literature? Your Wittenberg now devotes itself to the Greek and the Hebrew with very good results. The arts are taught with greater success than ever. The true theology of Christ now triumphs over the vain imaginations and disputationes of men, which have no scope for thought or research. All these things flourish under your auspices, at your expense, and under your protection. Oh, that the dignitaries, who ought themselves to be the foremost in showing forth examples in these things for the princes of the laity to imitate, would but imitate the examples that the laity thus shows them! But, such is the unhappily fallen state of the ecclesiastical power and opulence!

Again, why should I attempt to render you gratitude for the abundant kindness you have heaped upon me, when you have thrown them upon one who never deserved them. At your expense has honor, (the doctorate hat) been placed on my head, which forces me into public life, of which I am ashamed; yet I must wear it, as it is desired by those I am indebted to obey. What cares, attentions, expenses, and indeed, perils, did that monstrous production of mine cost your gracious Highness which owed its birth to the indulgences! Your whole dominion knows that my prince showed a much greater concern for me, than I did for myself. In my usual daring way I cast the die, being always ready to attempt and to expect extremities; for I hoped, upon that occasion, that, if I should be removed from teaching others, I shouold find some corner of the world into which I might retire, after I had left public life, to which I was always averse. But the persevering endeavors of your gracious Highness prevailed, and when I was willing to suffer those things which my enemies longed to inflict upon me, neither they nor I had our will.

But still, I am glad that such was the issue of matters, if it were only on this account, that there is not a Christian

that ought not to feel a serious grief and concern, that the impudence of a certain set of fellows proceeds to such a pitch of audacity in the church of Christ, that they presume to ensure themselves success in their filthy purposes and lusts under cover of the venerable name and authority of the church. The more kind, good, and learned the Pope happens to be, the greater enormities these monsters promise to themselves, by effecting them under the cloak of his authority. For, with what numberless and manifest lies did they profane and defile the sacred name of Leo X. in this one little point, the indulgences, in order to terrify the conscience of one poor brother, and to establish their own horrible tyrannies? Though it is not a thing so much to be wondered at, that there should be found such characters to prostitute the name of the high Pope, and to abuse it; for the patriarchs of such fellows, that is, the false prophets, false apostles, and false christians, did the same; who made the holy name of God and of Christ to serve their lies. Of the holy name of that God and Lord, I say, even our Lord Jesus Christ; whose are all those things which we admire in you, most illustrious Prince; and may he acknowledge, increase, and preserve the same to all eternity. This prayer I offer up, which is all I can do, as a return for the favours I have received at your hands.

Hence, the reason why I wished to send forth these productions, such as they are, for productions they certainly are, though I cannot find confidence enough to call them interpretations or commentaries, from a consciousness of my poor ability betrayed in them, under the sanction of the name of your most illustrious Highness, was none other, than because I greatly love you. For I am fully persuaded of the pure and chaste love which your heart hath for the Holy Scriptures: and my heart, to use the words of Deborah, "is toward" such Princes. Judges 5:9.

And why should I not here declare in full my thoughts concerning you, and the cause of this my love for you, that

those who boast themselves in the holy Scriptures may see how far a hypocrite differs from a true theologian? My very good and reverend father in Christ, John Staupitz, told me upon a certain occasion, that once while he was staying with your Highness the conversation turned upon those who preach publicly to the people; and that, according to the wonderful penetration of your judgment, you said, ‘Those sermons which are made up of the cunning and traditions of men, are but frigid things, and too weak and ineffectual to persuade us to our best interests; for nothing of that kind can be brought forth so acute, that may not be subverted and rooted up by the same cunning. But the Holy Scriptures carry with them a holy oneness, which sounds in our ears with such force and majesty, even without any exertion of ours, that, leading captive and cutting up all the schemes of human cunning, it urges and compels us to acknowledge “Never man spake like this man.” This is “the finger of God,” for “he teaches as one having authority, and not as the scribes and pharisees.” When Staupitz willingly coincided and expressed his commendation of these sentiments, he told me that you put forth your hand and demanded his and said, ‘Promise me, I pray thee, that thou wilt always think so.’

And were not this sentiment and this request such as would become even a most holy and high Pope? and the more so, as it may be clearly perceived, that they were not only expressed in word, but accompanied with a feeling of heart? Can we not, then, clearly discern who are the true theologians? Let shame, therefore, seize those theologians and lawyers especially, to whom the Holy Scriptures have become almost an object of ridicule, and who, tacking to them their infinite glosses, pestilently torment those, as Jerome says, who, in every thing they say, wish to appeal to the Word of God. As if Christ had said to Peter, ‘command,’ or ‘lay injunctions on,’ ‘teach,’ and not rather, “feed,” my sheep; that is, deliver to them that which will feed them. Such are fed by the Word

of God only, and not by the opinions and traditions of men. And moreover, that nothing so acute can be brought forward, as you justly observed, which may not be rebutted by the same human cunning, is abundantly shown us in that miserable workhouse, in which the disciples of Scotus, Thomas, Albertus, Modernus, and all others who have their peculiar followers, squander away their time.

I confess, most illustrious Prince, that by this sweet account of you which I heard, I was wholly captivated, and constrained to love you. For I know not how it is, but I cannot help loving all whom I hear to be lovers of the holy Scriptures, and, on the other hand, hating those who are obstinate and despise them; so that, in each respect, from the force of my feelings, I am filled with vehemence, and, as certain of my good friends say of me, am severe and vain-glorious. But let them criminate me as they will: they may give me epithets both good and bad, of the first, second or third kind, and impose them upon me, but they will never take away from me the grand essentials of theology, nor extinguish my love of them if Christ but continue to smile upon me. I know what scholastic theology did for me, I know also how much I owe to it, and I am glad that I am delivered from it, and give thanks for my deliverance to Christ the Lord. I have no need that they should teach me what it is, for I know what it is already; nor is it of any service for them to endeavor to reconcile me unto it, for I will have nothing to do with it.

Bear, therefore, most illustrious Prince, with my desire to send forth this little work into the world with the name of your Highness affixed to it, and consider it as a token of my love. I now for the second time undertake the Exposition of the Psalms in your Witteberg, being requested and urged to do so by my hearers, who are some of the best men, and to whom I cannot deny that I am a debtor. But I so profess to undertake them, as being quite unwilling that any one should presume to expect that from me, which no one of

the most holy and most learned of the fathers could ever yet pretend to, — that I should understand and teach the Psalms in all respects according to their real sense and meaning. It is enough that some men understand some parts of them. The Holy Spirit always reserves much to himself in order that he may keep us learners under him. Many things he only holds out in order to allure us on; and many things he delivers to us that they may work effectually in us. And, as Augustine has truthfully remarked, ‘No man ever yet so spoke as to be understood by all in all things;’ which leaves that great truth the more manifest, that it is the Holy Ghost alone who has the understanding of all his own words.

Wherefore, it becomes me candidly to confess, that I know not whether or not mine is, to a certainty, the true meaning of the Psalms, though I nevertheless hold no doubt, that what I have delivered is truth. For what Augustine, Jerome, Athanasius, Hilary, Cassiodorus, and others, have said upon the Psalms, is truth, though it is sometimes very far indeed from the literal meaning. And thus, this second exposition which I have undertaken, is very different from my first. And indeed there is no book in the whole Bible in which I have been so much exercised as in the Psalms: till at last I came to this opinion, that no man’s interpretation, provided it be a godly one, should be rejected, unless he that rejects it submit himself to the same law of retaliation. One man may fall short in many things, and another in more. I may see many things which Augustine did not see. And I am persuaded that others will see many things which I do not see now.

What course then remains for us to pursue, but that we mutually assist each other, and pardon those who fail, knowing that we are liable to fail ourselves? For let us not by any means follow the example of that most detestable and most vile race of men, who, though they cannot themselves perform one single thing that deserves not to be exposed, yet, when they find the least imperfection of a hair’s or straw’s value

in the productions of another, immediately consider themselves worthy of being rewarded with all the triumphs of Pompey. I know it to be the most impudent height of temerity for any one boldly to profess, that he understands any one book of the Scriptures fully in all its parts. Nay, who will presume to maintain that he understands fully and perfectly any one single Psalm? Our life is only a beginning and a going on, and not a consummation. He rises the highest, who comes the nearest to the Holy Spirit. If I can touch the moon I am not immediately to imagine that I have touched the sun also; nor am I to look with disdain upon the lesser stars. There are degrees in living and acting, and why not in understanding also? 2 Cor. 3:18. The apostle says that we are "changed from glory to glory." And, to open my design plainly, I write only for the service of those, who know not these things, but wish to know them: and therefore, it will be at least a satisfaction to me to reflect that I have hereby engaged myself and my hearers in a better employment of mind, than if I had been adding new clouds of darkness, and fresh toads and flies of corruption, to the books of human opinions.

This book of Psalms is, in my opinion, of a different nature from all the other books. For in the other books we are taught what we ought to do, both by precept and example. But this book not only teaches us, but shows us in what way and manner we may do the Word and imitate the examples it contains. For it is not in our power or strength to fulfill the law of God, or to imitate Christ: all we can do, is to desire and pray that we might be able to do the Word, and imitate Christ's example; and, when we have gained some power so to do, to praise, and give thanks unto God. What else then is the Psalter but praying to, and praising God? that is, a book of hymns?

Therefore, the most gracious and blessed Spirit of God, the Father of his humble scholars, and the teacher of infants, well knowing that "we know not how to pray as we ought," as Paul saith in Rom. 8:26, in order to help our infirmities,

like schoolmasters who compose letters or subjects for their pupils to write home to their parents, has prepared for us in this book words and sentiments with which we may converse with our heavenly Father, and pray unto him concerning those things which he has taught us in the other books are to be done and imitated; that man may not want any thing that is necessary unto his eternal salvation. So great are the care of God over us and his kindness to us! Who is blessed for ever. And in him may your most gracious Highness live and prosper now and for evermore! Amen!

Wittenberg, March 27, 1519.

COMMENTARY.
ON THE
FIRST TWENTY-TWO PSALMS.

PSALM I.

V. 1. *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked (ungodly) nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers (pestilence).*

There is a common inquiry among men concerning blessedness: and there is no one who does not wish that it may be well with him, and does not dread the thought that it should be ill with him. And yet all who have ever thus inquired have wandered from the knowledge of true blessedness and *they* have wandered the most widely who have inquired with the greatest diligence, such as the philosophers, the greatest of whom have placed true blessedness in virtue, or in the works of virtue; whereby, having rendered themselves more unhappy than the rest, they have deprived themselves of the blessings both of this life and of that which is to come. Whereas, the common people, though their ideas were the more grossly mad, by making blessedness to consist in carnal pleasure, enjoyed at least the good of this life.

This teacher, however, deriving his doctrine from heaven, and detesting all the devoted endeavors of men, gives this only true definition of blessedness which is wholly unknown to men — that he is the “blessed” man who loves the law of God. It is, indeed, a short definition, but it contains a savour that is contrary to all human ideas, and especially to human wis-

dom. First of all let us consider the grammatical signification of this passage, with respect to the Theology contained in it.

In the Hebrew, the word “blessed” is a plural noun, ASHRE, *blessednesses* — that is, all blessedness are the portion of that man who has not gone away, etc. As though it were said, ‘all things are well with that man who, etc. Why do you hold any dispute? Why draw vain conclusions? If a man has found that pearl of great price, to love the law of God and to separate from the ungodly, all blessednesses belong to that man, but if he has not found this jewel, he will seek for all blessednesses, but will never find one. For as all things are pure unto the pure, so all things are lovely unto the loving, all things good unto the good; and, universally, such as thou art thyself, such is God himself unto thee, though he is not a creature. He is perverse unto the perverse, and holy unto the holy. Hence nothing can be good or saving unto him who is evil; nothing sweet unto him to whom the law of God is not sweet.

It is well known that “to walk,” and ‘to go,’ in the scripture mode of expression are used figuratively, and are of the same signification, as to have life and conversation. As in Ps. 15:2, “He that walketh uprightly.” And Ps. 101:6, “He that walketh in a perfect way he shall serve me.” And again, Rom. 8:1, “There is no condemnation to them who walk not after the flesh.”

The word “counsel” is without doubt here to be received as signifying decrees and doctrines, seeing that, no society of men exists without being formed and preserved by decrees and laws. David, however, by this term strikes at the pride and reprobate temerity of the ungodly. First, because they will not humble themselves so as to walk in the law of the Lord, but rule themselves by their own counsel. And then, he calls it their “counsel,” because it is their prudence, and the way that seems to them to be without error. For this is the de-

struction of the ungodly — their being prudent in their own eyes and in their own esteem, and clothing their errors in the garb of prudence and of the right way. For, if they came to men in the open garb of error, it would not be so distinguishing a mark of blessedness not to walk with them. But David does not here say ‘in the folly of the ungodly’ or ‘in the error of the ungodly.’ And, therefore, he admonishes us to guard with all diligence against the appearance of what is right, that the devil transformed into an angel of light may not seduce us by his craftiness. And he contrasts the counsel of the wicked with the law of the Lord, that we may learn to beware of wolves in sheep’s clothing; who are always ready to give counsel to all, to teach all, and to offer assistance unto all, when they are of all men the least qualified so to do.

The “ungodly” man, who in the Hebrew is called RASCHA, is by Hilary most rightly defined to be ‘he who thinks evilly concerning God.’ For ungodliness is properly the sin of unbelief, and is committed in the heart. But the term has been variously translated, and differently at different times. Do thou, therefore, always understand these two to be contrary the one to the other, — faith in God and ungodliness; as also, the law of God and the counsel of men. For when we speak of godliness and ungodliness, we do not speak of actions but of thoughts, that is, of the fountain-spring of actions. Because he who is rightly taught concerning God, cannot but do what is right, and lead a good life. For, if the just man fall even seven times a day, he shall rise again; but the ungodly rush wholly into evil and do not rise again. These, because they are in a state of unbelief, do not a single good work, though every thing that they do may have a fair appearance, being that shade that covers behemoth, Job 40:22, whereby they deceive themselves and draw in the simple. Hence, he is godly who lives by faith, and he who lives in unbelief is ungodly.

Who “sinners” are we may plainly see, for this is the out-

ward man of the ungodly; but the counsel and the ungodly man that are hidden in the heart we see not. Here therefore, David is speaking of those works, actions, and ways which appear outwardly; and this he calls the “way,” because now, the inward counsel is supposed to have come forth into habit and practice, as they say, and because the ungodly here commit outwardly the evil which they imagined inwardly. But this “way,” as I have observed, is for the most part of a better outward show than that even of the godly. For, as to those grosser sinners, any one might easily beware of them without this admonition, or at least, might know them.

The term “stood” describes their obstinacy, stiff-neckedness, wherein they harden themselves and make their excuses in words of malice, having become incorrigible in their ungodliness, which they consider to be godliness. For, ‘to stand,’ in the figurative manner of scripture expression, signifies to be firm and fixed, as in Rom. 14:4. “To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand.” Hence, the word ‘column’ is by the Hebrews derived from their verb to stand, as is the word ‘statue’ among the Latins. For this is the very self-excuse and self-hardening of the ungodly — their appearing to themselves to live rightly and to shine in the external show of works above all others.

With respect to the term “seat,” — to sit in the seat means to teach, to act the part of an instructor and teacher, as in Matt. 23:2. “The scribes sit in Moses’ chair.” So, to sit on a throne is to reign or act as king as we frequently find it expressed in the Books of Kings. So also, to sit on a chair of state, signifies to act as ruler, and to sit on a tribunal, to act as a judge.

In respect to “pestilence,” — though the translation is not literal, yet it is very forcible. The word in the Hebrew is ‘of the mockers,’ or ‘of the scornful.’ But the scornful are they at whom he strikes in the Ps. under the terms ‘deceitful,’ and

'false tongues;' as being those who under a show of sound doctrine diffuse the poison of erroneous doctrine. For the pestilence in the bodies of men is not half so contagious as that of ungodly doctrine for their souls; "their word," saith the apostle, 2 Tim. 2:17, "will eat as doth gangrene." As the wise are called the health of the world, Wis. 6:26, so these ungodly are rightly called the pestilence of the world. And what mockery can be more pestilential, than to administer deadly poison unto souls that are thirsting after the purity of the truth?

The Psalmist, therefore, according to that usual manner adopted throughout the church of distinguishing the good life from the evil by faith and walk, the former distinguishing the godly from the ungodly, the latter saints from sinners, here describes these two states, and to them adds a third. For, after ungodliness has infected a man inwardly in his thoughts, and outwardly in his life, it would not be able to go farther, did it not rush forth and draw others along with it into the same perdition. And therefore, ungodliness is not contented with being wicked in thought and wicked in life, unless it teach others ungodliness also. — So far, concerning the grammatical part.

It is also especially to be observed in scripture — how wisely it omits to mention the names of sects and persons. For this Ps. without doubt strikes first at the people of the Jews; as the apostle saith, Rom. 1:16, "to the Jew first and also to the Greek." And Rom. 3:19. "We know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law." Yet the Psalmist does not say, 'blessed is the Jew,' or 'blessed is that certain person': nor does he say, 'in the counsel of the Gentiles, or of these or those certain persons'; but in general or absolutely, "blessed is the man;" and, "the counsel of the ungodly;" and, "in the way of sinners;" and also, "in the seat of the scornful;" whoever they may be, for there is no respect of persons with God.

And this was highly necessary to be done, in order that the Word of God, as it is eternal, should apply to all ages of mankind. For although manners, persons, places, and customs, may vary in different times, yet both godliness and ungodliness are the same in all ages. Hence we see, that the prophets used the same scriptures against the false prophets, the apostles against the false apostles, and the true teachers against heretics, though they found not in those scriptures the names of the prophets, or the apostles, or the teachers, or their adversaries, but only the godly and the ungodly.

Moreover, if any particular person were mentioned, then the rest would not believe that the evil which was spoken of belonged to them; or, that the good which was spoken of belonged to them only. Even as the Jews apply to themselves, all the good that was spoken to the seed of Abraham and to Israel. At whom, first, this Psalm undoubtedly strikes, as I before observed. Hence we also, after the example of the holy fathers, apply this Ps. to the generation in which we live; or rather, we follow it while it leads us thereunto, seeing that it goes before us arraigning all the ungodly, and is rather found of us already doing this, than forced by us to do it.

Therefore saith the Psalmist, "blessed is the man that hath not walked;" that is, while there are so many millions of the ungodly around us, that you may well say with Ps. 12:1, "help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men." And as Micah 7:2 also saith, "the good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men." And is he not a blessed man, and a man truly strong in the faith, who, in the midst of so great a multitude, does not walk in the broad way? who, moreover, suffers from the same, reproaches and many evils, and yet, does not so consent unto them as to walk with them? and who is not deceived by the most specious counsel of the ungodly, which might deceive the very elect?

It is a great thing not to be overcome by riches, pleasures,

and honours : but, to overcome the specious righteousness and wisdom of the ungodly, which direct their attack most of all against pure faith, is the greatest of all victories !

But you are to notice that these words are the words of faith, and that they do not speak of men according to what they appear to be. For, as I have already observed, no one would imagine such to be the ungodly. The prophet speaks in the spirit ; and, spiritually, that is ungodly which the world considers to be the most godly, because it is devoid of faith, as it is written in Eccles. 8:10 ‘I saw the wicked buried, who, while they lived, had come and gone from the place of the holy, and were praised in the city as the doers of righteous works.’ And again, Ps. 37:35. ‘I have seen the wicked exalted as a cedar in Lebanon.’ These are awful things. Who could have thought to find ungodliness here, and that so deep ?

But listen ! This Psalm does not only strike at the ungodly and sinners for every man out of Christ is an ungodly man and a sinner, but chiefly at those who are twofold sinners, — who, though they are ungodly, do not acknowledge it, but all the while form to themselves a “counsel” to walk therein, and to follow after ungodliness. For David does not say, blessed is the man who does not walk an ungodly man, or, who does not stand a sinner ; but “in the counsel of the ungodly,” and “in the way of sinners,” for such are not contented with being ungodly, but wish to be accounted righteous and saints ; thus adding to their ungodliness the outside show of godliness.

And at whom, think ye, does he strike in this our day ? I will not dare to mention by name any particular persons, lest I should split upon the implacable rock of some religious ones, priests or bishops. For such has ever been the nature of ungodly men, that they will not endure the Word of God, but will fill the world with martyrs ; and for no other reason, than that they imagine that they thereby yield obedience unto God ; and thus, while they seem to contend for godliness, they are

all the while most bitterly accusing the truly godly of ungodliness.

But know thou, and be well assured, that those are here pointed out, who shine in ceremonies, rites, and other pompous shows of godliness, and who measure their godliness by their garments, meats, times, and places, or, more especially, by their work and prayers; and more particularly, those who, on account of their observances, privileges, dignities, powers, and rights, divide themselves into implacable discords, and are ready to do and suffer any thing rather than humble themselves and yield to each other in mutual charity. And that these are the ungodly pointed at, you may conclude from this. Such are secure and confident in their lives, and there is no fear of God before their eyes.

And take this for a universal and infallible criterion, and as they say, for a certain touchstone, that the peculiar marks of the ungodly are, not to fear God, to be secure of his mercy, and to presume in all things! But on the contrary, of the godly, like Job, to be afraid of all their works, to have no trust in their own righteousness, and to account all their holiness as dung! And therefore, the latter cannot contend for these things, nor justify nor vindicate themselves, but consider themselves deserving the hatred and vengeance of all. Hence, as I said, we must have the eyes and ears of faith to hear these words of the Spirit and to understand their meaning, for man of himself cannot understand them.

Think not, however, that I condemn all holy ceremonies and good works. It is the false opinion, confidence, and devotedness that I call the pestilences; for it is through these things, as we see, that men rush forth into sects, strifes, backbitings, and infinite enormities of sin; all which by the veil of their counsel, and the show of their doctrines, they cover over with the name of godliness; whereas, if all their works were done in humility, they would certainly be good.

Nor standeth in the way of sinners.

After they have violated faith by ungodliness, what can remain but that their works are evil, and sins? But now thou wilt say, can the works of Jews, of heretics, and of the proud, be evil, when they fast, pray, do good, and accomplish all those things which no man dares to call evil? I have said that faith is wanting! Therefore, all those works are so much the worse, because they confirm their ungodliness, and cause them to stand and persevere in their way of sin; and they are sins, because they proceed from the ungodliness of their hearts. And, as saith the wise man, Sir. 34:4. ‘what truth will be spoken by a liar, or what godliness will be done by the ungodly?’

Christ however has given us excellent instruction on these points, when he taught us, that men are to be known by their fruits. And they have two sorts of works: some which he calls sheep’s clothing, which are not their proper fruits, but feigned according to their counsel and ways. But, when you touch them and oppose them, then, behold, their proper fruits burst forth — wrath, clamour, pride, backbiting, evil-speaking, self-excusing, envy, blasphemy, and the like enormities — nor can you ever gather other fruits from these thorns, than these very sharp thorns. And such, as you may see, are our ceremonial work-mongers.

Nor sitteth in the seat of pestilence (scoffers).

Yet this the Jews do, departing from Christ. Under their lips is the incurable poison of asps, Ps. 140:4, and their wine is the gall of dragons, Deut. 32:33, for they must of necessity teach contrary to Christ. These other heretics follow, under another name and person indeed, but with the same pestilence of ungodliness.

And, to come to our own times, *they sit in the seat of pestilence*, who fill the church with the opinions of philosophers, with the traditions of men, and with the counsels of their

own brain, and oppress miserable consciences, setting aside, all the while, the Word of God, by which alone the soul is fed, lives, and is preserved. Whence it comes to pass that men are ignorant of every other righteousness but that which is obtained by works; whereas this is ungodliness and sin in the sight of God. For it is impossible that you can teach the work of any laws whatever without peril, unless, by the better doctrine and the better labor, you first teach in Christ. In the Epistle to the Romans Paul sets forth faith as the foundation in eleven chapters and then in five chapters the life springing from it. In five chapters of Galatians he teaches faith; and in one chapter, the sixth, life. He does the same in his other Epistles. Christ in the Gospel requires faith only.

V. 2. But his delight (will) is in the law of Jehovah (the Lord), and on his law doth he meditate day and night.

The grammatical and theological exposition of this passage:

See that thou distinguish, to tell thee once for all, the “law of the Lord” as widely and as differently as possible from all laws of men, and take heed with all diligence, that by confusing all in one chaos, as the teachers of pestilence do, they do not miserably destroy thee; while they attempt to make the traditions of men the law of God, and the law of God the traditions of men.

Let me give thee examples of this. The law of God is, “honor thy father and thy mother.” Out of this law the pharisees have made this tradition: ‘The gift which is brought to the alter is better than that which is given to the parents,’ as you read Matt. 15:4. Again: despising God in the true commandment, they honor him according to another commandment of their own law, thus establishing a law for God. For the elders had said, ‘wash thine hands when thou eatest:’ and not to hear the elders is the same as not hearing God. Therefore saith Christ in the same chapter, Matth. 15:7-9, “Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, this people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from

me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."

Thus at this day matters are come to such a pass, that they boldly affirm, that the voice of the Popes and of the Roman council alone are to be heard with fear and trembling. When all the commands of God are at the same time laughed at, yea held in contempt; and not more so by any set of men than by those very characters who boast of the to-be-feared voice of their great council. In a word, they have carried these most impious superstitions to the extreme, that mass-priests are everywhere to be found, who imagine that they have sinned the sin unto death if they have celebrated mass without their stole or maniple, or any external that is attended to. Or, if they have made any like mistake or omission in the canonical form of celebrating mass, it is considered a most awful sin. But I am ashamed to proceed any farther in the enumeration of those ridiculous trifles with which the mass-priests and other religious ones of the same kind terrify their consciences. Whereas, all the while, if they have been living together in the sins of lust, wrath, envy, covetousness, and pride, and that for many years, and have despised God, they feel nothing of it whatever.

The term "will" here, does not imply any power in man, nor does it signify that inert *habit* which our modern theologians have dragged into their divinity out of Aristotle, to the subversion of a man's true understanding of the scriptures, nor, again, does it signify that *act* which they say is *allured forth* out of that *power* or *habit*. No human being under heaven has such a "will" as is here signified: it must be given him from above. For since the nature of man is intent on, and prone to evil, as the divine authority asserts, Gen.6:5;8;21, and since the law of God is "holy, righteous, and good," Rom. 7:12; it follows, that the will of man is against the law, hates the law, and flees from the law. And even if at any time from the fear of punishment, or from a want to get at what is

promised, it pretends a love for the law, yet, the natural hatred of the law still remains within; nor can such a will love the law freely, for it does not love it because it is good, but because it seems to promise some advantage.

The “will,” therefore, here signified, is that delight of heart, and that certain pleasure in the law, which does not look at what the law promises, nor at what it threatens, but at this only, that “the law is holy, righteous and good.” Hence it is not only a love of the law, but that loving delight in the law, which no prosperity nor adversity, nor the world, nor the prince of it, can either take away or destroy; for it victoriously bursts its way through poverty, evil report, the cross, death, and hell, and, in the midst of adversities, shines the brightest.

And this “will” springs from faith in God through Jesus Christ. Whereas, that will which is extorted by the fear of punishment, is servile and violently forced; and that which is drawn forth by a desire after the reward, is mercenary and feigned. But this is a free, spontaneous, and happy will. And hence it is that the people of Christ are called in the Hebrew NEDABOTH, that is, ‘spontaneous, voluntary, and free.’ Ps. 110:3.

From the above it is manifest that this Psalm is to be understood of Christ only. He is the mark and the goal to which the man that is “blessed” is to direct all his aims, for there is no one in this life who does not want something of this “will,” on account of the law and will in his members, which are contrary to it; as the apostle saith, Rom. 7:23, which latter will, according to true theology, is to be crucified, but which, according to philosophy, is to be accounted a virtue.

To “meditate,” as it is generally understood, signifies to discuss, to dispute, and to exercise in words, as in Ps. 37:30, “the mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom.” Hence Augustine, in his translation, has “chatter,” a beautiful metaphor, as chattering is the employment of birds, so a continual

conversing in the law of the Lord, since talking is peculiar to man, ought to be the employment of man. But I cannot worthily and fully set forth the gracious meaning and force of this word, for this ‘meditating’ consists first in an intent observing of the words of the law, and then in a comparing of the different scriptures, which is a certain delightful hunting, nay, rather a playing with stags in a forest or mountains, where the Lord furnishes us with the stags and opens to us their secret coverts, Ps. 29:6. And from this kind of employment there comes forth at length a man well instructed in the law of the Lord to speak unto the people.

For instance, “Thou shalt not kill,” if you pass it over in a cursory manner, is a frigid sentence, by which, according to the sound of letters, you merely understand that the act of murder is prohibited. But stop and meditate a little. It is not said, *thy hand* shall not kill, but *thou* shalt not kill. And what art thou? Soul and body, and thou hast many members and faculties in each, hand, eyes, tongue, mind, will, etc. When, therefore, thou art forbidden to kill, art thou not thereby forbidden to kill with thy hand, or thy tongue, or thy will? for whichever of these shall kill, it is *Thou* that killest. Therefore, we are not to be angry, we are not to wish evil, we are not to speak evil, we are not to calumniate, we are not to turn away our face, we are not to despise, we are not to injure, we are not to wish to injure; but, on the other hand, we are to love, to bless, to do good. What then is the purport of this scripture, Thou shalt not kill? Why this, that thou art not to be bitter and angry with, but kind and gentle to, thy neighbor. Therefore, look into what the scriptures teach concerning love, kindness, suavity, benevolence, goodness, and tenderness; and when thou hast collected and compared them all, hast thou not then well chattered and meditated in the law of thy Lord?

With respect to “day and night,” whether you understand them literally or figuratively for assiduously, or allegorically for the time of adversity and prosperity, it matters not at all;

for the righteous man, even when sleeping, loves and thinks upon the law of the Lord.

The Psalmist saith then of this man that is “blessed,” that his “will” will be in the law of the Lord. He will neither look at, nor love, nor hate any created thing whatever, either good or evil, but will, by this “will,” be entirely raised above all things that are created. What wonder therefore is it, that such a man should be blessed, who, being endowed with this heavenly will, has no taste whatever for those things by which the ignorant judges of blessedness are dashed to and fro.

Moreover, as such an one is by this his will now made one with the Word of God for love always unites the lover and the object loved, he must of necessity taste how good, sweet, and pure the holy and wonderful Word of God is, that it is the greatest of all good! But this *they* cannot taste, who have their hand or their tongue only in the law, while their will is immersed in the filth of the things of this world.

For there are many prating ones who talk much about the law of the Lord, and pretend much about it, but who do not yet love it. It does not read, blessed is the man whose tongue is in the law of the Lord, nor whose hand, nor whose mind and speculations are in it; for by these things men are only puffed up, and bless themselves, as if they were already saints and saved.

Moreover, this “will” comprehends the whole life of man. For if the man has his will, which is the fountain-spring of his life, and his head, in the law, there is no fear that he will keep any other member out of it. For wherever love leads, the whole heart and body follow it. And herein observe the different conversation of the godly and the ungodly — The ungodly begin their righteousness from without, and then go on to that which is within. They first feign works and then words, and then they go on to the exercising of thoughts; and this is the greatest height to which they attain. And here, they begin to be teachers of others, and whatever they think,

say, or do, they will have to be holy and divine; yet, after all, they never attain unto this secret "will." But the godly begin within from this holy "will," then follows "meditation," and then the external work, and afterwards, the teaching of others, as we shall see hereafter.

And in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Meditation is not without damnation, unless there be first the "will;" but love of itself leads to meditation. This "will" is to be sought by us from heaven, as I have said, by humble faith in Christ, when we are brought to despair of all strength in ourselves. And mark this well. It is the manner and nature of all lovers to talk freely, to sing, to write, to compose, and to amuse their thoughts, on their loves, and to hear the same things. And so also this lover, this man that is "blessed," has his love, the law of the Lord, always in his mouth, always in his heart, and always, if he can, in his ear. For "he that is of God heareth God's words," John 8:47. "Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage," Ps. 119:54. And again, "I will meditate always in thy statutes," ver. 16.

And thinkest thou that they are blessed men, who turn over swine's husks, and who talk day and night about natural things, about the opinions of men, about prebendaries, dignities, and the power and privileges of churches, and a thousand other vanities of the same kind? No! They are far more miserable than those who talk about the loves of maidens and the fables of the poets. For the latter know that they are acting foolishly, and can sometime repent of what they have done. But the former, thinking that they are all the while acting wisely and holily, die in their ungodliness; and too late to repent, that the laws which they have made have only heaped destruction and ungodliness on their own heads, because they meditated not on the law of the Lord.

V. 3. *And he shall be like a tree (wood) planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth (giveth) its fruit in its season.*

I have said that the blessedness of this man is hidden in the Spirit, in God; so that it cannot be known by faith and experience. And that this is true thou shalt clearly see. If thou look at his "will," in which alone his blessedness consists, it does not stand in his riches, nor in his honors, nor in his righteousnesses and virtues, nor, in a word, in any good that can be mentioned excepting this will in the law itself either in or out of the man. Nay rather, it is found in the midst of the contraries, in poverty, in contempt, in foolishness, in all the evils that can be mentioned either within or without the man. So that the man whom the prophet here calls "blessed," is hated by the whole world, and they all judge him to be the most miserable of mortals. And this Isaiah saw in Christ, the head and pattern of all these blessed ones, and therefore said, "he was despised, and rejected of men," 53:3. For the world and its prince cannot endure that man who desires to be blessed with this "will," but despises all his blessedness together. And therefore it is, that David, contemplating the fewness of such men, breaks out, 'O! blessed is the man, who,' etc.

Having thus described the "blessed" man in his own proper definition, he goes on to set forth the same by a similitude no less beautiful. The definition, indeed, was perfect, representing him as free from all evil, and filled with all good, which is what the generality of men call blessedness, but their blessedness stands in present things, while this man's blessedness stands in faith. And so also the similitude proves him to be free from the same evil, and full of the same good. And since this "blessed" man that is hidden in faith, could not be set forth to view clearly by any farther definition, David, as it becomes all definers to do, sets him forth under the similitude of a visible thing. And since we know that he is describing a righteous man under a figure, we are not to quarrel about terms.

I however believe that it is the palm-tree that is alluded to in the figurative description, for it is said in another Psalm,

"the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall increase like a cedar of Lebanon," Ps. 92:12. And what is there briefly alluded to, is here more fully enlarged upon. For the palm tree loves the rivers of water as Pliny says and drinks freely all the year round and is always green and brings forth most sweet fruits. And perhaps this similitude is taken from those palms on the Jordan near Jericho, which were so much celebrated, for Jericho is on that account called the "city of palms;" and the Jordan is in many other places in the scriptures spoken of mystically. Hence we have this passage, "A well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon," Song 4:15.

Here the prophet gives you a rule for understanding the allegories of trees and rivers which occur in the scriptures. A tree signifies a man. The good tree signifies a good man, and the evil tree an evil man, as Christ also teaches us, Math. 7:18. Though I know that Augustine, when he was so hotly pressed by the Pelagians, that he might not in any way admit that the children of the faithful were born holy, rather chose by 'tree' not to understand man, but the will of man. And this may perhaps be given in his favour, that by the tree here the spiritual man is set forth, which is indeed the will itself, or the spirit. But I think we may with no less, if not rather with more propriety, here understand by "tree" the whole man; by the root, the will, and by the branches, the members and powers. But I will not contend for this.

The Psalmist says it is "planted," wherein he distinguishes this palm tree from those which grow of their own accord, and represents it as being made what it is by the care and cultivation of another, and not becoming so by its own nature; that is, as being cut off from that which grew of its own accord and by nature, and planted by art as a branch in some other place. And this is what I said before, that the "will" in the law of the Lord is found in no man by nature, but brought down out of heaven by the great planter and cultivator, our heavenly Father, who transplants us out of Adam into Christ.

The “rivers of water” certainly signify the rivers of water of divine grace. For the palm is said to grow in a soft, sandy, nitrous, and saline soil, and therefore it always loves rivers. And so also the “will,” which is the root of this tree, being in this dry unfruitful life, thirsts the more after the rivers of heavenly waters, the more it finds that there is nothing in this world that can make it flourish, as Ps. 63:1, saith “my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and weary land, where no water is.” And thus, as Isaiah saith, 53:2, “he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground.” But, is it not wonderful that a tree should grow in a barren soil, being nourished by the rivers of water only? Blessed therefore is the man, who, the more he feels the barrenness of the world, the more he thirsts after heavenly waters. Thus, this tree does not grow by the richness of the earth, nor does the “blessed” man grow by the luxuries of this world.

Some have inquired why the prophet here saith ‘wood’, *lignum*, rather than ‘a tree,’ *arborem*, and, shall ‘give’ his fruit, rather than shall ‘bear’ his fruit. The reading in Genesis, is, that God created ‘wood’, *lignum*, not ‘the tree,’ *arborem*. And hence the scripture still preserves the metaphor ‘wood’ for ‘tree’. And the ‘giving’ of fruit shows that this blessed man serves not himself, but his neighbors, with that charity which we see to be commanded in every law of God. For there is no tree that brings forth fruit for itself, but every tree gives its fruit unto others. Nay, no creature only except man and the devil lives to itself, or serves itself. Nor does the sun shine for itself, nor the water flow for itself, etc.

Thus every creature observes the law of charity, and its whole substance is in the law of the Lord; nay, even the different members of the human body do not serve themselves. It is the affection of the mind only that is ungodly, for this not only will not give every one his own, and will not serve any one, nor wish well to any one, but, it takes all from all for itself, and seeks its own profit in all things, even in God him-

self. So that you may truly say, that this is the tree, or thorn, or brier, which grows of its own accord, cherished by the cultivation of no other hand, nor delighting in the rivers of water; and bringing forth nothing but thorns, with which it goads, tears, and chokes the fruits of all other trees that grow near it; and also pulls, plucks, and tears the garments, fleeces, skin, flesh, and every thing else of every object that passes by it. The prophet, therefore, has here set forth the benefit of good trees, — that, while they injure no one, they profit all, and give forth their fruits willingly.

In its season.

O golden and admirable word! by which, is asserted the liberty of Christian righteousness. The ungodly have their stated days, stated times, certain works, and certain places, to which they stick so closely, that if their neighbors were perishing with hunger they could not be torn from them. But this blessed man, being free at all times, in all places, for every work, and to every person, will serve you whenever an opportunity is offered him; whatsoever comes into his hands to do, he does it. He is neither a Jew, nor a Gentile, nor a Greek, nor a barbarian, nor of any other particular person. He gives his fruit in his season, as often as either God or man require his work.

Therefore, his fruits have no name, and his times have no name. He does not serve any particular person, nor in any particular time, place, or work; but he serves all in all things. And he is indeed a man of all hours, of all works, of all persons; and, after the likeness of his Father, he is all in all things, and to all men.

But the ungodly, as it is written Ps. 18:45, (Weimar Ed. 2 Sam. 22:46) ‘fall into their own pit, and are taken in their own net,’ and are tormented with the works, times, and places, which they themselves have chosen, aside from which they imagine nothing can be done rightly. And thus, being proud

of their own fruits, they do nothing but attack, judge, and condemn the fruits of others, being most free and most ready at all times to censure others; in a word, being just such in evil doing, as the godly are in well doing. For they also are men of all hours, calumniating and injuring, not in one way, nor at one time, nor one person only, but all men in every way and at all times, just as circumstances throw them in their way. And even if they should turn this devotedness to what they may call good, yet they would not any the sooner become godly.

This I say indeed not because I wish to reject the ceremonies of the church and of the monasteries, for the first duty of those, who entered the monasteries, was to learn to be subject to their superiors, and to undertake nothing of their own will, but to be ready to serve all in all things. The monasteries were truly schools to awaken and develope Christian liberty, as they are still where they have maintained their primitive spirit. This, I say, was the aim and character of the ceremonies. For what are the works of love and mercy themselves except a kind of free ceremonies, since they are external and pertain to the body?

The ceremonies of the old law were likewise most useful exercises in the true and free divine life. But since they began to misuse them in a perverted way to the suppression of liberty and in that they took them as a pretext to extinguish piety, and instead of liberty, slavery reigns as a tyrant, it has become necessary to abolish them altogether, as it is now the aim of the pious pastor to do away with the unnecessary ceremonies, where they act as snares of the soul and as a barrier to the free divine life.

Whose leaf also doth not wither.

He still pursues this most beautiful figure. This "leaf" signifies the Word and doctrine. We have said that the palm tree is always green in leaf and flourishing. But it is said,

Jsaiah 1:30, concerning the ungodly, "ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth." Now compare all these particulars. The ungodly walk in their own counsel; the godly man is fixed in the love of the law, and planted by the rivers of water. The former stand in the way of sinners; the latter meditates in the law of the Lord, and gives forth his fruit in his season. The ungodly sit in the seat of the scornful; the leaf of the latter never withers.

And note that he describes the fruit before he does the leaf. And though it is the nature of the palm to put forth its fruit, not among the leaves like all other trees, but among the branches, having all its leaves on the top, so that it might itself seem to produce its fruit before it does its leaves and we have said that this figure is taken from the palm, yet the Holy Spirit himself always teaches every faithful preacher in the church to know that the kingdom of God does not stand in word but in power, 1 Cor. 4:20. Again, "Jesus began to do, and to teach," Acts 1:1. And again, "Which was a prophet mighty in deed, and in word," Luke 24:19. And thus, let him who professes the word of doctrine first put forth the fruits of life, if he would not have his leaf to wither; for Christ cursed the fig tree which bore no fruit. And, as Gregory saith, that man whose life is despised is condemned by his doctrine; for he preaches to others, and is himself reprobated. And concerning such Matthew says, 7:23, that in the day of judgment they shall hear this sentence, "depart from me, ye workers of iniquity;" even though they may have prophesied in the name of Christ, and done many wonderful works by his Word.

But some one may say, there have been many saints and martyrs, but neither their fruits nor their leaves are now remaining, but all have perished with them; nor indeed have we the words of all the apostles. How, then, can this praise be applicable to all blessed men?

I answer: — their word was not their own word. "For it is not ye that speak, saith Christ, but the Spirit of my Father

that speaketh in you." All the saints were taught by, and they all taught, the same Word; as we read, 1 Cor. 10:3, 4, All did eat the same spiritual food, and all did drink the same spiritual drink." And Ps. 119:89, "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations."

Thus it is apparent that this "blessed man" and this fruit-bearing "tree," signify the whole church, or those who hold the office of teaching. But there is nothing against its being understood also as signifying every righteous man, because he has likewise the same "leaf," for if he does not teach others, he certainly teaches himself, meditating with his heart in the law of the Lord, which word remains in him unto eternity, as it does also in the whole church. And finally, as all the faithful are one body, although this leaf is peculiar to the member that teacheth, yet, by communion all things belong to all. For the word is mine which my tongue preaches, though I may be only the ear and not the tongue; and so we may say of the other members and of the whole body.

And whatsoever he doeth (maketh) shall prosper.

If he saith this with reference to the tree or palm, he alludes to the fact that the palm is said to be the only tree which still grows upwards against every weight and pressure. And they say that this is seen in beams made of palm trees.

And with respect to the word "doeth," in this passage if I am not too bold, it does not signify the good works of a righteous man for these have been sufficiently commended already under the term 'fruits', but rather, those performances or productions which we achieve by means of the arts and sciences. For so, the philosophers refer 'doing,' *agere*, to wisdom, and 'making,' *facere*, to art. And we may see the same distinction in the Hebrew tongue according to my bold way of proceeding. For I find that the verb ASA generally signifies 'making', *facere*, and PAAL, 'doing', *agere*. Thus, Ps. 28:5, "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the opera-

tion of his hands ;" where "the operation of his hands" signifies the very thing formed. As it is also in another place, "Israel is the work of my hands." And in Gen. 1:7, 16, 25, it is said, "And God made," etc. And again, Ps. 95:5, "The sea is his, and he made it." But the works of God are those which he does by his creatures ; and especially, by his word and his grace, by which he acts upon us and makes us act.

Let therefore this "doing" be considered to signify instituting, ordaining, distributing by various ecclesiastical ministrations, and as the apostles Peter, 1 Pet. 4:10, and Paul, 1 Cor. 12:4 etc., did, acting as stewards of the manifold grace of God, founding churches, and increasing them ; for thus, the very faithful are said to be of their forming, their work, and their workmanship. Hence Paul 'travailed in birth,' for the Galatians, 4:19, and 'begat' the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 4:15. And again, "Are ye not my work in the Lord?" 1 Cor. 9:1. You understand therefore that this is the spiritual workmanship of a blessed man, not a tyrannical exercise of power, nor a pompous show, for these things even the gentiles can do and show forth. But the 'doing' of this blessed man is, making many good and blessed and like himself.

And with regard to this "prospering," take heed that thou understand not a carnal prosperity. This prosperity is a hidden prosperity, and lies entirely secret in the spirit ; and therefore if thou hast not this prosperity that is by faith, thou shouldst rather judge thy prosperity to be the greatest adversity. For as the devil bitterly hates this leaf and the Word of God, so does he also those who teach and hear it, and he persecutes such, aided by all the powers of the world. Therefore, thou hearest of a miracle, the greatest of all miracles, when thou hearest that all things prosper which a "blessed" man doeth. For what is more miraculous than that the faithful should grow while they are destroyed, should increase while they are diminished, should prevail while others prevail over them, should enter while they are expelled, and should conquer while

they are conquered? For thus the world and its prince are overcome. Yet hath the Lord wonderfully ordained, that, to his saint, Ps. 4:4, that should be the height of prosperity which is the height of misery. This is the prosperity of the wise and the conversion of men.

But now we see that word of Proverbs 1:32, is fulfilled, "For the careless ease of the simple shall slay them, and the backsliding of fools shall destroy them." For in the present state of the church, we have made names and persons, and have turned the spirit into the flesh; and therefore what is now called a good state of the church, is opulence, tyranny, impurity, the peace of the flesh, and a pomp more than human. For the devil has seen, and at length understood, this spiritual prosperity, and therefore, he has turned himself round, and attacking us in another way, triumphs in our horrible misery. And thus, he who was conquered in a time of conflict, now triumphs in a time of peace; and God for wonderful ends has ordained both. Hence, Hilary has wisely and most truly said, 'that it is the nature of the church to increase in adversity, and decrease in prosperity.' But this wisdom of the cross, and this new signification of things, are not only unknown to the very heads themselves of the church, but are considered by them the most horrible of things. And no wonder, since they have left the Holy Scriptures, and have devoted themselves to the unhappy ordinances of men, and to casting up of accounts and sums of money.

The wicked (ungodly) are not so.

In the Hebrew text "not so," "non sic," is not repeated, but that has little significance. When thou hearest the word "ungodly," remember those things which we have said above concerning ungodliness, lest, like the ungodly, thou shouldst banish these words from thee as applying to the Jews only, and to heretics, and I know not what others who are far off; and lest perhaps laying aside the fear of God, thou shouldst not

tremble at this word of his. But as he is an ungodly one who is without the faith of Christ, you should tremble at these words, lest you also should be found to be one of the ungodly. For every truly godly man trembles at every word of God; as Isaiah saith, 66:2, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." And how wilt thou assure thyself that thou hast faith enough? Remember then, that as much as thou art deficient in faith, so much hast thou of ungodliness.

It is the way of the ungodly with confident security to arrogate to themselves all those things that are good, and to refer all that is evil unto others. On the other hand, it is the way of the godly to believe all that evil of themselves which does not belong to them, and to refer all good unto others; nor can they be brought to aspire after the better things without much suffering of unworthiness, even though they seek those things not on account of any merit in themselves, but only by a naked hope in the mercy of God.

Therefore there is no prosperity to the wicked; they have a withering leaf, and are not planted by the rivers of water. But hear in the spirit one who speaks in the spirit. For the whole scripture declares that the ungodly flourish and prosper, and we see the same in many of the Psalms; so that it seems as if one could say of them only, 'Their leaf is green, and all that they do prospers.' Hence faith is necessary to understand these things.

But are like the chaff (dust) which the wind driveth (scattereth) away.

In the Latin translation is added "from the face of the earth." This does not affect the meaning. The Hebrew word CAMOTZ in this passage signifies 'chaff,' or 'the dust of chaff,' or 'the sweepings of a barn floor;' yet, it is of no moment, for it is the same thing whether you say dust, or chaff-dust, or chaff, or ashes; because the persons here represented are those

concerning whom Luke saith, 3:17, "Whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." And you need not have the least doubt that it is this purging, this chaff, and this chaff-dust, that is signified in the present passage, though strictly and most properly the word signifies small chaff and pieces of chaff. And Job in the same way saith, 21:18, "They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away."

Observe that he does not only call them chaff, but that chaff which the wind scattereth away; he does not wish to signify the chaff which lies still, but that which is driven about, scattered and dispersed. And we may understand him first of the Jews, for these are scattered away in a threefold sense. First, corporally, by storms; that is, by the will and indignation of those men among whom they live, so that we plainly see with our own eyes that they have no certain dwelling-place, and are exposed every moment to a wind of this kind that drives them here and there. Secondly, their minds are driven about by the wind of various doctrine, by means of their pestilent teachers, because they are not planted in the faith of Christ, but their minds are scattered in different directions by uncertain doctrines, while their consciences can find no certainty or quiet. Thirdly, in the last day they will be scattered by the eternal storms of the intolerable wrath of God, and will be driven away never to have rest, not even for a moment.

And the same things, especially the two last-mentioned storms, will also await all heretics.

And what else do you think it is in the church but the storm of the wrath of God, that has scattered us away into so many and different, such unstable and uncertain, and at the same time infinite, glosses of lawyers and opinions of theologians? While Christ in the meantime is utterly unknown, and we are miserably driven and dashed upon so **many** quick-sands, rocks, and straits of conscience?

Though all the rest of the ungodly have their storms and hurricanes of pleasures and lusts, of riches, honors, favors, and the other billows of this world, by which they are most miserably dashed to and fro, because they despise the one only rock and solid strength of our heart.

V. 5. *Therefore the wicked (ungodly) shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation (counsel) of the righteous.*

We have already fully shown who are sinners and ungodly; and do thou take heed that thou hear not these words of God without trembling, as if thou wert sure of being godly and a saint. This fear itself is godliness; nay, the very fountain-spring and beginning of wisdom and godliness.

In the Hebrew it is “arise,” not “be raised,” and the context does not treat of the resurrection of the dead. For he did not say: men will not rise in judgment, but the ungodly. The resurrection of men is different from that of the ungodly. Therefore in the Apostle’s Creed it is better the resurrection of the flesh than the resurrection of men. The apostle calls it a resurrection of the dead or of men, in that he holds to two resurrections, one of the flesh and the other of the spirit. “Shall not rise” here signifies that the ungodly shall not stand before God, according to Ps. 5:5: “The foolish shall not stand in thy sight. And Psalm 24:3, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?” and this is said also concerning Christ when he shall rise up in judgment; as is also Ps. 12:5, “Now will I arise, saith the Lord.” Therefore, “shall not rise,” signifies that they shall not stand, shall not serve, shall not minister unto God, as they most confidently presume they shall do.

“Judgment” in this place, by a scriptural figure, signifies office. Thus, the whole book of Judges is so called from the Judges or rulers of Israel; as in Psalm 122:5, “For there are set thrones for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.”

And so also Psalm 110:6, "He shall judge among the heathen," that is, he shall be the judge of the heathen. And Ps. 72:4, "He will judge the poor of the people," that is, he shall rule them. And again, Ps. 96:13, "He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth."

The meaning therefore is, the wicked shall never rise to that state so as to be the judges or rulers of the faithful, nor even stand in their "counsel," that is, in their congregation; which means, that they shall never be reckoned either among the great or the small of the faithful. And, to explain the whole more plainly, it signifies that the ungodly shall never so rise in judgment nor in the congregation of the righteous as to be considered the servants of God.

What! shall we not then put down these ungodly rulers and these wicked men, and cast them out from the midst of us? Or, is that not a congregation of the faithful where ungodly men rule and where sinners are intermingled? By no means.

I before observed, that the prophet spoke spiritually, and must therefore be heard spiritually. For Judas was an apostle, and yet he was not an apostle. And as John saith, 1 Epist. 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us." And thus the ungodly, while they rule, rule visibly as to their persons, but in truth do not rule at all. For Zechariah, 11:17, saith, "Woe to the worthless (idol) shepherd that leaveth the flock." Here he calls the same person a "shepherd," which was the name with which he was honored among men, and also an "idol," for which he was condemned before God.

In order that we may understand that precedence is not that which essentially belongs to the faithful, Christ rewards many of the ungodly in this life with a paltry pittance. Such men, therefore, are to be borne with, as chaff is among wheat, until the winnowing day shall come.

And see whether this be not plainly the prophet's meaning. For, when he had before said "the ungodly are not so," it was

not necessary to repeat the same in another verse; it would have been sufficient to have said, ‘therefore the ungodly shall not rise in the judgment, nor in the congregation of the righteous.’ But he has spoken thus, that he may do away with all outward person, and all the external appearance of men; because rich men, powerful men, and what other external appearance soever there may be, may rise in the judgment, and be in the congregation of the righteous, seeing that all these things pertain only to the body. But ungodly men and sinners never can. Therefore the whole force of the passage lies in the terms ‘ungodly’ and ‘sinners.’

For such never have the precedence in reality and in spirit. The ungodly are never among the faithful, though they carry so showy an appearance in external life that it may be thought that none have so much precedence over, and such a place among, the faithful, as they. And this hypocrisy and external show of which they are so proud, on which they presume so much, and by which they deceive so many, are the very things at which the Psalm strikes. That this is the true meaning of the verse is shown by the following verse.

V. 6. *For Ichovah (the Lord) knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked (ungodly) shall perish.*

The Latin could have avoided the use of the two words “viam” and “iter” and said “the way (via) of the ungodly,” since the diction is the same and a fine antithesis: “the way of the righteous” and “the way of the ungodly,” and thus as in Hebrew the same word would have been retained.

So specious, saith David, is the way of the ungodly, that unto men they may seem to rise in the judgment and to stand in the congregation. But he who can not be deceived understands their ways and knows that they are ungodly; and in the eyes of him they are not at all among the members of his church. He knows the righteous only, and knows not sinners, that is, he approves the one, and not the other. Therefore

what they the least of all expect or believe, their way shall perish — shall perish, I say, though it go on with such success as to seem to be eternal. Behold, how he here terrifies us away from all prosperous appearance, and commends to us various temptations and adversities. For this “way” of the righteous all men utterly reprobate, thinking also, that God knoweth nothing about any such way, because this is the wisdom of the cross. Therefore, it is God alone that knoweth the way of the righteous, so hidden is it to the righteous themselves. For his right hand leads them on in a wonderful manner, seeing that it is a way, not of sense, nor of reason, but of faith only, even of that faith that sees in darkness and beholds things that are invisible.

When, therefore, we are subject to ungodly shepherds, we do not obey the ungodly, but men; for we do not hear or follow their ungodliness, but we endure the precedence of their persons. Again, when men put down and cast out such, as we see in Bohemia, is it the ungodly that they put down? no! they put down the persons. For the ungodly who are thus put down remain ungodly still. It is then only that the ungodly man is put down when he is led from ungodliness to godliness; which is not done by external violence but by love, internally praying and externally admonishing, where God condescends to work at the same time.

Whoso is not pleased to understand this passage thus, let him abide by this interpretation, that the psalmist, in the first place, directs his words against the ungodly Jews; for he has in many other places predicted that these shall be driven from the church, as shall also heretics and all those who openly declare their ungodliness, for they alienate themselves from the church and the church alienates and expels them, however much they may boast that they only are the church and the people of God.

Finally, the admonition is to be given which the most illustrious fathers, especially Athanasius and Augustine, have given,

namely, that our affections and feelings be brought in accord with, and be attempered to, the feelings described in the Psalms. For since the Psalter is solely a certain school and place of exercise for the affections, he harps without results, who does not harp in the spirit. So that when thou readest, "Blessed is the man that hath not gone away in the counsel of the ungodly," thy feelings and affections ought to move at the same time and to hate the counsel of the wicked and pray against it, not only on account of thyself but on account of the whole church also; and so they should also when thou readest of the "way of sinners" and their "pestilence" of doctrine. For it is with this fire, the affection of love, that heretics are to be burnt, and all who savour of and teach, ungodliness. But since we have despised that fire God has given us over to a reprobate mind, to become murdering executioners, and to burn heretics with natural fire, and to be burnt again ourselves in return.

And so also, when thou soundest forth, "But his will is in the law of the Lord," thou art not here to snore in safety, and securely bless thyself, as if thou wert already a lover of the law of God; but thou art, with all the ardor of the affection of thy mind, to sigh unto him who alone came to send that fire upon the earth; nor art thou, as long as thou livest, to think otherwise of thyself than as one who does not yet love the law of God, and who greatly needs this "will in the law."

Again, when thou hearest that all things "prosper" for the righteous man, thou art to desire it for thyself and to sigh for all those who are placed in any adversity, of what kind soever it may be; and so, when thou hearest that their leaf doth not wither and that the pure word of God flourisheth in the church of Christ, all fables and dreams of men being cast out. And if thou see any of these things so take place anywhere, thou art to congratulate, to rejoice and to give thanks unto the divine goodness. And do not think that thou art thus exhorted to impossibilities; only make the attempt, and I know that thou wilt have to rejoice and be thankful. First, exercise thyself

in one Psalm, nay in one verse of a Psalm. Thou hast done much if thou hast learned to make one verse in a day, or even in a week, a living and breathing word by being felt in thy affections. And when thou hast attained unto this beginning all the rest will follow, and there will open unto thee an overflowing treasure of knowledge and affection; only, take heed that thou be not frightened away from beginning by any weariness or despair. This is truly to harp, or, as the scripture saith of David, to strike the harp-strings with the fingers. For the nimble fingers of the harpers which run over the strings and strike them, represent the affections running over the words of the Psalms and being moved by them; and as the strings do not sound without the fingers, so neither is the Psalm read or sung unless it touch the affections.

I wished thus to premise these things once in this first Psalm, that I might not have occasion to repeat the same through every Psalm. Though I know very well, that if any one be exercised in this matter, he will of himself find more in the Psalter than all the commentaries of all commentators put together can give him. I see that Bernard excelled in this, and drew all his fund of understanding from it. And I know that the same way was discovered and made sweet to Augustine and many others. And so also, we ought to drink out of the same fountain these waters of life, lest that cutting rebuke should fall upon us which is found in the prophet Amos, respecting ‘inventing for themselves instruments of music like David,’ Amos 6:5. And again, “Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols,” Amos 5:23. For what thinkest thou that all the muttering and roaring which everywhere fills our churches without either mind or spirit, appears to be in the sight of God! nothing but a swarm of flies making a buzzing noise with their wings. And if thou addest to all this a belief that such things please God thou makest the true and living God a laughing stock and an idle phantom.

P S A L M I I.

V. 1. *Why do the nations (people) rage, and the peoples meditate a vain thing?*

V. 2. *The kings of the earth set themselves (stand up), and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah (the Lord) and against his anointed, saying,*

That this Psalm was written by David, and that it speaks of Christ, the authority of the primitive church compels us to conclude; concerning which Luke writes, Acts 4:24-28, "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is; who by thy Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David thy servant didst say, 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves in array, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed.' " And the kings of the earth have set themselves in array and the rulers have taken counsel together, against the Lord and against his Christ. For, of a truth, in this city Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the gentiles and the people of Israel, have taken counsel together against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed; for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done, etc.'

Therefore the heart is to be established in this sense of the Psalm, and not to be tossed about by any other wind of doctrine, Eph. 4:14, because this meaning of it was confirmed from heaven; for, as the same Luke saith, "when they had prayed the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together" Acts 4:31.

It is quite clear, therefore, that by "the kings" is signified Herod and Pilate, even though Pilate was not king, for these two co-operated together to fulfil that which the counsel of

God had determined before to be done, as the disciples themselves here say, that is, to destroy Christ.

It now remains that we clear up the trifling difficulty concerning Pilate. He is either called a king with Herod, or else called so by a figure of speech most commonly used in the scriptures, which gives an appellation to the whole people from the name of a part. Thus, Israel is called the “first-born,” even though many among them were idolaters. And again, they are all rebuked when only some of them deserved it. And so also, the one being king makes both to be kings.

Again, by “rulers” are to be understood the heads of the priests; by “heathen,” the Roman soldiers under Pilate, who seized Jesus, scourged him, and crucified him; and by “people” we are clearly to understand the common people of the Jews, or Israel, as the apostles themselves say.

In this passage therefore heathen and people are kept manifestly distinct. But I do not dare to affirm, nor do I believe, that this distinction is maintained in all instances, though the term heathen is most frequently used in contradistinction to the Jews, or Israel. For thus, the church of the heathen or Gentiles, and Paul an apostle of the heathen or Gentiles, is held in universal authority and use, as distinct from the church of the Jews, or that which is of the Jews.

And observe how this distinction is kept up, “the heathen rage,” and “the peoples meditate a vain thing,” “the kings set themselves in array,” and, “the rulers take counsel together.” The “heathen,” as irrational beasts raged, for they knew not what they did. But the “people” prated and conferred in their councils speaking iniquity against the Most High, and surrounded him on every side with words of hatred, as it is set forth in Psalm 109:2 etc., saying, “Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours,” Mark 12:7. And Caiaphas, John 11:49-50, having assembled the people, said, “Ye know nothing at all: nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people.” These vain

addresses to the people, therefore, whereby they so often sought to destroy Christ, and their fabricated accusations before Pilate, are what David here calls ‘vain meditations.’

For the “kings” decreed, because that is what we are here to understand from the Hebrew ‘stood up,’ determined, issued proclamations, and confirmed these their ragings and meditations by giving their sentence concerning Christ. “And so Pilate willing to satisfy the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified,” Mark 15:15. And the “rulers” gathered together, consulted, persuaded the people, and at the same time confirmed them in their determination to crucify Jesus; for “the chief priests stirred up the multitude, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them,” Mark 15:11.

Observe here the tenderness and modesty of the prophetic mouth, how feelingly, and as it were sympathetically, he speaks of the fury of these men. For when he might with justice have called these enraged expressions, “Away with him, crucify him!” John 19:15, and all those other infuriated clamours of the Jews whereby they accused Christ, frenzy and maddened violence, he calls them only meditations. And meditation, as the object we have shown before, Ps. 1:2, is a continual prating or talking with the mouth; and this is here a meditation in a bad sense. For as a lover is always spontaneously saying many things about the object beloved, so the hater is assiduously prating and saying the worst of things about the object hated. And there is the same modesty also in the words “rage,” “stand up,” and “take counsel together;” for the act itself was far more atrocious than the purport of these words would seem to indicate.

We are hereby taught that we ought not, after the manner of detractors, to exaggerate the evil conduct of men, but as much as possible to lessen it; that we may show that we do not feel so much indignation on our own account, as pity on theirs.

For the Holy Spirit is kind. He does not glory in the evils of others, but, in his kindness, pities all. And thus St. Peter says of Christ, “who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” 1 Epist. 2:23.

David says, “vain things,” in which expression he comprehends the purport of nearly the whole of the Psalm. For he wishes to show that Christ, who is set up as king by God the Father, cannot be hindered nor prevented by all the many and great resisting counsels, attempts, and furies of Gentiles, Jews, kings, and rulers; but all their endeavours are so utterly spent in vain, that they make themselves a derision, and by their very resistance further the kingdom of Christ. As if the prophet wished in this Psalm, as an example, to prove that which he had declared in the first Psalm, ‘That all things whatsoever he doeth, as far as it is understood with reference to Christ, shall prosper.’

For to this tend those words of Ps. 48:4, ‘And in thy majesty ride on prosperously,’ etc. And Ps. 118:25, 26, “O Lord, prosper thou. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” For the prosperity of Christ, as I said, Ps. 1:3, is not worldly, nor carnal, but spiritual. For what man is there, who while Christ was suffering, would not have thought, that he should ever have been one of the lowest men living, and that he was the farthest from being king of all. Who would not have believed, that the meditations of the people were then firmly established, and the farthest from being vain, when they gloried that he was condemned to the curse of the cross by the authority of God himself, and thought that their meditations were established forever? Matt. 27:42, etc.

So necessary always are faith and hope in the works of God, not only in the things that are to be borne, but in those which are to be understood: which are always accomplished contrary to all human sense and apprehension.

And this also is a word of faith — “*Against* the Lord and

against his Christ ;" for they seemed, both to all others and also to themselves, to be acting *for* God and for his Christ. Thus also, at this day and always, the ungodly work against the glory of God, when they imagine they are working for the glory of God. And it is thus that God governs the world, making all its wisdom foolishness. So that they who are considered to be acting for the glory of God, are acting to the blasphemy of him ; and those who are accused of blaspheming him, are the very persons who are truly contending for his glory. Thus his way is in a hidden path, in faith, and in holiness ; but 'the court which is without the temple is not measured, because it is given to the Gentiles,' saith John, Rev. 11:2.

David saith, first, "against the Lord," and then, against his anointed." For all sin first of all offends God. Because he is not only righteousness, but also the love of righteousness ; and all who love righteousness receive it from him. If it did not offend God, it would not be sin.

But he moreover orders his words thus, that we may learn for our consolation and exhortation, that we never suffer any injury, but what offends God first, and more than it does us ; and that such is the care of God our Father over us, that he feels every injury done to us before we do, and levels a greater indignation against it. This David holds forth to us, that we may keep ourselves from all feeling of revenge ; nay, that we may rather pity those whom we see rushing, on our account, upon such majesty, unto their own perdition ; while they not only do not in the least injure us, but merely horribly destroy themselves. For God saith, "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye," Zech. 2:8.

Hence the prophet, sympathetically grieving from his heart, as it were, at their rashness, first begins in an interrogative form, asking why they raged ? why they made themselves a derision ? why, like fools, they attempted impossibilities. O that they would be wise and understand ! And then, in a way

of exhortation, he admonishes them that they should attempt solid things instead of vain, that is, that they should rather receive instruction and understanding, and be brought to serve Christ in fear.

Moreover, by the very tenderness of his words, he sufficiently extenuates their vanity and fruitless attempts, saying they ‘raged,’ ‘meditated,’ ‘stood up,’ and ‘took counsel together.’ As if he had said, ye may rage but ye cannot destroy; ye may meditate, and talk, and prate much, but ye will effect nothing. Let your kings decree, but it shall not come to pass; let your rulers take counsel, but it shall come to naught. What therefore is left you but that in vain ye wish to accomplish many things, that ye attempt mighty things, and try every means, and at last see nothing accomplished, but every thing turns out just contrary to your wishes?

Thus God will permit ragings, counsels, and attempts, to be stirred up by the ungodly against the godly. But all these are like the swelling waves of the sea, which swell and rush toward the shore, as if they would utterly overwhelm it; but, before they reach the shore, they sink into themselves and vanish, or are dashed on the shore with a vain and empty noise. For the righteous man, like the shore, being firmly established in the faith of Christ, confidently contemns all these unavailing threats, and these swellings that will soon sink into naught; for he knows that Moab is exalted in pride and that his presumption is greater than his strength, and his indignation than his power, as Is. 16:6, and Jer. 48:28, etc. teach

And by this cross the ungodly are tortured according to their deserts, for it is a dreadful torment to wish to hurt all and to be able to hurt none. And hence, the heathen have said concerning envy,

Sicilian tyrants never could invent
A torment, like an envy-bitten heart!

And this has so much the more wonderful effect in Christian matters; because, the ungodly not only are tormented

and cannot hurt any one, but, in the counsel of God, are compelled by this their nature and their vain contrivances to promote, more than any thing else does, that which they attempt to hinder; so that his friends cannot profit a Christian so much as his enemies do.

V. 3. — *Let us break their bonds (bands) asunder, and cast away their cords (yoke) from us.*

These words ought to be connected with the preceding, they ‘raged,’ ‘meditated,’ ‘stood up, etc.;’ but the sense may be, they raged and roared, they meditated this, they decreed this, they concluded this,—to therefore take their necks from under the yoke of God and of Christ, to break their bands asunder, and to say, “we will not that this man reign over us,” Luke 19:14; or Job 21:14-15, “Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?” For the prophet represents the wicked as thus speaking.

Some are of one opinion and some of another; but I follow this sense of the passage. And therefore, as to the scruple that stands in the way of many that he here uses the plural number “their;” that is all to be referred to the Lord and to his Anointed, who are without doubt two Persons, the sender and the sent. As if he had said, they rejected both the messenger and the king, and would not receive their counsels.

And that by “bonds” and “yoke” are metaphorically or allegorically signified the divine commandments, Jeremiah proves in this passage, “Then I said, surely these are poor; they are foolish; for they know not the way of Jehovah nor the law of their God. I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they know the way of Jehovah, and the justice of their God: but these, with one accord, have broken the yoke and burst the bonds.” Jer. 5:4-5. And again, “For of old time thou hast broken my yoke and burst my bands,” Jer. 2:20. Though this passage is corrupted; for in

the Hebrew it is God that speaks in the first person, “For of old time I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bonds;” that the one bond may be represented as being contrary to the other, the one yoke to the other, the way of God to the way of man, and the judgment of God to the judgment of man.

These “bonds” are the commandments of Christ, by which we are taught how to walk in his way. And this ‘yoke’ or these ‘cords’ are his judgments, by which we are prohibited from doing evil. The former is the justification of the spirit, the latter the mortification of the flesh. For there are two things commanded: to depart from the evil, and to do good. The former of which pertains unto mortifying the desires of the flesh, the latter unto doing good works. Nor does it make any difference if these be transposed, and ‘bonds’ be received as signifying the judgments, and ‘yoke’ as signifying righteousness; for the sense remains the same, and when that is held firmly, all contention about words is to be despised.

The whole verse then is allegorical. For by breaking is signified despising and making of none effect, by bonds is signified commandments, by casting away, not obeying, by disregarding, not receiving, and by yoke is signified instruction and the discipline of mortifying the flesh. But when I say allegorical I do not mean, as our moderns use that term, that another and a historical sense is so sought in the passage, contrary to what it really means; but, that its true and proper signification is expressed in a figurative way.

For always note, that to the perverse all things are perverse, as it is written, “with the perverse thou wilt show thyself froward,” Ps. 18:26. Thus they call the law of Christ, which is the law of liberty and sweetness, “bands” and a “yoke,” signifying thereby that it is a bondage and state of labour and difficulty, but, on the other hand they believe their law, which is in truth a bondage and state of labour, to be liberty and sweetness. Hence, to the ungodly all things work together for evil; and therefore it is said, Jer. 23:38, “But if

ye say the burden of Jehovah; therefore thus saith Jehovah: Because ye say this word, The burden of Jehovah, and I have sent unto you, saying, Ye shall not say, The burden of Jehovah. Therefore, behold, I will utterly forget you, and I will cast you off: and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you and a perpetual shame which shall not be forgotten, etc.!" For it must of necessity be that he who is pleased with the things of himself is not pleased with the things of God.

And here again there is need of the eyes of faith, for when David says these things he does not intend to say that these ungodly men really meant the Lord and his Anointed when they said, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us;" because, in rejecting Christ, they believed that they were acting for the glory of God and of his law. But the prophet who says, "the Lord and his Anointed" is describing that Lord and his Anointed as rejected by them while they were ignorant of what they were doing. Observe therefore, whether he does not use an allegory throughout the whole verse, in order to show that they pretended one thing and did another, and, in their blindness, exhibited a certain allegory in their conduct, rejecting the Lord and his Anointed at the very time that they pretended most of all to act for their glory.

We may conclude, that David made use of the pronoun "their" in this passage in order that he may both meditate on, and understand, the Lord and his Anointed within himself, and also at the same time set forth their open contempt of the Anointed in not considering him worthy of that name, much less acknowledging him to be both Lord and Christ.

Thus far, therefore, has the prophet been describing the attempts of the ungodly in refusing to have *him* appointed king whom God had already set up; wherein they plotted not only against Christ, but much more against the appointment of God. Which same thing was exemplified in the case of David and Saul; for David was anointed king by the divine

command, but Saul resisted both God and David in this appointment with the most determined obstinacy. And indeed he raged, meditated many things, decreed many things, and often took counsels against him just in the same way. But as all his presumptive attempts were vain, so were also all those of the Jews and gentiles against Christ. It now follows;

V. 4. — *“He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh (at them); the Lord shall have them in derision.”*

This tautology or repetition of the same thing, which is frequent in the scriptures, is a sign of the thing being established; according to the authority of the patriarch Joseph, Gen. 41:32, where, having interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh, he said, “and for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh, it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.” And therefore, here also, “shall laugh at them” and “shall have them in derision” are a repetition, to show that there is not a doubt to be entertained that all these things will most surely come to pass.

The gracious Spirit does all this for our comfort and consolation, that we may not faint under temptation, but lift up our heads with the most certain hope, because “he that shall come will come and will not tarry,” Heb. 10:37. Wherefore, although in all human modes of expression tautology is a defect and deemed superfluous, yet, in the things of God it is most highly necessary; because, “hope deferred,” as the wise man saith, “maketh the heart sick,” Prov. 13:12, that true hope, I mean, which labors under sufferings and the cross; for all delay is tolerable to those who are laboring in the sufferings of Christ. Therefore, they have need of the all-firm and all-sure promise of God to support them.

And as, on the one hand, consolation cannot be sufficiently pressed upon the afflicted from the promises of good things, so, on the other, terror cannot be sufficiently thundered against the insensible, the hardened, and the unbelieving, from the threatenings of evil things. Therefore, in these things there

is need of tautology, that the ungodly may be hurled into terror by sure and certain denunciations. For as the former have always too much fear and too little hope and confidence, so the latter have always too much security and hope without any fear; as it is written, Ps. 36:1, "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Hence the latter want the fear of God, but the former want a hope in his mercy; that thus, the middle and right way may be preserved which is thus described, "Jehovah taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his loving kindness," Ps. 147:11.

These things, therefore, are written for our sakes, "that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope," Rom. 15:4. For what is here written with reference to Christ is applicable to all Christians, for whoever sincerely desires to be a Christian, especially if he teaches the word of Christ, will bear with his Herods, his Pilates, his rulers, his kings, his people, and his heathen, who rage against him, meditate vain things, rise up, and take counsel together, against him. For if these things are not done by men, they will be done by devils, or at least by men's own consciences, and certainly in the hour of death; and then there is need of our remembering this and the like consolations, "He that dwelleth in the heavens shall laugh at them; the Lord shall have them in derision," and of standing firmly in this hope and being moved by no circumstances whatever.

And, that the confidence of the afflicted may be the more firm, he emphatically saith, "shall laugh at them" and 'shall have them in derision.' As if he had said, so certain is it that they attempt vain things, although those things may appear to all human sense to be the most firmly established that the Lord will not deign to resist them as in any great and serious matter, but, as in a trifling matter and a thing of naught, he will "laugh at them" and "have them in derision." As it is written also, Ps. 37:12-13, "The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord will

laugh at him; for he seeth that his day is coming.” And it goes on to say that our adversaries are not only to be cut down but to be held in derision.

O what a power of faith is required in all these words! For who would have thought, while Christ was suffering and the Jews triumphing, that God was laughing at them all the while! And so also, while we are oppressed, how shall we believe that God is holding our adversaries in derision, when it seems to ourselves that we are held in derision both by God and men?

But, as I have said, this derision is divine. For God made the Christ-murdering Jews and Gentiles a derision to the whole world by raising Christ from the dead and making, out of his despairing kingdom among that one people, a kingdom that shall flourish eternally over all creatures, thus turning all their endeavours into an event the directly contrary of what they expected; so that we can sing, Ps. 113:4, “Jehovah is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens;” and yet, that same God was humbled under all the Jews and his ignominy went even under the earth. Therefore, as in the preceding verses the passion and death of Christ are prophesied, so in this verse his resurrection is predicted, though by a somewhat obscure allusion.

But what is the intent of these words “He that sitteth in the heavens?” It sets forth the quiet and wonderfully hidden Judge for the raising of our hope. He sitteth in the heaven, who is concerned for us. He sitteth there in quiet and safety. Though we are distressed he is not distressed whose care we are. We are tossed to and fro, but he sits unmoved that the righteous may not be tossed to and fro for ever. Ps. 55:23.

But his sitting in heaven is so secret and hidden, that unless thou be in heaven thou canst not know and understand it. Thou art suffering upon earth, in waters, and under all creatures, and the hope of help is denied thee by all and in all things, until, rising by faith and hope above all these things, thou

mountest up to reach unto him that sitteth in the heavens; and then thou also sittest in the heavens, but in faith and hope. Here therefore it is, that the anchor of our heart is to be cast in all tribulations, and in this way all the evils of the world will not only be made easy to be borne, but will become a derision.

V. 5. — *Then will he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure;*

That which has been said concerning tautology in the preceding verse holds good also in this. For to the insensible and haters and despisers of God, enough that is terrible cannot be said. For that Leviathan, Behemoth, describer in Job 41:17-19, ‘esteemeth iron as straw, darts as stubble, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee, sling-stones are turned by him into stubble,’ etc. Though this perhaps may not be considered as tautology.

When then does he “speak to them in his anger?” or what is his anger? It is then, when he has them in derision. This we shall see when we inquire from the scriptures what it is for God to speak in his anger. Jeremiah saith, chap. 18:7, ‘I will speak suddenly against a nation and against a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it,’ etc.

Therefore, “to speak in anger” is to root up and to destroy; and this is what came upon the Jews, who said, “the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not,” John 11:48-50. All these vain meditations the Lord had in derision, until that which the wicked feared came upon them; for the Lord rooted up, pulled down, and destroyed them by the Romans. This “anger” and “hot displeasure” of God, therefore, are the fury of the Romans. Hence, Is. 10:5-6, “Ho Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, the staff in whose hand is mine indignation. I will send him against a profane, that is, an hypocritical and dissembling nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a

charge," etc. Which words, according to my judgment, are spoken of the Roman army. For when he saith "I will give him a charge," it is the same as is said in this verse, "shall speak unto them;" because all things are done by the command and Word of God, as it is written, "He spake and it was done," etc. Ps. 33:9.

Wherefore, these words "shall speak" are to be taken absolutely in this way: He shall speak, that is, he shall decree, command, and ordain by his word; but it shall be against them, and not in their favor; and therefore, not in mercy but in wrath. For he speaks also against the righteous and his own children, when he commands the cross and death to be brought upon them, according to that of 2 Sam. 16:10, "Jehovah hath said unto him, curse David," but in mercy. And if the preposition 'unto' be changed into 'against,' and the verb 'speak' into 'command,' the text will be more clear, — "Then shall he command against them in his anger."

Nor will he only pull down and destroy them, he will also distress them; for he shall consume them outwardly by arms and inwardly by dread. And indeed he distresses his own children also and terrifies them with alarming fears; as was the case with Christ in the garden. But he distressed the Jews while they were in the act of being destroyed and slaughtered by the Romans, with a perpetually foreboding dread. For it is impossible that the ungodly man, when drawing near unto death, should not be under unceasing dread and apprehension. It would have been a light punishment if they had been destroyed only, but their having been destroyed in anger was that which increased the horror of their calamity; and, what was the most awful of all, after having been destroyed and slaughtered, they were destined to be punished in wrath and to be launched through death into eternal horrors.

Behold, therefore, what a catalogue* of dreadful punish-

*Weimar. catalogum for catalogum.

ments are prepared for the murderers of Christ. First, being stripped of all their glory, in the pride of which chiefly they raged against Christ, they are made a derision to God and to all men, and see themselves surrounded by ignominious shame on every side, which is no small calamity to proud and envious men. Secondly, deprived of every thing that could afford them any help, they are laid waste, rooted out, and destroyed; so that they have not, even with respect to their bodies, the least degree of comfort. And lastly, the sum of all their calamities is that tribulation and anguish will torture their souls to all eternity.

Thus, they are utterly destroyed in their fame, in their bodies, and in things eternal; and there is not one creature, nor God himself, propitious toward them. Here then, I ask, who would not pity his enemies, who would not lament for them, who would not endure all things for them, and even from them, when he firmly believed that all these intolerable evils hung over their heads? For only observe the order of these evils.

First, they are laughed at and held in derision, while all their glory is turned into the deepest confusion, which is the greatest thing they possess. Secondly, they are destroyed and deprived of all their property and patrimony, which is another possession. Finally they are terrified with dreadful apprehensions, all hope and confidence of spirit being taken away, which is their inward and last possession. And these are they who are made like dust before the wind. And again you see that the punishment of the wicked is here described as being fear and horror. For as the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and safety, so, of necessity, hell must be sin, dread, and horror.

V.6. *Yet I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.*
Rcv. Ver.

V. 6. — *Yet am I set by him as king upon his holy hill of Zion (Vulgate).*

Here the person is changed, for it is not David now speaking in his own person, but it is Christ that speaks. The Hebrew, however, rather makes it to be the Person of the Father speak-

ing and saying, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." But I do not think this a matter of so much moment that there should be any contention or dispute about it, because each sense is equally good, except that the Hebrew text, by a figure of speech very usual in the scriptures, rather favors that reading which gives the authority to the Father, according to that of Ps. 110:1, "Jehovah saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand," and that of Ps. 89:27, "I also will make him my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth." Stapulensis thinks that it may be rendered "But I have anointed my king," resting upon those words of the believers, Acts 4:27, where they say, 'Against thy holy Servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint were they gathered together.' But those believers seem to have taken the word "hast anointed," not from the present verse, but rather from the second, for citing that, they had said just before 'against his Christ,' ver. 26, which is the same as saying against his anointed, and which, from a holy desire to confirm the truth, they repeat in verse 27. As if they would say, most truly he is Christ, and the Anointed, whom thou hast anointed, that is, whom thou has made Christ.

According to my poor way of judging, I think that "my holy," if the Hebrew did not counsel us to couple it with Zion, does not inappropriately apply to Christ; so that the sense may be, "I have set my king upon my hill of Zion," not an indifferent person, but him who is my "holy one" anointed of me by the "Holy One of God," and, the Holy One of Israel, as in Ps. 16:10, "Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." And Ps. 89:18, "For our shield belongeth unto Jehovah; and our king to the Holy One of Israel." But the Hebrew, as I have said, has it "my holy mountain."

The meaning of the passage therefore is, They have gathered themselves together against me and my King, and would not that he should reign over them. But my counsel shall stand and I will perform all my pleasure. Who is able to stand before me? They have killed him, but I have set him up as King!

They have withdrawn themselves from under him, but I have placed my holy hill of Zion and all the kingdoms of the earth in subjection to him! Thus, they are laughed at and held in derision, and openly shown to have meditated vain things!

This verse strikes at the general doctrine of pride and arrogance, than which nothing more insolently prevails at this time in the church of Christ. For Paul thus applies this text, Heb. 5:4-5, "And no man taketh the honor unto himself but when he is called of God even as was Aaron." So Christ also glorified not himself to be made a high-priest, but he that spake unto him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." And again, Ps. 110:1, "Sit thou on my right hand." And this is what nearly the whole of this present Psalm inculcates; which describes all the things of Christ as ordained of the Father, and not arrogantly assumed or courted by Christ. Whereas, our decrees have now for many years scarcely been employed about any thing else but dignity, power, privileges, and a great and stinking filth of ambition, without any appointing or ordaining from God.

The church of Christ is called "Mount Zion," because it was there begun and instituted by the sending of the Holy Ghost. And although it is confined to no particular place, yet it was necessary that it should have a beginning from some certain place. And from thence it was spread throughout all the earth, that the words of Christ, John 4:2, might be fulfilled, "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father." Thus new, the church has every place and yet no place.

And, under the influence and teaching of the Holy Spirit, such a modesty was preserved by the Jerusalem church, that it never contended with other churches for precedence and dignity, as the Roman and Constantinopolitan churches did, in a long and scandalous warfare; whereas, if precedence be considered, this church ought to have been preferred by all right to every other, both because Christ was its high priest and

appointed King by God the Father, and because the true church rose there, from which all other churches sprung, which is the mother of all others, and in which all the apostles and disciples, the elders as it were, were born. But God would not permit her to arrogate to herself any supremacy, that he might show us how he reprobated such arrogance, and how he forbade such to be assumed by any church whatever, even by his own to whom it was due.

This I say not that I would condemn the supreme dominion (monarchiam) of the Romish church, but because I detest that it should ride with force and oppression and that it should usurp its authority by virtue of the command of God, when it is established by the mutual agreement of the believer and by the bond of love, so that it is a dominion not of a commanding force but of serving love. This arrogance I reject, the thing itself I commend. Gold is not evil but avarice is. The flesh is not evil but the lust of the flesh is. And here has Christ rendered vigilant resistance since he never suffered that the churches of the orient should be subject to this church of the occident.

Therefore the church is called Mount Zion by the figure of speech most common in the scriptures, synecdoche, which speaks of the *containing* for the *contained*, as, the city of Jerusalem for the people of that city. Nor is it so called on that account only, but also as conveying an allegory in its *name, nature, and form*.

The *name* Zion signifies ‘a distant view’ (*speculam*), a watch tower or observatory. And the church is called ‘a distant view’ (*specula*), not only because it views God and heavenly things by faith, that is, afar off, being wise unto the things that are above, not unto those that are on the earth; but also, because there are within her true viewers, or seers, and watchmen in the spirit, whose office it is to take charge of the people under them, and to watch against the snares of enemies and sins; and such are called, in the Greek, bishops (*episcopoi*), that is, spy-

ers or seers; and you may for the same reason give them, from the Hebrew, the appellation of Zionians or Zioners.

The *nature* of Zion is that it is a mountain. So also is the church before God lofty in spiritual height, on account of the greatness of her virtues, gifts, graces, acts, etc. wherein God has highly exalted her above all the power, wisdom, and righteousness of men; according to Is. 2:2 and Mic. 4:1, "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills." All this I am obliged to interpret again and again on account of those carnal dreamers, who are always twisting the words of God to favour worldly pomp. But the church is exalted above all the power and height of the world, not in riches and influence, but in faith, hope, love, and all those virtues that despise the riches and power of the world. For though the church is now exalted in all this worldly wealth and power, it does not properly belong to it, but is a certain strange Leviathan that has intruded; and therefore, it has in the same proportion decreased in the wisdom of the word of God, in holiness of life, and in the virtue of works, etc.; for these are the true hills and mountains of the church of Christ, in which the world cannot rival her, and in which she has ever surpassed the world if she who does such things may be called the church, for it is certain that the true church of Christ ever remains the same.

Again, the *form* of Mount Zion was this. It rose into a summit on the south and had the city of Jerusalem on its declivity on the north side, the city itself being situated on the side of the hill. Thus Ps. 48:2, "Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."

Thus the declivity and acclivity may signify the internal warfare of the people of Christ between the flesh and the spirit: the flesh tendeth downward to the north, the spirit upward to the south. Or, it may represent those two kinds of life, the

working and the viewing. The one tends downward to an employment in temporal concerns for the benefit of others; the other ascends upwards unto heavenly things, and is always on the hill of view, where the bishops or seers are, who excel in the word and in life, and who draw others unto them. In the midst of whom stands Mount Moriah, the Mount of the temple, and that is Christ, both God and Man, who embraces both these lives, and decrees in the midst of both; even as Mount Moriah, situated in the midst of Jerusalem under Mount Zion, represents in a figure.

For this Mount Moriah, that is, the Mount of Vision, is that on which Abraham offered up his son and on which afterward Solomon built the temple. And thus also, we are offered up on Christ like Isaac, and are built up by the true Solomon a temple of God. For Christ is our Mount Moriah; because God sees no one, and acknowledges no one, who is not offered up and built up on this place, that is, on Christ, and in Christ, for the eyes of God are on this place only. And therefore, he is called the Mountain on which God will look for ever, Gen. 22:14. Whereas, the heretics and the proud raise to themselves other mountains of vision, or rather, of no vision, while they wish by their righteousness and works to merit the respect of God.

And this mountain is called “holy,” not from that figurative holiness of the law and external consecrations, for these things are spoken in the spirit. And therefore, not being content with saying “holy mountain,” God adds “my.” As if he had said, the mountain which is holy from my holiness; not that holiness by which the stones, wood, and coals are sanctified, but by which the mind and body are sanctified through the unction of the grace of the Spirit and purified day by day through faith, hope and love. For that is “holy” which is separated from every profane use and dedicated to sacred and divine uses only. This separation is made ceremonially and literally by high-

priests who are men, but which, in truth and in spirit, is wrought by the Holy Ghost being shed abroad in our hearts.

By all these things God manifestly distinguishes the kingdom of Christ from every other kingdom. For it is concerning this king only that he says, "I have set," or "I am set." And, as the person speaking is the invisible, spiritual God, it shows that the appointer of this king is a spiritual appointer, for God appoints all other kings not by himself as here, but appoints men by the instrumentality of men, the visible by the instrumentality of the visible. Therefore, the kingdom of Christ is not of this world, but in spirit and in truth. And he says also "my king, not a king of men, or whom men have appointed. Wherefore, Christ is a king in spirit and before God.

And moreover, although he is set upon the hill of Zion, yet to "hill of Zion" there is added "my holy," or "his holy," that the kingdom of Christ may be understood to be the people indeed of Zion, but that people who are made "holy" by a spiritual holiness.

Here you again see, that the church of Christ does not consist in the power, nor in the wisdom, nor in the dignity of the world. Though there are some who pratingly affirm, that outside of this new monarchy there is no Christian. Whereas the power of such a monarchy has nothing whatever to do with spiritual holiness.

V. 7. — *I will tell of the (declaring his) decree, Jehovah (the Lord) said unto me, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.*

The Hebrew in this passage begins this seventh verse thus, "I will declare the decree: Jehovah said unto me," all which agrees, and, according to my judgment, is intended to let us know particularly what "decree" it is, of which he would here be understood as speaking, and which he says he will declare. It is that which he immediately adds, "Jehovah hath said unto me, thou art my Son," etc. This, saith he, I have given unto me as a decree, and unto this I am appointed King, that I might

declare unto all that I am the Son of God: for I ought to glorify my Father. And this is the scope of the whole gospel, that Christ is the Son of God. As in Matt. 16:15-16, "Who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And upon this rock the church is built.

Hence Paul saith, 1 Cor. 1:24, 'But we preach Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God.' And Christ himself throughout the whole Gospel of John does nothing else than manifest himself to be the Son of God, always speaking of God as his Father. And this was what was brought against him at his crucifixion as a capital crime. For Christ came to plant and establish that faith whereby men believe him to be the Son of God. And this faith is the fulfilment of all laws, the righteousness that endureth for ever, the work of praising God, the mortification of the flesh, the quickening of the Spirit, the victory over the world, the victory over the flesh, and the victory over hell! as he himself saith, Matt. 16:18, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And so also John 8:24, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." And again, John 6:47, "He that believeth hath eternal life.")

Hence, the epistles of the apostles are full of the doctrine of faith, because that doctrine is eternal life, as John saith, chap. 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son, hath eternal life: but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." And again, chap. 12:49-50, Christ saith, "For I speake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal," etc. It is fully manifest, therefore, that he declared the commandment of God, that is, faith in himself as the Son of God unto the salvation of all who should receive him and believe on his name, etc. John 1:12.

*) St. Louis Walch gives John 11:26, "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

But you will say, if this was the design of the holy Spirit, why did he not make use of plainer words, in this manner, 'I will declare the command of God, that I am his Son, and that this day he has begotten me,' etc. I answer: The Holy Spirit is ever like himself. For thus, Christ, throughout the Gospel of John, whenever he is speaking of his own divinity, always observes to bring in the authority of the Father, and to refer unto the Father all that he himself is. "I speak not from myself," John 14:10, "My teaching is not mine," John 7:16, "The Father abiding in me doeth his works," John 14:10. Together with many other scriptures of the same kind.

Thus also here, when he says that he will declare, by the decree of the Father, that he is the Son of God, he first introduces the Father as speaking unto him, in order that we may hear more the Father in the Son speaking of the Son, than the Son speaking of himself. So that the sense is, 'I will declare the decree of God, that I am the Son of God. But I will not do this by my own authority, lest I should seem to boast of myself. Nay, I will rather declare unto you what the Father has said of me, that ye may hear him speaking of me, who commanded me to declare that which he said unto me; that thus ye may believe me concerning myself upon his authority.'

And observe also this change of the persons. At one time it is the Fathers words; at another, the words of the Son, declaring the words of the Father concerning himself, which is a holy and sacred diversity, commanding unto us the nature and equality of the Godhead in a more holy manner than I, from my impurity and unworthiness, dare to set forth any farther. In a word this Psalm is one of the most important Psalms of the whole Psalter. This is sufficiently proved upon the authority of the apostle Paul, who, when speaking of the divine generation, says, Heb. 1:5, "Unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"

Now every one will observe for himself that the words of the Father express an *only* begotten Son. ‘He said unto me *only*, not unto many, Thou art my *holy* Son.’ Distinguishing most certainly by such remarkable and particular words this one especial Son from all others, concerning which, Ps. 89:6 saith, “Who among the sons of God is like unto Jehovah? As if he had said, there are many sons of God but only One among them who is God. And who is like unto him? And again, ‘I have begotten thee,’ ‘I only,’ ‘thee only,’ etc.

And how discerningly and worthily have all the holy fathers interpreted this passage, “This day have I begotten thee?” that is, in eternity. For that is an eternal generation which is born, and will be born, without end. And to be a Son, is to be born of a Father. But Christ neither began to be born, nor will ever cease to be born, but is ever being born in a present nativity. He is rightly said therefore to be begotten “to-day,” that is, being always begotten. For “to-day” implies neither a yesterday nor a to-morrow, but always a present time, a to-day. As is said, John 8:58, “Before Abraham was I am.”

Where are ye now, ye miserable, proud mortals, who ambitiously seek, or hold the place of this king in the church? who declare not the command of God, nor preach Jesus Christ the Son of God crucified for the salvation of them that believe, but amass riches, wallow in luxuries, and revel in a pompous show of all things? This Son of God who is appointed King does not seek his own, but declares the decree of God, and receives his kingdom, not for himself, but for the salvation of others, to the glory of God the Father.

But this one office of the Word, which is the great duty of bishops, is the one duty that is above all others omitted. And, if there be others who teach in their stead, they teach not the “command” of God, not Christ, but their own fables, or, at best, only the laws and traditions of men. Therefore, believe not that the church, the holy mountain of God is there where Christ does not teach Christ in all purity. For it is a word of

important weight when Christ says, “I will declare the command ‘of God,’ not the command, counsel, and histories of men. And ‘I’ myself will declare it. For if Christ does not speak in us, we shall never declare the command of God of ourselves. He saith ‘I will be in thy mouth,’ Ex. 4:12, and, ‘Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it,’ Ps. 81:10.

Our translation of this passage, therefore, does not in the least differ from the Hebrew in sense. And though a diversity in the reading will sometimes make a little difference in the sense, yet if the same truth be held firmly the diversity in the reading will do no harm; therefore I wish not to be contentious.

This verse distinguishes the kind of doctrine taught in the New Testament from that which was taught in the Old. In the Old the law was taught, which worketh wrath, Rom. 4:15, and increases sin; but now, faith, which worketh the remission of sins and fulfilleth all righteousness. In the former therefore was the manlawgiver and servant, Moses: in the latter the God-lawgiver, Christ, the Lord of all. The former made men to be the servants of sin: the latter makes them free in righteousness.

Not that the law is not taught now also, for Christ saith, Matt. 13:52, that a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of heaven brings forth things new and old; but grace is the peculiar preaching under the New Testament, and the works of the law under the Old. And as there is no one in this life in whom all the fulness of the New Testament is accomplished, so no one can be found, in whom there is not some part of the Old Testament remaining. For this life is a certain passage and transition out of the law into grace, out of sin into righteousness, and out of Moses into Christ; but the consummation will be after the resurrection that is to come.

V. 8. — *Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations (heathen) for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.*

And this also belongs to the “decree” which Christ received

of the Father, who commanded him to declare it. The Lord said unto me, and the Lord commanded me to ask of him the heathen for my inheritance. And this command I will declare, that ye may know and believe that I am appointed, not only king over Mount Zion, his holy mountain, that is, over the people of Israel, but also the heir and Lord of all things; that he who shall hear this command of the Father from me and shall believe it may come unto the Father and be saved.

Here again, you see that the kingdom of Christ was not assumed by him in arrogance, but confirmed unto him by the authority and command of the Father. Hence the ambitious are here so far from having any example or precedent set them, that their vice is rebuked even by the authority of divine example. Nor is this considered a sufficient reproof to their monstrous conduct, for Christ the Lord of all acts and does nothing in the church without the command of God. But these wretched worms of men try and dare all things in their own rashness in a church that is not their own.

. What is the reason, that, on being set as king upon Mount Zion, he is not commanded to ask the kingdom of Mount Zion? and that the inheritance of the heathen is promised him, yet not without his asking for it, nay, being commanded to ask for it? Perhaps, it is because the blessing and kingdom of Christ were promised to Israel in Abraham, but mercy was extended to the Gentiles without a promise. As in Rom. 15: 8-9, "For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy, etc." Thus, the truth was confirmed unto the Jews and the promises fulfilled unto them, but mercy unto the Gentiles was freely and gratuitously imparted. And hence mercy and truth are most frequently coupled together in the prophets. Though it was of gratuitous mercy also that God condescended to make the promise.

Therefore, Zion is given to Christ for a kingdom, but the

Gentiles are given to him for an inheritance upon his asking for them as a gift, as being those to whom the promise was not made. Thus Is. 66:19-20. "And they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren out of all nations for an offering unto the Lord." Hence Israel is the kingdom and we Gentiles are the gift, like the dowry of the daughter of Pharaoh, which Pharaoh king of Egypt gave unto her.

In a word, when Christ is set as king upon Zion, he uses the plainest declarations of it, which at once show that such is the case; but when he is declared to be the heir, he is first commanded to ask, and it is promised unto him as that which shall be hereafter. All which things we see fulfilled in the Acts of the Apostles; for the disciples did not preach the Word unto any but the Jews, until Paul being called from heaven was sent unto the Gentiles. Christ, therefore, being now upon earth, appointed king upon Mount Zion, asks for the Gentiles, and when he reigns in heaven, he receives the Gntiles which were then promised unto him. Again, the words "of me" are not spoken without a particular meaning. They are to show that this kingdom and this inheritance of the Gentiles are conferred on Christ, not by men, nor in any human way, but by God, that is, spiritually.

And this is one of those passages against which they rashly fight, who deny that any are Christians, except those who are under the Pope of Rome. For such endeavor to make God the Father a liar; because, he subjected the uttermost parts of the earth unto Christ, whereas, they hold that all Europe is not yet put under him. What! can there be no Christians there because the Turk or the Scythian reigns there temporally? How then did there exist Christians at Roine under Nero and Domitian? What! are there no bishops there because they do not buy bishops' robes? Are there no priests there because they do not pay annats? What if it be found, that those are the more truly bishops who are the most free from opulence, pomp,

and pride and teach the word of God and oversee the people of Christ? For Paul certainly describes bishops, Acts 20:28, as those who take heed unto the flock and feed the church of God. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God." And though he is here speaking to the elders as Jerome plainly collects from the text, and has shown from the words, 'take heed,' which are, in the original, of a kindred signification, yet cannot the ruling of the church and the taking heed unto the flock be done by the ministry of the Word and prayer only without all that noise and tumult of the bishops which prevail at present everywhere?

Let us therefore, lest we should contract the inheritance of Christ, not accuse the word of this psalm of a lie, either on account of the perfidy of the Turks, or on account of any other multitude of erroneous men. Otherwise, who even among us shall know who are Christians in truth? Do not wicked men abound among us also, while good men are few? The authority of the Word is greater than all our capacity. How much greater, then, is it than all our suspicion and the phantom of external appearance?

Augustine thinks that there is a tautology here, that is, that the inheritance of the Gentiles and the possession of the uttermost parts of the earth are the same, which tautology, as I have before said, is a sign of the thing being established by God, that our faith may rest upon it the more securely, namely, that there are Christians also in other parts of the world, where other apostles have preached, however much wickedness may there prevail.

V. 9. — *Thou shalt break (rule) them with a rod of iron, and thou shalt dash (break) them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*

Here again the vain dreams of the flesh are to be removed out of the way that no one might imagine that the kingdom of Christ is either founded or preserved by iron or arms; because it is written, that he delighteth not in chariots, nor in horses,

nor in the legs of a man, Ps. 20:7; 147:10. And the apostle saith, 2 Cor. 10:4, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal." And the Turks, whom at this day we never seek to conquer by any other means than by the sword, we ought to conquer by increasing the number of Christians among them.

Why do we not attack with the sword also the wicked among ourselves, especially the great ones of the people? But God forbid. The kingdom of Christ consists in righteousness, truth, and peace. By these it was obtained, and by the same it will be preserved. And hence when he said above that he was appointed king, he recommended no other office whatever besides that of the Word, saying, "I will declare the decree of God;" not, I will ride fine horses, I will lay waste cities, I will seek the treasures of the world; but, I will do this one thing, — declare those things which God hath commanded, that is, that Christ is God and Man, which Paul, Rom. 1:1, calls the gospel, saying, "Separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised afore, concerning his Son Jesus Christ, etc."

You see, therefore, that the whole of this verse is allegorical; and not without cause, for it signifies a certain allegory which really takes place in fact and life. For as the word of Christ is the word of salvation and peace, not in the flesh, but in the spirit, it of necessity follows, that it subdues and drives out the safety, peace, life, and ease of the flesh. And where it does this, it appears unto the flesh harder and more unfeeling than iron itself. For wherever the carnal man is savingly touched by the Word of God, one thing is felt, and another is wrought, namely, that of 1 Sam. 2:6-7, "Jehovah killeth and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up. He bringeth low, he also lifteth up."

This allegorical work of God is beautifully described by Is. 28:21, "That he may do his work, his strange work, and bring to pass his act, his strange act." As if he had said, though God is the God of life and salvation and these are his proper works; yet, in order to accomplish these, he kills and

destroys, that he may thereby come unto his proper work. For he kills our will, that he may establish his own in us. He mortifies the flesh and its desires, that he may implant the Spirit and his desires.

And this is the same thing as that which he said above without allegory. "Declaring the command of God." For the Spirit receives the Word of God as a most sweet commandment, and it is then that the holy mount Zion becomes his kingdom, the heathen his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth his possession. But the flesh militates against the command, or Word of God, with the greatest indignation, and will not acknowledge it, because it is utterly and in all things contrary to it. And therefore, it receives the word as a rod, and as iron that breaks it in pieces. And this is the allegory completed, both in the signification of this verse, and in the exemplification of it in fact and experience.

"Thou shalt rule them," is, in Hebrew, THROEM, which Jerome translates, "Thou shalt feed them." But John Reuchlin in his Rudiments gives us many significations of this word, namely, 'to feed,' 'to rule,' 'to consume,' 'to afflict,' and 'to shake,*') or break and bruise in pieces.' And this last signification, as far as I am capable of judging, is the most applicable to the present passage. First, because a "rod of iron," as every one knows, is more fit for bruising and breaking in pieces, than for ruling or feeding. And secondly, had ruling been signified, it would have been sufficient to have said "rod" only. And, for feeding, neither iron nor a rod is rightely adapted. For what can a 'rod of iron' do but bruise and break in pieces? according to that of Daniel 2:40. "For as much as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things;" so also shall this break and bruise all things in pieces. Add to this, that this kind of tautology beautifully agrees with the meaning of the passage, because, it now follows, "thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel;"

*) "Amicus cogitatio in the Basel and Weimar editions.

so that this ruling and this dashing in pieces signify the same thing.

Each of these expressions signifies the humbling of the proud by the Word of God, because, he breaks and dashes in pieces when he terrifies and humbles. The apostle says, Rom. 1:18, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven. Thus those who were converted by the word of Peter and were pricked in their hearts said, ‘men, brethren, what shall we do?’ Acts 2:37. And this is what is called in other places of the scripture ‘rebukes,’ the ‘moving of the world,’ the ‘shaking of the earth,’ etc. But Mic. 4:13, the most beautifully of all saith, “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion: for I will make thy horn iron, and I will make thy hoofs brass; and thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples: and I will devote their gain unto Jehovah, that is, the people themselves, as a spoil taken from the devil, and their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth.” Behold, then, what it is to rule them with a rod of iron: namely, to break in pieces many people with a horn of iron as the prophet here saith.

This “rod,” therefore, is the sacred, holy Gospel of Christ, for this is the sceptre of his kingdom; as in Ps. 45:6, “A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” And Ps. 110:2, “Jehovah will send forth the rod of thy strength out of Zion.” And also Is. 11:4, “And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” And what is the rod of the mouth of Christ but the Word of God, which breaks in pieces the earth, that is, those that follow after earthly things? And what is the breath of his mouth but the same word of his breath, with which he slays the wicked that they might die unto ungodliness and live unto godliness? This is the rod whose top, in the hand of Joseph, Jacob adored, Gen. 47:31.* Heb. 11:21, This is the

*) In all editions Gen. 47, Weimar Edition, in the margin, Gen. 49:22 etc. is not correct.

rod the top of which the blessed Esther touched, Esther 5:2.

It is called a “rod” metaphorically or rather allegorically.

First, because it is slender and easy to be carried, so that it may be borne in the hand, for the yoke of Christ is easy and his burden is light, Matt. 11:30. But the hands of Moses are heavy, so that they were supported by stones put under him by Aaron and Hur, Exod. 17:12, which signifies as Peter explains it, Acts 15:10 the intolerable yoke of the law. Whereas, on the contrary, the hands of Christ are laid even on infants and on the sick throughout the Gospel, that they may be healed and saved thereby.

Moses, moreover, has two great and heavy stone tables, and the Levites also used of old to bear many and heavy vessels belonging to the tabernacle, as we read Num. 4:31; and these Moses calls their “burdens,” and many and heavy burdens they certainly are, considered in themselves; but they are no burdens at all, or at least but very light, when we look at the tyrannizing laws and rites of the present day. For we at this day bear, not tables and vessels, but whole woods and rocks, and such heavy bands of popes, that the whole world together can scarcely endure them. And all this is come upon us justly, because we have cast away from us the “rod” of Christ. And therefore, that has happened unto us which is written, Is. 8:6-7, ‘Forasmuch as this people have refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly: now therefore behold the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the river, strong and many.’

Secondly, because it is straight. For the gospel and the law of the Spirit lead unto life by a straight, direct, and short way. Whereas, the law of the letter, by long and winding paths of figures and works, and, as it were, by a most tedious desert journey, scarcely brings us after all even into the plains of Moab, and never leads us into the land of Canaan, but with Moses it fails.

Thirdly, because the law of Christ is open and revealed, as a “rod” is carried without a case or sheath; but the law of

Moses and the tables were covered and carried in an ark, and so also, every law and every work of the law, without Christ, is but a shadow and a sign of hidden righteousness, and not the true righteousness itself; for that is revealed by the law of Christ, as it is set forth, Rom. 1:17, ‘In the gospel is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith.’

It is called “of iron.”

First, as I said, on account of the flesh, to which the law of Christ is most galling, though to the spirit it is most sweet. For it lays on all the desires of the flesh the cross and death, and imposes on us poverty, humility, and patience. These are the three horns of the cross. For poverty breaks in pieces the lust of the eyes and avarice; humility, the pride of life and ambition; and patience, the lust of the flesh and pleasure. Hence Is. 27:1, calls it a great and strong sword, “In that day Jehovah with his hard and great and strong sword will punish leviathan the swift serpent.”

Secondly, because it is of inflexible and invincible rectitude, or as the blessed Augustine here thinks of inflexible righteousness. For however much many have tried to twist and bend the Word of God to their own interpretations and lusts, yet it has ever remained of invincible rectitude, proving all those to be liars who have attempted to wrest and pervert it. For it is not of reed, like the staff of Egypt, 2 Kings 18:21, and Is. 36:6, “Whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it.” The reed is the doctrine of men, which is shaken by every wind of opinion. But this voice of one crying in the wilderness, as it is not covered with soft clothing, so neither is it, like the reed, empty or shaken with the wind, but full, solid, and of iron. And as to some men attributing to the scriptures a nose of wax, and saying that it is a reed that is moveable and to be shaken, that all proceeds from the doings of those, who abuse the Holy Word of God to their own vain and unstable opinions and glosses, making the Word of God to suit all, and so to suit no one.

Thirdly, as iron conquers and breaks in pieces all things, as Daniel 2:40 says, so, the Word of Christ breaks great things in pieces, that is, humbles the proud; it straightens the crooked, that is, chastises the undisciplined; it bends the straight, that is, bends down the proud; it smooths the rough, that is, cools the passionate; it lengthens the short, that is, comforts the weak and helpless; it shortens the long, that is, terrifies the presumptuous; it widens the narrow, that is, makes the tenacious bountiful; it contracts the wide, that is, makes the prodigal frugal; it sharpens the blunt, that is, instructs the ignorant; it blunts the sharp, that is, makes the wise fools; it keeps off rust, that is, drives out acidity. In a word, it changes every thing that is vicious and deformed into that which is pleasing unto God, as the apostle saith, 2 Tim. 3:16-17, "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

Like a potter's vessel.

David here minglest a similitude with the allegory, to illustrate his meaning the more clearly. So the apostle, 2 Cor. 4:7, uses 'earthen vessels' in an allegorical way to signify the body, or rather the man in the body. He says, "We have this treasure, in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves." And these also are the earthen pitchers of Gideon, which being dashed to pieces and broken at the sound of the trumpets, burn and shine, and rout and pursue the discomfited Midianites. That is, the bodies of the martyrs and saints, being dashed to pieces by various crosses and sufferings, instruct the world by their examples of love and truth, and put the ungodly to flight, together with all their ungodliness. And so, according to the figure, while the flesh or the carnal man is broken in pieces by the Word of the cross and the rod of iron, the confused multitude of sins and lusts are dispersed from before the face of the Christian vir-

tues, and before the face of that grace which exalts the man.

But we are in this passage to attend to the similitude, not to the thing itself. For Christ does not shake and dash his people in pieces and tear their bodies limb from limb, just as earthen vessels, when broken, are scattered into many small pieces. But this material dashing in pieces is an emblem of the spiritual dashing in pieces, that is, though the members of the body are not thus broken in pieces, yet they are dashed in pieces with respect to their evil lusts and actions.

The tongue does not speak those things which please the flesh, the ear does not hear calumny and detraction, the hand does not take that which is another's, nor meddle with those things which are unlawful, and, in a word, the body of sin, which before used all the members according to its own lusts, being on a sudden, by the Word of God, deprived of the members now scattered and disturbed by that Word, exhibits a certain happy Babylon; while, as the apostle saith, Rom. 6:19, the members which were yielded up to be servants to uncleanness unto iniquity, are now yielded up to servants to righteousness unto holiness. And so also in the gospel, Luke 11:22, that "stronger than he," not only takes away the armour, but divides the spoils. For the Hebrew word, THENAPHZEM, signifies, according to Reuchlin, 'thou shalt scatter,' 'thou shalt dissipate,' 'thou shalt disperse.'

Therefore all Christians are "this potter's vessel." First, because, as a potter's vessel is most easily broken, so tender men, not rendered obstinate by the hardening nature of unbelief, easily believe the Word of God and neither resist nor contradict it; whereas, those who are of a hardened mind rush on into evil, as it is said, Prov. 28:12, and shall without doubt be overturned like the mountains, and broken in pieces like the rocks, according to that which Elijah saw, 1 Kings 19:11.

Secondly, because, when an earthen vessel is broken in pieces it becomes utterly unfit for its former use. So that you may see Is. 30:14 fulfilled, "There shall not be found among

the pieces thereof a sherd wherewith to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern." for the prophet is there speaking of the breaking of a potter's vessel with a powerful dashing in pieces, which agrees with the present verse almost word for word; for the ungodly man, being thus converted and turned unto Christ, is rendered quite useless for his former manner of life, saying with the apostle, "The world has been crucified unto me and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14.

V. 10. — *Now therefore be wise; O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth.*

The Latin translator has in explanation of the word, "those who judge the earth" instead of "judges of the earth." Without explaining the word he said "kings," not those who rule. This is of little importance.

Having given a description of the kingdom of Christ, he now subjoins a faithful, holy, and wise exhortation; trying all things and plying every means to bring all, especially the greater ones, into subjection unto Christ.

But how bold and, as we are accustomed to say in our times, how seditious and offensive is this most daring prophet, who lifts up his mouth into the clouds, and to heaven dares to attack, not the lowest of mankind and the common people, but the loftiest personages, yea, kings themselves, and to instruct them, who, being inflated with both their title and their office to instruct the people, and also, from their habits and opinion of dignity, are most unprepared to endure such indignity to be put upon them; considering all others fools, and ignorant, and standing in need of being taught and instructed themselves.

It is easy indeed to make the ignorant common people, who are accustomed to be under discipline, attend to what you say. But to bring down kings, judges of the earth, masters, rulers, teachers, and popes, to a level with the common people, and not only so, but to bring them down to the rank of pupils, after such a long habit of ruling and teaching; yea more, to pass

over the common people in silence, and seek out them only for pupils to be instructed — these things, I say, who can bear to do? Who will not here, like John the Baptist, tremble to touch the head of Christ? Yet he is to be touched and to be baptized in the water of Jordan, as descending to the humble, that all righteousness may be fulfilled, Matt. 3:15; and thus, he who is the highest in majesty, humbles himself beneath the lowest, and he who is lowest, trembles at the humility of his high majesty.

But the benign and blessed Spirit knows that the entire welfare of the common people depends upon their right subjection to those in authority and therefore he admonishes first these in a friendly and fatherly manner, that they follow not their own inclination but that they be more docile to be taught, since they direct not their own affairs, but those of their subjects, and because when they fall into error they bring all their people with them into misfortune, as is said in Matt.. 15:14, "And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit."

But not only because of this reason does he admonish them, but also because he knows, as I have said, that those who are puffed up yith their power and office have always in their mouths that of John 9:34, "Dost thou teach us?" And that of Jer. 18:18, 'For the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet.' And therefore, being puffed up with this inflated and false confidence, they resisted the true prophets, just in the same way as, at this day, all those prating flatterers about the popes, resist every appearance of the truth, because they cannot once imagine, as they pretend, that the head of so high a personage can err, etc. The church cannot err they cry. The pope cannot err. The council cannot err, etc.

Those, however, under the Old Testament were more strictly bound to obey the bishop ,*pontificum*, than we Christians are. For then, they were bound to hear the Levitical priests under penalty of death. But, in our day, we are all priests and

that word of Is. 54:13, is fulfilled, "And all thy children shall be taught of Jehovah," and that also of Jer. 31:34, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah: for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah;" and Paul has plainly given us commandment, 1 Cor. 14:30, "But if a revelation be made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence." Since this is the case under the New Testament, all superiors are so to be heard that every lowest hearer be left free to judge what the higher person advances in those things which pertain unto faith, as far as the law of God will allow, which is a much greater liberty than was allowed the prophets in their resisting the elders of Israel, Deut. 17:8-12. For in the synâgogue, where the priesthood had to do only with external ceremonies, an error in the priests was not attended with peril. But in the church, where it is a matter of the spirit and of faith, it is of the utmost moment unto all to observe whether or not the priest be in error; because, God is wont to reveal unto the lowest what he does not deign to reveal unto the highest, that his church may stand firm in humility in which alone it subsists.

And mark the force of the adverb "now." "Now," saith the prophet, that Christ is appointed king of all. At this time there are two things that will hinder you in coming to the knowledge of the things that are right.

First, it is that Christ, who was crucified by you, who died and was condemned, and even accursed, according to the law of Moses, by the will and authority of God, that is now proclaimed Lord of all lords. It will be the most difficult thing possible to acknowledge him King who died such a desperate and ignominious death. For sense strongly resists such a faith, reason abhors it, experience denies it, and there is no example to support it. This is the height of foolishness to the Gentiles and a stumbling-block to the Jews, unless ye raise your minds far above all the external appearance of these things.

Secondly, this King so reigns as to teach that all things which you have hoped for from the law are to be despised and all things which you have feared are to be loved. He sets before you the cross and death. He admonishes you to think little of every thing human that appears either good or evil, in order to transport you into far different and better things which neither the eye has seen, nor the ear heard, nor has it ever entered into the heart of man to conceive. Ye must die if ye would live under this King; and the cross, the hatred of the whole world, poverty, ignominy, hunger, thirst, and, in a word, all the evils of this world, are to be endured, and cannot be avoided. For this King is one who was himself made a fool unto the world and died; and he also bruises all his with a rod of iron and dashes them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

How then shall this King be endured by him who depends on sense, measures every thing by reason, and stands at the door of his tent, and will not look at the face of Moses? So necessary are instruction and understanding in order to rise above all these things, and, despising things that are seen, to be carried up to things that are not seen, being made wise, not unto the things that are on earth, but unto the things that are above, where Christ is, etc.

Wherefore, the expression "be wise," is, in the Hebrew, ASCILU, which, being put absolutely, signifies 'make wise,' that is as Jerome explains it, yourselves or others, that is, so do, so strive, that ye may be wise, may be wise unto spiritual and heavenly things. In the same way also, Ps. 32:9 speaks, "Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding." And this understanding is not that concerning which philosophers dispute, but is faith itself, which, in times both of prosperity and of adversity, is able to see those things which are not seen.

Therefore, not fully describing those things which they are to understand, he says, absolutely, "be wise," that is, take heed that ye be wise, take heed that ye be in the faith. For

those things which faith understands are not to be described either in name or form. For the prosperity or adversity of present things utterly subverts every man who does not, by faith, understand the things which are not seen. And this understanding comes of faith, according to that scripture, ‘If ye will not believe, neither shall ye understand.’ This is that entering into the cloud, Ex. 20:21, in which is swallowed up every thing that sense, reason, or the mind or understanding of man can comprehend. For faith unites the soul to the invisible, ineffable, unnamable, unimaginable, eternal Word of God, and at the same time separates it from all things visible. And this is the cross, and the nature of the things of God, where it is necessary to preach this understanding.

Augustine receives “be instructed, ye judges of the earth” as spoken tautologically. And these words also are put absolutely, the same as the preceding “be wise;” and the meaning is, be separated from all ignorant and carnal affections and opinions, and all senses and sensible things, that ye think not as children concerning Christ and his kingdom. For the natural man understandeth not the things of God, 1 Cor. 2:14. However, it seems to me, that this ‘instruction’ signifies a turning of the heart from all perishing things, just as understanding signifies the conversion of the mind, and the apprehending of eternal things. The former of which is wrought by the cross in the mortification of the flesh: the latter by faith in the renewing of the spirit.

That “earth” signifies figuratively the men on the earth is too well known to need any exposition, excepting that Augustine seems rather inclined to understand it to signify figuratively the body.

V. 11. — *Serve Jehovah (the Lord) with fear, and rejoice (before him) with trembling.*

A wonderful expression this, and in our eyes absurd. For fear works hatred and a fleeing from the object feared, not serving of it; and trembling militates directly against rejoicing.

David in another Psalm speaks antithetically, wherein we are commanded to "serve the Lord with gladness," Ps. 100:2. What shall we understand, therefore, by these things? Let us hear the apostle Paul, as an intermediate teacher, settle the matter, who says, 1 Cor. 1:21, "For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe." As if he had said, we must be made wise by becoming fools. Thus, in peace and prosperity we do not, as we ought, acknowledge God nor praise him. As in security we do not serve God with gladness, it is pleasing to him that we serve him in fear with gladness, and rejoice in fear.

And in a word, as the world perverts all the things of God, so does God pervert all the things of the world. The whole creation was given to lift up and illuminate man, but he uses it to blind and pervert himself; and therefore God uses the whole creation to blind and pervert man. This is the cross of Christ and that foolishness of preaching whereby he saves them that believe, for the reasoners, the disputers of this world, the wise, the understanding, are offended at, and destroyed by these things.

The meaning therefore of this passage is this: Since Christ the Lord rules with his rod of iron and breaks in pieces the old man with the word of the cross, and that by the will and according to the commandment of the Father, who has put all things in subjection to him, it behooves you to acknowledge yourselves subject unto him, and subject unto him in fear, that ye may patiently and humbly bear his cross, fearing lest, by becoming unwilling to bear his hand and counsel, ye should prove to be reprobates, like those sons of Ephraim, mentioned in Ps. 78:9, "The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle."

And this ye will assuredly do if ye confess that you never suffered unmerited punishment, but that you had deserved

much. For the proud, who seem to themselves to deserve good things only, are secure and are not like Job, ‘afraid of all their sorrows,’ 9:28. Therefore in the time of temptation they stand not but, like the house of the foolish man, mentioned in Matt. 7:26, etc. which was built upon the sand, they fall with a terrible destruction and become worse and worse. Hence this fear in a man’s whole life and in all his works is a great part of the cross, nay, nearly the whole of the cross.

But farther, we are, with the Apostle Paul, Rom. 5:3, ‘to glory in tribulations also,’ and to rejoice in them with trembling. From all this we conclude that there are two kinds of serving and rejoicing in God.

First, a serving in security and a rejoicing in the Lord without fear: these are peculiar to hypocrites, who are secure, who please themselves, and who appear to themselves to be not unuseful servants and to have great merit on their side, concerning whom it is said, Ps. 10:5, “Thy judgments are far above out of his sight;” and also afterwards, Ps. 36:1, “There is no fear of God before his eyes.” These at all times do righteousness without judgment and permit not Christ to be the judge and to be feared by all, in whose sight no man living is justified. Ps. 143:2.

Secondly, a serving in fear and a rejoicing with trembling: these are peculiar to the righteous who do righteousness and judgment at all times, and always rightly attemper both; never being without judgments, on the one hand, by which they are terrified and brought to despair of themselves and of all their own works, nor without that righteousness, on the other, on which they rest and in which they rejoice in the mercy of God. It is the office of their whole life to accuse themselves in all things, and in all things to justify and praise God. And thus they fulfil that word of Prov. 28:14, “Happy in the man that feareth alway;” and also that of Phil. 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord alway.” Thus, between the upper and nether mill-stone, Deut. 24:6, they are broken in pieces and humbled, and,

the husk being thus broken off, they come forth the pure wheat of Christ.

And the emphatic force of the expression “serve Jehovah” I leave to your meditation: he does not say serve yourself, nor your own belly, nor your gold, nor, finally, your own righteousness, power, or wisdom, nor, in a word, any thing whatever that is your own or created; for all these things are a kind of idolatry. Therefore rejoice “in him,” not in yourselves, nor in any creature, but in Jehovah alone. And this thou doest when thou arrogatest to thyself nothing good whatever in any thing of thine own, so as to trust and glory therein, but ascribest every thing unto God, and praisest, blessest, and louest him in all things: ascribing unto thyself at the same time all evil, and fearing and trembling on account of it, and having no confidence whatever therein, even as Job 1:21, said, with respect both to his prosperity and adversity, “Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away, blessed be the name of Jehovah.”

How difficult all these things are thou wilt see if thou consider each time. For in adversity it is a hard matter not to faint, not to complain, not to become impatient, and, from the fear of evil, not to do things, and to leave them undone, contrary to the commands of God; and thus by the fear of God, to overcome the fear of the creature, not to yield to the senses and to sensible objects, but to cleave close unto the Word of the Lord even unto death. For by these things it is proved whether we serve God or not, or whether the will of God is feared more than the violence of any creature. Though, indeed, the trembling before God is more in peril in prosperity than the fear of God is in adversity. Because, in prosperity we rejoice in security, for it is difficult to fear, much more to tremble, when everything goes as we wish.

Consequently, according to my judgment, David has very appropriately connected trembling with rejoicing, and fear with serving; because, serving implies the labor of adversity,

but rejoicing the ease of prosperity, and fear was to be recommended in the former, that he might declare trembling to be necessary in the latter. As if he had said, there is more to be feared where fear is not, and the more pleasantly all things go the more anxiously ought we to fear; and consequently, we ought to tremble when at any time we exult and rejoice more than usual.

V. 12. — *Kiss the son (lay hold on discipline), lest he (the Lord) be angry, and ye perish in the (right) way.*

In the Hebrew the words ‘Lord’ and ‘right’ are not found, though that does no harm to the sense. But the translation “lay hold on discipline” is rejected by almost all. For in the Hebrew it is NASCU BAR, which Jerome has rendered in the Hebrew Psalter ‘Adore purely;’ because BAR signifies also ‘pure’ and ‘elect.’ And the same author in his short commentary has these words, ‘In the Hebrew it is read NASCU BAR: which may be rendered ‘Adore the Son.’ For BAR signifies also a son. Hence we have in the Gospel Simon bar Jonah, Simon the son of John. And bar Ptolemeus, the son of Ptolemy. And again Barnabas, the son of a prophet, and the like.

Burgensis and Lyra render the passage thus, ‘kiss the Son.’ But we no where find that bar signifies ‘discipline.’ And by ‘kiss’ they consider to be signified ‘do homage.’ So that the sense should be ‘kiss the Son,’ that is, hold the King and Lord, Christ, in reverence with humility.

But let us try to harmonize all these renderings. First, a kiss is a sign of reverence and adoration and a way in which we kiss and adore sacred and divine things, as when, humbly prostrating ourselves, we kiss the feet and footsteps of any person in the same way as Mary Magdalene kissed Christ; and therefore, according to this, Jerome has rendered the passage ‘adore purely.’

Secondly, it is a sign of acknowledgment and of a profession of fidelity, as when in doing homage, we are accustomed to kiss the hand, acknowledging thereby that he whom we

kiss is our Lord. Thirdly, it is a mark of the most perfect friendship and affection, as when we kiss the eyes or face of any one, concerning which the apostle commands us, Rom. 16:16, "Salute one another with an holy kiss." And we read that it was with such a kiss as this that Christ was used to receive his returning disciples. Luke 7:45; Matt. 26:49. And, as those who kissed each other thus were accustomed to clasp and embrace each other, therefore, our translation has "lay hold on discipline."

But since David says absolutely 'kiss the Son,' not saying any thing about his feet, nor his hands, nor his face, it is just that we should take this kissing in its full latitude, that is, by kissing his feet, we adore Christ as the Son of God and true God, by kissing his hand we receive him as our lawful Lord and our eternal helper and Saviour, by kissing his eyes or face, we embrace him as our most beloved Brother and Friend and the Bridegroom of our souls. Concerning these three kisses, see Bernard, at the beginning of the Song of Solomon. So that the sense is "kiss the Son," that is, worship Christ who is God with the greatest reverence, be subject unto Christ with the deepest humility, and cleave unto the Bridegroom Christ with the strongest love. Behold, here are love and fear, with humility between to keep both in their proper places. And this is the most perfect service and worship of God.

With respect to the other word BAR, which has been translated 'son,' 'pure,' and 'discipline,' let us bring these renderings in such harmony that faith in Christ is our right discipline. Therefore he who believes in Christ, that is, kisses the Son, truly lays hold on discipline, carrying the cross of Christ in himself, as we read in the Gal. 6:14, 17. For he does not kiss nor lay hold of Christ according to the flesh, but in the spirit; and that he does, when he lovingly undertakes his cross and sufferings, which are the things by which we are disciplined, Heb. 12:7, etc. Therefore our translation, though by no

means correct with regard to the literal meaning of the Hebrew, is yet most agreeable to truth and experience.

Moreover, ‘to adore purely’ touches upon that which is written, 1 Kings 19:18, concerning the adoration of Baal. “Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him (kissing his hand).” In which passage to make a cursory observation, kissing his hand is not in the original, but the same verb NASCA is there used, which is found in this passage and which we now are showing signifies ‘to kiss,’ and which, with reference to Baal, signifies to adore him; though it was in all probability some Hebrew interpreter that added the gloss “kissing his hand” that he might express the mode of adoration used, and afterwards that gloss was by some ignorant author introduced into the vulgate text.

According to this sense of the passage, Job also speaks, 31:27, 28, “And my mouth hath kissed my hand. This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judges; for I should have denied the God that is above.” By which scriptural trope is signified, as Gregory interprets it, a man that trusts in his own works and glories in a righteousness not received from Christ but gotten by his own works and performances. For such a man as this adores and kisses his hand with his mouth, because, he praises himself in himself, and pleases himself with himself, but his soul does not praise God and rejoice in him; and therefore, it is the greatest of iniquities and denying of the Most High, because such an one ascribes to himself that which belongs to God, setting up himself for an idol Baal, adoring himself, and making himself the author of all the good that he enjoys. For Baal signifies an ‘author,’ or a ‘lord.’ Thus, Is. 2:8, “They worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.” But this is the most impure of all adorations. Therefore to kiss Christ, to acknowledge Christ as a Saviour, and to kiss his hand, — this is truly and purely to adore the true and pure Christ, — this

is to adore the Son. And John saith, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," 8:36.

We conclude therefore that the prophets meaning is that men should serve Christ in fear, acknowledging themselves to be sinners, ever accusing themselves, and justifying only God in Christ. But as men may run against Christ, and pretend that they have kept the law, are righteous, have not sinned, and have no need of Christ for righteousness: therefore, opposing this wicked presumption, David saith, do not think that ye are righteous; away with such an idolatrous imagination; make not yourselves equal unto God; trust not in your own righteousness. Yea, kiss the Son, embrace the Son, and his hand, his righteousness, and his salvation shall save you. But if ye do not this he will grow "angry" with your righteousness, and ye shall "perish from the way," or 'Ye shall perish together with your way,' for in the Hebrew it is somewhat obscurely expressed VETHOBEDU DERECH, that is, literally, 'and ye shall perish, the way;' which seems to me to be put elliptically, for 'ye shall perish with your way,' according to that of Ps. 1:6, "but the way of the ungodly shall perish." For I do not see with due deference to the opinions of others, how *they* can perish from the right way, who were never in the right way. But they may be terrified to their destruction, who, pleasing themselves with their own way as being the right way, do not acknowledge Christ the true "way."

For (when) his wrath will soon be kindled (is kindled but a little). Blessed are all they that take refuge (trust) in him.

This passage in the Hebrew belongs to that which precedes. The order of the whole is thus, Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way; for his wrath will soon be kindled. Blessed are all they that take refuge in him.

The meaning therefore is, make haste and delay not to adore Christ, lest ye perish in his anger. And do not deceive yourselves as supposing that he is far from you; but know that his wrath is kindled in a moment, and that he may come

upon you when you little expect him, according to Matt. 24:48, 50, "But and if that wicked servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming. The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of." And so also Prov. 1:27. 'When your calamity shall come suddenly,' etc. And, 1 Thess. 5:2, 3, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." Terrible therefore is this threatening, because, if the wrath of God thus suddenly overtake a man there will be none to deliver.

Finally David concludes his Psalm with a most beautiful remark. This, saith he, is the blessing of all blessings — "Blessed are all they that trust in him." For he therefore suffered, he therefore rose again, he was therefore appointed King, he therefore received the inheritance of all things, that he might save all that trust in him.

And this trust alone it is that justifies without the works of the law, as the apostle teaches in his Epistles to the Romans, 3:28, and to the Galatians, 2:16. But it is a very hard matter to hold fast this trust in the midst of so many resisting adversities and so many alluring prosperities. 'Blessed are they, therefore, who shall not be offended in him,' Matt. 11:6. This is a work of divine grace, and not of human power.

Thus the Holy and Gracious Spirit does not threaten to all eternity, but to all eternity comforts those who are terrified and alarmed. If, saith he, ye fear anger, do not despair, but trust; and "Blessed are all they that trust in him," for he therefore terrifies them that he might bring them to trust in him. Amen.

PSALM III.

A PSALM OF DAVID WHEN HE FLED FROM THE FACE
OF HIS SON ABSALOM.

Why this Psalm is placed before others, which in the order of history were written long before it, is a matter of no consequence with me: for I have never yet found any exact order for the Psalms. Thus the history of the fifty first Psalm concerning the wife of Uriah, was without doubt before the history of this Psalm: and the histories of many other Psalms were before it.

With respect to the design and meaning of this Psalm, it is not my intention to bring forward the opinions and interpretations of all; and yet, out of such a variety I cannot come to a fixed determination in my mind which to choose. I am no friend at all of allegories; especially when I am searching after that legitimate, proper, and genuine sense, which may put an end to contention, and strengthen the instruction of faith.

But, that the meaning of this Psalm is not historical, is manifest from many particulars, which militate against its being so understood. First of all, there is this which the blessed Augustine has remarked; that the words "I laid me down to sleep and took my rest" seem to be the words of Christ rising from the dead. And then, that there is at the end the blessing of God pronounced upon the people, which manifestly belongs to the whole church. Hence, the blessed Augustine interprets the Psalm in a threefold way: first, concerning Christ the head; secondly, concerning the whole Christ, that is, Christ and his church, the head and the body; and thirdly, figuratively concerning any private Christian.

I will let each have his own interpretation. I, in the mean time, will interpret it concerning Christ, being moved so to

do by the same argument that moved Augustine — that the fifth verse does not seem appropriately to apply to any other than Christ. First, because ‘lying down’ and ‘sleeping’ signify in this place altogether a natural death, not a natural sleep. This may be concluded, because then follows, “rose again.” Whereas if David had spoken concerning the sleep of the body, he would have said ‘and awoke;’ though this does not favor so forcibly the interpretation of which we are speaking, if the Hebrew word be closely examined. But again, what new thing would he advance by declaring that he laid him down and slept? Why did he not say also that he walked, ate, drank, labored, or was in need, or mention particularly some other work of the body? Moreover, it seems an absurdity under so great a tribulation to boast of nothing else than the sleep of the body, for that tribulation would rather force him to a privation from sleep and be in peril and distress, especially since those two expressions, “I laid me down,” and “I slept,” signify the quiet repose of one lying down in his place, which is not the state of one who falls asleep from exhaustion through sorrow.

But this consideration makes the more forcibly for us, that he therefore glories in his rising up again, because it was the Lord that sustained him, who raised him up while sleeping and did not leave him in sleep. How can such a glorying agree, and what new kind of religion can make it agree, with any particular sleep of the body? In that case would it not apply to the daily sleep also and especially when this sustaining of God indicates at the same time an utterly forsaken state in the person sleeping? Which is not the case in bodily sleep; for then the person sleeping may be protected even by men being his guards, but this sustaining being altogether of God implies not a sleep but a heavy conflict.

Lastly, the word *HEKIZOTHI* itself favors such an interpretation; which, being here put absolutely and transitively, signifies ‘I caused to arise or awake.’ As if he had said, ‘I

caused myself to awake, I roused myself.' Which certainly more aptly agrees with the resurrection of Christ than with the sleep of the body, both because those who are accustomed to be aroused and awaked and because it is no wonderful matter, nor a matter worthy of so important a declaration, for any one to awake of himself, since that is what takes place every day. But this matter, being introduced by the Spirit as something new and singular, is certainly different from all that which attends common sleeping and waking.

Since then these things are so, it follows of necessity that where the title of the Psalm indicates something historical we are not always necessarily to conclude, that the subject of it is to be understood historically, but that the history was the occasion or event wherein and whereby the prophets were to be instructed by the intuition of the Spirit in things that were come.

Let the meaning therefore of the title of this Psalm be, 'A Psalm, a song of David, revealed unto him, or discovered unto him by the Holy Spirit when he fled from the face of his son Absalom,' that is, upon the occasion of that history and circumstance. For it is not likely that the Psalm was composed by him at the very time of that history and his flight from his son, because he was at that time in a state of the greatest inquietude from anxiety and gloomy apprehension. Whereas, the Holy Spirit requires a lucid and quiet instrument, and it is not under the temptation, but after the temptation, that the man at length perceives and knows the things which have been done unto him. It is most probable, therefore, that this Psalm was composed long after the historical event, when, in quiet meditation, he understood the mysteries contained in that event.

It is moreover to be observed that in all these titles, the word David is in the dative case, which, in these instances, is equal to an accusative with the preposition *ad*; and according to the same mode of expression it is said in the other prophets,

the Word of the Lord came unto this person or unto that, Jer. 1:2, or was in the hand of this person or that, Is. 20:2. And it is peculiar to this prophet to call the Word of God a Psalm, or a song, or instruction, and to adorn it with various other titles, as we shall see hereafter, and then, by putting his own name, David, in the dative case, to signify thereby that the revelation of that same Word was made unto him. Thus does the Holy Spirit command unto us this peculiar prophet and the peculiar prophesies of this book.

But it will be necessary also to be well acquainted with the history contained in 2 Sam. 15:14, and to understand its sacred mysteries.

In the first place, Absalom represents figuratively the people of the Jews both in his actions and in his name. In his name, because Absalom is, by interpretation, ‘the father of peace,’ which is a name that seems to promise something blessed, if all the other attending circumstances did not compel us to understand it as representing, in a bad sense, that peace which the world gives, that is, a hatred of the cross of Christ.

For that people hated in an especial manner the cross and the evils of this world, because the good things of this world and the peace of this life had been promised to them in the law. Hence their cry of “Peace, peace,” Jer. 6:14: whereas, there was no peace, because they neither kept the law nor were able to do it, and therefore, the apostle calls them “enemies of the cross of Christ,” Phil. 3:18.

In the next place, Absalom represents that people in his actions; because he is said, 2 Sam. 14:25, etc. to have been the most beautiful man in all Israel, and that there was no blemish in him from the sole of his foot even unto his head; that his hair was of such an unheard-of thickness, that it was cut every year and sold, and weighed two hundred shekels after the king’s weight; and it is also said that it was sold to the women, who used it to ornament their heads.

Thus is represented that synagogue which shone conspicu-

ously above all other peoples of the earth, which was the glory of our fathers and pre-eminently distinguished for its worship of the one true God, its gift of a knowledge of the law, and of the prophets, and many other things described, Rom. 3:2; 9:4 etc. And then, the very thick hair represents the splendid order of priests and Levites at the head and in the highest place of the synagogue, abounding in, overflowing with, and boasting of their riches and luxuries, concerning whom, Is. 3:17, 24 says, ‘And the Lord will make bald the head of the daughters of Zion: and instead of hair there shall be baldness:’ that is, instead of their splendid priesthood. And again, Ps. 68:21, “But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his wickedness.”

Absalom’s hanging suspended from an oak by his hair between heaven and earth, to be killed in that situation, signifies, that the priests hung by their carnal opinions, and were not impressed by, nor understand either the heavenly or the earthly things of the law. And the hair being shorn and sold to women signifies that those priests being separated in spirit from the head of the synagogue, gave themselves up wholly to their own lusts and pleasures. And yet pleasures are no ornament to any one, though they serve as an ornament and allure-
ment unto many, so that many rulers are addicted to, and sold under pleasures.

More directly to the point. Absalom aimed at the kingdom and the inheritance against his father David, and drove him from the city, using the counsel of Ahithophel, who afterwards hanged himself in his own house. So did the people of Israel against Christ, Luke 20:14. They said, “This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.” Mark 12:7. And so, John 11:48, “If we let him thus alone all men will believe on him.” And they used for this end the counsel and help of Judas, who, in the same manner as Ahithophel did, armed himself with bands of men and coadjutors. And he also, like Ahithophel, descending into the house of his own

conscience, and being filled with despair, hanged himself. For the name Ahithophel signifies, ‘Brother of folly; and this is what David alluded to, 2 Sam. 15:30, when he said, “O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” As if he had said, make him appear thereby to be a fool and an infatuated man indeed.

And David’s going out bare-footed and with his head covered, 2 Sam. 15:30, signifies Christ’s being led out to Golgotha, who also literally went out bare-footed and having his head covered with a crown of thorns and with blood. But, allegorically, the head signified the divinity hidden under infirmity, and the bare feet, the humanity left alone to itself.

The returning into the city after the slaying of Absalom is the resurrection of Christ from the dead and his victory over the people of the synagogue. For it was then that they were smitten upon the cheek-bone and their teeth broken in pieces, as this same psalm sings, for they could no more devour Christ, because he died no more, Rom. 6:9, and death had no more dominion over him. David saith, therefore, in this Psalm,

V. 1. — *Jehovah, how are mine adversaries increased! (Lord, why are they increased that trouble me?) Many are they that rise up against me.*

The scope of this psalm is nearly the same as that of the preceding, and the subject similar. For the psalmist begins here also, by complaining of the vain presumption of the adversaries of Christ, and concludes with a triumphant consolation, saying, “For thou hast smitten,” etc. v. 8; and, “Salvation belongeth unto the Lord,” etc. v. 9. But he here treats of the matter more briefly, and of the patience of the sufferer more fully.

For there are three things that most severely try a sufferer, his solitude, impotency, and despair; which the three opposite things of the adversaries increase and strengthen, their multitude, power, and confidence.

He refers to his own solitude and the multitude of his enemies, when he says, “O Lord, why are they increased that trouble me?” For if it were otherwise, and he were not solitary and left alone, how could he suffer? How could he be tried, how could he be touched, if he were supported with a greater or even an equal number of defenders contending for him? as the devil saw in the case of Job and said, “Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?” 1:9, 10.

He refers to his own impotency and the power of his enemies when he says, “Many are they that rise up against me.” For he would not have suffered even though left alone, if he had not been weak and helpless himself, and oppressed with more powerful enemies. For thus, Samson, though alone, could suffer no hurt from the Philistines whom he destroyed so often. Wherefore it is to be observed as a general rule, that his suffering is nothing who has the means of returning the injury he receives and of revenging it, and who has the power of resisting so as to prevent himself from being oppressed. For the two things that concur to make a sufferer are an inability either to revenge or to resist.

But it is more terrible to rise up against a person, than simply to distress him. Even as it is more terrible to be helpless than to be alone, and more terrible for the enemy to be powerful and invincible than for them to be many. Therefore he saith, they “rise up against me” as in Ps. 2, they are excited, strengthened, and banded together against me, they are too strong for me, they by strength prevail over me, and I, being too weak for them, totter, fall, and am laid utterly prostrate. For this their superior might and his own bereft state are signified by the words “rise up against me.” As it was expressed also in the former psalm, “The kings of the earth stood up,” for that signifies the same power. But that which follows, most strongly and extremely enforces these two points.

V. 2. — *Many there are that say of my soul, there is no help for him in (his) God. Selah.*

Christ certainly heard these words while hanging on the cross, “He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him,” Matt. 27:43; according to that which was foretold, Ps. 22:7-8, “All they that see me, laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, he trusted on Jehovah that he would deliver him: let him rescue him, seeing he delighteth in him.” For certainly this boasting confidence, this laughing to scorn, this derision, this insulting mockery, which are the triumphal song and lauding encomium of the adversaries over an enemy when vanquished and brought to utter despair, are the most bitter and extreme of all tribulations. For to have fallen and entirely yielded to many and powerful enemies, is then the most dreadful when the hope of rising again, though in God himself, is denied; as it is written, Ps. 41:5, 8, “Mine enemies speak evil against me,” saying, “And now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.” And we know that Christ was in this state of despair, not that he himself despaired, but he was despaired of by all, even by his own disciples, that is, he was considered in their hearts as dead, and they had no hope of his rising again, as it is written, Ps. 69:20, “I looked for some to take pity, but there was none.” Nay, for consolation they had nothing but desperation with the most bitter derision, which is diabolical.

In the Hebrew the expression is simply “in God,” without the pronoun *his*, which seems to me to give clearness and force to the expression. As if he had said, they say of me, that I am not only deserted and oppressed by all creatures, but that even God, who is present with all things, preserves all things, and protects all things, forsakes me as the only thing out of the whole universe that he does not preserve. Which kind of temptation Job seems to have tasted when he says, “Why hast thou set me as a mark for thee,” 7:20. For there is no temptation, no not of the whole world together, nor of

all hell combined in one, equal to that in which God stands contrary to a man; which temptation Jeremiah prays against, 17:17, "Be not a terror unto me; thou art my refuge in the day of evil;" and concerning which also the sixth psalm, v. 1, following saith, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger;" and we find the same petitions through the whole Psalter. This temptation is wholly unsupportable, and is truly hell itself, as it is said in Ps. 6:5, "For in death there is no remembrance of thee," etc. In a word, if you have never experienced it, you can never form any idea of it whatever.

Observe also the modesty, yea, the peculiar state of mind of him who is under this temptation. He says, interrogatively, "Why are they increased?" wherein he desires to prove himself innocent, and to show that he suffered undeservedly. Yet he does not dare to accuse them and to address them with the appellation of unrighteous and sinners, but using an ambiguous expression he says, "why are they increased that trouble me?" But at the conclusion, after his victory, he firmly and with confidence calls them sinners and ungodly, saying, 'Thou hast smitten all those that are mine enemies without a cause, as our text has it: thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.' For while he is under the hand of these implacably raging ones, he alone is the sinner, and all others are righteous; and while they are all, according to the will of God, fighting together against him, nothing is heard but this unutterable groan, in which, being imperceptibly aided by the spirit, he inquires and says, "why do so many of them rise up against me, one person?" But David himself in this part of his history, laboring under the same feelings, says, 2 Sam. 15:26, "But if he say thus, I have no delight in thee; behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." O great self-denial, to choose a God even when contrary to him! etc.

At the end of this verse we have the Hebrew word SELAH, which, as it will often occur, we will now consider once for all.

Concerning the Hebrew word "SELAH."

It is not at this day clearly known what this word signifies, or what its true meaning is. The seventy translators have rendered it by the Greek word *diapsalma*, which the sainted Augustine interprets, a pause, an interruption or discontinuation of the psalmody, as, on the contrary, he interprets *sumpsalma*, a making or continuation of the psalmody. He observes also, that wherever *diapsalma* or SELA is put, a change of the subject or of the persons is signified. And with him Cassidorus agrees.

The blessed Jerome to Marcella, adducing many authorities from Origen, thinks that the word more truly signifies a connection of the preceding things in the Psalm with those that succeed, or, certainly, that those things which are said are eternal. Hence Aquila, a most diligent expounder of the Hebrew words, has translated it, 'ever,' or 'for ever.'

Burgensis on the eighty-third Psalm says that it has no signification at all, but is only a supplement to the music, and refers to nothing but the music to which it is joined. He denies that it has any such signification as 'for ever,' that therefore it is found no where but in the Psalms, because they are canticles, and sung or uttered to music, and that it is found in one canticle of Habakkuk, and once in that canticle, in this passage, "And the Holy One from mount Paran." Habak. 3:3.

Burgensis is closely followed by a more recent writer, Stapulensis, who thinks that SELAH was of the same signification with the Hebrews, as the vowels, EVOVAE, are with us in our ecclesiastical responses, which are the signature to a pause or final tone, and signify, "For ever and ever. Amen," but they are not sung with the response, though they are joined to it in the music.

John Reuchlin in his Hebrew Rudiments brings forward two opinions. The one, that of Jonathan the Chaldean, who, he says, translated SELAH, 'in the power of ages.' To which

translation, Rabbi Eleazar added, ‘that to whatever portion of the holy scripture Selah is added, that scripture will have no end, either in this world or in that which is to come.’ The other opinion is that of Abraham Ben Esdras, who thinks that SELAH is of the same signification as ‘verily’ or ‘truly;’ and he says that this interpretation was received by the Hebrews, and that in their opinion also it has no meaning, except that it is joined to the music, as Burgensis has also observed.

Such a diversity of opinions, therefore, causes me to confess that I know not which of them comes the nearest to the truth. But the arguments which move me to dissent from all that they have advanced are these.

First, the examples taken from the Psalms and from Habakkuk do not agree together. For the SELAH which is found in the latter, though it favors the opinion of Augustine, yet it is against Jerome, because it is the subject that is changed, not the person; nor are the things which precede and those which follow connected by it. And yet, this same instance is against them both, because, it is sometimes placed at the end of the Psalms and sometimes repeated in the midst of the words of the same person in the same continued exhortation, as may be seen in the third and fourth Psalms, for at the end of the third Psalm it is said, “Thy blessing is upon thy people, Selah;” and, in the fourth Psalm it is said, “Commune with your own heart upon your bed; Selah. Offer the sacrifice of righteousness.” Here is a continued exhortation of the same person to the same persons, and yet SELAH is found in the middle of it, which is against Augustine, and that it is found at the end of the preceding Psalm is against Jerome.

If the opinion of each be defended in any manner, either with respect to Selah signifying a connection or a distinction of subjects or persons, even then no reason can be given why it should not equally be put in all the Psalms where there is either a connection or distinction of subjects or persons; for it might in many instances be put with greater propriety for

that purpose, than where it is now found, as is obvious to every observant reader.

But that it does not signify ‘for ever,’ as Burgensis rightly thinks, is evidently proved even by the verse now before us, which saith, “there is no help for him in his god. Selah.” For who, I pray, would be so mad as to assert that Christ, or any righteous man, could be in eternal tribulation without any salvation of God? for Ps. 8:5, saith that it was ‘for a little time,’ and short, as we shall hereafter see. And in Ps. 83:8, it is said, “Assur is also joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. Selah.” Did then Assur help the children of Lot for ever? In a word Selah, received in that sense, will accord with very few verses indeed. For when it is said, Ps. 4:2, “And seek after lying,” and, v. 4, “Be filled with compunction on your beds. Selah.” does it signify that the sons of men shall be filled with compunction and shall seek after leasing ‘for ever?’

The remaining opinion, therefore, is that of Burgensis, which I neither approve nor disapprove, though it may be said against him, why should this appendage of music be affixed to these, and not to other passages also?

I, in the mean time, will stand by the septuagint translators, who in many instances seem to have had a certain divine discernment, though they frequently departed from the literal propriety of the original words. As for instance, how clearly and appropriately did they render that passage, Ps. 2:12, “Lay hold on discipline,” which is in Hebrew, though somewhat obscurely expressed, “Kiss the Son?” For truly, to embrace Jesus Christ is to embrace discipline and the cross, and, as Paul is wont to say, ‘to have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings.’ For otherwise, many may confess that they know Christ, while in works they deny him. But, not he that talks about Christ, but he that lives according to Christ crucified, shall be saved. And to live according to Christ crucified, is to be crucified; as Paul says, Gal. 2:20, “I am crucified

with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I but Christ liveth in me." Thus also with respect to their *diapsalmas* what they meant to convey by it as to grammatical signification I know not; I shall divine its mystical meaning.

And they seem after their manner to intimate a mystery when they made bold to interpret it 'a division,' 'a pause,' or 'a resting,' which Selah, in the Hebrew, does not signify, nor were they a little moved by the consideration of the certainty, that no one letter, point, or iota, is written in the scriptures in vain. Matt. 5:18.

According to my bold way, therefore, I imagine this 'pause' to signify a certain particular affection of the heart, which the person feels while singing or meditating on the Psalms, under the movings of the Spirit, which affection of mind, as it is not in our own power, cannot be commanded by us in every psalm nor in every verse, but only as the Holy Spirit shall move us. Therefore, the word Selah is introduced confusedly and altogether without discernable order, to show, that the motion of the Spirit is secret, unknown to us, and by no means possible to be foreseen by us; and that, wherever it comes, it requires us to omit the words of the psalms, that the mind may be in a pausing and quiet frame, and in a state for receiving the illumination or feeling conveyed to us. Thus, in this verse, where that singular temptation of the spirit is spoken of, under which an angry God is sustained, and not the creature only, the prophet is moved to contemplate and dwell upon it with a deep affection of the mind.

Such is my opinion, without any prejudice against the judgment of others. And let this suffice concerning the word SELAH.

V. 3. — *But thou, O Jehovah, art a shield about me (my helper); my glory, and the lifter up of my head.*

David here contrasts three things with three; helper, with many troubling; glory, with many rising up; and the lifter up of the head, with the blaspheming and insulting.

Therefore, the person here represented is indeed alone in the estimation of men, and even according to his own feelings; but in the sight of God, and in a spiritual view, he is by no means alone, but protected with the greatest abundance of help, as Christ saith, John 16:32, "Behold, the hour cometh when ye shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

Hence such an one is weak and oppressed according to outward appearance and in the sight of men, but before God and in the spirit he is most strong; and therefore he glories in the power of God with all confidence, like the apostle, 2 Cor. 12:10, 9, 'When I am weak then am I strong: most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.' And Ps. 68:9, 'Thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.'

Thus according to man and the views of the unwise, such a person is in despair, and there is no salvation left for him in God. But in the "secret place of thunder" he is heard and lifted up, according to Ps. 81:7, "Thou calledst in trouble and I delivered thee, I answered thee in the secret place of thunder." And truly it is in the "secret place" of thunder, for this thunder-storm of tribulation so hides the knowledge of our being heard and of salvation, that any thing but salvation appears in view; and not a hearing God, but an angry God only is felt.

He who has understood and experienced these things will also know well how foolishly and rashly many teach, that man by nature can love God above all things; but there is no man, left to his own nature, who does not dread death and the punishments that follow death, being unable to endure the hell and the wrath of God let in upon him. And God cannot be above all things, unless all these things be overcome by the love of God.

Hence the words contained in this verse are not the words of nature, but of grace; not of free-will, but of the spirit of

strong faith, which, even though seeing God, as in the darkness of the storm of death and hell, a deserting God, acknowledges him a sustaining God; when seeing him as a persecuting God, acknowledges him a helping God; when seeing him as a condemner, acknowledges him a Saviour. Thus this faith does not judge of things as they seem, or are felt, like a horse and a mule which have no understanding, Ps. 32:9, but it understands things which are not seen, for “hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?” Rom. 8:24.

Of the same import with the present passage is that also which is written, Ps. 54:3, ‘For strangers, (behold here are many ,and strangers, that is, ungodly and advarsaries), are risen up against me that is, against me deserted and alone, and violent men have sought after my soul. Behold there are strong ones, and they prevail against the one that is weak: they have not set God before them.’ As if he had said, they do not believe that God is with me, but that I am in despair, and therefore they imagine that I am hated by God himself.

Likewise Ps. 86:14, “O God, the proud are risen against me, and a company of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.” That is, I am left alone and am helpless, and they are multiplied and oppress me; I am impotent and distressed, and they are powerful, and rise and stand up against me. I am in despair, and they say there is no help for me in God; and they are confident and glory in their victory over me.

Hence we see that the life of a righteous man in this world, after the example of Christ, is made up of these three parts of the cross, solitude, impotency, and despair; that he may thus be a proper object to find in God, a helper, a glorifier and a lifter-up of his head. Thus Joshua with the children of Israel, 8:5-14, and by that very means destroyed them utterly. And thus the children of Benjamin were slain by the children of

Israel, Judges 20:32-35, in the same manner, for the latter feigned a flight, and, returning afterwards, slew the former almost completely. For the cross and suffering are most ensnaring, and are most destroying flights to the world, and the devil, the world, and the flesh are not overcome by any powers more effectually than these, for here, by the wonderful counsel of God, while they conquer, they are conquered.

It is clear, however, that "glory" in this passage is to be received as signifying 'glorying,' or 'the thing gloried in,' according to a figure of speech used in the scriptures, whereby it is said, Jer. 17:17, "Thou art my refuge in the day of evil," and also, Ps. 22:9, "Thou didst make me trust when I was upon my mother's breasts," and again, Ps. 142:5, "I said, Thou art my refuge," that is, thou art that concerning which, and in which, I hope. Thus my God is my mercy, thus the Lord is my light and my salvation, etc.

In the same manner that it is said here, thou art "my glory," that is, that in which I glory. So that the sense is, *they* trust in their own glory, and glory in the multitude of their riches, Ps. 49:7, (Vulgate), and their glory is their strength; but I do not glory in my strength, and yet I am not confounded in the impotency which I suffer; but I glory in thy strength, and thy power is my glory, according to Ps. 89:17, "For thou art the glory of their strength, and also Jer. 9:23, 24, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he hath understanding and knoweth me," etc. And so again, 1 Cor. 1:31, "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

Now if any one should wish to enter farther into grammatical particulars, — that CABOD in this passage signifies, properly, that which the Greeks express by *dora*, glory, and the Latins by *gloria*, glory; and that therefore, it is a different thing from *glorying*, which the Greeks are considered to express by *kauchama*, and the Hebrew by PHEER or TIPHERA;

— if the passage, I say, be so received, it will not even then be properly understood, for it will then make God to be the ‘glory’ of the righteous man, in the same way as Paul, 1 Cor. 11:7, calls man “the glory of God,” and woman “the glory of man.” Because, God is glorified, honored, and praised in his saints whom he has redeemed; and on the other hand, they also are glorified on whom God has condescended to bestow so great a benefit, while they confess concerning themselves that they were holpen, not by their own strength, but by the power of God.

But there is to me very little difference in these two words, especially with respect to the present passage, except that ‘glory’ being unconnected with the feelings of the person glorified, signifies the good opinion of others concerning him, and his fame and renown; but ‘glorying’ signifies the affection of mind in the person glorifying, and his confidence in God. Let each one adopt that acceptation of the passage which pleases him most, because, in the spirit and before God, there can neither be glory without glorifying, nor glorifying without glory. For in order to glory and happily boast in God, thy opinion of thyself as to what thou art in the sight of God, must be good, and thou must feel and firmly believe it to be so; and then, God being thy glory, and known and believed to be so, makes thee rejoice and glory in God. For who may not glory, exult, and, despising all things else, unspeakably rejoice, who knows and believes that his opinion of himself, as to what he is in the sight of God, is good? that is, that God thinks well of him, is well pleased with him, is willing to help him, will fight for him, and will give him favor in the sight of all.

But again, it is not enough that thy opinion of thy self as to what thou art in the sight of God, be good; that is, that thou art loved by him, praised by him, and well pleasing to him, that is, that thou art in his glory, unless thou art and believe this. And be assured that, when thou knowest and believest

this, glorying and joy of conscience cannot by any means be wanting. Whence it is certain that it must of necessity be, that the glorifying of God and the glorying of the righteous must go together; as we find it in Ps. 106:47, "That we may glory in thy praise;" so that God is both the glory and the glorying of the righteous, their 'glory' is in God, and the 'glorying' is in their own conscience. For the 'glory' is our good opinion concerning another but the 'glorying' is our rejoicing and confidence in that object of our glory.

You see therefore, what great faith and confidence are manifested in these words. Although, saith he, many rise up against me, imagine evil against me, and think the worst of things concerning me, yet I know that I shall not be confounded. The Lord is my glory, and I firmly trust that his thoughts concerning me are most favorable, and I glory in this my persuasion.

"The lifter up of my head." Though I know that this "head" is received by some as signifying Christ himself, and also the mind itself of Christ, yet this acceptation seems to be figurative. Therefore, according to my bold way, I rather think that it should be received as signifying more simply, and by a figure of speech most common in the scriptures, 'glorification.' So that the plain meaning of the whole passage should be, "The lifter up of my head," that is, he has lifted me up and set me on high, according to 2 Kings 25:27f. "Evil Merodach, king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, did lift up the head of Jehoiachin, king of Judah, out of prison; and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon." Here it is clear that 'lifting up the head' signifies to exalt the whole man, and to place him in a state of glory and in a kingdom. And so Christ, who was represented in a figure by Jehoiachin, king of Judah, when he had died and descended into hell, and it was now said of him that all was despair, and that there was no hope for him in God, was soon after raised up by the right

hand of God from the depths of the earth above the heavens, and above all powers, and was made King of kings, and Lord of lords! Thus it is said in the same manner, Ps. 110:7, "He will drink of the brook in the way, therefore will he lift up the head," that is, shall be exalted above all.

And as 'to lift up the head,' in the scriptures, signifies a kingdom and power, so also, with no dissimilar figure of speech, to lift up the hand signifies to prevail and to be powerful in working, as in Is. 49:22, "Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the nations, and set up my ensign to the peoples; and they shall bring thy sons in their bosom," etc. And so also Ps. 74:3, 'Lift up thy hand against their pride.' And in the same manner, 'to lift up the feet' signifies 'to go quickly,' as we have it, Gen. 29:1, where we read, "Then Jacob went on his journey," which is in the Hebrew 'and Jacob lifted up his feet.' And we are accustomed in the German language also, by a figure of expression, to exhort those whom we would have to go quickly, by saying 'Lift up your feet.'

I have dwelt upon these particulars somewhat at length, because, a great part of the knowledge of what is written lies in the figures of speech; and especially in the Holy Scriptures, which have their peculiar idioms, an ignorance of which, sometimes raises great clouds where there is the clearest day. To have the 'head lifted up,' therefore, is to be exalted to the station of a king, and to be glorified.

Continually would I inculcate and bring to remembrance that these are the words of faith, hope, and love; whereby we are instructed in Christ, that we faint not in every strait, for all these things, as the apostle saith, Rom. 15:4, 'are written for our instruction and consolation, that we through patience might have hope.' For it is a hard matter and a work requiring the power of divine grace to believe in God as the lifter up of our head and our crowner in the midst of death and hell. For this exaltation is a thing hidden, and that which is seen, is only despair, and no help in God.

Therefore we are here taught 'to believe in hope against

hope,' which wisdom of the cross is in this day deeply hidden in a profound mystery. For there is no other way into heaven, than this cross of Christ. Therefore we must take heed that the active life with its works, and the speculative with its speculations, do not delude us: they are each very pleasing and quiet, and are on that account the more perilous, until they be disturbed and tempered by the cross. The cross is the safest of all things. Blessed is he who understands!

V. 4. — *I cry (cried) unto Jehovah with my voice, and he answereth (heard) me out of his holy hill.* Selah.

In Hebrew the verbs are future as Jerome translates them, 'I will cry. and 'he shall hear,' and this pleases me better than the perfect tense, for they are the words of one triumphing in and praising and glorifying God, and giving thanks unto him who sustained, preserved, and lifted him up, according as he had hoped in the preceding verse. For it is usual with those that triumph and rejoice to speak of those things which they have done and suffered and to sing a song of praise unto their helper and deliverer, as in Ps. 66:16, "Come, and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue." Also Ps. 81:1, "Sing aloud unto God our strength." Again, Ex. 15:1, "I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath triumphed gloriously." And so here, being filled with an overflowing sense of gratitude and joy, he sings of his being heard, of his having slept and risen again, of his enemies being smitten, and of the teeth of the ungodly being broken.

This it is which causes the change; for he who hitherto had been addressing God in the second person, changes on a sudden his address to others concerning God, in the third person, saying, "and he heard me," not 'and thou hearest me;' and also "I cried unto the Lord," not 'I cried unto thee,' for he wants to make all know what benefits God has heaped upon him, which is peculiar to a grateful mind.

However that expression of the Hebrew in the future, 'I

will cry,' and, 'he shall hear me,' carries greater force with it than 'I cried,' in the perfect; though the future does not exclude the perfect, but very forcibly includes it. And that I may set forth the mind of the speaker if I can, his feelings seem to be something like this. 'I, who have now experienced how good and sweet the Lord is, how far he is from forsaking and despising those who cry unto him, how faithfully he sustains, preserves, and lifts up all who call upon him, I who have experienced these things, will so carry myself towards him henceforth, that I will flee unto him only with the greatest confidence. I will not be afraid of many hundreds of thousands of people; for I am prepared to hope in him, even though many more and greater things are to be borne than those which I have borne already; as Job 13:15 saith, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." This is that God in whom all may confidently trust, and concerning whom they may be assured no one has any reason to despair. O unhappy they, who, when broken with either the multitude or the magnitude of evils, do not understand how powerfully, how wonderfully, and how gloriously this God saves those that cry unto him!'

That such were his feelings is manifest from what follows, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people." And again, "Salvation is of the Lord." And so also with the same feelings he says, Ps. 34:1, "I will bless the Lord at all times." As if he had said, 'Fool that I have been! for hitherto I have blessed the Lord at one time only, that is, in the time of prosperity and quiet, for I did not know how powerful he was in the time of adversity also; therefore, from this time forward I will bless him in the time of evil also.' For there are some who will praise God at the time when all things go well, according to that word, 'He will praise thee when thou doest good unto him.' Ps. 49:18. But in the time of temptation they so draw back, that they will flee unto any thing rather than unto God. In a word, they cannot even cry unto him, much less praise and bless him.

But we are here taught that in the time of the cross we

ought to sing forth that of Ps. 18:3, "I will call upon Jehovah, who is worthy to be praised; so shall I be saved from mine enemies;" that God may then be precious unto thee and be loved by thee, when he seems to be the most displeasing and the most worthy of being hated. This is the love of God that is pure and solid. And this is what Is. saith, 48:9, "For my praise will I refrain for thee, that I cut thee not off." For the heart is bound and restrained with this praise in the midst of the waters and storms of temptation, that it fall not away from the love of God. But all these things are the operations of the Holy Spirit, and not of nature; they all were perfectly accomplished in Christ, and are wrought and exemplified in all who are Christ's.

As to the words "my voice," Augustine, and after him Cassidorus, think they are not to be understood as meaning the corporeal voice, but 'the voice of the heart,' that is, the voice of the heart that is truly pure; and they are led to this interpretation of the words by the pronoun "my," because, that is not the man's real voice, which is interrupted by impure thoughts when in prayer. I think this is the true meaning of the passage. And yet I do not consider that the corporeal voice is excluded, because, when the feelings are powerful, the voice cannot contain itself, but will burst forth into words and expressions. For even Christ, when on the cross, cried out with the natural voice, and has taught us also to cry out in our straits, so that we may thus cry unto God with all our powers, both inward and outward.

He says, "From his holy hill." I find this "hill" to be variously understood. Some understand Christ here as speaking concerning himself, others concerning his most high divinity, and others give the passage different acceptations. I am best pleased by understanding it to signify the "hill" of his most high divinity; only, you are to observe I speak in my bold way that this "hill" has no name. For in the second Psalm he spoke of the "holy hill of Zion," upon which he was set as King; and therefore the "hill" was there to have a name,

because he could not rule upon it without its being known by name. But this “hill” from which he is heard, is unnameable and has neither form nor name.

And I conceive that by this we are all taught that in the time of temptation we ought to hope for the divine help from above; but that the time, manner, and nature of the help are unknown to us; that so, there may be room for faith and hope, which always rest upon those things that are neither seen nor heard, and that never entered into the heart of man. Thus, the eye of faith looks toward the inner darkness and blackness of the hill and sees nothing; except that it is fixedly directed upwards, expecting help will come unto it from thence. It looks up on high and from on high expects a helper, but what this on high is or what help it shall get it knows not. For although Christ knew all things, yet he was in all things tempted as we are; so that he himself, in a certain sense, and in respect to his humanity, had this hill unknown to him and incomprehensible during the hour of his passion; for he speaks of this same thing also in another place, Ps. 22:3, “But thou dwellest in thy holy place,” that is, in thy hidden and unapproachable secrecy. For as God is ineffable, incomprehensible, and inaccessible, so are his will and his help also, especially in the time of desertion.

But what this “holy hill” of God is no words can express, nor can any one come to the least apprehension of it but he who is brought to experience it by faith, and to prove it for himself in the times of temptation. It is the same as if he had said, ‘He heard from his holy hill, which is the common rendering: he heard me in an ineffable, incomprehensible manner, and in a manner that I never thought of. I know that I was heard from above, but how, I know not. He saved me from above and received me from on high, as we shall hereafter hear him speak, but what this ‘above’ and this ‘on high’ is, I know not.’

It is the same when God leaves us and does not hear us; for we know not whither the Spirit goes, nor whence he comes, though we hear his voice when he speaks to us; as

Christ saith John 3:8, and Job 9:11, "Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not." Christ says, "so is every one that is born of the spirit." He departeth when the Spirit departeth, that is, he is left alone when the Spirit leaves him; and he cometh when the Spirit cometh, that is, he is heard when the Spirit heareth; and yet he knoweth neither the one nor the other, nor how it is wrought upon him.

This is what is contained in the word "holy," which, as I have already shown, signifies separate and secret and, in a word, that which can be touched neither by sense nor by the powers of the natural mind; and into which whoever is taken, is taken into the invisible God, and is perfectly purified, separated, and sanctified. But this is hard to be received by, and unbearable to, human nature, unless the Spirit of the Lord move upon these waters and brood over the darkness of this abyss until the light shine.

Hence the folly lies here, that man endures not the counsel of God, but wants to be helped at the time and in the way that he himself chooses and that pleases him; whereby he makes out of the unmoveable hill of God a hill that has a name, and profanes the holy hill of God by touching it with his own thoughts as much as lies in his power. Ex. 19:12. For such an one is like the horse or the mule: he endures the Lord as long as he feels and understands him, but will not follow him beyond the limits of his own understanding, because, he does not live by faith, but by his own reason. This is proved by examples contained in all the histories both of the Old and New Testaments, as the Apostle has shown us in Heb. 11; in which examples we find that God always saves his saints that they know nothing of the way, manner, and time of the salvation. Salvation comes to all from on high and from above, unlooked-for and unexpected.

Hence, it is very well said, "from his holy hill;" that is, from his most high divinity. But all do not understand what they say when they speak of this most high divinity. For

to be heard by the most high divinity is, as I have said, to be heard in an unheard-of, unthought-of manner; so that nothing was less thought of than this help from, and this being heard by the divine. For it is faith and hope that speak in this passage; or it is concerning faith and hope being heard that the history speaks. When faith and hope are heard, they feel nothing and experience nothing and understand nothing of the being heard, because these are things that appear not.

This is what the word SELAH itself, at the end of this passage, particularly intimates, viz. a deep subject and feeling which require a pause, and which ought not to be passed lightly over; so hard and difficult a thing is it to expect, and wait for, salvation from the “holy hill” of God. The foolish man does not understand these deep thoughts of God; as is said in Ps. 92:6. Therefore, God reprobates the thoughts of the people and the counsels of princes, Ps. 33:10; for “Jehovah knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity,” Ps. 94:11. Nay, in these depths the faithful man is constrained to cry out, “All men are liars,” Ps. 116:11. So necessary is it in these deep things, that all human understanding should be slain and brought into captivity unto God.

V. 5. — *I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for Jehovah sustaineth me.*

The words, “I laid me down” signify, in the Hebrew, the posture of the person lying down or sleeping; but, “and slept” signifies the sleep itself. So that the sense is, I lay down, I slept; whereby he signifies, that he lay down and that he rested in the tomb and was dead; of which resting much mention is made in many parts of the scriptures. Thus, Gen. 49:9, “He stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?” And Ps. 4:8, “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep.” In which passages, we find the very same two verbs which are found in this verse, though they are not translated by the same words; so that, by the former you are to understand the resting, and by the latter the sleeping.

This is that rest mentioned in Ps. 16:9, “My flesh also shall

rest in hope." And Is. 11:10, 'And his sepulchre shall be glorious' for it is thus that Jerome translates it, but the Septuagint has faithfully translated it 'And his rest shall be honor,' or, as the Hebrew has it, 'And his resting place shall be glory.' As if he had said, while the glory of all other kings is ended by death, and their glory, as the apostle saith, ends in confusion; the glory of this King, on the contrary, begins in death, and by death all his confusion is at an end. And so it is with all who are Christ's, according to Ps. 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints;" because their life is ignominious in the sight of men. But I have only hinted at these things by the way. We now return to this "rest."

This is that "rest" which was signified by the Sabbath of old, which means rest, and which is signified also by our holidays, on which days, figuratively and spiritually considered, Christ causes us to be dead to, and to rest from all our works, that is, our sins and to keep holiday, that we may live unto God only, and no longer work ourselves, but let God work and reign in us. Hence it is that it was so positively and rigorously commanded of old, that no servile work should be done on the Sabbath, but that it should be a day holy unto the Lord. Concerning this Augustine, commenting on Genesis, says that it is to be understood as referring to our works which are always sins. Wherefore, nothing but the works of our master, free works, principal works, yea, divine works only, are to be done, now that Christ has procured a Sabbath for us, or has swallowed up and done away with all our works by his Sabbath and rest.

And to this refers also the circumstance of Christ's lying the whole Sabbath-day in the sepulchre; which was done that the circumstance itself, the time, and the figure, may all concur to show forth the same thing, and commend to us this all-sacred rest. And a horrible thing it is for a man to be busily employed during this time of grace and holy rest in his own works and to be found totally destitute of divine works. Like the Jews, to whom the words in Ex. 20:8 were spoken, "Remember

that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day;" who, understanding nothing about it, still continue in their own works, and by their very keeping holy the Sabbath-day most awfully desecrate it. But these remarks we have made mystically.

We now return to Christ. Christ, by the words of this verse, signifies his death and burial, as we have shown at the beginning of this Psalm. For it is not to be supposed that he would have spoken so importantly concerning mere natural rest and sleep; especially since that which precedes and that which follows compel us to understand him as speaking of a deep conflict and a glorious victory over his enemies. By all these things he stirs us up and animates us to faith in God, and commends unto us the power and grace of God; that he is able to raise us up from the dead, an example of which he sets before us, and proclaims it unto us as wrought in himself. For there is no one thing that more deeply affects and afflicts us poor miserable men, than the terror and dread of that death to which we are condemned in our first parent Adam. Nor is there any news that we can hear more joyfully than to hear that this curse is changed, and, what is greater still, overcome, and that death is not only conquered but also made the servant and helper unto a better life than that which we had before.

Therefore by the death and resurrection of Christ a greater consolation is brought in and proclaimed to us than any other that can be proclaimed unto the human race: namely, that death, the evil incident to all, is so overcome, so put under the feet of them that believe, that it is compelled to work together for the enjoyment of that very life which it seems to put an end to and swallow up. Who therefore may not here sing? Who may not rejoice with Christ? Surely this power of Christ which is so full of joyful tidings ought to be uttered forth, not with weeping lips and simple expressions only, but in a Psalm and song of praise, as triumphal praises are wont to be sung, in order that we may be the more animated to a contempt of this life and to a love of death; for music

itself has a certain peculiar effect in rousing and enlivening our spirits. Thus Elijah had a minstrel, 2 Kings 3:15, and Moses prepared trumpets for war, Numb. 10:9; and hence, the Spirit makes use of music also in things so salutary and necessary, because it is a hard matter to leave life behind and long for death; and therefore he would have this exhortation in the manner of a song that he might the more easily move us, and might show us that it is a way in which we may be the easiest moved.

This is shown farther in his use of gentle words, and such as tend wonderfully to lessen the horror of death. He says, "I laid me down and slept." He does not say, I died and was buried; for death and the tomb had lost both their name and their power. And now death is not death but a sleep; and the tomb not a tomb, but a bed and resting place. This was the reason why the words of this prophecy were put somewhat obscurely and doubtfully, that it might by that means render death most lovely in our eyes, or rather most contemptible, as being that state from which, as from the sweet rest of sleep, and undoubted arising and awaking are promised. For who is not most sure of an awaking and arising, who lies down to rest in a sweet sleep, where death does not prevent? This person, however, does not say that he died, but that he laid him down to sleep and that therefore he awaked. And moreover, as sleep is useful and necessary for a better renewal of the powers of the body, as Ambrose says in his hymn, and as sleep relieves the weary limbs; so is death also equally useful and ordained for attaining a better life, Ps. 4:8, "In peace will I both lay me down and sleep; for thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety."

Therefore in considering death we are not so much to consider death itself as that most certain life and resurrection which are sure to those who are in Christ; that those words of John 8:51, might be fulfilled, "If a man keep my word, he shall never see death." But how is it that he shall never see it? Shall he not feel it? Shall he not die? No! He shall only

see sleep, for having the eyes of his faith fixed upon the resurrection, he so glides through death that he does not even see death, for death, as I have said, is to him no death at all. Hence John 11:25 says, "He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live."

All these things are begun in baptism and are consummated at the end of life. For, as the apostle saith, Rom. 6:4, "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death;" which passage, as I understand it, does not refer to the spiritual death of sin only, but unto corporal death also; because sin does not die wholly until the body is extinct, or as Paul expresses it, until this body of sin is destroyed. Wherefore in baptism we are immediately begun to be prepared for death, that we may by death be brought the more quickly unto life.

Augustine here asks why David saith, in the future, "For the Lord shall sustain me?" for it is thus that the Hebrew has it, though our translation has rendered it by the perfect, "sustained." And although it is true that in the prophets the perfects are mingled with the futures, and thereby two things are signified: That the things prophesied of were future as to their events, but past and already accomplished as to the clear knowledge of the prophets; yet, this is perhaps put in the future for our consolation and exhortation, when it saith that the Lord not only sustained Christ our head, but will sustain also all his members that follow him. So that we are to understand him as speaking in his own person and in the persons of us all, both for himself and for us also.

This Hebrew word, YISMECHENI, which Jerome renders 'raise me up,' and in other places 'sustaineth,' has a peculiar force and energy which the Latin does not express and which Reuchlin renders, 'shall put his hand on me,' 'shall approach,' 'shall draw near unto me;' which is the sense that it conveys, that he who dies, is not left of God, but is supported underneath as it were by the hand of God extended and put upon him, that he might not fall into the deep, but rather be delivered out of it, and raised up; whereby the dying man and the manner

of his being sustained by God are descriptively set forth. For he that dies seems to perish, and as it were to be swallowed up in an abyss, but the hand of God drawing near to him from above, preserves him from perishing, so that instead of sinking, he is rather lifted up into life; thus he perishes and falls indeed as to himself, but is preserved and rises in God.

V. 6. — *I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people that have set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Jehovah; save me, O my God.*

This third verse of the present song of triumph is of the same nature as those that precede and those that follow, that is, it sets forth and commends to us that proud but holy affection of mind that despises adversity. For we have said that these things are spoken in the person of one, who rejoicing in, and being grateful to God his deliverer, praises and proclaims his power and grace, 1 Pet. 2:9; in which he is so confirmed and established by having experienced them in adversity, that he resolves to fear no evil whatever hereafter, but to rest safely in the protection of God, now known and experienced. And although after Christ rose from the dead, neither tribulation, nor death, nor surrounding thousands of the people, could have any farther effect upon him; yet the affection of mind and feelings, no doubt reigned and triumphed in him exactly as the prophet foretold they would. And all this was not on account of Christ only, who needed no such things, but for our sakes; who, although we may have overcome some temptations, have still many more to overcome. Therefore we have need of exhortation that, having once tasted the grace of a helping God, we may be encouraged and confirmed to the enduring of much greater things, being most sweetly comforted by the example of Christ. And this is the reason, according to my views, why the prophet so often varies the tenses of his verbs, speaking sometimes in the perfect, as, "I cried unto the Lord with my voice and he heard me," and also, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked;" and sometimes in the future, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people,"

and sometimes again in the present, "Arise, O Lord; save me," and then again in the perfect, "Thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone," etc. Although he says all these things in the person of the suffering Christ, yet he at the same time shows us, in the example of Christ, that these same things are accomplished and are to be accomplished in us.

Thus also, in John 12:27, Christ says at the hour of his passion, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." Here we would briefly observe that we ought to make ourselves well acquainted with this manner of speech peculiar to the scriptures and know that in the Prophets and in the Psalms many things are said together and at the same time, as to the order of the words, which are accomplished at different times; and some things spoken of first, as to order, which are accomplished at a later time. As we have it here in the person of Christ, where "Arise, O Lord; save me" refers to his passion; while that which precedes, "I cried unto the Lord with my voice and he heard me," and "I awaked," refer to the circumstances after his passion. But they are to be understood, as I observed, as spoken for the benefit of his members, out of a heart glorying on account of past triumphs, expecting with courage future temptations, and arming and fortifying itself with a confidence in the power of God.

Moreover it is too well known to need any explanation, that such expressions as "Arise" are not addressed to God as supposing him to be asleep or lying down, but, as Augustine remarks on this passage, that is attributed unto God which he does in us. So that he arises when he causes us to arise; just as he is said so to speak in the Prophets, when he causes them to speak; as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. 13:3, "Do ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me?" Or, he is then said to arise and awake when he shows us, by a present influence wrought on our minds, that he is then with us, which is a mode of speech more common than the former, and by which things in the scriptures are said to be done by God, when they are either

felt or known by us to be done; as in Gen. 22:12, "For now I know that thou fearest God," and also, Luke 7:47, where Christ first said to Peter concerning Mary, "Her sins which are many are forgiven her," but afterwards, revealing the same to the woman herself, said, "Thy sins are forgiven." Therefore, though there is no time when God does not help, yet he is nevertheless called upon to help, nay, he first gives us the power and helps us to call upon him and lest we should faint, he helps us to continue calling upon him until he sends us the help needed.

This verse, however, seems to be opposed to the first two; so that he says against the multitude of those that trouble him, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people," and against the power of those that rose up against him, "Arise, O Lord," and against those who taunted him as being in despair, "Save me, O my God." Or rather, this verse is set against the multitude of those that troubled him; and the following, against the power of those that rose up against him, where he says, "For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone," and the last against those who told him he was in despair, saying, there is no help for him in God, for in that last verse he says, "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah; thy blessing be upon thy people."

The force of the whole lies in these words, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people that have set themselves against me round about." As if he had said, from the deep sense that he had of his strong trust in God, "I will not be afraid though, not only any great one among the people, nor any whole people, but even though many thousands of the people rose up against me; and I will add, even though they should so surround me alone and deserted, as to hedge me in entirely and to leave me no way of escape: — even then I will not fear, nay, I will rest secure, not in my own strength, but because thou, O Jehovah, wilt arise, etc. Thus, I say, does the Holy Spirit every where graciously invite us to a great and full exercise of faith and hope in God.

V. 7. —*For thou hast smitten all mine enemies (all those who are mine enemies without cause); thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked (ungodly).*

The perfect is here put for the future, if it be understood of the person of Christ before his passion: but if it be understood of him after his resurrection, it is a continuation of his song of praise and thanksgiving unto God for our exhortation, as we have before observed.

Instead of ‘without cause’ Jerome has translated from the Hebrew “cheek-bone,” thus, “Thou hast smitten mine enemies upon the cheek-bone.” And with this rightly agrees that which follows, “Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.” And hence, it seems to be a repetition of the same thing.

The order, however, is ‘I will not be afraid of thousands, nor shall my followers fear any multitude, how ever wicked and powerful they may be: for I now know by experience, how thou art wont to smite and to consume my adversaries, by raising me from the dead, so that they can no longer devour me, and by comforting my believing ones by the spirit so that they cannot hurt them.’

This smiting may be understood as referring to the destruction of the people of the Jews by Titus and Vespasian. For although they are still open-mouthed, and maliciously inveterate against Christ and his Christians, yet they are so smitten and disabled that they cannot devour one of them; as it is written, Ps. 58:6, “Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth: break out the great teeth of the young lions, O Jehovah.”

He uses this metaphor of ‘cheek-bones’ and ‘teeth’ to represent cutting words, detractions, calumnies, and other injuries of the same kind, by which the innocent are oppressed; according to Prov. 30:14, “There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.” It was by these that Christ was devoured, when before Pilate, he was condemned to the cross by the voices and accusations of his enemies. Hence the apostle saith, Gal. 5:15, “But if ye bite and

devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." This metaphor of 'teeth' and 'jaw bones' is to be found in many other places in the scriptures, and it is of itself sufficiently illustrative of its own meaning.

On the other hand, the spouse of Christ has teeth also, as in Cant. 4:2; 6:6, "Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly shorn, which are come up from the washing," that is, the reproofs by which the church wounds and convinces sinners and by which she converts them when thus wounded, and incorporates them with herself, are like shorn sheep mild, and reprove with out fury or heated zeal; they are shorn, because they are devoid of all care about the things of this world, not seeking gain and the wool of the sheep. For even the apostles themselves could not preach the Word and serve tables, as it is written, Acts 6:2. Reference to this is made at another place.

These teeth are, figuratively, that jaw bone which Samson took up and slew with it a thousand men, Judges 15:15. And hence, in the more gracious application of the metaphor God smites and bruises the teeth of the wicked in mercy, when by his grace in their conversion he turns them from malice to kindness and from being accusers and revilers of the just to becoming their favorers and applauders. Thus, he broke those most powerful teeth of that terrible, devouring wolf, St. Paul, and made him an apostle and the devourer of all nations unto this very day. And it is in this sense of the metaphor that Is. 2:4, saith, "And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks." As if he had said, they shall change their noxious tongues into wholesome ones that shall nourish the men of the earth; so that they shall become plough-shares for reproving, and pruning-hooks for gathering people unto Christ.

These teeth may likewise be understood allegorically, according to Augustine, for the rulers and leaders of sinners; by whose authority men are cut off from the society of those who live rightly, and are incorporated with those who live wickedly. In direct opposition to these are the leaders of the

righteous, as priests, who by their example and by the good Word of God move men to believe, to be separated from the world, and to pass over among the members of the church. And to this agrees that, which Cant. chapters 4 and 6 says concerning the teeth. But any one may pursue the applications of these allegories taken from teeth still farther; therefore I shall say no more about them here.

This Psalm, however, will not be inappropriately used to comfort poor weak consciences, if it be taken figuratively, and by oppressors and teeth we understand those most tormenting assaults of sins and the consciousness of an ill-spent life. For here the heart of the sinner is in real distress and is solitary, helpless, and in despair. And if he does not accustom himself to lift his eyes upward against the assault of his sins and to call upon God against the accusations of his conscience, there is much to be feared, lest evil and malicious spirits, who for this purpose walk about in darkness and thirst for the destruction of souls, should swallow him up in distress and desperation, Ps. 91:6.

Therefore, the heart must be most firmly fortified, and be enabled to say with Christ, whether it be against sin, persecuting the conscience, or against those things that hinder our salvation, the heart, I say, must be enabled to glory with Christ, saying:

V. 8. *Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah (is of the Lord) : thy blessing be upon thy people. Selah.*

A most beautiful conclusion is this, and as it were the sum of all the previously mentioned affections of the heart. The sense is, it is the Lord alone that saves and blesses; and even though the whole mass of all evils should be gathered together in one against a man, still it is the Lord who saves: salvation and blessing are in his hand. What then shall I fear? What shall I not promise myself? When I know that no one can be destroyed, no one reviled, without the permission of God, even though all should rise up to curse and to destroy;

and that no one of them can be blessed and saved without the permission of God, however much they may bless and strive to save themselves. And, as Gregory Nazianzen says, ‘Where God gives, envy can avail nothing; and where God does not give, labor can avail nothing.’

In the same way also Paul saith, Rom. 8:31, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” So also, on the contrary, if God be against them, who can be for them? Why? Because salvation is of the Lord, and not of them, nor of us, for “vain is the help of man,” Ps. 60:13. And hence, we have it written in Rev. 7:12, “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power ,and might, be unto our God for ever and ever.” And so again, verse 10, ‘Salvation unto our God, and unto the Lamb.’ And Ps. 109:28, “Let them curse, but bless thou.” And again, Mal. 2:2, ”I will curse your blessings,” and bless youi cursings .

Therefore the blessed Christ and every Christian soul in the midst of tribulations, say it matters not that they curse and destroy me; it is not theirs, but God’s alone to serve and bless. Nor is it of any avail that they in imagination save themselves by their own powers and bless each other ; salvation and blessing are not of them, but of the Lord, and if he does not save and bless the:a they may seem indeed to be blessed and saved for an hour, but they shall in the end be cursed and destroyed. On the other hand, when he saves and blesses us, they may indeed appear for an hour to curse and destroy us, but we are in truth saved and blessed. This is taught by Ps. 146:3, “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.”

In order to encourage this consolation and confidence, it was of old forbidden in the law of Moses that one man should bless another. For God said, Num. 6:23, “On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel: saying unto them, “The Lord bless thee,” etc. etc., and “I will bless them.” O wholesome and necessary precept!

And why thinkest thou, was it that God would not have

any man blessed by another? Why, because he had those things in his mind which were afterwards written, Matt. 5:11, "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." Because men are dealt with, as is described in Ps. 10:3, (Vulgate) 'For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and the wicked blesseth himself,' and the just man on the contrary is despised and cursed; therefore the Lord most justly and piously saith, "I will bless them;" and this is what the present verse repeats as it were in confirmation, "Thy blessing be upon thy people."

This verse, therefore, is to be read so that the emphasis and stress be laid with an elevation of tone on the genitive "Lord," and the pronoun "thy;" so that by the antithesis we may be brought to experience that feeling of soul full of the sweetest confidence, which laughs as it were at the evil attempts of our adversaries and looks with contempt upon the confidence in which they boast, saying unto itself, "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah: and thy blessing be upon thy people." In which way we may learn to condemn the curse of men, and not to seek after their blessing; since we know, that it is of God alone to save and to bless. And it is in this same way that Isaiah taunts those described, 41:23, "Do good, or do evil," if ye can. As if he had said, ye can neither injure us nor profit us.

First observe that he puts the salvation before the blessing; and that is the right order, because a blessing in the holy Scriptures implies a going on and a multiplying, according to Gen. 1:28, "And God blessed them, and said, be fruitful and multiply;" which cannot take place unless he that is blessed be saved from perishing. And David aptly opposes these two things to the first two verses; that is, the salvation of the Lord, to them that trouble and rise up, for these destroy by cursing and saying, "There is no help for him in God;" but blessing is of the Lord. And this cursing and taunting of theirs is most terrible to be borne.

For when the wicked have nothing more that they can do

to the righteous whom they have destroyed, the one thing remaining for them is, to calumniate, curse, and blaspheme them, as was shown us in the example of Christ upon the cross; whereby they strive to destroy their good report both before God and before men. They aim at destroying before men by defaming them; and before God, by attacking their faith and trust of conscience, that they may not be able to glory in God; and that thus they may be confused on both sides.

At the same time is touched upon here, that terrible temptation of blasphemy, by which a man is urged on by devils to desperation, and to think that the curse of God is upon him: and thus he accounts God as an enemy, as long as he can feel nothing of good coming from God; and this is to blaspheme God, for we are commanded to hope for, and promise to ourselves, all good things from him; and are required by the first commandment to worship him with faith, hope, and love: and in Wisdom, 1:1, it is written, "Think of the Lord with a good heart, and in simplicity of heart seek him."

And perhaps this is the reason why he so often changes the person. For when he had said in the third person, "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah," thereby commanding, as it were, God unto others, he directly after changes it to the second person, saying, "Thy blessing." For as the temptation above mentioned takes us most of all from God, and makes us shun him as a curser, and seek another to bless, when there is no other to bless; he admonishes us to turn then most of all unto God, when we the most turn from him by the temptation. And this feeling of the heart, because it is very remarkable and powerful, is not in vain marked with the word "Selah;" concerning which we have said sufficient.

Thus have we expounded this whole Psalm concerning Christ, but if this interpretation does not please any, there will be no difficulty in understanding it concerning David, as being a type of the same suffering and of the same feelings of mind; which are all exemplified in Christ and in every Christian,

except that the fifth verse will give us some little trouble in such an exposition. We will therefore leave others to pursue it farther and better, while we only briefly set it forth thus: —

V. 1-2. "Jehovah, how are mine adversaries increased?" That is, Absalom, Apithophel, and the whole people, as in 2 Sam. 15, "Many are they that rise up against me."

"Many there are that say of my soul, there is no help for him in God!" This above all others did Shimei, 2 Sam: 16:7 cursing David and saying, "Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and base fellow:" and he cast stones at David and said, verse 8, "Jehovah hath returned upon thee, etc. Behold thou art taken in thine own mischief."

V. 3. "But thou, O Jehovah, art a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head." For David said in 2 Sam. 16:11, etc., "Let him alone, and let him curse, for Jehovah hath bidden him . It may be that Jehovah will look on the wrong done unto me, and that Jehovah will requite me good for his cursing of me this day." By which words he showed that he did not yet despair, but firmly trusted in God, whose command and will he acknowledged and justified.

V. 4. "I cry unto Jehovah with my voice, and he answereth me from his holy hill." This David did when he said, "O Jehovah, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness," 2 Sam. 15:31. And perhaps he did the same at other times which are not recorded. For, as I have said, it is not in the tribulation, but after the tribulation, that we are to suppose the Psalm was written.

O strong faith! which can speak unto an angry God, call unto him when persecuting you, flee unto him when driving you back, praise him as your helper, your glory, and the lifter up of your head, when you feel him deserting, confounding, and oppressing you ! This is a memorable example of Christian faith indeed! He says, "I go whither I may," 2 Sam. 15:20. As if he had said, 'I know not whither I am going.' and this is to believe and to commit one's self into that darkness where

you are utterly ignorant what will become of you, and yet have a good hope for the best and doubt not that you are heard.

V. 5. "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for Jehovah sustaineth me." — Which, according to my bold way, I would understand in this manner. David might say, 'I was in a state that I despaired of my life, of my glory, and of my all. I was like unto one dead and descending into the pit, as to all external appearance in the sight of men; nor was there any thing left alive in me but faith, and it appeared to me that if I should be again re-instated in my kingdom, it would be nothing less than as if I were raised from the grave and from the sleep of death.' For into this state of things, and down to these gates of hell, it is that the Lord is wont to bring those whose faith he designs to try; and indeed, the man that is put into this state differs little from one dead.

Or if this do not please, let the interpretation be this, 'I was overwhelmed with this tribulation. And, as those who are sunk into a deep sleep know not that they are alive, and are like unto men dead; so I, from the exceeding greatness of my affliction, and from being put to the very extremity of my faith, had no enjoyment whatever of this external life, and was almost dead; after which manner it is said concerning Jacob, Gen. 45:27, etc., that, when he heard that his son Joseph was reigning in Egypt, he was as one awaking from a deep sleep, and did not believe them; that is, because he had been in such utter despair concerning Joseph; but that, when he saw the wagons and all the things that Joseph had sent, his "spirit revived."

Thus David also says, that he revived and arose from the deep sleep of his heart, and as it were from death. For as I have confessed, I cannot understand it concerning natural sleep and rest. But David himself also says, 2 Sam. 19:22, when he returned, "Do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?" wherein he plainly shows his former feelings of despair concerning the kingdom, as to all present appearances.

V. 6. "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of the people that have set themselves against me round about." "Arise,

O Jehovah ; save me, O my God." This is what he said upon his being recalled, 'I shall no more fear evil if thou be with me, Ps. 23:4. Do thou only arise and save me, as thou didst lately, and be my God ; then I will fear nothing.'

V. 7. "For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone ; thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked." For the people and Absalom were slain, and there was a great slaughter that day of seventy thousand men, 2 Sam. 18:7. And thus were all who devoured and afflicted him smitten and slain.

V. 8. "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah ; thy blessing be upon thy people. Selah." As if he had said, 'Although Shimei with his followers gnashed their malicious teeth at me, saying "There is no help for him in God," etc, yet, it is of God alone to bless and save, to whom alone be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

P S A L M I V.

A PSALM OF DAVID, ON THE ORGANS, FOR VICTORY.

This Psalm is, according to my views, very obscure; and there is no other so variously expounded, which diversity is a proof of the real scope of it not being yet fully understood.

Let us first consider the title, as we shall frequently have the same hereafter. LAMNAZEAH, was, before the translation of Jerome, rendered by the ancients ‘to the end,’ which they all unanimously interpreted to signify Christ, whom the apostle calls “the end of the law,” Rom. 10:4, saying, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Which “end” they interpret two ways, — that Christ is the end and sum intended by the law; and that he himself put an end to the law, so that we are no longer indebted to it. But what these things have to do with the title of the Psalm, I do not see; it is only violently taking from one place, and adding to another. For all the Psalms which have this title do not speak of Christ, except it be in this way: that it is by the grace of God only we speak of any work, and that we have nothing either great or small without Christ. But in this way every Psalm ought to have the same inscription.

Jerome therefore has translated it ‘for the conqueror,’ and then was introduced, ‘for victory,’ because Lyra from Rabbi Tal, supposed that it should be understood in this way that the Levite singers, contending in alternate choirs, should strive to excel each other. But this he said, perhaps, measuring that divine melody of David, instituted for the praising of God, according to the custom of those bawling men in our cathedrals, who are called choristers. But to whom such men sing I am sure I know not; I can only hear the beams and stones roar with their noise. And then, comparing this with the interpretation ‘to the end,’ which some have given, he says, that the

'end' meant was the victory that is, of the noise in singing, which the choir sought after in singing this Psalm. Such ludicrous things as these will men teach in a matter so serious!

We read, 1 Chron. 15:16, that David appointed three kinds of singers: one to sing to the NABLIS, that is psalter; another to sing to harps, or as the interpreters variously render it, the lyres; and another to sound on cymbals; and to these, for a time, were added the trumpet and the cornet. And the third kind of singing there mentioned, verse 21, is the singing on harps upon LENAZEAH, which they have rendered by 'victory,' that is, 'a song of victory.' And hence perhaps it is, that LAMNAZEAH is translated 'for victory,' because the Psalm that bears this title is a signal song of victory.

But here I confess my ignorance. For if these things be so, I know not why all the other Psalms are not entitled 'for victory,' which contain a subject matter equally, if not more, applicable to that title than this Psalm and others like it. And then again, there will be a difference of opinion about what victory it is that is sung in the Psalm; because, some Psalms celebrate the victory of Christ, others the victory of any Christian placed in the midst of suffering and temptation.

John Reuchlin, in his Septena, translates it 'for invitation;' because, he will have it that Psalms of that kind are certain incitements to awaken and encourage the spirit of man. And to this rendering the root of the word admirably agrees. For, as he says, NAZA signifies 'he was instant,' 'he stirred up,' 'he forced,' 'he urged,' as in Ezra 3:9, "To have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God," and, verse 8, to have the oversight of the work of the house of Jehovah," or "To set forward the work of the Lord." And moreover, the content of the Psalm does not at all disagree with this interpretation; for this Psalm, according to my judgment, is merely exhortative to the work of the Lord, that is, to the enduring of the cross and death. But whether this acceptation of the title will uniformly and univcally apply to all these Psalms, that I leave to the consideration and judgment of the reader.

I willingly receive this Psalm as being both a song of victory and an invitation; because, all triumphal songs of this kind are wont to rouse and animate the spirit to war in a wonderful manner; and also do the Psalms wonderfully animate the faithful of Christ both to the battles and the trophies of the cross. And thus, I can reconcile all things, making the title to signify, ‘to victory,’ ‘to the conqueror,’ ‘for an invitation.’ In a word this seems to be the true meaning of the title, because the whole Psalms tend to this, — that, being animated by their incitements of the spirit, we may conquer and gain the great object over all our enemies and sins, that nothing may be left us but the triumph of glory.

By “organs,” we are undoubtedly to understand that a general kind is put for a particular; that is, that we are to receive it as signifying harps, because it is said, 1 Chron. 15:21, that the songs of victory should be sung to harps. For organ, in this passage, is a noun which, in the Hebrew, signifies any kind of musical instrument.

But concerning the effect of music and the praises of it, I shall say nothing here, for they have been abundantly treated by others; except that it here appears that the use of music was of old held sacred and applied to divine things, but in the lapse of time it has, like every thing else, been abused to the service of luxury and lust. It was by music that the evil spirit was made to depart from Saul, 1 Sam. 16:23. And by the same a spirit of prophecy was communicated to Elisha, 2 Kings 3:15.

This most obscure Psalm, as I have already observed, is variously expounded. Augustine believes that they either are the words of Christ after his resurrection, or of a member of his church who is possessed of faith and hope. Of Lyra and Burgensis I shall say nothing, the former of whom interpreted it in a way that made against the Saulites, the latter against idolatries. Jerome thinks it is to be understood of Christ only. All and each of these interpretations and acceptations are out of my way. I shall follow my own spirit and abound in my

own acception of the Psalm, but without any prejudice against the judgment of another.

I have thought that this Psalm is a general exhortation to the people of God; especially to those, who being ignorant of the works and ways of God, hate the wisdom of the cross. Among whom the Jews, the children of Israel, have been and still are the first, and they should be the most experienced in this. For as the apostle saith, Rom. 3:19, "We know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law." Wherefore, David being himself experimentally taught by one, or rather by many of his temptations, teaches them, from his own example, what they should do and how they ought to conduct themselves under every tribulation. And thus, according to its title, the Psalm will be an exhortation to victory; which the words of the Psalm themselves show, whereby he commends himself to them as their teacher, saying, 'O ye sons of men,' 'know,' 'be ye angry,' 'offer sacrifices,' 'put your trust,' etc.

V. 1. *Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness.*

Rev. ver.

V. 1. — *When I called, the God of my righteousness heard me.*

At the beginning he instructs the tender and querulous, teaching them that they are not to run any where else, but to call upon God in all the tribulations that may come upon them, of whatever kind they may be. As often, saith he, as I called, and I called as often as I was in tribulation, as he saith, Ps. 120:1, "In my distress I cried unto the Lord," so often the Lord heard me; so merciful is the Lord and so ready to pity those that call upon him. Why, therefore, do ye tender and fearful ones fill all things with complaints? Ye seek consolation in vain by fleeing unto man, and ye know not, nor seek after this only remedy of fleeing unto God.

Observe here the divine art of the teacher and his incomparable oratory. In one and the same introduction he accomplishes three things. First, turning to the children of men,

and feeling a concern for them in brotherly love, he teaches them all to what they should flee when in trouble; and this he does from his own example, and with a most modest glorying. I, says he, was wont to do that myself which I now recommend to you. Secondly, that he may render them docile and obedient to him, he commands to them the divine mercy. He says, "And he heard me;" as if he had said, I am persuaded that he will also hear you most mercifully, if ye do but take courage and call upon him. Thirdly, and this is the principal thing, like a most able orator, he begins with gratitude and praise, which is, in the things both of God and men, the most effectual way of producing a willing mind. For thus, we are commanded also to begin the Lord's Prayer with "Our Father," repeating and comprehending in those words and their all-sweet corresponding feelings, all the kindnesses of God.

The reason why he addresses his words to the sons of men, which he ought to address unto God, is this; he did not wish to leave them to come before God alone and empty, and therefore, he is desirous of gaining their good will, and being concerned for the salvation of his brethren, he instructs the weak. For directly afterwards, in what follows, he addresses his words unto God only, saying, "Thou hast enlarged me;" wherein he now brings with him into the presence of God those to whom he had spoken just before, that they not only may see what God did for him in his former troubles and tribulations, but may behold also an example of the manner in which he is wont to flee unto God in every present tribulation; and thus he most sweetly instructs and comforts both by word and by example.

Now with respect to the words, "O God of my righteousness," they may be also expressed without peril thus, "O God my righteousness." For though I do not deny that the words signify and imply that righteousness is of God, and that it is God alone that justifies; yet, that prophet appears to me to touch upon the main point of the question or complaint before

him, namely, that complaint which the weaker ones are accustomed to make, that they consider themselves to have been injured by their adversaries, and that, therefore, they may with justice show indignation and be angry. These, therefore, the prophet does not attack with severity, but, as I said, tenderly admonishes them that they are to forget their own righteousness and are to commit it, together with their whole cause, unto God who judgeth righteously; and to arrogate no more of righteousness to themselves than shall seem good unto God, as Peter saith concerning Christ, 1 Pet. 2:23, "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself unto him that judgeth righteously," that is, he committed the matter unto God, who judgeth righteously. And thus David here saith, whenever I suffer injuries, I call upon the God of my righteousness, being willing and ready to take for righteousness that which he shall adjudge. And therefore, I know nothing of any righteousness of my own; I know nothing but God only and his holy will.

Is not this then a most excellent way of consoling the weak, not indeed to condemn their cause, nor yet to justify it, but to take it out of their hands and to commit it unto God; and thus to put both them and their cause into his hands, that they may consider that to be righteousness which God may think proper, and thus patiently submit to the will of God?

This interpretation of the passage I more willingly follow, because "my righteousness," according to the mode of expression used in the scriptures, signifies more particularly a man's own cause than that grace which justified, for that is more usually called the righteousness of God; as in Rom. 1:17, "Therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith." And again, Ps. 31:1, "Deliver me in thy righteousness" not in mine. Whereas, in the other case it is said, Gen. 30:33, "So shall my righteousness answer for me hereafter." And again, Ps. 7:8, "Judge me, O Jehovah, according to my righteousness, and to mine integrity that is in me." For this is the righteousness between man and man; which also God

judgeth, though it sufficeth not for any one before God. Therefore does David rightly call men away from a trust in their own righteousness, and transfer it over into the hand of God, lest perhaps they should be found deserving to suffer much greater things before God, however just they may be before men.

Indeed this is a most useful doctrine, though it is always neglected by men. For if this doctrine were held and acted out, there would not be so many courts, causes, laws, strifes, and contentions. All men have upon their tongues' ends justice! justice! — right! right! — but there are few who commit their justice or righteousness unto God according to the example and the word here set before us. Hence, the whole world is in a tumult for justice and right, and contends for it by wars, commotions, bloodshed, and innumerable enormities of sins and evils; and indeed, things are so that justice becomes almost the only cause of all injustice. For error has so blinded men that they immediately think that to be righteousness or justice before God also, which they may have learned from the dissertations, opinions, and decrees of men, to be justice. Concerning this, much more might be said and ought to be said, if we had not now another object before us.

Thou hast set me at large (enlarged unto me) when I was in distress.

This is a repetition; for to be heard and to be enlarged are the same thing; as we find it also in Ps. 118:5, "Out of my distress I called upon Jehovah: Jehovah answered me and set me in a large place."

This, "thou hast enlarged unto me," or this 'enlarging,' is a Hebraism and a metaphor or a metonymy peculiar to the scriptures, which we without a figure call 'a comforting,' as on the contrary we call sorrow and affliction 'a straitening.' For as the heart and all the senses are contracted while they flee from, and are in dread of sorrow, and as, when evil presses on every side, there is a straitening and a total contraction into a confined space; so, the same senses are enlarged and dilated

when the evil is taken away, and good and pleasant things are again brought to us. And indeed, how very descriptively are the natures of distress and joy set forth by that expression? For we see how the forehead and the whole countenance are contracted by care and trouble, and dilated by joy and gladness. Hence it is said concerning the wicked in the Psalms, ‘They shall be afraid out of their close places.’ Hence also the apostle, Rom. 2:9, joins “tribulation” and “anguish” together, that is, evil and the attempted escape from evil, but from which evil there is no escape.

It appears as if the expression ought to be, “Thou hast enlarged me,” rather than “Thou hast enlarged unto me.” But it is a peculiar idiom of the Hebrew verbs to stand absolutely and to include, elliptically, an accusative case of the noun, or to admit of being resolved into a verbal noun. As here, “Thou hast enlarged unto me,” that is, ‘thou hast made an enlargement unto me,’ ‘thou hast been my enlarger;’ that is, thou hast given me consolation whenever I have called upon thee in my distresses.

Thus a willingness of mind is produced and the weaker ones are instructed. Nay, if thou wilt, thou mayest understand this verse to be the argument of the whole Psalm, for the psalmist proposes to instruct the weak to call upon God, to commit their cause into the hand of God, to praise the justice of God, and to seek consolation no where else, but to expect certain consolation from God, with all the great fruits thereof; and this he teaches them most effectually by his own example, but yet so, that he joins himself as a companion with them, and makes their case one with his own.

Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

I confess, saith he, that thou hast heard me when I called upon thee; for which, I not only give thee thanks, but rest confidently assured, that, as sufferings will hereafter always abound in us, so thou wilt always hear them that call upon thee; under which confidence, being now again sunk into dis-

tress, I again call upon thee that thou wouldest again hear me.

As these words form in the Hebrew the latter part of the first verse, I would, according to my judgment, understand the whole of this verse as being a certain form prescribed to the weaker ones, showing them the way in which they should proceed when in tribulation from the injustice of others. I would understand the last clause of it to be a piece of fore-tasted food, as it were, whereby the prophet would teach them as children, and would have them use those words whenever they approach God to call upon him; namely these, "Have mercy upon me, and hearken unto my prayer;" that they may first implore the mercy of God upon themselves and for their sins, on account of which, perhaps, they have deserved far worse things than those they now suffer, and that thus they might first forget all revenge and commit their cause into the hand of God, and then beg to be heard; for, "The just man first accuseth himself," Prov. 18:17. And, 'He that pleaseth God pitith first his own soul,' Sir. 30:24. Therefore, the person first implores grace for himself, and then prays to be delivered from punishment. But this I do not assert positively to be the meaning of the passage.

But be it so, that this is a new tribulation and a new calling upon God; yet, as I said, we may thereby be instructed, that we are not to be so much concerned about the punishment as about the sin; and that we are first of all to obtain the mercy of God, lest perhaps after the perverse manner of fools, we should forget our own fault which merited the punishment and look only at the fault of others, which was designed to work our punishment, thus leaving the beam in our own eye and setting about to cast the mote out of our brother's eye. Whereas, he who is in distress is first of all to pray for mercy on the cause of the distress, which is sin, not to pray against the distress itself. Therefore God must first have mercy, and then hear those on whom he has mercy.

Thus you see that the Psalms were written by the Holy

Spirit to this end, that they may administer consolation to those who are under tribulation. Hence, what have they to do with the Psalms who have nothing to do with tribulation? And those who are less willing to suffer tribulation at this day, than these who are employed in the Psalms day and night, or rather, who ought to be employed in them? Does not, therefore, Amos 6:5 apply unto such, where it speaks of certain characters inventing unto themselves instruments of music like David? For how shall they harp, who fill the world with bloodshed for the obtaining of their riches, privileges, and rites, not being content with their own thundering decrees? Hence, at this day, the I'salter is used for nothing else but for the noise of chantings and mutterings, which is a use most unworthy of it and yet it is perpetual.

V. 2. — *O ye sons of men, how long shall my glory be turned into dishonor (how long will ye be of a heavy heart)? Why do ye love vanity, and seek after falsehood (lying)? Selah.*

Jerome translates the passage thus: “O ye sons of man, how far, my renowned ones, will ye shamefully love vanity and seek after lying?” This holy man certainly touches upon the force of the Hebrew words, for this verse says nothing whatever about the heart, and therefore it is clear that our translator, whoever he was, was in error and read B for K; and, what is more, divided one word into two, reading, instead of LICHLIMMA, which signifies ‘into shame,’ LEB LAMMA, which signifies ‘heart, why.’ And therefore, that which Jerome has translated, as from one word, ‘shamefully,’ our translator has rendered, as from two words, ‘heart, why?’ and what is in the Hebrew CHEBODI, which our translator has rendered “heavy,” Jerome has rendered ‘my renowned ones,’ or ‘my glorious ones,’ for ‘glory,’ in the Hebrew, is expressed nearly by the same word as ‘heaviness.’

Nor has the Hebrew “sons of men,” but sons ISCH, that is, ‘sons of the hero,’ just as it is said, Ps. 1:1, “Blessed is the man,” or “Blessed man.” For he is not here speaking of the

sons of Adam, so as to mean the generation according to the flesh: he does not seem to address the sons of the flesh, nor to be speaking as to the sons of the flesh; but, he seems to be as a master, a preceptor, or one of some greater authority, addressing his minors and sons.

First of all I will pour out my spirit upon the passage, and then we will see to all the rest. I, therefore, translate the verse thus: "O ye sons of the man, how long will ye turn my glory into shame, love vanity, and seek after lying? Selah." Hence, these seem to be the words of the prophet spoken in the person of God the Father, or of Christ, who is speaking first of all to the Jews and then to the Gentiles, as the apostle is accustomed to speak. So that the sense is, O ye sons of Israel, how long shall my name be polluted among you? How long shall my glory be exposed to shame by you, while, leaving me who am the truth and the life, ye love vanity and seek after lying? And how this is done let us now see.

I have said that this Psalm is an exhortation unto those who, being destitute of faith, are offended and cast down in mind at the cross and at the injuries which they receive, which is the evil of unbelief and the sin of spiritual idolatry; and it is of such sins that the children of Israel were accused in the wilderness; as it is written, Ps. 78:8, "A stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God." Here, it is the sin of the heart that is evidently meant, which was distrust, ignorance of the cross, and no understanding in the way of God, for the same is taught in Ps. 106:13: "They waited not for his counsel;" of which sin they are accused throughout the Old Testament.

And it is from this sin that the various external forms of idolatry at present arise, diversified according to the infinitely various inclinations of men, some worshipping this god, and some that; and every one transferring the glory due to God unto the creature, unto that creature from which he has prospect or hope of obtaining the consolation he requires.

Now since the glory and worship of God consist in a sincere faith, firm hope, and perfect love towards him, it of necessity follows, that he who neither trusts nor believes in God, nor loves him, but comforts himself in some creature or other, turns the glory of God into shame, and seeks that name and work in some creature which he ought to seek in God. And this is what all do, who in the time of temptation draw back, for it is of such in particular that he is here speaking.

Hence it is, that the world, from its beginning to the present has been full of idolatry. Although they have not at all times adored the similitudes of creatures, yet they have the same things in their hearts, which are the head and fountain of all idolatries. But this is, as I have said, to trust in things and creatures, and to be pleased and delighted with them, which delight, pleasure, and trust, are due to God alone. This is infidelity and distrust, and from these come contempt and hatred of God.

Thus, Ps. 106:20, "They changed their glory for the likeness of an ox that eateth grass;" in which verse, is beautifully described the power of idolatry. The Psalmist calls the glory of God "their glory," because the glory of God, that is, the true faith and worship of God, was with them only; by which glory of God it was, that they had glory both before God and men. Hence it is said, 1 Sam. 4:21, "The glory is departed from Israel." And Rom. 1:23, "They changed the glory of the incorruptible God for the likenesse of an image of corruptible man." For what is the changing of the glory of God, but the changing of the worship of God? For the worship of God is nothing else than the glory of God in a very short compendium. The glory of God is nothing else than believing in him, hoping in him, and loving him. Because, he who believes in him, holds him as true, and thereby ascribes truth unto him; and he who hopes in him, holds him as powerful, wise, and good, and as a God by whom he can be holpen and saved, and thereby ascribes unto him a power that can do all things, a wisdom that knows all things, and a goodness

that is willing to afford all help. This is to make God the true God and to hold him as such. Then, by and by, there is kindled a love in him, who thus from his heart willingly delights himself in such a God, and has such an all-precious view and opinion of him.

Whereas, he that does not believe in God makes him a liar; he that does not hope in him makes him impotent, ignorant, and unwilling to help; which are horrible things, and from these will of necessity follow a contempt of God, and then follows a going over to the creature. For the human heart must have something to love and something to believe and trust in: it will either trust in riches, or favor, or its own strength, or in something else of the same kind, or in some absurd opinion concerning the true or a false God that may be published to the world. If by the permission of God a man should be left to find any comfort therein he will go after it with his whole heart and affections; and thus, the power, the goodness, and all things which belong to the glory of God, are turned into shame and given unto that to which they are not due.

Thus also, Is. 42:8, "My glory I will not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." He gives indeed all good things even unto his enemies, but glory he reserves to himself only; for all good things that are sought after or received, cannot be ascribed unto any but God alone, whose goodness and true divinity are hereby declared, Matt. 19:17; John 17:3.

If we understand these things thus, I think the verse is easily explained, and it shows that those who are ignorant of the cross and destitute of faith, when they once begin to fight against the glory of God, soon afterwards pollute and prostitute it and flee unto any thing else rather than unto God for help and seek counsel, assistance, and salvation, not from him whose alone they are, but from his creatures whose they are not; because, they do not believe the last verse of the preceding Psalm — "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah, and thy blessing be upon thy people."

Let us now see the peculiar force and experimental con-

tents of this verse. First, as it is a powerful and close exhortation, he addresses those to whom he speaks with the most worthy appellation, "O ye sons of the man." By which "man" whether we understand Israel or Christ, it is one and the same thing. Though I should rather understand Abraham, because I receive the Psalm as addressed, first, to the Jews, for Abraham is called "the father of many nations;" and it is said, not in this passage only, but in Is. 51:1-2, also, with a like exhortation, "Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for when he was but one I called him, and blessed him, and made him many." As if he had said, attend, not to the manner of your being born from him carnally, but unto my having called him, and to his being justified, not by the flesh, but by faith in me. And this is what ye ought to be and to do also, if ye would be his children, as it is said, John 8:39, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham."

Hence, as he is not here setting Abraham before them as their father according to the flesh, but is advising them to become his spiritual children, he says, "O ye sons of the man," rather than, "O ye sons of men." And though they are a bastard and spurious offspring before God, and boast of Abraham according to the flesh, being destitute of faith; yet he condescends to put the honor upon them, that he might the more gently and effectually make them such as he calls them: just in the same way as Paul addresses the Galatians as the churches, Gal. 1:2, when they were at the same time seduced and fallen from the faith of the church. Nevertheless, David by a side blow strikes at their degenerate mind, because though they are the sons of so great a hero, they do any thing but show themselves to be such.

Then there is that inquiry, "How long?" which carries with it a wonderful force, because, it at the same time commends to us the astonishing sweetness of the long-suffering of God and also pities their long and perilous neglect of their

salvation. As though he had said, since ye are, or rather ought to be the sons of so great a man, in whom alone ye make your boast; how long, at the awful peril of your salvation, and by the abuse of the long-suffering of God, will ye show yourselves to be such as ye now are? How long will ye so degenerate, as to be the sons of so great a man in name only? And this ye do while ye neither believe nor hope in God, in whom he believed. Nay, ye turn this glory of confidence in me into your own confusion and shame, and mine also; for ye know not in the time of adversity, that there is no refuge to flee unto but myself. For, as I have said in Is. 46:4, "I have made, and I will bear: yea I will carry, and will deliver you." Why does another enjoy my glory, who cannot fulfil it? Why is not that glory given unto me, who alone am able to do all those things, and am willing to do them, and to whom alone all the glory is due? You see therefore how sweet and yet how forcible, this expostulation is.

Again, this carries with it a powerful weight, — his asking how it is that his glory is turned into shame? not any glory, but his own proper glory? At the very hearing of which, every godly mind ought to tremble. For it is a horrible thing to hear that the glory of God is turned into shame and his praise into blasphemy, which glory every creature strives to venerate with all its powers, Ps. 19:2.

And he himself makes this of so much moment that he uses an elliptical mode of expression, omitting the *verb* by an *aposiopesis*, or silence, saying, "How long my glory into shame?" that is, will ye change, or turn, etc., as Paul saith, Rom. 1:23, "And changed the glory of the incorruptible God," etc. For by this *aposiopesis*, or silence, he intimates that this crime is so great that it is too awful to be named, from the horror of the wickedness implied in it. For he would say, the sin would have been much less if ye had abused any of the creatures and turned them into shame, and had brought the glory of my works into contempt. But, not only to refuse to give me the glory, but even to take it from me wilfully, to turn

it into shame, this is a wickedness at which the very heavens themselves may tremble, which the ears cannot endure to hear and which the tongue fears to utter. Behold with what power of words our God urges us to believe in him, unto our salvation.

Now it will be easy to reconcile the other translations with my own, though they do not so expressively give the true sense of the passage, “O ye sons of men,” etc. As if ye would say, ye are indeed the sons of men, rather than the sons of the man whom ye ought to represent; but ye savor of the *flesh* of him and of your fathers, rather than of their *faith*. But “how long will ye be of a heavy heart?” How long will ye be unbelieving in heart and rush backwards under the weight of unbelief, resting in a trust in created things, and giving unto creatures that glory which ye ought to ascribe unto me? This we have already fully set forth.

Thus also that rendering of Jerome, “O ye sons of the man, how long will ye shamefully love vanity, and seek after lying?” As if he had said, this is to the shame both of my glory and of yours, that, forsaking all trust in me, ye love something else rather than me, who alone am the truth, etc.

In a beautiful order David says first that “vanity” is loved, and then that “lying” is sought after. For there is first of all the affection of the mind itself, or the love, or will, or desire; which, if it be perverse and wicked, immediately begets wicked, false and lying opinions. For on these two, the will and the opinion, turns the whole life of every man, as it is set forth in the first Psalm. Hence it is that, contrary to what Moses teaches, Deut. 12:8, “Every man doeth that which seemeth right in his own eyes.” This desire, this counsel of the wicked, and these vain thoughts of man, the Holy Spirit here reproves, calling them all lies; and we see through all the scriptures the same that we find throughout the Psalter. Therefore the love of vanity turns away the affections, which being turned away, the mind is at once infected with false opinions; and thus as it has a wrong love of things it forms a wrong judgment of them, and while the man is walking in his

own blinded mind through malice he imagines that he is walking in the truth, in wisdom, and in the light, though he is only walking in error and his own lies.

Every word in this passage has its peculiar force. The whole book of Ecclesiastes defines fully that “vanity” is whatever is not God. If the salvation which a man seeks be vain, how much more shall every thing else be vain? That truly is vanity, when a man, ignorant of the cross and of grace, seeks salvation and help, not in God, but in something else; for he can find neither salvation nor any other good in any thing but in God: all things else are vexation of spirit and an allurement and tickling enticement unto consolation, rather than consolation itself; and an enticement unto salvation and good, rather than salvation and good in reality.

Further, to have vanity is not the greatest of evils, for every man is vanity, Ps. 39:6; and there is nothing new under the sun, Ecc. 1:8; and though it be an evil, it is bearable. For there is no one saint that does not hope, trust, desire, fear, love, and hate, more or less, in a way and manner that he ought not. But this body of sin and death, these laws of sin, these vanities, he ought to hate, not to love nor to take pleasure in them. To use the comfort and help of a creature is not sin nor wrong; but to love them and rest in them alone, and from a love of them, not to trust in God is a sin of ungodliness.

Again a lie is a less sin and evil than to seek lying; for any one may embrace vanity instead of truth, but to seek it is sin and ungodliness. For as all men are liars, Ps. 116:11, our seeking is to be, not how we may obey and direct our lives according to our own opinions, our own judgment, or, as they say, the dictates of our own reason; but our great seeking and endeavoring are to be, how we may be kept from obeying these, and how we may be led and guided by the dictates and will of God.

Hence, nothing more pestilential and destructive can be taught a Christian man than moral philosophy and the decrees

of men, if they be so set before him as to make him believe that he can walk in and by them so as to please God. For by such instruction it will come to pass, that relying on this wisdom, he will judge, condemn, and persecute whatever he sees is against him, and will thereby reject the cross of Christ and utterly despise the way of God; which is in its best and most prosperous state when we are living without our own guidance and wisdom and are following, as through a desert and wilderness, Christ in a pillar of fire. For this is loving, not "vanity," but that which is solid and substantial, and seeking not lies but the truth. But all these things are better felt by experience in the time of suffering and adversity than they can possibly be described in words, or imagined by the heart; for there must, as we have said, be an experience of these things to understand the words of God: these things must not only be spoken of and known, but be experienced in the life and felt. Hence David saith, Ps. 116:11, "I said in my haste, all men are liars." Why does he call them liars? Because, being in the extremity of suffering and living by faith alone in God and being stripped of all confidence in created things in which he sees all men immersed and overwhelmed, he with certainty pronounces all their affections and thoughts to be vain, and all their counsels and pursuits to be lies, because they are destitute of faith in God. If they are without faith in God, then they are without the Word of God; and if they are without the Word of God, then they are without the truth. Thus all things are vain and lies which are without faith; for faith is truth on account of the Word of truth in which it believes and to which it cleaves by believing.

Thus then we have the true sense and meaning of this verse, that all are ungodly idolaters and polluters of the glory of God, who under any tribulation draw back from faith, hope, and love, to a confidence and comfort in created things, and protect and direct themselves by those means.

Concerning the small word "Selah" we have already said

enough. It seems to be put here for the purpose of denoting a particular feeling of the mind. And truly it is wonderful above all things that the whole human race is so immersed and implicated in depraved affections and opinions, that men love vanity and seek after lying; and so awfully so that the matter, from the greatness and extent of it, cannot be sufficiently set before us and impressed upon our minds.

V. 3. *But know that Jehovah hath set apart for himself him that is godly (made his saint to be a wonder) : Jehovah will hear when I call unto him.*

A most wholesome instruction! For the reason the sons of men dread the cross which is the way of truth and of that which is substantial, and rather choose to seek after vanity and lying and trust in created things, is this, — they are in ignorance of God, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 15:34, “For some have no knowledge of God”; they know not, I say, what God is doing, what he intends, nor what his thoughts are, when he tries us by tribulations; for they judge like a horse or a mule, according to that which is before their eyes and is seen and felt. In such cases nothing appears to view but shame, want, death, and all those things which are shown us in the sufferings of Christ. And if thou view those things only, do not acknowledge the divine will in them, and endure and praise that will, thou must of necessity be offended at the cross and flee to thine own counsel and wisdom; and thus at once become an idolater and give unto the creature that glory which is due unto God alone.

When Christ, John 16:3, showed the reason the Jews should persecute the apostles, and turn them out of the synagogue, he said, “These things will they do, because they have not known the Father nor me.” But how was it that *they* did not know, who had held such great contentions with Christ about God? To know Christ is to know the cross and to understand God in the midst of the crucifixion of the flesh; this is the design of God, this is the will of God, yea, this is God.

Therefore their hating and persecuting the cross and the word of the cross, as being contrary to their affections and opinions, which were vanity and lies, are the cause of their not knowing God, or of their not knowing the will of God, which is the same.

Thus also, when he said, John 6:53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves:" it was to them "a hard saying," and many of his disciples being offended from that time forward walked no more with him. Why was it "a hard saying?" Because to eat the flesh of Christ and to drink his blood is to be incorporated into Christ by faith, and to have fellowship with him in his sufferings. But this depraved human affection and the heart that is corrupted by perverse opinions abhor above all things.

To this David alludes when he says, Fear not; nor think that ye are perishing, if your own affections and senses are destroyed, and if all that ye suffer seems contrary to your own opinions. But be ye wise and know the Lord and understand his will and turn away your eyes that they behold not vanity, for the Lord is wonderful in his saints. His work upon them is one thing in appearance, but quite a different thing in reality. He seems to kill but in reality makes alive; he wounds, but in reality heals; he confounds, but at that very time in reality glorifies; he brings down to the grave, but at that very time rather brings up from the grave. All his works are thus, concerning which we have said much in the foregoing.

What then is more wonderful than this divine will? It dwelleth indeed on high, and yet hath respect unto lowly things. It makes men fools that they may become wise; it makes them weak that they may become strong. But it is the former of these works that appears and is felt: thou wilt never arrive at the understanding of the latter unless thou have faith. Thus Peter saith that the prophets foretold first

the sufferings of Christ, and then the glories that should follow, 1 Pet. 1:11.

Therefore we stand in need of admonition and exhortation that we may be raised up to knowing and acknowledging God in such cases. David saith, "Know that he hath made his saint to be a wonder." As though he had said, why are ye thus tossed to and fro? Why seek ye comfort and counsel from this quarter and from that? Why do ye love this and that consolation? Vain are all such things. They are not only vain, so as not to be able to afford you any help; but they are lies also and miserably deceive you. "Know ye," and be assured, hear ye and believe, that it is an immutably fixed decree, that whoever will be a saint of God, whoever will obtain his grace and be acceptable and well pleasing unto him, must so suffer that God shall be wonderful in him! Thus wonderful he cannot be, if the counsel or consolation of yourself or of any other creature can help you. For all such things, which are not above and beyond your own ability and comprehension are not wonderful at all. But when ye shall be brought to despair in yourselves and in every other created thing, and shall commit and commend your cause to the will of God only, then, behold, your righteousness shall break forth as the light, and then shall God bring forth your judgment as the noon-day, Ps. 37:6, in a manner and at a time wholly unthought of either by yourselves or any other creature.

The word "saint" in this passage is in the Hebrew, HASID; because he is properly a saint who has obtained mercy, and who, as we term it, is justified by grace. We are to receive the expression here as distributive and as containing a definite number for an indefinite. "Know ye that the Lord hath made his saint wonderful," that is, his saints. Which is the same as if he had said, know ye that the Lord wonderfully works in, and rules the man, whom he justifies and makes a partaker of grace. From this learn that whoever will please God must, as I said, know what this good, and acceptable, and perfect

counsel and will of the Lord are? For Paul saith, Rom. 12:2, that this “will” never can be proved, unless ye be “transformed by the renewing of your mind;” whereby God always destroys our own affections and our own opinion.

“Jehovah will hear me,” etc. Here again he teaches the weak both by word and by example. For he might have referred this to the saint, who he before said was made a wonder, and have said, Jehovah will hear him when he calls unto him. Or, he might have made the former part of the verse accord with the latter, and have said, know ye that the Lord hath made me a wonder. But as I said, these sudden changes of the persons set forth the wonderful varieties and changes in the feelings and affections; we are therefore to consider the person of the prophet accordingly and see how concerned he is for the sons of men in all this variety, addressing the saints at one time as in a body collected together, at another as mingled among sinners, that he might thereby gain all. He saith, “Jehovah hath made his saint a wonder:” and, he would add, if this will not move you, I tell you that “Jehovah will hear me,” who also am one of the saints, that is, one of those who have obtained his grace.

Behold the Psalmist’s affection and state of mind. He persuades the sons of men to endure the hand of God; but as that is done in faith, he cannot show what nor how it is, for God, as I said, is not visible. Therefore he does the utmost that he can do and all that lies within his power: he promises them the help of God. As if he had said, I can do this and this is the only thing that I have power to do for your consolation: I can with confidence promise you that you will be heard. Therefore trust with firmness, love not vanity, nor turn the glory of God into shame; but wait in expectation and take comfort from this my example, for I am most fully persuaded that the Lord will hear me, not in this hour only but as often as I shall call upon him.

Thus we see the godly concern of a spiritual mind for the

brethren. David does not dare to boast of himself; but on account of the need and necessity of his brother, he is compelled to bring forth himself as an example, as the apostle Paul also does in many places: thus, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ," 1 Cor. 11:1. Again, "We wronged no man," 2 Cor. 7:2. But it was to avoid this boasting as much as possible, as it seems, that David spoke of the "saint" in the former part of the verse in the third person, that he might not in vain-glory boast that he was one with whom the Lord dealt wonderfully; and of which in the latter part he did omit to speak; for to speak of calling upon God is not any great incitement to boasting, but rather a proof of affliction.

The good Spirit therefore teaches us, that in our being made wonderful, that is, in our tribulation, we should do nothing else than endure our wonder-maker, the Lord, and call upon him; and not flee from sufferings nor seek after lies nor after those things which seem unto us to be right and good; for such things are alluring shadows, the most destructive of all.

V. 4.—*Stand in awe, (be ye angry), and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. (which things ye speak in your hearts: and be filled with compunction on your beds).*

The Hebrew according to the authority of Jerome is, "Be ye angry, and sin not: speak in your own hearts upon your beds, and be silent." Whence it is manifest that the relative pronoun 'which' and the conjunction 'and' are in our translation redundant; and the words 'be filled with compunction' also have forced our translators into a sense that is not agreeable to the original text. Therefore let us first consider the Hebrew of the passage.

The prophet in the third verse called back the sons of men from vanity and lies; that is, from corrupt affections and false opinions, and therefore, as they might then say, what shall we next do? What shall we strive after next? Are we thus to leave all things? He answers them in this fourth verse by

telling them, that they should trust in the Lord and rest upon his mercy and know, that those things which they should suffer from the injurious, would under the operation of God tend, not to their destruction, but to their salvation, though in a way altogether wonderful.

If they complainingly ask again, but who is there that can avoid being moved and becoming angry? Who is there that can help murmuring and accursing those who injure them? He kindly replies, "Be ye angry," but not so as to "sin" in being angry. I know that the motions of anger are not in your own power; but take heed that ye consent not to them. Thus Paul saith, Gal. 5:16, "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." And Rom. 6:12, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey the lusts thereof." Again, Rom. 13:14, "Make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

All these scriptures tend to show us that there are evil desires as well of lust as of anger in us, but that we are to take heed that they reign not, that is, that we "obey" them not, as Paul saith. Thus he complains, Rom. 7:19, "The good which I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practice." Again, verse 25, "So then I of myself with the mind indeed serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." How was all this? Because he wished to be free from evil desires, but could not; and to have pure desires only, but could not. As he says again, Gal. 5:17, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would."

It is manifest therefore that the words here, "Be ye angry," are not words of command or of exhortation to anger, as being proper and as being a something different from sin; but words of permission or of concession in the case of anger, though evil, when any injury is received; on account of the inevitable and invincible infirmity of the flesh. Thus August-

ine says on this verse, “Be ye angry and sin not,” means that, although the motion of anger should rise in the mind, which now on account of the punishment of sin is not in our power; yet, let not the mind and will, which are regenerate within according to God, consent unto it; that with the mind we may serve the law of God, though with our flesh we still serve the law of sin.’ Thus Augustine speaks excellently and beautifully.

The sense therefore is plain. “Be ye angry, and sin not;” that is, forasmuch as ye complain that ye cannot help being moved, being hurt, being angry, being put into a tremor, for the Hebrew word bears all these significations, under so great an evil as an injury received; well! your heavenly Father knows this your infirmity: be ye moved and angry; only proceed not so far as to think, say, do, or allow, any evil against your own soul, and thus sin against God, yourselves, and your neighbor.

This sense I the more willingly embrace, because the spirit of Paul, which I desire always to follow, has the same thing, Eph. 4:26, where he saith, “Be ye angry, and sin not.” That he does not speak of anger here as proper or good, which would be making it different from sin, is manifest from what follows, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath;” which he certainly says as considering anger to be evil. And indeed it was this passage of Paul that gave me the occasion for expounding this Psalm as applying to the injuries and complaints of the weak, who are to be restrained by a godly exhortation and by exciting confidence in God. It is to the same end that Paul uses and applies this verse of the Psalm, as is manifest to every one.

But here that question concerning the first motions, as they term them, will put forth its head, and will ask, where ends the venial sin, and where begins the mortal sin? The apostle indeed gives the setting of the sun as a limit, when he says, “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” But this, again,

they call into question, whether we are by this to understand the visible sun, which we see setting at a certain hour, or the spiritual sun, Christ, which they think may, as to the human senses, set in a moment.

For my part, I always avoid mystical interpretations of the scriptures, where there is no cogent necessity for so doing, and advise others to do the same, because they are very perilous. I cannot suffer myself to understand by Paul's "sun" any other than the visible, though I do not condemn the other opinion.

Moreover, I know that there is no temerity more perilous than the wishing to make a distinction between venial and mortal sin, especially in the hour of the commotion of the flesh and of temptation: between those sins, I say, which are committed by the motions of the raging mind; for either lust, or indignation, or some other motion, is wont to prevail in a man, not for one hour only but sometimes for many hours together, and in such a manner that he cannot be certain whether he consents or not. Nay, very often, God so ordaining it, the feeling of the motion of the good and pure mind is so very low and involuntary and so hidden, that the man fears, nay, almost believes, that he has consented. By this remedy the divine mercy is wont to keep all its beloved ones, whom he has adorned with conspicuous gifts above others in humility, lest, being puffed up with them, they should be exalted in pride above others, and perish.

Therefore, the doctrine and rule of the apostle appears to me most safe and most wise, that every man should at least return to himself at night; and, if he have conceived any anger, should lay it aside before he goes to sleep, and be reconciled to his brother. For no other time more proper can be appointed for this purpose, than the setting of the sun, and the end of the day, when all business and all works and labor, etc. are finished, and when the mind is now more quiet and in a proper state to lay aside this and every other feeling of

malice, whether there has been a consenting unto it or not. For who can understand his errors? And in every work we are to fear the strict judgment of God.

Now follows, "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still." It is manifest that 'upon your bed,' 'into your bed,' and 'in your bed,' all signify the same thing; for in the Hebrew the words imply motion to a place; the same figure of speech Christ uses, Matt. 6:6, "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut the door," etc.

Now I must follow a most unskilful master, as we are accustomed to say, that is, my own self; for I have never seen this Hebrew text explained to my liking by any one, and as far as I can I will follow my own spirit.

It is the custom of those who suffer injury to burst out, make a clamor, and fill all ears with complaints; which is the reason the apostle, Eph. 4:31, enumerates "clamor" among the effects of anger, saying, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you," etc. Therefore the prophet, with a design to prevent the sons of men from thus breaking out, as he had permitted them to be angry in the first motion of their mind, and yet not so as to sin, now teaches them, that they should make no tumult at all, but commune and talk with their own hearts upon their beds. Thereby he expressively shows them what they should do to prevent themselves from sinning when moved with anger, namely, that they should commune with themselves, and be silent; which I do not understand otherwise than according to that of the prophet Is. 30:15, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." For the silence here spoken of is not that which is kept by the mouth, but that patience and rest which are the opposite of tumult; as it is expressed in Ps. 37:7, "Rest in Jehovah and wait patiently for him." And Ps. 65:1, "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion." Again, Is. 41:1,

"Keep silence before me, O islands: and let the people renew their strength."

But finally, to be silent, according to the figurative mode of the scriptural expression, is of the same signification as to lay aside one's impetuosity, to mitigate one's fury, to bridle one's mind; which we Germans in our vernacular express by saying to those whom we would restrain when angry, 'Still, still, halt in!' Hence tomb is in the Hebrew expressed by DUMA, from this true and real silence; because, there a man ceases from every thing and remains wholly in silence. Therefore Isaiah said, 30:12, "Ye trust in oppression and perverseness;" for the mind of those who are angry and offended, is irritated to oppression and perverseness: whereby it presumes that it shall obtain revenge and prevail. But restraining this irritated state of mind he saith, "In returning and rest ye shall be saved;" for you will overcome, not by making a tumult, but by remaining still. Then follows, "and in quietness and confidence shall be your strength;" that is, if ye keep silent and remain still, bridle your impetuosity, abstain from tumult, and not seek revenge, but wait for my hand, and leave all revenge unto me, and deliver your cause into my hand, behold then ye shall be strong and shall overcome; for I will fight for you, but ye shall be still.

Thus Moses saith, Ex. 14:14, "Jehovah will fight for you, but ye shall hold your peace." What mean these words, "Ye shall hold your peace?" They mean, ye shall be still, ye shall do nothing in the matter, but shall act just as if it did not at all concern you. This being in peace and still therefore is nothing else than exercising a quiet patience; which is a figure of speech most common in the holy scriptures.

Hence Isaiah, in the above passage, when they would not listen to the admonition and exhortation to keep silence, adds, 30:16, "But ye said, no, for we will flee upon horses, and we will ride upon the swift." And what is this, but declaring to defend themselves by tumult, and not to wait to become strong

and be saved by quietness and confidence. Hence follows in the same passage, verses 16, 17, "Therefore shall ye flee: and therefore shall they that pursue you be swift. One thousand shall flee at the threat of one; at the threat of five shall ye flee: till ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill." From these words I think it is quite clear, what it is to be silent and still, and what it is to make a tumult. The one is to remain in patience and quietness: the other, to be moved and to put every thing else in commotion, and, as we say, to confound heaven and earth. The former is the silence which this verse teaches.

The meaning of the passage is therefore, "Commune with your own heart upon your bed;" that is, as we say, ponder, deliberate, be not precipitate, nor immediately bring forth that which your anger may suggest. First consult with yourselves, "for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," James 1:20. As a heathen writer has also written, 'Let nothing be done or said in anger.' Gregory also said, 'It is better to avoid anger by silence, than to overcome it by reply.'

Now let us look at the words more particularly. First, we have "Commune, or speak, with your own heart;" that is, let them meditate well with themselves and not obey the motions of their anger, which is precipitant, and which always has its words upon the tongue and not in the heart; according to Sirach, 21:26, "The heart of fools is in their mouth: but the mouth of the wise is in their heart." A beautiful and excellent antithesis! And the same admonition is given in the present verse, that we should turn our mouth to our heart, and not immediately utter forth what the temptation may suggest. For to have our heart in our mouth, is to speak imprudently; which persons in a passion generally do. But to have our mouth in our heart, is to speak prudently; which those do who are still and quiet.

Therefore we may use the same antithesis here, and say, to speak in our hearts and to think in our mouths, if I may

so say, are opposites ; the one being a mark of wise men ; the other, of fools.

But that they may the more conveniently commune with, or speak to, their hearts, he adds that they should do this upon their "beds;" that is, that they should seek solitude and avoid all the irritation of a crowd. For when the body and all external tumults are reduced to quiet the mind may be the more easily stilled, so as to be in a state to commune and meditate with itself. But as avoiding the crowd and seeking solitude are useful in this temptation, so are they perilous in many other temptations. These things have I spoken according to my own mind, without prejudice against any other expositor.

Now, how shall I make our received translation to accord with the Hebrew? It is necessary to understand some other verb, as Augustine teaches, who disposes of our translation thus, "Which things, or the things which, ye say in your hearts." Here understand, says Augustine, the verb 'say;' thus, "The things which ye say, say in your hearts." This may be made to accord with my rendering thus: seeing that, when angry, ye are prompted to say whatever comes first upon your tongue, do not precipitately utter abroad what ye wish to say, but speak it in your hearts, that is, speak wisely what ye desire to speak. For according to this figure of speech, Christ said to Judas, John 13:27, "What thou doest, do quickly," that is, what thou desirest to do, or what thou hast already proposed to do. So here the things which ye say, that is, what ye wish to say, say in your hearts. What, from your impatience of anger, ye wish to say foolishly, take care to meditate in your hearts, that ye may speak prudently.

Lastly how shall I reconcile, "And be filled with compunction on your beds." What concord can there be between 'silence' and 'compunction?' In my opinioin there may be this concord ; that, by returning to his heart, the angry man feels a compunction and is dissatisfied with himself that he has been thus moved to anger ; and therefore by the silence referred to,

he comes by the shortest way to the force of compunction. Hence while he communes or talks with his heart, especially when on his bed, or sitting alone, he sees how foolish his commotion and impatience of anger were, which if he had followed he would have basely fallen. And thus, being changed by his compunction, he refrains from the tumult to which he was moved, and now remains still and in silence, the flame of revenge being not a little extinguished. Whoever can give a better exposition of the passage, let him communicate it without envy. This is the best I can produce.

I have already sufficiently shown what “Selah” at the end of this verse signifies. It is a signal gift of grace for that man, who has been provoked to anger and impatience by injury and the like temptation, to exercise the feelings here required, to refrain his tongue, and to withdraw himself aside into secret, and remain silent. For it is to this end that Paul, as I said, handles this Psalm, Eph. 4:32, where he says at the end, ver. 32, “And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.”

V. 5. — *Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your trust in Jehovah (hope in the Lord).*

An admirable doctrine! And what is this sacrifice? Who can offer unto God righteousness, when we ought rather to ask of God for all our sacrifices? David here distinguishes, in a few words, the sacrifice of righteousness from all the sacrifices of cattle and of all other things. For these two sacrifices are directly opposed to each other. The sacrifice of righteousness makes men righteous: the sacrifice of things makes them sinners. In the latter we seem to give something unto God, and to work a righteousness: in the former we only express our desire to receive of God, and to confess our sins. Hence it comes to pass that the sacrifice of things, while it puffs us up with self-righteousness and works, renders us impatient of injuries, making us appear to ourselves to be persons of much and great merit; and it inflames us the more unto

revenge, because we then, as it were, stand up in defense of our own righteousness.

The sacrifice of righteousness therefore is to justify and praise God and to confess ourselves sinners and worthy of all those things which we suffer, and causes us to exclaim with Ps. 119:137, "Righteous art thou, O Jehovah, and upright are thy judgments." As is described also by a most beautiful example in the third chapter of Daniel and in The Song of the Three Holy Children, 1:8-9, which is the continuation of the third chapter of Daniel in the Apocrypha of the Old Testament; "Wherefore all that thou hast brought upon us, and every thing that thou hast done to us, thou hast done in true judgment: and thou didst deliver us into the hands of lawless enemies." Again immediately following, verses 16, 17, "Nevertheless, in a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted. Like as in the burnt-offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs: so let our sacrifice be in thy sight this day, and grant that we may wholly go after thee: for they shall not be confounded that put their trust in thee." And Baruch 1:15 teacheth the Babylonian captives the same thing, "And ye shall say, to the Lord our God belongeth righteousness, but unto us the confusion of faces, as it is come to pass this day unto them of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

But this sacrifice must be offered out of a true heart and mouth, and with a true work: out of a heart truly acknowledging its sin, out of a mouth confessing unfeignedly, and with a work that willingly beareth the punishments which are inflicted. For there are many who say with their mouths that they are sinners, but do not feel the same in their hearts, and evince it in their works. Which they manifestly show by their being unwilling to be called and accounted sinners by others, and to suffer injuries. But if thou art a sinner why dost thou flee from the punishments? And if thou dost not appear to thyself to deserve the name of sinner, why dost thou call thy-

self one? The glory of the righteous is that they have “honor and peace” laid up for them; but the things that are laid to sinners are “tribulation and anguish,” Rom. 2:9-10.

Those therefore who ascribe unto God righteousness, and unto themselves sin, with a true heart, these are they who sacrifice those two sacrifices of righteousness commended in the scriptures. The one of which may be called the morning sacrifice, concerning which Ps. 50:23 saith, “Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his way aright will I show the salvation of God.” The other is the evening sacrifice, concerning which Ps. 51:17, saith, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” And perhaps this is what the verse before us signifies, which in the Hebrew has ‘sacrifices’ in the plural number, “Sacrifice the sacrifices of righteousness;” so that it includes both sacrifices.

In every temptation and under every injury therefore we are not to arrogate righteousness to ourselves and hold it fast, but to take it utterly from ourselves and ascribe it unto God; and they who do not this, are immersed in self-excuses, accusations of their adversaries, self-justifications, and all kinds of judgings, detractings, strivings, quarrelings, contendings, brawlings, and those other works of the flesh which the apostle enumerates, Gal. 5:20. And it comes to pass that by mutual bitings, such are consumed, not only in spirit, all love being lost, but not unfrequently in body also, by mutual slaughters and by possessions spent in litigations.

But you will say perhaps if Christians used always these sacrifices of righteousness, what would become of ordinances and laws? But we are taught these sacrifices to this end, that we might have no need of ordinances and laws. Thus the King of Babylon acted lawlessly in leading the children of Israel captive, as Three Holy Children 1:9, says, “And thou didst deliver us into the hands of lawless enemies, most hateful for-sakers of God, and to an unjust king, and the most wicked in

all the world." And yet King Zedekiah and those who were left in Jerusalem, by resisting righteousness and expostulating with God, offended him much more. Whereas those who, laying aside all boasting in their own righteousness, committed themselves unto God, greatly pleased him. So that the latter were preserved, honored, and multiplied in Babylon in the midst of enemies; while the former at Jerusalem in the midst of friends perished, were confounded, and decreased. Because the latter of the captivity sacrificed the sacrifices of righteousness without cattle or any such things; but the former offered the sacrifices of cattle and of created things without righteousness, because they wished to be righteous in themselves, and did not acknowledge their sins; whereas, those of the captivity did acknowledge their sins and ascribed righteousness unto God.

From this we understand, all that chaos and dark abyss of forensic causes and Roman arts, together with the whole mass of books, waxen tables, morals, uses, ordinances, and all such judicial righteousnesses, are matters totally foreign to a Christian man and have nothing to do with that holy life of the church which is in sincerity; and are only tolerated for the safety of the weak, that they may not do worse things in their desire of revenging themselves, and may not be overcome by the power of impatience. But at the present day, Rome and the episcopal senate devote themselves so wholly to this judicial righteousness, that they not only imagine that righteousness rules there, but for the sake of increasing this kind of righteousness, they even procure strife by strife; yea, they call to themselves the quarrels and contentions out of every corner of the whole world; so that there never was a senate-house of any Emperor, either gentile or profane, filled with such a confusion of affairs and causes, and those the most profane; and yet, which may perhaps excite wonder, the whole is about sacred and divine things most basely bought, redeemed, sold, re-sold, taken by force, and squandered.

Those lawyers call the Roman senate, at this day, the fountain of justice and righteousness; whereas it ought more properly to be called a deluge of iniquity, for it is from there that the destruction and the oblivion of those sacrifices of righteousness and of the knowledge of Christ proceed, which have spread themselves with such force and violence throughout the whole world. In a word, Rome at this day far more nearly resembles the kingdom of hell than the kingdom of heaven.

But perhaps some will say, be it so that we give up all righteousness and confess that we are sinners, and condemn ourselves to all the deserts of sinners: what then? Are we to perish and die in our sins? Does not God hate sinners? Into what peril dost thou draw us by this thy doctrine? David answers you thus: be of good cheer: only hope in God. For thus the companions of Daniel did, as is recorded in the third chapter of Daniel and in the apocryphal Song of the Three Holy Children 1:6, "For we have sinned, and committed iniquity." But afterwards, being raised to hope, they say, ver. 17, "For they shall not be confounded that put their trust in thee." Upon this I spoke referring to Is. 30:15, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." That is, we are not to avenge ourselves as if we were righteous, but are to suffer in silence without tumult; confessing our sins, committing our cause into the hand of God, and expecting his mercy with believing confidence. For he that shall come will come, and will execute judgment in favor of them that suffer injury, and will avenge the poor; and thus, God will make his strength perfect in our weakness. For if our confidence in our own righteousness be not taken away, and if we do not confess ourselves sinners and worthy of any and every evil, salvation and hope can have no place in us; for God will have respect only unto the humble.

V. 6. — *Many there are that say, who will show us any good? Jehovah, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.*

This verse among us is divided: the first part of it being

joined to the former verse, and the last part to the following verse. The Hebrew, according to the translation of Jerome, is, "There be many that say, who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." But I think the verse should be rendered and punctuated thus, "Many say, who will show unto us any good sign upon us? Lord, the light of thy countenance."

David however turns his words unto God in a way of complaint, but with admirable reverence and modesty, lamenting on account of the unbelieving, and those that will not be persuaded; such as were the stiff-necked Jews more especially, because they could not believe those who rightly advised them, unless, as Christ says, they should see signs and wonders, John 4:48. Thus the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 1:22, "That Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom." Hence it comes to pass that they are always offended at the Word of the cross and the doctrine of faith. And this is what David here says: that when he had advised them to cast away all their own righteousness, and to hope in God, and expect all good from him, he offended those who would not believe him, and who would not be prevailed upon to hope, unless they saw some good sign by which they may be assured concerning the future good which they were commanded to hope for. They say, "Who will show us any good sign upon us?" Who will assure us that these good things will come unto us? By what sign is it manifest that we shall receive those things? As if they had said, all things appear quite the contrary; and the worst signs of things seem to be upon us on all sides. Men of this kind are every where numerous, who tempt the Lord with this unbelief, like the children of Israel in the wilderness.

And from this same source you may trace a whole sea of superstitions and of the most foolish desires even among Christians, if the wind does not blow just to please them, if their crops seem to be in danger, even if their leg pains them, or if they are visited, or fear they shall be visited, with any

temporal inconvenience or loss. For in all these cases, how anxious are we to know, by means of some good sign, that these things will not come upon us, or that we shall be delivered from them if they should come. We run here and there to magicians, to diviners, yea, to devils also; and the devices and ways are innumerable, by which we endeavor to avoid this one thing, hoping in God, or at least, that we might not be compelled to hope in him without some good and certain sign.

The miser hopes in God, but it is only whilst his purse keeps filling, and his barn continues to be stored with corn; the strong man hopes in him also, but it is only so long as his strength is sound; the powerful and ambitious man hopes in him, but it is only so long as the authority of his name and his power prevail: because, by these good signs they seem to themselves to be sure that they have God propitious unto them, but if any one of these things should fail, their hope fails with it, unless some other or greater sign shows itself for their support.

Thus it is also in spiritual things, in the remission of sins, and the peace of conscience; wherein, not a few prepare to themselves a security, not by faith, nor by hope, but by a confidence in their own works, or by what others think of them. And indeed, in every temptation, these seek for themselves a good sign as something whereon to rest their hope; without which, they will not hope at all, and therefore, they do not hope in God, because they do not hope purely, for, "hope that is seen, is not hope," Rom. 8:24.

The Psalmist might have spoken of all these, mentioning them by their names; such as temptors of God, unbelieving, sons of distrust, infidels, and stiff-necked rebels. But, not mentioning their *names*, he sets forth their *work* only, and that in the most simple and modest words, "There are many that say, who will show us any good," leaving the judgment of their work unto God and to those with whom it ought to be left; because,

with a godly affection he rather pities them and grieves for their state, than bitterly accuses them.

Hence David condemns the error of such, and shows that there is not that good sign upon us to be looked for which they seek after, and that God is not propitious unto those on whom he abundantly bestows such things. Nay, because such things are the worst and the most fallacious signs, he brings forward a much better and surer sign, namely this, "The light of thy countenance, O Lord." As if he had said, to know no sign but to rest in God by faith and hope only is the best sign. 'For whosoever trusteth in him shall not be confounded,' as it is said in Daniel 3. Three Holy Children, 1:17. *They* are fully satisfied concerning all good things, who, without any sign whatever, firmly believe in God; without which faith, no works, no signs, no miracles, can make a man certain.

And faith is most rightly called 'the light of God's countenance,' because it is the illumination of our mind inspired from on high, and a certain ray of the divinity conveyed into our heart, by which, every one is saved and directed, who is saved. As it is described in Ps. 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." And Ps. 44:3, "For they gat not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance." Again, Ps. 89:15, "They walk, O Jehovah, in the light of thy countenance." Hence David exults, Ps. 27:1, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation."

This was prefigured in the "pillar of fire" and in the "cloud," by which the children of Israel were ruled and led through the desert. For, just in the same way, it is by faith alone that we are led through ways that we know not and in paths wherein there is no help of man to be found, that is, through sufferings and tribulations. And as, in the former case, the pillar of fire was with them and went before their face; so here, faith has God present. So that the illumination

of the heart proceeds, as it were, from the countenance of the present God; and hence it is most rightly and properly called, the light of the countenance of God; that is, an acknowledgment of, and confidence in, a present God. For he that does not know, and does not feel, that God is present with him, does not yet believe and has not yet the light of God's countenance.

It matters not therefore whether the light of the countenance of God be understood *actively*, as that by which, being present with us, he illuminates us by lighting up faith in us; or *passively*, as signifying the light of the faith itself, by which we believe with confidence and feel his countenance and presence. For, in the Holy Scriptures, as is well known, face or countenance, signifies presence. And therefore, an illuminating God and an illuminated heart are one and the same thing; as are also, God seen by us and God present.

This is the meaning of the name Israel, by which Jacob was called when he had seen the Lord face to face. For by his face he saw the face of God; that is, God was made present with him by faith, being, as it were, brought before his face; and he, on the other hand, beheld God present with him, and ready to help him, and, as it were, brought before his face. And hence, Israel is said to be "led" of God; that is, he was one that was ruled of God alone, or led by him in a right way. And this is done by means of faith; and therefore, Israel is the same as faithful, or believer, except that Israel sets forth the power and measure of faith with wonderful propriety.

Therefore, "Blessed is the man, as David saith, Ps. 94:12, whom thou chastenest, O Jehovah, and teachest out of thy law." For by Jer. 18:17, he threatens the Jews 'that he will show them the back and not the face;' that is, that he will leave them in unbelief and ignorance of God.

We see, therefore, what a good sign is upon us: or, we see who will show us good, namely, faith. Faith, I say, because it is the light which shows us the presence and the countenance itself of God; that is, it shows us all good even God

himself, while it brings him before our face and works in us a confidence in him. Thus no man can of himself teach another these things.

And now it will be easy to make the other interpretations harmonize with this.

The common reading is very near to this sense, — “O Lord, the light of thy countenance is sealed upon us.” The characters of whom we first spoke seek after a God that will show them some good, desiring rather to see those things visibly before them, than to believe that they shall have them. But, the believing characters of whom I spoke last, do not desire that this sign should be shown them, but glory, that the light of the countenance of God, that is, the knowledge of, and confidence in, a present God, is sealed and impressed upon them, as we may plainly understand from the words of the verse.

And with respect to the rendering of Jerome, “There are many that say, who will show us any good: Jehovah, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us:” This is the same sense, only given in the form of a petition. For God does lift up the light of his countenance upon us, when he lifts us up by that light. For faith is a light above all our faculties and powers. And hence, this lifting up is nothing else than pouring out upon us that light of faith which is in itself most high, whereby we are lifted up. And hence also it may be said to be ‘fixed’ or “sealed,” because it is enclosed and incomprehensible to us, and yet comprehending us and leading us captive into an obedience unto it.

Hence it is certain, that this verse cannot be understood concerning natural reason as being the great director; according to the opinion of many, who say, ‘that the first principles of morals spring from themselves;’ for all such things are speculative and false. Faith is the first principle of all good works, and this is so hidden and unknown, that all reason utterly shrinks from it. Reason, when at the summit of its power and perfection, can only say, “Who will show us any good?” For

we find that “many” say this, that is, all who are led and guided by reason.

V. 7. — *Thou hast put gladness in my heart. More than they have when their grain and their new wine are increased. (They are multiplied by the fruit of their corn, and wine, and oil).*

The former part of this verse is, with us, joined to the verse preceding; which, with the one that follows it, makes, in the Hebrew, one verse; and which Jerome has rendered thus, “Thou hast put gladness in my heart, from the time that their corn, and wine, and oil increased.”

According to my judgment, this verse draws the line of distinction between the believing and the unbelieving; that the God of the one is the true God, but the God of the other is their belly. For faith in God, or the light of the countenance of God, gladdens the heart, and diffuses throughout the inward man a solid and true joy, while it produces a peace on account of sins forgiven, and gives the man a sure confidence in God even in the midst of sufferings; for there can be no joy, no peace, except in a pure conscience. Hence Paul, Gal. 5:22, enumerates “joy” among the fruits of the Spirit. And David says above, ver. 1, “Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.” And hence it comes to pass, that as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so does the consolation of Christ abound in us also, through that faith whereby we rest in him; as Paul saith, 2 Cor. 1:3, “Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction.” For who can but rejoice, and even exult over all the evils of the world and of hell itself, saying, with Paul, Rom. 8:31, “If God is for us, who is against us?” if he believe that God is with him and for him? But, when will he ever believe firmly that God is for him, unless, from being proved by various temptations, and having had his faith exercised, he has thereby learned that God is for him?

It cannot be therefore but that the man must rejoice with his whole heart, who has the light of the countenance of God. For such an one, because he is righteous; and because he rejoices, he fears no one and exultingly triumphs over all things, even over death and hell, being certain that he has the approving presence of his God. And hence, after "O Lord, the light of thy countenance," follows, "Thou hast put gladness in my heart." As we have it also in Ps. 68:3, "But let the righteous be glad; let them exult before God: yea, let them rejoice with gladness."

But what shall we say, on the contrary, concerning the unbelieving? Have they ever any joy and gladness of heart? No! For there is no peace to the wicked, nor any joy to the ungodly, as Is. saith, 48:22. Because Paul saith, 2 Cor. 1:7, "As ye are partakers of the sufferings, so also are ye of the comfort." But these never have been partakers of the sufferings, and therefore, shall not be partakers of the consolation. And it is said also, Prov. 14:10, "The heart knoweth its own bitterness and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy." But what joy have these? Why, they have that which they sought after. "So I let them go after the stubbornness of their heart," saith the Lord, Ps. 81:12. And in Ps. 78, we read that God satisfied their desires when they tempted him by asking food for their lusts, and He rained down flesh upon them as dust; where follow, verses 30, 31, "Their food was yet in their mouths, when the anger of God went up against them;" which the apostle also repeats, Eph. 5:6, calling such 'the sons of disobedience, upon whom the wrath of God cometh.'

God giveth unto these, instead of rejoicing of heart, the vile gratifications of the belly; because they only ask, "Who will show us any good." Savoring of nothing but present and sensual things, and not having the light of the countenance of God. And therefore David here saith, 'that their corn, and wine, and oil are increased,' as they wished; thus describing their misery in mild words and leaving us to judge how great

that misery must be, by contrasting it with the joy which he felt and with his enjoyments which were all directly contrary. For what good has that man who has not God? What joy can he have whose heart does not rejoice in God? What delight can he know whose conscience is ever in a state of alarm? for such an one always feels that God is against him.

These words of David therefore display in him a most remarkable humble mind and yet contain a most powerful comparison. The righteous have a rejoicing of heart in God. But what have the unbelievers? An abundance, says he, of temporal things and nothing more. O miserable pittance! O worthless inheritance, the just desert of unbelief! For what else is fit for swine but deceiving and empty husks, the refuse and outside coverings of what is really good! Thus, they have the good which they wished to have shown unto them. They have that good, for the sake of which they are willing to be without the light of the countenance of God. They have those rewards given unto them which were given unto the sons of the concubines of Abraham, but they are separated from the true heir, Isaac, to whom the whole inheritance is given. And as the two are separated and distinct in desert, so are they in fruit and reward. The unbelieving wanted visible good things, and they have them: the believing desired invisible good things, and they have them in the joy of their heart. And thus, as he had shown in the preceding verse what the *workmen* were, so now, in the present verse, he shows what *fruits* followed their works; how different they are from, yea, how contrary to each other.

You may see here, therefore, in what sovereign contempt he held all the pomp and all the possessions of this world, from the comparison which he draws between them and the good things which he enjoyed; and from his showing that such are the things which are given to unbelievers.

Now it is easy to harmonize the different translations. For there is no difference whether one says as the Vulgate, they are

multiplied by their grain and wine, that is, they are become rich, great and strong, expanded by their temporal and earthly possessions, or as Jerome, your grain and wine are increased, as every grammarian knows. For it is a short description of their prosperity as Job, in the 21 chapter and the 144 Ps. verse 11, etc. set forth more in details.

But that the Prophet does not speak here of the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Augustine proves in that it is especially mentioned, your grain, your wine, not without specifying more definitely grain and wine, since it is evident that he by this pronoun your, speaks of many who say, "Who can show us, what is good?" For it has reference to the godless and the unbelievers, who have nothing to do with the Lord's Supper, since they are swine and dogs, which can never be satisfied, as Is. 56:11 says. Therefore is would be wrong if he broke the chain of thought and introduced foreign matter under a similar name when he had not previously mentioned it.

Therefore it occurs that in Hebrew and in Augustine it is, from the time *a tempore*, while in the Vulgate we have of the fruit, *a fructu*, since *a fructu* has frequently given occasion among us to understand it referring to the Lord's Supper, the text in Hebrew gives just as much occasion that it speaks of their grain, which they have "from time," that is, that he speaks of temporal things. "From time" he says, we have what we have, that which time provides to give according to temporal necessities and luxuries. This seems to say to me that from the eternal presence of God they have nothing, but that they have their possessions from time.

According to our sense, *a fructu* can be so understood that they were so enriched by the variety and superabundance of their grain and wine, as if he would say, may their temporalities prosper and bear fruit. This again is in the way of understanding it in a becoming manner of the Lord's Supper, since the believers in Christ are not multiplied by the fruit of the Lord's Supper, but they themselves are the manifold fruits and re-

sults of the Lord's Supper, so that according to this meaning much more should be said: by their grain and wine the fruits are multiplied.

But this is also the sign of an oblique accusation, since it stands *your* grain, *your* wine, namely in that the prophet sharply attacks the evil of the cupidity of the unbelievers, as if he would say: that is their characteristic nature, for they seek these things, they love them, only these possessions do they know how to enjoy.

It is only of minor importance that in the Hebrew "their oil" is not mentioned after "their wine" as in the Vulgate, for it is of no significance whether it is added or not. It is certain that by this figure of speech in the scriptures a superabundance of temporalities is meant, as Gen. 27:37, "With grain and wine and oil (Vulgate) have I sustained him," and then follows: "What then shali I do for thee my son." Yet I suspect that was through the permission of the Spirit introduced by the fluent translator, so that those who would read, might be reminded that nothing but temporal gifts should be understood, since oil does not permit the least reference to the Lord's Supper.

By this however I will not detract from the interpretation of those, who understand it to refer to the sacrament. Each may advocate his own meaning if only faith and peace remain undisturbed. It is not our task to confute the labors of others, but as far as possible to come to the right understanding. The good is not cast away, when we praise the better or the very good more than the good.

V. 8, 9. *In peace will I both lay me down and sleep; for thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety.* Rev. ver.

V. 8, 9. — *I will together lay me down in peace to sleep, and take my rest. For thou, O Lord, hast singularly established me in hope.*

These two verses are, in the Hebrew, only one: and Jerome has translated them, "In peace together will I lay me down

to rest, and sleep; because thou, O Lord, hast made me in an especial manner to dwell in safety."

The two expressions, "I will lay me down to sleep" and "I will rest," have been abundantly discoursed on in the preceding Psalm, verse 6, where we have shown, that by them is signified natural death and burial. Though I know that Augustine interprets them, figuratively, in a different way, as signifying the oblivion of temporal things; yet he himself confesses that such an oblivion cannot be attained unto in this life.

The words '*in id ipsum*' in the Vulgate have the same signification as the verb *simul*, 'together,' 'with' Jerome and they imply concord and unity; as in Ps. 133:1, "Behold how good, and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell in unity, *in unum*," that is, 'together in unity.'

The sense therefore, is, being, O Lord, satisfied and assured, from the light of thy countenance, that thou art with me and for me, I am full of joy. I shall therefore die in peace and willingly leave this life; because as in Ps. 23:4, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me."

Hence according to my judgment 'laying one's self down to rest together,' and 'sleeping together,' are of the same signification as we now use those terms; and they convey that meaning, that would be conveyed by the Latin words *condormire* and *correquiescere*; and I think, that by those expressions David declares his persuasion that he should sleep with his fathers. For the same expressions are frequently made use of in the books of Kings, "David slept with his fathers," 1 Kings 2:10. Again, in the Books of Moses, "I am to be gathered unto my people," Gen. 49:29. And again Moses, "Thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people," Num. 27:13. Aaron shall be gathered unto his people," Num. 20:24. And many more like passages.

Faith therefore after it has been exercised by various sufferings and temptations, moves us to look upon death as a sleep

in peace; which to the unbelieving is a terrible and intolerable vexation. For what else do you imagine David intends by this his great glorying in death, and commendation of it, than that he may not only give an example in himself of the way in which we may come to a sweet and quiet death, but that he may leave it also to every one to judge how terrible the death of the unbelieving must be, and how full of unrest, dread and horror, in whose death there is no lying down to rest and sleeping, but according to the Psalmist, "Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him." Ps. 140:11. Again, 'The death of the wicked is terrible.' And again, "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days," Ps. 55:23. "When they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them," 1 Thess. 5:3. Therefore he terrifies them in the most mild and quiet way by showing them their awful death, while he commends his own death, which would be most happy; because he rather chooses to move them in a sweet way by his own example than to urge them to the life of the cross and of faith; to effect which, he sets before their eyes that glorious death which is the fruit of such a life.

For thou, O Lord, hast singularly established me in hope.

This is taken from Deut. 33:28, and is frequently repeated throughout the scriptures. Let us therefore come to the fountain-head of it. Moses saith, Deut. 33:12, "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety." And in verse 28, "Israel shall dwell in safety and alone." And Jer. 32:37, "I will cause them to dwell safely." It is consequently plain that Moses said safely and alone, "*confidenter et solus*" where David uses here singularly in hope, "*singulariter in spe*," in that the same words are used in both places and in the same sense. Since therefore the translator of the Vulgate added the conjunction "and" in Deut. 33:28, which is not in the text, so it ought to have been inserted in this verse also, "singularly and in hope." For it occurs frequently in the Bible that the conjunction is omitted, which must be supplied by the translator, as Josh. 10:13, sun,

moon stood still" instead of sun and moon. So also here: safely and singularly, or safely and alone, that is in a special and secure state, as if David wished to say: Verily that thou hast fulfilled in me, since thou hast caused me to dwell singularly and safely, which thou didst promise in Moses, where thou saidst, "Israel shall dwell in safety and alone."

David, therefore, concludes his psalm with this general and authentic truth of Moses: and thereby excellently shows, in opposition to the carnal opinion of the Jews, what Moses really meant by those words, and also applies them to his own purpose. For as Moses said, Israel should dwell in safety and alone; and as Israel is most beautifully set forth in this Psalm, for he is represented as seeing, like Jacob, God face to face, and as having the light of his countenance, that is, believing in God; therefore, David rightly saith that the promise and all the full salvation given to Israel belong to *him*, and that *he* is made to "dwell in safety and alone." Jacob also declares that he had the same confidence when he says, "My life is preserved" or saved, Gen. 32:30. What else was this, but his dwelling in safety in a singular manner, being satisfied concerning the salvation of his soul? For his soul was safe, but only in hope and confidence. This security and all-certain hope of salvation, therefore, is that very spiritual safety, and spiritual dwelling alone; that is, a dwelling in God himself, which is the salvation of the soul.

The prophet therefore fears not death, but says with confidence that he shall sleep in peace with his fathers; because he is satisfied and fully assured of his salvation. Here we trace David's reading and meditation in the writings of Moses, in which he exercised himself, and from which he drew this spiritual understanding, having been taught it, and established in it, by various temptations.

But what is this 'dwelling alone,' or 'being established singularly?' for to dwell in hope, or confidently, seems to be plainly understood. According to my bold way of thinking,

it seems to be the same as dwelling at liberty and in security; so that solitude is a state of liberty, according to Ps. 88:4-5, "I am as a man that hath no help, cast off among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave;" that is, alone and secure. More to the point is Judges 18:7. 'The five men saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt in security, no one putting them to shame, being of great wealth and far from the Sidonians, and having no dealings with any man.' Here it is manifest that their solitude was their security, for they had shunned and separated themselves from all men to the end that they might live in security. In this state they could not have lived, if they had mingled among men. So now they who wish to live securely and quietly, seek a sequestered and solitary place; from which desire it is that monks, that is, solitary ones, have their rise; who in order to dwell in security and to avoid those dangers of the world that are among men, seek places of solitude.

Therefore 'singularly' and 'securely' mean the same thing; except hat 'singularly' expresses the peculiar nature of security, that is, a being removed to a solitary place out of the way of danger. But if all these things be not done in the spirit, they will only make men monks and hypocrites, who only avoid external dangers.

David however is here speaking of spiritual security, which is so great that a man may be safe in the midst of the perils of the world, of death, and of hell, and yet be filled with no more fear than if he were dwelling alone; and indeed such an one is more alone in the greater number of perils and evils in which he is involved. This is the powerful grace of faith, and the effect of a good conscience toward God.

Now see whether Jerome did not truly feel this security in the verse before us, when he translates it, "Because thou, O Lord, hast made me in an especial manner to dwell in safety."

But to sum up the whole, 'to dwell singularly in hope,' is for a man to be satisfied and confidently secure concerning his salvation in and by the mercy of God. In the enjoyment of

which experience, he may wait for death as that which will be to him a most grateful sleep. These things, I say, faith produces, exercised and tried by sufferings, these are the “peaceable fruits,” as Paul saith to the Hebrews, which it yields.

Wherefore those doctors of theology, as they are called, are to be utterly detested and condemned, who teach us to remain in doubt and uncertainty as to whether we are in the grace and favor of God or not; and also, whether God be our God, and we his people. To establish this their doctrine, they invent their distinctions and force them upon us; saying that the sacraments and ordinances do work in us a certain effect of grace, as to the authority and power of God; but that, with respect to the person receiving, they work doubt; and they say that this doubting is a godly feeling. O pestilent fellows! For if this be true, and if every Christian ought to doubt in this godly manner, as they call it, then that article of the Creed, ‘I believe in the Holy Church, and in the communion of saints,’ falls to the ground; because, according to them, I ought not to assert that I am a saint, nor art thou to make such an assertion, nor any other Christian; and therefore we are all to remain in doubt whether we have a God for us or not, and whether or not the whole Church will perish.

But away with all such most absurd and most impious heresies! Let every one take heed that he be not by any means in doubt whether or not God be for him, that is, whether or not he has God for his Father, his Saviour, and the giver of all good things, that he may dwell securely alone and in hope, and that he may not be in a continual state of fluctuating uncertainty “like the troubled sea;” which Isaiah saith is the state of the wicked, 57:20. For if thou believest concerning the saints, that they are safely secure and confident, why shouldest thou not believe the same concerning thyself, if thou desirest to be like them, and if thou hast received the same baptism, the same faith, the same Christ, and the same all things?

Nay, thou pestilent teacher, thou most impiously believest

one thing concerning the saints, and another thing concerning thyself, if thou impiously teachest them to doubt as thou thyself doubttest. For thou art either wicked in teaching that doubting is a godly feeling, or else thou art wicked in believing that to be sure and certain which thou commandest us to doubt, for faith cannot rest upon that which is known to be uncertain. Indeed, I never could have believed, that these impious fables and these most pestilent opinions had ever crept into the Church of Christ, even secretly, had I not both read and heard those, who were considered to be great theologians , assert these things as being most sure articles of faith, and establish and defend them, and consider the contrary catholic doctrine to be heretical. So great are the darkness and blindness of the heads of the church, and so great is the wrath of God upon us! But more of this elsewhere, and addressed to others.

P S A L M V.

TO VICTORY: FOR THE INHERITANCES: A PSALM OF DAVID.

What is meant by ‘to victory’ has been set forth in the preceding Psalm, once for all.

Concerning these “inheritances,” I read a great deal, but I read nothing that satisfies my dull comprehension. As to what Lyra and his followers understand here, I can neither understand nor receive. I will say what I think upon the subject.

It is certain that this Psalm does not treat of sufferings and tribulations, for the person that harps does not say one word about them. The whole Psalm is a complaint concerning the ungodly, the unjust, and the wicked. The scope of the Psalm therefore, according to my judgment is this; — the prophet is praying against hypocrites, deceitful workers, and false prophets, who seduce and deceive the people of God and the heritage of Christ, by their human traditions, whom Christ calls, Matt. 7:15, John 10:12, “ravelling wolves,” and the apostle Titus 1:10, “vain talkers and deceivers.”

And that we may come to our own times, as in the preceding Psalm David inveighed against a mere profession and abuse of justice; so in this Psalm he attacks the godless teaching and the misuse of theology. Because that is the most destructive of all persecutions which rages under the cover of truth and godliness, for such always professes the name of God; and because it is that which most of all destroys the heritages of God; therefore it is, that the Psalmist is under such powerful emotions, prays with so many different petitions, accuses the ungodly with so many names, and so burns with zeal, that he can say of himself what he said in Psalm 69:9, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.”

Neither Christ himself, nor Peter, nor Paul, burned with zeal, nor showed their indignation against any thing so much as against these heady soul-deceivers and these reward-seekers, against whom all the prophets set themselves. We shall therefore find that this Psalm is directed against all false prophets, hypocrites, heretics, superstitious persons, and the whole generation of those who devour the people of God by an adulteration of his Word and by a false show of works.

Rightly therefore is the title ‘for the inheritances,’ or, ‘to the inheritances,’ given to this Psalm; because its design is to preserve the people of God in safety for their rightful Lord. For the people of God are the Lord’s heritage, Ps. 33:12. “Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people whom he hath shosen for his own inheritance;” and Ps. 47:4, “He chooseth our inheritance for us, the glory of Jacob whom he loved.” This is the same we have in Psalm 2:8, “I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.” The same is found in many other places.

But it is said ‘inheritances’ in the plural number, whereas, the inheritance of Christ is but one. This is because it must of necessity be that the one inheritance of Christ must be divided into many parts and places, on account of the great multitude which no one pastor could rule and teach. Therefore as there must be many pastors and stewards in the one inheritance of God, so there must be many inheritances which are intrusted to them; whence it comes to pass, that many deceivers and scatterers of the same will rise up in different places.

The tender concern of the Psalmist is shown by his calling the people of God an inheritance rather than a church, a people, or an assembly; because he thereby excites greater envy in those who aim to scatter it and produces a more gracious feeling in himself and other pastors like him. For if an inheritance is that which every one loves and is most zealously anxious about, how much more so must it be with God. Hence he

saih, Ex. 19:5, "Ye shall be mine own possession." Hence also David saith in this Psalm v. 10 'for they have rebelled against thee.'

Indeed the metaphor contained in the title 'for the inheritances,' at once shows the scope of the whole Psalm. For inheritances must be cultivated, tilled, and worked, in order that they may be fruitful and improved. For that reason they will have many snares and hindrances thrown in their way, and will meet with many enemies and destroyers. Therefore the people of God will need their laborers, their teachers, and their rulers, by the industry of whom, the inheritance is cultivated for God and wrought upon and prepared by his Word; while it is also, on the other hand, land waste and destroyed by wicked teachers. Hence this Psalm is entitled, 'for the inheritances' and their cultivators.

We may add this Psalm is not only to be understood of the church of Christ in general, but also of every part of the people of God in every age, all of whom ever have their seducers and persecutors, so that the Psalm in general, agreeably to its title, is 'for the inheritances.'

Nor should I make any objection, nay I would rather coincide with him, if any one should wish by 'inheritances' to understand the two opposite classes of men; that is, those who depend upon their own strength and those who depend upon the grace of God, for this all comes to the point before mentioned.

V. 1. *Give ear to my words, O Jehovah, consider my meditation (cry).*

V. 2. *Hearken unto the voice of my cry (prayer), my King, and my God; for unto thee do I pray.*

This is the way in which the Hebrew divides these two verses, though our common translation joins the last clause of the second verse to the beginning of the third, making it begin thus, "For unto thee, O Lord," etc. The rendering by Jerome differs very little from this our received translation, ex-

cept that for "my cry" he has 'my roaring,' and Lyra has 'my meditation,' and for "the voice of my prayer" he has 'the voice of my cry.'

Here also I must venture my opinion concerning the meaning of the Psalm. As I said above, this Psalm especially strikes at self-justifiers and wicked teachers, the aim of all is one and the same, to feed their own pride. For the blessed Virgin describes such when she says, "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts," Luke 1:51. Because all wicked doctrines derive their origin from pride, and therefore Augustine in many places calls pride the mother of all heresies, for it is humility alone that teaches rightly. Hence Prov. 11:2, "When pride cometh, then cometh shame; but with the lowly is wisdom." The proud man must be contumelious and contentious; he must judge and condemn all others, as we see it evidenced by the Pharisee in the Gospel in his conduct towards that poor humbled sinner, the publican, Luke 18; and also those in the house of Simon the leper, in their conduct towards the woman who was a sinner, Luke 18:11; 7:39.

The prophet therefore is intent upon inveighing against the hypocrites of his time, who, being puffed up in a wonderful manner with their own righteousness and works, thought nothing at all of the enormous sins of envy, pride, avarice, and the like, nor believed that they had any need of the grace of God, walking securely in their own way without any fear of God; and this is what all proud men of this kind always do, always have done, and always will do.

David begins the Psalm humbly with prayer, seeking the grace of God, and thereby he plainly and powerfully, at the very outset, condemns their pride. For it is as if he had said, these ungodly characters are full, are holy are righteous, are whole; and therefore they want no physician, nor do they seek, O Lord, thy grace to be justified thereby. But I, a poor needy creature, full of every sin and brought to despair of

myself and all my works and powers, can do nothing but pray unto thee and implore thy grace and mercy.

Here is given a beautifully marked difference between the law and faith, or between the letter and the Spirit. This Augustine in his work upon the difference between the letter and the Spirit, sets forth thus: ‘The law of works saith to the man, do what I command; but the law of faith saith unto God, give what thou commandest.’ Again, saith he, ‘what the law of works commands with threatening, that the law of faith obtains by believing.’ Hence the people of the law “*theologi justitiarii*”, say, I have done so and so, and they boast in pride as if they were justified by the works of the law; but the people of faith say, I pray that I may be enabled to do it. The former trusting in works do not seek the mercy of God: the latter accounting all their righteousness as dung, Phil. 3:8, breathe after the mercy of God only. Hence the apostle saith of the former, Rom. 10:3, “For being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Therefore the letter always puffeth up and killeth; but the Spirit humbleth and giveth life. “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble,” James 4:6, 1 Pet. 5:5.

Again he that prays in this threefold petition, must pray with a deeply moved soul. He assigns no other reason for his praying thus, than his confidence that he should both pray and be heard; “O, Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice,” verse 3. Why, David, wilt thou pray in the morning? and why shalt thou be heard? “For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness,” v. 4. And what is the meaning of this? Why, that God loveth humble supplicants for his mercy, but hateth the proud that presume upon their own righteousness.

Behold, saith he, for this reason will I pray, because I know that this pleases thee, that thou desirest this, and that thou hast commanded this, that man should acknowledge him-

self a sinner and that his whole life should be nothing else than a state of praying for, desiring, groaning after, and sighing after thy mercy; even as Luke 18:1, records the precept, "That they ought always to pray and not to faint." Ps. 105:4 says, "Seek his face evermore." But this, saith David, these ungodly presurers never do; or perhaps they may occasionally do it for a moment, or rather may pretend to do it, though they are all the while in reality full and satisfied; and therefore thou, O Lord, hatest them, seeing that they neither acknowledge their own things nor thine.

Now observe the order and force of the words, "my cry," "the voice of my prayer," "give ear," "consider," "hearken." These expressions all evince the urgency and energy of David's feelings and petitions. First we have, "Give ear;" that is, hear me. But it is of little service for the words to be heard unless the 'cry,' or the roaring, or the meditation, be 'considered.' As if he had said in a common way of expression, I speak with deep anxiety and concern but with a failing utterance; and I cannot express myself, nor make myself understood as I wish. Do thou therefore understand from my feelings more than I am able to express in words. Therefore I add my "cry," that what I cannot express in words for thee to hear I may by my cry signify to thine understanding. When thou hast understood me, then, O Lord, "Hearken unto the voice of my prayer" and despise not what thou hast thus heard and understood.

We are not however to imagine that hearing, understanding, and hearkening, are all different acts in God, in the same way as they are in us; but that our feelings towards God are to be thus varied and increased, that is, that we are first to desire to be heard, then, that our prayers which are heard may be understood, and then that, being understood, they may be hearkened unto, that is, not disregarded.

The exordium of this prayer of David consists of these three parts, whereby he desires that God would be favorably

inclined toward him, would fully understand him, and would regard his petitions, because his requests are worthy of God's attention, easy for him to grant, and to his honor to accomplish, and also most necessary for himself.

"My King and my God," continues he. Herein he plainly strikes at the ungodly work-righteous persons, who act without any king and without any God, being sufficient of themselves. This is one of the passages in which the scope of this Psalm is touched upon. For to have a King and a God is for a man to presume nothing in himself but to yield himself up to be governed and ruled by God; to become altogether tractable, and to ascribe unto God every thing that has been received, or that shall be received. This is what those self-righteous ones never do, or at least they only do it feignedly, because they ascribe not a little to themselves. Nay, in fact, as they do not ascribe all things unto God, they ascribe nothing, for he that ascribes any thing unto himself, ascribes unto himself all the glory of it also; and they who ascribe the glory unto themselves ascribe all unto themselves and nothing unto God, because he must have all the glory, or he can have none, for he never divides his glory, nor has any partner therein, as he saith, Is. 48:11, "My glory I will not give to another." Such men therefore do certainly reign, but not by God; they are their own kings and their own idols.

"For unto thee do I pray." Here he confesses his poverty and has nothing, except the hope that as he prays he shall receive, as not being a worker but one who prays.

Here again in these two particulars we have the whole sum of our Christian life set forth: I mean, in our having a King and a God. God rules us as King when he takes us away from ourselves and leads us unto himself. He acts as our God, when he receives us as we are coming unto him and fills us with himself, that is, with all good. The former state is the cross, the manifestation, the transition, or our being led out of the world and out of our sins, or, in a word, the mortification of

our flesh. The latter is our being received, or our acceptance or glorification.

Hence Augustine says upon this passage, that the scriptures generally call the Son, rather than the Father, King. For Christ, by his twofold nature, has accomplished both the above-mentioned things for us. By the kingdom or the rule or the dominion of his humanity, or as the apostle calls it, of his "flesh," which is carried on in the kingdom of faith, he renders us deformed and crucifies us, making us, from having been securely satisfied proud gods, miserable and wretched sinners. For as, in our old Adam, we proudly ascend in self-opinion, so as to imagine ourselves to be like God himself; therefore he descends into our likeness, that he may bring us back to the true knowledge of ourselves. All this is done by his incarnation, that is, in the kingdom of faith in which the cross of Christ rules, which casts down all that divinity that we perversely aspired to in our imaginations and brings back the true sense of our humanity and of the contemptible infirmity of our flesh which we had as perversely left behind.

But by the dominion, or in the kingdom of his divinity and glory, he will make us like unto his glorious body, where we shall be like him; and then we shall be no more sinners, no more weak, but shall ourselves be kings, the sons of God, and as the angels that are in heaven; then shall we say "my God" in real possession, which now we say only in hope.

Hence, it is not without due propriety that he says, "my King," before he says, "my God;" for so Thomas the apostle also, John 20:28, saith, "My Lord and my God;" because, Christ must first be apprehended as Man before he is apprehended as God; and the cross of his humanity must be sought after and known before we can know the glory of his divinity; and when we have laid hold of Christ as Man, that will soon bring with it the knowledge of him as God.

All these things are hard to be received by the flesh, for that would rather have Christ to be God only than Man also,

because it is more ready to seek after the glory than the cross, but to seek glory by the cross is what it abhors. Thus Moses fled from before the serpent into which his rod had been turned, but when he touched it and took it by the tail he became glorious in miracles and was made a god to Pharaoh. Ex. 4:3-4; 7:1.

V. 3. *O Jehovah, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice; in the morning will I order my prayer unto thee and will keep watch (stand before thee; and will look up).*

I must here labor a little before I enter into the sanctuary of this verse and come at the full understanding of it. I know two things. The one is ,that “morning” in the scriptures signifies mystically the time of grace; because, when Christ the sun of righteousness graciously arises upon a man he illuminates him, and does so as often as he vouchsafes those visitations. The other thing is, that to the time of “morning,” literally understood, are devoted, for the most part, sacred and divine works, such as praying and teaching; whereby also the mystical morning is figuratively represented.

Hence it is ‘that the Lord looked upon the hosts of the Egyptians in the morning watch and destroyed them.’ Ex 14:24. Hence also it is written, Ps. 46:5, “The Lord shall help her, and that right early.” And Ps. 63:7, “I will meditate on thee in the night watches.” But concerning wicked and ungodly teachers he saith, Ps. 127:2, “It is vain for you to rise up early to eat the bread of toil.”

And the prophet Micah, 2:1, says still more clearly on this point, “Woe to them that devise unprofitableness, in the Hebrew AVEN, that is ‘iniquity,’ and work evil upon their beds! When the morning is light they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand.” This they did, when, as the prophet Isaiah says, 10:1, they taught the people false laws and false interpretations of the laws which they themselves invented, whereby they devoured the people both body and soul; whence their throat is rightly called “an open sepulchre,” Ps. 5:10.

Agreeably to this it is said in the same place, Micah 2:2, immediately afterwards, "And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage." God saith by Amos, 4:4, "And bring your sacrifices every morning." From all this it is manifest that of old the morning was the time devoted to sacrifices and self-justifications, to teaching and reading, in a word, to divine things, according to the custom which is still preserved in the church at this day.

Setting aside therefore the mystical meaning of the word "morning," I shall interpret it according to the temporal sense as well as I can, not knowing whether I shall be positively right. The morning as we have said is always devoted to them rightly. The prophet therefore seems to me to separate himself, together with all the inheritances of God, if not in place and time, yet certainly in affection and desire, both from all ungodly teachers and hearers and also from all ungodly workers. For he attacks both in the present passage, and thereby shows that though there must be a meeting together with them in the same place and at the same morning time, for divine purposes, and to hear the law of God.

But they corrupt the law of God by their traditions, or at least do not rightly teach it, and impiously live and act under the appearance of what is holy and good, and yet at the same time teach their own fables, that they may thereby grow fat, which they are continually accused of doing by all the prophets, and which we hear and see done everywhere throughout our churches, by those who will say anything in the church and that he may be favored to hear God himself; not the word shows that while they act and proceed thus his prayers and desires shall be that he may be accounted worthy of being heard of man only, but the Word of God.

For all the other characters do as it is said of them, Is. 30:9-11, "For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children and in their sermons for a little of the most filthy lucre. David

that will not hear the law of Jehovah ; which say to the seers, see not ; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things ; speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." And these characters Paul also describes in his Epistle to Timothy, saying, "And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside unto fables," 2 Tim. 4:4.

The sense of the verse therefore is, woe is me that I must dwell among a people who will not hear the truth and who abhor the Word of the cross, but will heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. As Is. 6:5 saith, "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips," on account of their impious doctrines. I assemble with them in the morning to hear thee, but behold, I hear not thee, but men only. They teach their own ways and the works of men. Therefore do thou, O my King and my God, hear me in the mornings ; because at those times I do not stand before them, but before thee, nor do I direct my thoughts towards them, but the mouth of my heart is opened unto thee ; it is before thee I stand, it is unto thee that I offer myself, that thou wouldst instruct me that I may see and understand, according to that Word, "And they shall all be taught of God," John 6:45.

Hence you see that all the burning zeal of this prophet was roused by his seeing the people of God and the inheritances of Christ seduced and destroyed by those that taught what was corrupt. Indeed all places are full of false teachers and vainly-prating deceivers of souls ; which, as it is the most destructive of all evils, so it the most heavily afflicts the godly mind.

For what sight can be more distressing, what spectacle more miserable, than to see a wolf go through a flock of innocent sheep, so tearing and devouring them as not to leave one of them alive ! It is thus that a wicked and impious teacher rages among the simple sheep of Christ ; for it is of this that Paul warns with tears, Acts 20:29, saying, "For I know that

after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

In thus setting forth the sense of this verse and the feelings of the prophet we almost repeat our exposition of the two verses preceding; for we ought rightly to understand here that these are the motions of an overflowing heart, under which the prophet grieves at the multitude of these teachers, of whom we shall hear him speak more fully presently, when he beholds their iniquity, and under which he calls upon his King and his God with such repeated petitions against these tyrants of the law and against these idols that take the teacher's chair. This sense of the passage more aptly agrees with the scope of the Psalm than that mystical interpretation of the word "morning," though the latter does not differ widely from the same point.

This third verse also aptly accords with the former interpretation, because he desires to be taught the Word and work of God, and not those of men; and it rightly agrees with the verses preceding, "Give ear unto my words, O Jehovah; consider my meditation; hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for unto thee do I pray." And for what dost thou pray, David? For that which is a gift above all things necessary, that thou wouldest restrain these wicked teachers, who occupy the morning time and the place in teaching ungodly doctrines and that thou wouldest hear me in that for which I pray unto thee at that time. For what dost thou pray at that time? That I may stand before *thee* and be *thy* hearer, that I may be instructed by thine own teaching and be enlightened by thine own illumination, and that I may not be deceived together with those who have itching ears; for thou art my King who rules me and my God who preserves me. Thus the prayer is directed absolutely against all corrupt doctrines and works.

He says, 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee. In that which I pray, do thou hearken unto me. I pray for all the true teach-

ers and hearers of the Word which are accustomed to be held forth at that time.' There is not a more vehement prayer in all the Psalms than this one, nor one that contains so many earnest repetitions; and there is not one more necessary and wholesome for all of us at this day, nor ever has been, nor ever will be.

Let therefore the godly Christian's first and great concern be to pray unto God most earnestly, according to the example given in this Psalm, for all the inheritances of God, that his Word may flourish amoug his people; for it is by the Word only that the people of God live, are feil and are preserved, as Christ saith, Matt. 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." For while the Word of God flourishes all things flourish and go well in the church. What is the reason that at this day the church has not only withered away into luxury and pomp, but is almost wholly destroyed? What, but because the Word of God is disregarded and the laws of men and the artful inventions of Rome are taught?

Jerome translates the words according to their native energy thus, "O Lord, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice: in the morning will I be prepared for thee, and will meditate." And does not this word "prepared" aptly agree with the sense above mentioned? For what else is it to be prepared for God, than to become teachable and tractable in the hand of God? David here shows that he does not want to be prepared by man. Nor does it militate against this sense, that John Reuchlin, according to the opinion of the Jews, renders it, 'In the morning will I order,' so as to make it the active verb which the scripture uses when speaking of arranging and ordering sacrifices; that thus it may signify a ready and prepared state of mind, a mind that casts off every thing that stands in its way and is resigned and devoted to the whole will of God. For that is a true sacrifice and an acceptable offering unto God, when a man orders himself in this way, thus prepares him-

self, thus stands before God, and becomes thus teachable and tractable.

It is manifest that, according to the Hebrew idiom, the verb ‘to stand’ (*adstare*) is a verb substantive, or an absolute verb; thus “I will stand,” or, ‘I will order,’ that is, I will make an ordering or an offering, that is, of myself. Hence it is not inappropriately translated “I will stand.” We are here at the same time taught, that in hearing the Word of God we are not to be intent upon the man that is speaking, but upon God who is teaching.

In the same manner the word ‘see’ or ‘look up’ is absolute; that is, I shall be seeing, I shall be illuminated, I shall be instructed, I shall become one that can see, that is, one that can see truth and righteousness; according to Micah 7:9, “He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.” For no one can see or know the righteousness of God, but he whom God instructs; all others are only vain talkers who speak out of their own brain.

Hence it is that Christ gave the Holy Spirit to his apostles and to the church that he himself may speak in us, and not we from ourselves. If therefore David had stood before men he would not have seen, but would have been blind, according to the words of Christ, “If the blind lead the blind,” but now, because he stands, orders himself, and is prepared, before God, he shall see and be illuminated.

But if the mystical morning rather pleases any one, which is the beginning of grace, wherein the church begins to stand before God and to see, I make no objection to it. Though I am never much in a hurry to follow mysteries where I can have the plain letter. Nor should I say any thing in opposition to it, if by ‘morning’ and ‘standing’ and ‘seeing’ any one should wish to understand man’s offering up himself, not as a self-righteous sacrifice so as to boast of having given something unto God, but as evincing a state of mind that is waiting to receive the righteousness of God.

V. 4. *For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: evil shall not sojourn with thee (nor shall the malignant man dwell with thee).*

V. 5. *The arrogant (the unrighteous) shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity.*

V. 6. *Thou wilt destroy them that speak lies; Jehovah abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.*

He here accuses corrupt teachers and their disciples under seven different appellations, so great is his zeal for the true life and doctrine of godliness. Hence we must understand this part of God's Word, as well as every other, in the Spirit and in faith. For the characters concerning whom David is here speaking, if you look at their external appearance and outward show, will seem to be every thing but what he here declares they are, so deceptively covered are they with the clothing of sheep and the name of Christ. In a word their opinion is that these things which are said concerning them belong altogether unto others, whom they look upon as their adversaries. Hence they acknowledge neither the names nor the works which are here set forth, for they would turn them thus, 'For thou art a God that hath pleasure in equity, and we shal dwell with thee, for we are kind; and shall stand in thy sight, for we are righteous. Thou lovest us the workers of righteousness and thou shalt preserve us, for we are speakers of truth. Thou shalt highly esteem us, for we are men gentle and sincere.' Such are the glories which these ungodly ones foolishly imagine concerning themselves; but all that is here said contrary to this, they transfer to the truly godly, righteous, and lovers of God.

This perversion of things shall remain until the end of the world. Thus we read, that Jacob and Esan struggled in the womb of Rebecca, Gen. 25:22; and thus also the two harlots contended before King Solomon for the living son, 1 Kings 3:16 etc. For heretics and false preachers always arrogate to themselves the title of truth, righteousness, and the church, and

they excel all men in external pomp and show, though they are excelled by the just in the sight of God; and in reality the truly catholic and righteous alone are they who excel all, though without any pomp and show, because they are righteous before God.

Let us then dwell a little upon these *seven terms*, “wickedness,” malignant,” “unrighteous,” “workers of iniquity,” “them that speak lies,” “bloody man,” “deceitful man;” under which terms David sets forth six evils and sorts of characters: — a God that has no pleasure, those that shall not dwell with God, those that shall not stand in his sight, those that shall be hated, those that shall be destroyed, and those that shall be abhorred.

First then we have “wickedness,” which had been better rendered ungodliness. For, as we have shown in Psalm 1, RASCHIA signifies ungodliness, that ungodliness whence proceeds the “counsel of the ungodly.” This ungodliness, as I have before observed, is unbelief itself and a perverse opinion concerning God and his Word and works, though, as to its outward appearance, it carries a show of godliness. Our God therefore as he is just and righteous, has no pleasure in ungodliness, that is he does not desire it, he cannot delight himself in it. For the Hebrew word in this place is HAPHEZ, whence comes HEPHZO, which is used in Psalm 1:2, “his *will* is the law of the Lord,” or his ‘desire,’ or ‘his delight.’ The sense of the present verse is appropriately set forth in Psalm 51:16, “For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it thee: thou delightest not in burnt-offering.” Why does God not desire sacrifice? Why does he not delight in burnt offering? Because the sacrifice of “a broken spirit,” which is the sacrifice of godliness, is wanting; and therefore, godliness is wanting, and that want makes the sacrifices of the wicked “an abomination unto the Lord,” according to Prov. 15:8.

The sense of the whole Psalm is, I will therefore pray unto thee, I therefore desire of thee to hear me, I will therefore stand before thee and will look up, because I know that the

desires, the prayers, and the sacrifices of the ungodly do not at all please thee, as they blindly presume and as they seduce others to presume; for while they hide ungodliness under all their works and sacrifices, they never acknowledge it nor are humbled on account of it, but rest content as if all were going on well because they had performed those works.

In this same way also Is. 1:11, exposes and condemns these characters, saying, "What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices?" Again he saith just afterwards, verse 16, "Wash you, make you clean." As if he had said, these works themselves, while ye remain unclean and ungodly and without either faith or hope in my mercy, which alone justify and take away ungodliness, cannot please, however specious they may be. Ye rest wholly on works and judge according to external appearance, and thus ye seem to yourselves to be godly and holy. But I look at your heart and judge according to truth, and thus I find you to be ungodly. As Christ said unto the Pharisees, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts." Luke 16:15.

This is what is meant by the present verse, Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in ungodliness. Thou art not deceived by the outward appearance of works, so as not to discern the ungodliness of the heart. Such men are rather deceived themselves, who, being led away by an external show of works, never acknowledge their ungodliness, and who, while they imagine that they please thee the most of all men, are of all men the farthest from pleasing thee.

Secondly: We have, "Neither shall the malignant man dwell with thee." In the Hebrew it is RA, that is, a bad man, or badness; so that it may either signify an ungodly man, or ungodliness, because where ungodliness, infidelity, and unbelief reign, there also malice or malignity reigns. For what can the man do, who is destitute of the good grace of God, but sin? By malignity in this passage we are to understand the very root and the old leaven of malice and wickedness, whereby, being

destitute of grace, we are prone to rush into every sin, whenever occasion is given us for so doing. As Christ saith to his disciples, “If ye then, being *evil*, know how to give good gifts unto your children,” Matt. 7:11.

This malice however plausibly conceals itself under the covering of works that are holy and pious in appearance, until some opportunity or occasion presents itself to irritate it and to force it to display itself in its true colors. You may see many who are gentle, humble, and kind in their words, actions, and deportment, who, if you but touch them with your finger, become in a moment most cruel, most austere, and ready to commit every evil. Yet these characters in the present day go by the honorable name of men of acute feelings, because on account of their external show of a good conversation they must not be called “malignant;” though they all the while perish themselves in security, and destroy all others who, after their example, neglect to mortify this malignity. For all these passions and acute feelings are a proof of the root of malignity, showing that godliness, or faith in God, is there wanting and that ungodliness is in full dominion. Such therefore shall not dwell with God nor tarry in his sight.

Thirdly: We have “unrighteous,” whom the Hebrew calls HOLOELIM, which signifies properly those who break forth into the outward act, transgress, and commit evil both in deed and word. Ungodliness, indeed, and malignity frequently lie hidden, except in those to whom the spirituality of the law has been opened, for the latter confess themselves to be sinners with the Apostle Paul, Rom. 7:9, and these make the ‘tree evil.’ But these HOLOELIM are they who bring forth the ‘evil fruits’ by following the malignity of their ungodly hearts, concerning whom Solomon saith, Ecc. 10:13, “The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is HOLELOTH RA,” which translators have rendered ‘the worst of errors,’ mischievous madness.

We still see therefore a beautiful order kept up in the words.

First, there is ungodliness, a state in which we are left to ourselves without the assistance of the grace of God. This is followed, secondly, by malice, by which we are inclined to perform outwardly that which is in us, that is, every evil. And thirdly, there is unrighteousness, the transgression itself, that is, the very fruits of this ungodliness and malignity.

These, saith David, “shall not stand in thy sight,” or, as the Hebrew has it, ‘The *HOLOELIM* shall not make to stand in the sight of thy eyes.’ And this verb ‘shall not make to stand,’ or ‘shall not place, or establish’ (*statuent*), is exactly the same as that verb in Ps. 2:2, which the translators have rendered by the perfect, “The kings of the earth *stood up*,” instead of ‘shall make to stand’ or ‘shall establish;’ that is, in the full meaning of the absolute verb, ‘shall make themselves to stand.’ So also here “shall not stand,” shall not make themselves to stand before God, shall not appear before him, which nevertheless they most confidently believe they shall do, being deceived by their false opinions and works, for they do not believe that they do evilly even when they are really doing evil.

Fourthly: “Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.” We read this same sentence in many places in the Old Testament, and it is always written with the verb *PAAL*, which, as we have shown, Psalm 1, signifies ‘to do or to work,’ and the noun *AVEN*, which is variously and differently rendered, as we have before seen, verse 3 of this Psalm.

Now I see that the prophets, especially Hosea 10:5, playing as it were upon the word, have called that place Beth-aven instead of Bethel, where Jeroboam the first king of Israel set up the golden calves to be worshipped, lest the people of Israel should go to Jerusalem to sacrifice and should ultimately revolt from him to the king of Judah, as we read, 1 Kings 12:26-33. Hence where they ought to have called it Beth-el, that is the house of God, they call it Beth-aven, which some have rendered ‘the house of the idol,’ that is, contrary to the house

of God, or, more properly, ‘the house of iniquity or wickedness,’ or ‘the house of idolatry.’

Following the prophets therefore, I would rather understand by AVEN ‘iniquity and idolatry,’ not that idolatry only which serves idols of wood and stone, but rather that idolatry which Samuel, 1 Sam. 15:22, sets forth unto Saul in a powerful way, * thus, “Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim.” Here we see that this religion of Saul was a furious disobedience, a perverse superstition, and a wretched AVEN; for of this we find him accused openly throughout the Old Testament, as being the way in which he reigned.

So in our day, no pest more awfully rages than when men leave the way which God has ordained and make to themselves another way of worshipping him entirely of their own invention, and attempt to serve him in it.

Thus the bishops, who are the best, delegate the office of the Word and the care of the people to the most unworthy and the most ignorant people, and they devote themselves with all their power to add to their possessions, buildings, income, and the appearance of their churches, and imagine that thereby they do God a service in that they are disobedient. The priests also and the spiritual leaders who are the holiest, do rather anything else for God than fulfill their office. For here we do not say any thing about the wicked; for the Romish court does not in the least come under consideration here, for it is totally corrupt.

This unhappy fall into disobedience has gained ground much more widely than any one can describe. For in every condition of life among Christians you find that, neglecting the observance of God’s commandments, they worship God according to their own traditions and opinions.

This, I say, is the AVEN, that outside show of works under

which, as I said before, they cover their iniquity, ungodliness, malignity, and every transgression, and this sheep's-clothing and pestilent hypocrisy, lays waste the Christian religion more dreadfully than any sword, famine, or pestilence.

Behold therefore how the prophet is inflamed with zeal against this impious piety and this irreligious religion, than which there is no religion that he more bitterly hates, saying, "Thou hatest all them that work iniquity." "All," saith he, and "thou hatest." Here lest any should imagine that they please God by such an accursed superstition, he declares that "all" are under the hatred of God, without excepting one.

For in fact misdirected service is mischievous in human affairs, which is apparent since the right obedience is thereby neglected. For who would suffer that a shepherd, to whom the care of the sheep had been committed, should leave the sheep and begin to serve his lord in his bedchamber? This is forcibly taught us in Aesop's fable of the ass, that tried to imitate the ways of the little dog and was stricken with a cudgel, because it neglected its own duty and meddled with the office of another.

It is just this evil that causes many to be dissatisfied with their own order, station or calling; since they look at the office of others as if it were better, and are displeased with their own. One leaves the priesthood to become a Carthusian friar, another leaves this calling for that. It is this of which Job speaks, 6:16, "They that fear the hoary frost, the snow shall fall upon them." (Vulgate). They flee from the rain and fall into the water.

These few observations will suffice concerning this greatest and most widely prevailing depravity, which we shall hereafter always express by the term '*disobedience*' or '*idolatry*', that is, the externally holy worship of the ungodly. For they do not openly violate the commands of God, like the publicans and harlots, but under a show of great works and singular piety, as was the case with Bernard. Ps. 91:6 calls these characters "the devil, or the destruction, that wasteth at noon-day." The

apostle Paul calls them “ministers of Satan fashioning themselves as ministers of righteousness,” 2 Cor. 11:15, a description of whom we have plainly and strikingly set before us in the above mentioned character of Saul, 1 Sam. 15:13 etc.

Therefore AVEN is rightly interpreted by many, not only ‘iniquity,’ but also ‘pain’ and ‘labor’ because this disobedience has indeed in it much pain and labor. Hence as the common proverb goes, ‘It is harder work to merit hell than to merit heaven.’ For the devil presses these his martyrs most terribly and never gives them any relief or refreshment. As the Lord said by Moses, Deut. 31:16-17, that he would deliver the people of Israel into the hands of their enemies and that they should there serve strange gods which should give them no rest neither day nor night.

So Ecc. 10:15, “The labor of fools wearieh every one of them.” And it is said frequently in the same book, 1:14; 2:17; 4:16, that to such “all is vanity and vexation of spirit.” Whereas on the contrary, although Christ chasteneth, yet “his yoke is easy and his burden is light,” because he relieves and refreshes all who are weary and heavy laden with a joyful confidence of heart, if they will but come unto him, Matt. 11. But all the former characters will have to say with Wisdom 2:1, “Our life is short and tedious.”*

Whoever wishes to study this subject further should read Paul, Rom. 12:3 etc, and 1 Cor. 12:11 etc., where he treats of it with all diligence, that each member should perform its own office, so that no confusion of the members would arise, which would be the case if the eyes began to do the office of feet, or the feet the office of the eyes, but hold to the rule of Prov. 4:25, “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee.” Look before thee, and take heed to thyself.”

Proverbs against this perversion have arisen among the

*) St. Louis Walch gives Wisdom 5:7, “We wearied ourselves in the way.”

heathen, as, "let each one work at the trade he has learned," and "shoemaker stick to your last," and "let each one remain in his own skin."

Fifthly: "Thou wilt destroy them that speak lies." Here he attacks the teachers and the doctrine of iniquity; for the Hebrew verb DIBBER seems to me to signify that kind of speech whereby something is taught or spoken or recited in public. Hence, the word DABAR signifies the thing done or wrought, or rather, spoken or narrated. This figurative mode of speech has been preserved by Luke, 2:15, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this word (*rema*)," that is, this thing which is done and spoken of. And indeed, in the book of Leviticus a clear distinction is made between the words DIBBER and AMAR, each of which signifies 'to speak' or 'to say.' For it is continually written, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying :" where the first verb is DIBBER, that is, 'spake.' Hence it is in constant use with the prophets, as "And the Word of the Lord came unto me, saying." Wherefore, DIBBER generally signifies 'to speak any thing forth publicly in the way of doctrine' which doctrine is particularly specified by the verb AMAR. Even if this distinction and difference are not universally received and allowed, yet let us use them thus until we shall have found something better. It is at least certain that the word which is here rendered 'to speak,' in many places signifies 'to teach,' as in Ps. 119:46, "I will also speak of thy testimonies." And Ps. 60:6, "God hath spoken in his holiness" or 'in his saint' (*sancto suo*).

Therefore, as the life of the ungodly is, such is their doctrine; as they act, so they speak. Hence the whole is ungodly, evil, and iniquitous, all which David includes in the term "lies." These "lies" he called, Ps. 1, "the counsel of the ungodly," nay, "the seat of pestilence and scoffers." The madness of such characters as these rages and reigns at this day also, concerning whom Paul said, 2 Tim. 3:7, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." They strenuously

devote themselves to the teaching of good works, as they imagine them to be, whereas they have never yet known what good works are, because they are utterly destitute of the knowledge of faith. Hence it comes to pass that they most miserably crucify and murder the people by their lies and impious fables which they take from the morals of philosophers, the laws of men, and their own precepts and traditions, concerning which I have spoken before and shall say more hereafter.

Sixthly: Jehovah abhorreth the bloodthirsty and deceitful man." Here David shows, in a very few words, what sort of men the above-mentioned characters are toward their neighbors, in their manners and conversation; that is, that they love no one from their heart. For as they are destitute of grace and true godliness and are left in their own malice, it of necessity follows that they are polluted with the love and conceited opinion of themselves from the crown of their head even unto the sole of their feet. They feign indeed all things. They call each other and all men their dearest friends, write to them as such and speak with them as such. They appear to be humane and sweet tempered, and, under that covering, they plausibly conceal "bloody" men; but all this is deceit. This is manifested the very moment they begin to be offended, or whenever an occasion presents itself wherein they are required to give proof of their benevolence; for then the deceit immediately appears and the blood-thirsty anger and hatred show themselves and all the consequences which follow. For they never love any one unless it be for their own advantage; it is never that they may do others good, but that they may do themselves good.

These words therefore are to be understood spiritually, not as having respect unto the external appearance, but a searching of the heart and the reins. For the words of faith are directly contrary to all outward appearance and have respect unto the things and times of the cross. It is by such words that those who are of the character mentioned are discovered

and are found to hate every man and to love no one truly, because they love themselves.

Under this disease no set of men labor more than those most holy and most religious martyrs of the devil, whom we have already denominated ungodly, workers of iniquity, and children of disobedience; and all under the external garment and show of godliness, the power of which they above all men deny.

If thou dost not believe these things, or dost not know them to be true, only consult experience. The whole world is full of this complaint, that there is no faithfulness to be found among men, that all things which are either done or spoken are feigned and dissembled; so that they will aver the truth of that word of Micah 7:5, though they may never have read it, "Trust ye not in a neighbor; put ye not confidence in a friend; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house."

Hence it was that Christ gave this admonition, "Beware of men," Matt. 10:17. For if thou indulge their wishes and be useful to them, thou wilt find them deceitful friends; and if thou offend them or dissent from them, especially if thou do it for God's or the truth's sake, thou wilt find them most bloody enemies. Therefore, David could not describe the nature of man in terms more apt and short than by calling it "bloody and deceitful."

So rare a thing is it to find one who does not act deceitfully with his neighbor and who is faithful. A man will live with you pleasantly, will speak to you courteously, and smile upon you; but if you ask him to help you with ten dollars of his large property you make him your enemy at once. Indeed, if you do not serve him in all things, even in those things which are unjust and wrong, you are sure to lose your friend. In a word, if you do not lay yourself out for his use to gratify him

in all his desires, without making use of him in the least instance for your own service, you wil not have your friend's acquaintance long. These things we are taught by experience; so easy is it to understand the present verse.

Yet these characters will not acknowledge their miserable state, for they all despise these things and believe themselves to be the farthest of all men on earth from blood-thirstiness and deceit. First, on account of their specious works; for, being inflated and blinded with these, they cannot see themselves. Next they are so in love with themselves and so kindly indulge their own vices, that they always have before their eyes, not how many evil things, but how many good things they have done. This their blindness is increased by their considering it to be a heavenly holiness to hate those by whom they have been injured, or rather, by whom they imagine they have been injured; for they look upon themselves as persons qualified by their eminent righteousness to hold the unrighteous in hatred.

Being subverted by this madness, they proceed to such lengths, that, neglecting the beam that is in their own eye and beholding the mote that is in the eye of another, they desire to have themselves accounted humane and faithful while they judge others to be the bloody and deceitful men. Thus, with a perpetual perversion and madness they place upon others that divine abhorrence which is declared to rest upon themselves. Whence it comes that if they read the scriptures they do not understand them, and if they hear them, they do not receive them, as considering that they do not belong to them; and thus they become wholly incorrigible, of whom we read, Matt. 11: 16-17, unto whom, if you pipe they will not dance, and if you mourn they will not lament. God's Word and work on these are lost.

It is also no small mantle for their wickedness that whenever they lose some of their friends they find or have others with whom they associate in the same deceitfulness. Deceived by the mutual understanding with these, as is the case with de-

ceit, they have no concern as to how many they hate and despise, but toward how many they are benevolently disposed, though it may be hardly the thousand thousandth part, and it occurs not to them that Christ commanded to “despise not one of these little ones.” Matt. 18:10.

Behold the fruits which this trusting in their own works and their own righteousness brings forth; namely, ignorance of themselves, obstinacy, and incorrigibleness, together with all the evils of ungodliness, malice, disobedience, and every other sin. Such monsters are they who can conceal, nourish, and preserve themselves under a covering so light and trifling. Moreover, horrible monsters like these can appear before God in the morning, sacrifice to him, and believe that they can please him; nor do they ever implore his mercy, but give him thanks, like the ungodly Pharisee, that they are not as other men. Is not this horrid to see and hear! And is not the burning zeal of the prophet against such instances of madness most just!

Now let us sum up the contents of these three verses. The two former describe the four sins whereby we sin against God. Two are contained in the first verse, namely, ungodliness and malignity. The former is an aversion from God, that is, a being destitute of a pure love and a right opinion of God. The latter is a turning towards self, that is, an inclination to all evil works and an enmity against all good works, as perverted affections and a perverted opinion. By these two sins the person himself is described, that is, the bad tree, such as these characters are in the sight of God.

The other two sins are contained in the second verse, nemely, unrighteousness and the working of iniquity. The former of which is transgression or the effect of malignity and the omission of the worship of God. The latter is the external appearance of the worship of God, but in reality disobedience and idolatry. For in these two sins are comprehended all the evil fruits and works which we bring forth and do in divine things. The one is, doing things contrary to really good

works and to the true worship of God, which characters are the *MOLOELIM*, the other is doing things feignedly which are good in appearance but contrary to the obedience of God, which characters are “the workers of iniquity.”

The third verse describes those sins which are committed against man, which are three. First, “lies,” whereby men seduce others by word, example, and conduct from the true worship of God into their own impious idolatries, making others like unto themselves in those things which pertain unto God. Secondly, Hatred and all those things which follow it, whence they are called “blood thirsty” men. And thirdly, deceit and all its consequences, whereby men make use of others only for their own advantage, use, and pleasure, and wherein are included all the sins of a perverted love. For there are fraud and deceit in all carnal love, as is abundantly manifest. For as hatred and love are the grand and ruling affections which direct all their actions, it is evident that the whole viperous poison of a vicious life and conversation lies in these, which hatred is bloody and which love is deceitful; for a right hatred opposes all that is sin and a pure love seeks those things which are to the profit of others, and not to its own profit.

To conclude the whole of this scripture, they that come in the “morning,” saith David, do not pray, O Lord; neither do they want thee, nor do they desire to be heard. They are full and satisfied, being filled with all that mass of filth, their own righteousnesses. Nor do they “stand” before thee, nor do they offer themselves unto thee, that they may be formed by thee, and that they may be illuminated in order that they might “see”; but they rather form themselves against thee, and agreeably to the idol of their own hearts, as Isaiah saith, 46:5, having false opinions of thee; and therefore they see not, but are rather blinded and hardened. This most certainly will be their case, because thou hast not, as they imagine thou hast, any pleasure in iniquity, but hatest the ungodly and utterly abhorrest all such. But I, says David, come unto thee, stand

before thee, and offer myself unto thee, that I may be formed by thee, that I may think of thee according to thy nature, that I may be illuminated and may see. They come unto thee, bringing with them, as an offering unto thee, their own good works, deeds, and merits, and thereby take away with them the greater evils and sins; but I come unto thee to beg of thee thy good things, confessing my own evils and sins. They because they are whole, need not a physician; but I, because I am weak, and under dangerous disease, seek a physician. This is now shown in the verse that follows.

V. 7. — *But as for me, in the abundance of thy loving-kindness (mercy), will I come into thy house: in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.*

A blessed verse this! a blessed saying! The words and the sense itself carry with them a powerful contrast. For there are two things with which this life is exercised, *hope* and *fear*, which are as it were those two springs of Judges 1:15, the one from above, the other from beneath. Fear comes from beholding the threats and fearful judgments of God, as being a God in whose sight no one is clean, every one is a sinner, every one is under condemnation. But hope comes from beholding the promises and the sweet mercies of God; as it is written, Ps. 25:6, “Remember, O Jehovah, thy tender mercies and thy lovingkindnesses; for they have been ever of old.”

Between these two, fear and hope, as between the upper and nether millstone, we must always be ground and kept that we never turn either to the right hand or to the left. For this turning is the state peculiar to hypocrites who are exercised with the two contrary things, security and presumption. By security they decline to the left hand, neglecting the fear of God, as in Ps. 36:1, “There is no fear of God before their eyes”; and by presumption they decline to the right hand, while, having no fear of God, they presumingly imagine all that they do pleases him. For while they do not acknowledge themselves sinners it must follow that they fear not God, whose judgments

they never consider, as it is written, Ps. 10:5, "Thy judgments are far above out of his sight." Therefore, instead of the judgments of God, they set before themselves a certain ignorant idea of God, and instead of his mercy, their own righteousness. Hence it follows that they can neither hope nor fear.

This therefore is the contrast which David uses. They who are without thy fear, disregarding thy terrible judgments, worship thee in security like the Pharisee in the Gospel, Luke 18, and they enter into thy holy temple in the multitude of their own righteousness, and come into thy sight without feeling any need of thy mercy.

But I, being conscious that I cannot be safe in the sight of thee and of thy judgments, wholly despair of myself, and so enter thy temple and stand before thee, as to have thy mercy only before my eyes, which mercy I know to be great and infinite; and looking at that only, I find boldness and feel safe, as in Ps. 26:3, "For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth." Entering with this confidence therefore I will worship in thy temple; but in thy fear, not presumptuously imagining that I shall please thee of myself, for I shall rather be in fear, lest my service and worship should deserve thy reproof. By remaining in this fear I shall preserve unto thee thine honor and keep myself humble; while I do not justify myself, but in a humble mind expect thy judgments, having nevertheless a hope in thy pardoning mercy.

You clearly see therefore that the scope of this Psalm is directed to show the difference between the religion of the godly and the ungodly, the humble and the presumptuous. For he draws a comparison between himself and them in this morning service, which is, entering into the house of the Lord and worshipping toward his holy temple; for it is there that the works and doctrines of all are especially and chiefly made known.

The contrast of the words is very beautiful, but somewhat changed. For he puts the "mercy" of God, which is the object of hope, without expressing the word 'hope'. Again, he puts

"fear", the object of which is the judgments of God, without expressing the word 'judgments'; whereas, to have made the antithesis quite correct, he should have put the words mercy and judgment, or hope and fear. But it was necessary to express mercy, the object of hope, as well as the nature of hope. Nay rather, the object of hope is the multitude of the mercies of God; which is set before the hope of the godly, because they are too much inclined to fear and approach unto God and divine works with great awe and reverence.

Hence these two, hope and fear, are the two sacrifices and works that are by far the most acceptable unto God, which those ungodly self-justifiers neither teach nor understand, and therefore they neither do them nor are able to do them.

The whole world, as I have said, is at this day full of the ungodliness of these same characters, who draw men into a confidence in their own works and righteousness and do not permit them to attain unto the fear of God and to a hope in his mercy; and such are ever learning, but never able to come unto the knowledge of the truth, and as Christ saith, Luke 11:52, "Ye too, took away the key of knowledge," namely, the power of teaching, and the knowledge of God, "ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

These presumptuous persons, these most secure despisers of the judgments and mercies of God, Isaiah also copiously exposes and condemns, 1:11, saying, "What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifices? saith Jehovah." And verse 15, "When ye make many prayers I will not hear," etc. And why? It is shown in what follows, verses 15, 16, "Your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean."

Hence, nothing can please God but that which is done in humility, and humility cannot be exercised unless we fear the judgment of God in every work we do however good it may always be. Humility rests alone upon the goodness of God, which he gratuitously bestows by grace. Against this kind of godliness the people of Israel fought above all people in the

world, from a natural and inbred presumption, being puffed up in a wonderful manner with their law and works.

But you ask the question, perhaps, how can David promise that he will enter into the house of the Lord and into his temple, when, in his time, there was no temple or house of God, and when the ark of the testimony in the tabernacle of Moses was instead of a temple? David says in another place also, Ps. 122: 2, 3, "Let us go unto the house of Jehovah. Our feet are standing within thy gates, O Jerusalem." And Ps. 135: 2, "Ye that stand in the house of Jehovah, in the courts of the house of our God." From such passages one might suspect that these were not the Psalms of David, or that they were altered by Ezra afterwards.

According to my opinion, any place where God is worshipped may be rightly called the house of God. For we well know that the place where Abraham offered his sacrifice was called Beth-el, that is, the house of God, Gen. 22: 4; which Jeroboam, having polluted with his golden calves, afterwards was called Beth-aven, 1 Kings 12: 29; Hosea 4: 15; 10: 5, that is, the house of iniquity. Jacob, Gen. 28: 19, when he had slept on Mount Moriah, 'the mount of reverence', or 'of the worship of God', or, as others will have it, 'the mount of vision', on which the temple of Solomon was afterwards built, 2 Chron. 3: 1, set up a stone and said, "This stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house," Gen. 28: 22.

Wherefore laying aside all mystical interpretations, I wish to understand by the house of God, a fixed place, in which there is an assembling together to worship God and to hear his Word. Such was the place in which Cain and Abel offered their offerings and heard the Word of God, and such were afterwards the altars of all the fathers, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job; in their different places; until we come down to the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon.

For as the Word of God never utterly failed in the world, so neither did the worship of God. Therefore there must have

been places in every age in which divine works were performed. For when Jacob, Gen. 35:1, etc., was going to build an altar unto God and commanded them to put away the strange gods from among them, what did he but preach the Word of God in the same manner as we do now?

Since therefore we find that hypocrisy and false doctrine reign most especially in the worship of God, for it always pretends to, and defiles, the best things, and that true godliness and specious hypocrisy contended with each other in the first two brothers Cain and Abel; therefore it is that the present Psalm strikes at that false show of godliness in the ungodly and at its doctrine, which are found in the worship of God that is performed in the morning.

For what degree of sincerity can he show in his dealings and works among men, which are things so inferior, who acts perversely and impiously in that first and most sublime of all works, the worship of God? wherein a false outside show is the more injurious, the more specious it is, and the more it resembles a true and really holy work. In a word, there is nothing in the world more perilous than false religion, or idolatry, for this is the fountain of all evil, though under the name of all good.

The house or temple of God therefore is that place in every age and among any holy persons where God is worshipped. For God may truly be said to dwell where he is truly worshipped, but especially, in the general assembly of his saints. Wherefore, one place is not called the house and temple of God more than another on account of the magnificence, cost, or size of the edifice, or on account of the multitude of the people, but, as I said, on account of the assembling of many to pray and worship God and hear his Word, according to Ps. 102:22, 'When the peoples are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve Jehovah.' Whence, the place is called the house of God on account of the people for that is indeed the house of God, and not the people on account of the house.

But there is a powerful superstition now prevailing that is devoted to building, consecrating, and preserving temples of this sort throughout the whole world, in which there is not so much concern manifested about the people being godly, the worship true, and the Word of God pure, as about making the temples themselves magnificent in riches, splendor and pomp, superb buildings, and all such kind of worldly vanity. To set forth the whole state of the case after the manner of this Psalm, every thing else, with shame be it spoken, seems to be attended to in these places appointed for divine worship, except entering into them in the multitude of the mercies of God, and worshiping him in his fear; and every thing is taught in them except that we ought to enter into them in the fear of God and worship him in truth; whereas, it was for these purposes alone that they were ordained.

Hence it is no wonder that they are often riven asunder with lightning as profane houses; for there are no places under heaven filled with greater abuses, iniquities, and deceptions, than these which are expressly dedicated only to the most pure, yea, divine works and duties. For though crimes are committed in other houses, yet the name of God is not so polluted in them, because that holy name is not there called upon. For in religious houses the sin is doubly great.

V. 8. — *Lead me, O Jehovah, in thy righteousness, because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face (direct my way in thy sight).*

The Hebrew, according to Jerome, is, “Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness: because of mine enemies make thy way straight before my face.”

I have said that from the beginning of the world there have been false workers and lying teachers as is taught in 2 Pet. 2:1, and therefore, the world has never been without false religion and idolatry.

These characters, 2 Pet. 2:14, “are enticing unstedfast souls”, for there is nothing more insidious than this iniquity of

the serpent; and of this iniquity Paul had many fears when writing to the Corinthians, for he says, 2 Cor. 11:3, "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is toward Christ."

The Hebrew word SCHORERAI may indeed signify "enemies," as our translation has rendered it, but it signifies more properly 'one that plots evil with a malicious design,' that is, by treachery, and that too, under the appearance of doing good. These characters the apostle calls *phrenapatai*, that is, deceivers of minds, as being men who corrupt others by false opinions, especially in those things which pertain unto God. This signification of the word most strikingly accords with the design of this Psalm; which shows that there is no pestilence more to be dreaded by sincere and godly men than the crafty machinations of false religion and false learning; and therefore it teaches us that the only way in which such machinations can be guarded against is by prayer. This is the serpent that always insidiously lies at our heel that it may corrupt the way of true godliness. Hence the word SCHORERAI would not be rendered improperly 'seducers' or 'defilers' or 'corrupters'.

By the righteousness of God, which we shall often meet hereafter, we ought always to understand according to its canonical signification, not that righteousness whereby God himself is just and whereby he condemns the wicked, which is the righteousness that is generally understood to be meant; but as Augustine has beautifully said in his work on the 'spirit and the letter', we ought to understand it as signifying that righteousness wherewith God clothes man when he justifies him, that is, that mercy itself or that justifying grace, whereby we are accounted before God; concerning which the apostle saith, Rom. 1:17, 'For therein is revealed a "righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, "the righteous shall live by faith." Again, Rom. 3:21, "But now apart from the

law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."

It is called the righteousness of God, because it is by his grace freely given unto us, even as that is called the work of God which he works in us, that the Word of God which he speaks in us, and that strength of God which he makes perfect in our weakness, etc. As in Ps. 31:1, "Deliver me in thy righteousness." And Rom. 10:3, "For being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." Hence also, that passage of Ps. 24:5, is not improperly rendered by our translator, "He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and mercy (in the Vulgate) from the God of his salvation," though the Hebrew has it 'righteousness' instead of 'mercy', because the blessing of the Lord and the righteousness of the Lord are the same thing, that is, they are both that mercy and grace of God which are freely given us in Christ.

This scriptural manner of speaking of the righteousness of God, because it is different from the usual mode of speech among men, has been made the occasion of many difficulties in many places. We are not indeed to cast away the saying that the righteousness of God is that righteousness by which he is righteous. So that we are made righteous by the same righteousness whereby God is righteous, even as we were made to exist by the same word whereby God spoke us into being, and as we exist now by his existence, and as also, his being is our being. But these things are of a nature too high to be pursued farther upon the present occasion and are deeper than most men can comprehend, and though they are useful and necessary, yet we must leave them for some other opportunity.

This translation of the Hebrew by Jerome is also most correct, "The way straight before my face," which we have rendered, "My way in thy sight," a sense directly the contrary. But the Hebrew agrees with the preceding clause and makes it a repetition, because "thy righteousness" and "thy way" are

nearly the same thing; for the “way” of God is the “righteousness of God, in which we are to live and walk and not in our own way and our own righteousness. This is the way of God and the way of the righteous, which are spoken of in Ps. 1:6, “For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.” This is what John meant, when he said, Matt. 3:3, “Prepare ye the way of the Lord.” It is the way of God, when, as he saith he will, Lev. 26:12, ‘He walks in us’; that is, works in us, lives in us and speaks in us; for, saith Christ, “It is not ye that speak,” Matt. 10:20.

Yet our translation does not wrongly or improperly render this passage, “My way in thy sight”; because when God works in us we are rightly said to work; though this working of ours is a being influenced and led by, and a being passive under the hand of an operating God, as this verse implies when it says, ‘Lead me’, “Direct my way”, whereby it signifies that the man does not act of himself but is lead and acted on of God.

Nor do these two “before my face” and “in thy sight” militate against each other. For each expression is peculiar to the Holy Scriptures; and they both show that all we do should be done as in the sight of God, in his presence and before his eyes, these things are in the power neither of our own free will nor of our own righteousness, but are a work of divine grace. And thus our Latin translation shows by these words that by “my way” the way of God is to be understood, which the Hebrew expressed by “the way”. Again by “before me” the Hebrew shows that the way of God is our way, which our Latin translation expresses by “my way” in order that we may turn our face to the way of God and direct our way before the face of God. The way of God before our face is the same as our way before the face of God; both necessarily take place at the same time.

This figurative expression strikes at the ungodly and their perverseness, for they turn their faces to their own way and their backs unto God and so walk on. Thus, Lev. 26:27,etc., ‘And if ye walk contrary unto me: then I will walk contrary

unto you in wrath', etc. These characters consider and follow their own works only and disregard the way and works of God; as it is written, Is. 2:8, "They worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made." Again, Is. 5:12, "But they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands." And all this, as we have said, proceeds from their hating the way of the cross and the life of faith, which compel them to lay aside all that they are in themselves and all that they know, and from their endeavoring in vain to worship God according to the commandments and doctrines of men; as saith Is. 29:13, and as it is repeated in Matt. 15:9.

The verb "direct" or 'make straight' is of most frequent use in the scriptures; in which is set forth the rightness, or uprightness, or right direction of the heart, as in Ps. 119:7, "I will give thanks unto thee with uprightness of heart." And Ps. 73:1, "Surely God is good to Israel, even to such as are pure (upright) in heart." Again, Cant. 1:4, "In uprightness do they love thee." Hence the word uprightness is sometimes put absolutely, as in Ps. 99:4, 'Thou executest uprightness'; namely, thou alone makest uprightness; whatever uprightness of heart there is to be found any where, the whole is thy gift. Those that are made thus upright are the only persons who truly love and please God.

This uprightness is a sound opinion and right knowledge of God. Contrary to it, is the corruption or perversion of heart, which latter, as we have frequently shown, is the state of heart in the proud, "the counsel of the ungodly", and "the wisdom of the flesh", and there are many other terms whereby it is set forth in the scriptures. That is called an upright heart, which seeks not what is its own, but what is God's, and which looks with a single and unaltered eye to the will of God; on this will alone its eye is fixed in all things, both prosperous and adverse, and it will look at and know nothing else.

Whereas, a corrupt and perverted heart is that which seeks

its own, has its eye only on its own advantage, and always looks two ways, pretending that it seeks the will of God, whereas it is all the while seeking its own profit. This depravity and persuasion lie so deeply hidden in the corruption of nature that God alone can discover it, as Jer. saith, 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it? I, Jehovah, search the mind, I try the heart."

David therefore fearing he should be led into this depravity, prays in this Psalm 'For the inheritances', that the way of the Lord may be made plain before his face; that he may perseveringly walk, and always live, in uprightness of heart, which can only be where pure and full faith of heart exist.

This verse therefore is directed against the ungodly and workers of iniuity, who leaving the true obedience of God worship him by their own works; for it opposes to such worship the "righteousness" of God and the "way" of God, that is, the obedience of God. In this "way" David desires to be led and directed like a tractable sheep, on account of his enemies, the deceivers, the crafty and the all-destructive corrupters of the inheritances of God. All this is more especially practiced by those deceivers and destroyers in that greatest of all works which we call worship, than which no one work is more exposed to ungodly abuses, superstitions, heresies, hypocrisy, and vanity; for the deepest iniquity of these corruptors is their clothing themselves in the outside show of the best intentions and their puffing themselves up, so that caution against them cannot be too earnestly inculcated.

V. 9. — *For there is no faithfulness in their mouth, their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.*

The clauses of the verse are divided thus in the Hebrew, but we make of it two verses. Jerome translates the Hebrew, 'For there is no faithfulness in their mouth: their inward parts are snares: their mouth is an open sepulchre: they speak lightly with their tongue'. All this is quite correct, except that

it is generally and more rightly considered that the Hebrew word signifies ‘vanities’ and not “snares”, but that is of no moment.

It is evident however that the prophet is speaking now especially of the doctrine of those whom he accuses first of lying, then of vanity, then of destructiveness, and of deceivableness; for they so teach this their word of doctrine, that under the appearance of being good it is incurably destructive. All these accusations from what has preceded, are plainly and manifestly just.

These lying teachers, says David, are all ready to teach; they are all open mouthed and full of words, but as Paul saith, 1 Tim. 1:7, “They understand neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm”; that is, they neither understand their own words, nor that of which they speak. Therefore “there is no faithfulness in their mouth”; though they seem to teach the truest and purest doctrine. In a word, “As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth”, 2 Tim. 3:8: they dare to contend with all and even to persecute those whom they are convinced know better than themselves. Hence we have the declaration, Job 42:7, “For ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.”

The reason such persons do not speak what is right is, because they work iniquity and depravity; that is, in all their doctrine they aim only to make man seek only his own, and to trust in his own merits and works; or at least, they do not take this evil out of the way, nor correct it, nor bring man down to nothing that he may become a fool and acknowledge himself a sinner. Hence it comes to pass that, whereas God is to be worshipped in fear, to be served in fear, to be rejoiced before with reverence, and to have every work done before him with a trusting only in the multitude of his mercy, they make men secure and presumptuous dependers upon their own works.

This is what those three friends of Job did through all their contention with him. They said nothing about the mercy of

God, which is what Job above all things dwells upon and extols in the fear of his judgments, but disputed only about that righteousness which praises the good and condemns the bad. Hence they are justly reprobated of God as not having "spoken the thing that is right". Because the real truth is that no one can be found righteous before God on account of his works, however many and great they may be. On the other hand it is certain that he who trusts in God only is righteous, even without works. While he abides in that trust and confidence he is assured that his works please God, and that God views him now as neither sinning nor having sinned; whereas, it was for such an assertion as this that Job's friends condemned him as a blasphemer, concluding from the calamity that had befallen him that he had sinned and was now under the wrath of God.

But you will say, what am I to do when these characters speak things so excellent and so consistent and true, that no reasonable argument can disprove them? as was the case with the friends of Job, and in a word when they bring forth out of the scriptures the very words of God?

I answer, David is here speaking especially concerning those characters who adulterate and corrupt the Word of God. It is the covering of the wickedness of such that he is here laying open, when he says, "Their inward parts are snares", or 'vani ties'. As if he had said, their words are plausible and apparently holy and true, but they are not applied to a right and true purpose, but are made use of to produce a false understanding. Hence Jeremiah saith, 5:1, "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her. And though they say, as Jehovah liveth; surely they swear falsely". And again, 23:28, "He that hath my Word, let him speak my Word faithfully." What do all these scriptures show and prove, but that the Word of God may be spoken both truly and vainly?

These therefore are faithful and true as to all outward appearance indeed, but their inward parts are vain and their heart is vain. They do not savor of that in their heart, which their words outwardly teach; though they wish it to appear that they hold in their hearts that which they teach with their mouths. Thus truth is used by them only as a covering for lies and vanity, and hence these words, "Their inward parts are vanities", descriptively set forth the real nature of the doctrine of hypocrites, that they pretend one thing outwardly, but cherish and foster another inwardly, that they pretend to godliness, but foster ungodliness. This is to be a minister of Satan transformed into an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11:14. This is the subtlety of the serpent, saying that the knowledge of gods may be attained unto, Gen. 3:5. This is the religion of angels, of which Paul speaks, Col. 2:18.

Nor do they speak absurdly who render this same Hebrew word HAVOTH, not 'snares' only and 'vanities', but also 'perversions', because such men are in truth perverters of the words of God, as is written in Jer. 23:36, "For ye have perverted the words of the living God". By these perversions they become vain in themselves and snares in the way of the truth and of those that seek it, according to the words of Paul, 2 Tim. 3:13, "But evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived".

This perversion of mind was prefigured in all the idols of old that were either graven or molten, and this Moses has by no means obscurely intimated, Ex. 32:2, etc., where, when he describes the making of the golden calf, he says 'That Aaron, after he had received the ear-rings of the women at their hands, made or melted them into a calf, and fashioned it with a graving tool'; in which passage, the Hebrew has 'with a pen', intimating that it should come to pass that these ungodly teachers should change the words of God, which are the ear-rings of believing souls, the true daughters of Israel, and their only ornament into forms of their own, so as to make them convey their own sen-

timents; and that the people also should “heap to themselves teachers having itching ears” and deceitful rulers, and be turned unto fables, as Paul saith, 2 Tim. 4:3-4. For Jeremiah, writing as it were a comment on Moses, says, 8:8, “Behold, the false pen of the scribes hath wrought falsely”; and chapter 9.* Is. 44:12 etc., also gives us a full and particular description of the formation of an idol. Ezekiel 16:17, Jerusalem is accused of having taken her ornaments of gold and silver which the Lord had given her, and made unto herself idols and images of men and committed fornication with them.

However all these things are but a mere joke if we compare them with what has taken place in our times, in which nothing is so much boasted of as the worship of God and the church and the house of God; when at the same time, there are none that worship God less than those, who by their numerous rites and ceremonies and their newly-invented works, have given themselves up, some to the sowing of discord, others to seeking after glory, others to hunting after gain, and all to seeking their own profit and advantage.

In all these things they use as a pretext the Word of God, when they teach that we ought to pray, to do good works, and the like. Indeed, what evil, what enormity, what monstrous sin is not at this day committed under the cover of the terrible name of God, of St. Peter, St. Paul, and the church? For, to say nothing about the rest, some of these holy sects are religious above all others, merely to foster mutual hatred and to fill their own bellies; and yet these mutter over this and other Psalms for the salvation of others with a brow so impenetrably fortified with brass, that they cannot feel any thing of the vehement zeal with which the words of the Psalmist inveigh against those who do thus mutter them over.

Their throat is an open sepulchre.

There is no doubt that by these words written in so forcible

*) St. Louis Walch gives Jer. 10:3 etc.

a way David wishes to shew the insatiable voracity of these characters, for not being content with having compared their throat to a sepulchre, which is that which devours all things, he heightens the representation by adding the epithet “open”, to show their continual readiness to devour with insatiability.

The holy scriptures indeed have ascribed to these characters, above all others, an insatiable avarice, and a devouring of the people. Hence Christ saith, Luke 20:47, ‘They devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers’. And Micah 3:3, “Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron”. Again directly afterwards, verse 5, “Thus saith Jehovah concerning the prophets that make my people to err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, peace; and whoso putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him”. Again, Amos 4:1, “Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, that oppress the poor, that crush the needy, that say unto their lords, bring, and let us drink.” But Is. 56:10-12, describes them much more fully and particularly thus, “His watchmen are blind, they are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea the dogs are greedy, which can never have enough, and these are sheperds that cannot understand; they have all turned to their own way, each one to his gain from every quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, a day beyond measure”.

This will need no explanation if you look at the leaders in the church at the present time and those who are considered the teachers of the people. For why is it necessary to call attention to the incredible avarice, gluttony, pomp and the more than worldly luxury of the bishops at Rome and all bishops, priests and leaders of orders, since they do that daily by their talk to the people and confirm the same by deed? For where do they

not sing publicly of the avarice of the clergy? And this is all done under the cloak that they are the leaders of the people of God. Does not the prophet rightly call their throat an open sepulchre. For they rob every one of every thing, and yet they are not satisfied, but are full of greed, as to-day so to-morrow, to swallow still more.

Offence is taken when these things are mentioned, they are revolutionary and scandalous words to their saintly ears. But they gave offense and were revolutionary when the prophets spoke there to the rulers of the synagogues, so that they were shamefully put to death as heretics in the church and traitors in the government.

Isaiah says of them, 5:7-9, "He looked for justice, but, behold oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry. Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room, and ye be made to dwell alone in the midst of the land! This is before the ears of Jehovah of hosts". Amos says the same, 6:1-6, "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come! Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to Hamath the great; then go down to Gath of the Philistines; are they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater than your border? Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that invent for themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief oils; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph".

But I must be temperate and not add more in order that I may not be thought to have sinned against the holy spiritual canons and to have stolen the patrimony of Christ and the possessions of the church by disregarding the discipline of the

church, and to have insisted that these temporal possessions of riches and lands are not allowed. For I would not be sufficiently secure here before the most holy papal laws although all the prophets and apostles stood with me.

It is sufficient that the prophet Amos esteemed the kingdoms that surrounded Israel, although they were great and very rich, less than the riches of the priests and the luxuries of the elders of the people, by which he shows us what their throat is that the psalmist calls an open sepulchre. At the present day you might much better call it the throat of hell as Is. 5:14 says, "hell hath opened its mouth without measure". New devices are always being used to get the little that is yet among the people, and of it which they can hardly live, since all the rest is already swallowed and the word of Ps. 14:4, is fulfilled, "they eat up my people as they eat bread".

Since it is evident therefore from these statements that such ungodly teachers do not teach the way of the Lord, nor seek any thing else, even in the things of God, than their own profit, it follows that they seek much more their own profit in things pertaining unto this life. Hence it was that Paul with so much boldness and confidence dared, Phil. 3:2, to call them dogs, saying, "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision". And in verse 19, "Whose end is perdition, whose God is the belly". In his epistle to Titus 1:12, he calls them "liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons": in both places he is speaking of seducing teachers.

Therefore David, detesting with a holy indignation the wickedness of such, exposes their lusts by a most filthy comparison. As if he had said, what do these swine, by their ungodly doctrine whereby they destroy souls, but serve their own bellies, whilst by preaching this their doctrine they so deceive the people as to seize upon, collect, and increase an immense store of worldly things with unending and insatiable voracity? In a word, he speaks of their "throat" as Paul in his epistle to Titus did of their "belly". As if he had said, ye are all "throat" and

nothing else, and that throat is like an “open sepulchre”, for ye devote yourselves to nothing else but to devouring the substance of men.

I would add to this another way in which these words may be understood, namely, that they are called a “throat” which is like an “open sepulchre”, because they lead the souls of those men by their impious word and works into the swallowing jaws of hell; and this is the way in which Augustine understands and treats the passage, though it seems somewhat remote from the literal meaning; and I shall not dwell upon it myself here, because it is more easily explained than the literal meaning, on account of its agreement with the succeeding and preceding context; but I entertain no prejudice against the judgment of another as to the propriety of the spiritual interpretation.

Since therefore these teachers of the people reap their temporal harvest, as in the case of the Levites, but under the most plausible cover and pretext, while they sow unto them their spiritual things, as they pretend, there grows and increases from this their dominion an avarice and also an ignorance of the “way” of God. Thus, instead of sowing spiritual things, they sow the most impious doctrines which savor only of the flesh; and because these doctrines please the common people more than those which are truly spiritual they are easily seduced and their teachers in the mean time reap their temporal fruits, until they have swallowed their farms together with all their substance. Thus the teachers for their ungodly labor obtain and enjoy the happiness of the ungodly in this world; while the people, on account of their ungodly religion, are destroyed with a double destruction, the destruction of both body and soul.

Nor is it without its peculiar appropriateness that David compares the “throat” of these to an “open sepulchre”, rather than to any other kind of voracity? For why does he this? Perhaps it is because the whole substance and possession of those things which are acquired by a wicked ministry and under a wicked pretence, is of that unhappy nature, that it returns

to no good use whatever, but is like dead bodies which, when once buried, never return to life. For David does not say, their throat is a coffer or chest, so as to leave some hope of that coming into use again which has been put into it; but he says "sepulchre", from which there is no hope of ever regaining that which has been once placed into it.

So it is at this day, for the possessions of the church, especially the greater ones, are of that character and appropriated to such use, that they are made to serve grooms and harlots and the most infamous of mankind, and are left for that purpose by wills and successions; so that the poor believers in Christ are not considered worthy of them. This is well known, not only by general report, but by actual experience. Wherefore, to devour substance and to communicate it to none of the faithful in Christ is the peculiar privilege and characteristic of the "workers of iniquity", namely, the martyrs of the devil. Therefore has come the proverb that it is injurious to have any contact with or make any use of the so called spiritual possessions, and that they consume every thing they touch. This some think takes place, because they are so holy and are dedicated to divine services, others say because they are deserted and like Jericho cursed, Josh. 6:26, wherefore they shall never be of any service with their possessions that are for good uses, since they have robbed them of their right use.

Lastly we have, "They act deceitfully with their tongues," or 'They speak lightly with their tongues,' as the Hebrew has it, 'They fawn and flatter with their tongues.' This belongs to that which precedes, for they do not consider that their duty is to teach such things as shall lead the people to godliness, but to tell such impious fables as shall please them.

All their concern is not to offend the ears of the people to the end that they may grow fat and increase in wealth. They are of those, whom Is. 30:10, describes as saying, "Speak unto us smooth things." Paul saith of them, 2 Tim. 4:3, "They having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their

own lusts." And Rom. 16:18, "For they that are such, serve not our Lord Christ but their own belly; and by their smooth words and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent." Such therefore speak not the truth from fear of ignoble poverty, but they willingly speak those things which please the people, from the hope of amassing wealth, and therefore they become "an open sepulchre."

It is at these light, flattering, or as our translation has it, "deceitful" tongues, that the present verse strikes, for such tongues are more destructive and pestilential than all the poison of asps. The reason such characters act thus is because truth is unpalatable and the word of the cross rougher than the camel's hair of St. John the baptist; for he that lifts up his voice in the desert of ungodliness is not clad in soft clothing. Therefore a messenger of the Word of God must be poor, or at least cannot long be rich.

Hence arises that excuse which is so universally made at this day, 'That they do not teach and declare the truth, because by their doing so the ruin of the church and of the rich wealth of the monasteries of Christ would soon follow, and no small portion of dainties would be taken from the throat and the belly.' Therefore that the "throat" may not be robbed and that the yawning "sepulchre" may be kept open, there must be speaking lightly with the tongue, there must be flattering the people, and conniving at their vices; and if they be of the higher class their vices must be called virtues, whatever they say or do or leave undone, must be called unalterably right, and every thing that is the contrary must be condemned as heretical and ungodly and be persecuted.

Proceed thus and your throat will be safe and your belly secure; you will not be excommunicated nor deprived of your benefice. If you will speak a little more lightly still with your tongue and flatter a little more brazenly your throat will be distended, the sepulchre will open wider, and your belly will be made to give more room; you will be loaded with benefices

and donations and adorned with honors; your sermons will be looked upon as letters of gold, your books will be immortalized, and every place on which you tread will be considered a bed of roses.

I believe it is quite clear and manifest to every one, that the world is at this day filled with flatterers of this kind, for all the religious persons have their mouth filled, and their zeal fraught with flattery and levity of speech. Thus is fulfilled that which Ezekiel saith, 13:18-19, "Woe to the women that sew pillows upon all elbows and make kerchiefs for the head of persons of every stature, to hunt souls! Will ye hunt the souls of my people and save souls alive for yourselves? And ye have profaned me among my people (that is, by teaching a false opinion of me instead of the truth) for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, to slay the souls that should not die, and to save the souls alive that should not live, by your lying to my people that hearken unto your lies?"

How beautifully applicable is this scripture and how it illustrates the words of David before us, is shown in what immediately follows, verse 21, "Your kerchiefs will I tear (that is, your flattering speeches and "*chrastologiai*," as the apostle calls them), and deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall be no more in your hand to be hunted." Then follows, verse 22, "Because with lies ye have grieved the heart of the righteous, whom I have not made sad (for flatterers must not only teach the ungodly false things, but must also persecute the doctrines of the truly righteous, otherwise their throat would soon be stopped up), and the hands of the wicked strengthened, that he should not return from his wicked way, and be saved alive: therefore ye shall no more see false visions, nor divine divinations, etc."

It is manifest therefore that by deceitful tongue our translator understood flattering and fawning tongue, that is a tongue that will teach the ungodly for the sake of those worldly advantages. Therefore no faithfulness is in their mouths, their

inward parts are vain, perverse, and deceitful. Such then is the meaning of this verse.

I am inclined to be displeased with myself for having been so diffuse and prolix and for having used so many words in my endeavor to explain the meaning of so short a sentence of the Holy Spirit. But when I consider that I am not writing for the learned, the acute, and the skilful, but for the simple and the inexperienced and particularly for those who are in the ministry also, I seem to myself to have been even now too brief and sparing; and especially as these are some of those things that are essentially necessary to be known and that have been buried throughout the world under superstitions and idolatries and have now for a long time and by long habit been driven out of the hearts of men. This makes it in my opinion highly necessary that they should be sounded forth with the continual thunder of voices, that the sleeping may be roused and awakened. Let the delicate reader therefore either know that these things are not written for him, or let him remember that his duty is to exercise patience for the benefit of the weak and inexperienced; and let him leave me, after the manner of the patriarch Jacob of old, Gen. 33:1 etc., to follow on softly with the children, the flocks of sheep, and the herds of oxen, as I see they shall be able to bear it, lest, if I should outdrive them one day, all the flock should die.

V. 10. *Hold them guilty (judge them), O God, let them fall by their own counsels; thrust (cast) them out in the multitude of their transgressions, for they have rebelled against thee (provoked thee to anger, O Lord).*

The first part of this verse is attached by us to the verse preceding, but this improves the sense but little. The prophet having hitherto described and condemned all ungodly hypocrites and "workers of iniquity," now prays that such may be marked by the judgment of God; because they are excused, approved, and defended by the judgment of men, and considered to be just and true, and that their name and reputation as such can-

not be taken away from them. As if he had said with Jeremiah, 5:30-31, "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" For who can resist those who are defended by the voice of the common people and by the great? Yet thus in truth are the ungodly workers of iniquity armed against one poor preacher of the truth! Such a preacher therefore must of necessity make many open declarations that shall be deemed scandalous and seditious, that shall give offence to the ears of these righteous ones, and that shall be judged by the people to be erroneous and heretical. What can he do in the meantime? Nothing but call upon God for his judgment, committing his cause into his hands.

The Hebrew word, which is rendered "judge them," Jerome translates 'condemn them.' The word signifies properly that judgment by which men are made manifest, their ungodliness being laid open to view. In this sense Paul also saith, 2 Tim. 3:9, "But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be evident unto all men, as theirs also came to be." It is therefore as if David had said, grant that, as they have lately been approved, loved, and boasted of by all, so their folly may be now made manifest and they themselves hated, cast out, and detested by all, that every person may see that they have approved of that which thou hast condemned. For I have seen and still do see it happens to all heretics that they first of all please men, but afterwards their bones are scattered, Ps. 53:5, and they are put to shame, because God hath rejected them. Their glorying and boasting and their applause and pomp are therefore in the meantime to be borne with. Hence we hear Jeremiah say, 20:7-9, "I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one mocketh me. For as often as I speak, I cry out: I cry, violence and destruction; because the word of Jehovah is made a reproach unto me, and a derision."

These words of David therefore do not only refer to the

last judgment, but are a prayer that the truth may triumph through the judgment of God, which such characters oppress through the judgment of men. Do thou, O Lord, says David, rise up and judge, for men do not judge rightly.

"Let them fall from their own thoughts." Thoughts here is of the same signification as "counsel of the ungodly" in Ps. 1:11, and rendered from the same original word. Wherefore it does not mean simply "thoughts," but as we fully showed in the first Psalm, ungodly opinions, sentiments, ideas, disputations, human reasoning concerning God and divine things, and also human inventions delivered to others as true doctrines. Hence there is a peculiar force lying in each word, both in "thoughts" and "own." These are their "own" thoughts indeed, and not God's, according to Is. 55:8-9, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

And what does the prophet show by these words, but that the thoughts of men, however holy they may appear, are but earthly, vain, and lying; according to Ps. 94:11, "Jehovah knoweth the thoughts of man that they are vanity."

Hence David calls them "thoughts" by way of expressive force, intimating that they are vague, unstable motions of the mind, for that is the nature of a mere thought, though they are considered to be decrees more stable and durable than the rock by the sea-shore. Hence the apostle admonishes the Hebrews, 13:9, "Be not carried away by divers and strange doctrines." In Eph. 4:14, he exhorts not to be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." What these wandering flies of doctrine are, is fully set forth in the plague of Egypt. Therefore Christ said, Matt. 11:7, that the doctrine of John was not like "a reed shaken with the wind;" for the doctrine of our faith is a firm key-stone, a mountain, a rock that laughs both at the winds and the waves of the whole sea,

and it will do so for ever, because the righteousness of God is for ever and ever.

But what means this praying of David that not their thoughts only, but the persons themselves should fall? Augustine thinks that this verse contains the words of one prophesying, and not praying; or that if they are a prayer, they pray that these persons may fall saved and be changed to sound thoughts concerning God; and his interpretation is good and admissible. But the figure of speech here used still induces me to consider the meaning to be like that of Ps. 81:6, "I removed his shoulder from the burden." Because in the world, where the powers of darkness still rule, it is in vain for any one to try to prevent the existence of ungodly doctrines and thoughts, for it must be that offences come. But our care is to be that we turn away from such doctrines and thoughts themselves, as being those which closely cleave unto us and therefore will never fall from us of their own accord, but will be continually rushing on us and most obstinately assaulting us.

If these things be so it appears therefore that those who wish to have no errors and heresies left and no impieties to exist, only attempt the burning of all heretics, and remain in the end free heretics themselves. For I consider that it is a conflict and not a state of ease, that is intimated by the verse in question, a conflict against the thoughts of men, for he does not pray that the thoughts might fall from the men, but the men from the thoughts. Because the human heart and its own thoughts or its own counsel are so inseparably and, as it were, adulterously connected together and in love with each other, that to separate them nothing less than the great and divine power and operation of the grace of God are required.

David wished rather to say "fall from" than 'turn from,' because he wishes such persons to come down from pride to humility, for "thoughts" puff up to that height, that such men cannot acknowledge themselves sinners, nor be humbled to the grace of God.

However he that would understand the passage rather as a prophecy, which is the sense that I prefer, may easily satisfy himself with the propriety of such an interpretation, namely, that the ungodly fall from their thoughts when their confidence in them fails and they cannot establish them. An example of this we have in the building of the tower of Babel, for there the attempt, the labors, the work, and the end of all ungodly teachers are most beautifully represented, which, when those impious ones had begun, they were not able to finish. This Christ has also set forth, Luke 14:28, in the parable concerning the man beginning to build a tower. In the same way also Ps. 21:11, "They conceived a device, which they are not able to perform."

Such therefore "fall from their thoughts" when they perish in the execution of them and leave a monument and example behind them that all might see what they imagined and attempted, and how they failed of accomplishing their purposes. In this way it was that the Arians fell and left their memory and their thoughts which they could not accomplish, a subject of derision and a fable in the mouths of all. It is such a judgment as this that the prophet here predicts, and prays that it might fall upon all ungodly teachers and performers of "their own thoughts," that they may not be able to accomplish that which they imagine against true godliness. This takes place in the execution of it when they are judged of God, as David says, for as long as they are judged of men, they increase and prosper in their thoughts.

Why did he not simply say "Thrust them out?" Why did he add "in the multitude of their iniquities?" Moreover the verb 'Thrust out' signifies, according to the original Hebrew word, 'a dispersing;' in the same way as the builders of the tower of Babel were scattered abroad thence upon the face of all the earth, and abandoned the building of the city, Gen. 11:8. In the same way the blessed virgin saith, Luke 1:51, "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." This

scattering Samson prefigured by his foxes, Judges 15:4, and the same is represented by the scripture, “A kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation,” Matt. 12:25.

For no heretics have ever been conquered by force or craft, but by dissension among themselves only; nor did Christ contend with them in any other way than by sending among them the spirit of confusion and dissension. Such a spirit as this was sent among the Shechemites, Judges 9:23, and among the builders of the tower of Babel; and under the New Testament, among the Arians, Donatists, and Pelagians. And indeed the Jews perished by their final destruction through dissension. Hence the holy man Hilary, in his book upon the Trinity, glories in declaring ‘that the war of the heretics is the peace of the church;’ for upon their dissension is sure to follow their dispersion.

This Christ also refers to, when in describing “the strong man armed” who is to be despoiled of his armor by a stronger, he says that his armor in which he trusted is to be “divided” and dispersed. So Hosea, 10:1-2, comparing iniquity to a multitude, says that they are to be dispersed by division. “Israel is a luxuriant vine, that putteth forth his fruit: according to the abundance of his fruit he hath multiplied his altars: according to the goodness of their land they have made goodly pillars. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found guilty: he will smite their altars, he will destroy their pillars;” which words beautifully explain this present verse of David. For what does this increasing of altars and multiplying of images, according to the goodness of their land, mean, but that Israel multiplied into many states and cities and erected unto themselves as many altars? As we read, Jer. 2:28, “For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah.” Upon this division soon followed their dispersion, while each city or division watched and wished for the ruin of the other that his own might stand.

The meaning of David therefore is, ‘They are ungodly in

many ways, they invent many superstitions and practice various kinds of idolatry; they are also divided among themselves like the sadducees and pharisees of old and like their imitators and followers in our day. According therefore to this multitude of their iniquities, do thou, O Lord, thrust them out, that their ungodliness may be brought to naught by the strength of their concord being broken.'

If then these things be true and will take place according to David's prayer, there appears to be a great persecution, devastation, and scattering hanging over the present state of the church, which being divided into so many sects, and the members all seeming to fight against each other, threatens a terrible shaking and an awful destruction; for there are not only now as many altars as there are cities, but almost as many as there are heads, so wholly has brotherly love gone to ruin; and therefore it must of necessity follow, that whatever exists without that is idolatry, for it does not seek that which is God's. Hence all the specious lives and conversations of all our priests and religious people, being destitute of, and disregarding this love, for such is the present state of the church, may be rightly called a multitude of iniquities; and thus we are divided and scattered more and more daily, each one according to Is. 53:6, turning "to his own way;" all this, as I have before observed, was beautifully prefigured by the foxes of Samson, Judges 15:4, which had their faces turned from each other, and fire-brands tied to their tails!

"For they have provoked thee to anger." This in the Hebrew is 'they have embittered thee.' As I have observed, above all other sins that are committed, this kindles God's wrath the most, when men omit that which is commanded and do something else which they think is better and which is not commanded at all. This is that AVEN, that disobedience itself, and that idolatry and working of iniquity. Hence the prophet says of them that they "provoked God to anger" and made him bitter. Other prophets do the same, where they call

the house of Israel the one that makes God bitter, provokes him to anger, irritates him, and kindles his wrath, etc.

We particularly observe that the word “iniquities” in this verse is in the original a word different from all those preceding. For it is not AVEN nor RESCHA, but PESCHA, that we here find in the Hebrew; which is a general noun that signifies all transgression, as in Is. 1:2, “I have nourished children, and they have rebelled against me,” that is, they have sinned against me or they have despised me by their transgressions. Hence Jerome translates this clause “according to the multitude of their wickedness;” and what these transgressions are in their nature and character, he has enumerated above where he said, “Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness.” For David designs by all these things to show that these characters sinned, transgressed, and prevaricated in many ways, and so as to provoke God to anger, even while they thought they were pleasing him. Hence by saying ‘the multitude of their iniquities,’ he does not only mean that they were divided, as we have observed, into many and various sects, but also that every separate one of those sects sinned in many ways, which ways we have described under our foregoing *seven heads*.

V. 11. *But let all those that take refuge (hope) in thee rejoice, let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: Let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. (they shall shout for joy and thou shalt dwell in them. And they that love thy name shall glory in thee.)*

All this is one verse in the Hebrew, and Jerome translates it, “And let all who hope in thee rejoice, they shall praise for ever; thou shalt defend them; and they that love thy name shall be joyful in thee.” In this last clause our translator has put “shall glory” for “shall be joyful.” But others again vary wonderfully in rendering these words which contain so many feelings and affections, so that we cannot harmonize all their

variations without going to the original Hebrew, the fountain head.

We here find four words put together to convey a fulness of expression, ‘To rejoice,’ ‘to hope,’ ‘to shout for joy,’ and ‘to glory.’ But the expression “shall dwell in them” indicates the affection of hope. How then do they differ? This is difficult to be investigated and learned, because these affections are of a high and sublime nature and can neither be taught nor understood but by those who have experienced them.

This one thing however is certain, according to the tenor and scope of the whole Psalm, namely, that David is speaking of that joy and quiet safety of heart, which arise from, and stand, not in the removal of external evils, for that is where patience more properly reigns, but in the remission of sins and impurity and good assurance of conscience where hope reigns. For the object and intent of the Psalmist is to show in what way men may become righteous and godly, namely by the mercy and through the fear of God and not by works of iniquity. All men seek to be glad and to rejoice, but all do not seek rightly, and therefore they find not that for which they seek.

Hence we will divide this verse into two, that it may as it were be a repetition, and that “And let all those that hope in thee rejoice: they shall shout for joy for ever, and shall dwell therein” may be the same as, “And they also that love thy name, shall glory in thee”.

For the Psalmist seems to contrast these affections of joy to the *POELE AVEN*, that is, the “workers of iniquity”, or as it is very frequently translated ‘the workers of pain’; because as I have observed, this idolatry and outward show of works is the labor of fools, which afflicts them and kills them with sorrow and never suffers them to know real joy of heart; as they themselves say, Mal. 3:14, “And what profit is it that we have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?” Is. 58:3, “Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Wherefore

have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge?" The remaining part of the chapter and also that which follows abundantly set forth this misery.

Dost thou desire to know then, where true joy of heart is to be found and in what it consists? David says, "Let all those that hope in thee rejoice". This truth therefore remains firm and this definition sure, that the heart of man cannot rejoice in works, nor in any thing else but in a pure hope; he therefore that seeks to rejoice in any other way besides this hope, will toil much and will find all his labor in vain at last! For, as it happened to the woman with a bloody issue, mentioned in the Gospel, that she spent all her substance upon physicians and only grew worse; so it happens to all who, under perturbations of conscience, run about to this place and that, consult now this person and now that, now doing this and now that, and trying all ways to obtain rest for the heart; but they seek not after this hope, which alone can bring them the quiet they seek. And in this soul killing work are all those lying teachers engaged, who impiously teach their works, satisfactions, indulgences, and pilgrimages, and who administer their false consolations, and, by other works of darkness like these, deceive mankind; the number of these in the present day is out of one's power to count.

CONCERNING HOPE AND SUFFERINGS.

Since this 'hope' is so often taught throughout the Psalms let us make a more extensive and full digression than usual, that we may consider once for all the force and nature of this term 'hope'; for these things are very necessary to be known by trembling, weak, and simple consciences.

Just as impatience, dejection, and confusion do not properly and primarily proceed from the multitude or magnitude of the afflictions, adversities, or evils, of whatever kind they may be, but rather from the feelings of the person who is alarmed at them and who is in an unwise way thirsting after the contrary, prosperity, happiness, and honor; so, despair, spiritual

dejection, and the confusion of a restless conscience do not properly and primarily arise from the multitude or magnitude of sins, but rather from the feelings of the person who is alarmed at them and who is in an unwise way seeking after an abundance of good works and righteousness and salvation.

The *first part* of my observation is clear; for David here says, "Let all those that hope in thee rejoice". If then, he says, "all" shall rejoice in the Lord who hope in him he does not permit us to understand that any are excepted, not even those who are in tribulation; nay, it is concerning such that he more particularly speaks, when he says that such hope in the Lord while they are afflicted in themselves and by men. These are the faithful in Christ, in whom, as the sufferings of Christ abound, so do the consolations of Christ abound also, as the apostle saith, 2 Cor. 1:5. For they know where and in whom they ought to rejoice and to glory, namely, in the Lord. Therefore through this their wisdom they are not cast down, they are not confounded, they are not impatient, because they do not aim at things prosperous, things pleasant, nor things honorable. Hence they pass through a tranquil medium between good and evil as it is written, 'Nothing that happeneth to the just shall disturb him'. And in Prov. 28:1, it is said, "The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion".

But they who are ignorant and unwise and will not understand that rejoicing and glorying is to be in God alone, what else do such, than become dejected, confounded, and impatient? and that, not because adverse or afflicting circumstances come upon them, but because when these come upon them they do not turn unto God which proceeds from their foolish feelings, but look anxiously after the prosperous and pleasant things which they have lost. Thus they flee but cannot flee away nor escape, because they know not whither to flee. Hence the whole cause of every one's sorrow is the unwisely anxious search after joy and honor; for if men were not glued to these things, adversities would cause them no uneasiness, according to the trite

proverb, ‘The world is ruled by opinions: and such as each man’s opinion of his condition is, such is his condition’. Hence contempt can neither profit nor injure any one, but when it is regarded then it profits or hurts, and then only.

The *second part* also is equally certain; because, many and great sinners have been saved. The very persons who David here says rejoice in the Lord, would say with Job, 9:3, “We could not answer him one of a thousand”, and hereby they acknowledge both the multitude and magnitude of their sins. Herein God shows that the cause of despair is not the multitude or magnitude of the sins but the wrong affection in those who seek after good works in the time of their trouble of conscience, in order to set these against their sins as a counter-balance and satisfaction. For such imagine by this their depraved opinion that their sins have been and can be, overcome by such works; and therefore not being able to gain the victory for which they labor and not knowing that they ought to turn to the mercy of God, desperation of necessity follows; for he must necessarily become impatient, who neglecting all regard of God attempts to put good for evil and cannot succeed; because no works whatever can make satisfaction for one sin even though it be a venial sin.

In the same way the conscience of an ungodly man at the point of death and drawing near to the judgment of God disputes with itself thus: O miserable man that I am! O if I had but now done many good things! O if I had but never done any evil! If I had but remained pure! And these words full of folly and iniquity most eminently prove that the saying of Augustine is true, ‘The unhappy change overtakes the ungodly man that when living he forgets God, and when dying he forgets himself’. Hence such an one seeks the good and hates the evil, and yet does not feel that he never did so much evil, nor less sought good than in this very hour, when he says these things and acts thus unwisely. For he proves that he does not hope in God, but presumes upon his own works, while he thus

looks back upon his past works and presumes ; whereas, these are not things upon which he has any right to presume. If he imagines that he can hope in God on account of his works, in which case he dreams that he shall hope in God more confidently and more joyfully, if he can but see before him plenty good works, it is plainly manifest that he hopes more in his own works than in God, than which nothing is more horrible or more impious !

Whereas the righteous even though they sin despair not. Because as among temporal evils, that is, the sufferings of this life, good things are intermingled ; so it is also with respect to spiritual evils, namely, sins ; for spiritual good things are intermingled with them also. These righteous persons therefore neither presume upon spiritual blessings when they live in the enjoyment of them, nor despair when they sin, for they know that they ought neither to be elated by the one nor cast down by the other, because they feel that the one state proceeds from God's gifts being bestowed upon them, and the other from their being taken away ; and whichever of these takes place, they still remain cleaving close to the giver himself.

This is taught in Prov. 24:16, "For a righteous man falleth seven times, and riseth up again : but the wicked are overthrown by calamity" : that is, they rise not again but fall into despair. If thou hopest and canst hope only when thou doest good, thou wilt certainly despair when thou doest evil. Take heed therefore lest that of Ps. 49:19, "He will praise thee when thou doest well unto him", and that of Luke 8:13, "And in time of temptation fall away", be applicable unto thee ; take heed that thou add not iniquity unto iniquity and blasphemy unto disobedience.

Hence it is greatly to be feared lest a twofold evil should befall these ungodly. First, when they find all things going prosperously and gloriously with them, they should imagine they are rejoicing and glorying in God, when in truth they are not trusting in God, but in his gifts, that is, in their pros-

perity, as temptation will in the end prove. And next, lest, when they are looked upon by all as living a holy and religious life, especially in this our most perilous day, which is so much devoted to the observance of the outward show and bug-bears of works, they should imagine that they are hoping most firmly in God, when they are all the while ignorantly hoping in their own sanctity, as the hour of death will prove. For when such are drawing near to judgment and are dying in full confidence under a self-persuasion of their good life which is the ground of their confidence in God, the destruction of all good hope, it will happen unto them just as it does unto a man who sets his foot upon a log of wood swimming in the sea — the log slips aside and he is suddenly lost in the deep, or, as Isaiah saith of them, 30:13, “Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly in an instant”.

Therefore just as that patience which is exercised in prosperity is no patience, so the hope that is exercised in merits is no hope. And, as it is possible and easy to have patience in prosperity, so it is possible and easy to exercise hope in merits. In each case there is eminent peril. In the former, lest the man should become proud and secure; in the latter, lest, being puffed up with his own righteousness, he should disregard the fear of God, in which fear lies the exercise of true hope. For the nature of patience is to be exercised only in adversity, and that of hope to be exercised only under sin. Not, however, that we should sin, in order that we may be in a state to hope! No, God forbid! We have sins enough already, both of those which we have committed ourselves and of those in which we were born, for all our own good works are but sins before God, to make us fit subjects for the exercise of hope.

Is God cruel then, who condemns all our works and performances? No. But his mercy is unspeakable in his condescending to communicate himself unto us and to take away all our own confidence from us, which is the only thing that

opposes his mercy. He has given a law, in and by which he has shut up "all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all", Rom. 11:32. For where there is no law there is no sin; where there is no sin there is no mercy; where there is no mercy there is no salvation; and where there is no salvation there is no God. Hence the strength of sin is the law, 1 Cor. 15:56, the strength of the law is mercy, the strength of mercy is hope, the strength of hope is salvation, and the strength of salvation is God through Jesus Christ our Lord; for he "is the God of deliverances and unto Jehovah, the Lord, belongeth escape from death", Ps. 68:20. For the law works sin in us, mercy works, that is, fulfils the law, hope works mercy, salvation works hope, and God works salvation, and all is in Christ. Hence salvation descends from God through Christ unto sin, and we ascend from sin through Christ unto God.

From this it follows, that as in temporal affairs good things are given unto us of God, that we may by them be led the more to worship him, hope in him, and love him, since, from the depravity of our nature, we worship, hope in, and love him less in the time of prosperity than in the time of adversity; nay, in the latter we worship, hope in, and love him, more than in the former. So in spiritual things, the blessings and merits of grace are given unto us of God, that by them we may be led the more fully to hope in him. And behold, by the depravity of our nature, we presume upon these freely given blessings and exercise under them the least hope of all and are more easily brought to hope in him under sin. Hence it seemed necessary to the divine goodness to raise the cross, and by the preaching of it to save fools and sinners that believe, and to reprobate the self-wise and saints, as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 1:23 etc., "But we preach Christ crucified, unto Gentiles, that is, to the wise foolishness, and unto Jews, that is, the saints, a stumbling-block; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, that is, sinners and fools, Christ the power of God

and the wisdom of God"; and so on as it is there beautifully set forth.

Wherefore as it is most perilous for a man to be left always in prosperity, because in such a state he never or very rarely learns to love God; so it is more perilous for a man to be left in great spiritual prosperity all his life long, for he will scarcely ever learn to hope in God. Hence when God begins in mercy to visit such they do not only fall into perturbation of conscience, but if they happen to be of a more incorrigible nature than usual, they will sometimes even fall into the open act of sin, that is, into fornication or something of that kind. God thinks fit to deal with them thus, leading them as it were to his mercy in a way that is contrary to mercy and permitting them to fall into sin in order to deliver them from sin.

But these things are higher than many can grasp and understand, and perhaps they may say by way of objection, well then! we had better sin only, and lay aside doing good altogether! Or, as the apostle says, in stating the objections that such will make, "Let us do evil that good may come", Rom. 3:8. For when we speak as I do now we seem to many to be opening the door to sin and shutting it against good works unto the injury of salvation. To such we will give this answer: Good works are not only not prohibited, but are greatly commended by these words, and sin is by the most effectual discipline taken out of the way, while they teach that these good works are to proceed from within and that sin is to be destroyed within. For it is that depraved affection, the head of the old serpent, which is so secretly and subtlety carnal and which trusts in these works and most obstinately resists that hope which rests in the mercy of God alone, that is to be bruised, plucked out, and destroyed. And we are to understand that even if our mind has not been employed well we are not to despair, and that, on the contrary, we are not therefore to hope, because it has been employed well; the former of which is very difficult to be put into practice, though the latter is much more difficult

still; because, in the former we fight only against sins, but in the latter, against good works and sins both, that is, against that feeling of presumption which always accompanies good works.

Moreover, when I say that patience cannot exist in prosperity, do I therefore condemn possessions, power, peace, the happiness of life, etc., things without which we cannot live, and which are prized by the best of all beings? By no means! I only condemn the state of our minds under the enjoyment of them. In the same way, these things are elsewhere compelled to be called by a name descriptive of them, as in Ecclesiastes they are called "vanity", and by Christ in the Gospel "thorns"; not from any evil that there is in these things themselves, but from the vanity of men, under which vanity, as the apostle saith, Rom. 8:20, 22, "For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope".

Hence these very good works of the ungodly, which are themselves gifts of God and by which others are often benefited while the ungodly themselves are destroyed by them, are called AVEN, that is, iniquity, idolatry, and disobedience; not on account of the evil in the works themselves, but on account of the evil and contagious depravity in those that perform them. And Moses speaks of these things thus, Deut. 28:30, with the veil upon his face, "Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her: thou shalt build a house, and thou shalt not dwell therein: thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not use the fruit thereof"; and many other things he says in the same spirit, wherein he foretells the labors that such shall endure, but of which others shall reap the fruit; for what else does Moses here say than that such do good works, but that those works end only in their own punishment and the benefit of others?

Hence, the argument which many adduce by way of objection is answered and disposed of. They ask how a work done without grace, such as, giving of alms, helping a needy

person, and the like, can be sin? As if Christ did not know that to prophesy, to do wonderful things in his name, and to hear his Word, were good works! And yet he says that he will condemn all such works as iniquities and will say to the performers of them, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity". So, when a harlot is adorned with gold and jewels it of necessity follows, that it is she that sins, and not the goodly ornaments that she wears. Therefore the ungodly may do good to profit others, but not to benefit themselves. For it is rather God that works by them in these works, who worketh all in all.

All these things are also proved by the firm and conclusive argument, that according to the opinion of all, hope is a spiritual and powerful principle which in its acting has God for its object, and God is goodness, and that mercy which is promised unto us. Wherefore, if a person hope in any thing else than that promised mercy, that is, in God, he does not hope, but presumes and misses hope altogether. The same also does he who hopes in God and his own merits. For, as God cannot be loved together with another as Augustine says, for then he is not loved above all things; so, neither can he be hoped in together with any other, because then he is not hoped in above all things. These three things, therefore, are of a divine nature: — there is a divine object, a divine subject, and a divine agent; wherein are contained the work, the manner, and the act. Here are the bridegroom and the bride and all the secrets of the marriage-bed, the bridegroom alone with the bride alone. All other works are carried on by the daughters of Jerusalem and by the companions, all others halt between two opinions, worshipping their Baal and God together!

Finally, these things are further proved thus. 'Hope acts upon things which are not seen', as does faith also, for the apostle saith, Rom. 8:24, "But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" So if a man believe in that which he seeth, why doth he yet believe? If these men hope in, believe, and love what they see, what do

they hope and believe in? In nothing but a carnal bugbear, in something for beneath God, that is, not in a reality, but in a deceptive hobgoblin of appearance. Such hope in, see, hold, possess, and feel their own works, and in them they trust, but not in the invisible, intangible, incomprehensible promiser who is heard, and who reveals himself in his Word only! These things are too high, too difficult, too hard for our flesh, because they are the death of it.

Hence, all that is said in the Song of Solomon concerning the bridegroom and the spouse in a lascivious manner, as it were, and according to the carnal love of men, and also all those things which are there represented as transacted between the male and female sex have a signification directly the contrary to those pleasures; for they represent the most perfect works of faith, hope, and love, that is, they show such works to be as strong as death and hell; as it is there written, Song 8:6, "For love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave". Again, ver. 7, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, he would be utterly contemned"; which things can by no means be understood concerning the flame of lust.

Many men have vamped up and fabled many things about mystical, negative, proper, and symbolical theology, "not knowing what they say nor whereof they affirm"; for they know not what either negative or affirmative theology is, nor the relative nature of either. Nor can the commentaries of such men be read without peril, because such as the men are themselves such are their writings; as they felt, so they spoke. They felt every thing the contrary to negative theology, that is, they never knew nor ever felt death and hell, nor loved such experience; and therefore, it is impossible but that they should deceive themselves and their readers.

I wished to say these things by way of admonition, because the commentaries of Dionysius upon mystical theology are every where circulated both from Italy and from Germany;

which are mere “oppositions of science”, vaunting and puffing off itself. Let no one therefore consider himself to be a theologian in mysteries because he has read, understood, and taught these things, or rather because he imagines that he has understood and taught them. For a man becomes a theologian by living, or rather by experiencing death, and condemnation, not by mere understanding, reading, and speculation.

Again they may bring forward, by way of objection to what I have said, the saying of Paul, Rom. 5:3-5, “Tribulation worketh stedfastness (patience) ; and stedfastness, approvedness ; and approvedness, hope ; and hope putteth not to shame”. ‘Here, they say, the apostle seems to place hope among merits.’ Thus they will make the great master of all doctrines, Peter Lombard, to give this definition of hope in unison with the opinions of the whole multitude of theologians : — ‘That hope is a certain expectation of a reward springing out of merits.’ For such have no other hope than that which preceeds from merits. From which opinions, what else can follow than the ruin of all theology and the ignorance and oblivion of Christ and his cross, and the forgetting of God for ever.

But what will such say when we bring before them their own confessions, ‘that faith, hope, and love are infused virtues, and the principles of all good things?’ Hence they themselves declare that merits cannot exist before love. They moreover constantly assert, ‘that hope and faith are infused together with love’. According to their own assertions therefore it is certain that hope does not proceed from merits, but merits from hope. Yet, when they define hope they controvert this assertion and contradict themselves, making hope to proceed from merits.

What will they say to the apostle, when he makes patience to be the work of tribulation? Rom. 5:3. But who can endure any tribulation without hope? For the man that is in despair will never come to any patience, nor to any approvedness, nor to any glorying in tribulation, by tribulation, but on the contrary will only become worse and worse by it; as Christ teaches

us in his discourse, Matt. 7:26 etc., concerning the house built upon the sand, the fall of which was great when the winds blew and the floods came; and as we are also taught by his parable of the seed, which when sown fell upon a rock, Luke 8:6, and soon sprung up, but was scorched by the sun; these parables represent those who in time of temptation fall away. Hence there must be hope in the beginning of tribulation in order to its working patience.

But further; only reason upon this definition, 'Hope proceeds alone from merit'. Therefore no sinner can ever hope except the righteous alone! If this argument stand good, who will be converted to repentance? Who will be righteous, if no sinner repent? And how will any one repent, without hoping in the mercy of God? Are we then to say to a dying sinner, 'Thou hope! far away be it from thee to attempt to hope. Thou hast no merits from which thou canst possibly derive any hope?' This would not be acting the theologian, but acting the devil. For the voice of the devil is always, 'Do not thou presume to hope, for thou hast no merits!' Whereas the point of death is the greatest, the most important, and the best place and circumstance in which hope can act, and death itself is most especially adapted to work together for the exercise of hope. Such a definition of hope therefore is most false, and I would rather confess that I did not understand one word of the apostle, than admit that such a definition of hope could be drawn from him.

I will therefore give my opinion. First of all, it is certain that grace, namely, faith, hope, and love, are not infused or communicated without sin being also infused or felt at the same time; that is, the sinner is not justified unless he be first condemned, he is not made alive unless he be first killed, he ascendeth not into heaven unless he first descend into hell, as the whole scripture plainly shows. Wherefore the infusion of grace must of necessity be attended with bitterness, tribulation, and suffering, under which the old man groans, not being able

to bear his casting out with any kind of patience. But if under this tribulation the man be patient and wait for the hand of him that is working in him and infusing or communicating grace unto him, he is thereby proved and he shall find hope, faith, and love, which under such an experience are infused. This takes place as often as things turn out contrary to our will, and the effects are the greater, the more contrary those things are.

This I say is the way in which grace is infused or communicated not only at first, but also at every subsequent communication. For the old man is always more and more expelled, as grace more and more enters in even unto death; according to Rev. 22:11, "He that is righteous let him do righteousness still; and he that is holy let him be made holy still"; and according to John 1:16, "Grace for grace"; and Paul, Rom. 1:17, 'A righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith'; and 2 Cor. 3:18, 'We are transformed from glory to glory'; so Ps. 84:7, "They go from strength to strength". And in the same way we may rightly be said to go from hope to hope.

It is quite manifest therefore that the apostle is not speaking so much of the hope itself which is obtained, as of the certain assurance of heart under that hope; while the man, after the tribulation and infusion or communication of hope, for under the tribulation he appears to himself to have no hope at all, *feels* that he hopes, believes, and loves; for he then tastes how sweet the Lord is, and begins to hunger and thirst after more suffering, that the tribulation may work in him a greater degree of hope. Hence it is necessary that there be faith, hope, and love, in the beginning of every good work and suffering; but it is after the work and suffering that the hope which lay hidden is made manifest; and it is then that the persons are approved and manifested. In this way Job and Abraham were tried, that they might be made manifest and known to themselves and might be assured that they believed in, hoped in, and

loved God. "Now know I that thou fearest God", that is, now have I made thee to know, etc., as Augustine expounds it.

For a man must not only believe, hope, and love; but he must know and is certain that he believes, hopes, and loves. The former takes place in the hidden circumstances of the storm, the latter after the storm is over.

Thus, Peter exhorts you to "give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure". 2 Pet. 1:10. For it is one thing for a man to be, or to be made, good and another for him to know that he is so made. Just in the same way as a "blood thirsty and deceitful man", when he is irritated, becomes manifest and is found to be a blood thirsty and deceitful man; whereas before, he seemed to others and also to himself to be of a very sweet disposition and a simple character.

In like manner the cross operates in those who endure it and are proved by it, even unto the end, until they arrive at solid hope; that is, the hope begins, increases, and goes on, and makes the man's knowledge of the goodness of his state sure and certain. But in those who do not endure it and are not proved by it, but found reprobate, it works the most impotent despair from the very beginning. Hence Tauler, a man of God, said, as all who experience the same thing say, 'God is never more pleasing, more lovely, nor more sweet to his children than after their probation under tribulation.'

This is the hope that the apostle says is wrought by approvedness". Rom. 5:4. And as children of the flesh love their natural father more sweetly after correction by the rod; so the bridegroom Christ visits his bride after his embraces with a pleasure which is contrary to the flesh, which embraces are themselves death and hell to the flesh. Herein does that great mystery, "And thy twain, Christ and the Church, shall be one flesh", Eph. 5:31, rule and reign; which is indeed a great mystery. It is very hard to be borne in its operation, but it produces the sweetest fruits, bringing forth an offspring most like unto God and works that are blameless. For it is thus that

the vine is purged, that it may bring forth more fruit. If then it be true that every *degree* of hope is wrought by experience how much more is the apostle to be understood as having spoken and thought in the same way also of *perfect* hope, which proceeds from many and different tribulations?

Let us now look farther into the words of the apostle. He calls hope the work of approvedness, approvedness the work of stedfastness, and stedfastness the work of tribulation. But that great master of doctrines says too much if he calls those ‘merits’ from which hope proceeds; at least, the persons who so understand him do not comprehend what he means by those ‘merits’. For, most certainly that *active* life in which many too rashly confide and which they generally understand to be signified by the term merits, does not produce or work merits, but presumption; just as knowledge puffeth up. Therefore we must call in another kind of life to be understood as here signifying merits, namely, that *passive* life which mortifies and destroys all this active life, so that nothing of the merits of the latter remains in which the proud person may glory.

Where this takes place, if the man persevere, hope is wrought in him; he learns that there is nothing in which he can rejoice, hope, or glory, but God. For tribulation, as it takes away all things from us, leaves nothing but God; it cannot take away God, but rather brings him nearer to us. If, when all our own affairs are taken away, even our works and our merits, if, I say, we here endure and stand, we find God in whom alone we trust, and thus “we are saved by hope”.

Wherefore though those holy work-mongers say they trust in God with all their confidence, yet, when their *active* life, which is all their dependence, begins to be tried, either with contempt in the sight of men, or with trouble of conscience before God, they all give way and fall, thereby showing that they trusted more in their own life, than they hoped in the mercy of God. There is no active life which can suffice before God, or can so suffice before men as to be satisfactorily pleasing

to all unto the end. Hence David saith, Ps. 143:2, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight no man living is justified".

It is the *passive* life only that is most pure, and therefore it is only that which works hope and glory. In this we ought to be conformed to the example of Christ our King and Captain, who began indeed with the *active* life, but finished with suffering, all his works, though so great, so many, and so wonderful, being accounted as naught, that is, in the sight of men, as our own works should be in our own sight, that he was not only numbered by men among the wicked, but was thought to be deserted by God.

All things therefore are to be so entirely taken from us, that not even the best gifts of God, that is, the merits above-mentioned themselves, shall be left, in which we may trust; so that there may be pure hope in an all-pure God, and then the man is truly pure and holy. This matter is attended with various tribulations and with many pains; but the greatest pains are, when we begin to approach towards the perfection of hope, that is, to the being stripped of all our good works and of trust in our good life. For in the loss of all other things, such as property, health, and honor, it is not so much hope that is exercised, as it is patience that is contending against impatience and the natural man; under which the man is so exercised and instructed, that he learns patiently to despise his present troubles as being those which he will never have to endure again.

But in these storms of conscience and in these ruins of merits, hope itself fights against desperation and oftentimes against itself, nay, even against God; whom love feels to be angry with her, because she has no merits whatever; and though she cannot endure being without these merits, yet she is forced to be without them, which so miserably crucifies the spirit of the man, that it makes him almost able, like Christ, to tell all his bones. Ps. 22:18.

So that, any one may rightly call hope, spiritual patience, or patience in enduring accusations; as, on the contrary, patience may be called spiritual hope, or hope in enduring punishments. For what is it to be tried and tempted in the conscience and with despair, but to feel that our sins are unpardonable, that God will not be merciful to us, and that all our works are naught? Yet, if the man persevere and hope against hope, Rom. 4:18, he shall be found proved and approved; and being by this tribulation stripped of all his merits, he shall be furnished with hope and be crowned with an incorruptible crown that shall not fade for ever and ever. For God is not really angry nor is it his will to refuse pardon to such an one's sins, he only tries him to see whether he will hope in his mercy rather than in his own works.

Whereas our self-justifiers who are daily filled and crammed with the merits of their *active* life dread nothing so much as having this cross laid upon their merits, being deceived in the words of our great master of theology, where he says that hope proceeds from merits, which they understood to be good works. But the apostle calls them "tribulations", that is, mortifications and crucifixions of the flesh.

Behold therefore how far we have strayed from the true knowledge of hope by misunderstanding one word of the apostle; and this error has produced an infinite number of conscience-murders and perhaps eternal damnations. For while such have tried to find hope and peace by works, tribulation either of conscience or of body, which are the true workers of hope, opposed them in their attempt; and they, not knowing what that tribulation was and rejecting it, did not find the hope and peace they wanted and therefore despaired. And no wonder, for they sought hope in that way which leads to presumption; and being hindered, or, as Hosea 2:6 saith, finding 'their way hedged with thorns,' and not understanding this hindrance they fell away.

Hence we have today that multitude of poor, weak, fearful,

and scrupulous consciences, which are unstable in all their ways. Thou art not, poor soul, thus tried with despair or wringings of conscience, that thou shouldest be driven to run to trusting in thy works, but on the contrary, that thou mayest be called away from those works. This is a truly spiritual conflict, though it be most bitter, and it is between thee alone and God; where hope alone can support thee by waiting and expecting, committing its whole cause unto God and overcoming God against God; as Jacob did, Gen. 32:24, etc., where it is recorded of him that he being alone wrestled with God and prevailed against him and therefore received the blessing from him in the same place; but the name of the one who blessed him it was not lawful to know: so he called the name of the place Penuel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."

If any one be permitted to go on prosperously in the way of presumption and to increase his works without this temptation, what will he come to? Perhaps he will not run into despair but despair will come into him, because he knoweth not God nor has learned how wonderful he is in these his counsels and workings.

Now we can see the contents and weight of that famous, much admired saying of Cicero, 'The consciousness of a well-spent life is a most sweet reflection.' True! But the sweeter such a reflection is, the more destructive is it. This sentiment does not at all savor of the Christian; for, to a Christian the consciousness of a life that has well suffered, that is, has been reduced to nothing, is most sweet; for, "He that glorieth let him glory in Jehovah," Jer. 9:24. Job did not speak like Cicero; for though he said, 27:6, "My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live," yet he did not dare to glory but prayed that God would not enter into judgment with him. Nor did Paul speak like him when he said, 1 Cor. 4:4. "For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified." Nor Jer. 9:23, 24, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,

neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding and knoweth me, that I am Jehovah who exerciseth loving kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Jehovah."

Consequently we are not to believe in, hope in, cleave to, or glory in, any gifts of God, lest we should commit fornication with them, as is often said in the prophets, but in God himself the giver and in him alone. This is what is meant, Ps. 116:11, "I said in my haste, all men are liars." Now this "haste" was tribulation, by which we are instructed to know how vain and lying every man is who hopes not in God alone. For man is man until he is made like unto God who alone is true, by partaking of whose truth, man becomes true also, which he does by cleaving unto God in true faith and hope, being reduced to nothing in himself.

For to what can the man come, who hopes in God, but to nothing in himself? Where can the man go who is brought to nothing, but unto him from whom he came? He came from God and from nothing; and therefore, he who returns to nothing returns unto God. He that fails from himself and all creatures cannot fall from the hand of God also, for the hand of God upholds all things; he holdeth, as Isaiah saith, 40:12, the world in his hand. If therefore thou fall through the whole world, where canst thou fall but into the hand and bosom of God? Thus the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, because their safety is out of the world. They seem in the eyes of the foolish to fall utterly and perish, Wis. 3:1-2, in the same manner as they see a stone go through the air or the water; but the stone, remember, does not fall through the earth also!

But, as to those active workers and self-justifiers, who, being deluded by their own opinions, seek only by all their works and righteousnesses to increase and become fat and great, and who by no means wish to come to nothing, but to become something great — to what think ye such will come? Why, they too will

be made to fall back into their nothing; not, however, to be brought into the hand of God but to fall utterly and perish everlastingily.

But I know how many things are brought forward out of the holy scriptures and out of the sayings of the fathers and the lives of the saints in opposition to these teachings. But I also well know how perilously all those things are understood, if they be not brought down to the rule and standard now before us, for they all make to this same point. I will, however, for example's sake, produce one of these.

We read upon the authority of Jerome that Hilary said to his soul, while he was fearing to die, 'Leave this body, O my soul; what fearest thou? Thou hast now served Christ for these ninety-three years; and dost thou fear to die?' If therefore he be understood to have spoken as the words imply, that is, if he thus trusted in the works of his life, we must conclude that he went to hell and not to heaven.

But why do they not look into those different words of St. Agathon? who, when he had been looking up to heaven with steady and unaltered eyes for three days, and was asked by his disciples why he feared and why he did not trust in his well-spent life answered, 'I do fear in reality. I know indeed that I have kept the commandments of God, as well as I could; but the judgment of God and the judgment of men are very different from each other.' But the fear of Hilary proves the same thing. For if he had found his works sufficient he would not have been filled with fear. He was forced therefore to seek some other anchor for his confidence and trust and to set before himself the mercy of God, from the remembrance of his past benefits and mercies toward him. For it is no slow motive to, and excitement of, hope, to call to mind the past or present benefits of God which have been bestowed or are now bestowed upon us; nay it is a ray of the countenance of God shining upon us and a good sign in our favor, and very encouraging to faith and hope. Thus the children of Israel were commanded to re-

member the works of the Lord and his bringing them out of Egypt, Deut. 8:14; that their mouths being thus stopped and filled with the praise of God; they might not perish, as Isaiah saith, 48:9.

But you will ask, perhaps, are there then no merits at all? Why are we enjoined by so many precepts both of Christ and his apostles to do good works, to sow our seed, to build gold, silver, jewels, etc.? I answer: this is what I said before, that most men are deceived by misunderstanding good works. Good works are certainly to be done and the tree of the spirit ought to bring forth those fruits which are described, Gal. 5:22, 23. But men do not understand those words of Christ, John 12:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." And those words in John 15:2, "Every branch in me that beareth fruit, he cleaneth it that it may bear more fruit."

For this mortification and purgation, which take place by all the infusion of faith, hope, and love, strip a man of all his own works, that he may learn to trust in God alone and to do good works; not that they may be merits to him, for which he may seek and expect his reward, but he does them gratuitously with a free mind and with a mind ready and willing to please God, not trusting at all in them himself, but doing them to promote the glory of God; as Christ saith, Matt. 5:16, "Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

They who do good works in this way do them not for themselves but for God, as instruments to his glory. They arrogate nothing to themselves in doing them, being satisfied with God only in whom they hope. Those who do not their works in this spirit and for these ends are only apes of the true saints.

Hence of necessity unbelief follows from the life of all saints, unless they have learned to glorify their heavenly Father by their works. Rightly is it said, therefore, Ps. 25:10, "All

the paths of Jehovah are lovingkindness and truth"; that is, truly good works are done when God only and totally does them in and by us, so that no part of the work whatever pertains unto us.

Wherefore, let this be thy standard rule; wherever the holy scriptures command good works to be done, understand that it forbids thee to do any good work of thyself, because thou canst not; but to keep an holy Sabbath unto God, that is, a rest from all thy works, and that thou become dead and buried and permit God to work in thee. Unto this thou wilt never attain, but by faith, hope, and love; that is, by a total mortification of thyself, Col. 3:5, and all thy own works.

Consequently there are merits and yet no merits in us. There are merits, because the gifts of God and his own works are merits. Yet there are no merits, because we cannot any more presume upon them, than any sinner can who knows nothing at all about them and in whom God has not yet wrought any thing. Thus we all are, all have been, and all shall ever remain, upon an equal footing before God, so that the glorying of one over another must for ever perish; according to 1 Cor. 4:7, "For who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" Mark the words! He who is puffed up with, and boasts of, the gifts of God does the same as if to say he had received nothing! Where then is a difference to be found? Nowhere. As the apostle here saith, "Who maketh thee to differ?" Who has declared that thou art better than others? As if he had answered, no one.

From all these things, then, consider the equal judgment and justice of God, and how he would have held up to contempt all that external bug-bear and outward show of life and works. Because in his eyes the just and the unjust are alike as to the merits of their works. For he has ordained this law for all that live in this mortal life: — that they should be made to know, that, as the righteous have no cause or ground for presuming,

so sinners indeed have no cause or ground for despairing. He has given to each the same law for their hoping in him, which law alone makes the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those that despair in themselves and those that presume. Hence in Ps. 119:75, David sings rightly, "I know, Jehovah, that thy judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." Behold, before the face of the truth of God David is nothing, and in the judgment of a just and righteous God he is as the greatest novice, the greatest sinner of all sinners.

The end of the law of faith, hope, and love, is to make us all the greatest and least instructed of all sinners, that is, to make us all equal; and yet, to work thereby the most unequal and the most strange things. Truly God is wonderful in his saints!

We are all therefore by the commandment of God urged to hope in him, and are by the same commandment deterred from despair and presumption; and thus, truly God is in all things and in all, equal and the same; and yet, he is most unequal and most different. For he is a God who is simple in multiplicity and multiplex in simplicity, equal in inequality and unequal in equality, low in loftiness, deep in height, and far in nearness, and their contraries. So he is powerful in the weak, weak in the powerful, wise in fools, and foolish in the wise, in a word, he is all in all. But I wish to say these things apart from the pious ears of those who are offended at the truth, which by all their unhappy reasonings and questionings they could never learn.

But perhaps the weak and infirm conscience may yet say, 'But suppose I cannot believe, and thus find my despair to be unsurmountable?' I will answer: Thou art not even then to despair when thou thus feelest thyself to despair. For that is not despair when thou desirest not to despair and grievest that thou dost despair, it is only the trial and temptation of hope; though that is certainly by far the most heavy of all tempta-

tions, because it involves in its sensations the greatest, the eternal hatred of God, blasphemies, curses, and all the evils of hell, which we dare not openly mention, in a word, it involves in an awful degree the ever-blessed and glorious Majesty.

What therefore shalt thou do in this case? Why, first acknowledge that thou deservest all this and that it is due unto thy sins. Here thou art to be wise, thou art to praise and give thanks unto God, and thou art to endure this infirmity and temptation, according to Eccl. 10:4, "If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for gentleness allayeth great offences." Hence what thou hast to take care of is, that thou do all in thy power not to yield to this hatred, blasphemy, and desperation; but that thou cry unto God, if it be but in one single sigh or groan; and that thou assure thyself that, according to Is. 42:3, "A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench."

I will say first in my free way, there are none nearer to God in this life than these kind of haters and blasphemers of him, nor any sons more pleasing to him and beloved by him! Thou mayest in this state make more satisfaction for sin in one moment than ever thou couldst by repenting for many years under a diet of bread and water. Hence it is true that, in death, where this temptation prevails most, a Christian may in one moment get rid of all his sins, if he act wisely under the temptation. It is in this state those "groanings that cannot be uttered" are exercised and prevail. Rom. 8:26.

Secondly, remember throughout thy whole life, that thou pray for hope; but so that thou refuse not the will of God in this thy infirmity but that thou endure it even unto death, saying with thy Lord and Master, Matt. 26:38, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death". Pray so as not to doubt that hope will be given thee of God. For he, who willed that thou shouldst pray, yea rather, who taught thee to pray thus without any of thine own seeking after it, willed thee to pray thus, because he had purposed to hear thee. There-

fore, bear all delays with patience but doubt not that thou shalt receive; that which will come, "shall surely come, it will not tarry", Hab. 2:3, and do thou in the mean time hope against hope.

But to this end you will have the rod and staff of God to sustain and comfort you, namely the first and greatest of all the commandments of God; "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me". In this commandment we are not only reminded, warned and persuaded to hope in him, to love him, but it is commanded us under the greatest punishment and obligation, for it teaches that we have a God. By this commandment you are not freed from any sin, yea it outweighs all sin, whenever the opportunity is at hand to keep and fulfill this commandment. For if thou hadst sinned against all other commandments, and that in various ways, thou didst not sin as much as when thou this moment dost doubt this first commandment. For this would be the same as to deny God, which is horrible only to think of. For who can say in the face of his God, thou art not God? Yea, who can hear this? Yet, he who doubts, says this with the full and everlasting fervor of his heart. The tempted one does not think he says it, yea, indeed, he does say something like this, or what is nearer the truth, he suffers satan to say it in him.

But how you will say if he torments me concerning predestination and makes me uneasy, so that I hope in vain, if I am not predestined? Concerning this I will say more under Ps. 22, if Christ give us grace. In the meantime it is sufficient that this is the most dangerous of all temptations. If thou knowest why satan and the wisdom of the flesh thus move you, you will at the same time know with what means you can meet them.

First you must hold firmly and be perfectly sure that this thought is not of God, and therefore with all diligence banish it as one that in many ways is displeasing to God. That it is not of God thou canst know by this, that whatever is of

God moves us to keep his commandments and do his will, for God does, thinks and wills nothing more than that his will may be done. But this overcurious solicitude, whether you are predestinated or not, he has not commanded you, since he has forbidden you the same, Ps. 55:22, "Cast thy burden upon Jchovah", and Matt. 6:31-33, "Be not anxious. Seek ye first the kingdom of God etc."

Satan occupies your attention with these useless and injurious cares for no other reason than that you should under their weight forget the commandments of your God, in which he has commanded you to hope and believe, and he at the same time deceitfully leads you to think only of yourself and love yourself, when you begin to seek your own. For this is his last and greatest trick, by which he leads us so that our care is self love, and he makes us thus guilty before the commandment of God. What will it profit, if you are occupied with this thought to the end of the world? Nothing will result from it; thou wilt not be secure by it, neither will God think differently of you.

Therefore you should hurl the thunderbolts of the scriptures against the work of such fools and against satan, who suggests such things. First the words of Ps. 1:2, "Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of Jehovah, not in his own predestination, day and night." And this saying from Sirach 6:37, "Let thy thoughts be upon the precepts of the Lord, and meditate continually in his commandments". Ex. 13:19, "It shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes". And Matt. 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven", and many like passages.

For God requires nothing more than that his will be commended unto us with assiduous solicitude. When we do that our predestination will be spontaneously accomplished and that without any anxiety on our part. The tempter how-

ever wills that you should first be concerned about yourself, and then about the commandments of God, whereby you in this way prefer yourself to your God, and do not love him above all things, yea you do not have a God. For if they hardly persevere who hold most faithfully to the commandments of God, where will they be who forsake them and engage in strange and useless thoughts? Then you should say to satan and to your heart: God has not commanded that, but has called me to hope; and about this alone am I concerned; should I wish to do that, I would not be able.

Secondly you can readily see that this thought is not of God in that satan with these strokes intends two great evils for you; first that you should tempt God, which he had in mind with Christ on the pinnacle of the temple. For he is concerned to occupy you with this theme, in order that you should wish to be certain of your predestination or to see a sign from heaven. For what is it for man to be tormented about his predestination, except to be impatient concerning the uncertainty of the divine decree? What does this impatience do except tempt God in that it desires to be certain of the counsel of God as far as it concerns each individual? In short such a person has a hatred toward God, that he is God, since he will not that he should know more than he knows.

Therefore you should meet this awful sin with the word of God as Christ did, when he said, Matt. 4:7, "It is written, thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God". For thou must not desire to know his secrets concerning which he has willed that you should not know them, and be happy in this his will, which he has commanded you to observe in all things. But if you love this will of his unrevealed decree, then thou art already predestinated. Hence there follows naturally from the keeping of the commandments, without all this worry of ours, that which we so anxiously and in vain seek by a perverted study in the face of the commandments, and yet never find it, because the commandment of God is the way to God.

If we have lost it, in that we through the temptation of satan wish to accomplish this by our own care for our salvation and predestination, we are necessarily lead into error and loose both the way of God and our own way and thereby both our predestination and our salvation.

The other very great evil is, that satan labors to bring you into the same deep fall, which he himself experienced and into which he plunged Adam. For what is his aim with this anxiety about your predestination, except that you should wish, as I have said, to know the decrees of God? But if man wills to know God's counsels, that means that he wills to be like God, as satan willed it, as he said, Is. 14:13-14, "I will ascend into heaven; I will make myself like the Most High", and to Adam he said, Gen. 3:5, "Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil". This means again that you will not that he should be your God, which is the greatest of all sins. Thus you see how subtly through his horrible deeds he stirs you against the commandments of your God in order that you may experience the same fall which he experienced.

Therefore he must be crushed by the word of God, which says, "It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search out their own glory is grievous". Prov. 25:27. Again, "Seek not the things that are too hard for thee, neither search the things that are above thy strength. But what is commanded thee, think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes the things that are in secret. Be not curious in unnecessary matters; for more things are showed unto thee than men understand. For many are deceived by their own vain opinion; and an evil suspicion hath overthrown their judgment". Sirach 3:21-24.

Therefore this over-curious concern about the works of God is forbidden by the word of God, in which we are taught that they are above our reason and sense and his judgments are incomprehensible, and we should rather exercise ourselves in fear in order that we may hope in him with con-

fidence, and turn this impractical undertaking back upon satans own head, and, comforted with Joab, being armed with the word of God, say, "Be of good courage; and Jehovah do that which seemeth him good", 2 Sam. 10:12. Oh beautiful example! If he had disputed before whether the victory were predestinated, he would not have fought, moreover by disputing he would have become indifferent, and interested in other affairs, and thus been shamefully defeated.

Here we see our most impious impiety, our most stupid stupidity and our perverse perversity. We marry wives, build houses, plant vineyards, buy goods, and no one first disputes whether it is predestined or not, whether the wife is chaste or an adulteress, whether the house will be destroyed by fire or stand, whether the goods will perish or endure. In short all our works, especially our sins, we courageously begin and do without being concerned about what God has predestined as to them. Here the most high counsel is very clear in the face of our rashness. There is no one who is not first thoughtful, solicitous and zealous as to how he shall accomplish what he undertakes, before he investigates and disputes about predestination.

Why is this? Because as they are not the precepts of God, they are truly our own and chosen by us. But when it comes to the works of God and his commandments, then the question at once arises, the counsel of God is attacked, yea, then we begin to dispute whether we will obey the commandments of God before we know his secrets. Does it not provoke the divine majesty with the most bitter perverseness that we are so patient and oblivious in our own affairs as to his counsel, and so impatient and inquisitive as to his affairs? Is it not time that just as no leaf of a tree falls to the ground without his will, so no soul can be saved without his counsel? No hair grows upon your head without his counsel; without his counsel neither do you eat bread nor drink water. Here you do not dispute nor hesitate, here you are not concerned about

his counsel, you are at once settled down to work. But then you are truly full of questions and hesitation.

Now therefore understand at least that these offensive and crafty thoughts have not come to you from God but from satan, in order to draw you by these unnecessary things from the commandment and most agreeable will of your loving God. Right and most suitable are the words of the preacher, Solomon, Ecc. 11:4 etc., "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the work of God who doeth all".

How is it? Shall we do nothing since he does all, and we do not understand it? That be far from us, for it follows, Ecc. 11:6, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, (that is that sown in the morning or in the evening), or whether they both shall be alike good". You see how God teaches us that we do not know all and yet, therefore we should not cease, moreover he commands us, that we should labor the more, because we do not know what shall come to pass, while those perverted people will do nothing because they do not know what shall take place.

For the devil seeks this in order that they may not do anything in life nor die in peace and hope, and at both times be rebellious against God and disobedient as to God's will, yet in such a way that they may not have the blame but God himself, since he did not first by revelation make void his decree and annihilate the glorious majesty of his Godhead by making his counsel of none effect, as if he had burdened these people with his commandments. For these very sanctified people would have gladly done all that was commanded, if they only knew first, what God had thought concerning them, that is if they had had no God and no lawgiver; for he can not be God if

he is not different, and does not think and know different than we do.

But see again, when God reveals to us his counsel, we first fear then condemn and despair, as there are now people who think it is injurious to preach grace and predestination since many take offense. Thus man who is only dust dishonors everything that God wills and does and is warm only on one subject, namely, that he is without the fear of God, that is, without God. For God cannot be feared if he have not secret thoughts concerning us; then neither faith, hope nor love could exist. Woe to thee, most raging impiety.

We will return to the subject of hope in order to bring our long discourse to an end.

Now there are two things to be observed in hope, our own merits and the promise of God. In the midst of these thou art to understand hope. Thou art to know that hope depends on the promise of God and that merits proceed from hope; so that merits are not the rich foundation of hope, but hope is the work of the Word or promise of God.

Wherefore, merits are not necessary unto a man's hoping. Thou art rather to look with the purest simplicity at the Word of the free promise, by hoping in which thou mayest afterwards bring forth merits. Thus the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, does nothing but prove that our righteousness does not proceed from the law, nor works, but from the promise and blessing of God. For the mercy of a freely-promising God and his truth which fulfils that promise are the true causes of hope; by these the mind is encouraged and drawn out to hope, to call upon God, and to live well; for if these things did not exist or were not revealed unto us there would be neither faith nor hope.

Wherefore, the object of faith and of hope is a freely promising God, or the Word itself of God promising, and nothing else. If this Word be not observed always and every where hope must of necessity fall, just as the house which is built

upon the sand must fall when the floods and winds beat upon it. For upon this rock of the sure promise and infallible Word of God is the church of Christ built; as it is written, Prov. 18:10, "The name of Jehovah is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe"; also Ps. 61:3, "For thou hast been a refuge for me, a strong tower from the enemy". There is nothing here about merits; all that is said is about God himself and his name in which alone man is to place his hope.

It follows therefore that hope does not proceed from merits, but, on the contrary, merits proceed from hope. Or hope goes on from hope to hope; and so it is before all merits and goes on with merits after merits. Even as in this life we do not lay hold of righteousness, but are always stretching forth after it and seeking it, always seeking to be justified, always seeking to have our sins forgiven, always seeking that the will of our Father which is in heaven may be done, and always desiring that his name may be sanctified. Yet in this very state we are accounted righteous before God; as he saith, Matt. 5:6, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." So that hope may rightly be understood as increasing from itself while tribulations work it if they be but so endured that we may be found proved by them.

From this it seems to follow that other virtues may be perfected by *doing*; but faith, hope, and love, only by *suffering*; by suffering, I say, that is, by being passive under the divine operation. Because the works of the other virtues are the fruits of faith, hope, and love; for who can expect to see incarnate faith, incarnate hope, and incarnate love? In a word, all the other virtues are exercised only in the grosser works.

Here the spouse of Christ again defiles her feet which she gloried in having washed, again puts on the garment of which she gloried in having been stripped, because those things which are done by the flesh cannot be done without sin and pollution. But the works of faith, hope, and love, appear to be the same.

For what is faith, but that motion of the heart which is called believing? What is hope, but that motion of the heart which is called hoping? And what is love, but that motion of the heart which is called loving? For all those phantasms are merely human, the *habit* is one thing and the *act* another. Especially in these divine matters in which there is nothing but a passive suffering or being acted upon, a being moved, a being carried along by the Spirit, whereby the soul is moved, formed, cleansed, and impregnated by the Word of God. So that the business of these virtues is nothing else than a purging of the vine-branch, as Christ saith, that, being purged, it may bring forth more fruit. John 15:2.

Finally, other virtues are employed in courser things and things outwardly carnal; but these inwardly, with the pure Word of God, whereby the soul is taken hold of and does not take hold of any thing itself; that is, it is stripped of its own garments, of its shoes, of all its possessions, and of all its imaginations, and is taken away into the wilderness by the Word, to which it cleaves, or rather which lays hold of it, and leads it in a wonderful way, as Hosea saith, 2:14, to the invisible, into the banqueting house, Song 2:4, and into the marriage chamber. Song 1:4.

But this leading, this taking her away, and this stripping her, miserably tortures her. For it is a hard path to travel and a strait and narrow way, to leave all visible things, to be stripped of all natural senses and ideas, and to be led out of all those things to which we have been accustomed; this, indeed, is to die and to descend into hell. For the soul seems unto herself to perish utterly, when all those things in which she stood and was employed and to which she cleaved are destroyed, and when she herself can neither touch earth nor heaven nor feel herself nor God, and saith, 'Tell my beloved that I am sick from love,' Song 5:8. As if she had said, I am brought to nothing and I know nothing, I am come into blackness and darkness, I can see nothing, I live and am made strong

by faith, hope, and love only, that is, I am wholly passive, for when I am weak then am I strong.

This leading or being led is what the mystical theologians call 'going into darkness' and 'ascending above entity and non-entity.' But I much question whether such understand themselves, for they make all these things to be *c elicited acts* and do not believe them to be sufferings and feeling sensations of the cross, death, and hell. But the theology of the cross alone is our theology!

From these things I think we may clearly understand the word of the apostle, where he makes hope to be the ark of patience, proved by tribulations polished, refined, and beaten out as it were, like a vessel from the hand of the artificer, so that he shines forth far beyond all visible and comprehensible things, being taught to trust, not in merits, but in God alone. So a golden vessel wrought out with file and hammer is not formed for showing the color of it only nor yet for displaying the workmanship, but is made a vessel that it may be of some service. Nor is it polished that it might be made gold, but it is formed into a vessel that its owner might use it. So man is formed by hope for the use of God. But the works themselves do not produce this hope, for this would be to make that first which is last.

Wherefore, that figurative language of the scripture which describes this purging and operation of hope to be a workmanship or a vessel sent forth from the hand of the Word pleases us well; as, Prov. 25:4, 5, "Take away the dross from the silver, and there cometh forth a vessel for the refiner. Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness". Thus the golden calf, Ex. 32, is said by the same figure to have been sent forth from the hand of the workmen, that is, formed and fashioned by them. Hence we have the scripture, Ps. 121:8, "Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and for evermore"; that is, the beginning and the end of all

thy temptations; as Augustine says, in his observations upon that passage.

It is an error, therefore, to hold that free-will has any hand in a good work, for when we say a good work, as we have said of believing, hoping, and loving, is a moving, a carrying along, and a leading, wrought by the Word of God, and a continual purging and renewing of the mind and understanding day by day in the knowledge of God; and though that passive reception of the teaching of God is not always the same in degree and extent, yet it is a being continually taught while lying passive in the hand of God. "Behold, says the Lord by Jeremiah, 18:6, "as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel". What power of action has clay, I ask you, while it lies in the potter's hand and he is forming it into shape? Is it not seen to be wholly passive? And yet by this its passive and shapeless state it is rendered fit to be moulded into the form that shall please the potter.

In the same manner we, by growing hope while tribulation worketh for that end, are conformed to the divine likeness and are renewed after the image of him that created us, as Paul saith. Col. 3:10. But the incarnate will or that which is connected with the external act may rightly be said to co-operate and to have in that sense activity. Just in the same way as the sword can do nothing whatever by any power in itself to move but is merely passive, but in giving the wound it co-operates with the person who cuts by its means. Wherefore, as the sword does not at all co-operate as to putting of itself in motion, so neither does the will co-operate in the putting of itself in motion to do good, for that is a moving wrought by the Word of God where the will is merely passive; which nevertheless when put in motion co-operates to perform the work of the hands in praying, in walking, in laboring, etc.

But I have now digressed, perhaps, somewhat too far, I will therefore return to the Psalm.

*But let all those that take refuge (hope) in thee rejoice.
let them ever shout for joy (they shall shout for joy for ever).*

Let us first look at the force of the words, and then at the occasion on which, or the reason why, the prophet spoke thus. Only “those that hope” are to rejoice; and who these that hope are, we have already fully shown. And they shall hope “in thee”; not in any thing of their own, nor in any creature, for there are some that trust in man.

We also remark that the word *OLAM* is of very frequent use in the scriptures and has been rendered ‘for ever’, ‘always’, ‘for ever and ever’, and in many other ways bearing the like signification. In the Hebrew, by a manner of speech peculiar to that language, it signifies time of an uncertain and indefinite duration; at least, it does not always signify ‘eternity’. Hence in the Law of Moses it is often said, ‘A certain rite, etc., shall be observed by your generations for ever’; whereas, it is certain that all those cities, etc. were at some time to have an end. Therefore the word appears to me not to be translated improperly by the Latin words *semper*, *perenniter*, and *perpetuo*.

But what was it that moved the prophet to set forth these feelings so copiously and fully? Doubtless the conversation of the wicked whom he saw spending their days in wealth”, as Job saith 21:13, and so to live as if it were their peculiar privilege to rejoice, exult, and glory; which was an offence so deceitful and had such an effect upon the saints, that many prophets complained of this as their greatest temptation and were moved with murmuring and revenge. For as the state of such persons is an offence unto the saints from the appearance of works and temporal merits; so it is also from the appearance of temporal rewards which it carries with it. Hence Asaph saith, Ps. 73:1-6, “Surely God is good to Israel, even to such as are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone: my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the

wicked. For there are no pangs in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride is as a chain about their neck".

And Jer. 12:1, "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? wherefore are all they at ease that deal very treacherously?" Again more fully, Job 21:7, etc. "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, wax mighty in power?"

The prophet therefore in order to fortify the godly against being deceived by these external appearances and offences calls them aside and exhorts them to despise the rejoicings of such as these and to turn themselves to true rejoicing, which is rejoicing in God. Wherefore we are through this whole verse to observe a twofold antithesis, as it were, in this way. We appear to such men as these to be miserable, because we are in tribulation and are deprived of all those temporal things in which they abound and rejoice. And thus there is an offence given to both these characters by that which they behold externally, and this outward appearance deceives very many. But inwardly, where we live by hope, they die. There we rejoice and shall rejoice for ever, but there they neither can, nor ever will rejoice, if they die as they now live. And our joy is so real and solid that we are the only persons of whom it can be truly said, 'they shall rejoice'; whereas, their joy is more a sorrow than a joy if you look within them.

Therefore he condemns the joy of the wicked altogether and commends the joy of the godly. As the joy of the latter is without any outward show and that of the former with a great deal of such outward show, there is need of faith to understand the words of the Spirit which are spoken in the Spirit; otherwise, thou wilt not understand them and wilt be offended with the appearances of these characters. For the carnal man cannot savor the things of God; that is, he cannot understand how a man can rejoice under the privation of all enjoyments, even spiritual, because he knows not that there

can be any joy but in present things sensibly enjoyed; whereas, our glorying and rejoicing are in the cross of our Lord.

But as the Hebrews have no optative mood and therefore use the future of the indicative in its stead and as we have seen from the preceding observations that these words and feelings of this Psalm are full of burning zeal, it is just to understand this verse as spoken under a feeling of holy indignation and having such a meaning as this — Why do these ungodly ones rage thus? Why do they delude the souls of men by a fallacious and destructive external appearance? Condemn, O Lord, I pray thee, their joy and expel them; make their hypocrisy manifest and let them fall from their deceitful appearances, that those only may rejoice who hope in thee; that it may be made manifest and that all may know that there is no joy anywhere but in the multitude of thy mercies. I burn and am grieved, O Lord, that I cannot persuade them to these things, for they will not hear them. Do thou therefore judge them and make manifest their vanity and our truth.

Here then we have it told us, where and what true joy is, namely, a good confidence and a conscience resting in the mercy of God. For they that have had experience in these things say, ‘that there is no joy above that of a pure conscience, nor any sorrow greater than that of a guilty and troubled conscience; as the wise man saith, “He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast”, Prov. 15:15. Again, Ps. 26:3, “For thy loving-kindness is before mine eyes; and I have walked in thy truth”.

A pure and joyful conscience comes in no other way than by looking steadfastly to the mercy of God; as it is said, Ps. 4:6, 7, “Jehovah, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us: thou hast put gladness in my heart”. But what is the joy of the characters before mentioned? A plenty of corn, wine, and oil! that is, the joy of swine, consisting in the surfeit of the body.

Let them ever shout for joy.

This verb Jerome translated not improperly ‘shall praise’; for some will have it that vocal joy is here meant, either that of singing or that of speaking; just as, when we are joyful we are accustomed to talk pleasantly or even to sing, and to talk much of, praise, and boast of, him in whom we rejoice; as in Ps. 35:28, “And my tongue shall talk of thy righteousness, and of thy praise all the day long”, that is, shall proclaim it with joy.

Whether therefore the words “for ever” refer to “rejoice”, or to “shall shout for joy”, the prophet still goes on in the same zeal and holy jealousy; as if he had said, let them talk largely of their good things, let them boast of themselves and theirs, let them sing of themselves; they not only do not truly exult and rejoice, but will not even rejoice as they now do for ever. “The joy of the godless,” as Job saith 20:5, “is but for a moment.” And as he says again, 21:13, “They spend their days in prosperity, and in a moment they go down to the grave”.

So uncertain and unstable is their boasting; and even that does not last long but is disturbed by many calamities and sorrows. Even if all should go on well and prosperously yet their joy ends in sorrow at last and their folly shall be made manifest to all, as was that of Jannes and Jambres, 2 Tim. 3:8, etc. Why therefore do they thus miserably deceive and destroy themselves? But all they that hope in thee shall rejoice and shall shout for joy for ever, and no stranger intermeddleth with their joy, as the wise man saith, Prov. 14:10.

Here we see the fruits from which we may know whether we are under grace or not; for as Paul saith, Gal. 5:22, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, etc.”; and we cannot say that we do not know whether or not we have this fruit, for if our joy be continual and stable and our praises of God persevering, even under sufferings and afflictions it cannot be a deceiving sign; for, “by their fruits ye shall know them”. The cross

proves all things; wherefore, if thou canst say with Ps. 18:3, "I will call upon Jehovah; so shall I be saved", thou shalt indeed be saved; for this cross and calling upon God under affliction the joy of the wicked cannot endure, and therefore they neither call upon God continually nor is their joy stable.

The other fruit that follows is to talk of, to speak freely of, to proclaim joyfully, and to hear the Word of Christ, to extol his righteousness, to sing of his mercy; and to detest ungodly fables, calumnies, obscenities, and such like dregs of the world. And can we not feel and know these things for ourselves? especially if we are tempted, tried, and opposed on account of them and because of them, suffer envy, reproach, terrors and other evils? This therefore will be by no means a fallacious sign of Christ living in thee, if thou persevere in thus praising, rejoicing, and proclaiming the grace of God in the face of, and in opposition to the pride of men.

It is not in vain, therefore, that David has added 'continually' or "for ever" to the word "shall shout for joy"; because when this joy of the Spirit breaks forth it is sure to raise up against it the adversaries of the truth, as we see it happened to the apostles, Acts 2:3, 4, 5, etc.; and because many are to be found who praise Christ and the mercy, truth, righteousness, and grace of God, but do it not continually, because they do not truly hope, and truly rejoice in God; for they fall away in time of temptation, and do not persevere in the face of iniquity, nor at all times nor in all things, nor do they dare at all times to glory in God, that is, in the grace of God.

There are many of this sort in the present day, who speak the truth only before those of the common people who bear all things, and never before those whom they fear and have any reason to believe will become their persecutors: whereas it is before the latter that it is more especially to be spoken. If thou reply, but such are rulers of the people and they will put us out of the synagogue, will excommunicate us, and cast us out of the city, — hear what follows,

Because thou defendest (shalt dwell in) them.

This Jerome renders, ‘And thou shalt protect them.’ And who shall prevail against us when God himself is our protector? If it were not so hard and difficult a matter to rejoice in, and proclaim the mercy of God against the workers of iniquity and the speakers of lies, there would be no need that such an exhortative promise should be made to us. David himself knew that the gates of hell would rise up against our joy, and therefore he says, but still trust. The God of Jacob is our helper. They will not prevail. He himself will dwell in us. And 1 John 4:4, says, “Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world”. And Paul, Rom. 8:31, “If God is for us, who is against us?”

By consulting the Hebrew, I find here an absolute verb, the same which we have in Ps. 2:6, “Yet have I set my king”, etc.; which verb, according to Reuchlin, signifies ‘to ordain’, ‘to constitute’, ‘to set over’. Hence, according to the proper meaning of the Hebrew this passage is, “Thou shalt dwell in them”; that is, thou shalt ordain over them, thou shalt constitute over them, thou shalt be an ordainer over them, thou shalt have them for thy care, thou shalt rule over them; which Jerome has rightly, though not fully, rendered, :Thou shalt protect them’, for the signification of the Hebrew word is much more extensive.

In the same way this also is absolute, ‘They shall rejoice, or praise’. As if he had said there shall be, and may there be, preachers and evangelists, which is the meaning that the signification of the Hebrew more immediately conveys, for to evangelize or to preach the Gospel is to proclaim glad, happy, sweet and good tidings; which is what the Hebrew word TERARENU signifies. There are no other tidings that are truly glad tidings, but the remission of sins, the multitude of the mercies of God, and comfort for an afflicted conscience. Yet that which happened to these messengers and proclaimers of grace we may see in the apostles, martyrs, and all saints. On

the other hand we know how Christ dwelt in them, ruled them, and preserved them. But, who will dwell in these their enemies? Who will protect them? Who will rule them? They want no protectors, they are strong, they are giants of the earth, they are the powerful gates of hell and the seat of the devil, for there the prince of this world is and in them he dwells. Now follows the remaining part of the verse.

Let them also that love thy name be joyful (shall glory) in thee.

Although Jerome rightly translates these words 'And they also that love thy name shall rejoice in thee', yet our translator has beautifully expressed the meaning of the Hebrew word, which signifies another kind of joy than that meant by the first verb "rejoice". As I am inclined to divine, the former signifies properly to have joy, to receive and enjoy in one's self; and the latter word, to cause to be, or to make joyful, to rejoice another, or, as the Latins say, to be pleasant, *jucundus*. If any one is pleasant and happy from the joy which he experiences in himself there is a rejoicing in gladness; as is written Ps. 68:3, "Let them rejoice with gladness". Again, Ps. 21:6, "Thou makest him (the king) glad with joy"; otherwise, as we say, we should be filled with joy in ourselves and afford joy to others. Hence we have in 1 Sam. 2:1, "My heart exulteth in Jehovah"; that is, is happy, ready to proclaim its joy. And so also, 1 Chron. 16:32, "Let the fields exult and all that is herein". Here the poet figuratively called the fields 'joyful', because by their gladdening nature they make us joyful.

Perhaps it is folly in me to dwell so much upon words, when there are many other words in the Hebrew language which signify joy, the difference in which, I neither can nor wish to undertake to set forth. It is sufficient for us to suppose that the kind of joy here mentioned pertains to that affection of gratitude which renders us grateful to, and happy in, our benefactor, rejoiced at his gifts, and joyful in such gratitude; thus bringing our returns to our benefactor and his gifts, as the fruitful field does to its cultivator. That this is the true signi-

fication appears, because at the beginning of the verse an absolute verb is used, "and they shall rejoice"; but here it is said "and they shall rejoice in thee". The former verb plainly indicates the feeling on account of a benefit received; but the latter, the joyful returns of gratitude to the benefactor. For this rejoicing in joy is set forth in Ps. 122:1, "I was glad when they said unto me, etc"; where we find the same word that we have in the beginning of the present verse. I do not say that this is a standard rule for understanding these two verbs, but I observe that they are so to be understood in this passage from their ruling and absolute state. For in the passages "Be glad in Jehovah", Ps. 32:11, and "Be glad in Jehovah, ye righteous", Ps. 97:12, we find the same verb with another governed word as that with which the present verse begins in a absolute position. The signification therefore of the verbs which I have given must be right, unless they say that you may rejoice in God and in his benefits without any feeling of gratitude.

This moreover exactly agrees with the meaning of the context. For as in the former part of this verse he describes the joy in tribulation, so in the latter part he describes the joy in prosperity, or the rejoicing in joy, which rejoicing cannot be true and sincere unless it be a rejoicing in God only; according to the words of Isaiah 61:10, "Rejoicing I will rejoice in the Lord". All these things we cannot understand better than by setting before us, as we have said, the generation that is contrary to all such rejoicing; in speaking of whom, we must invert the whole of this verse, for they being in adversity are in sorrow instead of rejoicing, and despair of God. They do not rejoice continually and speak good concerning God, but continually murmur and speak evil of him. Therefore God does not protect them nor dwell in them. On the other hand when they abound in prosperity they glory as fools, not in the Lord, but in their own works, please themselves, admire their own, love their own name, and seek their own glory.

We may rightly invert the whole of this verse making it thus applicable to them, and say ‘And they shall all sorrow who hope not in thee, they shall always murmur; thou shalt forsake them; and all they that love their own name shall glory in themselves’.

Therefore this verse, in a wonderful and brief way makes a distinction between each prosperity and adversity, between each generation of men, and between each kind of affections, and works; and the spirit of the prophet describes the whole with a most appropriate antithesis. For it is impossible that he should not be filled with sorrow, who does not hope in the Lord, when tribulation comes upon him; and he who is in sorrow cannot but continually murmur, because there is no praising God without joy of heart, and this sorrowful and impatient murmurier must displease God and be more and more forsaken of him; for God dwelleth not in Babylon but in Salem; his tabernacle is in a place of peace, Ps. 76:2. And his spirit rests upon the quiet and the humble. Is. 66:2.

On the other hand, it is impossible that he should not rejoice, who hopes in God; even if the whole world should burst upon the head of such an one he would stand unmoved amid the falling ruins. He who is joyful in such hope cannot but think well of God, exult in his praise, and encourage himself in him. The man thus rejoicing therefore is patient, happy, and in a state to be protected and dwelt in of God. Nor will such an one be permitted to rejoice, hope, or exult in vain, for God preserving will preserve him. This is the dividing road where ‘The men of blood’ and ‘the deceitful men’ separate from the men of mercy and the men of a willing mind, in the time of the storm and in the hour of temptation.

Wherefore as I have often said, our Saul has no better remedy against the evil spirit from the Lord than that our David seizes the harp and plays with his hand, 1 Sam. 16:23. That means if thy soul be sad and cast down begin some joyful song or psalm or something that brings thy God to thy memory,

and thou wilt soon find relief and wilt prove that the counsel of the wise man is good, "In the day of evils be not unmindful of good things", Sir. 11:27. Again, "Sadness hath killed many, and there is no profit in it", Sir. 30:25. For in this case, music in the midst of mourning, even contrary to the proverb, is a most appropriate remedy; thus David saith, Ps. 43:5, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God".

Again it is impossible that the man should not please himself, be puffed up, and glory and rejoice in himself, who, as soon as any prosperity happens to him, loves and praises his own name and glory, and not those of God. While he pleases himself in his prosperity, what does he else than fulfill that common proverb, 'Mules rub each other'. For in the same way he blesses them who bless him, and praises them who praise him; they in their turn bless him who blesses them, and praise him who praises them; according to Ps. 10:3,* "The sinner is praised in his lusts and the impious are blessed". The god-father jumped the fence and back again, etc. The last thing that they can do, is to vainly boast of, vaunt, and preach themselves, whose end is confusion, Phil. 3:19.

On the other hand, it is impossible that he should please himself and rejoice and glory in himself, who, however much serenity and happiness attend him, loves not his own name, but the name of God. For while a man is thus displeased with himself and vile in his own eyes, he will of necessity seek, love, and speak of the name, praise, and glory of God, saying, "Hallowed be thy name", but let my name and the name of all men be profaned. Let all the works of the Lord bless the Lord. Let none bless the righteous but thou alone: let the blessing of the wicked be considered a curse.

If therefore thou wouldst rightly understand this verse of

*) This saying was introduced by Roth.

the Psalmist suppose him, or rather, view him, as placed in a situation, where beholding the life of the wicked he is vexed with a two-fold offence. The one, because all things turn out unfavorably for him, and all his words and actions are accounted folly and impiety, hereby he is moved to sadness, impatience, and desperation. The other, because all things turn out favorably for the wicked, and all their actions and words are praised and held in esteem ; and are immediately consecrated to immortality ; which is the most galling of all, and more especially irritates to offence. Then growing angry but not sinning, he speaks in his heart, he is silent on his bed, and waits for the end, saying the words of this verse. For if any one ask what it is to speak and talk upon the bed concerning which we have spoken, Ps. 4:4, it may be rightly answered, it is nothing else than those things which are delivered to us in this verse, for a man to comfort himself in God, while the characters here described are glorying in themselves.

Hence David here preserves a most appropriate order. For the temptation on *the left hand* comes first and is less perilous, because on that side only “a thousand” fall, Ps. 91:7, but on *the right hand* “ten thousand”; which latter temptation is much more heavy and perilous, and is not undergone except by those who have been long exercised by the former.

Each temptation is a furnace of probation, as is written, Sir. 27:5, “The furnace proveth the potter’s vessels; so the trial of man is in his reasoning”. Again, Prov. 27:21, “The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; and a man is tried by his praise”. But how? Because by the former, men are rendered sorrowful and made to murmur; while by the latter they become vain-glorious, loving their own name, and blessing themselves. In the former case is found more generally the destruction of the common people and those whom we despise as sinners; but in the latter is the perdition of the fat ones of Israel and the chosen ones among them, and those whom we venerate as the wise and the righteous, that is, the

ungodly, according to Ps. 78:31, "He slew of the fattest of them, and smote down the young men of Israel". And Is. 5:14, "And their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth among them descend into it", that is, into hell.

Therefore God has ever smitten down the high ones and the potentates, that he might terrify us and teach us humility as the safest. And hence it is properly concerning the great ones of the earth that Ps. 76:12 speaks, "He shall cut off the spirit of princes, he is terrible to the kings of the earth". But this has been of no profit whatever to tyrants. Of whom do we read in the Holy Scriptures, that held the highest place, who did not make his glory and loftiness memorable by some signal fall, even if you number the whole of them from Adam down to Peter? Such a care has God ever taken to humble the lofty and great, seeing that it is necessary for the salvation of those who are under them to cut down the flourishing state even of their honor or dignity, lest they should become impious lovers of their own glory and admirers of their own name. But on the other hand, there is hardly recorded here and there one of the commonalty as having rendered himself notorious by a crime. We have an Achan, and him who gathered sticks on the sabbath day, Num. 15:32-36, etc.

CONCERNING THE NOMEN DEI TETRAGRAMMATON, OR
FOUR LETTERED NAME OF GOD.

It is necessary to consider also what 'the name of the Lord' in this passage is, concerning which many different things have been written in different languages. The Jews boast of ten names of God, according to the testimony of Jerome, and one of these,, which they call the Tetragrammaton, JEHOVAH, they celebrate with great superstition; by virtue of which they promise to themselves I know not how many safeguards and effects; whereas, by an impious disbelieving and blaspheming of the name of Christ they are all the while continually taking

the name of God in vain; and they think of any thing else but looking to and trusting in the name of God for the salvation of their souls. And this same superstition has crept also into Christendom; where many continually boast of, rub with their fingers, fix to their bodies, and carry about with them, these four letters, not at all regarding whether they themselves be godly or ungodly. Like the Magi, who pretend and presume that they can do great wonders with certain letters and characters.

But we as becometh Christians ouglit to know that without godliness which accompanies faith all things are superstitious and damnable; so that neither Christ, nor God, will be of any saving benefit to any one, unless they be held by faith. But every name of God, yea, every word of God is of almighty power unto the salvation both of soul and body, if it be possessed in the reverence of faith. It is not the name of God, therefore, but faith in the name of God that does all things; nor is one name more efficacious than another. For if the four-lettered name of God only has all this virtue and efficacy, the church acts foolishly, by not baptizing and performing all her sacraments in that name, instead of performing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It might well excite wonder that the church of Christ, which has the Spirit of God, did not find out this before, since she knows all the things of God.

If you reply, 'But the Tetragrammaton contains all these things in it and the perfections of all the other names; so that when you name the holy Trinity, or God, or the Lord, the Tetragrammaton is named at the same time'. Why then is it separated from the rest? Why has it not the same effect when joined with the rest as when it is venerated apart from them? Is it so very holy that when mixed with the others it is polluted by their profanity? Or is it so invidious that it envies the others the honor of being placed with it? Let then all such things be considered as mere figments of the Jews. Let all

Christians be wiser, and know that all the names of God have the same power and virtue. Have thou godly faith without which not even the name of the holy Trinity can be of any profit to thee.

But as all those things were intended to be figurative, and as we believe that not one jot or tittle was written in vain, I will not deny that in the four-lettered name there was a figure, peculiar and different from the rest, which was to be revealed in the New Testament, and therefore, it is even now held ineffable and incomunicable, and is still held as it was before by the Jews, because they most obstinately hate and recoil at the mystery of it which is now revealed. Wherefore let us consider (whether we be thought to trifle or merely to cavil with the Jews), that the four-lettered name is a symbol or sign of the name of the holy Trinity, and the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now revealed, but then shadowed forth under *Four letters*. That we may bring this to some kind of proof, let us argue from the *Letters themselves*, from their *number* and from their *signification*.

The *signification* is this. Jod signifies beginning (*principium*), *He* this (*ista*) *Vaf* and, *He* this (*ista*); which, if grammatically put together, according to the Latin language, will form this sentence, *Principium istius et istius*; which in all things agrees with the name of the Holy Trinity; for, in the Godhead the Father is the beginning of *this*, that is, the Son; and of *this*, that is the Holy Ghost. To these pronouns this (*istius*) and this (*istius*) represent, in an obscure manner, the Son and the Holy Spirit; even as it was meet so to be in the Old Testament, wherein the mystery of the Trinity was not to be revealed, but only to be shadowed forth. Nor indeed is even the name of the Father clearly revealed, though by the name *beginning* he was more distinctly pointed out than the Son or the Holy Ghost. In the whole of which is signified that, as Christ saith, Matt. 11:27, neither the Father nor the Son is known by any one but by him to whom they are revealed;

even as at this day also the mystery of the Holy Trinity, however much the name may be professed, is known to none but by the teaching of the Spirit of faith.

It appears therefore that the number and nature of the Persons of the Godhead were not less shadowed forth to the Jews under the TETRAGRAMMATON than they are to us under the name TRINITY. For as when this latter word Trinity is unfolded, its meaning gives us the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; so when the Tetragrammaton is unfolded it gives us *Principium istius et istius*, 'The Beginning of Him and of Him'; which, though somewhat obscurely, is the same, for in each there are alike Three Persons and Two proceedings set forth to us, and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Secondly, the *number* is Four. Here we have a quadrate or square plane: the first of which itself consists of two simple proportions equal to the first; of which, one is equal to one and two equal to two. From this two-fold proportion or proceeding, therefore, there proceeds a square figure, consisting of one equal to one, and two equal to two, beginning from unity and ending in quaternity. These proportions are unequal according to arithmetic, but according to geometry they are equal.

Thus in the square of this divine name is signified the unity of the paternal substance; from which proceeds the Son, equal to him by the first simple proportion; and from both proceeds the Holy Spirit, by a second simple proportion, equal to the Father and the Son; as the proportion of two to two, and one to one, are equal in geometry. And as this simple proportion is of all the most perfect, and as the first is the fountain or head of all proportions, and the hole is a figure wherein neither part exceeds the other, nor is exceeded by the other, because one is equal to one, and two are equal to two in all things; it is clear that by these two proportions or proceedings in this most beautiful square, or quadrate plane, where the substance is all

one and the same, or, by the symbol of this Tetragrammaton, the equality of the Persons in the Godhead was set forth to the primitive fathers in a hidden way. For the Son is equal to the Father by the *first proceeding*, and the Spirit by the *second proceeding* is equal to the Father and the Son.

Now to this we may easily refer those four relations which are so commonly used by theologians, *active generation* (*generatio*) and *passive generation*, *active breathing* (*spiratio*) and *passive breathing*. For these four constitute, so to speak, the Triune-God, even as the four letters in the Tetragrammaton constitute his name.

Thirdly. *The letters themselves.* The first syllable terminates the first proportion in the letter He, which is a soft breathing, indicating that the proceeding in the divine Persons is not carnal but spiritual, and altogether sweet and gentle. For if the aspirate letter be extended in sound it is nothing more than a certain soft *proceeding* of wind or gentle blast; so that it most appropriately figures forth the proceeding of the Son. In like manner the whole name is terminated by the second proportion in the same letter of a soft breathing; so that we are to understand that the second *proceeding* is also spiritual and not at all differing from the former, except its being the second and proceeding from the first. So neither does the Spirit differ from the Father and the Son, except in his proceeding only, which is from both. Since therefore these proceedings are spiritual and of a most spiritual nature, it of necessity follows that the whole *beginning* flows into the two *proceedings*, because the substance is indivisible. Thus the inestimable plurality subsists in an all-simple unity.

These things, I say, and others that may be adduced of the same kind seem to have been figured forth to them of old in the Tetragrammaton or four-lettered name, but which are now indeed made known in all languages, so that there is no more particular need of the Tetragrammaton to understand God, than there is of the whole Hebrew language, and what I say

is supported by the words of Burgensis when he says, ‘The Tetragrammaton was therefore called ineffable or incommunicable, because it was not reducible to the etymology of any Hebrew word, and its signification could not be known by any analogy’. Whence it appears that these letters were joined together by the divine wisdom and purpose, and so that they might form a name without a communicable signification, extraneous, and not reducible to the nature of the Hebrew language; in the same way as any word may be made up of Roman letters, unknown to grammarians and used merely for the sake of a certain signification or commemoration; which the Valentians seem to have initiated in their Greek word *abraxas*.

That name of God, therefore, was rightly called ineffable or incommunicable, because the sacred mystery of the Trinity was not then revealed, though it was secretly figured forth. And this name was rightly said to be applicable to God alone, because it figured forth God according to his substance and internal nature. For the true God is none other in himself than Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or the Trinity, and all that is said of the unity and the proceedings, which can be found in no creature whatever; and therefore, the Tetragrammaton can be applied to no creature. For in other respects the names King, Lord, God, High, and the like, might be applicable and ascribable to any one that stands in the place of God, because angels and men may be likened unto God as to his external works, but they cannot be likened to him in the Trinity in Unity. Therefore they may bear the names of God, but the Tetragrammaton or four-lettered name and the name Trinity they cannot make use of.

Now as I think that difficulty, Exod. 6:2 etc., may easily be solved, where many make a great noise about what the Spirit means when he saith, “I am Jehovah: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty; but

by my name Jehovah I was not known to them": whereas, the four-lettered name is found, long before in Gen. 4:1, and afterwards. Now I do not here understand it to be signified that those letters of the Tetragrammaton were not then made known, except it be signified that they were not then composed or written, but that the force and true signification of that name, that is, faith in the Trinity, or the knowledge of Christ, was not abroad in the time of the fathers, nor of Moses, nor of the whole of the Old Testament, but only secretly inspired and shadowed forth under figures.

But there are some who think that the Tetragrammaton is the name of Jesus, the letter *Shin* being added; which, indeed, I wish were true and proved. But since the Evangelist Matthew, 1:21, gives to his name the meaning of salvation, where the angel says to Joseph, "And thou shalt call his name *Jesus*; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins", and since the Tetragrammaton, as I said, is of no etymology at all, it will be difficult to defend such an opinion. Not to mention also that in the Hebrew word which signifies salvation, or saviour, there is the necessary or substantial letter as they call it, *ain*, which the Tetragrammaton will not admit, and which the name *Jesus*, formed from it has not. But I leave others to exercise their judgment in this matter. I have thus made these observations to guard all against the superstition of the Jews.

What, then, is the name of God, which the prophet in this verse says is to be loved? This name is not one only, for Paul, 1 Tim. 1:17, calls him "wise", saying "The only wise God". And in the same place he calls him "The King eternal, immortal, invisible". And 1 Tim. 6:15, 16, he calls him "the blessed and only Potentate; who only hath immortality". I John 4:8, saith, "God is love". And he is not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Heb. 11:16.

But what would it profit us to bring forward all the writings

of Dionysius concerning the names of God? What would it profit us to bring forward all the works of the same upon mystical theology? We may do this until we should leave no name to God at all. Indeed how can he that is incomprehensible in nature be affable or communicable in name? Let us leave all speculative attempts of this kind to those who have nothing else to do; and let us by a simple understanding receive the name of God in the scripture before us as signifying, not that merely by which he is called ,but that which is proclaimed of him abroad ; according to Prov. 22:1, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches". Again, 10:7, "The name of the wicked shall rot". And Ps. 22:22, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren".

The name of God therefore, is a good report, praise, glory, the preaching and proclamation of a saving God ; as is clearly shown, Ps. 102:21, "That men may declare the name of Jehovah in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem". Here David says that the name of the Lord and his praise are the same and are proclaimed by the same preaching. Again we have, Ps. 148:13, "Let them praise the name of Jehovah ; for his name alone is exalted ; his glory is above the earth and the heaven".

But since it is God alone that worketh all in all, it is a necessary consequence that the name and glory of all good works are due to God only. He alone therefore is good, wise, just, true, tender, merciful, holy, Lord, Father, Judge and whatever else can be named or applied to any one in a way of praise.

From this truth it is manifest that as nothing is left to us either of power, merit, or operation, so we cannot arrogate to ourselves any thing of name, and that as we are men and are nothing but sin, lie, vanity, and can work nothing else, we have a putrid and rotting name. So that "All men are liars", and, "Every man at his best estate is altogether vanity", Ps. 116:11, and Ps. 39:5.

Wherefore, our name is sin, lie, vanity, unrighteousness, inalice, perverseness, and whatever evil may be said of any

one. When we acknowledge these things and confess them we do rightly ; and then we hate ourselves our own words, our own name, and cast them away and lose sight of them altogether, and love, desire, and seek God, his works, and his name, saying, with Ps. 54:1, "Save me, O God, by thy name". As if he had said I shall perish in my own name, yea, I am undone already, but in thy name I shall be saved.

It is sufficiently manifest therefore that all these things are spoken by the prophet against the godless vain glory of impious hypocrites. For as these have the audacity to justify themselves with the Pharisee, Luke 18:11, and with Simon the leper, Luke 7:39, so it is equal madness for them to boast of themselves, and to love their own name and preach it abroad, to insult others, and to accuse, expose, and upbraid publicans and sinners with the worst of appellations. But if godly and faithful men glory, they glory in the Lord and desire that the name of the Lord should be sanctified, magnified, and glorified. All such as these accuse, judge, and condemn themselves ; they take the lowest seat, and so are ignorant of their own name and honor altogether.

But here, again, the cross alone is the judge and test of truth, for there are some who boast that the name of the Lord is loved by them. They with great confidence commit to paper such expressions as, 'In the name of the Lord' etc., 'Glory to God only', and, 'Glory to God'. 'In the name of Jesus', and the like. In a word in whose mouth and use is there not that signal and most christian expression, 'Thanks be to God'?

What could be more fortunate for the church today, than if there were none who lied and took the name of God in vain when they boastingly make use of all these expressions? But alas, to find such a one is to find a rare bird indeed! For if all such love the name of God indeed, and do not rather love their own names, why do they feel indignant and swell with fury when they are touched by being addressed in their own name? that is, when they are called fools, or evil men, or are

loaded with any such reproach of the same kind. Why do they not here acknowledge their name and say, ‘Thanks be to God’ and ‘Glory be to God only’? Why do they so pertinaciously resist the truth which another professes before them, when they, according to their own account, profess the same themselves? Therefore, the cross itself makes all men manifest. So that he spoke truly who uttered these words, “I said in my haste, all men are liars”, Ps. 116:11.

You see therefore how soon such an one’s pretended hatred of his own name is turned into a most powerful love of his own name, as soon as his false love of God is made manifest. For such an one will by no means patiently bear his own name to be taken away from him, which he nevertheless continually casts away and takes away from himself, saying, ‘Glory be to God’, ‘Thanks be to God’, ‘But I am a sinner’. Who then could ever discover this most deeply hidden hypocrisy, if Christ did not take care to make such manifest by the cross and by reproach? The words of Gregory therefore are most excellent and true, ‘The being reproached will manifest openly what a man is secretly in himself’. For when this falls upon a hypocrite he will soon turn his thanks unto God into blasphemies against him.

But this ostrich finds a leaf under which to conceal himself and makes excuses for his sins. First of all he lays hold of Augustine, ‘He that neglects his own reputation is cruel’. This also, ‘Thy conscience is necessary for thyself, and thy reputation for thy neighbor’. Also that of 1 Pet. 4:15, 16; “For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men’s matters: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name”. Jerome plainly teaches that no one ought to rest patiently under the suspicion of heresy.

First, in these matters we speak in the Spirit with the prophet, and before God, — that we ought to provide all things honest not only before God, but also before all men, Rom.

12:17. And 2 Cor. 4:2, "Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God". Again, 1 Thess. 5:22, "Abstain from every form of evil". Christ in Matt. 5:16 says, that they who suffer persecution are blessed; but then, it is those who suffer it "for righteousness' sake".

Wherefore it is true that we ought not to lie and acknowledge a crime before men of which we are not guilty, but rather die like the woman mentioned by Jerome, who was beaten seven times. As we ought thus to suffer death and every other evil for righteousness' sake, when innocent; so we ought also to suffer the injury of our reputation, and not attempt any tumult to regain it, nor to retaliate with injury; but, though innocent before men, we ought to confess before God that we deserved these and much greater evils and losses, not only of our property and possessions, but of our good name also. For we ought to acknowledge, not our property and life only, but our good name also, to be good creatures of God and the best of gifts. We are not to think that we deserved these things, nor to consider that any injury is done us if they are taken away; nay, we are to consider ourselves wholly unworthy of all these things and are patiently to suffer the loss of them if such be the will of God.

Therefore it is not required of thee that thou shouldst confess thyself a murderer or an adulterer, if thou be not one; or that thou shouldst acknowledge any such crime if laid to thy charge. Nay, thou oughtest not to confess or to acknowledge it, lest thou also shouldst lie as well as the person who may thus falsely accuse thee. Yet thou ought to be ready to bear it, and be patient under such trial, if, when thou shalt bear testimony of innocence concerning thyself, thou shalt not be believed, but still criminated. In the same way thou art not to confess that thy life is nothing, or that thy flesh is a mere shadow of naught, or that thy gold is not of the value of copper, so as to carry an appearance of humility. But thou art to confess these things to be what they really are; and yet, if they are

taken away thou art not to resist, nor to recover them, nor to revenge the injury done thee.

So also thou art not to resist those who vilify and calumniate thee; though thou oughtest to protest and stand by thy innocence and not to confirm their lies by thy silence. Thus the Christians of Lyons in France who were some time ago accused of devouring their infants in secret, firmly denied it unto their death. And, Jer. 37:13, when Irijah accused Jeremiah of fleeing to the Chaldeans, he answered, "It is false, I am not falling away to the Chaldeans". Nevertheless he was not believed, and he suffered himself to be beaten and to be sent into prison though innocent. So Christ before Annas constantly defended his doctrine, concerning which the high priest interrogated him, and which he in a sinister way denied; and yet Christ received a blow from the servant, suffering innocently, and permitting himself to be accused of the crime of falsehood by the unbelieving.

By this same rule we all must walk in our day, when those most ungodly flatterers of the great, like furies and madmen, most insidiously brand the righteous with the appellations of heretics, offensive, erroneous, seditious, offenders of pious ears, detractors from the reverence of the popes, and such like, just as their own opinions lead them on.

All these enormities I say, are to be borne, but not to be acknowledged as true. Even if they prevail over us and are not content with the defence which we make, let them go on raging and let us confess to God that we suffer no more than what we deserve, and that it is not our good name, but God's, that is thus taken away, and that it is justly lost by us because we are unworthy of such a good name. Nevertheless let us within by faith and a good conscience, and without by confession, most firmly cleave unto it, for they do not take away the good name from us, for it does not belong to us, but from God whose gift it was and from whom we received it. Nay, they take away our good name from themselves, because it was therefore given

unto us, that they might by it be moved towards God, being instructed by the light of our good works, that they might glorify our Father who is in heaven. Therefore they do not in reality take any thing of our good name from us, because they cannot take it from our conscience nor from our confession, but can only extinguish it in their own opinion, and that to their own loss. Therefore we have more reason to condole with their misery, than to be dejected at our own loss. Hence when we confess ourselves to be innocent, and by an honest defence repel the evil name which they would put upon us, we do not serve ourselves so much as we serve our calumniators, and that, against their will.

But these ostriches do not defend their name with this affection and according to this rule, but only seek how they may avoid infamy, and they never rest until they have overcome their own adversaries, if they can, and have regained their own name, according to the rule of right, or rather, the mistaken idea of right, by repelling force by force. That they may not become cruel, as they imagine, by neglecting their own name, they become both impious and cruel by avenging their good name, not as if it were God's, but as if it were their own.

Thus such most perversely abuse those beautiful words of Augustine, 'He that neglects his own reputation is cruel', and 'Thy reputation is necessary for thy neighbor'. For we are not on that account to rage furiously, and contrary to the Gospel, to demand a cloak for a coat, because a cloak is necessary for our neighbor; nor are we to refuse to lay down our property, nor even life itself, because our neighbor has need of them. In the same manner our fame is not to be regained by force, because it may be necessary for our neighbor. It is enough in all these things not to acknowledge the crime laid to our charge, and having done that we ought to be willing to suffer greater things for God and to have our other cheek ready though not to acknowledge that the blow on the first was deserved by our guilt.

But that all this zeal in such pugnacious and pertinacious defenders of their good name is mere pretense and that they speak most falsely when they say that they do all these things from love of the name of God and that they seek not their own name, but the name and glory of God. That all such zeal is false, I say, you may prove by this sign. First, such are found most unconcerned in all other matters where God is concerned. They make not all this bustle to do the will of God and to seek the glory of his kingdom, which they certainly would do if they sincerely loved the name of God. Moreover they must patiently suffer the same name of the Lord and the same good fame to perish in their neighbor. Nay, they are themselves the first to establish the name of God in themselves and to destroy it in their neighbors. Thus at this day there are many who think they cannot be Christians and of the Catholic faith unless they go and search out those whom they may brand with the appellation of the heretics, thereby proving that they hold one name of the Lord and worship one God in themselves and persecute another in their neighbors.

Wherefore believe not that they are lovers of the name of the Lord, who are always ready to brand others with opprobrious names and to commend their own good name only. A truly good name is the same in all and cannot be loved in thyself more than in thy neighbor. Thou errest if thou art offended at being called a heretic thyself and yet laughest and rejoicest when thy neighbor is accounted a heretic. In how much worse state art thou then, if thou defame another that thou thyself mayest have a name? for on the contrary, thy good name ought to be used in covering the reproach of another, as the comely members are said to give more abundant honor to those members which are less comely, 1 Cor. 12:23.

But let us return to the words of the prophet.

That love thy name.

We have said that the name of the Lord is the fame, the knowledge, and the praise of the Lord; and these also must be

in others, that is, in us by faith and confession: it is not our righteousness, strength, and wisdom, that are to flourish, but those of God are to be revealed in us and in us to increase and reign. Thus we are baptized in the name of the Lord that we might not live ourselves, but that God might live in us, and that the name of the wicked might perish in order that the name of God only might reign in us. And hence, as all our actions are his so is our name. Thus both our actions themselves and our name are to be ascribed, not unto ourselves but unto God.

Therefore it is not improper to say that by the name of the Lord we may understand Jesus Christ, or Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; for all these are names of God to whom belongs every good name. Hence they who love the name of Jesus love also the salvation of God, the truth of God, the mercy of God, the wisdom of God, and all good, for all these things are included in the name of the Lord. If a man love these he must of necessity hate his own name and cannot glory in the wisdom, the salvation, and the power of man, because they are vain; and in this way only will he be in a state to love the name of the Lord that he may be saved by it and that God may be glorified.

Wherefore let us observe the peculiar force of each word, "love" and "name"; for David does not say, who write of, talk about, sound forth, explain, think about, acutely dispute about, or profess to know, thy name; but "*they who love thy name*". For who does not see how many there are who talk much about God and his name and yet do not glory in it. The heart of such therefore is vain and their inward parts perverse. Where these are perverse nothing can be done rightly; and on the other hand where they are right nothing can be done perversely, for God shows himself pure unto the pure and unto the perverse he shows himself perverse, Ps. 18:26 etc.

What loving the name of the Lord is, cannot, I think, be understood in any other way better than by considering the power and nature of love, which is not to seek that which is its

own but the things of the object beloved. Wherefore he will be proved and found to love God, who, despising his own name and the name of all others, desires from his heart to see only the name of God exalted, spread abroad, magnified, and known to all. That this may be accomplished, such an one must think of all things, which he shall think likely to promote the knowledge and exaltation of the name of God; and that too at the expense of his own property, name, and life, if necessary. Hence such an one cannot be vain-glorious but must be a prodigal despiser of himself; nor can he be proud of, or glory in any thing else than in the Lord whose name he loves and seeks to promote.

He therefore who in the time of quiet and prosperity looks at his own, pleases himself and, with the full bent of his will, seeks after his own name, will be proved by that furnace of the mouth that praiseth him, mentioned in Prov. 27:21, not to love the name of God but his own. And it is such ungodly characters as these that the prophet is attacking in the present Psalm, as glorying and trusting in their own righteousness. Concerning whom also the scripture speaks thus, 1 Sam. 2:3, "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth; for Jehovah is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed".

Paul also glories that he can do all things, but it is through him who strengtheneth him, Phil. 4:13. Otherwise he glorieth not, except it be in his infirmities, 2 Cor. 11:30. The blessed Virgin speaks of these things briefly and beautifully, Luke 1:49, in these words, "For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name". As if she had said, I have done nothing, but he hath done great things to me, who alone worketh all things and who alone is mighty in all, to whom on that account belongs all the name, and whose is all the glory, for he alone hath done it. That is, the name "holy" which no man can attain unto, nor arrogate unto himself belongs only unto him, for when he knows that he did not himself perform the

work, how can he have the temerity to take unto himself and glory in a work that was not his own?

He therefore truly hallows the name of the Lord, who keeps himself from usurping it. This he does when he acknowledges that no good work belongs unto him but unto God only, and when he confesses him to be that which he is praised as being, Ps. 145:17, "Jehovah is righteous in all his ways". Behold, this is what is enjoined in the second commandment, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain'. This is what we pray for when we say 'Hallowed or sanctified be thy name'. This also is what is intended in Ps. 111:9, "Holy and reverend is his name".

But these impious justifiers of themselves rushing on rashly, continually pollute the name of the Lord, while they ascribe unto themselves righteousness, power, and wisdom, and are pleased with hearing their own name praised in these things.

Whence it follows that the greater the number of the gifts of God any one of them is adorned with the more perilously he lives; and therefore no mortal has more need of the fear of God than such an one, lest he should pollute his name and ascribe unto himself those things which are the gifts of God, or should patiently suffer them to be ascribed unto himself by others. This is that temptation "on the right hand" where ten thousands fall. This is that "arrow that flieth by day" and that "demon or destruction that wasteth at noon-day".

For this cause Gregory teaches in many places that the good works of all saints are unclean, because they cannot sufficiently avoid the name of God, nor hold him so holy and terrible as they ought to hold him, nor will they do so until the passions of nature be wholly mortified, which never will be done in this life. For how rare a thing it is to find a man who is frightened and terrified at the name and praise bestowed upon him and shrinks from putting his hand on it as a most holy thing of God, which it is terrible to touch? Nay, we rather smile sweet-

ly as if pleased, and like swine quietly suffer ourselves to be rubbed with this kind of praise.

Where then shall they appear who like the giants of old, from an insatiable and maddened love of praise and of fame, carry on war against the Lord and his name by mountains heaped on mountains, thereby endeavoring to take from the Lord both his work and his name and to usurp it for themselves? Yet such in the meantime prate nothing else but 'Hallowed be thy name', 'Glory to God alone', 'Thanks be to God'! 'In the name of the Lord, Amen': and with such plastering and daubings as these they color, paint, and set off their Jezebel faces. Indeed the world is so filled with the robbery of the divine equality, with the profanation of the name of God, and with the pollution of the name of God that there is not one of them who sees that, instead of fighting for the name of God, they are horribly fighting against it and implacably resisting it.

What a sacrilege it is considered for the cups, the coverings, and the linen of the churches and the altars to be touched by the laity, because they are consecrated in the name of the Lord? Yet none more awfully pollute and defile the name of the Lord than those very blind consecrators, those reprobate selfjustifiers, and those most vain boasters of the works and words of God themselves, by their polluted touching of his glory.

He therefore reverently loves the name of the Lord, who with pious awe trembles to touch his praise and good name and abstains from it as from that ointment, mentioned in Exod. 30:22-23, which was commanded to be kept holy, and that no other composition should be made like it, that the flesh of man should not be anointed with it, but only the tabernacle and the vessels thereof. Fer he that thus worships and sanctifies the name of God shall be sanctified by it, according to Ps. 18:26, "with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure". Because such an one not only reverences the name of God that he might not touch it himself, that he might not usurp it, and that he might not anoint himself with it; but he desires that this same name

should in the same way be reverenced and held holy by all and that this may be brought to pass he omits nothing either by doing or by suffering. Thus we read of the saint, Thomas Aquinus, that he made the sign of the cross under his clothes as often as he heard himself praised. Which is certainly a good and pious custom, to show reverence to the name of God.

Now the sum of all that we have said may be set forth in a plain way, thus. That no one should be elated by prosperity. This is indeed a thing easy to be said but it is most hidden and most deep to be understood and can be known by none but by those who are brought to experience it; as it is written, Ps. 111:9-10, "Holy and reverend is his name. The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments; His praise endureth for ever".

But they who do not understand the fear of the Lord in any other way than in being terrified from the commission of sin by the fear of punishment, do not understand it at all; nor will such ever learn to glory in the Lord, for the fear of the Lord is that whereby we fear to arrogate to ourselves, or arrogantly pollute, any of those things which are the Lord's, that is, his glory and his name, and when we fear to touch such things lest we should defile them. In this fear we must proceed so far as not to usurp to ourselves either temporal things or spiritual, or to imagine that there is any thing of ours in them but the being allowed to use them to supply our necessities and those of our neighbors; and as being granted to us by the free bounty of God, to be possessed with godly reverence, and to be returned to him with faithful gratitude.

The praise of such endureth for ever, that is, that they did not glory in themselves nor in any men that praised them, but according to Paul, 1 Cor. 1:31, desired only to "glory in the Lord"! As he saith again, 1 Cor. 4:5, "Then shall each man have his praise from God". And Ps. 34:2, "My soul shall make her boast in Jehovah". Again, 2 Cor. 10:18, "For not he

that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth". God praises and commands those only who take all praise from themselves and give it unto him and who do not desire their works to be seen for any other end than that their Father who is in heaven might be glorified, whose name they love; and therefore he loves and praises them, as he saith, 1 Sam. 2:30, "For them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed".

It is however very hard, though necessary, to expect praise and a name from God, neglecting in the meantime all the names and praises given us by men, and when they happen to be given us, to give them all back to God as being borne with in fear, rather than possessed for the salvation of others. This is serving Jehovah with fear and rejoicing before him with trembling, Ps. 2:11. This is not being in despair when tried and not lifted up in presumption when comforted and favored.

V. 12. *For thou wilt bless the righteous, O Jehovah, thou wilt compass him with favor as with a shield (thou hast crowned us with the shield of thy favor).*

Jerome translates it 'For thou, O Lord, wilt bless the righteous; as thou wilt crown him with the shield of favorable kindness'; he omits the pronoun "thy", and the pronoun "him" is more appropriate than the pronoun "us" for it refers to the "righteous". But I think that this genitive would be better turned into the ablative, thus, 'With thy favor, as with a shield'. But the force lies in the punctuation: our translator begins the last verse with the vocative "O Jehovah", which in the Hebrew is the end of the middle one of the last three verses.

The sense of this verse is the same as that of Psalm 3:8, though the words are somewhat different. "Salvation belongeth unto Jehovah, and thy blessing be upon thy people". As all the force and emphasis of this passage lie in the pronoun "thy" and the words "unto Jehovah", so in the passage now before us they lie in the pronoun "thy" and the vocative "O Jehovah". The understanding of which depends upon the con-

trast drawn between the righteous and wicked generation. Men bless the wicked and curse the righteous; but thou, O Lord, says David, shalt bless the righteous; on which we have before spoken more at large in the end of the third Psalm.

But David is here explaining also the preceding verse where he said that all those rejoice who hope in God, that they rejoice in the time of adversity, and are the care of God, and that in prosperity all glory in God who love his name. This they do, O Lord, says David, because they know that thou only blessest the righteous; and being instructed in this knowledge, they despise all the blessings and cursings of men, who bless them only that love their own name, but curse all those who love the name of the Lord only, that is, the righteous. Wherefore it is not without a forcible meaning that he adds "the righteous", thereby making a manifest distinction between them and the wicked whom men bless, and not God, with a very different kind of blessing.

Here again we are to esteem the words of the prophet as spoken in the Spirit. For as he had before called these characters the workers of iniquity, malignant, and ungodly, who before men have any thing but this evil appearance, nay, have an appearance and form of godliness while they deny the power thereof, 2 Tim. 3:5. Therefore the prophet by "righteous" here means those who are such in spirit, but who before men and in their eyes seem unworthy not only of the name of "righteous", but of the name of men, and who are always considered fools, evil men, and mad men in the sight of those externally showy saints who rest securely in the blessing.

This disease or rather impetuous flood of ungodliness prevails at this day in the church even unto despair of all remedy. Therefore whatever the great ones choose to do they have plenty to favor and bless them, as if what they did were the will and pleasure of God also; and if you doubt this at all, or mutter any thing against it, you must be immediately called a heretic, a son of the devil, and a son of perdition.

In this way does the holy and reverend name of God suffer at present, in this way is it prostituted in the holy lusts of such men, thus is it made to serve the cruel tyranny of the Turkish ecclesiastics, and thus is it made a mantle to cover all things of iniquities and all kinds of evils. So that there is nothing more horrible to be seen, if thou open the spiritual eye, than that which is in our day ascribed to the Word of God; for to it are attributed works the most numerous and those diabolical; and on the other hand, to the name of the devil are attributed the best and most Christian works. Nor does any one at present dare to resist and condemn, if any one of these flatterers of the great has prefixed to any work, though the most diabolical, the name of the Lord; and has dared thus to introduce the plans and designs of the devil under the authority of God, of Christ, and of the apostles. Unless thou hast made up thy mind to burn as a heretic thou must adore this Satan and Antichrist, and on account of the cover of Christ's name which they bear commemorate all their works as divine.

On the other hand if God do any thing in the name of the Lord to oppose these monsters, you must not favor it nor consent nor assent to it, but you must believe and affirm that all such things are carried on under the name and authority of the devil. What else does such maddened ingratitude to Christ deserve, than that we should be thus delivered over to a reprobate mind and be left to commit the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost upon every occasion continually and without fear? thus condemning God under the name of the devil and worshiping the devil under the name of Christ. Thou art righteous, O Lord, and righteous is thy judgment. For if God gave up the Gentiles to a reprobate mind, because when they knew God they worshipped him not as God, and if they were left to commit all those enormities which are recorded, Rom. 1, and if he also visited the Jews with such terrible calamity because they did not receive Christ, what evil do we most justly deserve to have brought upon us, who, after we have received

and professed his name, have been subverted with such malice as to mock and defile it? But what a cross, think ye, these things are to those who love the name of the Lord! How horrible it is to live in these times, to hear and see the horrible insults and indignities which are offered to God's holy name!

Let us therefore learn to know ourselves, and let us set before our eyes the contrary judgments of God and of men, lest we should err with the unwise and lest we should be ignorant of the judgment of God and should fail. This then is a truth that stands firm. He that will become righteous must become a sinner; he that will become sound, good, upright, and, in a word, like unto God, a Christian, and of the true faith, must become unsound, bad, perverse, and, in a word like a devil, a heretic, and a Turk; as Paul saith, 1 Cor. 3:18, "If any man thinketh that he is divine among you in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise". This truth, I say, stands firm. For such is the will that is settled in heaven that God has determined to make men wise through foolishness, good through evil, righteous through sin, upright through perverseness, men of a sound mind through madness, of the true faith through heresy, Christians through infidelity, and of the image of God through bearing the image of the devil.

Do you ask how this is done? The answer is ready and may be given in a few words. Thou canst not become such an one in the sight of God as thou wouldest be unless thou first become such an one in thyself and before men as he will have thee to be. He will have thee to be in thyself and before men that which thou really art, that is, a sinner, an evil person, mad, perverse, of the devil, etc. These are thy names, this is all that thou hast of thine own, this is the truth itself, this humility; when all these things have been brought to pass, then thou art such an one before God as thou wouldest wish to be, that is, holy, good, true, upright, godly, etc. In this way thou wilt be one thing before thyself and men, and another before God. Why then dost thou wonder? Why art thou disturbed if thou neither

pleaseth thyself nor men? "If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ", saith Paul, Gal. 1:10.

But we are deceived here, we do not think that these leaders of Israel are men nor those who rage to please them. As though we never had heard that snares were laid for the apostles themselves by the false apostles under the name of Christ! so delighted are we to be deceived by their appellation of blessed apostles and apostolicals, if we can but find that we please them; so that the words of Ps. 53:5, (Vulgate), are fulfilled, 'God hath scattered the bones of them that please men: they have been confounded, because God hath despised them'. And that of Is. 3:12, "O my people, they that lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths".

Observe, I pray you, how plain and powerful this definition is. All are deceived who are praised, and all praisers are deceivers. Who then would not tremble at being praised? Who ought not rather to be dispraised? Are those then, you will say, the only persons who speak and think rightly, who reprove all our actions and account us miserable? Yes! That is the true state of the case. For, in Rev. 3:17, it is said to the church of Laodicea, "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that art the wretched one, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked".

As therefore these things are so, every Christian should take the most diligent care not to despise or praise according to the judgment of the multitude those whom men despise and praise. For there is danger here lest we run against the Lord of life and glory who as numbered with the transgressors and still remains with those who are accounted such, and will do so unto the end of time; because he justifies sinners before men and condemns the righteous ones of this world. For in the former, his own name is lost and the holy and reverend name of God dwells and they are thereby sanctified; but in the latter, the name of God is cast out, and there dwells in them

the profane and abominable name of men whereby they are polluted.

For the same reason you dare not despise yourself nor despair concerning yourself, the less so the more miserable you are. For as no man dare judge and condemn a sinner, nor despair of him, so you dare not judge and condemn yourself, though you have sinned against yourself and your fellow men. Just so you dare not praise and justify yourself nor be presumptuous, though you do appear to be something in your own eyes and the eyes of your fellows; but you are to glory in God alone and find your pleasure in his name which is good in the presence of his saints".

I take it for granted that the figure synecdoche is very well known by which "the just", *justo*, is put for the just, *justis*, in the plural, or for a general and distributive sentence, thus, "Thou wilt bless the just", that is, every one who is just. Moreover all know that to "bless", according to the manner of expression used in the scriptures is the same as to praise, to glorify, to wish well, to wish all good; and is contrary to cursing, reproaching, and wishing ill, either of which, when it is done of God, is done indeed and in reality, because he saith and it is done; but if it be done of men it is nothing and amounts to nothing.

As we said at large in the first Psalm *he* is called a just or righteous man, who is so in secret; not in his own eyes nor in the eyes of men, but in the sight of God. Such an one believes and trusts in God, and of such an one you may say that he is a righteous sinner; but, as we have said, in a different way and view from all human estimation.

Thou wilt compass him with favor as with a shield.

That is, thou hast surrounded or encompassed him, according to Ps. 125:2, "The Lord is round about his people". And Ps. 34:7, "The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him". Again, Deut. 32:10, "He compassed him about, he cared for him, he kept him as the apple of his eye". But

all this is done insensibly in the spirit, while you are sensibly feeling that of Ps. 118:12, "They compassed me about like bees", etc.

Wherefore this favor, this good-will, and this lovingkindness of the Lord are to be apprehended by faith that he fail not when our Saul compasseth us about as with an hedge, that he may bring us over to trust in him, 1 Sam. 23:26. Thus we see the various consolation which God holds forth unto us, but all in the Spirit, that he may allure us to trust in him, as we have it, Deut. 32:11, 'As an eagle enticeth her young to fly, and hovereth over them', etc; for, as it is written, Ps. 18:10, "He rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, he soared upon the wings of the wind".

Thus have I spoken at great length concerning these affections of *faith, hope, love and joy*, that when they shall occur again we may dismiss them sooner, and, having thus indulged prolixity once for all, we may be more brief hereafter. Let us therefore at the end of this fifth psalm pause that when we have recruited ourselves by a little rest we may enter with more alacrity upon the sixth psalm.

As we have thought proper to rest here a little we will for the use of some few just add to these crowning graces and blessings which pertain unto life those two verses which are often sung at the end of the Psalms in the church, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost', etc., for these are so much like the last two verses of the present Psalm in which we are taught that the name of the Lord is to be praised and loved. They are as follows:

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

In using these godly verses the affections are to be engaged, so that what is sung by the voice may be sung in mind and spirit also; for in these is contained the sum of all prayers and affections in the same way as in that part of the Lord's prayer,

'Hallowed be thy name', are contained all the following petitions, and as all the following precepts of the decalogue are contained in the first commandment. Thus as the first commandment is the sum and substance of all the rest and that first petition of the Lord's Prayer is the sum and substance of all the rest, so the affection of this verse is the sum and substance of all affections, for no prayer ought to be offered but that which has for its object the glory of the divine majesty, that his name may be sanctified; nor ought any thing to be done in work but that wherein those things are sought which are God's that we may have no strange god; so that we ought to be proved by no other motive but the glory of God.

In a word, by these verses, if we use and sing them in mind and spirit, we in a short way offer all the numerous sacrifices commanded in the Old Testament. For what was their offering unto God slain sheep and cattle, but the same as our offering ourselves unto God as men slain by sin, and living unto righteousness unto the praise and glory of his grace? as Hosea saith, 14:2, "So will we render unto thee the calves of our lips": and Ps. 51:19, "Then wilt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, then will they offer bullocks upon thine altar". And Heb. 13:15, "Through him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips, which make confession to his name".

Nor is the sacrifice of the New Testament any thing else than that which is contained in these verses, so that the sacrament of the altar may be called the Eucharist, that is, a giving of thanks, because in performing that service we properly fulfil the force and meaning of these verses. For it is not enough to partake of the body of the Lord unless we do it "in remembrance" of him, as it is commanded.

But how many are there who daily mutter over this verse while there are but few who really do that which it signifies. Wherefore it is necessary that every one watch himself and

remind himself, from the admonition and invitation contained in this verse, what he owes to God.

Here we do not say Glories be to the Three Persons, but, "Glory be", etc., because the glory of the Triune God is equal and the same, even as their majesty and divinity are the same; and therein we confess the revealed holy name of the true God. In this the highest faith is necessary, which is called into exercise in the verses before us. For those things of which we are now speaking are incomprehensible and the highest points of our faith.

But that we may speak of these things in a more practical way, we would say, let power and might be ascribed unto the Father, wisdom and counsel unto the Son, and goodness and love unto the Holy Ghost. So that let him who sings glory to the Father, offer up his own vain-glory, confessing his own weakness and infirmity, and let him never desire to be strong or mighty but in God the Father.

When he sings glory to the Son, let him hate all his own wisdom and counsel, and, having sacrificed these beasts, let him offer them up, confessing his own ignorance and foolishness and not wishing to be accounted wise and prudent neither by himself nor others but in the Son, his God.

When he sings glory to the Holy Ghost, let him lay aside all confidence in his own righteousness and goodness, confessing his sins, desiring to be made righteous and good by God the Holy Ghost, and offering up the opinion of his own righteousness. Hereby it comes to pass that we leave all things unto God and nothing unto ourselves but confusion and the confession of our evils, our nothingness, and our misery. Thus we are just and render to all their dues.

But let no one so think as to believe that he can worthily sing these verses. Let him rather sing desiringly than positively, that his singing may be rather a prayer, a praise, and a giving of thanks. For there is no one without a vain-glorious opinion of his own power, wisdom, and goodness, and no one

to be found who does not take something from the glory of God, and does not impurely make this sacrifice.

This prayer is to be offered as a common prayer, ‘As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen’; that is, he who sings this ought to wish that all the creation from the beginning would unto all eternity glorify God with him. Therefore this prayer is most weighty and efficacious, because it is the most universal, wherein that which is deficient in us is supplied by the communion of all saints and especially by Christ himself, with which universality we may sing in concert most safely, for there the deficiency of our voice will be assisted and perfected by the multitude of the perfect.

Hence it is impossible that any man given to vain-glory should sing these verses unless he would by his horrible noise confound the sweet harmony of the whole creation and thereby call down and hasten evil upon his own head. For such importunate discord which would disturb the harmony of God would not be tolerable. From this destructive vain-glory therefore may Christ himself deliver us, who is our glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Wittenberg, in the year of our Lord, 1519.

P S A L M V I.

TO VICTORY; ON THE ORGANS; UPON THE EIGHTH. A PSALM
OF DAVID.

CONCERNING ‘victory’ and the ‘organs’ we have spoken, in the fourth psalm. But the mystical signification of this ‘Eighth’ has been minutely handled by many, whom we will allow to indulge in their own opinions, and we will follow those who speak simply and without any mystery, considering that the grammatical or historical signification of the ‘eighth’ is, that it means an organ, or a harp with eight strings. For Ps. 33:2, indicates that the psaltery was an instrument of ten strings. So that the meaning is that this Psalm is one of those which were sung ‘to victory’ on the organs, concerning which, we have spoken in Ps. 4 from 1 Chron. 16:19-21, but so that it was sung on the particular instrument of eight strings, that is, the harp; and the word “eighth” is added in the title to signify the kind of instrument mentioned in the Psalm. I am not certain whether the eight-stringed harp was of the highest, the middle, or the lowest kind. It appears that the psaltery of ten strings was of the highest, so that we find that to have been used in the joyful and festive Psalms. And it is certain that the Psalms ‘to victory’ were accustomed to be sung on the harps which, by a general appellation, are called ‘organs’ in the titles of the Psalms.

It is not however to be doubted that all these things were figures of things to come, and that these eight strings were not then instituted in vain nor commended in vain. Though indeed I am not inclined to apply them to the eighth day of the future resurrection only, but to the present state of the church and to a certain affection and experience of the believers in Christ.

Not that there was not the same state also under the Old Testament, but it was not then revealed. Wherefore let us meditate for our mind's edification and consider that the harp of eight strings was the highest, the chief, and superior to all the rest, even as we consider that the psaltery of ten strings was the highest, and that it was for that reason distinguished in this title by the name 'eighth'.

We have mentioned in the beginning that the psaltery and harp differ in this, that the psaltery, from having the cavity in the upper wood, sends its sound downwards from the top, whereas the harp, from having the cavity in the lower wood, sends its sound upwards from the bottom. By which particulars are figured forth those two sacraments of the death and resurrection of Christ, and the mortification of the flesh, and quickening renewal of the spirit in us. So that the singing on the harp, in the revelation of the truth, signifies nothing else than the work of the cross, the mortification of the members, and the destruction of the body of sin, whereby we are raised above all our earthly wisdom and brought to savor those things which are above where Christ sits. The singing on the psaltery signifies the work of the Spirit, justification, peace, and the like, which through faith and hope come down from above. Hence the harps were properly adapted, as we have said, to the Psalms 'to victory', because the work of the Lord, that is, the cross of Christ, requires exhortation that we may endure unto the end and may by perseverance obtain the victory.

Since in this Psalm that sum of the cross and mortification and that very brink of death, that is, hell, are described, it was not properly said to be on the highest harp, that is, the 'eighth', and the eighth number very frequently occurs and is a sacred number in the Holy Scriptures; as Jerome shows from the eighth day of circumcision and from the eight souls that were saved in the ark of Noah, and David also is said to be the eighth son of Jesse, and Zacharias the father of John received his speech on the eighth day, and the like. Moreover eight is a

solid number, a square, and an equal to equal, consisting of six equal sides, having twenty-four plane-triangles and eight solid ones, like a die; which square figure is also frequently used in the Holy Scriptures, and it is by philosophers applied to signify equality and stability. Again the number *six*, which is the number of this Psalm, is the first number of perfection, so that by it is signified the solid, stable, perfect, and absolute mortification of the old man by what is sung on this harp, which mortification is truly described in the present Psalm. But why this same title is not prefixed to all the Psalms on the same subject we desire to remain in ignorance, to use the words of Augustine, because God has not willed that we should know the reason.

Wherefore the words of this Psalm will suit him who is singing on the eight strings, that is, who is exercised under the extreme pains of death and hell, as the words of the Psalm themselves show. Hence according to my judgment, this Psalm contains the experience of what was taught in the Psalm preceding. For we there said that the nature and power of hope were shown and exercised in man while laboring in the midst of evils and sins. What the feelings, the surges of mind, the groans, and sighs, and the words and counsels of such an one are, we have set forth in the Psalm under consideration.

Wherefore we are to consider that the words and doctrine contained in this Psalm are general, that is, are applicable not only to Christ himself, but unto any Christian who suffers these things. Now according to my opinion when the pain of purgatory, the fear of death and the horror of hell present themselves because of the lack of the right and perfect love, it is very becoming for the church to pray this psalm in the person of the dying. Nothing more suitable can be prayed.

For those who are in this state and exercised with these things and are instructed thereby, are sure to have an implacable war raised against them by the workers of iniquity who, depending on their own works and teaching others to do the same, always most pestilentially resist this mortification. For

it is not our works, but the work of God, that is here going on, which must be endured alone by a patiently-suffering hope; for such an one cannot be delivered from, nor confor^ted under this work by any works of men; nay when placed in this excess, one sees that "all men are liars". Hence the Psalmist here most severely attacks, not persecutors, but the workers of iniquity and crafty counsellors, who under a show of kindness are injurious opposers of this work of God, for their opinion will never endure to hear that these things are sent and wrought of God, being always authors and teachers of despair and presumption but never of hope.

Nor are we to think that all believers in Christ are exercised with the things which are set forth in this Psalm. For all are not proved by all kinds of temptations, though all are proved by many and various temptations. So in the Gospel we do not read of more than one, the woman of Canaan from Syropheni^cia, who was exercised with this kind of temptation and passion, which was when Christ refused to hear either her own cry or the intercession of his disciples, and while she suffered being compared unto dogs and not unto the children, and being most positively denied. The rest ere blind, or halt, or laboring under some such bodily calamities and diseases.

So also the temptations here described happen principally unto those who are of great faith, and, as it was said of David, who are men "after God's own heart". Yet the nature of this temptation is to be learned that we may readily if at any time God shall will to prove us by such a day of trial.

Why should we not endeavor also, as many have, to find the *order* which is observed in the preceding Psalms with the intent to seek and know their peculiar variety? for these various Psalms contain various and particular designs and experiences.

The FIRST PSALM seems to set forth to us the perfect image of a godly man or of the people of God, though in short and general words and terms, and there is set forth such a godly man as all the Psalms afterward speak of, one that is spirit-

ual, that is delighted only with the law of the Lord, and that is not moved by any prosperity or adversity. Then it sets forth the opposite image of the ungodly, and afterwards the end of each, showing that God knows the former but not the latter, and that therefore the latter shall perish, but the former shall be saved. So that the First Psalm seems to be placed most rightly at the beginning as the argument of, or introduction to, all the rest, in which we may see what is taught throughout the whole Psalter.

The SECOND PSALM teaches that Christ is the head and author of the godly people. Then it shows where and whence his kingdom is and to what extent it shall be enlarged; namely, that it is from Zion and shall be extended to the uttermost parts of the earth in defiance of, and contrary to, the will of all the adversaries who shall fight against it in vain. Lastly it shows the nature and manner of this kingdom, that all the subjects of it serve in fear and joy and are prepared to trust and hope in Christ in the time of his anger.

In the THIRD PSALM the Head and King of this faithful people himself is introduced as an example of suffering and of glorification, showing that he is not a leader in name only, who commands and requires many things to be done and does nothing himself; but one who goes before the people over whom he is appointed in the most lawful office of leader, one who is powerful and “mighty in word and deed”, and who begins “to do and to teach”.

In the FOURTH PSALM the people thus constituted follow their leader through sufferings. First of all, they are led into temporal and lighter sufferings in which they are exercised and, despising all the abundance and good things of this life, which are signified by the abounding in corn, wine, and oil, they are led into hope, in which they sleep in peace. This is the first and lowest degree of the cross which is thus set forth for beginners and those who are more tender.

In the FIFTH PSALM this people, being strengthened by

temporal sufferings, are brought under the spiritual and more perilous temptations described by the Word, wherein Satan attacks them with heretical cogitations, that is, perverse opinions, which fight against pure faith and hope. They have, moreover, to contend against that greatest of all spiritual beasts, pride, which arises out of their very prosperity and through which the angels fell from heaven. Here therefore the feelings and exercises are more vehement and increased. Here the powers of the soul especially suffer and the spirit agonizes for the truth and the sincerity of faith.

This is the kind of exercise which we find in Paul when contending against the Jews and the false apostles.

Then in the SIXTH PSALM which contains the last and finishing conflict we have their contending with death and hell, which kind of conflict is endured, not with men, nor with temporal nor spiritual things, but it is inward in the Spirit; nay rather, it is out of, and above the Spirit, and is in that extreme ecstasy where no one hears, sees, or feels any thing but the Spirit who with groanings that cannot be uttered, makes intercession for the saints and wrestles in a certain way with God himself. No name can be given to this wrestling prayer, nor can any one know what it is but by experience. But let us now enter the particulars of this Psalm.

V. 1. — *O Jehovah, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.*

A question has been raised whether there is any difference between anger and hot displeasure, and any difference between rebuking and chastening. Now we know that in other places of the scriptures, rebuking and chastening are put together, as in Rev. 3:19, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore and repent"; so that this last word is the same as chastening or disciplining. Those who wish to consider this as a repition only we will leave to indulge their own opinions. But we will, in the mean time, make this distinction, that rebuking is reprehending, and chastening, chastising or

striking the person when reprehended; which is according to general usage among men, where the criminal is first accused and reprehended and then, after the sentence has been pronounced, led to punishment. So when children have done wrong they are first rebuked and chided and then beaten.

This rebuking in the experience of the heart and spirit is a dread and horror of conscience before the face of God, under which Christ groaned for us in the garden; as Isaiah predicted of him, 53:11, saying, "He shall see of the travail of his soul".

And when he began to be sorrowful and very heavy he said, Matt. 26:38, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death". For in this state the soul, being left destitute of all confidence, finds herself in a horrible condition as a guilty criminal standing alone before the tribunal of the eternal and angry God. Of this state Job saith, 9:12, "If He examine on a sudden, who shall answer him?" For in this examining every one must be dumb, like that guest mentioned, Matt. 22:11, 12, who, when asked why he came in not having on a wedding garment, was speechless. Then that which is mentioned in the same chapter, verse 13, "Bind his hand and foot and cast him out into the outer darkness", expressed what is here experienced in the being 'chastened in anger'. For the conscience, being reprehended and convicted, immediately feels nothing else than that eternal damnation is its portion.

No one can understand this deep experience nor indeed the inferior kinds of it but he who has tasted it; and therefore we cannot fully describe it. Job experienced it more than any other, and that frequently. And after him David and king Hezekiah, as recorded, Isaiah 38:10 etc., and a few others. Lastly the German divine John Tauler makes frequent mention of it in his sermons.

This temptation seems to me to be the same as that which Christ mentions, Luke 21:25 etc., where, among other evils of the last time, he enumerates terrors from the heavens, under which men's hearts shall fail them for fear and for looking

after those things which are coming on the earth; so that the worst and most perilous tribulation shall be in the last and most perilous time. But we see many even now suffering those things, and, from not knowing any remedy turning away into madness and continually sorrowing, wasting away, and consuming. Under this some of the fathers have also labored in the desert.

Let no one pratingly contend with us nor presume so much upon his stupid brains, as to pretend to come forward and make a seperate distinction between servile fear and love, and say that they do not exist together. This work of God is not to be comprehended by any capacious understanding: there is darkness upon the face of this deep; and there may be together a most servile fear, a fleeing from punishment, and a most servile fear, a fleeing from punishment, and a most ardent love. As Christ saith, Ps. 142:4, "Refuge hath failed me; and no man cared for my soul". Love lies in a most secret depth, but servile fear appears and is felt with intolerable violence; the spirit is borne upon the top of the waters and nothing is left but a groan that cannot be uttered. Finally what this tribulation is and what it worketh may be collected from the various features of it which this Psalm enumerates.

First of all David prays for the removal of the wrath and fury of God, which he would not have done if he had not felt his anger and fury. He does not however refuse to be rebuked and chastened but prays that it may be done in mercy; as we have it also, Ps. 26:2, "Examine me, O Jehovah, and prove me; try my reins and my heart". And Ps. 139:23, 24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me".

Wherefore in this verse we have a twofold rod of God described; the one of mercy and the other of anger: This also Jeremiah saith, 10:24, "O Jehovah, correct me, but in measure; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing". And Job says, 7:20, "Why hast thou set me as a mark for

thee?" And verse 17, "What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thine mind upon him?" This tribulation is also called in the scriptures the day of visitation and the day of beholding; because God tortures the wicked only by his looking upon them, which is intolerable; as we have it, Hab. 3:6, "He beheld, and drove asunder the nations, and the eternal mountains were scattered". Thus also, Exod. 14:24, we read that the Lord only "looked" upon the hosts of the Egyptians, and that terror and confusion immediately seized them. In a word, this is that day of judgment and eternal destruction, which no one can ward off, no one can avoid or escape, unless by hope he lay hold of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This Psalm teaches us that if any one be pressed in these straits, he should flee unto no other than the angry God himself. But this is a matter most difficult and painful; in a word, this is hoping against hope and indeed a striving against impossibilities, as far as the feelings and apprehension of the person are concerned. For here is that most miserable conflict which Hezekiah describes in his own experience, Is. 38:14, "O Jehovah, I am oppressed, be thou my surety". And immediately afterwards, as if he had felt a denial, he adds, 'what shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it'. As if he had said, like Job 9:16, "If I had called and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice". So much do hope and despair alternately prevail here, that even if those who call upon God are heard ,yet they feel it not and do not even believe that their voice is heard.

Therefore when this Psalm saith "*in thy fury*", the Psalmist thereby confesses that what he suffers is from God; so that he might say, what shall I say? what will he answer me? will he hear me? will it do me any good to pray when I know that he himself has done these things?

Wherefore if men have not learned in lighter temptations to

flee unto him that smiteth them, that is, unto God, as the prophet Isaiah, in the eighth chapter, most fully teaches ought to be done, how will they turn and flee unto him under this greatest of all pressures where it is felt that God himself worketh them?

Wherefore all other temptations are the most perfect examples of this, and are, as it were, pre-instructions and preludes to it, wherein we are taught always to flee unto God against God as it were. From this verse I have taken what I discussed before concerning suffering of the soul in purgatory, that doubt seemed to me to like purgatory and almost hell itself, from which souls could not be delivered through intercessions or indulgences, but only through the prayers of the church, or they may be purified and perfected in love by the punishment of purgatory, or make satisfaction for their sins, which is something I do not understand. For indulgences can not help the living who tolerate these things. For only the intercession of believers can help them.

Here then we are to know that the doctrine of this Psalm is most diligently to be observed by them that suffer these things; that they may not wander away, may not complain, and may not seek the consolations of men, but may stand alone and endure the hand of God, and, with the prophet may never turn any where but unto God, saying, "O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger". If they do not continue in this prudence, as those consecrated to these things recommended, then to their great ruin they fall from the hand of God, who heals and cleanses them, in that they flee to the miserable consolation of a weak creature, just as when the clay falls from the hand of the potter and is crushed to pieces, so that it is entirely useless or it deserves to be cast away as good for nothing.

This is what Jeremiah in Lam. 3:24-29, most fully and beautifully teaches, "Jehovah is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. Jehovah is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a

man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of Jehovah. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Let him sit alone and keep silence, because he hath laid it upon him. Let him put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope"; that is, he hideth his face and sayeth nothing, as if he were buried in the dust with the dead.

And it is under the same feelings that those words of Ps. 143:3, 4, were written, "He hath made me to dwell in dark places, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate". In this silence and in this solitude, this purging and cleansing are accomplished. As is also in Ps. 55:4-8, "My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me. And I said, O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander afar off, I would lodge in the wilderness, Selah. I would hasten my escape to a shelter from the stormy wind and tempest"; which in the Hebrew is, from the commotion of the wind and storm, which is the same thing.

V. 2.—*Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah, for I am withered away (weak): O Jehovah, heal me, for my bones are troubled (vexed).*

Here he in the second place confesses himself withered away, that is, destitute of strength, and therefore unable to endure that unsupportable rebuke and chastisement of the anger of God. As if he had said, the terror of thy anger is more than I can bear; and unless thou communicate to me the power of thy grace, I must utterly despair and perish. Thus Moses, Ps. 90:11, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger", that is, the violence and force of it, "And thy wrath according to the fear that is due unto thee".

And the force of this feeling is moreover shown by the frequent repetition of the name of Jehovah, "Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah", "O Jehovah, heal me", O Jehovah, how

long"? For these are the feelings and cries of those even, who are oppressed with lighter temptations; they call continually in heart and mouth upon the helping name of God.

Some will have it, that "Have mercy" in this passage signifies properly, not the remission of sins, which is generally expressed by a word signifying clemency or pity, as in Ps. 111:4, "gracious and full of compassion", but grace or strength, whereby the soul may be strengthened; which aptly agrees with the word "weak", "For I am weak" or 'impotent'; and it is weakness that is helped by strength. Such therefore is the nature of this temptation, which is most appropriately described in the words of this Psalm, though it can be really known by no one but through experience, as I have before said. For this expression "weak" touches the weakness of the spirit, not that of the flesh; that is, that weakness which neither hope nor love, no, nor even faith is able to support, unless it be thus strengthened.

In the third place he says that his "bones are vexed" and therefore he prays to be healed. But who understands what this vexing of the bones is? For David is not here speaking of a corporal vexation of the bones by a fever or any other disease. This inexperience gave occasion to many illustrious fathers also to understand by "bones" the powers of the soul, whose opinion I do not condemn. But, as I have observed already, the powers or faculties of the soul, such as the understanding, the will, the reason, the memory, and the like, were signified in the former part of the verse under the term "weak". Grace properly, for which he prays in the words "have mercy", strengthens the heart and its powers against that spiritual weakness, for it is in the spirit that he speaks.

Wherefore "bones" ought here to be received as signifying according to their grammatical meaning the very bones themselves which are in the flesh of our bodies and which, by this weakness and perturbation of spirit, are vexed that they tremble and have no strength whatever and indeed are then no longer

bones, nor are they able to support only the body itself. For thus it is written, Is. 38:13, "As a lion, so he breaketh all my bones". This is what we sometimes find in them also who are brought to the point of death, where many tremble and are horribly wracked with straits and agonies. For God often works this tribulation in that state, where the man can no more run to human comforts, and is forced to bear the hand of him that purifieth him. For it is necessary that sin should be destroyed in this manner, and be driven from us, that we may love God above all things, and may burn with an unspeakable thirsting after him . And those earthly effections which are wrought by sin are beyond all comparison less and weaker than this thirst of the man who thus seeks after God, that is, his grace and mercy.

That is what we mean when we say that we must love God just as much and more than we love the creature. Those who postpone it to death must then suffer this great purification. God would however not be loved and desired with so great ardor if man were not weighed down by these great troubles, which force him to seek and say unto God with powerful exclamations of the heart, especially if he be deeply sunk in vice, and had been inactive in crucifying the flesh. For this crucifying of the flesh will be the harder, the more lively the manifold development of sin formed his character. It is to be hoped that those who have suffered this death and hell in this life will have less when they die.

Here perhaps I may seem to advance unheard-of and absurd things in the estimation of those, who imagine that they can find an easy way to heaven by their indulgences, their letters, or their works. And though I know that I cannot prove the truth of what I thus advance to the satisfaction of those who do not believe the words of the prophet, yet I will not, on their account, deviate from the words of the prophet. Let every one abide by his own understanding of the scriptures. I know what I say; and let them take heed that they fully

know and understand what they say. This is certain, that no one will come to the mercy of God, but he who most cravingly hungers and thirsts after him; like him who said, Ps. 42:1, "As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My tears have been my meat day and night". Again, Ps. 63:2, "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and weary land, where no water is."

Let no one ever think that a full and satisfied soul will be filled of God; he only "fills the hungry with good things". How much less then will he give eternal life to those who disdain it; nay, who despise it in comparison with the good things of this life. No! He will give it to those who most ardently, and with groanings that cannot be uttered, seek after it, crave after it, and knock at the door for it. As we should not thus seek, crave, and know it otherwise, especially if we enjoyed a quiet life, God has set before us death and various tribulations, that being pressed under these, we may be forced to seek for mercy and life; as Job saith, 10:12, "Thou hast granted me life and lovingkindness; and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit".

It is certain therefore that the bones of those who suffer this tribulation are so vexed that they cannot perform the office of bones. On the contrary we see that where the heart exults and is kept filled with joy, the bones are as it were strengthened and made ready to leap and to bear the heavy and filthy burden of the flesh, and there is nothing that they are not able to bear. So that the joy is felt through all the bones like a certain watering. As in Prov. 3:8, "It will be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones". Nay even a poet of old said,

Through all his bones a chilling tremor ran.

So that the affections of the mind penetrate through the body. Rightly therefore does David say, "O Jehovah, heal me"; because he is so broken down, even in body, that his bones have lost all their strength. So great is this tribulation

that there is not a corner in the frame or in all its powers which it does not vex and wear down.

V. 3. — *My soul also is sore troubled.*

In the fourth place he complains that his “soul” is sore troubled; that is, the lower and inferior part of it, namely, the sensible life. For when the spirit is vexed and the bones also there is no part of the sensible frame that is not filled with sorrow, so that now there is nothing remaining either in spirit, body, or soul, that is not possessed and filled with the most bitter sorrow and terror. The soul or life feels the attack of death, which is the most distressing of all to the feelings, and the spirit feels hell which is intolerable. And what this sensation of death and hell is, in this conflict and perturbation, is shown in the following part of the Psalm. In the meantime, however be it known, that to those who are exercised under this tribulation there is nothing in the whole creation so pleasant as to be able to give relief even to one hair of the head, nothing so sweet in sound as to be able to soothe the ear, nothing so delightful, either to eat, to drink, or to touch, that does not seem to be very bitterness. Death is in every thing that is either seen or touched. The man is most miserably wracked between life and death, he dreads death and has not life.

I presume it is known to every one that life or soul and spirit differ from each other, according to the scriptural usage of those terms, though philosophers will go according to their opinions. For the apostle in Thess. 5:23, gives it thus, “And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Upon these points Origen and Jerome have disputed much in various parts of their works. But the apostle prays that they may be preserved separately and particularly in spirit, soul, and body. And in the Evangelists, Mark 12:30, we have “With all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength”. But upon this we cannot enlarge farther here.

And thou, O Jehovah, how long?

Here some understand a word; thus, “how long” ‘wilt thou refuse to deliver me’, or, ‘to strengthen me’? and such a reading the pronoun “thou” favors, “And thou, O Jehovah, how long”? Under these same feelings David saith, Ps. 13:1, “How long, O Jehovah wilt thou forget me for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart all the day”? Where he not only prays the Lord to hasten his help but, being as it were impatient of delay, he complains of his distress on account of the delay; because in every feeling of fear, love, hope, and hatred, etc., delay is always distressing and grievous; as Prov. 13:12, “Hope deferred maketh the heart sick”. And under this sensation of death and hell the delay is above all the most distressing. For here that common saying is true ‘One hour in hell is longer than many years in this world’.

In a word human nature cannot bear to endure this tribulation even the shortest time, nor does it suffer the whole of it at all, it only tastes a few drops of it, as on the other hand, it is said of those who under the experience of the heavenly feelings, that they scarcely taste one drop, because this life cannot bear all the riches of the pleasures of that life to come. Indeed when either of these feelings or sensations exceeds the common measure the man thinks that his soul will leave the body, unless a miracle of divine power prevent. Wherefore in these words “And thou, O Lord, how long”? is particularly indicated that unutterable groan of the Spirit which man under these feelings breathes forth.

V. 4. — *Return, O Jehovah, deliver my soul; save me for thy lovingkindness' (mercy's) sake.*

He again indicates in this verse that his soul is lost and that he himself is condemned, for these are his feelings in the hour of this excess, when he prays that his soul might be saved; that is, from the death that presses upon him; and that he might be delivered from the hell that now with open mouth

is ready to swallow him. Ps. 9:13, "Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death". Again Hezekiah saith, Is. 38:10, "I shall go into the gates of hell".

The Psalmist also beautifully shows the power of hope while he sets nothing before his eyes but the mercy of God, saying, "For thy mercy's sake". As if he had said, not for my merits, for I have none, as is sufficiently manifest from this my terror at thine anger, from my perturbation of heart, and from the vexation of my bones and of my soul; therefore save me for thy mercy's sake, that the glory and praise of thy mercy may be exalted in my salvation unto all eternity. For though I be unworthy of being delivered and saved yet thou art worthy of being praised, glorified, and loved, to all eternity; and yet, thou canst not be praised, nor can thy mercy be glorified, unless there be some whom thou shalt save from death and deliver from hell.

Thus Manasseh, king of Judah, in his prayer, verse 15 etc., says, 'For thou wilt save me, that am unworthy, according to thy great mercy. Therefore I will praise thee for ever all the days of my life; for all the powers of heaven do praise thee'. Behold in this way does God render his mercy most lovely, most sweet, and most desirable to be sighed after. This is how it ought to appear unto us, as it is eternal and of a majesty so great, he is bringing upon us those evils and temptations which we have deserved. But, as to those whom he does not try with these temptations, what wonder is it if such should look upon the mercy of God as a thing of no value and nauseate the heavenly manna.

Here at one blow and in one moment perishes all the prating of those who talk about meriting grace by works of congruity and gaining heaven by works of condignity, and who, by an incredible madness, prepare to meet the intolerable judgment of God by the works of their own righteousness. Therefore, David, at the end of this Psalm, attacks such with a fiery zeal of spirit, inveighing against them in words addressed

especially to them, saying "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity". So that this truth stands firm and certain, "O save me for thy mercy's sake"; for my iniquity is found to be unto death and hell, my righteousness is all vanished, my strength has failed, and my merit has come to naught. Blessed man that I shall be, if I be but allowed to breathe unto, and rest in, thy mercy!

Here therefore we are taught that as we ought not to presume at all concerning ourselves, so we ought not by any means to despair of the mercy of God, but ought, however unworthy we may be, to call upon that mercy to save us from the power of death and hell. For what sins or what evils can there be so great that they should lead thee to despair, when thou hearest from this scripture that no one ought to be led to despair when under the feelings of death and hell, where there must of necessity be the greatest of all sins and evils?

V. 5. — *For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol (the grave) who shall give thee thanks?*

Here David plainly opens to us the experience and feelings contained in the whole Psalm, where he confesses that he feels death and hell. For he does not speak these things like the sophists, who have the audacity to divine and imagine any thing, as being matters of which he in reality knew nothing, but he speaks from what he himself experiences and paints forth the whole just as he himself feels it. "Save me," saith he, that I may proclaim thy mercy to all eternity: and rebuke me not in this thy anger, for therein there is nothing but death and hell and no remembrance nor praise of thee. For here, the words of Prov. 16:14, are found to be true, "The wrath of a king is as messengers of death".

Hence Hezekiah saith, Is. 38:18, 19, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: for the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth". And Ps. 115:17, "The dead praise not Jehovah, neither any that go down into silence".

These feelings are set forth in many other places in the Psalms.

What then is this being in death and hell? It is, first of all, to be in an eternal forgetfulness and oblivion of God, and next to be in eternal blasphemy. For here the care for the love of self reigns with a most powerful and confused concern; and therefore it is impossible for such to have the mercy of God before their eyes. They seek refuge and escape, and find none; and then they are presently involved in a most burning hatred of God. They first of all desire that there were another God, and then that they themselves had no existence; and thus they blaspheme his divine Majesty. They wish, as I said, with all their heart that no such majesty existed; and if they could, they would destroy his existence; and this fleeing from and this hatred against God are eternal. Thus that scripture of the first Psalm is fulfilled, "For the ungodly are like the chaff which the wind scattereth away"; that is, they are ever fleeing but never escape.

But here some will open their mouths with this objection, what then did those words mean so often found in the scriptures, 'There is no redemption in hell'? For, according to this it appears that the pains of hell can happen to none but to the damned? I answer, though I do not remember that I have read these words in the holy scriptures, yet they seem to be taken out of this verse of this Psalm, and also out of other like places of the scriptures. But such scriptures are not understood by these carnal ones, nor by any inexperienced theologians. As though no one could taste of hell, because there is no redemption from hell! According to the same argument, we might say that Paul never tasted heavenly things, because the blessedness of heaven can never be lost, and sin can never be felt there, because it is forgiven.

Wherefore it is true that in the present conflict and agony nothing is present in the feelings but hell, without any prospect of redemption, for all that is felt seems as if it would be eternal. For the anger of a mortal man when felt is attended with the

hope that it will have an end, but no hope accompanies this anger of an eternal God, nor any expectation of its coming to an end. ‘Rebuke me not, O Lord, in *thine* anger’, saith David: but, to be brought under the mortal anger of a mortal man is nothing.

All that takes place in hell takes place in the soul; even the hatred and blasphemy are almost the same. “For love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as hell”, Song: and therefore the man under this temptation prevails in praising God. Love however most severely, sharply, and vehemently wrestles against hatred, hope against despair, mercy against wrath, praise against blasphemy, perseverance against flight, and, in a word, heaven against hell, to the unspeakable torture of the soul.

But why do we spend words in vain, when we can effect nothing by thousands of words? because, nothing can give a man a judgment in, and an understanding and comprehension of this tribulation, but the feeling, sensation and experience of it. Though every one, if he be not devoid of all feeling and callous in heart and conscience, when he hears these things, must say that there is something signified by these words, which he does not yet know; and it is terrible to be brought to the knowledge of it.

V. 6. — *I am weary with my groaning; every night make I my bed to swim, I water my couch with my tears.*

This verse may be arranged in the translation two ways: either by making the words “I am weary” to stand alone, or by joining them to “with my groaning”. Though the former order is the most generally used, yet we will upon the present occasion pass it by and confine ourselves to the latter, by doing which, as I think, we shall more properly preserve the repetition which the passage contains. So that, washing the bed under sighing and groaning will be the same as watering the couch with tears; thus taking together the sighs and groans with the

tears, the washing with the watering, and the bed with the couch.

In the Hebrew it is, ‘I will make my bed to swim; and water my couch’. Here the question may justly be asked, how any man should have so many tears? Augustine according to his custom has recourse to a mystical understanding of the passage, in which he is followed by many others. We however will understand “bed” and “couch” according to their plain grammatical signification as being those places where men, according to the common usage, recline for the night. The groans and tears we will understand as spoken hyperbolically or comparatively, when they are said to wash and water the couch. For it was never, nor in any place, heard that any one saint ever shed so many tears in one night even, much less every night, as to water his couch, to say nothing about its being made to swim.

But we will understand the hyperbole or the comparative expression as applying only to the act or state of crying itself. But as the words of the Spirit are always to be understood in the Spirit, there will be no hyperbole at all if you consider the affection of mind in the person who experiences these things, for then this will signify, not what the person could really do, but what he wished and desired to do. For so the fathers say of Mary Magdalene, that she did not speak according to her natural bodily strength, when she said to the gardener, John 20:15, “Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away”. For all things are considered possible in the feelings of those who believe, hope, and love. Since therefore God weigheth the spirits, and not the works, and does not look at the external appearance of the works, but at the reins and hearts of men, David says these words without any hyperbolical or comparative figure at all; nay, he speaks from his heart when he says that he would wash his couch with his sighs and tears. Though he cannot really do this yet, because his wish is so ardent, that which he would do is accounted done before God. Hence we shall do rightly if we

understand the passage in an optative sense, thus; ‘O I wish I had so many tears that I could every night make my bed to swim’. As Jeremiah saith, 9:1, “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people”.

This verse therefore is another testimony of the terribleness of the agony when conflicting with death and hell. The man wishes to do impossibilities, that he might be delivered from it. Hence, I can easily believe the accounts of those who have said that many souls under these agonies have confessed that they would rather endure the greatest punishments that could be inflicted by men in this life, even unto the day of judgment, than to suffer these things in their reality for the shortest space of time.

This is more particularly confirmed by the repetition in the passage, which, as I have said before, always strengthens the confirmation; and thereby is confirmed also the all-serious truth of this experience. See therefore with what proofs he sets forth the cross of this most miserable conflict and how he would prefer suffering any evil of the world to this under which he says he could weep with so many tears. What then is there left in the world that can give any delight or ease to such an one? Is he not most completely dead to the flesh since he has undertaken to live God in the Spirit; and has chosen to weep not at the table, nor at work, nor by day, nor in business, where others weep, but in his bed, upon his couch; and in the night, when others are accustomed to rest and quicken their tired spirit, he has undertaken the great and unheard of task to shed tears until he could swim in them? Perhaps those who were once suddenly in danger of death have experienced to some degree the meaning of this verse, while in the real battle of death and hell such a wish and undertaking are easily wrung from man, yea, he readily undertakes and does it, if he is able, and is prepared to promise and do even greater things.

“I am weary,” saith David. A most appropriate word this

for the present description, signifying that he was in the utmost anxiety and difficulty. For so Isaiah 53:4, "He hath borne our griefs;" that is, he was most distressed, as Christ himself saith, Matt. 26:38. Here I say distress forces him to be ready to do and suffer such difficult and great things. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted, Matt. 5:4, namely, those who bewail and afflict and humiliate themselves in order that they may not be forced to suffer this distress. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." The rest I leave to practice and experience.

V. 7. — *Mine eye wasteth away (is consumed) because of grief (anger); it waxeth old because of (among) all mine enemies.*

Reuchlin renders the passage, 'My visage is worm-eaten from anger'; wishing by 'worm-eaten' to signify corroded, as a garment is eaten and consumed by moth. But the sense is the same as that of our translator. For the prophet means to say that the power and effects of this conflict are so great, that it alters the appearance of the whole man. No wonder David should say that he has become pale and worn by it, when it consumes the bones and the blood. And indeed any sorrow or grief alters and wears the appearance and the countenance of a man, but the changes which other troubles make by degrees this conflict produces in a very short time. We have read of many who have become grey on a sudden through trouble and grief; how much more then shall men be so altered, and decay, and waste into a state of old age by this conflict?

We have the same thing, Ps. 39:10-11, "Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thy hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth". In the Hebrew it is, 'Thou hast made his comely parts like a moth'; that is, his face or his visage or appearance. And in the same way Reuchlin has here rendered this passage, 'My visage is worm-eaten'. For the face is the part where man's comeliness consists. Finally, we

have the same words, Ps. 31:9, "Mine eye is consumed with grief", which we find in the present verse.

By "eye" therefore he means visage or appearance, for the same word in the Hebrew signifies eye and appearance. So that the sense is "Mine eye is consumed", that is, I am suddenly changed in my whole body and am become deformed. These are the effects which this "anger" produces. He does not say *my* anger, but the word anger is put alone; that is, it is the very tribulation of death and hell. Thus also the apostle often expresses it by wrath, or death, or hell, only; as Rom. 5:9, "Much more then being now justified by his blood shall we be saved from the wrath of God through him".

That which follows is the same. "I have waxed old among all mine enemies". Which is much better in the Hebrew, "Among all my tribulations". Which is the same as if he had said, 'I have straits on all sides; all sides cause me tribulation; the whole creation is against me; I have no place to flee to; and therefore I grow old before my day, under the weight of my anxiety, and my whole appearance is changed'.

The present verse shows also another powerful cause of this misery; that in addition to being alarmed and terrified by the anger of God, he can find consolation in no creature, but whatever he looks at seems to be against him. For the whole creation acts with its Creator, especially when a man's own conscience is opposed to God, and therefore, every thing around is wrath, every thing increases the tribulation, all around are enemies. This is more particularly shown in his saying not merely "my enemies", but "among *all* my enemies"; that is, among all those who are mine enemies; for I am in that place and state that no-body and no-thing agrees with my sensations; as Job saith, 9:19 (Vulgate). "No man dare bear witness for me".

It is my belief also that David under the exercise of these tribulations was brought to that state, that toward the end of his life he was very much weakened and so cold continually,

that he could not keep himself warm with many garments ; as we have it recorded 1 Kings 1:1. For, as I have said, this wrath consumes and withers all things. Thus then have we this terrible temptation described with all its attendant signs, feelings, counsels, and thoughts. Now follows the consolation and the bringing back and deliverance from this death and hell.

V. 8. — *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity, for Jehovah hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

Now I ask you why he thus indignantly rejects these workers of iniquity in particular and above all others ? For we have said, Ps. 5:5, that POELA AVEN signifies those who are of the religion of disobedience, of self-righteousness, and of spiritual idolatry. These he commands to depart from him. Whereas before he had made no complaint about these in this psalm, but had been complaining only of the wrath and fury of God. What then have these workers of iniquity to do with the fury of the Lord? especially when such being most secure and presuming every thing against God could not at all interfere with him in the temptation of which he is complaining in this psalm ? To increase the apparent absurdity he therefore commands them to depart, because the Lord had heard the voice of his weeping. Did then these workers of iniquity prevent the Lord from hearing him before ?

We will observe that the whole of this lies in the feelings of David, and those are the most powerful and exalted ; and therefore he does not describe *why* he does it but *what* he does. Thus we see that those who are carried along with any powerful feelings, often talk to themselves, act as apparent madmen, and say strange things, but we are ignorant of the cause why they say those things. Let us then enter into the feelings and experience contained in these words.

I see this to be particularly worthy of remark throughout the Psalms, that whenever the prophet speaks under any peculiar ecstacy he immediately adds a word addressed to the adversaries full of indignation and complaint against them, as

in these passages: Ps. 116:10, 11, "I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted. I said in my haste, all men are liars". And Ps. 39:11, "Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity". But we see in human affairs also that those who meet with oppression experience something of the same. However it is universally the case, that when any one apprehends the truth in the experience of it, he is soon led to inveigh with indignation and complaint against those who savor of, or teach the contrary.

We have a striking example of this in Augustine who, in the ninth book of his Confessions, in his exposition of the fourth Psalm inveighs with impetuous zeal against the Manicheans. The great art of all exposition is so to teach the subject in question as to root out at the same time all that is contrary to it and launch out against the adversaries; for how can we, when we are teaching right and true piety, refrain from inveighing at the same time against ceremonialists and crafty workers of the Word, while we feel an indignation that they did not know the truth that we teach, or that they once taught us the contrary?

Hence David also did the same when he had been taught by this his ecstasy and particular experience to trust in God alone and to feel and know that no righteousness of his own would avail. For he knew that those, who had not been instructed by these temptations, taught and did foolish and impious things under the garb of piety and were wholly inexperienced in these things when they happened to come upon them; and yet such are ready to teach the whole world, for men of this stamp always act thus, who are the most foolish when most wise, and the most wise when most foolish, becoming blind leaders of the blind, "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth", and, which is the greatest evil of all, such are unteachable, unpersuadable, incorrigible.

Yea, as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these resist those who have attained unto this sound wisdom through

the experience of great temptations and withstand them continually with impudent temerity; by such therefore the godly man is afflicted with tribulation upon tribulation. Hence David from a zeal of love, whereby he desires that the truth may be known to all in common with himself and that the contrary error may be exposed and condemned, inveighs against such characters with the most just indignation, saying, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity". In a word, we shall scarcely find a psalm which contains a complaint of this kind, where the psalmist does not accuse and condemn these workers of iniquity; and this we shall see as we proceed.

The whole therefore lies in the particular feelings of the psalmist, that he commands them to, "depart", because the Lord had heard him. And what the cause for his so doing is, he leaves us to understand from what has preceded; that is, his knowing and experiencing that God saves those who cry unto him for his own mercy's sake only; before whom no one is righteous, as Moses saith, Deut. 34, that no one is guiltless in himself. As these things are so therefore, and he has declared that they are so throughout the whole psalm, he rightly concludes and says that he will not know those who savor of and teach the contrary; and that it is enough for him to know that 'the Lord has heard the voice of his weeping', etc. And to this same point refers also Matt. 7:23, where the Lord declares that he will say to those that have prophesied in his name, and done many wonderful works, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity". For the Lord referred to these words as applying, according to the general sense of this psalm, to all those who trust in themselves, and not in his mere mercy.

V. 9. — *Jehovah hath heard my supplication; Jehovah will receive my prayer.*

He had said in the preceding verse in a general way "Jehovah hath heard, the voice of my weeping was heard". He now defines the particular nature of that voice of weeping and shows what it was. It is observable that he here repeats the

name of Jehovah three times, “Jehovah hath heard”, “Jehovah hath heard”, “Jehovah hath received”, to signify thereby his feeling of confidence and his confirmation of hope against the adversaries whom he here attacks.

The word in the Hebrew which is rendered “supplication” is a word which signifies properly imploring mercy or grace; so that it answers to the former word, “Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah”, and to that which follows; whereby, as we have said, grace or power was implored. The latter word “prayer” signifies, in the Hebrew, a praying against evil; and therefore answers to the words, “O Jehovah in thine anger”, etc. Unless any one would rather understand the whole as signifying a repetition that betokens a confirmation and exultation of the affections.

These are the words of hope, raising up and exhorting the conscience and now prevailing over all surrounding difficulties. In the same way as the preceding words were those of hope suffering, laboring, and almost yielding. Here we see those things which were spoken in the fifth Psalm, not only taught, but experienced; those things, I mean, which are contained in the words, “And all they that hope in thee shall rejoice”.

The words themselves plainly show the prophet’s state of mind and feelings; under which he has before his eyes the mercy of God, which he sets against the disturbing views of sin, death, and hell. For, as it is certain that he speaks in hope and in the Spirit, yea, in the presence of God and in the enjoyment of the present vision; it is also certain that he was saved by hope, that he attained unto the grace of the power of God by hope, and that he was consoled by hope; and all these things show the way in which he drove away the distressing crowd of evils.

This is the reason why he impresses upon himself the mercy of God in so many repetitions; which are, as it were, so many strong and heavy blows with which he follows up his adversaries and all the things that are against him, and so many

powerful words whereby he exhorts and encourages his own infirmity and hope.

Hence, according to the instructions given us by this our teacher, when heaviness or sin distresses our conscience we are to be active and not to fall asleep, nor to yield. Nor are we to wait until the tribulation goes away of its own accord, nor until the consolation itself comes to us; for all these things are those that accompany perdition. But we are to fight, to cry again and again, to strive with all our might, until we are assured of the good will of God toward us; according to Ps. 3:3, "But thou, O Jehovah, art a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head". And in Ps. 30:5, complaining of the like tribulation, David strengthens himself in the good opinion of God concerning himself, saying, "For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime", that means our God wills not death and hell but life and salvation. As also in Ps. 32:7, "Thou art my hiding-place; thou wilt preserve me from trouble; thou wilt compass me about with songs of deliverance".

Yea, in all the psalms where this or similar suffering is lamented there is at once introduced how hope may be created and confidence in God established according to the word of Wisdom 1:1, "Think of the Lord with a good heart". For unless this meditation and this confidence should rise up and overcome the tribulation, no one could stand. But these are not attained and we are not established in them except by the word of God and by Jesus Christ.

So here, when as yet he knew not that his weeping was heard, he conceives and strengthens himself in this persuasion, repeating and maintaining it so as to attack his adversaries, being fully persuaded that such as he assures himself he is in the sight of God, such he is. Therefore as his hope is, such is his state in reality; for in these matters also man is ruled by opinions, but they are opinions of God, that is, concerning God,

and the difference lies here, whether those opinions be good or bad.

V. 10. *All mine enemies shall be put to shame and sore troubled: they shall turn back, they shall be put to shame suddenly.*

This verse may be understood as applying to persecutors, because he calls them his “enemies”. But that these last words may agree with the preceding, let us understand these “enemies” to be none other than the POELE AVEN themselves, “the workers of iniquity”. For we have observed that in every Psalm where this tribulation is described the spirit of the prophet inveighs against those characters; for, as I have said, there is a continual war and contention with these ungodly ones, because they not only will not hear of this humility of the godly and this commendation of the grace of God, but they even persecute it; as it is said, Ps. 109:16, “But persecuted the poor and needy man, and the broken in heart, to slay them”. Ps. 69:26, “They persecute him whom thou hast smitten”. These are they who, like Job’s friends, talk to the increasing of those tribulations which are justly inflicted of God, and who set themselves against such afflicted ones as standing on the side of God, and pronounce that God is justly angry with them and become their enemy; while they themselves are most secure as to their thoughts about God, as if they should escape his judgment.

Since therefore all these things when spoken to these impious ones are like a story told to one that is deaf, for they cannot understand the things of the Spirit by reason of their carnal senses, or their inflated pride, the prophet prays for a speedy and sudden destruction and subversion of their iniquity; that they themselves might be overtaken by this kind of temptation, that they might feel the wrath of God, and the tribulation of death and hell; as Jeremiah also saith, 17:18, “Let them be put to shame that persecute me, but let not me be put to shame; let them be dismayed, but let not me be dis-

mayed". And in the verse preceding he says, "Be not a terror unto me: thou art my refuge in the day of evil". Ps. 9:17, 20, "The wicked shall be turned back into hell, even all the nations that forget God. Put them in fear, O Jehovah, let the nations know themselves to be but men", that is, vain and liars.

"For the law worketh wrath", as Paul saith, Rom. 4:15, because it revealeth sin, by which the conscience is confounded; and when the conscience is confounded it is distressed and put in perturbation by wrath and death, which the soul sees that it deserves by the law revealing them. This excess, when men fall into it, suddenly and terribly vexes and confounds and disturbs the proud, bringing them to nothing and forcing them to lay aside all supercilious conceit of their own righteousness and to seek the mercy of God. If these characters of which we are now speaking have not proved these things in their own feelings and by their own experience they will read, hear of them, and do all that they do, in vain. For it is vexation and tribulation, as Isaiah shows, 28:19, which alone give understanding to the hearer; that is, the Word of God becomes intelligible unto them only who have felt what it contains, and who have been well exercised and vexed with tribulations. The cross of Christ is the only way of instruction in the Word of God, and the only true theology.

These words "sore" and "suddenly", however, may be understood two ways. They may be referred either to the *time* or to the *kind* of temptation. Their meaning with reference to the *time* of the temptation is this, — that such may not be long left thus, but that they may be vexed suddenly, in order that being quickly turned from their iniquity they may thirst after the mercy of God. But when referred to the *kind* of temptation it means, that they may not be vexed with any light tribulation but with the storm of this greatest and most severe vexation, the force and nature of which are to be most powerful; and therefore it most powerfully humbles and instructs unto grace. For the self-wisdom and self-righteousness of

these workers of iniquity render them so obstinate and stubborn, that if they be touched with certain light temptations only, they glory in them without any fear, and in the midst of these tribulations think themselves to be sincere and true martyrs, so pertinaciously do these ravening wolves imitate sheep's clothing. Hence they become hardened and confirmed in their ungodliness by those very temptations whereby they are visited that they may be reformed.

But they cannot stand before the face of this visitation when they are vexed with the confusion of sins and the wrath of God. This is the vexation which subverts the securely impious, and in which none persevere but sincere and upright hearts, who are rightly instructed in the fear of God and in hope. Wherefore as the enduring of the wrath of God is impossible, so it is most especially necessary for these unbelieving and insensible ones, as being that alone which is sufficiently powerful to humble them effectually.

It was with such a visitation as this that St. Paul was overtaken, which came upon him immediately from heaven, when he was filled with the most secure violence and impetuously perverted zeal; for being on a sudden surrounded with a light, and all trembling, he said, Acts 9:6, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And here is proved that word of Jeremiah, 23:29, "Is not my word like fire? saith Jehovah; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces"? And Ps. 21:9, "Thou wilt make them as a fiery furnace in the time of thine anger: Jehovah will swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them". David would not have said these things if he had not experienced them. For this "furnace" and this "fire" are the 'rebuking in anger' and the 'chastening in his hot displeasure', which drive guilty consciences into inextricable and inevitable straits by setting before them a view and a realizing sense of the judgment of God.

In this verse moreover he compares, or rather sets forth in other words, the fury and the anger of Jehovah. For to

be ‘rebuked in the Lord’s anger’ is nothing else than, for the conscience of man to be ashamed, to be confounded, and to be found guilty, before the eternal judgment. And there is no man whose conscience is not found guilty before that judgment; as it is said, Ps. 143:2, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight no man living is righteous”. What is it not to be righteous but to be found guilty and to be confounded? Again David saith, Ps. 116:11, “I said in my haste, all men are liars”.

Therefore he desires all these insensible ones who still securely glory in themselves, to be brought to this and be confounded. “Thy hand will find out all thine enemies; thy right hand will find out those that hate thee”. Again, Ps. 83:16, “Fill their faces with confusion, that they may seek thy name, O Jehovah”.

For as I have often said, the ungodly differ from the godly in this. They are both indeed liars and unjustified before God and are both vanity of vanities. But this tribulation turns the godly to a knowledge of themselves; and having attained unto this knowledge, they flee from the anger of the judgment of God to his mercy and are saved. As is said, Prov. 12:7, “The wicked are overthrown and are not”. Which some have understood thus, “turn away” that is, unto a knowledge of themselves; and when they have been thus humbled they will cease to be ungodly, having thus obtained grace. But when such are turned away they do not come to a knowledge of themselves, and therefore do not seek grace, but remain in their vanity, lies, and iniquity.

Again ‘to be corrected in anger’ is nothing else than to be “sore vexed”, as David says; that is to be under a conflict with death and hell. When this anger is kindled, yea but a little, as David saith, Ps. 2:12, “Blessed are all they that put their trust in him”. But this the wicked do not. For in the same psalm he sets forth two evils, where he saith, verse 5, “Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, that is, shall rebuke and convict,

and vex them in his sore displeasure”, that is, shall correct and chastise them. 1 Sam. 2:10, teaches, “They that strive with Jehovah shall be broken to pieces; against them will he thunder in heaven”. And we have many other like passages in the scriptures where this powerful confusion and vexation of heart are described, both as they are experienced in the hearts of the saints and as they are foretold to await all the wicked; by which the former being humbled are comforted and raised up, but the latter when humbled are only afflicted more and overwhelmed. David says this, therefore, as wishing all men to be saved, and that none should perish.

There is moreover in the Hebrew a beautiful allusion in these two verbs “turn” and “ashamed”, which the Latin language is not capable of rendering. For in this passage we have by a change of letters JASOBU for JESOBU; and David repeats the word JESOBU, “let them be put to shame”, from a vehem-tence of feeling, desiring that those things which he himself suffers may be turned upon his adversaries, that they also may cease to be proud and to persecute the humbled. As we have it also, Ps. 54:5, “He will requite the evil unto mine enemies”.

“The righteous is delivered out of trouble and the wicked cometh in his stead”, Prov. 11:8. And Ps. 32:10, “Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in Jehovah, lovingkindness shall compass him about”. In the same way he prays, Ps. 79:5, 6, that the anger of the Lord may be turned from him upon his enemies, saying “How long, O Jehovah? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire? pour out thy wrath upon the nations that know thee not, and upon the kingdoms that call not upon thy name”. He also prays in this psalm, that *he* might not be rebuked by the anger of the Lord, but that *they* might feel this rebuke who call not upon him nor fear his wrath.

We have observed that the enemies of the godly are more especially those who are called “workers of iniquity”, advisers to a presumptuously secure heart and to an ignorant faith and

hope in God; and therefore the godly have a continual warfare with these, which warfare they would not have, if they had at some time been vexed with this kind of tribulation themselves.

But if any one chooses rather by "workers of iniquity" to understand devils, who in the hour of temptation fearfully assault the godly and urge and drive them to desperation, setting before their eyes good works and telling them that if they do these they will have no reason to despair, and thus confirming desperation by presumption, and presumption by desperation, and all the while entangling their souls in these trammels of iniquity, that they might not worship God in true godliness of faith and hope. If any one, I say, wishes to understand the passage thus, I will not oppose it; for devils are certainly the most crafty persuaders of souls to disobedience under a show of obedience, because it is peculiar to them to transform themselves into angels of light, and then more especially when they least ought to do it, that is, in the time of tribulation.

I believe however that the prophet speaks against those *men* who are the enemies of true godliness, that is, those who cannot endure the knowing or being told that their ignorant wisdom will drag thousands together with themselves into hell.

P S A L M V I I .

THE INNOCENCE (IGNORANCE) OF DAVID, WHICH HE SUNG UNTO THE LORD CONCERNING THE WORDS OF THE ETHIOPIAN, THE SON OF JEMINI.

Many have spent much labor upon this psalm in order to show what the scope of it is and what the title indicates, and it still remains as much as ever in dispute. We in the mean time will follow Burgensis who seems to me to come nearer to the true point than any other, when he judges that the Psalm is not to be understood of Saul but of Shimei. That we may see the propriety of thus understanding it, let us cite the words of the history recorded in 2 Sam. 16:5-8, "And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out thence a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David: and all the people, and all the mighty men, were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Begone, begone, thou man of blood, and base fellow: Jehovah hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul in whose stead thou hast reigned; and Jehovah hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son; and, behold, thou art taken in thine own mischief, because thou art a man of blood." When the servants of David wanted to kill Shimei David said, "Let him alone, and let him curse, for Jehovah hath bidden him". Who is there that would dare to say, why dost thou do so? And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold my son, who came forth from my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more may this Benjamite now do it"? 2 Sam 16:11.

It is evident therefore that he calls this cursing Shimei, in the title, the son of Jemini, and it is he who cursed David, although Saul is also called the son Jemini, 1 Sam. 9:21, because they were of the same tribe, 2 Sam. 16:15.

Therefore, we have here also at the same time the words on account of which he sung this psalm, namely, on account of the curses of Shimei, by which, as a most bitter and persevering calumniator, he loaded him with false accusations. For we do not find in the history of Saul that he vomited forth any such words as these against David. Hence it must of necessity follow that it is concerning the dreadful injury done him by these words that David speaks, as the text of the Psalm itself will show.

It now remains to be shown why he particularly calls him Cush, which signifies an Ethiopian. Almost all commentators agree that this is a metaphor, because blackness always indicates wickedness of character. As the poet of old also saith—

Romans! of this man beware;
He is a dark — black character!

As on the other hand we call him white who is sincere and upright and of a candid heart, and who is without any dark cast, as the proverbial term goes. Commentators suppose therefore that the proper name of the man was omitted by David in the title, and that he made use of a new appellation suited to his heart and disposition. But if we do not admit this we may consider that he had two names, which we frequently find in the sacred scriptures, as may be collected from the lineage of Christ, Matt. 1 and Luke 3, and as we find with respect to Zacharias the son of Jehoida, 2 Chron. 24:20, is called in Matt. 23:35 the son of Barachiah. Still the same point remains, that, being silent about the name Shimei, he chose to call him by another name, "Ethiopian", rather than Shimei, as being an appellation more suited to his bad and malicious nature.

Now if we receive these things the ignorance here mentioned will discover itself of its own accord and show what

its meaning is. For as David was so far from acknowledging the justice of the curses of Shimei, as, even on his death bed, to command Solomon, 1 Kings 2:9, that he should ‘bring down his, Shimei’s, hoar head to the grave with blood’, as a revenge for the curses that he had received from him; it is manifest that he, David, had confessed his innocence unto God, and that this “ignorance” is nothing else than innocence, for that of which we are not conscious, we may be rightly said not to know or to be ignorant of.

But as it is wicked for any one to trust in his own devices, Prov. 12:2, and according to “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool”, Prov. 28:26. Therefore we are so to stand in this innocence of ours as yet to fear the judgment of God, and not to glory in our innocence in a way of security; but we are first to give glory to God and confess before him that his judgment is one thing, and man’s another; that having thus received permission from him, we may profess our innocence before men, and yet not injure, but glorify, his judgment; and this we learn by temptation. Therefore David, though he knew that false things were laid to his charge, that is, as far as his conscience was concerned, yet, as he knew also that God had bidden Shimei thus to curse him, feared lest they were true and just in the sight of God; nor had he a sufficient confidence in his own conscience. In the same way, the apostles had not sufficient confidence in themselves when they heard that one of them should betray their Lord. For such is the tender state of every godly man’s conscience, that although innocent, he fears sin where sin is not. Such is the case where there is the fear of God and a sense of the inscrutable depth of his judgment.

Hence David, though innocent, fears that he was guilty of those things which were laid to his charge; and especially in his time of temptation, in which God seemed to favor the cause of his adversaries, and to strike him because of those things which are laid to his charge, though he knows nothing

of them. Therefore though he is not conscious of any crime either to himself or before men, yet, fearing lest he should be guilty in heart, for God searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, he teaches us in this Psalm, that which is taught by the Apostle, 2 Cor. 10:18, "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth".

Wherefore although this Psalm is written concerning David and his ignorance, yet, as this evil of calumny is common and frequent in the world we are to believe that these things are written as a doctrine applicable in general unto all of us; as Paul saith, Rom. 15:4, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope".

Here we see what are and ought to be the mind and feelings of all those who would faithfully, and in the fear of God, bear and overcome calumny. For this kind of persecution David has here set forth to us in this seventh psalm. He has in the preceding Psalms instructed us in those evils and temptations whereby we are purified from sin; and now he would more perfectly instruct us in the perfect fear of God; that we may there fear that we have sinned where we really have not sinned; and that we may be perfected in such a hatred of sin and such a love of God, that we may be brought to fear as sins those sins of which we are ignorant, and which are indeed no sins at all.

To attain unto this perfection, we have need, not of a persecuting Absalom whom we know for certain persecutes us unjustly, but of a calumniating Shimei whose curses we may fear as true, though we know ourselves innocent all the while. For we are not to be satisfied with this our innocence and rest in contented security, but are to say with Job, 27:5, 6, "Far be it from me that I should justify you: till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live". Thus, as we touched upon these points in the

fifth Psalm, we are to confess our ignorance before God, who alone knows the hearts of men; but before men, we are to hold fast our innocence, if our heart does not condemn us. For, as before God sins are not to be denied, before whom no man living is justified; so, before men, the truth is to be asserted and maintained, before whom we can and ought to live without sin. David therefore having received this instruction by his own experience, imparts it unto us also, by which we avenge ourselves of calumny much easier than Apelles some time since took vengeance by his own picture. He saith therefore,

V. 1. — *O Jehovah my God, in thee do I take refuge (put my trust) : save me from all them that pursue (persecute) me and deliver me.*

The first feeling here set forth is not that of heated revenge and zeal against the calumniators and persecutors, as is the case with man accustomed to vanity and lies, for God saith, “vengeance is mine, I will repay”, but we are first of all to flee unto God and are to lay both our calumny and our persecution before him with that full hope and confidence which innocence and a good conscience will in such cases afford us.

Here then, you see, David prays to be saved from all his persecutors; for there were two that persecuted him, Absalom with smiles and by action and strength, and Shimei with the scourge of the tongue and calumny; and without doubt the latter was not alone, or at least, he did not do this to please himself only; and therefore David saith, “Save me from all them that persecute me”, with the same feelings as those under which he said, Ps. 6:7, ‘Mine eye waxed old because of all mine enemies’. Because those who suffer both violence and calumny seem to have all things against them; and it appears to them that there is not one left to help them; as indeed all things do seem to one thus alone. Therefore he saith, “from all them that persecute me”; that is, for I find all men and all things against me.

And as to what difference there may be between “save me”

and “deliver me”, I do not think that of any consequence whatever; unless we wish to understand “save me” as referring to the good, and “deliver me” to the evil. But rather, the whole is to be understood as a repetition, and indicative of the power of his feelings.

This verse we may bring forward against those who do not believe that faith and hope are necessary either for prayer or for receiving the grace of God or for receiving the benefit, as we term it, of the sacraments. As the prophet prays to be saved or delivered, and as he glories that he hopes in the Lord, it is certain that these things will follow to those that believe in, hope in, and love the Lord. He says moreover, “In *thee* do I take refuge”, not in myself, nor any man. We have spoken more at large of these things in the fifth Psalm.

V. 2 — *Lest they tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.*

Jerome translates the passage from the Hebrew, “Lest he seize my soul like a lion, and tear it, and there be none to deliver”. ‘Seize’, says David, and ‘tear’, as a furious beast does, which words he uses that we may not understand that any common kind of seizing is spoken of. Then he says, “like a lion”, a most implacable beast, and “tear me in pieces”. Tear what in pieces? my house or my cattle? no! my soul; that is, my life, that life which my body has from my soul, as we have shown from the preceding Psalm.

All these things David magnifies with the power of language that he may set forth his extreme necessity, and put it in its most alarming light, that he may be the sooner heard; or rather, that he may excite himself to a more ardent intentness of soul, for we must pray with earnestness and seriousness if we would ever be heard. It is not to be stated, however, that David was at this time in that state, that he feared lest he should be seized by Absalom and Shimei as by roaring lions, and should be torn in pieces by them; and he knew there was no hope nor help for him but in God. In a like situation are all those who

suffer violence and calumny, who will well understand the sense and meaning of these words.

V. 3. — *O Jehovah my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;*

V. 4. — *If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me (did me evil); yea, I have delivered him that without cause was mine adversary;*

Here David enters upon the very theme of his Psalm and according to the title speaks of the words of the Ethiopian, Shimei. This calumniator first cast in his teeth that he was guilty of the blood of the house of Saul, when he said, ‘Come out, come out, thou man of blood, and thou man of Belial’; In the second place that he had invaded his kingdom by violence; and that therefore both these things had now come upon his own head. That, first of all, his blood should be shed by his own son, and that, in the next place, the kingdom should be transferred to him. Of both therefore David complains and confesses himself innocent.

The nature and experience of the second namely ‘innocence’, he teaches us to understand in two ways, *negatively* and *conditionally*. That we should maintain our confidence in an innocent conscience, as far as the sight of men is concerned, and should yet fear our own secret sinfulness in the sight of God, our judge. For the experience of each is set forth in these verses in this manner, ‘O Jehovah my God, so far am I from having done this, so far are my hands from being guilty in this matter, so far am I from being the cause of the bloodshedding of Saul’s family and of the loss of his kingdom, that I did not even return him and his evil for the evil they did me, even when it was in my power to do it, when I caught him in the cave alone, 1 Sam. 24:5, and when I took away his spear out of his camp, 1 Sam. 26:11, etc.

Moreover he says I have not only not rendered evil for evil, but have, on the contrary, rendered good for evil. Thus Saul himself testified, 1 Sam. 24:17, saying, “Thou art more

righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil". So far is it, says David, from being possible that I can be a man of blood. But if there be any secret sin in me, in that I did not do these things faithfully, and thou judgest me thus, on that account, I am ready before thee. Punish me as I deserve. "Let mine enemy persecute my soul and take it".

Further, the expression "iniquity" seems to refer to the latter accusation of Shimei, and "if I have done this" to the former. So that the meaning is, I have not committed any act of blood at all, with which he charges me. Nor is there any iniquity in my hands, as to my having gotten the kingdom; because I have done no one any injury in this matter, for I did it, not by any temerity of my own, but according to thy command.

But where he imprecates so many evils upon himself if he had done any such thing, the feeling grows more powerful than it is where he merely says that he did it not. Whereby we are taught to pray with an earnest heart against calumny; yet so, that we may testify our innocence, and at the same time fear the secret judgment of God, being prepared to suffer any evils if we are found blamable. For although according to the best of your own judgment you have the command of God on your side in any work, yet you ought to fear lest you should not have acted rightly, and be apprehensive lest any commandment should be against you. Even as Abraham, though he had received the renewal of the promise in Isaac, yet fearing the judgment of God, he willingly offered him up as a burnt-sacrifice.

So David, in this case, though conscious of no sin, yet he resigned the kingdom, saying, 2 Sam. 15:26, "But if he say thus, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." So he permitted Shimei to curse on and even believed that he was commanded of God to do it, fearing that it might all be just and right that happened unto him.

Wherefore, however just, holy, innocent, true, and divine your cause may be, you must conduct it in fear and humility, always fearing the judgment of God and having confidence in nothing of your own but in the mercy of God alone. Judas Maccabee was engaged in a most just war, and many others were overcome in most just causes, and in divine matters; as is written in Judges 20:21-25; because they did not go forth in fear, but depended upon the justness of their cause, and not on the mercy of God only. But the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 4:4, "For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified".

This is what David, being placed under tribulation, teaches by his example, namely: that no one is at liberty to arrogate justice unto himself so as to make a tumult on account of the justice of his cause, or to rage with revenge because of it, or to meditate any retaliation either by force or by law. It is in this way that the church leaders who wish to seem just and wise above all men madly rage; but they ought first to be concerned with humble fear lest they have merited all those things before God, and they ought to offer themselves for deserved punishment.

Then they ought to pray against their adversaries according to the innocence of their conscience. This they may do, for no adversary can have a just cause against any man who has an innocent conscience; for this God alone can have, and this he does have. For the judgments of God are far different from the judgments of men. Man sees those things only which are open to view; but God beholds the heart. Therefore when any man judges otherwise than according to outward appearance, he becomes a calumniator like this Shimei.

In order to set forth this humility and fear of God, David carefully entitled the Psalm 'Concerning the words of Cush'; because he was not ignorant that he deserved the persecution of Absalom his son, and yet he does not excuse it. But the curses of Shimei he does not acknowledge; or, if they are

true, he confesses that he does not know his guilt. He deserved by his adultery and murder the evils that came upon him from Absalom; but he is not conscious that he deserves the curses of Shimei concerning the blood of Saul. Yet he fears that he deserved it on account of the secret and fearful judgment of God. How these things are the godly and God-fearing heart well knows and feels when it is vexed and afflicted either by accusing men or accusing devils.

The word, moreover, which the translator has rightly rendered "iniquity" is in the Hebrew AVAL, which signifies properly that which the Latins express by 'iniquity' (*iniquitas*) that is, a hurting or injuring a person more or less, so as to transgress the bounds of what is right, as it happens in the affairs of men. Thus here it would have been unjust to invade the kingdom of a neighbor against his will, if he had done it. And what our translation has "I will justly depart empty from mine enemies" Jerome renders, 'Yea, I have not sent my enemies, that is my persecutors, away empty'. Here Jerome wishes to convey that signification which I have mentioned, that David not only did not render evil for evil, but even did not send his enemies empty away'; that is, he rewarded them good for evil. For this also is a kind of revenge, to force benevolence and good-will from those who offend us; for even our enemies are to be loved. Though I know not whether this translation fully gives the meaning of the Hebrew.

Observe here how David exemplified the evangelical standard of righteousness. For to render evil for evil seemis agreeable to the feelings of the flesh; and this was prohibited by the law of Moses, unless it were done by the sentence of a superior, for no one was permitted to do it by his own authority. The contrary is the rendering of good for good; but this is mercenary and servile. This is how those serve God who wish to suffer neither evil nor death. For God oppresses us with evils, that we may learn to serve him purely, without any expectation either of good or reward on account of our service. The third

kind of return is, rendering evil for good, which is hellish, yea, worse than hellish. The fourth kind or return is rendering good for evil. This is the gospel of Christ. David says he acted according to this last; because, he not only did not render evil for evil, but rewarded good unto them, who, after they had received good from him, ungratefully returned him evil, for so the words are; as we have before shown from the confession of Saul, 1 Sam. 24:17.

V. 5. — *Let the enemy pursue (persecute) my soul, and overtake it; yea, let him tread my life down to the earth, and lay my glory in the dust.*

These words do not seem to me to be spoken under a feeling of confidence as many think, though David was certain that these things would not take place, because he did not deserve them. For as he began in humble prayer, so we strive to sing these things in the same fear of God. Because, as I said, though he was not conscious that he merited this cursing, nay, though he knew that he was called to the kingdom by the command of God, yet, for many reasons, he could not glory long and boast in this long: first, because God is wonderful in all his ways; and then, because we do not sufficiently know our own hearts. By these things it may come to pass, that you either may not rightly understand the command of God, or may not rightly fulfill it. Thus you will be guilty though in a most hidden way; and either the commandment of God must be made null or altered, or God must stand against you, whom you thought to be on your side.

It was in this fear that Abraham, as I before said, was instructed when he offered up his son Isaac. This indeed is an exalted degree of the fear of God; where thou art obliged to apprehend that God and his commandment are not for thee, and to fear that they are both against thee. In a word, where thou hast to fear God did not wish, but forbade those very things which he really did wish and command. Whereas in all other

cases the fear is only that we have not done those things which we know are plainly commanded.

Who can endure this most constant inconstancy of the divine contradiction, so to speak, with an all-constant though incomprehensible constancy, but he who is a “man after God’s own heart”, as David and Abraham were? For here the very truth of God itself seems to totter and excite hatred according to all human judgment. But in this way must that mercenary principle of our servile nature be destroyed, whereby we worship God only for our own advantage; and under the influence of which we are inflamed towards God, and for God’s sake, as we imagine and are filled with pride, zeal, and hatred for his cause’s sake, and ready and willing to endure any thing for his name and worship and for the salvation of the souls of men, as we call it. For who of us that had the promise of David or of Abraham would not show forth and maintain this command of God even before angels, if any one should oppose him with a denial upon that ground? So deeply therefore are the bent and feeling of the flesh rooted in man that God must show himself to us as if he were a God inconstant and faithless, in order that we may be rightly instructed thereby not to trust to any thing, even divine or eternal, with a perverted affection.

David here mentions the three things to be destroyed, which we surrender with the greatest grief, namely, soul, life, and honor: He devotes his soul a prey to persecution and his life to a trampling under foot, and his honor to a burial. For in the Hebrew it is said, ‘And let him bury, set up, my glory in the dust’; which indeed is the same as our translation but somewhat clearer.

He seems to distinguish “soul” from “life”, in that “soul” should be understood as signifying, as I have already observed, the substantial life which gives life to the body, but “life” the conversation or the things done in the body by the soul. This is the distinction which the Greeks seem to retain in their *Zoa*

and *Bios*. Though we use the same word *leben*, yet, we use it in different senses when speaking of the natural life and of the works of that life.

In these words he explained what his mind and feelings were when he said, 2 Sam. 15:26, "But if he say thus, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I", etc. And also when he said, 16:11, "Let him curse; for Jehovah hath bidden him". For then he was ready to lose his soul, his life, and the glory of his kingdom, as is manifest. Therefore he now sings these same things under the same feelings, that by his own example he may instruct us all how we ought to think, how to speak, and how to act, and instructs those who may be brought to suffer the same things.

The sense is therefore, 'If I am such before thee, let that be done which is now done. I willingly submit. Let Absalom and Ahithophel seize me, neither let there be any one to save me from my persecutors, nor to deliver me from the hand of him that seizeth me. I am ready to bear thy will and to endure the punishment due to me.'

Moreover let them tread all my life and the actions of my life down to the ground; that is, let them destroy and cast away all of them, that nothing whatever may any more remain before the eyes, in the ears, or in the memory of men: I willingly lose all. Let me be found evil in my life, useless, and pernicious, worthy of being vilely trampled under foot, of being supplanted by all, and of being cast away as dust shaken from the foot. But let all raise and exalt my enemy and extol him to the skies, let all his life and actions be great and wonderful before thee and before all men, and let all that he has done, or now does or will do, be honored in the same way.

Not content with this, he says, 'Yea, let him not only cast down my present and future glory and power, but let him bury them in the dust; so that they shall be cast away for ever, and never more appear. Let the throne of my kingdom, the wife of my bosom, my children, my friends, my riches, and all

that I have, go to oblivion. Yea, let that glorious promise made me concerning a future Christ, which I held more dear than all things else, and in which my only hope, glory, and rejoicing stood, go also; so that, behold, I also like my father Abraham bring and offer up my most beloved Isaac'.

O "man according to God's own heart", indeed! who can rightly value this state of heart and mind? who can rightly speak of it? We think it the greatest of all things to die voluntarily, and lay down our life. But here, David is prepared, not to die merely, but to be seized by a persecutor, to be delivered into the hand of enemies, to be put to death. Not to fall asleep gently in the midst of the tears of a circle of dear relatives, but to be put to death in the midst of infuriated, mocking, and triumphant enemies. But, as to us, what do we not perpetrate, what tragedies do we not act out, if even one of our works or our words be blamed, or we are not highly celebrated? Whereas here, one that was universally renowned for so many triumphs in war, for so many miracles, for a conquered Goliath, for a vanquished bear, for so many godly works, for so many augmentations of divine worship, not only permits all his actions to lose their praise, but to be cast away as dust from the shoes and trodden under foot for ever, and so trampled upon by all till they are reduced to nothing!

But as to us, what murders and acts of violence do we not plan, if not carry into execution, even upon the whole race, either for the maintaining of some old honors and dominions, or for defending some present privileges of our own? Whereas, David, though having been anointed king three times by the divine command, and having received the infallible declaration and promise of the Christ that should be born from him, not only lays down the whole kingdom and all that distinguished honor, but is prepared never to receive it again, and to remain as a cast-away and dishonored for ever, permitting all those unspeakable honors and ornaments to be trodden down and buried in the dust. What feeling can be conceived more un-

bearable, more sublime, more deep, and, in a word, more wonderful than this!

David had all these things by divine command and by commands repeated in more places than one. Why then does he not in a rage stand up for the defence of the divine right? Is he then ungodly for not maintaining, defending, and preserving the kingdom thus given him by the divine command, by blood and by death? But we at this day seem the most godly of all men, if we confound heaven and earth in defending temporal things, having affixed to them ourselves the title of divine right, without any fear of God whatever; whereas, if we really had any of these things by divine right, God would justly take the whole from us, being offended at our pride and contention.

If David feared that the command which he received from God had been altered by him, after he had been created king of all prophets by so many signs, miracles, and unctions, and after he had received the future Christ by so firm a promise, I ask you, what command, what promise of God, we can have that can give us cause for so much pride, war, contention, and for tragedies of the like kind? We may well fear therefore that there is the least vestige of the true Church there, where there is the most noise about the Church. For we see that God is most jealously impatient of all abuse of his promises, and terrible in his counsels and commands to the children of men.

But this is enough. I do not say these things as wishing that any one's right and aim should be taken from him or encroached upon. But what I believe is, that we are taught by the words and the example of this scripture, that whosoever holds or possesses any thing, however just and right his title to it may be, should possess it in fear, and not defend it by force but by prayer and patience, and be prepared to yield it up if God so please. Indeed the true force and meaning of this scripture could not be fully understood and set forth were it

not for the examples of the present age, to which it is so exactly adapted and which it so clearly portrays.

For in this way do the Roman and Greek churches both sin in their contentions for superiority and dominion, while neither yields to the other; whereas, if they acted in the fear of God each would yield to the other. Neither of them would have lost their superiority, but would have preserved it much more effectually if they had attempted by prayer instead of aiming at it by the contentions of popes and high-priests; that is, if they had not sought to do it by the will and favor of men but by the mercy of God, for it would not then have been preserved by the former, but by the latter. For in this way David also prays, and yet offers himself up: he asks with Christ that the cup might pass from him, and yet obediently yields to the will of God. As it is written in the law of Moses, "And thou shalt do righteously that which is right". Hence we see that he who has a most just cause is blamable before God, if he does not defend it in the fear of God. God regardeth not the proud and contentious, however righteous they may be.

Thus we read it was in the case of Job, in favor of whose cause God himself bore testimony, yet he himself reproved Job at the same time.

Such humility and fear are necessary in the present day for us, who are contending for the truth of theology and the power of the church; for we shall in both causes be condemned by God, though they are causes most just, if we do not seek the mercy of God by prayer, rather than aim at victory by a reliance upon the justice of our cause. We are indeed to pray that the truth may triumph; but if it does not please God that it should be accomplished by us, let it be accomplished by whomsoever he will. For let no one think that he shall acceptably do the commands of God, or defend them, if he offends at the same time and transgresses that greatest of all the commandments, the worshiping of God in fear and humility. For

all the other commandments are regulated by this, and without this all the other commandments come to nothing at all.

Nothing therefore is acceptable except that which is done in fear and humility. But where shall we find this state of things in the church at present? What is the church in our times but a certain confusion of schisms, where a tumult and noise are made everywhere about the justness of causes and the divine right, but all without any fear? and thus while we fulfill all commandments, we set aside the very head, life, and standard rule of all the commandments. Oh, blindness, blindness, blindness!

V. 6. — *Arise, O Jehovah, in thine anger, lift up thyself against the rage (in the borders) of mine adversaries, and awake for me; thou hast commanded judgment (awake, my God, in the commandment for me; thou hast commanded).*

These words in the Hebrew are given in one verse, but it is a verse the most obscure; nor is it fully understood to this day what or concerning what it speaks. Jerome translated it, ‘Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, and lift up thyself with indignation above mine enemies: awake for me in the judgment which thou hast commanded’. But, ‘with indignation above mine enemies’ is not in harmony with the Hebrew. I therefore will make bold to translate the passage verbatim from the Hebrew thus, ‘Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, and lift up thyself in the furies of my persecutors, and awake up for me from the judgment, thou hast commanded’. The word which we render ‘in the borders’ is, in the Hebrew, equivalent to and nearly the same as the word ‘furies’, or angers, and therefore, following Jerome, I have rendered it ‘furies’ rather than “borders”.

But this solecism, ‘thou hast commanded’, which our translators have made sense by the addition of the relative pronoun “which” is found also in other places of the scriptures. As in Psalm 51:8, “The bones, thou hast broken, shall rejoice”. Where we render it, “The bones which thou hast broken”, or,

"the broken bones"; as here also, "the judgment commanded", or, "the judgment which thou hast commanded". But, according to my judgment, I should add not, "which", but 'because', or, "for"; thus, 'because', or, 'for', thou hast broken them', and, 'because or, 'for', thou hast commanded'. And this "arise" or, "lift up thyself", or, "awake up", is equivalent to 'take out of the way', or, 'destroy'; because it is here put alone and implies power, as signifying that the Lord would send a destruction upon the anger or rage of his enemies: in this manner, 'Lift up thyself against the wrath of mine enemies'; that is, 'make a destruction and overthrow of those ragings whereby my persecutors rage against me', namely, Absalom and his party. The same meaning is to be applied, "awake", or lift up thyself, or arise; for David wishes to say, do thou raise or lift up thy hand against these furies. Just in the same sense as he says, Ps. 138:7, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me; thou wilt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies".

Then there is that expression, "awake up for me"; where, instead of "for me", our translation has "O Lord my God"; because, without the *points*, the Hebrew may read "my God", or, "for me". And "awake" applies to him who is waked up and who arises as out of sleep; as David says also in another place "awake, O Lord, why sleepest thou"?

Again, 'from the judgment', which our translation has "in the commandment", seems to me to mean the office from which judges and kings derive their name; concerning which it is said, Ps. 1:5, "The wicked shall not stand in the judgment". And Ps. 122:5, "For there are set the thrones of judgment". So that "from judgment" should signify the same as for judgment, or for the purpose of judgment. As it is in Ps. 68:29, "From thy temple at Jerusalem, that is, because of thy tempel at Jerusalem, kings shall bring presents unto thee". In the same manner, Ps. 4:7, "From the time of their corn and wine are they increased". For this use of the letter *Mem* or the

preposition *a* or *ab* seems to have a force equivalent to a conjunction, according to the sense of that passage, Ps. 81:4, "For it is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob". So here "from judgment", because that is the judgment which thou hast commanded.

Jehoshaphat giving commandment to the judges said, 2 Chron. 19:6, "Consider what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for Jehovah". Directly afterwards he commanded them, that they should judge for the judgment and the cause of the Lord when they returned to Jerusalem. Therefore David prays to God that he would rise up for him unto judgment, that the ungodly may not prevail, who always exercise among the people their own tyranny instead of the judgment of God. If, therefore, we receive the meaning of the passage thus, it will easily appear that 'commandment' and 'judgment' will signify one and the same thing; because, in judgment judges execute the command of God, whereas tyrants rather subvert it, as has been said.

The meaning is therefore according to the peculiar grammatical construction, 'Arise, O Lord, and show thy wrath, that thou mayest no longer suffer these things; oppose and prevent the fury of my persecutors, and stretch out thine hand against their rage, and prevent their impetuosity from falling on me. Finally awake and remember me. This I pray, not on my own account but for thy judgment's sake; lest all things be rashly perverted and confounded while there is none to administer and govern affairs; and especially at a time when all things ought to be governed by thine own immediate order and command'. So far the grammatical meaning.

Now calling theology to our aid, let us inquire why he prays for the anger of God upon his enemies and why he arrogates to himself the kingdom when just before he had been so willing to give up the whole, and to benefit his enemies.

First of all, as he had offered himself and his in fear and humility, it is certain that this prayer was not uttered in a

wrong spirit. After he has ascribed all glory and righteousness to God, he prays in safety against those who exercised tyranny by force. For the fear of the Lord causes a man to execute the divine command faithfully; by which he knew that the kingdom and the administration of judgment were committed to him. Add to this, that he does not seek his own here but the things of God; for he says, thou hast commanded that I should hold the office of judgment among the people. Therefore he chose rather to use the word "judgment" than 'kingdom'; that he might show that he was concerned in the cause of God, and that he did not desire a mere pompous outside show, but a good work. Hence Paul says, 1 Tim. 3:1, "If a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work".

He prays then for the wrath of God upon them, not as desiring that they should be destroyed, but that, according to what he had said in the preceding Psalm, they might feel the wrath of God and God himself resisting them and making all their attempts vain, and might be led to repentance and be brought right; for if they felt not this wrath, they would go on multiplying their sins and remaining insensible and persecuting the godly, the ways of the godly, and the commands of God without end, thinking all the while that they were rendering God the greatest service. How then could a church of the godly subsist in the world, if God did not at some time manifest his anger against the ungodly, and judge the needy, and avenge the poor?

Therefore as he himself makes stormy the depths of the sea, so he again stills its waves, setting bounds to the surges, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed", as it is written in Job 38:11. So, he who raises the fury of the ungodly can also restrain it at his pleasure, in order to show his anger against it, and to manifest that its malice does not please him.

David therefore prays for three things: First, that God

would arise and show his anger and take away that will from the enemies upon which they presume. Secondly, that he would restrain their fury and subvert their base attempts. And, thirdly, that returning to him he would restore the judgment of God. Thus, not because he deserved it, but because God had not only promised it and done it himself, but had commanded that it should be so; wherein the prophet seeks nothing else than that the truth of God may be established and that his command might be fulfilled: and he says, if this may not be he will willingly yield to their fury.

And here he begins to touch upon the feelings under such temptation, that, after the darkness of the tribulation is past his confidence in the mercy of God began to brighten. He teaches us that we should also learn to do the same in all our tribulations. For all these things took place and were recorded for an example unto us.

V. 7. — *And let the congregation of the people compass thee about; and over them return thou on high (for their sakes therefore return thou on high).*

In this verse, to keep to the sense and meaning already proposed, David shows that his concern was not for himself but for the people. For he first prays to be restored to his office, not for his own sake, nor for the sake of the people, but solely because God had commanded, that the will of God in this matter might be done first. From the love of God he comes down to the love of the brethren and of his neighbor, that by this same command of God he might serve his fellow men. Grant, says he, that the congregation of the people may again compass me about, cleave to me, and be subject to me, for he speaks in an optative sense by the future indicative, as he glories also, Ps. 144:2, "Who subdueth my people under me", for this redounds to their salvation if they obey thee who hast set me as king over them. Let them not stray as sheep without a shepherd, lest, as men without a guide, they fall into the hands of robbers. If I am unworthy, yet thou art worthy

whom I should obey, and they deserve not on account of me to be delivered over to scattering and destruction. O do thou, therefore, restore me to the head of affairs and gather the outcasts of Israel, Ps. 147:2, and the members into the body.

Thus the godly ruler of the people, as far as he himself is concerned, will willingly lose all things, will only desire to do his duty to God and men, and will fear lest his evils should be the cause of his people's peril and destruction.

As examples of this, look either at St. Athanasius or Hilary, or like characters, who in the time of the Arian heresy were driven from their stations into exile! For I do not see that it is possible to adduce any example from our own times, because none now a-days dare to do any thing that is likely to subject them to exile. These holy fathers, though they were most free from all iniquitous ambition, yet, as Hilary himself confesses, from the debt they owed to the ministry and priesthood committed to them, they prayed that the Arians might be cast down and that they might be permitted to minister unto God in their stations, and to profit the people; for while they were absent, they anxiously and grievously feared for the people intrusted to their care, lest they should be torn in pieces by heretical wolves; and they were deeply concerned also lest violence should be done to the word of God. If therefore the present verses be prayed in their persons and if the example of David be considered, it will be found that these words exactly agree with the feelings of those who are brought into such a state.

A parallel example would be, if a bishop or prelate were excommunicated and banished for the sake of the truth or because he was faithful in his office, and the people became alienated from him, being misled by pernicious entreaties, distractions and lies.

For if the people were not led into danger by any other evil they surely would be stirred up to lies and hatred of the truth by the slander and abuse of their prelate, a good man.

Since all Israel was perverted and corrupted by these means David sighed the more eagerly that he in a prayer called the wrath of God upon their fury, which was surely necessary to restrain the people. For it is better that the godless perish, than that the people should be ensnared by godless teaching, as the apostle, Gal. 1:8-9, uttered the wish that those who turned the Galatians from the truth might be anathema.

He has skilfully chosen his words; so as not to say, shall compass "*me* about", but "shall compass *thee* about"; that is, shall be gathered unto thee. That he might show forth that which we mentioned before, that the judgment is not of man but of God. Therefore, they who are gathered unto the man that ministers in the work of God are gathered unto God, and not unto man. He has reference to that figurative expression in the scriptures where the Lord is said to be in the midst of his people; as in Ps. 16:5, "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved". And 2 Cor. 6:16, which is taken from Lev. 26:12, "And I will walk among you and will be your God, and ye shall be my people".

Reasonably and most appropriately does David thus speak in this matter; for Absalom and those who imitate him do not seek to gather people unto God but unto themselves. They themselves wish to be idols surrounded by the people; for they seek not the glory of God and the salvation of the people, as all faithful men who stand between God and the people ought to do, but they seek the increase of their own power.

By this word therefore he strikes at the arrogance and ambition of those who command the people only to aggrandise their own power. That this may not be done is what the man after God's own heart ardently prays for. But this evil most certainly increases in the church at this day beyond all bounds, and that by the wrath of God, for our fearing the censures of men far more than the threatenings of God, and for our losing sight of God altogether by having respect to the persons of men.

Then with respect to these words, "For their sakes therefore return thou on high", or as the Hebrew has it, "return thou" etc. He does not say, put *me* again on high, but "Return *thou* on high". Nor does he say, for *my* sake, but 'For *their*, the people's sake". "For he says it is they that I pity, it is their calamity and their being seduced that fills me with so much grief. It is for them that I pray, not for myself. Behold therefore, as before in the love of God he prayed for the judgment which God had commanded; so here in the love of the brethren he prays for their salvation; thus, equally anxious in both respects lest the judgment of God should not be satisfied, and that men may not perish on his account; that the office of ruling the people which God has commanded, and the obedience of the people who submit themselves to it, may stand, that there may never be a people without a God nor a God without a people. O, that is a word that ought to be commended to all the bishops, pastors, rulers and leaders in the church, and held in memory and faithfully observed by them.

But when did God leave his seat on high so as to make it necessary for him to return unto it? Why, it is so often as any proud and ambitious one sits in the place of God. For while such an one subjects the people of God unto himself rather than unto God, he certainly, as far as lies within his power, is 'exalted, as Paul saith, 2 Thess. 2:4, above all that is called God or that is worshipped'. Such an one as this is ANTI-CHRIST! As this is a time when all these popes and high-priests in the church are thus ambitious and domineer over the people and subject them unto themselves and not unto Christ, who can doubt that Antichrist is reigning? But God returns on high when, casting down all these Absaloms, he again restores his judges as of old, who gather together people unto God, teach the commandments of God, as of old, and set aside all the traditions of men.

Let no one wonder that the returning of God on high is his reviving his judgment, his power, his office, and his min-

istry; for the prophet, as we know, speaks in the spirit, and therefore he is to be understood as speaking of a spiritual exaltation of God, who is exalted when we are brought to submit to him, when we hear his word, and when we see his works, and when all these are wrought by the ministration of man.

Wherefore this Psalm is the most fervent prayer for securing good bishops and leaders in the church. Would God that we each to-day might, with special fervency as becomes the words, offer this prayer in behalf of the church of Christ, for there never was a time when such a prayer was more needed.

But what do we see at present in the church that at all answers to these words? Where are to be found men who gather people together unto Christ, with the same anxiety as they gather them together unto themselves? Who is now as anxious to see the people fear Christ, as to see them fear the power of the pope? We unconcernedly smile at those who offend God by their sins, but when any offend the pope, we vent all our fury against them.

Then we compel them to observe our pomps, ceremonies, ordinances, and laws; but so far are we from gathering them together to the words of Christ and to the love of the Spirit, that we labor with all our endeavors to prevent the people from understanding Christ and the truth, and to hinder the believers in Christ from being in peace and union with each other, especially kings and princes. We have dared even to teach that it is an offence to teach the true godliness of Christ, that is, we teach that in our estimation it is a matter of no small peril for the people to be admitted to a true knowledge of the gospel, to prefer the Word of God to the words of men, and to value the works of true godliness above all the foolish outside show of works. For we begin to think that if such knowledge prevails we shall meet with famine on the one hand and poverty on the other, and that all the pomp which we have scraped

together from the whole world will fall to the ground. In a word, in such perilous times do we live that we are compelled to adore not God but man.

V. 8. — *Jehovah ministereth judgment to the peoples: judge me, O Jehovah, according to my righteousness, and to mine integrity that is in me.*

Here he plainly shows himself and discovers to us what he meant by God's returning on high, by the judgment commanded of God, and by the congregation of the people which compass God about. Why, says he, should I not speak thus? It is not we that rule, that judge, it is the Lord that judgeth the people, and the judgment of the people belongeth to him alone, it is he that speaks, that judgeth and does all things in us. Thus Gideon saith, Judges 8:23, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: Jehovah shall rule over you". Behold the holy man! he will not permit the people to be gathered together unto himself even though requested to do it; he gives all over unto the Lord.

On the other hand, 1 Sam. 8:7, the Lord said unto Samuel, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them". Not that there was any evil in asking a king, or in having one, for afterwards God gave them kings, but they by a blinded heart and affection were more anxious about a king than about God; for they did not desire the king that by him they might be brought nearer unto God; and therefore they were just such as ought to be under such a tyrant as would subject them to himself and not to God; and this is what happened unto them in Saul whom they desired for their king.

From all these things it is manifest that it is an evident sign of the wrath of God when he himself does not reign but permits ambitious Absaloms to hold the place of judgment, considering us unworthy to hear the Word of God or to see his works; as he himself foretold, Luke 17:22, saying, "The days

will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man and ye shall not see it".

In the Hebrew the verb is in the future, "he shall judge the people"; which, by the optative, may be understood in a petitionary sense in this way. I pray thee that thou wouldest be the judge of the people, and that thou wouldest not suffer men to judge, nor thy people to be seduced by the words of men, nor by the burdens which they may lay upon themselves. Or it may be understood assertatively and in a way of hope from his feeling a confidence that his prayer was heard. In this way I prefer to understand it. I feel confident and am certain that I am heard in praying, that thy Word, thy work, and thy judgment, may gather thy people together again whom these ungodly ones have scattered by their words and works, and have drawn them from thee on account of me.

After he had expressed his concern for the cause of God and of the people, he begins with his own cause, praying that his innocence might be made manifest; because the cause of God and of the people could not be restored in this instance unless the ungodly were cast down and his innocence were defended. Therefore the necessitous state of the glory of God and of the safety of the people compel him to pray that his own cause might be justified. For as long as he is condemned unjustly, so long it must appear that neither the judgment of God nor the obedience of his people is true, because he is not heard, though the accusations and condemnations of his accusers and persecutors must of necessity be heard.

Hence we see, that it is not enough that any one in a just cause suffer for the truth and commit the matter unto God, and be prepared to yield and to be brought down to the dust together with all his glory; but he must pray anxiously that God would judge and justify the cause of truth, not for his sake and advantage but for the vindication of the ministry of God and for the salvation of his people, which is not without peril nor without thy fault, if from a foolish humility thou

dost not pray most fervently for the preservation and manifestation of the truth and of thine own righteousness. For thou oughtest not so much to care about how humble and abject thou mayest be, as to fear that the people be drawn away from the truth and from righteousness by lies and iniquity. Thou art indeed to bear evils and injustice, but so, that thou mayest not throw away thy love upon others, for love ought to be solicitous about, not how thou mayest thyself rise, but how the godly may be prevented from offences and from perishing. "For my brethren and companions' sakes", says David, Ps. 122:8, "I will now say, peace be within thee". Thus Paul also gives thanks unto God that his bonds had not caused any impediment to the gospel, but had even furthered it. Phil. I :12-13.

David says therefore as thou art about to judge the people, as that belongs to thee alone and as it is thus that the people shall compass thee about again, and that thou shalt be again in the midst of them, as I have prayed thou mayest be; now, therefore that this may be brought about more effectually, judge me according to my righteousness and according to mine integrity that is in me, and thereby show how false and lying these curses of the Ethiopian the son of Jemini are, lest my righteousness being falsely accused should in any way hinder this thy judgment and the salvation of the people.

We have before shown in the third Psalm, that in the scriptures the righteousness of man and the righteousness of God are different things; that a man's righteousness is that whereby he is unblamable before men and in his own conscience, though that righteousness sufficeth not before God. But the righteousness of God is the grace and mercy of God which justify us even before God. Hence David most carefully adds "*my* righteousness", that he might distinguish it from that of which he speaks at the end of the Psalm, saying, "I will praise the Lord according to his righteousness". Perhaps he says "*my* righteousness" and "*mine* integrity" with

reference to the two things which he had before said, ver. 3, “If I have done this” and “if there be iniquity in my hands”; which he had said in defiance of Shimei. So that his “righteousness” is his not being guilty of the blood of Saul, nay, his not having rewarded evil unto them that did him evil and his not having sent his enemies empty away. His “integrity” or ‘innocence’ or ‘simplicity’, for the Hebrew word means all these things, are his not having invaded the kingdom of Saul by his own authority.

But what means this “upon me”? Jerome translates it “which is in me”: but whose righteousness is not in him? Does he add this in order to make a greater difference and to show more distinctly that the righteousness whereby we are justified before God is not in ourselves, but in God and out of ourselves? Yes, he does it to leave no one any opportunity of being puffed up in himself on account of his own righteousness before God; though for the sake of the salvation of others we are to seek to have our innocence or integrity justified before men, as was said.

V. 9. — *Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the righteous (thou shalt guide the just); for the righteous God trieth the minds and hearts (the hearts and reins).*

Here the Latin translator varies after his custom; for what he translated in Ps. 5:5, “The malignant shall not stand in thy sight” he here translates ‘wicked’ or “wickedness”. What he had rendered, Ps. 1:1, “ungodly” he here renders “sinners”. But what ungodly and ungodliness, malignant and malignity are, I have abundantly shown, Ps. 1 and 5. Aside from this the Latin translator took the word “just” from the end of this verse and joined it to the following verse against the Hebrew and Greek, but not without difficulty, in that he says in verse 11, “Just is my shield with the Lord,” as if the righteous could have with God another, that is an unjust shield”.

The Hebrew and Jerome’s translation run, “The wickedness of the ungodly shall come to an end, and the just shall

be established; the righteous God trieth the hearts and the reins".

David teaches us in this example that we also ought to contend more in prayer unto God against the malignity of the ungodly and for the innocence of the just, than in our own strength and with our noise and tumult. For we are to fight with weapons different from those of the ungodly. They contend with noise and tumult, but we are to contend with prayer, the Word, and patience.

Let it "come to an end", says David, which is the same as, let it be finished, end, and cease; as we have it, Ps. 104:35, "Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more". On the other hand, contrary to this, he prays that the just may be established; that is, that he may prosper, be guided, and be confirmed, and the more so by the wicked being consumed. Nor would it be at all absurd if we were to read it 'justice' (*justum*) in the neuter gender, in opposition to the "wickedness" of the wicked; thus taking it in the abstract for righteousness, or for a righteous thing, or the cause of a righteous person; as the apostle speaks, Rom. 5:7, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die". But these things are of little moment.

David then is to be understood to have prayed this verse as an example unto us in order to instruct us in right affections; for he did not offer up this prayer from a desire of revenge, but from a zealous love toward God and men, in the same way as he prayed in the verse preceding. For those who are desirous of revenge do not seek the fall of their adversaries in the last place but in the first. Whereas David here is concerned about God in the first place and about the people in the next, and then he comes to his own case in due order, and lastly unto his adversaries, whom he desires thus to be brought to an end, that the ministrations of God and the salvation of the people may not be endangered, as we before said; which peril cannot be taken out of the way unless the malignity of the ungodly be

brought to an end, and the cause of the innocence of the just be established; and that by the judgment and avenging hand of God. Wherefore as the wickedness of the wicked in the time of David's tribulation was the tyranny of Absalom and his party who oppressed justice, so in every state of the church each just man's oppression is the wickedness of his Absalom and the violence and tyranny which he endures.

CONCERNING THE REINS AND THE HEART.

We have not yet spoken on "the reins and the heart", of which frequent mention is made in the scriptures, and therefore we must once for all treat the subject here.

In the book of Leviticus nearly the whole of the third chapter, which instructs the priests concerning peace-offerings, speaks of the sacrifice of the reins or kidneys (*renibus*) or small kidneys (*renunculis*), of the parts that hold or contain the vitals, and of the fat and caul of the intestines. It is probable that the frequent mention that is made of kidneys or reins is taken from this part of the scripture, and therefore we must come to the nature and meaning of the words.

Physicians say that the two kidneys are connected to the loins and that they are the organs of lust and pleasure, as the heart is of fear and confidence, the spleen of laughter and joy, and the liver of love and hatred. Hence, they will have it that *ren* is derived from the Greek *reο* which signifies to flow, because the obscene humor of lust flows from the kidneys. Hence to the loins in which the kidneys are seated is ascribed by the scriptures the shame of lust; as in the passage, Luke 12:35, "Let your loins be girded about". Heb. 7:10, "For Levi was yet in the loins of his father Abraham". Again, Gen. 46:26, "And the souls which came out of Jacob's loins were threescore and six". It is manifest therefore that by reins are to be understood delights or pleasures, which must be offered as sacrifices to God by the mortification of the flesh.

These same pleasures or the sensations of delight that accompany them are signified by the caul and all the fat. Be-

cause all this delight and all this love and the pleasures attending it are to be offered to God, and we are to rejoice and delight in nothing but in God who alone is to be loved; as he saith, Lev. 3:17, ‘And all the fat shall be the Lord’s, by a perpetual statute’. This is what Paul also saith, Phil. 4:4, taking away the veil from Moses’ face, “Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again, I say re-rejoice”. David understanding Moses thus in the same spirit shows that fat signifies joy, saying, Ps. 63:5, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips”.

Therefore he that loves God enjoys God, delights in God, and rejoices in those things that are of God, he offers up to God the liver, the reins, the fat, and the caul, mortified together with all their carnal and corporal lusts, delights, pleasures, and gratifications. This is what the law enjoined the priests to do; that is, all Christians are priests and are “an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation”, 1 Pet. 2:9.

To all this Augustine agrees who everywhere by reins understands sensual pleasures. ‘Rightly, says he, is the pleasure of earthly and temporal things attributed unto the reins, because that is itself the inferior part of man, and is that part in which is seated the pleasure of carnal generation, through which the human race are sent forth, by a succession of offspring, unto this life so full of all sorrowful and fallacious joy’.

But the “heart”, because it is the seat of the understanding, signifies the counsels of the man, his pursuits, mind, judgment, opinions, affections, thoughts, powers of valuing and esteeming, and the like. Hence, heart is put before reins, because it seeks the pleasure by imagination, and then pleasure follows; and every one is delighted with those things which he judges will be good for him, when he obtains them. Hence the mind of the flesh is said by the apostle to be enmity against God, Rom. 8:7, because it seeks pleasures which are contrary to him, and is affected, delighted, and carried away with those things which God has prohibited. The sense of the passage is

therefore that God alone searcheth, knoweth, examineth, and proveth the thoughts, delights, desires, and pleasures of all; because he is a weigher of the spirits, Prov. 16:2. Thus far the grammar of the words.

But why did David wish to say these things here? Or how do they at all agree with what preceded? He had said, "Let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the righteous". As the judgment of men and the judgment of God are two very different things, nay, quite contrary to each other, David in the sight of men who see things as they outwardly appear, was judged by Absalom and Shimei to be a man of blood and guilty of many crimes; for as it is said, 2 Sam. 15:13, "The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom". Thus Absalom shines as just, righteous, and good; and in the eyes of all David was vile, ungodly, evil, and injurious. Hence as it is a most powerful temptation to be left and deserted by all, and to have all our friends go over to our adversary, David of necessity calls upon the judgment of God, that he would judge according to the heart.

In this way David consoles himself and confirms his hope, holding a good and right opinion concerning God. As if he had said, although all should forsake me and should flee unto Absalom, though he should be established and I should be consumed and brought to naught; yet thou, O Lord, who art a just God, judging in a manner far different from man, and trying all men according to their hearts and reins, knowest how iniquitously they act; for thou seest the heart and the reins and thou knowest what they think, what they seek, and in what they rejoice. On the other hand thou art not ignorant of my thoughts and wishes, though my enemies' outward appearance and mine are both very different from our heart and reins. Therefore I pray that thou wouldest consume their wickedness and establish my righteousness. For this verse, in the Hebrew, is manifestly a petition, because the word נא is added, which is translated by the interjection 'O', or by the

verb 'I pray'; thus, "Let, I beseech thee, the wickedness of the wicked come to an end". As it is in Ps. 118:25, "Save now, I beseech thee, O Jehovah".

We are instructed in this verse therefore not to yield in defending the cause of truth, however many, nay if all, fall off from us and go over to our adversaries; for it is no new thing at this day even for a whole multitude together with all the great ones of the land, to hold an error and to defend an unjust cause. Though it is difficult and hard to bear this being left alone, because when this is the case fools all glory that their cause is true and invincible. But God liveth, whose judgment must be called in to our aid, and firmly to be adhered to; for he trieth the reins and the heart, because he is a just God. Hence the word "just" belongs peculiarly to this verse, because the whole force of the scripture lies in it, and by it is signaled that all men are unjust judges.

From all this it will follow that heart and reins are to be understood in a twofold way: as being unmortified and not offered up to God, and on the contrary, as being rectified and purged by grace. For David speaks directly afterward of the upright in heart, and shows what hearts God tries, searches, and accepts, saying,

V. 10. — *My shield (defence) is with God, who saveth the upright in heart.*

The Hebrew is thus translated by Jerome, 'My shield is in God'; for it signifies protection and defence. These are the words of David exhorting himself unto hope in God against the multitude of men, who are his adversaries, and who trust in themselves, and especially against the words of Shimei, where he said, 2 Sam. 16:8, "Behold thou art taken in thine own mischief, because thou art a man of blood; and Jehovah hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son". Be it so then, says David, trust ye in man who judges according to appearance. I have found my defence, I trust in God who judgeth according to the heart. Wherefore all the force

lies in the pronoun “my” and “Lord”, and those two words are set against ‘your’ and ‘man’. Your defence, says he, is in man, but mine is in the Lord. This is how we are to act in all like cases. There is another force contained in the pronoun “who” and in the accusative “upright”, in this way. Man saves the corrupt in heart, but God the upright in heart. These words are very necessary for those who are enduring tribulation, that they may thereby cherish in their hearts a firm persuasion concerning the mind of God toward them, and may hold it fast against all arguments that may be urged to the contrary, that they may not faint in their hope of divine help.

What this upright heart is we have fully shown in the first Psalm, when speaking of the “counsel of the wicked”. This upright heart is when a man has a right apprehension of God and when he is not led according to his own senses, that is, when he believes and hopes in God. For it is faith alone that justifies, purifies, and establishes the heart by setting it in a right, true, and holy apprehension of God. This agrees exactly with the subject of the Psalm; for Shimei endeavored to prove the justness of his curses even upon the authority of God. And it rightly accords with the expulsion of David and the usurpation of Absalom. For David in these words shows how men of false and depraved hearts are accustomed to show themselves off under a specious appearance and to revile the upright in heart, especially when the applause of the people joins with them.

V. II. *God is a righteous judge, yea, a God that hath indignation every day. Rev. Ver.*

V. II. *God is a judge, just, strong, and patient; will he be angry every day?*

The Hebrew is different from this translation and runs thus, ‘God is a judge, righteous, and strong, being filled with indignation every day’. That which we render “strong” is a name of God, and is the same as EL: so that it might be more properly rendered ‘God is a righteous judge, and God

is angry all the day'; and therefore the word "patient" is added and is generally called in by interpreters in their rendering of the verse, though it is not in the original text.

Hence the hope of David so grew in this temptation that now he not only has no doubt that he is heard and will be delivered, but also begins to admonish his adversaries to fear the judgment and vengeance of God. Then he openly declares that all that they had devised against him shall fall upon their own head. Although David sang these things after his temptation, so that we may plainly see, that he offered this consolation to the persecuted, and denounced this anger upon the persecutors, after he had been taught by the very event of his tribulations, and that he instructed others by his own successful example and by the perils of his adversaries; yet, we are to believe that he meditated upon those things in the midst of his tribulation which he afterwards sang in his psalms in public. For he never despaired of God and therefore he knew that all these things would come upon his adversaries. So now also and always every just man who sees the ungodly unjustly doing violence to the righteous may with confidence think and say that God, whom he knows to be a just judge, will not suffer these things. As David says, Ps. 9:18, "The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever". And this he by no means obscurely indicates, when in the same history which is now before us he gave such anxious injunctions that his son Absalom should be preserved, because he knew and feared, that the evil he had done would fall upon his own head, as it also happened. Here he declares that the same shall come upon all who follow his steps.

Let us therefore hear this holy preacher and listen to those things which he declares to his ungodly adversaries with pious solicitude, desiring to rescue them from dangers, and thus truly rendering good for evil. Know this, God is a judge, but he is a just one, who has no respect of persons, is not moved

with any craft, nor changed by any favor, nor corrupted by any gift. For by these things men are not only rendered unjust judges, but even despisers of God the just judge, for they think it enough to please men. God as judge does not condemn, for the sake of pleasing men, either the solitary, the reviled, the cursed, the oppressed, the poor, or the despised. In a word, even this one word, ‘God is a righteous judge’, is enough if it be truly felt and apprehended to comfort the humble and to terrify the proud; and this had great weight with Christ; as 1 Peter 2:23 says, “But committed himself to him that judgeth righteously”. For he that thinks on this word soon lays aside all thoughts of revenge, nay, he even pities his adversaries who run upon the judgment of God.

“Strong, he is angry all the day”; that is, continually. Do not think, ye ungodly, says David, that God is favorable to you because ye are exalted and become powerful in your iniquity. Know ye and believe that things are otherwise than they really appear. God is wroth and hates you, he is indignant at you, he threatens you all the day, for the Hebrew word, as they say, has all these significations. These things must of necessity be said to the ungodly, who, because they feel not the anger of God, neither believe it nor fear it. For the words of the Spirit are spoken concerning things absent and not appearing, which are to be apprehended by faith.

But our translation seems to reverse the whole of this, making the former part refer to the ungodly and the latter to the godly. For we understand that God is just and patient towards the wicked who are to be alarmed; and that his not being angry every day refers to the godly whom he consoles and comforts; according to Ps. 103:9, “He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever”. Again, Ps. 55:22, “He will never suffer the righteous to be moved”. But the Hebrew more appropriately accords with that which now follows.

V. 12. — *If a man turn not, he will whet his sword (unless*

ye be converted, he will brandish his sword): he hath bent his bow and made it ready.

The Hebrew runs thus, ‘If he turn not, he will whet his sword’. Though he that whets his sword and prepares it, makes it fit for brandishing; so that whetting and brandishing do not differ much from each other. But it is doubtful whether the expression “If he will not turn” refers to God who is threatening, or to the wicked who is to be converted; though Jerome applies it to the man to be converted, saying, ‘He will whet his sword against him that will not turn’. Perhaps the verb is put absolutely “If he will not turn”, that is, if there shall be no turning. But whether you say ‘Unless ye turn’, or ‘against him that will not turn’, or ‘if there be no turning’, the sense remains exactly the same. Let us therefore proceed to inquire into this sense.

The prophet makes use of a plain and coarse similitude for striking terror, because he is speaking against the insensible and hardened, who will not understand the severity of the divine judgment concerning which he has been speaking, unless it be set before them by some similitude taken from that which betokens severity among men. Therefore he does not speak of a rod, nor a staff, nor of any thing that betokens severity of discipline among men, but brings forward that which threatens death, namely, the sword and the bow which betoken eternal judgment, eternal death, and eternal wrath. For what is the sword of God but the word of eternal judgment? concerning which Paul saith to the Hebrews, 4:12, “For the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword”; by which Word it is that God will say unto them “Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire”. And the word “sword” signifies cutting and slaying, especially when it is spoken of as being whetted and brandished.

His words are addressed to these same insensible persons when he is not only not contented with saying that the ‘sword is whetted’, but that the ‘bow is bent’; and not only so, but he

describes the ‘arrows’ also. So hard is ungodliness in its front and face, that all these threats are necessary, nor will it be softened even by these. The bow has the same signification as the sword, namely, the Word of judgment; which is the same things signified and represented by these various things. When David saith he hath ‘made them ready’, it is the same as he meant before when he said, “and guide thou the just”. So that you are to understand that the bow is prepared, bent, and made ready to strike the wicked immediately, even as the sword also is brandished to cut them in pieces.

In these words he beautifully describes the wrath of God as about to fall immediately upon the ungodly, of which nevertheless they never understand any thing until they feel it. Yet what would it have profited Absalom and Ahithophel even if they had succeeded and prospered for many thousands of years in their malice and wickedness, if they were to be overtaken by the sudden sword of the wrath of God at last, and cut off, and sent to eternal death? For the sudden wrath of God would be all the while hanging over them. Hence Sirach, 5:4-7, ‘Say not, I have sinned, and what harm hath happened unto me? And say not, His mercy is great; for mercy and wrath come from him, and his indignation resteth upon sinners. Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day: for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of vengeance’. And Ps. 34:16, “The face of Jehovah is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth”.

V. 13. — *He hath also prepared for him the instruments (vessels) of death; he maketh his arrows fiery shafts (he hath ordained his arrows for the burning).*

The Psalmist still pursues his similitude and he now aptly describes the eternal torment, which is to die and to burn. “Vessel” according to the Hebrew signifies, by a general term, every instrument of every kind; as in Ps. 71:22, “I will praise

thee with the vessels of the psalm"; that is, with instruments of music. And Ezek. 9:1, "And every man had a vessel of slaughter in his hand"; that is, an instrument of death or an instrument for slaughter. So, Acts 9:15, Paul the apostle is said to be "a vessel of election", which those who are ignorant of the Hebrew idiom do not understand to be, though it is so, the same as the Latin expression *instrumentum electum*, 'chosen vessel'; because Christ's will was to use him in preference to all the rest of the apostles to convert the Gentiles. They understand it as signifying only that he had received electing grace; whereas, Christ most particularly added that he was therefore "a chosen vessel" unto him, because he should bear his name before the Gentiles and the children of Israel, and should suffer many things for his name and Word's sake.

So here, by the same idiom, "vessels of death" signify deadly darts and weapons; which words he uses that these insensible ones might not account this threatening a thing of naught, but that from the apprehension of temporal death they might feel the terror of eternal death.

"He hath ordained his arrows for the burning". These words he uses by way of increased force of expression, thereby either repeating or explaining the words "vessels of death". That they might not think lightly of these arrows, he calls them deadly, and for terrible purposes; thus, still keeping up a weighty power of expression, and making use of striking and forcible words. Jerome thus renders the passage, 'He that hath wrought his arrows for burning'. Our translation renders the passage obscurely and almost barbarously. For what is the meaning of "He has made his arrows for the burning"? Does it mean that he made arrows for those who were burning to cast? The reason of their translating it thus, was the Hebrew word being in the plural, LEDOLKIM; which Jerome has rendered 'for burning'. It might have been rendered, 'He hath prepared for him the vessels of destruction, he hath made ready his arrows to burn'; or 'that they may be burning'. For the

Hebrew cannot be rendered literally thus, ‘He hath wrought his arrows to be burning’.

Nor is it full enough to say ‘he has made his arrows burning’; though this is also signified, because the verb “he hath ordained” or ‘wrought’, of which we have spoken, Ps. 1, is in this passage PAAL; which has not the signification of any workmanship or art, but of a use or a person using. So that it signifies both that the vessels of death are now ready and the arrows made burning, and also that God is so using and hurling them, that they slay and burn; and therefore it sets the wrath and severity of God immediately before our eyes as preparing for its execution. For he is now preparing to execute his wrath that the ungodly may die and burn, though they do not yet die and burn.

Moreover the word “burning” signifies also persecution and devastation, Ps. 10:2, “In the pride of the wicked the poor is hotly pursued”; that is, they suffer persecution.

The sum of the whole is, there is no doubt that under these terms “death” and “burning” he represents death and hell, concerning which we have spoken more at large, Ps. 6, under the words “anger” and “fury”, “rebuke” and “correct”, and also, “confounded” and “put to shame”. Concerning these arrows Job 6:4, complains, and we find them spoken of in many other places in the Psalms.

It is observable that we have not before had any such threatening and indignation denounced against the ungodly, nor has the Holy Spirit inveighed against them with such a power of language. In what follows he enumerates their pursuits and attempts, which were not indeed wholly in vain, for he shows that they all turned upon their own heads, that all who suffer the violence of calumny may plainly see for their consolation, how hateful calumniators are, above all others, in the sight of God.

V. 14. — *Behold, he travaileth with iniquity (ungodliness);*

yea, he hath conceived mischief (pain), and brought forth falsehood (iniquity).

Here he describes their malignant purposes which eventually prove injurious to no one but to the authors themselves; which purposes he calls “unrighteousness”, “pain”, and “iniquity”. Jerome translates the passage, ‘Behold he travaileth with iniquity, he hath conceived pain, he hath brought forth falsehood’.

The first word which we have rendered “ungodliness” or “iniquity” is, in the Hebrew, the very word AVEN, by which is signified as we have observed in Psalms 5 and 6 “the workers of iniquity”; on which passages we remarked that the word is more frequently rendered ‘pain’; as in Ps. 10:7, “Under his tongue is labor and pain”. And so again, Ps. 90:10, “Yet is their strength but labor and pain”. Hence it may be here rendered “Behold he travaileth with pain”.

These two words AMAL and AVEN, ‘labor’ and ‘pain’, are generally found together, as here and in the Psalms above-mentioned. Hence it may be here more properly rendered “he hath conceived labor”; for it more properly signifies ‘labor’, from the act of laboring; as in Ps. 127:1, “They labor in vain, that build it”. We have in the German language this manner of expression in the same number of the words and with a like meaning: “it is pain and labor”, so that AVEN is pain from causing pain, AMAL labor, from to labor, in order to express the labor and distress in the anxious intention of the heart and in the severe struggle, fatigue, weakness and disgust of the mind.

We have said that the lives of those who act impiously are thus, for “there is no peace, saith Jehovah, to the wicked, Is. 48:32. Such know nothing of the rest of which Christ speaks, Matt. 11:28, 29, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, as if he had said who are in AMAL and AVEN, and I will give you rest”. That is, the punishment of the wicked so closely presses upon them that they are afflicted and distressed in and by the very act of doing wrong. Nay, says

David, their very pleasure is labor. Pliny says, “even every pleasure engenders nausea if it is continuous”. Augustine in his Confessions, Book 1, observes, “Thou, O Lord, hast commanded; and hence it cometh to pass that every disobedient and insubordinate soul is its own punishment”. And Wisdom 5:7, “We wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction: yea, we have gone through deserts, where there lay no way: but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it”.

This punishment or trouble or labor, especially and terribly distresses men whenever they endeavor with devoted industry to establish their own purposes against godliness, and, as the apostle saith, Rom. 10:3, “being ignorant of God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own righteousness”; that is, that righteousness which is exercised in the work of all iniquity and in spiritual wickednesses. Therefore, as I have said, this evil falls principally upon those, who, under a superstitious religion, idolatry, and disobedience, seek to justify themselves by self-invented works and devotions, setting aside all the while the commandment of God and indeed of men also which they bound themselves to observe. As such they walk contrary to God, God walks contrary to them; and hence, they must of necessity suffer a great deal of uneasiness; and they can have nothing but labor and pain in all that they can do. Hence the Preacher in many places: 1:14; 2:11, 17, 21; 4:4, 6, 8, has called all this “vanity and vexation of spirit”. Whereas, on the other hand, those who are led by the Spirit of God and yield themselves up to be guided by it, enjoy much peace in God, even while they themselves are in tribulation.

Hence we find that AVEN was rendered “ungodliness” before, “unrighteousness” here, and “pain” a little later; and if all these renderings be put together they will give us that “malice” which strives so hard to carry the plausible appearance of righteousness and godliness; whereas, true godliness needs take no labor or pains at all to give itself the appearance of godliness.

Thus David here, being confirmed in hope and having come out of his temptation victorious, laughs at all the violence and all the efforts of his calumniators and persecutors; nay rather, he pities them, saying before them all, ‘Behold in what a state my calumniators are. Let any one behold in what misery they are involved and how much more wretched they are than I am. Not only does God threaten them continually, not only does he hang over them with a drawn sword and with a bow, with the instruments of death and with arrows that shall burn them up; but they are tormented with present punishment, and they now receive in themselves the due reward of their malice; while, with anxiety and rage, they wrack their inventions to find out a way wherein they may oppress me, and whereby, after they have destroyed me, they may remain in security themselves. They in their misery have more distressing anxiety about the way in which they shall destroy me, than I have about thinking by whose hands I shall perish. Nay, for my part, as I commit myself wholly unto the will of God, I expect all that may come without emotion. But they cannot be quiet nor in any rest until they have brought forth all that with which they are travailing, and have accomplished all their thoughts; and yet, as their thoughts are against righteousness and against God, they are vexed with all such thoughts in vain, “for they conceived devices which they are not able to perform”. Ps. 21:11.

David however touches upon that which Absalom said, 2 Sam. 16:20, “Give your counsel what we shall do”; at which time many ways were anxiously discussed in many counsels how they might kill David; but by the wonderful providence of God all were in vain. Just in the same way as the Jews tried with much labor and pain to destroy Christ.

‘We always find’, saith Augustine, ‘that those who inflict punishment suffer greater punishment than those who endure it; nay, this is always the case in the perpetration of any crime. What secret snares does not the robber or murderer fear! what hour, what place, what man, does he consider safe! With what

fears is not the adulterer tormented! in what stratagems is he not entrapped before he once perishes! Hence, in every kind of crime, and especially in that of calumny, the punishments suffered are far greater than the advantages gained; for the miserable wretch is compelled to expect every kind of evil and every kind of danger. Whereas in the meanwhile, he who trusts in God, like a fearless lion, despises all things in happy security, relying upon a consciousness of truth and innocence.

We are thus taught in this verse to embrace the best consolation when in straits and tribulations; that having committed our cause unto God, we may not be distressed, nor over anxious, nor in perturbation. It is sufficient for us to know that we are acting in the cause of God, in which case, let us divide the sufferings with our enemies. Let us be vexed by them externally, while they are tormented by themselves internally. Let them be our burden, while not only we are a burden to them, but they are the greatest burden to themselves.

Behold therefore the most miserable condition of all calumniators and ungodly men! God is a burden to them, we are a burden to them, and they are an intolerable burden to themselves! Who would not rather pity such wretched characters than be impatiently indignant against them? Every one of us knows that all these things await the wicked, and that they undertake such things as are here mentioned. But when the hour of calumny arrives, we do not all continue in the same mind, being in perpetual fear that all things will turn out prosperously unto our adversaries and against us, though we are always ready to affirm that they would not so turn out against others.

Let us then inquire further into the propriety of these words. "Behold", says David, struck as it were with wonder and admiration, he calls upon all to behold this singular sight, because it is contrary to all natural sense.

"He travaileth with pain". Here he very appropriately composes his words; for to be in travail is the same as to struggle with pain. As if he had said, such meditate pain in pain.

Which is a metaphor taken from women in child birth, in which he beautifully describes the anxious striving of the ungodly and of calumniators, which are, as I have said, to establish with much care and peril their own inventions against the truth; in doing this, as the saying is, one lie requires seven others to make it good, and to make all appear truth. Jerome saith, 'Falsehood requires much to give it the appearance of truth'.

"And hath conceived pain". It seems proper that he should have reversed this and have said, "Behold, he hath conceived labor and travailed with iniquity"; because conception is prior in order. This seems to me to be intended to describe to us the mind and ingenuity of the ungodly, who, when they are about to oppress the innocent, are most impatient of delay; and are more intent upon venting the malice of their minds, than upon consulting prudently: they begin before they deliberate. They are not guided by reason and counsel, but carried headlong by impetuosity and temerity. They think more about seeing the thing done than about consulting. When they have accomplished their wicked design, they enter into consultation about defending properly what they have done. Here begins their labor, here is the anxious concern about defending the iniquity which they have presumptuously committed.

So Absalom, after he had driven out his father David and had brought forth his AVEN, said, 2 Sam. 17:20 and 17:5, "Give your counsel what we shall do". So also the Jews first apprehended Christ and then sought false witnesses against him, that they might accuse him. Thus also every calumniator first brings forth his AVEN and imposes upon his neighbor, and afterwards seeks to persist therein under a show of justice and security; concerning which character, Prov. 30:20, "So is the way of an adulterous woman; she eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness". "Travail with pain" and "conceive labor" we are accustomed to express in German", you start a misfortune and then you will have something to do". And the proverb, "You have broken in and you

will hardly find your way out". These imprudent workers of iniquity therefore begin both difficulty and peril; that is, they bring forth their pain and then with much labor and toil endeavor to defend what they have done.

David teaches us therefore most beautifully that an evil committed before counsel is taken brings on pain, and counsel after the commission, labor. Both kinds of temerity and folly await such ungodly calumniators, both the act before the counsel, and the counsel after the act; for to the perverse all things are perverse. But one may understand this conception of labor as being together with the bringing forth of pain. For ungodly calumniators say thus, when they enter upon the commission of their evil, let us go on and act. After the act is committed something will follow which will enable us to answer for what we have done, or to defend it. As the Jews acted, according to the history in Matt. 28:14, when they corrupted the guards with money that the truth of Christ's resurrection might not be published abroad: for they said, "And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and rid you of care". Only behold here how they conceive pain, while they burden themselves with a pledge that they will find future security. In this way did Absalom and his party audaciously bring forth their AVEN; but they have not yet brought forth the counsel while they bring forth the act; as we have it written, Prov. 14:16, "A wise man feareth and departeth from evil; but the fool beareth himself insolently and is confident". That which they bring forth from this conception is shown in the following.

"And brought forth iniquity"; which in Hebrew is lying or falsehood, or vanity; and this exactly accords with that which I have mentioned as the design of this psalm. For these are the counsels, the defences, and the excuses of the godly after their wickedness is committed. They are mere frigid evasions, lying delusions, and vain deceptions, with which they set themselves off, persuade the people, and destroy those whom they oppress. Such are also all their vain attempts to establish

their own temerity. In all which they lose much labor and pains, and yet all is in vain. These things we find are continually taking place in our day. But in this place we are more particularly to understand the deceiving and vain birth than the iniquitous birth. For he is speaking of the vain attempts and fruitless counsel by which Absalom was deceived, and in which he was disappointed, when, collecting all Israel together, he sought to destroy David. For in all this his counsel and birth all proved so vain, that they fell upon his own head; and the very snares he had laid for David destroyed himself, as follows.

V. 15. — *He had made a pit (opened a lake) and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made.*

Here the prophet allegorizes, so that, as I have said under the allegory he might set forth the true state of things. In the same manner as the cross of Christ is an allegorical life, appearing to kill while it makes alive; for in the same way Absalom here opens a lake and digs it that he might drive David into it, not knowing that by this stratagem he should deliver David and destroy himself. And David touches upon this; that Absalom, relying on the multitude, thought that he should soon destroy David, one poor solitary creature, left and forsaken by all. For this is signified by the lake of death which he prepared and dug. But behold, this very thing happened unto himself; for being deserted by all and being hung up alone upon an oak, he was pierced through and thrown into a deep pit in the wood, and a very great heap of stones was cast upon him; as is recorded in 2 Sam. 18:17. This is the pit of which David here speaks and which he uses for the allegory. But Absalom had not prepared that pit for David, though he intended that death for him which he himself suffered. Hence we say often in common life that a certain trap was laid for us and that our adversary fell into it himself, though he himself did not intend any such thing. Wherefore this verse is proverbial and contains a common saying; according to the well-known lies of the poet,

No law's more just than when the wicked schemes
Of wicked men upon themselves are turn'd.

These things, as I have said, are spoken for the consolation of the oppressed, that they may rest assured that the evil which is planned against them will fall upon the head of their slanderers. They are spoken also to strike terror into these calumniators and persecutors, whose daring presumption and security are to be alarmed, and the weakness of the oppressed to be confirmed and strengthened.

Observe how he describes the ardor and the panting fury of the ungodly. For he does not simply say "hath *made* a lake", as he afterward said "hath made a pit"; but he says hath "opened" and "dug" a lake. As if he had said with Prov. 1:16, "For their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood". So busy and laborious are they in digging and preparing their lake. They leave nothing untried, they search into all things, and dive into every expedient. Not content with "opening" only, they "dig" the lake and make it deep, that they may the more terribly and effectually destroy the innocent.

Thus the Jews, though they hastened to destroy Christ and made every preparation for that purpose; yet, they were not content with any simple kind of death, but digging as it were a most deep pit, they procured for him the most ignominious death of the cross. So no calumniator is content with destroying his neighbor in the most dreadful manner, but he will do it in the most ignominious manner also.

This ignominious death is indicated by digging the lake deeper which was already prepared; because the persons cast in is the farther from the light and hope of recovery the deeper he is plunged. For no ungodly man is such a fool as to suffer the least appearance of his having destroyed the innocent without cause; nay, the more malignant he is, the more he seeks to make that his own cause was most just and that his neighbor was destroyed as having most basely deserved it. Therefore such an one must dig the lake deep that is already opened

and prepared. But on the other hand he is not said to have ‘opened’, nor to have ‘dug’ the pit for himself, but to have ‘made’ it; because he did not seek his own destruction and shame, but fell into them when he least expected it.

Again, here is a solecism. “He is fallen into the ditch, he made”; where our translators add the relative “which”, but I should have put ‘because’ or ‘for’, as I have observed at verse 6. Where we have “he hath opened” the Hebrew has “he hath prepared”. Though these are things of no consequence, because in either case we understand it that the lake was prepared before it was dug, which is contrary to the general ideas of all; because David would have us to understand by it that which I have set forth.

V. 16. — *His mischief (pain) shall return upon his own head, and his violence (iniquity) shall come down upon his own pate.*

The word here is not AVEN but AMAL, which properly signifies pain and labor, as I have before observed. “His labor, says David, shall return upon his own head”. And “iniquity” here is in the Hebrew a word that we have not had before; it is HAMAS, which properly signifies rapacity, violence, or an injury which by force arrogates to itself a tyranny, in the same way as hawks seize upon little birds. For Reuchlin says that the night hawk is named from this word HAMAS.

David has respect to that which he said in the beginning, “Lest he seize my soul like a lion”. For Absalom, having collected all the people, had prepared to seize David by force and to devour him; whereas, he as miserably seized and devoured himself, and thus his attempts and his labor all fell upon his own head. The sense seems to be the same as that contained in the preceding verse, the allegory of which he here explains in plain words. Unless it be considered to differ from the preceding in this, that in the preceding verse the work or act was designed, that is, death and perdition, set forth by the “lake” and “the pit”; and in this, the counsel and wis-

dom by which the lake and pit were prepared and dug; that we may understand that God is so concerned for those who are oppressed with calumny, and so wroth against their calumniators, that he turns the evil which they planned and the counsel by which they planned it upon themselves; and that thus we may not faint nor fall from our hope.

For this is the incomprehensible of the judgment of God, that he takes the ungodly by their own counsel and casts them into the destruction which they had themselves prepared and invented. Thus Goliah fell by his own sword. Thus it is said, Job 5:12 etc., "He frustrateth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the counsel of the forward is carried headlong. They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon-day as in the night"; that is, they are then the most foolish and most blind when they are, in their own views, the most clear-sighted and wise.

With a powerful force of language therefore he calls their counsels, their craftiness, and their wisdom, labor. Indeed they have nothing from all this but labor; for the expected fruits of all their devices never follow because God resists them. So in the case of the Jews who meditated the destruction of Christ, what did they else but labor in vain, and, as it is said in Ps. 2:1, "meditate a vain thing"? But David here does not only call it labor, but says that it 'returned upon their own head'; for by that very counsel which Absalom had formed for the destruction of David, relying upon the multitude, he himself perished: who would have been safer, if, according to the counsel of Ahithophel, he had remained in the city and sent out those two thousand men. But as the scripture saith, by the will of God the useful counsel of Ahithophel was disregarded, that the Lord might bring upon Absalom the evil intended.

The scripture holds out consolation to us when it teaches us that the ferocity of the wicked is nothing but a mere great

and vain attempt rather than any act, and such an attempt as will surely fall upon the heads of the projectors of it. So the waves and swellings of the sea seem as if they would overwhelm the shore, but it presently falls back upon itself and vanishes, leaving its threatening surges a laughing-stock to the spectators.

This figure of speech is very common in the scriptures, this returning, or falling, or descending upon the head and upon the pate, etc. Thus Sirach 27:25-27, "Whoso casteth a stone on high casteth it on his own head; and a deceitful stroke shall make wounds. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that setteth a trap shall be taken therein. He that worketh mischief it shall fall upon him, and he shall not know whence it cometh". With the same figure it is said, 2 Sam. 1:16, "Thy blood be upon thy head". And indeed all things both evil and good that are invoked, are invoked upon the head. So Deut. 33:16, 'Let the blessing of him that dwelt in the bush come upon the head of Joseph'. Because the head is the first and most worthy member of the whole body.

David indicates at the same time that both good and evil are sent down upon the head by God, both the punishment of the ungodly and the salvation of the godly. Therefore it is by the commandment of God that the iniquity of the calumniator descends upon his own pate and his labor upon his own head.

But by a repetition the returning of the labor upon the pate and the descending of the iniquity upon the head seem to indicate the same thing. It is thus repeated that its certainty might be set forth, as we have observed. For the ungodly being insensible laugh at all the threatenings of God, as if they would never take place, or at least were put off for a considerable time; and therefore these terrible things are to be inculcated into them repeatedly.

V. 17. — *I will give thanks unto Jehovah according to his righteousness, and will sing praise to the name of Jehovah Most High.*

He concludes this Psalm and prayer in a beautiful way. As if he had said, all these things have been said and all these petitions have I offered on account of the cursings, the calumnies, and the injuries of Shimei and of his men, in defence of my ignorance and righteousness as far as my conscience is concerned, and with respect to these things in the sight of men. But I do not trust in this my righteousness, nor do I consider it to be such that I can stand in it before God; as the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 4:4, "I know nothing against myself; yet am I not thereby justified". And again, 2 Cor. 10: 17-18, "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord". "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth". So also, I have another righteousness in which I glory, namely, the righteousness of God, and his mercy and grace whereby he pardons all my sins and justifies me in his sight. In this righteousness I do not boast, nor do I make a confession of it as if it were my own, but I praise God for it to all eternity. Wherefore, by means of my own righteousness I willingly serve God and the people and resist the ungodly, and in the righteousness of God I will seek my salvation.

In a wonderful manner in the same verse and in the same words David gives thanks unto God and praises his righteousness, and also describes the nature of it. He says it is the free gift of God, for which he is to be praised and celebrated. Wherefore "according to his righteousness" is here to be understood as signifying the same as 'on account of, or for, his righteousness'. So that the sense is, 'I will praise the Lord for ever, because it is he that justifieth; which if he did not do, my righteousness which I have in my own conscience could never stand'. This sense is supported by what follows, which is as it were a repetition of these words, "And will sing praise to the name of Jehovah Most High".

For the name of Jehovah, as we have said, is his praise which is proclaimed abroad, that he is merciful and a Saviour, etc.; and the man that believes in this name is justified and

saved, for God is such as he is believed to be by every man. But the damned and the ungodly ascribe to him no name at all. The former, because they cannot hope any good from him; and the latter, because they do not feel the want of him. Hence it is written, Prov. 18:10, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe". And Rom. 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved".

As therefore righteousness, salvation, and a joyful conscience, come from this name only by our firmly believing in it, and not from our own strength, doings, or works, the Psalmist rightly teaches that righteousness is to be ascribed only unto the Lord and that he only is to be sung to, praised, proclaimed, and celebrated; in order that others, being brought to the knowledge of that name of this confession and proclaiming, may believe in it and be saved. David saith almost the same thing in Ps. 51:13, "Then will I teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee". Again, Ps. 35:28, 'And my tongue shall talk of thy righteousness'. Whereas the ungodly do not exalt his righteousness, as we have often said before.

Wherefore this confessing and singing do not in this place signify any private duty of gratitude only, but also the public ministry of the Word of grace, whereby the name of the Lord is manifested to sinners.

The prayer of this Psalm is very necessary and very useful when prayed against the devil, either in the hour of death or in any time of deep temptation. For the devil himself is properly that calumniator who accuses us and confounds our conscience even for those things which we have done rightly and which please God, as well as magnifies beyond measure these wicked things which we have done; and he is therefore in both cases a most oppressive and unwearied Shimei, a most black, a cursing, and an insulting Ethiopian, continually coming upon us with such words as these, 'Behold thine evils are now come

upon thee. Come out, come out, thou bloody man. The Lord is now bringing upon thy head all the blood of the house of Saul'. And indeed we may take all the rest of this history as having a figurative meaning; wherein David is an example of us all and teaches us that we ought to bear these things and at the same time to expect the blessing of God for all such cursing and affliction.

P S A L M V I I I.

TO VICTORY; FOR THE WINE-PRESSES; A PSALM OF DAVID.

We have here a new title; and what David means by the wine-presses has been discussed so differently that I am ready to confess myself in total ignorance as to who, among so many, comes the nearest to the truth. For three Psalms have this title 'For the wine-presses'; the present Ps. 8 of David, the 70, of Asaph, and the 84 for the sons of Korah. It is not likely, however, that David, which is granted by all the most eminent Hebrews, composed this Psalm in the wine-presses of Palestine; because then for the same reason it would follow that Asaph and the sons of Korah composed their Psalms in the same place. Nor do we read that David was ever in the wine-presses of Palestine, but in those of Gath, which afterwards by a lengthening of letters was called Gaza, a city of Palestine; though Gath signifies a wine-press (*torcular*) and has the same signification as the words AL GITITH have here, which is 'On the wine-presses'. Nor am I satisfied with the opinions of some who suppose that this Psalm was composed to be sung at the feast of tabernacles, here thanks were given to God after the harvesting of all the fruits and the gathering of the grapes.

Therefore as we are here going according to the literal meaning I am inclined to coincide with the opinion of Lyra, who thinks that GITITH is a name proper to some musical instrument. Or else we must agree with the ancient fathers, who, following a mystical meaning, understand by wine-presses (*torcularia*) the martyrdoms and sufferings of Christ and the Church. Indeed there are other Psalms entitled by some word or other that is not in common use, as we shall see in their spiritual meaning. Leaving therefore every one to his own

judgment in this matter, we rightly affirm that wine-presses do signify mystically sufferings ; as in Is. 63 :2, "I have trodden the wine-press alone"; which all understand as having reference to the sufferings of Christ.

But Augustine very learnedly and discerningly understands by wine-press (*torcular*) the ministry of the Word of God in the church; consonant with which are many scriptures, as that of Is. 5 :2, "And also hewed out a wine-press therein". For as oxen treading out the corn in the barn signify the preachers of the Word, 1 Cor. 9:9: so the treaders in the wine-press signify the same. Hence grapes and ears of corn, wine and wheat, every where in the scriptures signify the people who are either instructed or hardened by the Word of God, of whom we have not time to say more now.

This meaning exactly agrees with the scope of the Psalm, wherein is described the name of the Lord which is great throughout all the earth, the people of Christ who are obedient to his government, and his enemies who are destroyed. When it is said that he hath perfected praise and exalted his own glory out of the mouth of babes and sucklings; by that is doubtlessly signified the preaching of the Gospel and of the Word of the cross; by which all these things have ever been and still are accomplished. For certainly the Word of the cross, like a wine-press, bruises and humbles the men of the world and collects many into one body, as the wine is collected into the receiving vessel. Hence, it was the design of the Prophet to sing here of a spiritual wine-press. It is not, however, foreign to the scope of the Psalm, to understand by wine-presses, sufferings; because the word of the cross crucifies the old man and compels him to endure many and various sufferings.

V. 1. — *O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent (admirable) is thy name in all the earth. Who hast set thy glory above the heavens!*

This is one verse in the Hebrew. One of these names is

the sacred Tetragrammaton Jehovah, and the other the name ADON, which is common and applicable to men also. Our translator has moreover thought proper to put “our Lord”, (*Dominus noster*), in the nominative, which Jerome has more properly rendered by the vocative, O Lord, our Ruler, (*Domine, Dominator noster*).

“Admirable”, in the Hebrew ADIR, signifies high, great, excellent, etc. Hence Jerome has rendered it ‘How great is thy name’. That which our translator has rendered “greatness”, he has translated ‘glory’. But the Hebrew word HOD signifies properly praise and confession.. It is from this word that the names of Judah and Judea are derived, which have the signification of praising or confessing. Hence we have it, Gen. 49:8, “Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise”.

“Who has set thy glory above the heavens”. In the 148th Psalm, verse 13, David said, “His praise or glory, is above the earth and the heaven”. He seems therefore to say the same thing in both Psalms. In Ps. 148:13, he says, “his name alone is excellent”: here he says, “how excellent is thy name”. There he says, “his praise is above the earth and heaven”: here, “his greatness is above the heavens”, “*magnificentia super coelos*”.

I here take it for granted that it is clearly known, from what has been said, that the name of God is not one but many; namely, every thing that can be said that is good. Hence the name of God is that good report, glory, estimation, and celebration, whereby he is proclaimed, believed, hoped in, known, loved, and feared, that is, truly worshipped and honored, as the only wise powerful, good, just, true, sweet, etc. Whereby at the same time all the glory and good opinion of man perishes; and no one is any longer found to be powerful, wise, and good, but all are found to be as the apostle saith sinners, and to come short of the glory of God, who before were impiously righteous and full of their own glory; as it is said also, Ps. 9:5,

"Thou hast rebuked the nations, thou hast destroyed the wicked; thou hast blotted out their name for ever and ever".

No one now who believes in Christ is strong by his own power, but is weak and suffers all things. Nor does he revenge or deliver himself even when it may be in his power; but he gives glory to God and waits for his delivering and avenging power; even as Paul, 2 Cor. 12:5, glories in his infirmities. No one who thus believes is wise in his own wisdom, but becomes a fool in his own eyes and before all men, and gives all the glory of wisdom unto God, who, when he hath proved him, will give him the glory of wisdom in the heavens.

So no Christian is righteous in his own righteousness, but gives all the glory of righteousness unto God, while he himself in his own eyes and in the estimation of men is numbered among the ungodly; so that 'in his humiliation his judgment is taken away', Is. 53:8, and he is justified by faith and hope, expecting the righteousness of God as that alone which can commend him; "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth", 2 Cor. 10:18.

This is the meaning and force of the name of the Lord to all the names and glory of men; and shows that the Lord's name is then magnified, exalted, and loved, when our name is reduced to nothing and hated both by ourselves and all others.

The same is expressed in Ps. 113:3, "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, Jehovah's name is to be praised". Again verse 4, "Jehovah is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens". Mal. 1:11, "For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles". Again, verse 14, "My name is terrible among the Gentiles". Is. 11:9, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain". Why shall they not destroy? "For, saith he, the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea". As if he had said, the knowledge of God and the magnifying of his name, which by means of the Gospel shall fill the whole

world like an overflowing sea, shall make men gentle, mild, and innocent; because they shall contend neither for wisdom nor for power nor for righteousness, for they shall know that these are not theirs, but the Lord's only. To the same end are the words of Isaiah 2:17-18, "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols shall utterly pass away".

We would, however, distinguish the two words "Lord" and "our Lord" in this way. By the former is represented the most-high Godhead dwelling in himself; and by the latter, his kingdom and care whereby he holds dominion over us and rules us by the word of faith, which is fulfilled by the incarnation of Christ, who is our propitiation, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily", Col. 2:9; for it is by that we are brought nigh unto the Father, and ruled in the world. As John, 14:6 says, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me". Hence it is not without reason that the pronoun "our" is joined with "Lord" rather than with "Jehovah". Therefore God was first known in Judea, and his name was great in Israel. But now, saith David, thy name is great in all the earth, and among all nations. Hence you see how well this verse accords with the title, seeing that the name of the Lord being made great by the wine-press of preaching has humbled some out of the nations of the whole world into the one faith and grace of Christ.

But it is of much greater moment for us to know what follows. "Who hast set thy glory above the heavens". The Hebrew and the translation of Jerome are 'who hast set', not "is lifted up". I find that by this glory or greatness, or praise, almost all understood Christ the Son of God, who, being received into heaven and seated at the right hand of God, sent down the Holy Spirit, who, by the apostles magnified the name of God throughout the whole world.

Nor am I displeased at the opinion of those who say that this latter clause of the verse gives the reason or cause of the

former; that is, that the name of God is magnified because Christ ascended into heaven. For Christ could not have been glorified but by the sending of the Holy Ghost; as it is written, Rom. 1:4, "who was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead". And John 16:14, "He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you". The Spirit could not have been sent if Christ had not risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, unto the appointment of king over all nations; as it is written, John 7:39, "For the Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified". So also, Psalm 2. Christ said that he would declare the command, which is fulfilled by the Holy Ghost, after he had said that he was appointed king upon God's holy hill of Zion.

It seems, however, to be against this acceptation, that Christ being called the 'praise', or 'confession', does not seem to agree well with that verse of Ps. 148:13, "His glory is above the earth and heaven"; nor with that of Ps. 113:4, "Jehovah is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens"; because in those passages the confession is not only said to be above the heavens, but above the earth; and no one understands that Christ is intended by confession in those passages. But these things ought not to move any one, because Christ is called the glory of God. Is. 46:13, "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory".

And it is in the same manner that the apostle dares to call him the righteousness, the power, the wisdom, the glory, the redemption, and the sanctification of God; because by and through him we acknowledge and confess God to be powerful, wise, glorious, etc. Again, while we honor and worship God by this sacrifice of righteousness, wisdom, power, etc., he justifies us, strengthens us, and makes us wise; as he saith, 1 Sam. 2:30, "Them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed. "For this is the sacrifice of praise,

by which, as he saith, Ps. 50:23, he is honored, and which is the way to the salvation of God. No one offers this sacrifice but he who has experienced the destruction of his own name, and calls upon the name of God in faith; that is, upon the wisdom, power, and righteousness of God, as I said, permitting himself in the meantime to be weak, a fool, and unrighteous. So that we are glorified with the same glory as God is glorified, made righteous with the same righteousness, and wise by the same wisdom as God. And 2 Peter 1:4, says, by Christ are given unto us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature; which are things, as he saith, 1 Pet. 1:12, that angels desire to look into.

Hence by this "confession" or glory lifted up into heaven we understand Christ. But we also learn the benefits which we derive from his being thus lifted up, or having thus ascended. "It is expedient for you, saith Christ, John 16:7, that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you". For the prophet wishes to say, that the praise wherewith God is praised in us and we in him is far different from all the praise of men. Our praise, as it is the praise of God, or from God, is not openly visible, or open to the eyes of the world, nor apparent unto men, nor even unto ourselves. Nay, as our life is hid with Christ in God, Col. 3:3, that we may be wise unto the things that are above, so our praise is taken up into heaven with him, and hid with him in God, that our hope may be in that, and not in any thing present.

Hence the praise of God wherewith both he and we are praised is the same, and it is the same glory and greatness; as is written in Ps. 106:47, 'To triumph in thy praise'. Again, Ps. 20:7, "But we will make mention of the name of Jehovah our God". Also, Ps. 34:2, "My soul shall make her boast in Jehovah". Because while we are stripped of all our own name, and suffering under ignominy, we are those truly humble ones

whom God regards, and those hungry souls whom God satisfies.

It was right that the prophet should use this summary term ‘praise’ or ‘glory’ or ‘greatness’, because he spoke at a time when the truth was not yet revealed. But what this praise was and what it contained, was left for the apostles to show forth clearly. These taught that he who would be praised rightly and truly should praise God above all things; and that he praises God above all things who ascribes unto God alone righteousness, wisdom, power, and all good things, and gives back the glory of them all to him when he receives them. This no one does but he who lives in faith, hope, and love, being oppressed in the world with weakness, foolishness, and sins, both in his own eyes and in the sight of men; and none can endure this easily but those who are partakers of faith and hope.

The sum therefore of the verse is, that there is a certain intercourse between God and men through Christ, formed by a wonderful and all-sweet communion (*commercie*). Men have nothing in the world more sweet than the name of the Lord; him they praise, proclaim, and confess before men, as alone powerful, wise, holy, and righteous. And this is for the name of the Lord to be great, admirable, celebrated, and of great estimation in the world; and this is what was wrought by the coming of Christ. On the other hand Christ himself stands round about those who thus proclaim him, confess him before men, and acknowledge his name; and passing by he administers to them, praises them, proclaims them, and confesses them before his Father and his angels in heaven; he acknowledges their name, and is himself their glory and praise in heaven, as they are his glory and praise on earth.

This is what David means when he says, “Hast set thy glory above the heavens”. So that this glory is the glory of God whereby we are praised and glorious before him, and whereby his name is excellent in being praised and glorified by us before men.

In this mutual interchange of names and praise many passages of the scriptures agree, and are by it made plain to our understanding. It is to this that Ps. 72:14 refers, "And precious will their blood be in his sight". Again, Ps. 91:14, "I will set him on high because he hath known my name". So the spouse in Song 2:16, "My beloved is mine and I am his". Ps. 111:3, "His work is honor and majesty". Again, "The earth was full of his praise", Hab. 3:3, "The heavens and the earth are full of his glory". For in this communication stands that righteousness of God by which we are justified; while we proclaim and honor him in that which we ought, he on the other hand honors us.

But as I said, as it is easy to utter and to understand this communication of praise between God and us, it is difficult to come to the experience of it. For it is a difficult matter to be stripped of all our name both in this world and in that which is to come, and to become nothing both in our own eyes and before all men; and yet if it be not so, the name of God cannot be great unto us upon earth, nor his praise above the heavens; for the name of the Lord must first of all be magnified upon the earth before his praise can be lifted up above the heavens. Hence the Blessed Virgin saith, "My soul doth magnify the Lord", Luke 1:46; and then, being certain that she was magnified in heaven because of this her magnifying the Lord, she says, "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour". For it is impossible that he should not be blessed of God who blesseth God. Nor is it possible that any one should love, praise, and delight in God, without God's loving, praising, and delighting in him in return.

But here perhaps the simple soul will raise a scruple, who has so often heard, that our love to God does not precede his love to us; as it is written, John 4:10, "Not that we loved God, but that he loved us". And Rom. 11:35, "Who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again"? Again, John 15:16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you".

Also, John 6:44, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent me draw him".

How then, it will be asked, can we first magnify him that he may magnify us? The answer is, The Holy Scripture describes both of these, both the grace of God, and the fruits of that grace. Therefore a great deal of care must be taken that we do not understand that of the tree itself which is said of the fruits; for if this chaos be introduced, that error of the Pelagians concerning free-will will follow; which ascribes unto man the beginning of a good work. Whereas God alone makes the tree good before us, and without us, which must of necessity precede the fruits; but it must equally of necessity follow that the fruits must precede the reward.

Wherefore this part of the Psalm, and all other passages like it, do not refer to initial grace, but to the final grace, that is, the reward itself, which is given to the first grace and its fruits; therefore we are not to understand by these passages any kind of exhortation to a perseverance in good works from this promise of the mutually rewarding goodness of God. Thus him who, being converted, praises God, that is, lives from received grace to the glory of God on earth, God praises in return, at the same time, and for ever in heaven: at the same time, I say, and for ever; that is, at the present time and for ever. For he that glorifies God in his life cannot but feel a joyful and quiet trust in the mercy of God, by which he knows that he in return pleases God and is praised in heaven. Therefore, our praise of the name of the Lord in the earth is almost heavenly, though before men we are continually vexed with ignominy. Then if the praising ones persevere, their praise in God will endure for ever. Thus we must understand Zechariah 1:3, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you", and similar passages.

But according to the opinion of those who understand that the latter part of this verse is, as it were, the cause of the former, among whom is our translator also, we must say, that

the praise of God above the heavens is prior to the greatness of the name of the Lord upon earth; and that Christ effected the latter by his ascending above the heavens, and by sending down the Holy Spirit to magnify the name of the Lord upon the earth, as we have said. Therefore John 7:39 saith, "For the Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified". Hence by the 'praise' of God here nothing can be understood but the personal exaltation of Christ into heaven.

It would not require much trouble to defend both these interpretations of the passage, for they are not very different from each other; because it is manifest that by the exaltation of Christ it comes to pass, that, having received the Holy Spirit, we believe in God, and that we are well-pleasing and commended in heaven; and that it is by the same spirit that we are emboldened to magnify the name of the Lord upon the earth. By all this is signified, that Christ's being exalted would have been of no service to us, unless he had been exalted *for us*; that is, unless, when he ascended up on high, he had given gifts unto us men, whereby we might magnify him upon earth. But all these things I here leave to each one's own judgment.

V. 2. — *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength (perfected praise), because of thine adversaries, that thou mightest still the enemy and avenger.*

This verse appropriately follows the one where we said that by the 'glory lifted up' we ought to understand the ascension of Christ; though it does not inappropriately agree with the other sense also; wherefore we will show that it harmonizes with both in this way. Thy name, O Lord, is magnified, but in a far different way from that in which it is magnified among men. For the manner of men is, if it may be called a manner, not to be praised by the humble and the contemptible, but by the very wise. They wish to please the few, as they term it, and to be looked upon by the great, the wise, and the powerful. Again, those praisers, as they are the vainest of men, never praise any but with a view to their own profit, that they also might be praised or might reap some advantage. Thus, mules

rub each other; and in the same manner neither those who praise are sincere, nor are those upright who are praised. This, I say, is the way with all those who are influenced and led by the appearance of things present.

But thou, O Son of God, David would say, as all thy things are hidden and only to be understood by faith, thou dost not find any among these great ones who will praise thee; nay rather, they are the very persons who most pertinaciously resist thy praise and glory from a maddened love of their own glory. Wherefore thou hast chosen the despised and the humble to set forth thy praise and to magnify thy name, who hate their own name upon the earth, being content that thou shouldst be their praise in heaven. That thou mightest manifest this, after thou hadst assumed thy glory, thou didst send thy Holy Spirit from heaven, being thyself the apostle of all apostles, and didst instruct the ignorant and simple, and from their mouth didst perfect thy praise.

But the authority of Christ has given rise to a great question in this passage. In Matt. 21:16, He applies it to the children that praised him in the temple, saying unto the chief-priests and the scribes who wanted to hinder them, "Did ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise"? Now if this Psalm be understood as applying literally to these children, as some will have it, then neither that which precedes nor that which follows will harmonize with it; for he is speaking of the name of the Lord magnified throughout the whole world, which took place after the passion. Again if we stick so closely to the literal meaning, these children were not "infants" nor "sucklings", for they blessed Christ and sang praises to Him in plainly articulated words, crying "Hosanna in the highest", Matt. 21:9.

But again, we ought not in any way to dissent from Christ who applied this verse to them, for this authority is to be preferred to that of the Psalm. It follows therefore that the words of this Psalm are general and applicable to all who are

simple and upright in heart, who are not wise above others, nor prudent in the things of the world, that is, who are the children of light; the generation of whom are not confined to any particular age, but are found in every generation and in every age of man; and the words are peculiarly applicable to children, not only because they are thus simple and sincere, but also because, by this simplicity and innocence, they figure out to us corporally the simplicity of the faith of Christ; according to 1 Pet. 2:2, "As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word". For children do not affect delight and overcome us by their wisdom, power, or greatness, but by their impotence, ignorance, and littleness. So, the praisers of Christ conquered the world and magnified the name of the Lord in all the earth, not by human strength, not by the words of human wisdom, not by the magnitude of giants, but by the foolishness of the Word and by the offence of the cross.

This verse therefore sings of the wonders of divine power, which could magnify its name throughout the world in so miraculous and unthought of manner. This was done, first in the midst of those who most madly magnified their own name, and moreover most pertinaciously resisted the name of the Lord. It would have been a great thing for God only to have destroyed the name of all the kings, the wise ones, and the righteous ones upon earth, and to have reduced them to nothing, and have erected his own name in their stead. But in the second place, he whose name was thus magnified never appeared anywhere, but was made known by the Word only. Whereas, the great ones of the earth could be present themselves and could openly show their possessions and the things whereby they raised to themselves a name. In the third place, which was perhaps the greatest of all, this invisible Christ was magnified in the fall of all visible pomp; and that, not by giants, by men of fame, of learning, of wealth, or of nobility, but by fishermen, by fools, infants and without any appearance of power or wisdom: whereas, their adversaries were sur-

rounded by multitudes and attended by the voices of the most wise, most eloquent, and most powerful.

Hence it is said, “Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength,” that the expression may convey the greater wonder. But some being offended at the word “strength”, have rendered it ‘praise’, considering the former an absurdity, perhaps, as not properly agreeing with the words “Out of the mouth,” and therefore they used the word ‘praise’ as more agreeable to the general ideas and apprehensions of readers. Although by “strength” here may rightly be understood the strength preached, by a figure of speech, and by a Hebrew idiom, yet, in my judgment, we should rather understand that which is strong, powerful, and mighty, and which all the adversaries are not able to resist; as it is said also, Ps. 141:6, “They shall hear my words, for they are able;” that is, for they are made firm and mighty.

So that we are here to understand also at the same time that Christ has wrought all things in the world by the mouths alone of those who preach the Gospel, and has by their weakness subverted all strength and power, by their foolishness all wisdom, and by their offence all religions. For the weakness of God is stronger than men, and the foolishness of God is wiser than men. In this manner also Luke frequently mentions, in the Acts of the Apostles, that the Word of God increased greatly and was mighty; thereby proving and exemplifying the substance of this verse.

And here also the rulers of the church of Christ are to be called together, that being instructed by these words they might learn their duty. For the power and strength of Christ and the church are not procured from the world; the church does not call for the aid of the secular arm, it does not threaten fire and sword, it does not trust in the arms of kings and princes, but its strength is perfected out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. David therefore, without doubt, here teaches that he who studies to magnify the name of God otherwise upon

the earth than by the mouth of babes and sucklings, rather blasphemies, and is proved to magnify his own name rather than the name of the Lord. And such are all those who madly imagine that the Turks, infidels, and heretics at the present day are to be attacked, not by the Word of God, of which they know nothing, but by war and worldly tumult, or by the clamors of abuse and revilings; that is, they presume to conquer by those very things which are themselves conquered by the mouth of babes and sucklings; and thus they turn the mild and gentle mouth of sucklings into the bloody mouths of giants, that is, they turn the sweet Word of God into the tyrannies of their own traditions. If therefore any one sees this evil and is willing to leave it, let him at length learn what he ought to do and how to act, that he may rule the people rightly.

First then "Out of the mouth," saith David. A most important admonition, but a most faithful one unto those who are employed in the ministry of the Word in the church. For the Word is rightly handled when the mouth is distinguished from the Word, and when it is known that the Word is not his who preaches, nay, that it is not he who preaches at all, but Christ who speaks in him. Hence Paul, 2 Cor. 13:3, 'Seeing that ye seek a proof of Christ that speaketh in me.' He might have here said, Babes have perfected praise; but rash fable-followers are to be blamed, who, without paying any regard to the Holy Spirit, pour out upon the people whatever comes into their mind, or rather into their mouth.

Nay, further, some search and strive that they may not preach solid things; that is, that Christ may not preach his own Word, but that they may teach theirs. Hence it follows that they not only do not destroy the enemy and avenger, but even strengthen his hands and make him a mocker. Of this same sort are those also, who, being confident of the greatness and importance of the doctrine that they have conceived in their own brain, dream that their peril is great if they do not teach it to others also, imagining to themselves that they have

a talent committed to them and that they are burying it in the earth, and must therefore expect the severe sentence of their Lord. With such ridiculous baubles does the devil laugh at their phantoms!

Such therefore being instructed by this verse, ought to know that it is not we who teach nor our word which is taught; and that it is only our mouth that is made to observe in his Word when he pleases to call us to that office. “*Thou, says David, hast established praise,*” not *they* nor *we*. So in the Gospel, also, a certain lord did indeed give talents, but it was to those who were “called”. Do thou therefore wait also till thou art called; and in the meantime neither teach after this office of teaching nor plunge thyself into it, for thy knowledge will not burst thee, though thou keep it in long. ‘They ran saith the Lord by the prophet Jeremiah, 23:21, but I never sent them: I have not spoken unto them, yet they prophesied.’ This temptation miserably vexes many, so that they are continually weary of, and sorry for that which they have undertaken. The devil does these things that he may distress the minds of those who have begun well, and at length wears them out by making them weary of the work. Therefore let him who is called, offer his mouth unto God, that he may receive the Word, and may be an instrument only and not the author. And let him who is not called, pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers, and perfect his strength out of the mouth of sucklings.

Secondly, we have the words “babes and sucklings.” Here the minister of the Word is taught that he should be a babe among babes, and, according to the words of Paul, 1 Cor. 9:22, should become all things to all men that he might by all means save some; and above all things take care that he never despise nor disdain any one. In the same manner as infants, from their simplicity, are utterly unacquainted with any distinction or respect of persons, but are equal and the same to all.

For what is more dangerous in a minister of the Word of

God, than to be one thing to the great and the rich, and another to the weak and poor? Whereas they are sent to this ministry to serve all men, to flatter none, and to hate none. You will scarcely find in the holy scriptures any one thing against which the Spirit so much contends, as against an unjust respect of persons; for it is difficult to despise the external persons and appearances of men, and yet to love and seek the good of the men themselves as they are in the sight of the invisible God.

They are moreover taught that they should be gentle and not railers, nor, as it is written, Titus 1:7, self-willed, nor soon angry, nor strikers; for such are not babes and sucklings.

Moreover in this scripture is condemned all the proud ostentation of those who deal in great and wonderful things which are above them, teaching lofty and difficult things which do not at all tend to the main object, which the people do not at all understand, and from which, if they did understand them, they could reap no solid advantage. In a word, the passage condemns all doctrine conceived and delivered by men, with whatever adulteration of human and carnal knowledge they may be infected, while it is contrary to the doctrine that is divinely inspired.

In the third place, we have ‘thou hast established or perfected.’ For it is not enough to teach the Word of God, if it be not rightly taught. Thus Paul instructed Timothy that he should handle the Word “lawfully.” For there are many wrongly-anxious and vain preachers, who rage and make a great ado, not knowing all the while that it is one thing to plant and another thing to give the increase: and these want all things to be done as soon as they have spoken the words, not so much desiring to be heard, because they speak forth the Word of God, as because they are the teachers of the Word; thus striving that the instrument should be commended rather than the Word sounded forth.

This is the case with those who promise to themselves that they shall touch, work upon, and immediately convert, now

these persons and now those, by words that they have previously conceived and meditated. Whereas by the wonderful management of God, it comes to pass that they are the farthest possible from accomplishing that which they have framed out in their thoughts. For the soul naturally feels that all such are the words of the man himself, composed by himself, and covered with human filth as Ezekiel saith, 4:1, that is polluted with human affections; and therefore the soul nauseates such a word, and is rather stirred up to wrath against it than converted by it.

The soul is the rather moved when it hears nothing of the attempt of the speaker but the free Word of God only. For the Word being free and pure will have itself spoken forth in public, and will touch those of whom the preacher himself knows nothing. Of this we have many examples upon record.

Therefore let it be ours only to offer up our mouth to the Word, and let it be God's to accomplish the work and to give the increase. Hence Christ, Matt. 21:2 etc., told his disciples, when he sent them, that they should find an ass and a foal; which they saw not and of which they knew nothing, and yet they went and fetched the ass and the foal, though they were in this ignorance about them.

Wherefore, laying aside this foolish confidence, as if we could do anything towards co-operating with the Word in the hearer, let us rather give ourselves to continual prayer that God would himself without us accomplish in the hearer what he speaks by the preacher; for it is he that speaks and he that hears and works all in all: we are only his instruments and able neither to give nor to receive any thing, unless he himself give and receive. Hence Ps. 68:18, with a word watchful over the honor of God, saith, "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast received gifts among men." But the apostle, Eph. 4:8, saith, "Gave gifts unto men."

Fourthly, now if the ministers of the Word were like these it would without doubt be effectual and powerful and would

not be spoken forth in vain; as it is said, Is. 55:11, ‘The word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please.’ Observe the words, “That which I please,” not that which the minister pleases. And, ‘it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it,’ not in them to whom the minister in his rash fancies shall send it.

Hence there is a most perilous thing both ways, either to teach the word of man under the name of the Word of God, or to hurl the pure Word of God, just according to our own whims and feelings; each of which monstrous perversions has held the church at this day under the most oppressive tyranny.

For this reason therefore let every one that is set over the people of Christ in the ministry of the Word be humble and fear, and let him study, by purity of prayer, more than by industrious strength, to deliver the Word free, pure, and simple, just as it is, committing unto God both his own tongue and the souls of the hearers. For it is a decreed truth, that there is no master in the church of God but he who says, Matt. 23:10, “One is your master, even the Christ.” And Ps. 60:6, “God hath spoken in his holiness,” or saint, that is, in his sanctuary, which is the church. But where men or Satan speak, there without doubt is a brothel and synagogue of Satan; for such as the Word is, such are the people, such is their God, such their worship, such their faith, such their conscience, such their works, and such all that belongs to them. Therefore all things are wrought in men by the Word only.

Hence I fear that infinite number of books, both of rites and of theology, which prevail at this day in the church over and above the Gospel, are those bowls of the wrath of God mentioned in Rev. 15:7 etc. which, being poured upon the earth, the sea, the rivers, the sun, the air, etc., are described as bringing many dreadful plagues on men. For what wrath or what plague from God can be more dreadful, than that Christ should not be taught among Christians, nor his faith known, but that

the souls of men should be employed in and oppressed with Decrees, Decretals, Sextaries, Clementines, Extravagaries, Mora-
rals, Summaries, and the like.

Now, as we have said that no one ought to teach in the church but he who is called of God, lest any one should be at a loss to know what this call of God is, let him observe this, whether or not the person be called to the ministry of the Word by the authority of his elders, either ecclesiastical or secular, without, nay contrary to, his own will and inclination. For there is no power but that which is ordained of God, Rom. 13:1. Therefore whatever both powers command is without doubt the command of God. Moreover we do not read in the Old Testament of any undertaking that prospered, unless God was first consulted and an answer obtained either by means of some angel or some man. For how unsuccessfully did the children of Israel fight when they fought without the command of God! as we read in Numbers 14:40 etc.; and we see the same in the Maccabees. If God want thee, he will undoubtedly seek thee out and will rather send an angel down from heaven to fetch thee to him.

This I believe is the reason why the popes, priests, and religious ones do not teach the Word of God in the church, because there is no longer any one of them who waits for the call of God, but they all seek after dignities, prebendaries, and the ease and gratification of their bellies. So that despair and a certain slothfulness of spirit do not now make men monks only, but the same things move our popes and priests also to their offices.

Thou wilt not better understand this call of God, therefore, than by observing the scripture histories and the histories of all the saints of the church. For all those who were called of God always wrought some great works; as Augustine and Ambrose, and before them Paul the apostle, etc. And, that I may not raise any scruple or doubt in any one's mind, I am speaking of those who have come and still come forward to teach the

Word of God. It behooves these, I say, to take the greatest heed that they go forth with the commission of God; as Paul saith, Rom. 10:15, "How shall they preach except they be sent?" as it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace." Again, Mal. 2:7, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of Jehovah of hosts." But as to all the rest who come to episcopal sees, to canonries, and all such priestly offices, in which there is not the ministry of the Word, I do not see that they have need of any calling at all. For in all these offices there is nothing more sought at this day than a private serving of God, in which, as Paul saith, 1 Cor. 7:7, "Every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that."

Yet those are not to be rejected and cast out, who, moved by godly desire and despising riches, fame, and their own life, have a desire to teach the Word, though their cases are very rare, nay, they are rather to be commended; as the apostle saith, 1 Tim. 3:1, "Faithful is the saying, if a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." But why the apostle says it is a "faithful saying" and why he calls it "a good work" is shown in what immediately follows: "The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach" etc. As therefore the apostle would say these are the works of a bishop, he that desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a good work. For that office requires one that is a despiser of glory, of fame, of his own life, and of all things, because it is a ministry of truth. And these things Christ foretold when he said, Matt. 10:22, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." And as those can scarcely endure this who were drawn to the work against their will by the power of God, that man must in vain hope to endure it who has sought after the office of his own accord, or who has not been moved to it by some singular impulse of grace within.

It now follows in the verse, “because of thine enemies;” that is, thine adversaries, or as we have already often translated that noun, thine oppressors. As this, therefore, may be rightly said of the incarnate God, for God himself cannot be oppressed nor suffer from adversaries, that we may go on with the same acceptance of the Psalm as that with which we began, let us understand all these things as spoken of the Son, as those of the verse preceding were of the Father. We are comforted by this Word, because we hear the Holy Ghost declare that these adversaries are not ours but the adversaries of God, for they are the adversaries of him whose Word and work they persecute. And as it is not we that speak and work, but God in us; so it is not we that suffer and are despised, but God in us. Thus the apostle dares to say, Eph. 4:30, “And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.” And Zech. 2:8, “For he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye;” though our ecclesiastical ones have twisted this around as applying to priests only, as if the laity were not also partakers of the Holy Spirit. Again, 1 Sam. 2:30, “And they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed..” Why then are we filled with fear and disquieted if ungodly men fight against our word or work? Let us leave them to rage on; or rather, let us pray for them that their eyes may be opened and that they may see that it is not against us they run but against God himself.

What is it then ‘for strength to be perfected out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, because of the enemies?’ Why, David here still goes on to comfort us under all our weakness, and so hold forth to our view the wonderful power of God. As if he had said, There shall rise up against these helpless infants a powerful Pharaoh, and the sons of men shall open their mouths against them; magicians shall not be wanting, nor a Jannes and a Jambres who shall be most powerful both in might and craft, and shall resist the Word of truth. Because of these, I say, saith David, that they might not prevail, but, as Paul

saith, 2 Tim. 3:9, that their folly might be made manifest to all men, he shall give them a mouth and wisdom which all their adversaries shall not be able to resist or gainsay. For, as the Hebrew terms them, there are always “giants” and “murderers” upon the earth and “men of renown,” who, trusting to their own strength and violence, rush upon and oppress the weak and simple infants who are preachers of the Word of truth. But all this is permitted that the power of the Word which proceeds from their mouth might be made manifest and perfected, while God confounds the mighty by the weak and the wise by the foolish, and brings to naught things that are by the things that are not. Hence it now follows,

“That thou mightest still the enemy and avenger.” Jerome translates it, ‘that the enemy and avenger might rest;’ that is, that he might cease, desist, and rest from his evil works. The Hebrew is, that a sabbath, that is, that rest might come; that it might show that the enemies and avengers must either cease or be destroyed; according to Ps. 104:35, “Let sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.” Or else it shows, that they are to be changed into friends, and those that shall suffer also; according to the words of the prophet Is. 2:4, “And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks;” which is an allegorical figure to signify the changing of evil and destructive into wholesome tongues.

The words “enemy and avenger” signify figuratively all enemies and avengers. All are enemies who think and act contrary to us. They are moreover called “avengers” because they madly contend against the babes and sucklings of God in defence of their own principles and pursuits, as they say, Ps. 2:3, “Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us.” But there follows, in the same place, the manner in which such shall be destroyed, ver. 5, “Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them in his sore displeasure.” Though, as for myself I believe it is a saving destruction that

is signified in this Psalm, by which, as I said, the ungodly man is destroyed, in order to his becoming godly; for this is the peculiar work of Christ in the church, and this is the work of the Holy Spirit, and is wrought by the peaceful Word of the Gospel rather than by the impetuous violence of wrath and fury. The proof of this seems to be David's saying, that all these are to be wrought by no other means than out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, and that it is out of their mouth only that this strength is to be perfected.

Now he goes on to show what are the disposition and manners of these adversaries of the Word. In the first place, he shows that they are flesh and blood; as he saith, Ps. 116:11, "All men are liars;" they are above all things unable to endure that truth which mortifies the flesh. For the wisdom and prudence of the flesh is "enmity against God, because it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be," as Paul saith, Rom. 8:7. Moreover when this truth is spoken by babes, those wise ones of the world, considering that understanding insulted in which they boast themselves, not only become enemies, but under a false external pretext, and under the name of truth, arm themselves with zeal to revenge the insult offered to their understandings, and never rest until they have suppressed and slain these apostles of the truth under pretence of defending the glory of God and the truth, or as the common term is now-a-days, for the honor of the holy church. So general, usual, nay necessary a consequence is it, that he who is an enemy to the truth of God must also become an avenging defender of his own lies. Though we find this evil to be general in all causes both profane and sacred, yet, in the latter, where a holy pretence can be more conveniently made, it triumphs with ease and security.

Let every one therefore who is called or who attempts to teach the Word, be instructed and assured, that he will have adversaries who will not only not hear what he has to say, but will, when he offends against their opinions and pursuits, which

he must of necessity do, become his most bitter enemies and persecutors. These words of the Spirit however which bring the babes into a contention with enemies and avengers will not lie; the contest may be fearful, but it is so managed by divine power, and will end so well, that if the babe does but believe that the matter is conducted by the counsels of God and not by his own, and if he does but concern himself about offering his mouth to him that speaketh in him, and does but leave himself in his hands as the mere instrument of the Word, that Word perfecting will perfect strength, and destroying will destroy the adversary.

Moreover, he that so teaches as not to find an enemy to resist, and an avenger to persecute, because he teaches out of the rule laid down in this verse, let him not presume to himself that he is a perfect and pure preacher of the Word. But if enemies and avengers rise up and rush upon him, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us," or if they shall taunt him as they did the prophets, saying, "What is the burden of the Lord?" or shall serve them as Zedekiah did Micaiah, 1 Kings 22:24, and say, "Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?" Art thou the only wise one in the world? Let such an one be of good hope, knowing, according to this verse, that he is a babe and a suckling, but that his enemies are Nimrods and giants: for this is what we see came upon all the prophets, upon Christ himself, upon the apostles, and upon all the ministers of the Word. The example of whom, like a thick cloud, ought to animate us, for we see all such examples to accord most exactly with this scripture.

From this it follows that all those laws and rites of men and also all those dumb and sleepy systems of theology drawn up by mere oppositionists, were never the strength that was perfected out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, and that they have nothing whatever in them that agrees with the description given in this verse, because no one of all such com-

pilers was ever known to suffer any evil or persecution on account of their profession or writings; unless perhaps it be a little abuse in a bickering or quarrelling, like that of women, for they are never compelled by mere opinions to suffer the peril of fire and death, until they have been brought forth and instructed in the scriptures, and have begun to preach the Word of God. Nay rather, such are adorned with titles and honors and high places and names; they are saluted in the market place, and are called Rabbi, as is the case with all our great doctors and teachers.

Such a doctrine as this of human framing, therefore, has no enemies and persecutors, except it be in the same way as Pilate and Herod contended together, and the Pharisees and Sadducees. For it would not take much to stir up all the disciples of Thomas, of Scotus, of Modernus, together with all the priests, bishops, and religionists at this day, and to bring them all to stand together against Christ, though they are always in a continual state of contention among each other; thus the prophet justly wonders, in the second Psalm, that all the kings of the earth, though the greatest enemies to each other, yet stood up against him. And so, all the princes and elders among priests, though completely divided among each other in mutual factions, yet all assemble together against the Lord and against his Christ.

These things I wished to say unto those who desire to speak the Word of God and administer it purely, that they may know that, according to this verse, they will ever have the more and greater enemies and avengers, the more corrupt these latter times are, and the more specious outside show there is of titles, names, dignities, offices, and rites, under the name of Christ. Let such, therefore, bear in mind, that this truth is certain. ‘Out of the mouths of both babes and sucklings, saith God, I only perfect strength; which shall have enemies, but which shall destroy the enemy and avenger’.

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